

Health and Safety Policy

(See also the *safeguarding and child protection policy*, *emergency procedures policy* and *sickness and medication policy*.)

The aim of this policy is to ensure that we provide adequate control of all health & safety risks associated with the operation of the nursery, for children, staff and visitors. Although it is formally reviewed once a year, it is a key working document for the nursery and is revised whenever necessary.

Health and safety responsibilities

Overall responsibility for health & safety is that of the Manager, who is responsible for reviewing health & safety policies and procedures, and carrying out the risk assessments alongside the other members of staff. However, all members of staff have day to day responsibility for ensuring that the policy is put into practice and bringing health & safety concerns to the attention of the manager. Failure by the staff to apply this policy can lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Managing risk

Steps taken to reduce risk

- Staff risk assess all activities, sites and the weather (see below).
- Staff follow safety routines (see below).
- The manager communicates with the duty wood keeper to share information about any potential hazards, including weather.
- Staff inform colleagues, volunteers, children and visitors of potential hazards and agreed methods of working in order to minimise their risk.
- The manager ensures that all staff, volunteers and children are aware of the emergency procedures for all sites.
- The staff teach children skills in order to keep themselves safe.
- All staff are aware of the setting's emergencies procedures and know how to call the emergency services.
- Off-site trips (ie, to locations other than the woods) are risk assessed by the manager. Also, risk assessments and liability insurance for the premises to be visited are requested/checked.
- Parental consent is requested before taking children on trips away from the woods.

Risk assessment

All activities are risk assessed either formally or informally. Staff are required to make a judgement about all activities that the children undertake during a session. Anything that might be medium risk or higher does not take place until it has been formally risk assessed first, using the ITW risk assessment process. This involves using a standardised format to identify potential risks and put in place measures to reduce the risk. If it is not possible to achieve low risk then the activity will not take place. The risks and measures to reduce them that relate to a specific activity (from the risk assessment) are kept alongside the daily plan and all staff are required to read and implement them.

Awareness

- Our induction training for staff and volunteers includes ensuring all staff have read and understood the health and safety policy, and understand their shared responsibility and accountability for health and safety. The induction training covers matters of staff well being, including safe lifting.
- Health and safety procedures are reviewed at all staff meetings.

- Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health and safety through discussions, safety routines, and talking about possible risks of activities they plan. See *Children learning* section below.
- Reviewing safety practices is on the agenda for all staff meetings, to ensure our practice continues to develop.

Safety routines and practices

This section details the agreed safety practices that all staff must carry out in every session.

General safety practices

- Overall staff ratios – maximum of 4 children per adult.
- Maximum of 24 children in each session.
- Group sizes – under normal circumstances one adult with a maximum of 4 children, although in special circumstances an adult may need to supervise more children to ensure the safety of the group (see handovers below, and *emergency procedures policy*).
- Groups stay together except in exceptional circumstances.
- All children and adults wear colour-coded high-visibility vests. All the children and adults in a group wear the same colour.
- Group leaders have primary responsibility for the children in their group, unless they have officially handed them over to another staff member (see below).
- Group leaders must be completely certain about who is in their group and where they are at all times, including (but not restricted to) when they have been handed over to another staff member, are eating lunch, waiting to be picked up or start the session.
- All group leaders check their children have been signed out at the end of the day.
- All practitioners are aware of the deployment of the other practitioners at all times during all sessions, so that if one practitioner is leading an activity, the other will take an overview of the camp or children on the walk.
- The children are supervised at all times.

Safety lead practitioners

One practitioner is the **first safety lead** for each day. There is also a **second safety lead** who assumes the role when the children split into the walking group and camp group – one safety lead with each group.

Safety leads are responsible for:

- Knowing how many children are in the nursery/group at all times.
- Ensuring that the register is with the appropriate person.
- Making sure the other staff are aware of the numbers.
- Telling all staff at the start of each day who the high risk children are (children most likely to wander/run off and go missing).
- Reminding staff about safety practices and monitoring their practice.

Safety in camp

- We risk assess the site by carrying out safety sweeps before each session.
- Staff setting up the camp mark the boundary with cones, no more than a metre apart. Children are taught not to cross the boundary.
- Staff ensure that there are no major blind spots in the camp where children might be difficult to see.
- Group leaders count all the children in their group (including those sleeping or reading in tents) every 2 minutes while in camp.

- Children are not allowed outside the boundary unless with a teacher.
- Group leaders should not take some of the group outside the boundary leaving the rest inside the boundary, even for a short period, unless they officially hand-over the remaining children.
- Children who are sleeping are checked every 10 minutes.

Safety on walks

- There will be an adult at the front and back of the group at all times.
- Group leaders do a head count on leaving and returning to/from a walk.
- Group leaders count all the children in their group every 2 minutes.
- Children are not normally allowed to stay in camp if their group goes for a walk. If there is no alternative, then an official handover must take place.
- Once on a walk, all children stay within 10 metres of the group leader at all times.
- Group leaders must be able to see all their children all of the time. They think about where to position themselves so that this is always the case. For example, the children should not be following behind their group leader.
- The children are trained to stop when called. If they do not stop, wait and come back when called, they will be asked to stay very close to an adult (ie holding hands) until they can be trusted to do this.
- When crossing roads all children hold on to a 'hoop train' (rubber hoops linked together by short lengths of rope) or an adults hand if all hoops are in use. A member of staff is at the front and back of the train, and if possible a third in the middle.
- When crossing Muswell Hill Road, the pedestrian crossing is always used.
- When the walking group stops to stay and play in any one place (ie, they decide to stop and play for a while rather than continuing the walk, taking bags off), blue cones are used to cone off any obvious exits (all around if need be) to the location, to stop children wandering off.

Safety at pick-up and drop-off

- The safety lead signs in children using the registers mobile phone app, as whoever is dropping off leaves.
- The safety lead signs out children just before they leave with their parent at the end of the session.
- Parents tell the safety lead (who notes it on the register) if a person other than themselves is picking their child up. A code word is given to the person picking up. Without this, they are not allowed to pick up the child.
- When a child arrives, they are signed in, put on their hi-vis vest and enter camp straight away.
- There is a member of staff on the gate of the walkway signing children in and stopping children leaving, and keeping count of the number of children in the walkway at any one time. They do an official head count every 2 minutes. There is another member of staff in the walkway playing with and supervising the children. The ratio is never more than 6 children to 1 adult.

Lunchtimes

- During the Summer season (Summer 1 and 2 and Autumn 1 terms) all full-day children stay in camp for the whole of lunchtime. They are not allowed to go anywhere else at lunchtime.
- During the Winter season (Autumn 2 and Spring 1 and 2 terms) all full-day children are taken to the Pavilion Cafe in Highgate Wood for lunch. They are not allowed to go anywhere else at lunchtime and stay seated at the table until lunchtime is over.
- At Kenwood all full day children stay in camp for the whole of lunchtime, all year round. They are not allowed to go anywhere else at lunchtime.
- Staff formally hand over children from their group if they are leaving to go on a break.

- Supervising staff head-count every 2 minutes.

High-risk times

During certain activities or times of the day there is an increased risk of a child going missing. On an ongoing basis, during each session, safety leads decide when there is an increased risk and designate one practitioner to continually count all the children.

This continual counting practice is employed as and when needed, but also, is **always** used at the following times:

- Lunchtime during the Summer season, when children are coming and going, collecting packed lunches, washing hands etc.
- Pack-up time at the end of the day after afternoon snack time.

Hand-overs

When a member of staff is fully occupied by a number of the children in their group, and for whatever reason cannot supervise all the children they have responsibility for, they officially hand over responsibility for the other children to another member of staff. This is a verbal exchange in which the receiving member of staff repeats back the names of the children they are taking responsibility for.

Staff hand over children when they begin **any** activity that will prevent them from counting their children in accordance with this policy.

Children learning about safety

- Children are taught the emergency procedure twice during the first week of every half term.
- Children are taught about the importance of safety in the woods. They are taught and practise safety rules, for example:
 - not crossing the camp boundary,
 - stopping and returning when called,
 - knowing their colour and group leader,
 - staying with their group.
- Children and adults are taught about specific dangers and the safest way to deal with them, including:
 - poisonous plants, berries and fungi;
 - spiky, stinging plants, insects, processionary moths;
 - dogs;
 - strangers;
 - checking dens are safe and secure before going in or climbing on.

Staff safety

- Staff do not work not on their own in the woods.
- Staff are given regular supervision meetings in which they can raise concerns about their own safety.
- Staff are reminded of safe manual handling techniques (eg, lifting).

High wind and thunderstorms

- If it is very windy, or high wind is forecast, or there if there is a thunderstorm very nearby, the children are not taken into the woods.
- The nursery either closes and parents are asked not to bring their children in, or the children are kept indoors.

- In deciding whether conditions are (or are forecast to be) too windy, Into The Woods takes its lead from the City of London woodkeepers in Highgate Wood, who close the wood if there is wind or forecast to be wind of over 40mph. In these cases, Into The Woods considers that it is not safe to take the children outdoors.
- If the wind increases unexpectedly during the day or if a thunderstorm develops while the children are in the woods, they are taken indoors as quickly as possible. The staff ensure that the children stay on main paths and take them directly to shelter and stay there until conditions are safe.
- If they are in Highgate Wood, the children are taken to the information hut.
- If they are in Queens Wood, the children are taken to the Queens Wood Cafe.
- At Kenwood, the children are taken to the West Lodge.
- Thunderstorms are considered to be dangerous if there is less than a 3 second gap between lightening and thunder, indicating that the storm is close.

Fire safety and emergencies

- A fire risk assessment is carried out annually for all nurseries.
- Staff never light fires of any kind (eg, campfires, barbecues, kelly kettles) in any location other than the garden of the Queens Wood Cafe. Such activities (in the QW garden) are carried out in a highly controlled manner with a specific risk assessment for each being carried beforehand.
- There is an agreed procedure for dealing with emergencies in the woods, including fire and a missing child. See *emergency procedures policy*.
- All staff have been trained in emergency and fire procedures.
- Our emergency procedures are explained to new members of staff and volunteers and shared with parents.

Fire safety at West Lodge, Kenwood

- Staff ensure fire exits are kept clear at all times.
- When staff are in West Lodge, they ensure all doors are readily openable (ie, without the need for a key) from the inside.
- No highly flammable materials (eg, lighter fuel, fire lighters, butane gas) of any kind are stored in West Lodge.
- No large amounts of combustible materials (eg, cardboard) are left in West Lodge.
- All rooms within West Lodge are to be kept reasonably tidy at all times.
- All ITW personal belongings are to be kept in the storage room during the day. Items must be kept within personal storage boxes or hung on coat racks so as to keep fire exits clear.
- All electrical appliances in West Lodge, including those installed and used by Into The Woods, are PAT tested annually. PAT testing is carried out by Kenwood House estate management (English Heritage).
- Kenwood House estate management (English Heritage) ensure that the fire extinguishers within the building are checked annually.
- Kenwood House ensure there is a working fire alarm system at West Lodge and that it is properly maintained and regularly checked.
- As part of their fire safety training, staff are made aware of what the fire alarm sounds like and how to respond (see Emergency Procedures Policy).
- ITW staff have the use of a Kenwood House radio in order to call the estate team to report a fire.
- The appointed ITW Fire Warden is responsible for leading and ensuring procedure is followed in case of a fire emergency. In the event of the Fire Warden not being present the Deputy Fire Warden assumes the role.
- A fire evacuation plan is in place – see Emergency Procedures Policy.

- All new staff are trained on fire safety and fire evacuation at induction.
- Fire safety and fire evacuation are reviewed by all staff once a year during a staff training day.

Keeping healthy

Sun Safety

If we are in direct sun for prolonged periods, we wear suncream and protective clothing. All adults act as positive role models – eg use sun cream, wear sun hats etc. Parents are encouraged to ensure they have applied sun cream to their child before the start of each session their child attends. We have sun cream available and will apply it if necessary. Parents have signed to say their children are allowed to have the nursery sun cream applied or else will supply their own.

Hygiene

- We follow Public Health England guidelines on hygiene and infection control, and Food Standards Agency guidelines on hygiene and handling of food (<http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/caterers/startingup/childminders>).
- We ensure that any third parties preparing and providing food to the nursery (eg, Pavilion Cafe) are registered as a food business with the local authority and have a good or better food hygiene rating.
- We keep up to date through information shared by the local authority.
- Our daily routines encourage the children to learn about personal hygiene – eg, hand washing, nose wiping and disposal of the tissue, the spread of infection through coughing and sneezing, using the toilet correctly.
- We bring along warm soapy water, wipes and gels for washing hands
- We take home any waste daily.
- Any soiled nappies or clothes are secured in a nappy sack, and removed at the end of each session
- We clean equipment regularly.
- The toilet area has a high standard of hygiene including hand washing and drying facilities.
- We implement good hygiene practices by:
 - checking the toilet regularly,
 - wearing protective clothing, such as disposable gloves, as appropriate,
 - providing sets of clean clothes,
 - providing tissues and wipes.

Hand washing

We use running water and soap to wash hands and disposable paper towels to dry them. Children and staff wash hands after going to the toilet, after touching any animals or fungi and before preparing or handling any food.

Food and drink

- Children's allergies are written on both registers.
- Staff who supervise the preparation and/or prepare and handle food receive appropriate training and understand and comply with food safety and hygiene regulations.
- All food and drink is stored appropriately.
- Adults do not place hot drinks within reach of children.
- Snack time is appropriately supervised and children do not walk about with food and drinks.
- Fresh drinking water is available to the children at all times.

- We ensure children do not have access to foods to which they are allergic.
- We provide parents with a list of foods not to be included in packed lunches, to avoid children bringing in any common allergens or specific foods that might cause a serious allergic reaction in any children on roll.
- Any cooking done with the children is planned, appropriate for the age of the children and follows our H&S policy guidance.

Health information for specific children

- Detailed health information for all children is gathered from the enrolment forms, and kept as a record.
- Relevant health information (conditions, allergies, etc) is documented on a log of specific health concerns which is kept in each first aid bag and in the register folder.
- Parents are reminded weekly to update the nursery of any changes.
- Specific health concerns and requirements are shared at staff meetings, and key people informed.

See also sickness and medication policy.

Equipment and resources

- Before purchase, equipment and resources are checked to ensure that they are safe for the ages and stages of the children currently attending the setting.
- All equipment is regularly checked for cleanliness and safety and any dangerous items are repaired or discarded.
- All the children's materials are non-toxic.
- Children are taught to handle and store tools safely.

No smoking, alcohol or drugs policy

- All areas and sites of the nursery are no smoking areas.
- Alcohol and drugs are prohibited in all areas of the nursery during our hours of operation.
- If a member of staff, student, volunteer, visitor, parent or child arrives at the setting clearly under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they will be asked to leave immediately, and disciplinary action may follow.
- If a member of staff believes a parent/carer is under the influence they advise the manager and the child protection officer who will then decide on the appropriate course of action according to the Child protection Policy.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

As an employer, we have a duty under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 to prevent employees from coming into contact with substances hazardous to health.

Chemicals and material

It is our policy to, wherever possible; avoid the use of substances that have the risk of being hazardous to health. Safety data sheets under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) or Chemical Hazard Information Packaging (CHIP) information supplied by manufacturers will be held on file for all substances and available for staff reference purposes and risk assessment. Staff who use these chemicals and materials have the duty of care to make themselves aware of the potential hazard, contradictions and treatments.

Measures and provisions

- We have conducted a risk assessment in relation to all substances in our operations and concluded that no substance presents a high risk.

- At present all chemicals used within the nursery are of domestic standard for household use and therefore do not present any threat to health and are safe to use.
- All new chemicals and substances used in the nursery are risk assessed before use.
- In the case of any substance potentially hazardous to health, a COSHH risk assessment is completed, and control measures shared with staff and implemented.
- The manager maintains a COSHH folder of hazardous substances in use, which lists the substance and its location (where it is stored), the safety data sheet, and the risk assessments. The folder is available for all staff to access at any time and the risk assessment and safety data sheet are also kept with the substance.
- The risk assessments are shared with any new member of staff and kept with the substance.
- Any cleaning equipment or potentially hazardous substances are stored securely away from the children.
- The nursery has general hygiene measures in place, together with the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) to further ensure the safety of employees.
- Cleaning substances are of domestic standard.
- All substances are correctly stored in clearly labeled containers.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

As an employer we have a duty under the PPE Regulations, to provide suitable equipment and clothing to protect employees from the risk of harm or injury during the course of their employment.

Into The Woods has risk assessed all the activities in which its employees are engaged and at present provides the following protective protective equipment or clothing:

- Disposable nitrile gloves for use when changing nappies, when serving food (in the Winter), or when cleaning.

Records

In accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage, we keep the following records.

Adults

- A single central record which includes the following information about all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers:
 - name, address, identity check, address check, DBS check, right to work, qualifications.
- Names and addresses of the owners or of all members of the management;
- All documents relating to the staff's employment with the setting, including application forms, references, results of checks undertaken etc.
- See the *child protection policy* for more information on safe recruitment of staff.
- The sickness of staff and their involvement in accidents is recorded. The records are reviewed termly to identify any issues that need to be addressed.

Children and parents

- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of parents and adults authorised to collect children from
- setting;
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of emergency contacts in case of children's illness or accident;
- Allergies, dietary requirements and illnesses of individual children;
- Times of attendance of children, staff, volunteers and visitors;
- Accidents, incident and medicine administration records;

- Enrolment forms contain detailed information on medical history and medical requirements.

Insurance cover

We have public liability insurance and employers' liability insurance. The certificate for employer's liability insurance is available.

Policy review

Last reviewed: November 2020

Last modified: 17 March 2021

Next review date: November 2022