

Outdoor Play Policy

Version History

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Brief Description of Changes
Original	Feb 19		
2025/1	September 25	Board of Management	Added onto new template and annual review
2026/1	September 26	Board of Management	Yearly review and updates

Policy Owner

Head of Children and Young People

Purpose and Scope

All YMCA Children & Young People's Services settings have outside areas, which are safe and secure for the children / young people to explore. This policy outlines the actions taken by YMCA staff to ensure that children and young people are given ample opportunity to play outside regularly.

Furthermore, YMCA East Surrey's sun safety procedure is also outlined in this document - Vitamin D (gained from sunshine) is essential for children / young people's development; therefore, our settings employ a strong focus on outdoor play, whilst protecting children / young people from over exposure from the sun.

Definitions

Relevant Legislation or Governance Requirements

- ▶ Working together to Safeguard Children 2026

Related Policies and Procedures

- ▶ Safeguarding Children Policy
- ▶ Safeguarding Adult Policy
- ▶ Accident and Incident Policy
- ▶ Health and Safety Policy

Policy Requirements

Children and young people learn by being active. YMCA East Surrey provides the children / young people with ample opportunities to play outside, along with information to make healthy choices. YMCA East Surrey follows these strategies:

- ▶ We talk to children / young people regularly about the importance of making healthy choices, taking risks and being active
- ▶ We talk to the children and young people about what happens to their bodies when they are physically active

- ▶ We ensure that the children and young people have time to run and play freely
- ▶ Staff will ensure that children and young people play outside as often as possible, ensuring adequate protection from the weather

To provide children and young people with the best and safest experiences when outside, the outdoor environments will complement the indoor environment and will challenge the children and young people's physical needs, as well as the other areas of learning.

Staff responsibilities

Staff must ensure that:

- ▶ Under no circumstances will children / young people be left outside alone
- ▶ The outdoor area is prepared before the children / young people go out to play - this includes checking all gates are locked, completing daily outdoor risk assessments, and setting up planned activities
- ▶ Children / young people are appropriately dressed before going outside (e.g. sun block and hats, winter hats and gloves, wellington boots, coats done up etc.)
- ▶ The amount of time children / young people spend outside during extreme weather conditions, including peak sun periods and major rain/snow, is limited
- ▶ They follow relevant guidance around outside play during extreme weather
- ▶ Drinks are available whilst the children / young people are outside
- ▶ They participate in children/ young people's play and conversations, and limit talking amongst themselves unless necessary
- ▶ They position themselves so that they always have a clear view of all children and young people

Weather variations

Staff encourage children and young people to play outside in all weathers, and it is a parent/carer responsibility to ensure that they have the correct clothing to do so. Parent/carers are asked to bring in wet/cold weather clothing, wellington boots and a change of clothing to ensure that their child / young person can play outside in all weathers.

As the year progresses towards warmer seasons, parent/carers will be asked to bring in the necessary to ensure their child / young person stays safe in the sunshine, such as sun block and hats. These items can remain with the setting if appropriate, where it will be labelled and stored correctly.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parent/carers responsibilities during hot weather

Parents / Carers are responsible for applying before attending a setting and where appropriate providing sun protection.

Children and young people should be dressed appropriately to play out in the sunshine depending on their age and ability. Despite the warm weather children / young people will continue to run and climb, parent/carers must provide appropriate footwear.

Staff responsibilities during hot weather

Staff will take appropriate measures as agreed with Senior CYP Managers for when children / young people play outside in hot weather. This may include putting on sun protection and ensuring children / young person wear hats. Shaded areas will be provided

by the staff, to keep children / young people cool and safe, and fresh drinking water will be freely on offer.

On very hot days, where possible, indoor / shaded activities and play will be planned during the hours of 11:00-15:00 if possible, in an air-conditioned environment.

Monitor:	Head of Children & Young People
Approve:	Board of Management
Endorse:	Children & Young People Advisory Group
Propose:	CEO
Draft and review:	CYP Childcare and Children's Activity Manager

Implementation and review

This Policy is reviewed annually and disseminated to staff on HealthboxHR and SharePoint.