8.4 Risk assessment

Policy statement

We believe that the health and safety of children is of paramount importance. We make our setting a safe and healthy place for children, parents, staff and volunteers by assessing and minimising the hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment.

Risk assessment means:
Taking note of aspects of your workplace and activities that could cause harm, either to yourself or to others, and deciding what needs to be done to prevent that harm, making sure this is adhered to.

The law does not require that all risk is eliminated, but that 'reasonable precaution' is taken. This is particularly important when balancing the need for children to be able to take appropriate risks through physically challenging play. Children need the opportunity to work out what is not safe and what they should do when faced with a risk.

Health and safety risk assessments inform procedures.

This policy is based on the five steps below:

1. Identification of a risk: Where is it and what is it?
2. Who is at risk: Staff, children, parents, visitors etc.
3. Assessment as to whether the level of a risk is high, medium, low. This considers both the likelihood of it happening, as well as the possible impact if it did.
4. Control measures to reduce/eliminate risk: What will you need to do, or ensure others will do, to reduce that risk?
5. Monitoring and review: How do you know if what you have said is working, or is thorough enough? If it is not working, it will need to be amended, or maybe there is a better solution.

Procedures

- Our manager undertakes training and ensures that our staff and volunteers have adequate training in health and safety matters.
- Our risk assessment process covers adults and children and includes:
  - determining where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how we are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers and inspectors;
  - checking for and noting hazards and risks, in relation to our premises and activities;
  - assessing the level of risk and who might be affected;
  - deciding which areas need attention; and
  - developing an action plan that specifies the action required, the timescales for action, the person responsible for the action and any funding required.
- Risk assessments are reviewed regularly.
- We carry out a daily sweep before the children arrive, checking for rubbish/hazardous items, loose/fallen branches, animal faeces/dens/burrows, checking the underfoot to ensure it isn't hazardous and being aware of any natural changes (flowering/poisonous berries/fungi) etc.
- Our general manager ensures that checks, such as electricity and gas safety checks, and any necessary work to the setting premises are carried out when necessary and records are kept.
- Our manager ensures that risk assessments are carried out for off-site activities such as children's outings if required, including use of public transport.

Legal framework

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

This policy was adopted by	The Woodland Nursery
Date to be reviewed	October 2027
Signed on behalf of the provider	T Paskins
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Nursery owner