



Freshfield Nursery School and Freshfield 2 Year Olds

Risky Play Policy

Presented to Governors:	November 2023
Presented to Staff:	November 2023
Date for Review:	November 2026

STATEMENT

Risky play is an invaluable part of childhood. Research shows that not only does it increase children's physical and motor skills but also teaches them about their own limits, and how to deal with risks in the future. It is important that we provide children with an environment where they can engage in risky play that is as safe as necessary rather than as safe as possible. We want our children to grow into independent, resilient adults. With care, we can raise children who will actually be safer, more self-aware, and more confident as they face any number of challenges in life.

The more children are free to engage in risky play the better they will be at managing risks, judging what they are capable of, and keeping themselves safe. The role of the teacher is to provide a challenging and risky learning environment that will support all children as they become more motivated, curious, able, and adventurous.

Aim:

The aim of this policy is to make sure children are given access to risky play to extend their learning and development whilst being supported by capable and confident adults.

Objectives:

- For children to explore and extend their development through taking risks in a controlled environment.
- For staff to supervise children to ensure they are able to access risky play whilst staying safe.
- For children to become confident in taking risks and developing their skills and independence.

Guidelines for Implementation:

- At Freshfield we recognise that taking risks forms a vital part of building children's learning and development.
- We will encourage children to take risks and challenge themselves in the safety of the nursery environment.
- To ensure children can learn skills in a safe environment staff will always adhere to ratios. These ratios ensure that children can always be properly supervised. Staff are always alert and aware to the children's needs and will support them as much as they can.
- Types of risky play that the children may be involved in includes:
 - Climbing: Children love to climb things! We have a climbing tree in our garden. The children are aware that they are not to climb past the height of where staff can help them get down - just in case they get stuck! We also have a new open ended climbing area. There are all sorts of ways for children to create their own climbing experiences with logs, crates and planks. These projects are excellent for problem solving and

communication. They also get children excited about a group activity, and helping each other try it out. They also develop so much coordination and balancing skills. Hills or slopes are a great element to climb, particularly if there is the risk of tumbling down, riding bikes and scooters around.

- Experiencing speed: Rope swings provide that raw speed, and also height mixed together. Bikes are another one that in their various forms provide this element of speed for risky play. There is the danger of falling off or crashing. Bikes are excellent for developing strength in the legs, and also coordination for going around obstacles.
- Dangerous tools: We use cutters and knives to chop up fruit and vegetables. Staff ratios are always in place, and the children are talked through simple rules, and just made sure they are focussed when using them and not distracted. Tools are brilliant for fine motor skills, providing real life experiences which are more inviting for the children, which in turn, makes them more focused and motivated to learn.

- Risky elements:

Fire: We have our very own 'fire circle' as a central focus point of our nature school sessions. A 'fire circle' is quite simply an area that will at some point have a live fire, with log seating at a safe distance around it. It is crucial to set up some agreed rules before using the fire pit. A key rule is that you can't go through the middle of a fire circle at any point during a session, whether the fire is lit or not. Often children will be asked to practise walking around the outside of the fire circle. Only when children have grasped this idea, is it OK to light the fire. We also use the fire to cook food such as marshmallows and sausages, or heat up drinks such as hot chocolate. Just being in close proximity to fire adds that element or risk that give these activities huge extra benefits.

Water: Once again, supervision and risk assessment are very important. However, once again the benefit of being near water is its dangerous nature and how it should be respected.

Roles and Responsibilities:

It is the role and responsibility of all members of staff to ensure they are aware of any risks in the nursery and that they position themselves with the children so that they are able to help, support and encourage as and when needed. It is the responsibility of the Co-Headteachers to ensure staffing ratios are always adhered to within the nursery.

Links to other policies, procedures & guidance:

- health and safety policy

