

Outdoor play policy

Approved: 27 February 2019
Reviewed: 1 September 2024
Review due: 1 September 2025

Purpose

All YMCA Children & Young People's Services settings have outside areas, which are safe and secure for the children to explore. With this in mind, 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's development; therefore, our settings employ a strong focus on outdoor play, whilst protecting children from over exposure from the sun.

Responsibilities and monitoring

Monitor:	Head of Children & Young People
Approve:	Board of Management
Endorse:	Children & Young People Advisory Group
Propose:	CEO
Draft and review:	CYP Quality and Insight Manager

Policy and procedure

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

- ▶ We talk to children 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

In order 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 be left outside alone
- ▶ The outdoor area is prepared before the children go out to play - this includes checking all gates are locked, completing daily outdoor risk assessments, and setting up planned activities

- ▶ Children 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 spend outside during extreme weather conditions, including peak sun periods and major rain/snow, is limited
- ▶ Drinks are available whilst the children are outside
- ▶ They participate in children's play and conversations, and limit talking amongst themselves unless necessary
- ▶ They position themselves so that they have a clear view of all children at all times

Weather variations

Staff encourage children and young people to play outside in all weathers, and it is parents/carers 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 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 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 it correctly.

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 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 play outside in hot weather. This may include putting on sun protection and ensuring children wear hats. Shaded areas will be provided by the staff, in order to keep children 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.