

# THE IMPORTANCE OF RISK-TAKING IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT



**E**ven as a baby takes those first steps across the kitchen floor, he or she is slowly learning the benefit of careful risk-taking. It is perfectly natural for parents to want to protect their children and ensure that they have a smooth path through life, but that has to be balanced with the importance of learning how to deal with challenges and take risks safely; an essential part of a child's journey to academic success.

Philippa Cawthorne, the headmistress at Bassett House, believes that children should be nurtured but not be wrapped up in cotton wool. They should be allowed to play and undertake activities to understand the opportunities and challenges in the world around them and learn how to be safe. For children, the best risk-taking finds its foundations in a safe and secure environment, where they are allowed to play and explore adventurously.

Play, leading to child-led, independent learning, is at the heart of the Montessori ethos that permeates Bassett House in the Early Years, giving children the opportunity to make innumerable finely-tuned decisions. There is an emphasis on independent learning, encouraging children to find things out for themselves and be responsible for their actions and belongings.

Bassett encourages the children to have a growth mindset approach to their learning, not giving up when they find something difficult to achieve; rather than say 'I can't do it', they say 'I can't do it yet'. It is this grounding that not only helps the pupils gain places at some of the most prestigious senior



## THE DETAILS

To see the school's ethos in action, an open day is recommended

The next ones take place on Saturday, 19 May between 10am – 12.30 pm and Friday, 5th October between 9.30 – 11am. Please ring Thalia Demetriades on 020 8969 0313 either to book a place or arrange a visit to the school.



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schools in London but also to thrive once they have moved to their new schools.

Bassett House children, right from the start of their education in the early years, have the benefit of specialist lessons in music, games, computing, French and art and an extraordinary range of clubs and enrichment activities. In addition to this, older children enjoy residential trips where they may push boundaries and let their imaginations soar.

School clubs such as orienteering, martial arts and fencing are selected to encourage 'thinking on one's feet', the development of leadership skills, team-building and active problem-solving. Residential trips are chosen to introduce the children to new experiences, from learning how to rig and sail a boat to bushcraft activities, where children can make their own shelter, build a campfire and cook in the freedom of a wild wood.

Philippa Cawthorne believes that If we want children to have the confidence and skills to thrive in an increasingly challenging world, we need to allow them to learn how to develop their own awareness of limits and boundaries – to learn, in short, how to take risks. ■

