

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL, HEDGEHOGS NURSERY & SUNBEAMS CLUB



Physical Development & Outdoor play



Updated: Sept 2026
Review Date: Sept 2027

Policy Statement

At Woodlands Primary School, Hedgehogs Nursery and Sunbeams Club (the school), we recognise the vital importance of physical development for all children. In the early years department, all of our rooms provide a safe, stimulating, and nurturing environment that encourages our youngest learners to explore movement and build their physical skills both indoors and outdoors. Outdoor play for Early Years is an essential part of the daily routine and supports children's health, wellbeing, and development.

This policy is underpinned by the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, particularly the Prime Area of **Physical Development**, which focuses on developing children's gross and fine motor skills, coordination, balance, and control.

Aims

In Hedgehogs, Squirrels and Foxes we will aim to -

- Provide daily opportunities for babies, toddlers and preschoolers to move freely and explore a range of physical activities both indoors and outdoors,
- Support each child's physical development through age-appropriate and individualised experiences.
- Encourage outdoor play in all weather conditions, ensuring the children's safety and appropriate clothing. i.e., Puddle/splash suits, wellies, sun hats.
- Promoting healthy habits and guiding the children's understanding of physical wellbeing from an early age.
- Enabling an inclusive environment that values each child's developmental stage and physical abilities.

Implementation

Indoor Physical Development

- The Hedgehogs and Squirrels rooms are equipped with soft play equipment, sensory toys, push-along toys, and furniture that encourages gross motor physical development i.e. crawling, cruising, and walking.
- The foxes room provides opportunities to encourage both fine and gross motor skills.
- The staff in the rooms will plan and provide experiences that promote fine motor skills, such as grasping, picking up small objects, stacking blocks, and exploring textures.
- Staff encourage the children in Hedgehogs and Squirrels to explore their surroundings safely and they are supported in developing independence in movement.

Outdoor Play

- Outdoor play is offered daily as a vital extension of our indoor learning environment.
- Each room's outdoor space is age-appropriate, enclosed, and designed to support safe exploration, crawling, walking, climbing, and balancing.
- Activities include playing with balls, exploring natural elements (grass, sand, water), and opportunities for sensory exploration.
- Outdoor clothing such as coats, hats, and wellies are to be provided by parents to ensure all children can participate comfortably in all weather.

Health and Safety

- All equipment and play areas, indoors and outdoors, are regularly checked and maintained for safety and hygiene.
- Risk assessments/safety checks are carried out daily before children access any area.
- Staff supervise all activities and maintain appropriate ratios at all times.
- Staff will closely observe all the children to ensure they are safe, supported, and not over-exerting themselves.

Staff Responsibilities

- Staff use observations and knowledge of each child to tailor physical development opportunities.
- Practitioners ensure that physical activities are inclusive and adapted to suit different developmental needs.
- Staff record and share observations of children's progress with parents/carers and use this information to plan next steps.

Parental Involvement

- Parents are encouraged to share information about their child's physical milestones at home.
- We work in partnership with parents to ensure continuity of physical development support across home and nursery settings.
- Parents are informed about the importance of physical activity and outdoor play through newsletters, discussions, and parent meetings.