**Updated 16/11/20**

**GENERIC Risk Benefit Assessment – ELC Outdoor Space: INFECTION CONTROL COVID-19**

**You MUST adapt this RBA for your setting. You have a different site, children and circumstances that need to be considered.**

**Who:** Staff, children and visitors to the nursery outdoor space

**What:** Outdoor play

**Where:** Designated outdoor space

**When:** All year round, every day, except in really extreme weather

**Benefits of hygiene measures outside**

* Children learn that hygiene matters outside as well as inside (HWB 0-16a, HWB 0-17a, HWB 0-33a)
* Transfer of skills learned indoors can be applied outside (HWB 0-03a, HWB 0-33a, HWB 0-48a)
* Children learn to use different equipment such as using a water canister or a spa tap (HWB 0-33a)
* Children have to problem solve when it comes to the additional challenges, e.g. dropping paper towel and getting mud on one’s hands again (HWB 0-33a, HWB 0-48a)
* Reduction in the transmission of infectious diseases, including COVID-19

**Covid-19 benefits**

*Evidence suggests that outdoor environments can limit transmission, as well as more easily allowing for appropriate physical distancing between children and staff.[[1]](#footnote-1)*

*The research[[2]](#footnote-2) in support of this statement gives the following reasons:*

1. *Outside, it is easier to remain socially distant. There is a reduced risk of transmission in uncrowded outdoor spaces compared to indoor spaces.*
2. *Outside, the viral load, that is, the amount and concentration of droplets, likely to land on a surface is significantly lower.*
3. *Sunlight may rapidly inactivate SARS-CoV-2 on surfaces, suggesting that persistence, and subsequently exposure risk, may vary significantly between indoor and outdoor environments. The researchers undertaking this study also suggested that “natural sunlight may be effective as a disinfectant for contaminated nonporous materials.”[[3]](#footnote-3)*

**The need for cleaning surfaces**

Contact with contaminated surfaces (hand to the eyes, mouth, or nose) is another recognized mode of COVID-19 transmission, and one that is not affected by the 2m physical distancing rule. Surfaces become contaminated when respiratory droplets settle upon them.

When the virus lands on a surface, the amount of time it will remain there varies. It decreases over time. The approximate length of time the virus remains traceable varies according to the type of material, its porosity and, outside, the meteorological conditions. Steel and plastic are non-porous and traces of the virus can be found several days later. On porous materials including wood and paper, the virus will persist for significantly less time. This is why equipment including books can be quarantined. The virus will die and the equipment will be sufficiently safe to use again.

**What should we be cleaning outside?**

Identify your key touch points in your outdoor space, e.g. door and window handles, railings, popular installed play equipment (e.g. ladders, rails), gate latches. These are the priority areas for cleaning and disinfection.

Next look at your equipment. This is likely to include pots, pans e.g. in your role play areas and items such as guttering, bread crates and so on. It is these items that you may decide need to be kept separate for each group, if you cannot manage to clean between sessions. Quarantining may also be part of the approach where equipment is rotated with 72 hours between use by different groups. You may also decide to use less amounts of equipment and it is recommended that you have items that are easy to clean.

Regardless you must have a cleaning schedule in place that follows the HPS (2018) *Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings[[4]](#footnote-4)* Guidance and the *COVID-19 Guidance for Non-healthcare Settings[[5]](#footnote-5)*

**What about outdoor surfaces and natural resources such as tree stumps, branches, pine cones that are found in outdoor environment?**

Outside there are lots of natural materials everywhere. This includes mud, grass, flowers, leaves, sticks, stones, puddles and so on. Realistically, they cannot be removed or cleaned, and children will play with them. In this instance the World Health Organisation[[6]](#footnote-6) advises:

*“Where cleaning and disinfection are not possible on a regular basis due to resource limitations, frequent hand washing and avoiding touching the face should be the primary prevention approaches to reduce any potential transmission associated with surface contamination.”*

In addition, WHO also state:

“*Spraying or fumigation of outdoor spaces ...is also not recommended to kill the COVID-19 virus or other pathogens because disinfectant is inactivated by dirt and debris and it is not feasible to manually clean and remove all organic matter from such spaces. Moreover, spraying porous surfaces, such as sidewalks and unpaved walkways, would be even less effective. Even in the absence of organic matter, chemical spraying is unlikely to adequately cover all surfaces for the duration of the required contact time needed to inactivate pathogens. Furthermore, streets and sidewalks are not considered to be reservoirs of infection for COVID-19.”*

For this reason, setting up outdoor handwashing stations that enable staff and children to wash their hands outside in line with national guidance is a sensible strategy.

**Consultations with children, staff and parents**

Adjust the questions and approach to suit your children and parents. Be particularly aware of the needs of Minority Ethnic[[7]](#footnote-7) children, their parents and staff. These must be recognised and individual requests for addition protections should be supported wherever possible.[[8]](#footnote-8)

* Children: What do we do if we need to go to the toilet and wash our hands when outside? What do we need to remember to do to keep ourselves clean and safe?
* Staff and parents: We have set systems for cleaning resources, toileting, washing hands and keeping our children safe and clean outside? What are your thoughts about these measures? Do you have any additional concerns or measures we need to consider?

**Precedents and comparisons for using outdoor space**

* There has been an early years tradition of using outdoor spaces that dates back several centuries. This has been document in Rosaleen Joyce’s book (2012) *Outdoor Learning: Past and Present* and is recognised in Care Inspectorate (2016) *My World Outdoors*, p3-5
* Four outdoor nurseries within Scotland have been hub nurseries. No transmissions recorded at any of these settings since lockdown began. They have

To-date there have been no reported outbreaks of *E-coli* or similar infections at any Scottish outdoor setting (HPS, 2018).

HPS Scotland have produced two reports reviewing outdoor settings with research, expert consensus and guidance to this effect:

* HPS (2010) *An evaluation of the available evidence on hand hygiene for outdoor nurseries across Scotland* http://bit.ly/2JY2tt1
* HPS (2018) *SBAR: Hygiene Requirements in Outdoor Nurseries in Scotland*http://bit.ly/2YtlmMr

The WHO Hand Hygiene guidelines (2008) provide lengthy guidance <http://bit.ly/32Xk3F6>

**Conclusion**

Cleaning schedules, good hand hygiene, a sensible approach to toileting and taking appropriate social distancing measures will prevent the spread of infection when outside.



**CORNHILL Risk Benefit Assessment – ELC OUTDOOR SPACE INFECTION CONTROL**

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| **Line Manager name: Miss G Devlin** | | **Line Manager signature** | **Assessment No:** |
| **Date:**  **August 2020** | **Assessed by:**  **Signature:** | **Location:**  **Activity:** | **Review date: As and when required with updated guidance** |

| **What has the potential**  **to cause harm (hazards) and what harm might result?** | **Who and how many people might be at risk?** | **What measures are already in place?** | **Severity** | **Likelihood** | **Risk rating** | **What further action (s) needs to be taken to reduce risk** | **By whom and**  **by what date** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The use of enclosed spaces for snack or shelter from the elements**  Spread of infection | Children  Staff | * Use of tarps for shelter. * Good ventilation. * Ensure social distancing of adults is maintained in these spaces. |  |  |  | Consider individual needs of each child and adjust protocols safely.  Ensure shelters are well-ventilated.  One adult to be responsible for snack.  Children not involved in preparation for this specific period of time.  Usual hygiene and cleaning procedures adhered to. |  |
| **Lack of cleaning schedules for outdoor provision**  Resulting in cross-infection, sickness and illnesses | Children  Staff | Health Protection Scotland *Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings* guidance is followed:   * Cleaning schedules are in place and followed for keeping the outdoor space and resources sufficiently clean. * Morning/Afternoon children to have their own equipment/resources, unless this can be cleaned between sessions, in line with national guidance or quarantined |  |  |  | Be aware of any children who may be more prone to infections/illness.  New cleaning record/rota created.  Cleaning records kept  and signed at the end of each session.  Resources between sessions will not be shared unless cleaned inbetween or  quarantined for 72 hours first.  Staff members responsible for cleaning touch points during session.  Fewer resources on offer. Easily cleaned resources only.  No soft furnishings/ teddies at this point. |  |
| **Poor personal hygiene**  Resulting in cross-infection, sickness and illnesses, especially COVID-19 | Staff and children | * Handwashing procedures and hygiene followed in toilet area, (not outside) Toilets are close enough to outdoor area and are closely supervised and monitored) * Handwashing station potentially set up in N3. * Staff and children wash their hands using warm or tepid running water and biodegradable liquid soap. * Hand sanitiser is available for adults to use. * Open wounds are covered with a waterproof plaster or equivalent. |  |  |  | Individual staff to follow this guidance and be challenged by others if not perceived to comply with this.  Update risk assessments in line with any changes to national and local guidance.  Check staff and children with skin conditions ie dermatitis for adverse reactions to soap used.  Should there be a reaction, parents will be encouraged to give their child their own soap/sanitizer if skin becomes affected.  Staff must understand that hand sanitisers are only effective on clean hands to make them ultra clean. These do not replace hand washing outside with soap and water.  Hands will be washed on entry to and exit from nursery in addition to other key times during the session. |  |
| **Unintended breaches of 2m social distancing rule**  COVID-19 spread of infection |  | * Adults to maintain social distancing where possible * Minimise physical contact with the person – e.g.   no hand shaking.   * Consideration given to emergency evacuation   procedures/ fire drill & muster point from the outdoor space   * Ensure that all staff understand protocols outlined in this risk assessment. |  |  |  | <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reopening-early-learning-and-childcare-services/pages/infection-prevention-and-control/>  PT/SEYP to monitor that all staff are adhering to the 2m rule social distancing rule.  Parents reminded to adhere to 2m distancing rule.  Face coverings may worn by staff/parents, but is not enforced.  SEYPS/PT to ensure all staff/children are present and correct during fire drill.  Classes to exit via designated gate.  Social distance measures between adults.  Walkie-talkies used between nursery staff and SMT during fire drill. |  |
| **Parent drop off or pick up from outdoor space**  Risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19 |  | * All adults should maintain physical distancing principles. * Sufficient space available for a parent to remain with their child if needed without coming into contact with other staff, children or families * Drop off/pick up systems must not block access and create pedestrian blockage. Sufficient space for social distancing with due regard for other users with disabilities. * Staff to be in charge of sign in book. * Parents strongly advised to wear face coverings at drop off/pick up. * Hand hygiene facilities outside. |  |  |  | Waiting points marked on the ground for parents, to ensure 2m distancing at drop off/pick up time.  Parents to wait on pavement at signposted area if there are no markings left to stand on in garden area.  All children enter through their designated gate, greeted by nursery staff – with distancing adhered to between staff and parents.  Clear space between N1 and N2 waiting areas.  Staff in charge of handling sign in book – parents will no longer sign in themselves during this period.  Hand sanitiser to be made available for parents involved in inductions.  Children/staff to wash/sanitise before going outside and re-entering building. |  |
| **Outdoor toileting**  Bacterial infection or COVID-19 infection through failure to use effective, toileting, hand hygiene and cleaning procedures | Children | No outdoor toilets – toilet in close proximity to garden areas.  Clear and controlled handwashing procedures in place. |  |  |  | Consult the guidance in *Out to Play*, p32-37  Handwashing process and technique posters displayed in toilet area.  Children supervised as they wash hands.  ASN children will be supported to wash hands if necessary.  Paper towels to be placed in bin.  Children understand the importance of washing hands – reinforced at home also. |  |

**CORNHILL Risk Benefit Assessment – ELC OUTDOOR SPACE**

**Who:** Staff, children and visitors to the nursery outdoor space

**What:** Outdoor play

**Where:** Designated outdoor space:

**When:** All year round, every day, except in really extreme weather

**Benefits of outdoor play in the outdoor space**

*There are multiple benefits which arise when children to access the outdoor space, all day and every day. From discussions with staff, parents and children in xxx (month, year), the follow benefits were explicitly referenced* (list them or insert photograph of display/documentation):

**Precedents and comparisons**

There is a wide range of research[[9]](#footnote-9) and national documents[[10]](#footnote-10) which support young children having lots of time outside. It is recognised that all *Curriculum for Excellence* experiences and outcomes can be achieved through outdoor play.

**Auditing your first aid, accidents and near-misses**

You are strongly advised to review monthly and look for patterns in the frequency, time and nature of the accidents which happen. You need to look for patterns which tell you whether may be a concern about a feature, area of the outdoor space, resource or even a child that needs attention. You could also use this to compare with indoors, to see if being outside is any more or less dangerous.

**Consulting and actively involving children and parents in discussions around safety.**

Adjust the questions and approach to suit your children and parents. Be particularly aware of the needs of Minority Ethnic[[11]](#footnote-11) children, their parents and staff. These must be recognised and individual requests for addition protections should be supported wherever possible.[[12]](#footnote-12) You may prefer to insert a photo into this RBA that shows you have had a conversation or taken other action, e.g. display, a page in a floorbook, photo of a parent consultation, etc. Keep it simple.

* Children: What do you enjoy doing outside? How do we keep ourselves safe when we play outside? What do we need to do and remember?
* Staff and parents: what do you remember about playing outside as a child? Why do you think outdoor play is so important for your children? Is there anything that concerns you about our outdoor space or provision that you think needs addressing?



**CORNHILL Risk Benefit Assessment – ELC OUTDOOR SPACE**

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| **Line Manager name:** | | **Line Manager signature** | **Assessment No:** |
| **Date:** | **Assessed by:**  **Signature:** | **Location:**  **Activity:** | **Review date:** |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What has the potential**  **To cause harm (hazards) and what harm might result?** | **Who and how many people might be at risk?** | **What measures are already in place?** | **Severity** | **Likelihood** | **Risk Rating** | **What further action (s) needs to be taken to reduce risk?** | **By whom and**  **by what date?** |
| **Inadequate supervision**  Leading to a variety of accidents.  Increased likelihood of Children running away | Children | * + - * Staff deployed in line with national guidance to ensure adequate supervision within the totality of the ELC setting, inside and out. * Ratios of staff to children is the same as indoors 1:10 and adapted where necessary to meet needs of specific children and the unique nature of the outdoor space. * Staff undertake a daily register of all children present. * Adults keep a sharp eye on the whereabouts of all children at all times. * The nursery follows school procedures for absconding children. * Outdoor space is secure OR working boundaries are known and abided by, e.g. when using part of the wider school grounds. |  |  |  | PT/SEYPs to check guidance for latest updates regularly and amend this risk assessment accordingly.  Staff to keep a headcount to ensure the ratio of adults to children is adhered to.  Daily sign in book taken outside and used for reference.  Children “sign out” with pegs and picture cards if they opt to play outside.  Staff vigilant at observing whereabouts of children, especially if the child goes inside for the toilet etc.  Nursery grounds gates closed at all times during session and gate handle out of reach of the children.  Children aware of boundaries which will have been discussed prior to going outside. (ie not using chute, staying off wet logs on rainy day etc) |  |
| **Ability**  Failure to understand and follow instructions can lead to a variety of accidents. | Children  Staff | * The ability of the children is taken into account when setting up and planning for the outdoor space. * Additional support for specific children is given to help them access quality provision. * New equipment and resources are introduced to the children in ways which allow them to explore safely. For example, a member of staff allocated to be near the resource and support children to explore and consider any safety issues. * Staff use common sense, knowledge of children and play and dynamically risk assess. |  |  |  | The needs of the children are taken into account and monitored during outdoor play.  Prior info re ASN children will have been gathered virtually/by phone and will equip staff with the knowledge they need to ensure the safety of the child outside.  Individual pupil risk assessments completed if necessary.  Risk benefits will have been discussed with the children prior to outdoor play.  Any ‘risky play’ resources will be manned by a member of staff. |  |
| **Unsuitable resources for children**  Leading to a variety of injuries | Children | * In line with the Loose Parts Play: A Toolkit (2nd Ed) p29, every resource is checked prior to being used by children. * New resources are introduced with care, and where needed, additional supervision and direct instructions so children understand the safety aspects, where the resource is stored and any other relevant factors. * Observations of children playing enable staff to reflect on the suitability of a resource in terms of its learning and play value. * There are systems in place for cleaning, repairing, removing and disposing of a resource wisely with due regard for the environmental impact. |  |  |  | Part of morning routine - all resources checked prior to the start of a session, and at end.  Any risky play resources will be discussed with the children to ensure they understand and adhere to the safety aspects.  Child led learning observations enable staff to change/rotate resources accordingly.  Any broken/damaged resources removed by nursery staff/janitor and recorded.  Any injuries/near misses recorded. Details shared with parents. Forms double signed by staff.  Staff to review resources being used at the end of each session for any faults/dangers.  Reduced amount of resources on offer to the children for the time being to cut length of cleaning process and decrease chances of spread of infection.  Children to be shown how to use new resources, how to identify any risks and what to do if they find broken/damaged equipment.    Visuals sometimes used to help children with tidying up – photos of what the resource boxes/equipment should look like when they are finished with and are tidy. |  |
| **Thrown, dropped or colliding objects and people**  Leading to a variety of impact injuries and death |  | We have :   * A positive approach to behaviour management that mitigates most intentional inappropriate behaviours * An engaging and interesting outdoor environment * Practical reminders given by staff and other pupils. * Dynamic risk assessment undertaken by staff and children. * Unforeseeable, unintentional and accidental situations are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. |  |  |  | Staff will use stories, scenarios etc to help the children familiarise/reinforce acceptable behaviours.  Praise for catching children doing the right thing, being safe and responsible etc.  Reminders about/introduction of SHANARRI  Adults to risk assess outdoor area/resources daily and children to be included in their own daily risk assessments/tick list of outdoor area, and as and when other situations arise.  Child led resources used  Report damaged resources to janitor  Accidents, near misses and first aid to be monitored to find out where issues exist, when and what action needs to be taken. |  |
| **Built structures collapsing through lack of maintenance, damage, vandalism, poor design**  Leading to impact injuries, crush injuries, head injuries, death | Children  Staff | * Dynamic risk assessment by staff * Homemade structures dismantled daily if need arises * System of checks in place for semi-permanent structures created by adults and children. |  |  |  | Climbing walls, dens etc to be dismantled daily if appropriate.  Regular checks on safety of homemade outdoor resources.  Report any damages.  Remove any broken/weathered resources. |  |
| **Broken equipment**  **Through play or vandalism, etc.**  Causes a variety of accidents. | Children  Staff | * All faulty or broken equipment is cordoned off, labelled as faulty and reported to the janitor for repair or removal. |  |  |  | Daily Garden checks  Damages reported  Remove broken resources |  |
| **Working at height**  Falls leading to impact injuries or impalement | Children  Staff  Volunteers | * Staff dynamically risk assess children using high equipment – installed or otherwise. * Children and staff check ground and surrounds for protruding objects within the fall zone and keep these spaces clutter free. Staff have an agreed approach to managing play at height. * Installed playground equipment that facilitates children playing at height, has an impact attenuating surface underneath installed by a reputable company that meets BSEN 1177 standard. * Storage of resources ensures that only lightweight resources are stored up high. Staff know how to access these safely, using correct equipment. * Resources and equipment are not stored in a way that facilities access to the roof of the main building or other high up place. |  |  |  | Ensure safety of climbing walls and tree swing.  Staff and children to risk assess playground every day before use.  Blue container and N3 sheltered area not to store any heavy items in high positions. |  |
| **Litter** | Children  Staff  Volunteers | * The outdoor space is checked daily before or at the start of the session – for litter, playground equipment and surfaces. There is a checklist for this purpose. * Drug materials are removed by a competent person in line with local authority guidance. * Gloves are used to remove glass and the material placed in a cardboard or metal container before placing in the bin. * Animal scat is removed in line with local authority guidance on biological agents. |  |  |  | Staff/pupils to risk assess any littering, daily  Problems reported to the Janitor  Appropriate PPE worn |  |
| **Spread of infection from poor food hygiene practice**  Leading to sickness, diarrhoea and outbreaks of infections, e.g. E.Coli | Children  Staff  Volunteers | * Local authority food hygiene policy and procedures are applied to cooking and eating outside. * First aid kit and qualified staff in centre. * Parents are advised not to send their child to nursery if they are concerned about their health and feel they are not well enough to be outside. |  |  |  | Infection prevention & control guidance adhered to if/when snack eaten outside.  Staff will implement good food hygiene.  PPE worn where necessary.  Handover from parent in morning – if child ill – will not stay for session. |  |
| **Manual handling**  Back injury through lifting, crouching and using heavy equipment  Crush injury if heavy item is dropped onto any part of a person’s body. | Children  Staff  Volunteers | * Adults lift any heavy equipment in line with setting, local authority and national HSE guidelines. * Adults model good practice including when crouching to work at child or ground level. * Heavy items are not stored high up. * Children shown how to lift and carry heavy resources appropriately should they attempt this during their play * Loose parts systematically checked prior to being made available for play for potential crush risk |  |  |  | Be aware of any specific medical needs of adults which may affect their ability to carry items.  Staff to ensure heavier objects are lifted by janitorial staff or in pairs, and in the correct way.  Children can be trained in how to lift bigger objects, carefully.  Look at manual handling guidance for children in the Loose Parts Play: A Toolkit (2nd Ed) p29 <http://bit.ly/2NXizaf> |  |
| **Slips and trips**  People slip and trip on uneven surfaces leading a variety of impact injuries | Children  Staff  Volunteers | * Children wear suitable clothing and footwear for being outside in accordance with their own individual need. * On icy days or particularly inclement weather, the ratio of adults to child may alter or the numbers accessing the outdoor space reduced. Key areas of the outdoor space are gritted during cold weather, e.g. entrance areas and other access points. * Systems in place for tidying resources that children play with outside. * A place for keeping resources that are not in use is identified. Everyone knows how and where to leave the resources. Staff dynamically risk assess and ensure resources are not left lying around where they could become a trip hazard. |  |  |  | Janitor to carry out any required gritting.  N1/2 not to run on blue area when wet.  N1,2,3 not to use logs when wet etc  Not sharing clothes – encouraged to take in own from home. If school clothes, photo labels can display who it belongs to.  Clear, covered boxes or rails used for school based outdoor clothing.  Regular washing of school outdoor clothing.  Children’s own waterproofs to be taken home daily and washed as required.  Induction booklet informs parents of suitable clothing.  Suitable outdoor clothing photos added to blog.  Suitable footwear outside – no sharing of school supply unless sprayed and cleaned afterwards and quarantined for 72 hours.  Children clear about garden rules.  Labelled boxes for resources – kept at outer edge of garden area. |  |
| **Entrapment**  Trapped or broken limbs, head, neck or fingers leading to injured joints, strangulation and death | Children  Staff  Volunteers | * Any resource, including loose parts, is systematically checked prior to being made available for play for potential entrapments * Children’s constructions are checked by staff through dynamic risk assessment * Rope, string and long things are brightly coloured or clearly visible. Children have been specifically taught the safety elements around their use. See separate RBA. |  |  |  | See *Loose Parts Play: A Toolkit (2nd Ed)* for the flowchart on p29 that has a list of hazards to check <http://bit.ly/2NXizaf>  Staff check resources daily.  Children help to risk assess.  Any broken/faulty equipment removed.  Staff supervision of risky play.  Appropriate risk assessment of loose parts resources. |  |
| **Security**  Unwanted visitors into the grounds  Stray dogs in grounds  Potential for bites, assault and abduction | Children  Staff  Volunteers | * Outdoor space is secure OR working boundaries are known and abided by, e.g. when using part of the wider school grounds * Any unauthorised persons entering the outdoor space are only be approached if staff are satisfied they are not putting themselves or children at risk. * The centre has procedures for parents/carers dropping off and collecting children from the outdoor space. * The centre has emergency procedures e.g. assembly point, other place of safety, evacuation plan, etc. * Local authority guidance for stray dogs in the grounds is followed. |  |  |  | Parents only have access to garden area only and are clear about drop off/pick up and 2m distancing rules etc.  No parents allowed in buildings at this point.  Inductions carried out in garden areas.  Secure fencing in all nursery garden/playground areas.  Staff vigilant if any unknown adults hovering.  No access for dogs due to high gates/fences.  Gates closed at all times during session and locked at end of day.  All staff are aware of fire procedures and muster points – adults to remain 2m apart. |  |
| **Trees**  Old age, disease or structure leads to limbs dropping or tree falling over.  Crush injuries | Children  Staff  Volunteers | * Trees in school grounds or designated outdoor space are checked on an annual basis or more often by aboricultural team or specialist tree service * Refer to separate Woodland and Tree Climbing RBA |  |  |  | Tree checks - by staff and any concerns passed on to janitor. |  |
| **Confined spaces**  Collisions and impact injuries |  | Activities requiring large amounts of space happen in an alternative area, e.g. beyond designated outdoor space in school grounds. |  |  |  | Field can be used if required – separate risk assessment to be carried out if this is the case. |  |
| **Water**  Death through drowning  Accidental ingestion of outdoor water, e.g. drinking puddle water or from a water butt or unemptied water tray or an outside tap.  Resulting in sickness, diarrhoea and a range of possible infections including Legionnaire’s disease  Fungal growth due to storage of wet items  Cross-contamination through shared resources | Children  Staff  Volunteers | * Staff dynamically risk assess * Adequate supervision * Ponds have grill and are raised above ground or are fenced off. * Water butt has a lid/cover to prevent debris such as leaves accumulating. Children cannot access the inside of the water butt. * Water butts and pump barrels are emptied and cleaned on a regular basis to avoid build-up of scum algae if used for play. * Children and adults do not use water from outdoor sources for drinking or handwashing. * All children wash their hands as they enter and leave the outdoor space and before or after any activity involving sand, water, mud or gardening. * Accumulated water in equipment outside is emptied daily, e.g. in tyres, buckets, etc. * Wet resources are dried thoroughly before storing especially before a w/end or holiday * Cleaning procedures in place in line with HPS *Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings* are followed. * Where necessary, equipment and resources for water play are cleaned, quarantined or allocated to a social bubble for use within this cohort of children. |  |  |  | Only water trays used, no ponds, butts etc available.  Any off site trips near water will be individually risk assessed.  Children wash hands before and after outdoor play in toilet area as this is in close proximity.  Children to wash hands before/after using sand/water  Currently no ponds/water butts in our nursery area.  Different resources used for am/pm groups or cleaned in between/quarantined if necessary.  Resources sprayed and left to air dry before storing away. |  |
| **Bacterial or viral infection through contact with naturally-occurring materials and plants and mud**  Leading to a range of possible illnesses |  | * Hand washing procedures and protocols in place outdoors that everyone knows and follows in line with Health Protection Scotland *Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings* guidance. |  |  |  | Where necessary equipment and resources for mud play are removed, or reduced in quantity.  Cleaning/Quarantining of equipment allocated to specific sessions/groups of children. |  |

**CORNHILL Risk Benefit Assessment – SAND AND MUD PLAY OUTDOORS**

**Who:** Staff, children and visitors to the nursery outdoor space

**What:** Sand and mud play

**Where:** Nursery outdoor space

**When:** All year round, every day, except in extreme weather

**Benefits of sand and mud play in the outdoor space**

There are multiple benefits which arise when children have access to sand and mud outside. The aim is to provide a bigger, better or different experience to what is offered inside.

* **Creativity** is developed through offering a wide range of creative possibilities – sand castles and sculptures, miniature cities, roads for toy cars, twig structures, tunnels and fantasy worlds. These are often enhanced with the addition of other props such as toy vehicles, sticks, shells and pebbles. **EA 0-02a, EA 0-05a, TCH 0-14a, TCH 0-15a, TCH 0-01a, TCH 0-11a, TCH 0-12a**
* **Mathematical concepts** are supported through estimating and experimenting with volume, mass, and flow using standard volume measures as well as non-standard volume and capacity explorations (cups, buckets, tubs etc.) **MNU 0-01a, MNU 0-11a**
* **Science and engineering** is supported through experimenting with wet sand and dry sand and mud, construction, understanding that sand and mud have unique properties which enable us to play with it in different ways. **SCN 0-15a**
* **Social and co-operative skills** are commonly developed as children work together on joint projects – building a fantasy world, creating a water channel from A to B, negotiating whose turn it is with the bucket etc. Sand and mud play offers good opportunities for older and younger children to co-operate together – something that’s unusual in many playgrounds. **EA 0-06a, HWB 0-08a, HWB 0-05a, HWB 0-19a, HWB 0-23a, , HWB 0-44a, HWB0-44b, HWB0-45a, HWB0-45b, RME 0-02a, RME 0-09a, SOC 0-17a, SOC 0-18a**
* **Language skills** are developed – both in terms of words that describe sand and its used and as children discuss what they are doing with adults and each other. **LIT 0-02a, ENG 0-03a**
* **Motor skills** (gross and fine) are developed through digging, constructing, carrying and manipulating the mud and sand. **HWB 0-21a, HWB 0-22a, HWB0-25a**

**Precedents and comparisons**

* Grounds for Learning, the Scottish school grounds charity produced an advice sheet[[13]](#footnote-13) for sand based upon their Scottish Government funded natural playgrounds project which ran from 2011-14.
* Creative STAR Learning Ltd also have a web page[[14]](#footnote-14) dedicated to myth busting around outdoor sandpit and giving a range of international examples.
* Millions of people visit beaches daily and do not suffer any adverse effects. Many public play parks have sand as a safety surface which are also used for play purposes.

**CORNHILL Risk Benefit Assessment – SAND AND MUD PLAY OUTDOORS**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line Manager name:** | | **Line Manager signature** | **Assessment No:** |
| **Date:** | **Assessed by:**  **Signature:** | **Location:**  **Activity:** | **Review date:** |

This is a Live Template of a risk assessment identifying typical hazards and control measures for outdoor play. Staff should add specific details relevant to each venue and on a regular basis. Delete elements that are not relevant.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What has the potential to cause harm (hazards) and what might result?** | **Who and how many people might be at risk?** | **What measures are already in place?** | **Severity** | **Likelihood** | **Risk rating** | **What further action(s) needs to be taken to reduce risk?** | **By whom and by what date?** |
| **Sand blow or throw – into eyes**  - Irritated eyes, scratched corneas | Teacher Auxiliary Pupils | * Sandpit covered at overnight, reducing wind blow * First aid for irritated eyes * Behaviour strategies applied for each child in accordance with IEP and/or personal plan |  |  |  | No large sand pits – tuff trays only.  Sprinkle sand with water on windy and sunny days (a job for children)  Ensure children are familiar with sand play rules. |  |
| **Bringing sand indoors**  Whilst not a health concern, sand inside can get into IT equipment and resources. | Teacher Auxiliary Pupils | * Outdoor clothing available for children to wear, * Mat for wiping feet at inside door. * Shower caps or hats for head, if getting sand in hair is an issue * Brushes available for brushing down /off sand from clothing outside * Sand on indoor floors and surfaces swept up. * Children wash hands after playing in sand/prior to coming inside |  |  |  | Not really an issue as we don’t have a walk in sand pit, only tuff trays.  It can be helpful to train children to give a wiggle and a shake before leaving a sandpit so that the sand stays there as much as possible. |  |
| **Presence of animal faeces**  Leading to bacterial infections and possible COVID-19 transmission | Staff  children | * Monitor situation as animal behaviours do change over time with fluctuating populations. * Rake sand at end of each day during monitoring period to find hidden excrement deposited by night time visitors. * Sand pit is covered at night, ideally with mesh or netting or closed off, e.g. in a hut * Children asked to check their hands have no cuts or grazes. Open wounds are covered with a plaster or equivalent. * Children encouraged to wash hands before and after playing with sand. * If faeces or bird droppings are discovered then the patch of sand is treated in line with dealing with spillages of blood and body fluids (as per HPS *Infection Prevention & Control Guidance in Childcare Settings*, May 2018) * Sand cleaned in line with RoSPA guidance – this is built into cleaning schedules for outdoor space. |  |  |  | N/A – No walk in sand pit – tuff trays used and taken in after use.  See RoSPA Sand Play in Children’s Areas <https://www.rospa.com/play-safety/advice/sand-play/>  Handwashing procedures applied. |  |
| **Build-up of bacteria due to sandpit remaining covered and unused**  Bacterial infection  Open wounds on hands | Staff  Children | * Sand raked and played in daily. * Cover removed daily to allow sunshine and air to access sandpit. * Health Protection Scotland advice followed with regard to hand hygiene. * First aid kit and qualified staff in centre. * Regular disinfecting of sand and thorough raking/forking weekly and at the start of each term |  |  |  | N/A  Tuff trays of sand cleaned regularly.  Separate tray for different sessions. |  |

**CORNHILL Risk Benefit Assessment – WEATHER**

**Who:** Staff, children and volunteer helpers

**What:** Weather arrangements and considerations for outdoor provision

**Where:** Nursery outdoor space and routine and expected off-site visits, such as weekly visits to local greenspace

**When:** All year round

**Benefits of being outside in almost all weathers.** *Children learn:*

* How to dress appropriately for a range weather conditions HWB 0-15a, HWB 0-33a
* How to manage being outside in a range of weather conditions, developing resilience and a positive attitude HWB 0-03a, HWB 0-07a
* About features that provide shade on sunny days HWB 0-48a
* About the creative possibilities afforded by the different weather conditions, such as a range of art, music, drama and dance EXA 0-05a
* How to use the weather conditions for mark making opportunities outside LIT 0-26a
* How to keep warm when it is cold HWB 0-16a, HWB 0-17a, HWB 0-21a, HWB 0-22a, HWB 0-25a
* About how other animals manage in different weather conditions and seasons SCN 0-01a
* How to move over or around slippery surfaces such as frozen puddles or wet wood HWB 0-16a, HWB 0-17a, HWB 0-21a, HWB 0-22a, HWB 0-33a. SCN 0-05a
* How to recognise when to change clothing and eventually doing this independently HWB 0-16a, HWB 0-17a
* How to apply sunscreen HWB 0-16a. HWB 0-17a, HWB 0-33a, HWB 0-48a,
* About the need to eat plenty of good food and drink sufficient water HWB 0-48a
* To observe, listen, feel and recognise the prevailing weather conditions and the play possibilities that arise as a result of the weather. HWB 0-11a, HWB 0-19a, HWB 0-25a
* Learn new vocabulary and expressions associated with the weather and seasons. LIT 0-10a, MNU 0-13a
* Develop fine and gross motor skills based upon managing changing terrain and ground surfaces HWB 0-21a, HWB 0-22a,
* Can reflect upon the experience and be actively involved in documenting the experiences, e.g. drawing pictures, talking about photos or videos, wondering about weather, talking about their perceptions of weather and/or fears. HWB 0-19a, LIT 0-09a, SOC 0-09a,

**Precedents and comparisons**

There are more than 30 outdoor settings throughout Scotland where children are outside in almost all weathers. The number of days where alternative arrangements for adverse weather are rarely more than five days per year. However, the outdoor provision does change according to the weather and staff ensure children are supported to cope in all weathers.

**Conclusion**

There’s no such thing as bad weather. We just have to adapt our outdoor practice to make the most of the benefits provided by our variety of weather.

**CORNHILL Risk Benefit Assessment – WEATHER**

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| **Line Manager name:** | | **Line Manager signature** | **Assessment No:** |
| **Date:** | **Assessed by:**  **Signature:** | **Location:**  **Activity:** | **Review date:** |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What has the potential**  **To cause harm (hazards) and what harm might result?** | **Who and how many people might be at risk?** | **What measures are already in place?** | **Severity** | **Likelihood** | **Risk Rating** | **What further action (s) needs to be taken to reduce risk?** | **By whom and**  **by what date?** |
| **Adverse weather** which includes:   * High winds: falling trees and branches; wind borne debris * Thunder and lightning * Heavy snow or hail * Hot, sunny weather   Adverse weather which may lead to:   * Hypothermia * Hyperthermia * Sunstroke, sunburn and dehydration * Impact injuries through slips and trips * Head injuries * Impalement injuries | Children  Staff  Volunteers | **Checks and closures**   * Weather conditions are checked daily and the daily routines and outdoor experiences adjusted accordingly. * Nursery closure procedures in place – parents and carers are aware of these. * Off-site visits reviewed during adverse weather   **Appropriate clothing and footwear**   * Children and staff are wearing appropriate clothing and footwear for the prevailing weather, including accessories. * There are sufficient spares of all clothing to ensure all children and staff can stay and play outside as much as they wish. * Staff and children have their own outdoor clothing and footwear that is identifiable to the owner.   **Sunny weather**   * Sunscreen is applied in line with ELC setting policy. Sun hat and long-sleeved clothing worn by children and modelled by adults. * Spare drinking water available on site and on off-site visits. * Activities in shady places are encouraged by staff.   **Windy weather**   * Consider the risks of materials being blown about in windy weather. Resources available are suitable for windy weather * Structures have been identified which may need tying down or secured. There is a system for doing this. * System in place to ensure children and staff able to hear and follow instructions.   **Snow, ice, hail and weather below freezing**   * Wind chill factor is taken into account. * Adequate clothing and shelter available * Sufficient heating available in indoor or sheltered spaces to warm up children and staff and dry clothing. * Staff actively encourage children to move around and find ways to keep warm. * Areas of outdoor space are gritted prior to children’s arrival to reduce slips and trips in identified key areas of movement, e.g. entrance areas, access paths. * Outdoor space may be reduced or numbers of children accessing outdoor space may be limited,   **Access to building**  In the event of extreme weather, parents informed in advance to make the decision whether their child attends nursery in light of limited indoor space. |  |  |  | Weather-related checks are included in daily site check list of outdoor area.  School Closure information on school website.  Parents made aware during induction and through newsletters the items of outdoor clothing that are required.  Children should have their own outdoor clothes as much as possible.  Borrowed items will be sprayed and quarantined.  Children bring own supply of (labelled) cream, which will have been used previously to ensure no adverse reactions.  Nursery will have own supply of cream but will only be used if parents give consent.  Sun hats encouraged.  Water bottles used by children.  Dens/shelters created for providing shade.  Staff judgement if safe to play outside or not if very windy.  If so, items secured so they will not cause damage or injury.  Staff judgement if safe to play outside or not if very windy.  Sufficient spare clothing, accessories and footwear should be available for children who need it. This should be stored and covered where it can be easily accessed.  Parents to be encouraged to ensure children have 2 changes of clothing and weather appropriate clothing.  Staff to develop a bank of run-around games and active songs and rhymes can be useful to keep children moving.  Janitor to grit paths for parents/children and playground areas.  Staff to consider smaller groups out at a time, and for shorter periods if very cold – for sake of staff as well as children.  Groupcall for parents. Make parents aware that in extreme weather this may be the case/situation. |  |

1. Scottish Government (2020) Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reopening early learning and childcare services

   30.7.2020 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reopening-early-learning-and-childcare-services/pages/outdoor-spaces/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For comments 1 & 2, see Freeman, S. and Eykelbosh, A. (202) COVID-!9 and outdoor safety: considerations for use of outdoor recreational spaces, p3 & 4. This is a straightforward research summary. <https://ncceh.ca/sites/default/files/COVID-19%20Outdoor%20Safety%20-%20April%2016%202020.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Shanna Ratnesar-Shumate, Gregory Williams, Brian Green, Melissa Krause, Brian Holland, Stewart Wood, Jordan Bohannon, Jeremy Boydston, Denise Freeburger, Idris Hooper, Katie Beck, John Yeager, Louis A Altamura, Jennifer Biryukov, Jason Yolitz, Michael Schuit, Victoria Wahl, Michael Hevey, Paul Dabisch, Simulated Sunlight Rapidly Inactivates SARS-CoV-2 on Surfaces, *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, , jiaa274, <https://doi.org/10.1093/infdis/jiaa274> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Health Protection Scotland (2018) *Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings* <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/infection-prevention-and-control-in-childcare-settings-day-care-and-childminding-settings/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Health Protection Scotland (2020) *COVID-19 Guidance for Non-healthcare Settings* <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. WHO Q&A: Considerations for the cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces in the context of COVID-19 in non-health care settings

   [*https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-considerations-for-the-cleaning-and-disinfection-of-environmental-surfaces-in-the-context-of-covid-19-in-non-health-care-settings*](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-considerations-for-the-cleaning-and-disinfection-of-environmental-surfaces-in-the-context-of-covid-19-in-non-health-care-settings) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. This term is used in the Scottish Government guidance for ELC settings. The term ‘BAME’ representing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities is commonly used too. Use the term your families prefer. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See the latest Scottish Government guidance for ELC settings <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reopening-early-learning-and-childcare-services/pages/risk-assessment-and-support-for-specific-groups/> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://www.childrenandnature.org/learn/research/> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://creativestarlearning.co.uk/international/significant-scottish-outdoor-learning-and-play-documents/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. This term is used in the Scottish Government guidance for ELC settings. The term ‘BAME’ representing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities is commonly used too. Use the term your families prefer. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See the latest Scottish Government guidance for ELC settings <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reopening-early-learning-and-childcare-services/pages/risk-assessment-and-support-for-specific-groups/> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <https://www.ltl.org.uk/resources/open-sand-in-schools-and-nurseries/> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <https://creativestarlearning.co.uk/developing-school-grounds-outdoor-spaces/sandpits-outside-roar/> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)