

Outdoor Setting Suitability Policy

Deadline for policy to be reviewed by:	Reviewed and shared on:	Manager/director initials:
June 2025	September 2025	LC

Our Ethos

At Bee in the Woods, the safety, wellbeing and development of every child is of paramount importance. As a fully outdoor kindergarten, we are passionate advocates for the powerful role nature plays in early years education. Outdoor learning supports children's physical and emotional development, promotes resilience and creativity, and fosters lifelong connections to the natural world.

We are committed to inclusive practice and strive to make our provision accessible to as many children as possible. At the same time, we recognise that, just as a conventional indoor classroom may not suit every child, a fully outdoor environment may not always be the most suitable setting for all children at all times.

Considering Suitability for the Outdoors

We take a child-centred, supportive approach to understanding when an outdoor setting might present challenges for a child. This is never about a child being "unsuitable" for nature-based learning, but about ensuring physical safety, emotional wellbeing and a positive experience for every child in our care.

Some of the indicators that a child might benefit from further support, review or adaptation include:

- Struggles to tolerate or wear weather-appropriate clothing, placing them at risk of harm.
- Difficulty in understanding or respecting physical boundaries, which poses safety concerns.
- Consistent distress caused by open spaces or a more fluid/dynamic daily rhythm.
- Regular unsafe use of tools or natural resources in ways that put themselves or others at risk.
- Inability to follow key safety instructions around fire, tools, climbing, and risk play.
- Continuing to be in nappies into the winter months, with little indication of readiness for toilet training - due to the discomfort and hygiene challenges of outdoor nappy changing in cold, wet weather.



Note: Every child is on their own journey. We do not impose rigid expectations but instead assess readiness and needs holistically, always in partnership with families.

Our Approach to Support and Risk Assessment

If concerns arise regarding a child's safety, comfort, or ability to access the provision meaningfully, we will take the following steps:

1. Bespoke Risk Assessment – including specific plans to mitigate identified risks.
2. Collaborative Support Planning – regular communication with parents/carers to jointly explore strategies.
3. Environmental Adaptations – making reasonable changes to the site layout or routine where possible.
4. Provision of Additional Resources – including clothing, sensory supports, visual aids, etc.
5. Involvement of Professionals – drawing on support from SEND, health or behaviour specialists where appropriate.
6. Regular Review Meetings – to assess progress and ensure decisions are made in the best interests of the child and the group.

Only once all avenues have been explored with care and compassion, and if a child's needs are consistently not being met (or the safety and wellbeing of the cohort is at ongoing risk) might we suggest exploring a more suitable provision, either temporarily or long-term.

Shared Responsibility and Communication

We ask that all parents/carers:

- Share relevant information about their child before joining—especially any medical needs, SEND, or behavioural factors that may impact safety.
- Work collaboratively with us to support their child's positive transition and sustained engagement.
- Stay open to reviewing how the setting is working for their child, especially during changes in weather or developmental stage.

Open communication is key. We are committed to working with families, not around them and always aim to find creative, compassionate solutions where challenges arise.

Final Note

Every child is capable, curious, and unique. We believe in high expectations with high support and in the transformative power of outdoor learning. This policy is not about exclusion but about safeguarding the emotional and physical wellbeing of all children and ensuring the best experience possible for everyone in our woodland community.