**Outdoor Play Policy *(Garden and Wild Wednesdays)***

**Policy Statement**

Outdoor play is essential for all aspects of children’s development.

It provides experiences for children to develop intellectual, emotional, social and physical skills. In doing so, it provides opportunities to develop communication skills and encourages positive attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle.

At Little Oak, we recognise the importance of daily outdoor play and are committed to ensure all children have daily access to the outdoors, regardless of their age and stage of development. Where possible, this includes children having free access to the outdoors, allowing them freedom to play indoors or outdoors.

We make reasonable adjustments where required, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We go out to play with all the children, in all weathers (unless deemed unsafe). We understand the vital role that learning outdoors has on children’s development and learning. As well as the importance of regular access to outdoor play, in order to keep fit and healthy, develop large/fine motor skills, experience learning in a natural environment and access daylight to absorb Vitamin D efficiently.

The outdoor area and our Wild Wednesday site has a wealth of experiences and equipment which enable children to develop and learn in a variety of ways, including independence, exploration, investigative skills, risk taking and self-esteem.

We take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the children through risk assessments, whilst balancing the benefits to learning through providing an element of risky play. Risky play helps children explore and find their own boundaries in a safe environment with supportive practitioners.

Outdoor play is supervised and we have robust safety checks in place, including regular head counts. All outdoor activities, including Wild Wednesdays, are planned to compliment the Early Years curriculum. We plan both adult-led and child-initiated opportunities, to enable children to learn and practice new skills, knowledge and behaviours.

During Wild Wednesday sessions, a mobile phone and first aid kit are taken to ensure the safety of children at all times. A paediatric first aider will be present at all times.

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Rosalind Hambidge (Director) Date: 9/1/2024

Signed on behalf of Little Oak Pre-school (Witney) Ltd

Policy review due: June 2024