

# NORTH EAST WILDS

Handbook 2020

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# Our Aim

**Our Forest School aims to:**

help people to be independent, self motivated, courageous and considerate and help prepare them for life-long learning. In particular we aim to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, resilience and community.

**Through following the Forest School Ethos we will endeavour to:**

- Provide ways of acquiring useful life skills in an outdoor environment
- Provide a safe environment in which participants can take risks, make choices and initiate their own learning.
- Help participants appreciate and care for the natural environment.
- Develop self-esteem through the completion of achievable tasks.
- Develop social and group working skills
- Encourage participants to be independent and self motivated
- Stay genuine to the Forest School ethos and approach
- Cultivate a secure, happy and welcoming environment
- Provide stimulating and varied learning activities appropriate to the participant's needs and phase of development.

# Introduction

## WHAT IS A FOREST SCHOOL?

Forest school is a regular gathering of people in a woodland area for an extended period of time to give them opportunities to increase their confidence, develop their emotional intelligence and grow to appreciate their natural environment. The forest school leader guides the group towards learning new skills, working with tools, building fires, putting up tarps, exploring creativity in music, stories and art, building social relations and playing games. Through taking the time to reflect, share with each other and listen to different perspectives members can increase their self awareness, esteem and empathy.

Forest School is not unique in its approach, it is a collection of great ideas, philosophies, tools activities and skills that are connected by the theme of 'nature' and used to help nurture happier, healthier, more courageous, compassionate and connected people.

The Forest School approach to learning is ultimately about the holistic development of those taking part. It does vary in different settings and should be adapted to suit the leader, the group and the environment.

The Forest School model understands that development takes time and personalisation, and therefore works best when the same group regularly meet in the same location over an extended period of time. Members are encouraged to play and explore with 'focus' and with the support of the facilitator understand the need for risk awareness so that they can explore their own interests and limits safely. Facilitators may plan activities, or introduce skills at different times but these should help inspire rather than direct or restrict.

## FOREST SCHOOL ASSOCIATION AND DEFINITION AND PRINCIPLES

'Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees. Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and complements the wider context of outdoor and woodland education.' (2011)

Principle 1: Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

Principle 2: Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners

Principle 4: Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Principle 5. Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

Principle 6. Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning

## **HISTORY OF FOREST SCHOOL**

'Frulitsliv' is a Scandinavian word that literally translates into English as 'free air life', culturally it embodies more than this approximation it signifies a deep, personal and impactful relationship with the outdoors that can be healing, informative, challenging and peaceful and experienced in many different ways. It denotes a connection with nature as a place to feel at home and as a fundamental part of life. Its a cultural characteristic that shapes early-years education in Scandinavia.

In 1993 a cohort of Nurses from Bridgwater College in Somerset were inspired to incorporate these 'Frulitsliv' ideals into their college creche after a visit to a pre-school in Denmark. Their new practise was shaped by the child-centred, largely outdoor and play based learning of their exchange trip. This was then developed into a early years practitioner course in 1995 and called 'Forest School'.

Forest school grew rapidly in popularity from here, with many local authorities taking up the Forest School approach and by 2003, with support from the Forestry Commission, an Open College Network qualification was started for Forest School Practitioners. By 2002 the first Forest School

definition and principles were established and then updated in 2011. On the 7th of July 2012 a national governing body for the Forest School approach was established - The Forest School Association (FSA). Forest School flourishes in the UK largely due to its rich and dynamic history of outdoor learning, the basis for the many Forest Schools being run today.

## THE FOREST SCHOOL PEDAGOGY

The Forest School leader focuses on holistic development, giving consideration to the unique and changing needs of individuals. They take into consideration the whole being and not just an individual aspect, emotional, physical, relational, intellectual, creative and spiritual needs are all 'subjects' of learning and development in Forest School and are considered more important than any other. These potential 'areas' of development and learning in a Forest School environment are also often interlinked. Acquiring new skills, for example, can simultaneously develop self-confidence and patience. The Forest School Leader is there to support as the individual leads their own self-actualisation and development. This Forest School approach is to encourage explorative play and risk-taking and to set achievable goals.

Activities need to be planned that will allow individuals to develop in their own way. Sessions need to be flexible and open to allow for this level of personalisation to happen. The woodland environment of Forest School offers many opportunities for capturing the interests of all the learners, therefore the facilitator should 'ground' all sessions and activities in the environment and use activities that encourage an interaction with nature.

The pace of learning and the style of learning also differ for each individual. The facilitator should diversify the nature of the activities so that all different learning styles can be tried and experimented with and even chosen by the individuals. Members risk taking, explorative play, and small manageable tasks.

These are some of the ways Forest School Leaders promote Learning and Development:

Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The leader lets the participants lead the activities, encouraging ownership and supporting self-awareness.</li><li>• Structure activities for the level, character and ability of the group, so that tasks are achievable and can support personal satisfaction.</li></ul>
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Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflective activities at the start and/or end of activities to encourage thoughtfulness and self-awareness.</li> <li>Try to give members the chance to talk through conflict, share successes and ideas to encourage conflict management skills and empathy.</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create opportunities for members lead activities, to work together and support each other.</li> <li>Play games that rely on non-verbal communication to encourage a deeper communication and awareness of others.</li> <li>encourage different pairings/groupings through shared interest to broaden friendship experiences.</li> </ul>
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use review and reflecting time to internalise learning and help make it transferable knowledge.</li> <li>Use ID books and guides to help develop knowledge of flora and fauna.</li> </ul>
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach a variety of skills to help develop fine motor skills.</li> <li>Create opportunities for members to develop gross motor skills through games, climbing etc.</li> </ul>
Spiritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the sharing of different points of view and beliefs.</li> <li>encourage members to think and care for something beyond themselves, that connects everything such as the environment, the importance of caring for each other or their own interpretation.</li> </ul>

# Procedures

The following are the minimum requirements for the safe running of all Forest school activities. All Forest School Leaders working on our projects have a duty to follow these policies and should be familiar with their contents.

**As we are working on the sites that belong to other organisations, but running our projects, sessions and programmes independently we have created our own procedures and risk assessments for the activities we will be running. These are in support of the site's existing procedures and will not replace those that are already in place. In addition, any major or concerning incidences that occur and recorded on site will be referred to the site manager and/or safeguarding officer.**

## Procedure Review

These procedures and risk assessments will be reviewed annually and before starting on a new site and/or with a new group by a Forest School Leader.

This handbook of procedures and risk assessments was reviewed:

By Bryony Jones, director

on the 22nd February 2020

## Communicating with everyone involved

### Starting a new group

- To help prepare members for forest school before a Forest School programme begins, the forest school leader will arrange to meet with the group and explain what is to be expected and the expectations or provide the attendees/their parents or carers with documentation that can help them prepare. The format will be tailored to suit the group. There will be a discussion/information provided about what clothing/preparations will be needed.
- We will set up what's app, message, email or Facebook group to help facilitate communication where possible.
- We will introduce all leaders, assistants and volunteers working on site to the group.

### Organisations we're working with

We'll keep organisations we work with informed informally through email updates. We'll report any incidences to the organisations we work with and arrange a meeting post project, or if the project is longer at key intervals throughout the project to help us evaluate its success and arrange any future work.

### Parents

Parents on site will be kept updated during the session.

Parents leaving their children onsite will be kept updated after each session.

We have an open door policy, and clear lines of communication for parents to contact us about any matter concerning their own or their child's involvement with our forest school.

### Communicating our procedures and risk assessments with staff, volunteers, parents and participants

North East Wilds CIC makes available online (and when booking) our handbook. Our Handbook includes all of our operating procedures, policies and activity risk assessments as well as useful information about Forest School Programmes. Our is read by all of our Forest School Leaders.

### Complaints

We hope that we can resolve any issues you might have through direct communication with us. We encourage you to make contact with us if there is anything concerning you and we will arrange a face-to-face meeting with a mediator if that is suitable. Our aim is to reach a resolution where all parties feel heard, and that the correct next steps have been taken. If this is not proving to be adequate we will seek the assistance of an appropriate third party to help us resolve the issue.

## Normal Operating Procedure

### Before using a new site

- Visit the site record useful site info and create a site map, and site risk assessment.
- Assess our impact on the site, and plan ways to minimise this.

### (before the first session) Participants will need to provide:

- Emergency contact information.
- Details of any existing conditions or medications that they are taking.
- Details of any allergies they have.
- Dietary requirements.
- Signature to confirm that they are happy to take part and aware that there are some risks.
- Permission/denial for the use of photography.
- Permission for North East Wilds to store and use this information in accordance with our Data Protection policy.

### Before each Session

- All activities are risk assessed.
- A session review is completed after each session.
- Site check (looking for risks and litter) / Risk assessment
- Forest School bag check, including first aid kit check and weather specific clothing.
- Emergency contact/participant info check.
- Make sure all tools are safe and safety equipment is on site, e.g. fire buckets and gloves.
- Prepare food and water.
- Checked all participants have suitable clothing and footwear.

### In the first session

- The group will be made aware of the boundaries.
- The group will establish rules for returning when they hear a certain noise/instruction.
- The group will be told about toilet access and where to meet in an emergency/fire.

### During Each session

- All first aid incidents recorded in the log book.
- A charged mobile phone must be on site.
- Continually monitor the weather conditions.
- Review how the activities are going and adapt them as appropriate.
- Check that all members are accounted for at regular intervals.
- Encourages appropriate behaviour from the group throughout the walk to / from the woodland and during the session.

After each Session

- All waste will be cleared from site food containers cleaned and cloths washed.
- All tools/equipment used during the session checked for damage and stored carefully.
- Any incidents recorded in the log book.
- Review and reflect on lesson, and what to focus on next time.

## Accident, Emergency and First Aid

A record of emergency information is made accessible to the Forest School Leader for all sessions, either through Bookwhen access or through google drive. This will include any known allergies and existing conditions and emergency contact information. A mobile phone will always be onsite for emergency service calls if necessary.

In case of an emergency or incident, the following procedure will be followed.

### Near Miss

- Any 'near miss' should be reported to the Forest School leaders and recorded in log book.
- Near misses should be periodically reviewed in order to review and amend practice and safety policies.

### Minor Incident

- Individual assessed by trained outdoor first aider.
- Treat as required.
- Complete incident log book.
- Inform parents/carers verbally during the session.

### Serious Incident

- Stop all activities on site when safe to do so.
- First aider will attend to any casualties with one other while the remaining adults take care of the rest of the group.
- Emergency services contacted if necessary.
- A record to be taken of incident and monitoring of casualty.
- Inform parents/guardians of incident.
- Complete incident log book.
- All incidences that require emergency service call out require a meeting of directors in order to review and amend practice and safety policies.
- Incidents leading to admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours, resulting in an injury preventing a person working for three or more days afterwards or a fatality or multiple casualties need to be registered with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm>. Call the Incident Contact Centre on 0345 300 9923 (opening hours Monday to Friday 8.30-5).
- Do not allow anyone to interview any party member without an independent witness being present.

**First Aid**

- There will always be at least one Forest School leader on site with an Outdoor first aid certificate, with training in paediatric first aid. The certificate is renewable every 3 years.
- First aid kits must be restocked after use and a stock check carried out every 6 months.
- There will always be a 'Forest School first aid bag' onsite for accident, emergency and discomfort needs, the contents may vary during the year dependent on the weather conditions and the planned activities. The incident log book will also be kept in the bag. A checklist of the contents needed in the bag will also be included. The bag will be accessible to all Forest School Leaders and support staff.
- All staff will have necessary phone numbers stored in their phones at all times, and their phone available at all times.

## Mental Health First Aid and Wellbeing

Today, every UK business has a duty of care requirement to look after the health and safety of employees, including their wellbeing. 1 in 6 adults will experience a mental illness in their lifetime, and youth mental health needs are increasing every year. North East Wilds CIC believes in promoting and protecting staff mental health and wellbeing. Mental wellbeing is relevant for all employees, which means every member of staff can play a part in improving wellbeing in the workplace.

North East Wilds CIC services are there to promote positive, self-led strategies for mental health and wellbeing. Our sessions focus on the here and now, the natural world and on people's strengths, successes and achievements.

### Mental wellbeing

- North East Wilds will have a designated Mental Health and Wellbeing First Aider to oversee our wellbeing policies and promote mental health and wellbeing at work. They will upkeep a Mental Health First Aid award every 3 years.

### **Designated Mental Health and Wellbeing First Aider 2020 - 2023 Bryony Jones**

- The Mental Health and Wellbeing Officers will be vigilant towards the mental health needs and concerns of North East Wilds' freelancers, volunteers and service users. and take action as required.
- Forest School leaders who would like support may contact the Mental Health and Wellbeing Officers to discuss concerns and be supported to access appropriate services.
- Should either of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Officers need additional support, they can contact our mental health support worker, whose contact is available upon request.
- Using the freelance whatsapp group, provide updates and information about the importance of mental health to encourage understanding of mental health and increase awareness.
- Communicate our Mental health and wellbeing provision to all new leaders, assistants and volunteers.
- Provide ways for staff to support their own mental health through signposting and social events.
- Deal with any conflict quickly and make sure the workplace is free from bullying, harassment, racism or discrimination.
- Ensure all staff have clear job descriptions, objectives and responsibilities as well as the training to do their job well.
- Identify workplace stress factors and carry out risk assessments of the business.

### Wellbeing

- Provide information on the ways that physical activity can help people manage stress and back pain and well as improving mental alertness and concentration.
- Publicise walking routes, local physical activity classes and facilities.
- Provide details of the governments cycle to work scheme.
- Provide information on the impact of healthy lifestyle choices on mental health, such as healthy eating, meditation, socialising and sleeping routines.
- Promote healthy eating during our sessions, by cooking healthy food and sharing health recipes.

## Mental Health First Aid

### **Suicide Crisis**

- Watch out for signs that someone may be feeling suicidal, such as expressing a desire to hurt themselves, hopelessness, acting recklessly, feeling trapped, withdrawing, anxiety or sleep disturbances, dramatic changes in mood, putting affairs in order, sudden unexplained recovery.
- If you suspect someone is considering suicide approach the person and tell them your concerns sensitively. If they don't want to talk to you offer to help find someone who they would like to talk to.
- Try to find a safe and neutral space to talk.
- The following questions can help assess the immediate risk for suicide: Do you have a plan? Do you have what you need for this plan? Do you know when you would do it? Do you intend to attempt suicide? Have you been using drugs/alcohol?
- If you suspect immediate danger, call 999.
- Try to find out if they have any relevant prior behaviour, such as previous suicide attempts or self harm.
- Find out if they have any support, received recent treatment or are taking any medications, what resources do they have that they could turn to for help?
- Talk to them, be patient accepting what they are saying without judgement or disagreement. Show that you are listening by summarising what they are saying, ask open ended questions, clarify important points to make sure they are fully understood.
- Discourage the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Try to limit access to means to take life.
- If they are willing help them write a support plan, this sums up the steps that should be taken to keep the person safe and could include: focus on what the suicidal should do rather than what not to do, such as strategies for feeling better, activities, exercise, sleep, socialising, anything the person enjoys doing, be for a specific length of time, include contact numbers that the person agrees to call.
- Who to go to for help: Encourage the person to get professional help as soon as possible (local resources are listed at the end of the policy, additional signposting is available in North East Wilds CIC Mental Health Signposting database in the Forest School Leaders google drive folder. aware.

- If the risk is urgent, and the suicidal person refuses to seek help ask their permission to call their GP or the emergency services 999, if the person is under the age of 18 make sure a family member is also.
- If someone has attempted suicide, call 999 and follow First Aid training.

**It is not the place of Mental Health First Aider to make a diagnosis of the Mental Health condition that a person may be dealing with.  
Therefore North East Wilds CIC employs the Mental Health First Aid **ALGEE** Plan for Action plan for mental health first aid.**

A - Approach, assess the severity of the situation and assist, open up a conversation, watch for warning signs (self-harm, panic attack, traumatic event, severe psychotic state, medical emergency).

L - Listen, non judgementally, avoid confrontation, don't be critical or argue, reflect back what they have said.

G - Give Support and Information, have realistic expectations, offer emotional support, give hope, don't take over support coping strategies, where risk to self of others exists, don't keep a secret but try to consult a person before sharing any details.

E - Encourage Professional help, discuss the range of options (Gps, counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists, NHS, Early Intervention teams, Crisis Resolution, Community Mental health teams, voluntary sector. GP is first port of call. Respect a person's right to not seek help, unless an emergency.

E - Encourage other supports, family friends, support groups, voluntary organisations, Self help strategies such as WRAP ® and complementary therapies

Assisting with a panic attack or traumatic event

1. If unsure what it is call 999
2. Ensure that you are safe
3. Attend to basic needs and seek help
4. Introduce yourself, stay calm, speak slowly and try to move to a quiet safe space
5. acknowledge that terror feels real
6. reassure that a person is safe, focus their attention on something in the present that is non threatening. Normalise their reactions.
7. Ask them what would help.
8. watch out for and if necessary treat for shock.

Assisting in a severe psychotic state

1. Ensure that you are safe
2. Contact emergency help and explain that the person needs help.
3. check for a mental health crisis card and follow the directions.

4. Find out who the person trusts and get their help.
5. Don't leave person alone.
6. Stay calm, speak quietly, use short sentences
7. Don't pretend hallucinations or delusions are real for you, but don't challenge them, emphasise and be reassuring and concerned.
8. Comply with reasonable requests and try to de-escalate the situation.

### Who to Contact

In an emergency call 999

First point of contact should be their local GP practise (request an emergency appointment)

Professional NHS Advice: 111 (24/7)

Samaritans: 116 123 ([jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org))

Childline – for children and young people under 19

Call 0800 1111 – the number won't show up on your phone bill

### **Community Mental health teams (CMHT) & Crisis teams**

Newcastle North and East Community Mental Health Team (CHMT)  
0191 2875300 - 9-5pm, Monday to Friday

Newcastle West Community Treatment Team  
0191 2875060

Gateshead CMHT (Talking Therapies)  
0191 283 2541

Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team – Newcastle and Gateshead  
0191 814 8899

Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) - Newcastle  
0191 2466913

CAMHS - Gateshead  
0191 283 4560

**Mental Health Helplines & Support Groups**

Newcastle and Gateshead Step Up Hub  
0191 2875060

Gateshead and Newcastle Homeless Service  
0191 2875060

Talking Helps Newcastle  
0191 2826600  
[www.talkinghelpsnewcastle.org](http://www.talkinghelpsnewcastle.org)

**Anxiety UK**

Charity providing support if you have been diagnosed with an anxiety condition.  
Phone: 03444 775 774 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm)  
Website: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

**Bipolar UK**

A charity helping people living with manic depression or bipolar disorder.  
Website: [www.bipolaruk.org.uk](http://www.bipolaruk.org.uk)

**CALM**

CALM is the Campaign Against Living Miserably, for men aged 15 to 35.

Phone: 0800 58 58 58 (daily, 5pm to midnight)

Website: [www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)

### **Men's Health Forum**

24/7 stress support for men by text, chat and email.

Website: [www.menshealthforum.org.uk](http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk)

### **Mental Health Foundation**

Provides information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities.

Website: [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

### **Mind**

Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **No Panic**

Voluntary charity offering support for sufferers of panic attacks and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). Offers a course to help overcome your phobia or OCD.

Phone: 0844 967 4848 (daily, 10am to 10pm). Calls cost 5p per minute plus your phone provider's Access Charge

Website: [www.nopanic.org.uk](http://www.nopanic.org.uk)

### **OCD Action**

Support for people with OCD. Includes information on treatment and online resources.

Phone: 0845 390 6232 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm). Calls cost 5p per minute plus your phone provider's Access Charge

Website: [www.ocdaction.org.uk](http://www.ocdaction.org.uk)

### **OCD UK**

A charity run by people with OCD, for people with OCD. Includes facts, news and treatments.

Phone: 0333 212 7890 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Website: [www.ocduk.org](http://www.ocduk.org)

**PAPYRUS**

Young suicide prevention society.

Phone: HOPElineUK 0800 068 4141 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm and 7pm to 10pm, and 2pm to 5pm on weekends)

Website: [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

**Rethink Mental Illness**

Support and advice for people living with mental illness.

Phone: 0300 5000 927 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm)

Website: [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

**Samaritans**

Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline)

Website: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

**SANE**

Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers.

SANElne: 0300 304 7000 (daily, 4.30pm to 10.30pm)

Textcare: comfort and care via text message, sent when the person needs it most: [www.sane.org.uk/textcare](http://www.sane.org.uk/textcare)

Peer support forum: [www.sane.org.uk/supportforum](http://www.sane.org.uk/supportforum)

Website: [www.sane.org.uk/support](http://www.sane.org.uk/support)

**YoungMinds**

Information on child and adolescent mental health. Services for parents and professionals.

Phone: Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm)

Website: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

**NSPCC**

Abuse (child, sexual, domestic violence)

Children's charity dedicated to ending child abuse and child cruelty.  
Phone: 0800 1111 for Childline for children (24-hour helpline)  
0808 800 5000 for adults concerned about a child (24-hour helpline)  
Website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**Refuge**

Advice on dealing with domestic violence.  
Phone: 0808 2000 247 (24-hour helpline)  
Website: [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

**Alcoholics Anonymous**

Phone: 0800 917 7650 (24-hour helpline)  
Website: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

**National Gambling Helpline**

Phone: 0808 8020 133 (daily, 8am to midnight)  
Website: [www.begambleaware.org](http://www.begambleaware.org)

**Narcotics Anonymous**

Phone: 0300 999 1212 (daily, 10am to midnight)  
Website: [www.ukna.org](http://www.ukna.org)

**Alzheimer's Society**

Provides information on dementia, including factsheets and helplines.  
Phone: 0300 222 1122 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm and 10am to 4pm on weekends)  
Website: [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

**Cruse Bereavement Care**

Phone: 0808 808 1677 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)  
Website: [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

**Rape Crisis**

To find your local services phone: 0808 802 9999 (daily, 12pm to 2.30pm and 7pm to 9.30pm)

Website: [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

**Victim Support**

Phone: 0808 168 9111 (24-hour helpline)

Website: [www.victimsupport.org](http://www.victimsupport.org)

**Beat**

Eating disorders

Phone: 0808 801 0677 (adults) or 0808 801 0711 (for under-18s)

Website: [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk)

**Mencap**

Charity working with people with a learning disability, their families and carers.

Phone: 0808 808 1111 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Website: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

**Family Lives**

Advice on all aspects of parenting, including dealing with bullying.

Phone: 0808 800 2222 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm and Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 3pm)

Website: [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

**Relate**

The UK's largest provider of relationship support.

Website: [www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)

## Fire Procedure

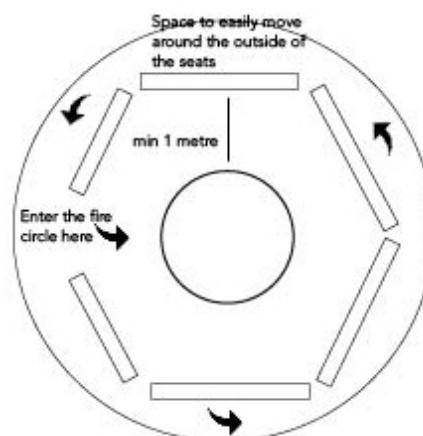
During the Forest School process, a careful regard and respect of fire is reinforced with the participants through a step by step process. Strict fire circle rules are enforced at all times and behaviour is controlled by the Forest School leader and support staff. Any disregard for the Fire Circle rules needs addressing by a Forest School Leader immediately.

Notify local site management and local fire brigade that there will be a fire one site, before the event.

### Fire Location

- Choose a site carefully; avoid tree roots, peat soil & deep leaf mould, overhanging trees, rough ground etc. Remove any stones from the fire area as hot stones (especially flints) can explode.
- Construct a surround for the fire using wood or bricks.
- Have at least 1m between fire surround and seating logs.
- Seating logs should have emergency escape routes between them.
- Keep fires approximately 4m from any shelter built from easily combusting materials.
- Clear any dry material from underneath fire pit, including turf if possible.
- Mark the perimeter of the outer edge of the fire circle.
- Make sure seats and fire surround are secure to avoid accidents.

### Fire Circle Example (minimum requirements)



### Before starting a fire

Establish a Fire Circle and train members on the Forest School Fire Circle rules before starting a fire.

- How to approach and leave the Fire Circle - There should be one entrance and exit, stand behind the bench and carefully step over the bench to sit down.
- We do not run around the Fire Circle.
- Do not walk across the Fire Circle. To move around the fire circle, step over the seats to the outer edge and walk around the circle before re-entering.
- Only enter the fire circle when invited to by the Forest School Leader.

### Starting a fire

- No loose clothing (or unacceptable loose hair) near the fire circle.
- Have a water bucket and a fire blanket available to extinguish the fire.
- Heat-proof gloves should be used whenever adding anything to fire or moving anything on the fire.
- A burns first aid kit and bucket of water need to be onsite for burns.
- Don't light in windy or tinder dry conditions.
- Never leave a fire unattended.
- Fires will only be lit in the fire-circle area.
- If young people have fires restrict flame height to equivalent of your knee.
- Prior to lighting fire check with landowner and local authority for permission. On some sites the fire brigade may need to be informed before lighting fire.

LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTACT (GATESHEAD): 0191 433 3951 ([environmentalhealth@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@gateshead.gov.uk))

HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICES (NEWCASTLE): 0191 2116102 ([psr@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:psr@newcastle.gov.uk))

(Specific sites have specific contacts for that need to be involved in planning for fires - this will be recorded in the site risk assessments)

- Use dead, dried wood and no green wood/kindling to reduce smoke inhalation, explain the importance of this to participants.

- Encourage people in smoky areas to move to non-smoky areas.
- Participants will only be allowed to light fires under direct supervision of a trained leader using suitable materials and equipment.
- All participants will follow the fire circle rules about how to behave and move around the fire circle.
- All fires should be fully extinguished and all traces removed at the end of a session.
- Fires should be no bigger than what is needed.
- We will follow the site specifications for what kind of fires we are allowed to have, and where needed use raised fire pits.

## Food Hygiene

### Allergens and dietary requirements

- No meat will be prepared/offered during Forest School
- All members are asked about any allergies or special dietary requirements, a record of this is referred to when planning menus and kept onsite incase of emergencies.
- All recipes are recorded on a recipe card with a full list of ingredients and allergens.
- All known allergens for a particular individual will be excluded from that forest school setting for the whole group. Alternative options made available where necessary.

If you think someone is having a severe allergic reaction call 999.

### Preparing food for the session

- Wash hands after breaks, touching bins, cleaning etc.
- Do not handle food or drink if you have vomiting or had diarrhoea within within 48 hours.
- Tie hair back.
- No smoking around food.
- Cover wounds with a brightly coloured dressing.
- Store and prepare ready-to-eat foods and raw foods separately
- Defrost foods in the fridge in a covered container.
- All food items, including those picked wild will be washed before consuming.
- All foods and drinks will be stored in a sealed or covered container before being transported to the Forest School site.
- Store foods in the fridge when possible.
- Fully defrost food before cooking
- Don't let raw food touch cooked food when cooking.
- Eggs and rice should be cooked until steaming hot.
- Rice should be served hot or cooled and refrigerated until served.

### Cleaning food and food equipment

- Clean food preparation services before preparing food.

- Wash and dry used cloths after every session in a washing machine.
- All food preparation and storage equipment should be cleaned after each use.
- Cleaning equipment will be stored safely and not accessible to children.

#### When cooking outdoors

- If using skewers, use green wood and peel/carve off the bark before use.
- Be careful of recipes with too much fat to avoid pan fires starting.
- Utensils will be used to remove food from containers to cooking/heating equipment on the fire to avoid cross-contamination.

#### Serving food

- Utensils will be provided for serving to avoid contamination from hands.
- Food displayed for the shortest time possible.
- Label allergens and appropriate dietary information on food that is being served.
- Fresh drinking water will be available at all times.
- Black bin bags available onsite for any non-compostable rubbish.

#### Useful Contacts

(Health and Safety Officer - Gateshead Council)

[GordonSmiles2@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:GordonSmiles2@gateshead.gov.uk)

[NeilKilgour@Gateshead.Gov.Uk](mailto:NeilKilgour@Gateshead.Gov.Uk)

(Food Safety Service - Newcastle Council)

0191 2116102

[psr@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:psr@newcastle.gov.uk)

## Manual Handling

- Inspect the load to be lifted or moved for sharp edges.
- The route over which the load is to be lifted should be inspected to ensure it is free of obstructions
- No one should attempt to lift or move a load which is too heavy to manage comfortably. Ask for assistance if there is any danger of strain
- When lifting an object off the ground, assume a squatting position, keeping the back straight. The load should be lifted by straightening the knees, not the back
- Do not attempt to obtain items from shelves which are beyond their reach.

## Weather

At Forest School there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing. Forest school runs in all weather. Before the session, the leader will do an appropriate risk assessment of the site and the weather and make sure the pupils are correctly dressed for the session.

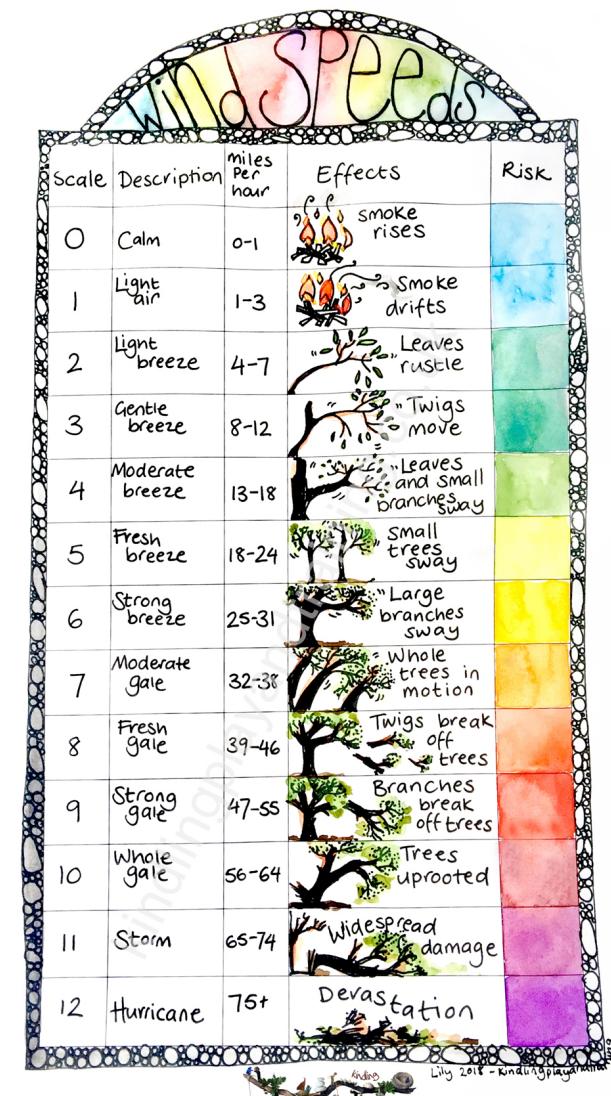
### Conditions for cancelling or moving a session

- Winds of force 6 or above are forecast/reported.
- On a windy day, if substantial tree branches are blowing at 20 degrees or more.
- Children do not have appropriate clothing for the weather (have a supply of replacement and additional clothing if possible).

When a session needs to be cancelled for extreme weather it will either be re-scheduled or moved to an appropriate location if possible.

### Protection and comfort

- If children are getting cold, they can play an active game, sit by a fire or share a shelter. There will be hand warmers, blankets and extra clothing in the forest school bag.
- There will be a supply of fresh water on site.
- There will be sunscreen in the forest school bag that can be used by parents/guardians or adults if permission is granted.
- When the sun is particularly strong, the forest school leader will encourage participants to work/play in shaded areas.



## Medication

- A record of all medications being taken will be on Forest School booking pages or google drive attendance, which will be made available to Forest School Leaders working in those sessions.
- Medication will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians.
- Sun screen and insect spray will be available but can only be applied if permission is granted by parents/guardians. They will be in the manufacturers original containers.
- No pain-relief medication will be given out to participants.

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## Welfare

### Clothing

- Participants will be notified about clothing recommendations before the session.
- As far as possible we will help arrange specific clothing to meet the needs of the group and the weather conditions.
- In order to take part in any physical activity such as tree climbing, rope swings, tool use etc. long trousers must be worn.

### Personal Protective Equipment (P.P.E)

- The Forest School leader will assess each activity and decide on the P.P.E needed for the activity. The table in the tool use section lists P.P.E equipment required for each activity.

### Toilets

- Participants will be encouraged to use the toilets before the start of the session.
- Any child that needs to go to the toilet during the session will be able to return to the main building accompanied by an adult.
- When toilet facilities are not available, the leader will set up a compost toilet in an appropriate location with a privacy tent, sawdust and toilet paper.
- Sanitising gel will be available.

### Food and drink

- Drinking water will be available during the sessions which will be left in a designated area.
- A rubbish bag will be available near the food site for all waste that can't be composted.
- Food will be provided for all participants that meets dietary requirements, if permission is granted.

### Hygiene

- Wipes and antibacterial hand gel/hand washing facilities will be available on site when necessary.
- Participants will be encouraged to wash their hands prior to drinking or eating.
- All rubbish will be cleared from the site and disposed of in the bins at the end of the session.

## Forest School Tools and Activities

Using a range of tools is an important part of forest school as it enables participants to develop new practical skills which in turn helps to develop self-confidence. We aim to ensure that all people participating in sessions with tools do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible. All new tools will have a procedure added to this document before it is used in the forest school setting.

### Maintenance

- All tools in the first instance are cleaned, maintained and stored safely by the Forest School leader.
- Prior to use, the Forest School leader will check the tools for any damage or instability and check for sharpness.
- All tools are counted out and back in at the beginning and end of each session in which they are used.
- Participants must never be allowed to help themselves and will always have supervision when they are using tools.
- Participants must be introduced to a tool using the DUMP demo method outlined below before they can use a tool.
- The Forest School leader must be content that participants are ready to use a tool before they are allowed to use it.
- You should always be two arms and a tool length away from anyone else.
- You should never run when carrying a tool.

**BOW SAW****What is it used for?**

- For cutting wood bigger than a 2 pence piece and smaller than your arm.
- Small serrated edge for seasoned wood, spaced serrated edge for green wood.

**How**

- You need to have a partner and someone to steady the wood.
- Wood is placed on an A-frame or on a wood stump on the ground.
- Cuts on the push and the pull.
- Partners say 'to me to you' to help with the rhythm.
- Legs need to be to the side of the cutting strokes.
- Your free hand either holds the wood, or passes through the bow saw and holds the wood on the opposite side.

**Walk**

- Hold it like a handbag with the blade facing downwards.

**Pass**

- Keep the blade facing down and pass the handle end towards someone.

**Put down or away**

- When its not being used, return the cover and place to your side with the blade end facing towards you.
- When its finished with, return to its tool bag.

**Glove**

- No glove on tool hand, glove on the other hand holding the wood.

<b>BILTHOOK</b>	<p><b>What is it used for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Splitting or timing wood.</li></ul> <p><b>How</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place the wood to be split/trimmed on a tree stump.</li><li>• Working with a partner, one holds the billhook first from the top of the blade and the handle, then just from the handle. The other holds a mallet and hits the billhook from the top.</li><li>• Start with small taps and then move the bigger ones.</li><li>• Use clear question and answer 'are you ready' 'this will be a little tap'.</li></ul> <p><b>Walk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hold next to leg with the hook facing backwards.</li></ul> <p><b>Pass</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep blade facing down, hold the top of the tool and pass the handle towards the other person.</li></ul> <p><b>Put down or away</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Always return the sheath.</li><li>• Place by your side with the hook facing inwards and the handle facing outwards.</li><li>• When its finished with, return to its tool bag.</li></ul> <p><b>Glove</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No gloves on the tool.</li></ul>
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<b>KNIVES</b> <b>(SHEATH KNIFE, SPOON KNIFE, HAND DRILLS AND PEELERS)</b>	<p><b>What is it used for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carving and whittling wood.</li> </ul> <p><b>How</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blade always faces and pulls away from you.</li> <li>• Cross your arms over your body so the wood and knife are working on the outside of your body.</li> <li>• Have a hard surface below you and where the knife pulls down.</li> </ul> <p><b>Walk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold next to leg with the blade facing backwards and the sheath cover on.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pass</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holding the sheathed blade, pass the handle towards the other person.</li> </ul> <p><b>Put down or away</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always return the sheath.</li> <li>• Place down on the work surface or by your leg with the blade facing towards you.</li> <li>• When finished with return to the tool bag.</li> </ul> <p><b>Glove</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glove only worn on the non-knife hand.</li> </ul>
<b>LOPPERS</b>	<p><b>What is it used for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutting anything smaller than a 2 pence piece.</li> </ul> <p><b>How</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A partner holds the end of the wood to be cut.</li> <li>• Open handles to open blade end and place around wood.</li> <li>• Close tightly and firmly to cut the wood, making sure fingers no where near.</li> <li>• Close and lock handles together when not using.</li> </ul> <p><b>Walk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold under the arm across your body like a chicken.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pass</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure blades are closed and locked, hold just below the handle and offer the handle to the other person.</li> </ul> <p><b>Put down or away</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always lock the blades together when not in use.</li> <li>• Place on a work surface, or back in the tool bag when not in use.</li> </ul> <p><b>Glove</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No gloves on this tool.</li> </ul>

<b>PRUNING SAW</b>	<p><b>What is it used for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pruning small branches on trees.</li> <li>• Sawing/cutting small pieces of wood.</li> </ul> <p><b>How</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firmly holding the handle, unfold the blade away from the body until it clicks into position.</li> <li>• Keep the blade horizontal.</li> <li>• Rest your hand on the wood above where you are cutting.</li> <li>• Always saw away from hands, legs and body.</li> </ul> <p><b>Walk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold next to leg with the saw opening facing backwards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pass</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold the folded away blade end and pass the handle to the other person.</li> </ul> <p><b>Put down or away</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always close the saw when not in use, make sure it clicks into place.</li> <li>• Place on a work surface or by your leg with the saw facing towards you.</li> <li>• When finished with, return to its tool bag.</li> </ul> <p><b>Glove</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glove worn on the hand supporting the wood.</li> </ul>
<b>FLINT AND STEEL</b>	<p><b>What is it used for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a spark to start a fire.</li> </ul> <p><b>How</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kneel on one knee.</li> <li>• Find a clear but not a dry area to work (if not in the fire circle itself).</li> <li>• Two arms lengths away from anyone else.</li> <li>• Hold the flint in your non-dominant hand and the steel in your other.</li> <li>• Strike the steel away from the body, altering the angle, the speed, the side or direction till you get a spark.</li> <li>• Aim at the cotton wool/kindling.</li> </ul> <p><b>Put down or away</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place down on work surface.</li> <li>• Return to tool bag when finished with.</li> </ul> <p><b>PPE, clothing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NO protective clothing is necessary.</li> <li>• Don't use with loose or flammable clothing, or near flammable materials.</li> </ul>

<b>KELLY KETTLE/ STORM KETTLE</b>	<p><b>What is it used for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heating/boiling water.</li> </ul> <p><b>How</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a clearing of an adult stride in radius and mark the perimeter.</li> <li>• Work out the wind direction and mark the side opposite this, this will be avoided as the wind will blow smoke in this direction.</li> <li>• Point the hole in the base towards the wind.</li> <li>• <b>REMOVE THE CORK/PLUG</b></li> <li>• Prepare a stack of small kindling to feed the fire, and light a small fire in the base, then place the kettle on top of the base.</li> <li>• Kneel on one knee and keep feeding the fire.</li> <li>• Once the water boils, remove the kettle from the heat using a glove and place carefully on the ground.</li> <li>• Always use a gloved hand to pick up the kettle after it has been on a fire.</li> <li>• Never look down the kettle when the fire is lit.</li> <li>• Hold the handle and tip the base with a gloved hand to pour.</li> </ul> <p><b>Storage</b></p> <p>Make sure the fire is completely out, pour out embers and use water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cork/plug can be added when the water inside is cooler to protect it from contamination.</li> </ul> <p><b>Gloves</b></p> <p>Always wear a glove on the hand adding wood to the fire or moving the kettle.</p>
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<b>ROPES AND TARPS</b>	<p><b>What is it used for?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used to make shelters</li> <li>• Used to build ladders, swings and seats.</li> </ul> <p><b>Before Starting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss friction burns.</li> <li>• Discuss how the rope cannot be used to tie anyone up.</li> <li>• Ropes checked regularly for frays or damage.</li> <li>• Check the tree for dead woo or fungal growth.</li> <li>• Check for obstacles (tree string).</li> <li>• Maximum swing height (at its highest swing point) should be be 1.5 metres.</li> <li>• Check the fall site for sharp objects.</li> </ul> <p><b>Supervision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest School leader should check knots before being used.</li> <li>• An adult must always be present for tree-climbing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Gloves</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have gloves available for use if needed/wanted.</li> </ul>
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<b>POND DIPPING</b>	<p><b>How</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approach the pond slowly.</li> <li>Kneel on one knee, both knees or lie on your belly near the pond when retrieving creatures or water from the pond.</li> </ul> <p><b>Safety Precautions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pond will be signposted as a potential hazard.</li> <li>All members will be made aware of the risks of the pond.</li> <li>Only walk near the pond.</li> <li>Children always supervised by adults when near the pond.</li> <li>Wash hands after pond dipping.</li> <li>Cover any wounds when pond dipping.</li> <li>Rinse pond-dipping equipment after use.</li> </ul> <p><b>Environmental</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return all creatures and plants back in to the pond at the end of the session.</li> </ul>
<b>HANDLING NATURAL MATERIALS, FLORA AND FAUNA</b>	<p><b>Safety Precautions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate clothes and shoes need to be worn onsite, including closed shoes.</li> <li>Hands should be washed after handling any creatures or plants.</li> <li>Remind participants not to eat any wild plants without being invited to by a forest school leader.</li> <li>When carrying logs/wood, consider using long sleeves/gloves or rope.</li> </ul> <p><b>Environmental</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return all creatures and plants back to their natural environment after use.</li> </ul>
<b>TREE CLIMBING</b>	<p><b>Safety Precautions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trees that are safe to climb will be identified and checked by the Forest School leader, they will be free from fungal growth and dead wood and have low branches strong enough to support an adults weight. These trees will be marked and individuals notified.</li> <li>Individuals will not climb higher than 1.5 metres.</li> <li>An adult will always be present when someone is climbing the tree.</li> </ul>

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## Safeguarding

Everyone is responsible for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Any incident no matter how small needs reporting to the Designated Safety Officer (DSO) who will make a full record in the incident log book. The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to protect young people and vulnerable adults who access services provided by North East Wilds CIC, it is also here to provide parents, staff, volunteers and third party organisations a clear understanding of our safeguarding practices.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults in England.

**The Designated Safety Officer (DSO) for North East Wilds CIC is:**

**Bryony Jones** 0771 342169, [hello@northeastwilds.org](mailto:hello@northeastwilds.org)

**The Deputy Safeguarding Officer is:**

**Clara Warden** 07976 905762

**This Safeguarding Policy was reviewed:** 22 February 2020

**Next Review** February 2021

North East Wilds CIC believes that all adults, children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind. That we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and to keep them safe and protect them. We understand that some children and adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

**All sessional leaders working with North East Wilds CIC must take responsibility for Safeguarding, for noticing any and all indications of abuse, or unmet needs and report them to the DSO or deputy DSO who is responsible for following up concerns with the appropriate social care.**

### Prevention and Vigilance

- Forest School leaders will be committed to safeguarding all members of the course, by following the procedures in this handbook and the Forest School principles.

- All Forest School leaders, assistants and volunteers will have necessary DBS certificates unless supervised by an another DBS checked person at all times.
- All sessional leaders will receive a copy of the safeguarding policy as part of their induction.
- The DSO and Deputy DSO will keep their training up to date (renew every 3 years) and keep up to date with current legislation.
- All Forest School leaders will have appropriate PLI insurance. For this project it needs to cover: shelter building, the use of tools, tree climbing up to 2 metres, the use of swings for all ages, pond dipping, green woodworking, creative activities and campfires. It should have a minimum cover of £5,000,000.
- Forest School Leaders should be aware of the different types of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.
- Forest School leaders should be observant of any physical symptoms of abuse: unexplained bruises or injuries, unexplained gifts, poor appearance or hygiene, recurring health problems, not meeting developmental milestones, being left alone, unsuitable home environment (e.g. cold, dirty, unsafe, pregnancy or STI's), and emotional abuse; withdrawn, behaviour changes, anxiety, depressed, aggressive, clingy, sleeping problems, eating disordered, bed wetting, soiled clothes, extreme risk taking, anger, unexplained absences, obsessive behaviour, drugs or alcohol and self harm.

#### Peer abuse

- Peer abuse can be prevented. Adults who work with children and vulnerable adults must be aware of the potential for abuse between peers.
- This abuse could be bullying, cyberbullying, emotional, online, physical, and sexual abuse.
- To help prevent peer abuse Forest School Leaders must: Identify blind spots in the environment and monitor, take steps to prevent isolation, or check regularly on those in isolation. Separate people if necessary, confiscate phones in appropriate and necessary, or instruct that the use of phones is not acceptable in sessions for use in certain ways (such as photographing/videoing without permission, sending harassing messages), encourage a culture on site of disclosure and trustworthy listening as well as a lack of tolerance towards abusive behaviour.
- It will be made clear that peer abuse is not tolerated in our sessions. Adults and children (through their parents and carers will be asked to leave our sessions for unacceptable peer abuse and if necessary will be reported to the appropriate local authorities, social workers and care teams.
- It is important that care is taken over children and adults who are peer abusing as this can be a sign that they are suffering or have suffered from abuse. If this is suspected it requires taking the safeguarding actions listed below.

#### Disclosure

- Disclosure refers to a person talking about what has happened. It is important that Forest School leaders working on a project make it possible for people to approach them to talk about sensitive and difficult issues.
- The individual will be informed that a record of any information they disclose will need to be recorded in writing but only those who need to be informed will be told, if it is decided that they or anyone else is at risk or harm.

- Respond sensitively, taking the time to listen and asking open ended questions. Take them seriously and make notes as soon as possible after disclosure.
- Sharing concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- Follow this same procedure if the allegation is against a Forest School Leader or support worker.
- Sometimes disclosure happens indirectly, such as through making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong, or through displaying behaviour that signals something is wrong (this may or may not be deliberate) or Non-verbally – writing letters, drawing pictures or trying to communicate in other ways. Sometimes children and vulnerable adults make partial disclosures of abuse. This means they give some details about what they've experienced, but not the whole picture. They may withhold some information because of fear, or feelings of shame and guilt.

#### Action

1. If the child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, remain with them and call the police.
2. If a child or vulnerable adult discloses something to you:
  - a. Show you care, help them open up: Give your full attention and keep your body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today' help.
  - b. Take your time, slow down: Respect pauses and don't interrupt – let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. And remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what's happened to them.
  - c. Show you understand, reflect back: Make it clear you're interested in what they are telling you. Reflect back what they've said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience.
  - d. If a child or vulnerable adult tells you they are experiencing abuse, it's important to reassure them that they've done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault.
2. Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the disclosure. This could make things a lot worse.
3. If it is an emergency situation call 999.
4. Remove the child or vulnerable adult from harms way if they are in immediate harm. Contact the police and the relevant authority for that situation (e.g. Community health and social care direct (initial contact), Adult Social Care or Gateshead or Newcastle Councils' Children's services).
5. Contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer, who contact the relevant authority for that situation (e.g. Community health and social care direct (initial contact), Adult Social Care or Gateshead or Newcastle Councils' Children's services).

6. It's important that you keep notes on the incident, you can do this by completing the incident reporting log. It may be important to make paper notes while you are talking, and then add this to the digital log immediately after. (Make sure you carefully dispose of the paper notes after you have updated the incident log).

### Confidentiality

- Never promise a child or vulnerable adult that you will keep the things they're telling you a secret. Explain that you may need to share what they've told you with someone who will be able to help.
- If there are no concerns for a person's welfare, then children should be given the opportunity to decide whether they agree to their personal information being shared. If a child doesn't have the capacity to make their own decisions then ask their parent or carer (unless doing so would put the child at risk of harm).
- You should generally seek consent to share information about an adult. To get consent be open and honest, make sure the person you're asking for consent understands what information will be shared and why. Explain who will see the information and what it will be used for. Make sure the person you're asking for consent understands the consequences of their information not being shared. Get the consent in writing, in case there are any disputes in the future. If it's only given verbally, make a written record of this. Make sure the person knows they can withdraw consent at any time.
- If a child or young person needs confidential help and advice direct them to Childline. Calls to **0800 1111 (telephone 0800 400 222)** are free and children can also contact Childline online. If a vulnerable adult needs confidential help and advice direct them to their local GP, their social worker or the local authority safeguarding team (contact numbers at the end of this chapter on Safeguarding). North East Wilds CIC sometimes keeps contact details of the social workers, care workers or care teams of vulnerable adults with additional needs. It is important that the vulnerable adult is involved and empowered in their own safeguarding, so should be consulted before talking to their social worker.

### Sharing information

- Information sharing is important as it allows a child or adult to receive right support and care, and allows professionals to build a clear picture of those involved.
- You may need to share information in the following situations:
  - You are making a referral to arrange additional support for someone.
  - Someone from another agency has asked for information, this should only be handled by the designated safeguarding officer.
  - Someone in the family has asked to be referred for further help.
  - A statutory duty or court order requires information to be shared
  - You are concerned that a child or a member of their family may be at risk of significant harm

- You think a serious crime may have been committed or is about to be committed which involves someone in the family.
- Keep a record of who you contact in the incident report log.
- Always seek consent to share information about a child and their family. However if consent isn't given, you can still share information with relevant professionals under certain circumstances, for example if you are preventing a child from significant harm.
- When sharing information about vulnerable adults, you must make sure that you assume they have the mental capacity to make their own decisions unless it is proved otherwise. Take steps to enable people to make their own decisions, always act in their best interests and consider their past wishes and beliefs.

#### Lost or missing child

- A regular head count should be undertaken by Forest School Leaders during the sessions.
- Forest School leaders should be made aware of who has gone off to the bathroom and when they return.
- If a child or adult seems to be lost or missing, all children and adults will be called back to the main circle.
- A quick scan of the surrounding area will be done and the time taken.
- If a child or parent whose child is still present has still not been found the Forest School Leader will call the police.
- If an adult has not been found family and friends will be contacted to attempt to ascertain where they are. If necessary the police will be called.
- Contact the designated Safeguarding Officer.
- The Forest School Leader will record the incident in the incident log book.

#### Dealing with allegations of abuse against North East Wilds' staff, sessional staff and volunteers

- All concerns or allegations of abuse should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- If the concern is about the Designated Safeguarding Officer, it should be reported to the deputy Safeguarding Officer.
- All concerns or allegations of abuse should be reported to the Designated Safety Officer.
- When children are involved: either the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer will contact the local authority LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): Newcastle: **Melanie Scott on 0191 277 4636**; Gateshead: **Nicholas Leon 0191 4333554 / 07714957868** [LADO@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@gateshead.gov.uk) When adults are involved, this needs to be referred to the police and the local safeguarding authority.
- Members of staff or volunteers will be temporarily suspended from leadership positions until the matter can be resolved with support from LADO.
- Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with North East Wilds CIC should contact the LADO directly.

- North East Wilds CIC has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff or volunteer has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person.

#### Visitors

- All visitors, leaders and volunteers will be introduced to the group at the start of the session. If anyone sees an adult they do not recognise, they should inform the forest school leaders as soon as possible.
- Un-arranged visitors will be asked to leave, before checks can be made to confirm who they are.

#### **Important contact information:**

##### Gateshead council's children's services

0191 433 2653 (office hours: Monday - Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)

0191 477 0844 (out of hours, at night, at weekends and bank holidays)

##### Newcastle council's children services

Initial Response Service – 0191 277 2500

Emergency Duty Team – 0191 278 7878

The Emergency Duty Team will help with personal or family problems that reach a crisis at these times.

##### Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care Direct 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

0191 433 7033

[adultsocialcaredirect@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:adultsocialcaredirect@gateshead.gov.uk)

##### Community health and social care direct (Newcastle)

0191 278 8377

0191 278 7878 For out of house care needs.

##### Northumbria Police (and ask for the Safeguarding Department).

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NSPCC Helpline  
0808 800 5000

Modern slavery NSPCC helpline for concerns that a child or an adult is a victim of slavery Call 0800 0121 700

Childline  
08001111 (telephone 0800 400 222) or [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

In an emergency  
999

Online Support:

The Procedure's Manual for North and South of Tyne Safeguarding Children Partnership

<https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/>

Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)  
(acts on behalf of the three Safeguarding Partners, Newcastle City Council, Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group and Northumbria Police, and brings together partner agencies across the city to ensure there is a joined-up approach to safeguarding.)

<https://www.nsccb.org.uk/>

Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership

<https://www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk/article/9175/Gateshead-Safeguarding-Children-Partnership>

For further reading on safeguarding adults:

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/care-and-support/adults/report-suspected-adult-abuse-and-neglect/safeguarding-adults>

<https://www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk/article/9176/Gateshead-Safeguarding-Adults-Board>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/adult-pocket-guide.pdf>

## Data protection and Media

### Data

- All participants will provide some basic information before they start in order to help keep them safe whilst at the Forest School. We will only collect what we need.
- We will keep up to date with current legislation on how we store data.
- Personal information needs to be stored onsite in case of an emergency. It will be stored discreetly and securely and only known and accessible to the Forest School Leaders.
- The information will only be used on a need to know basis, such as preparing food without allergens.
- It will not be shared with any third party unless it is for the emergency protection of that individual.
- When not on site all information will be securely stored or disposed of by Forest School Leaders in a locked building.
- Contact information (such as emails and phone numbers) will be stored on a password protected phone.
- Permissions for all our activities and provisions for children and adults on site will be collected before sessions begin.

### Photography and digital media

- All participants will be asked to give permission on their sign up sheet. Photography will be used for monitoring and evaluation purposes and for us in leaflets, website and social media contexts.
- If permission is refused we aim to avoid photographing that individual, or if necessary not use photographs with them in.

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## Data Protection Policy

### **What information do we collect and why?**

We collect personal details of our participants, staff and volunteers that relate to your association with our company. These details include: Your name, contact email address, contact phone number and emergency contact numbers.

We also ask that you share with us details relating to your personal circumstance, mental health, physical health, dietary requirements, allergies and any medications you are taking, but it is your choice if you provide us with these. This information is used to keep you safe in emergency situations, if we feel it is a medical emergency we may share this information for medical professionals and emergency services. Staff will be informed of these details only when there is a vital need to know. This is necessary for the purpose of legitimate interests, if those legitimate interests are not overridden by your rights or interests.

During your participation in our sessions, we will collect photographs and feedback, monitor your mental health and keep a record of what sessions and activities you participate in, this will ONLY be collected with your explicit permission. We would like to use this information for research purposes to monitor the impact participating in our sessions has. With the exception of photographs, this information will only be used anonymously in the form of data and may be shared with our funders and future funders. If we wish to share photographs taken in our sessions or quote written by/spoken by you with our project partners, we will make this clear in the photography/feedback sharing consent form.

We will only use your contact details in relation to the sessions and activities you have subscribed to. If you would like to receive our infrequent emails of new projects or opportunities that we are offering, then you can subscribe separately to this on our website.

We may need to use, retain and share your information if it is reasonably necessary to: (a) respond to legal process or to government requests; (b) enforce our agreements, terms and policies; (c) prevent, investigate, and address fraud and other illegal activity, security, or technical issues; or (d) protect the rights, property, and safety of our members staff, volunteers or others.

### **How we collect this information**

We collect this information in a form filled in by you, or a referral agent through our website (paper copies can be made available. We will check with you periodically if it is up to date.

When you complete our forms you are giving us consent by way of a contract to collect, store, use and share this information ONLY for the express uses listed above. You may revoke this consent at any time.

### **Storing your information**

We retain your personal information only for as long as necessary to provide you with our services and as described in our Data Protection Policy. However, we may also be required to retain this information to comply with our legal and regulatory obligations, to resolve disputes, and to enforce our agreements. We will generally keep your data for 7 years. Our Data storage is compliant with GDPR regulations and our data protection policy is reviewed regularly to ensure consistent application. This involves us keeping your contact details in a secure database accessed only by staff and volunteers as necessary.

In order to safely store data North East Wilds will:

- Use encryption where necessary.
- Keep documents and/or computers and phones password protected.
- Keep computer software up to date and use firewalls.
- Never leave service user data (including photos and quote) accessible to other people on their electronic devices.
- Never discuss service users in public places.
- Be mindful of their screen visibility.
- Use adequate spyware protection on their computers/devices accessing personal data.
- Only share documents and details with agreed sessional leaders.
- Never access North East Wilds CIC personal data on 3rd party servers.

Any Forest School Leaders with access to our service user's or freelancers/directors/volunteers data must ensure they follow the same procedures in this data protection policy for safely storing, using and accessing data.

### **Transfers of Personal Information Outside the EU**

We may store and process your information through third-party hosting services in the US and other jurisdictions. As a result, we may transfer your personal information to a jurisdiction with different data protection and government surveillance laws than your jurisdiction. If we are deemed to transfer information about you outside of the EU, we rely on Privacy Shield as the legal basis for the transfer, as Google Cloud is Privacy Shield certified.

### **Your Rights**

As a participant, volunteer or staff member you have a number of rights in relation to your personal information. While some of these rights apply generally, certain rights apply only in certain limited cases as described below.

**ACCESS.** You may have the right to access and receive a copy of the personal information we hold about you by contacting us using the contact information below.

**CHANGE, RESTRICT, DELETE.** You may also have rights to change, restrict our use of, or delete your personal information. Except for under exceptional circumstances (like where we are required to store data for legal reasons) we will generally delete your personal information upon request.

**OBJECT.** You can object to (i) our processing of some of your information based on our legitimate interests and (ii) receiving marketing messages from us after providing your express consent to receive them. In such cases, we will delete your personal information unless we have compelling and legitimate grounds to continue using that information or if it is needed for legal reasons.

**COMPLAIN.** If you wish to raise a concern about our use of your information (and without prejudice to any other rights you may have), you have the right to do so with your local data protection authority.

**How to Contact us:**

North East Wilds (Northern Wilds CIC) is the data controller for the purposes of data collection and use.

by email to: [hello@northeastwilds.org](mailto:hello@northeastwilds.org)

by post: 20 Haddricks Mill road, Newcastle, NE3 1QL

The ICO are there to help you if you feel your data protection rights have been breached. You can contact them on their website, by phone or for more information:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Phone: 0303 123 1113



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## Employing Staff, including Employing Ex-Offenders

- All facilitators working for North East Wilds will need to present a recent DBS check, or have a check completed through us.
- Potential employees are encouraged to disclose any criminal record to us upon application that we are legally entitled to know about, we will comply fully with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, code of practise and undertake to treat all applicants fairly.
- North East Wilds is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities of dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- North East Wilds select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
- North East Wilds also ensures to consult appropriate legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 when necessary.
- North East Wilds undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- All staff working with North East Wilds will need to complete the appropriate online contract with us, this includes supplying us with the necessary documentation and references for us to do background checks if we need to, confirm qualifications and store safety or emergency information about you should it be needed.

## Ticks

Ticks can transmit bacteria that cause diseases such as Lyme disease, which can lead to very serious conditions if left untreated. Symptoms of Lyme disease can include flu-like symptoms, fatigue, muscle and joint pain.

- After attending forest school, check for ticks, especially moist places on your body and along hair lines.
- If a tick is found, remove with a pair of tweezers or a tick removal tool.
- Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull upwards slowly and firmly, as mouthparts left in the skin can cause a local infection.
- Once removed, apply antiseptic to the bite area, or wash with soap and water and keep an eye on it for several weeks for any changes.
- Contact your GP if you begin to feel unwell and remember to tell them you were bitten by a tick or have recently spent time outdoors.
- For more information, visit: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/552740/Ticksandyourhealthinfoabouttickbites.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/552740/Ticksandyourhealthinfoabouttickbites.pdf)

## Special Education Needs

- All participants will be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured.
- All individuals will be given the opportunity to participate in all Forest School Activities regardless of age, ability or gender.
- We will do our best to accommodate all special educational needs within the forest school sessions it may sometimes be dependent upon additional support which will be discussed and arranged in advanced.
- We will meet with carers, support workers and family members where appropriate prior to beginning forest school sessions to discuss specific needs and if/how we can reasonably meet them.

## Behaviour management

### Expected behaviour

- Listen when other people are talking, especially to the Forest School Leaders.
- Take turns when talking with your peers, listen to what they have to say.
- Keep to the Forest School boundaries agreed with Leader.
- Be aware – keep yourself safe – look around you – take care.
- Keep your friends safe too.
- Use Forest School language – kind words always and be polite.
- Be patient with each other, everyone learns at different rates.

### Challenging behaviour

- Verbal and physical abuse will not be tolerated, individuals displaying this behaviour to Forest School Leaders and other members of the group will be first asked to stop and If it persists will be asked to leave.
- If an individual's behaviour becomes unsafe to themselves or others, then that behaviour will need to be stopped. Measures will be taken to stop the situation from escalating, and if needed we will ask the individual to leave the area. A discussion will follow once the situation has calmed down and a resolution will be sought.
- If further unsafe behaviour occurs, then the forest school leaders may choose to ask the individual not to return.
- Incidents will be recorded in the Forest School Incident book.

### Anti-Bullying Policy

- We will not tolerate any form of bullying, an anti-bullying culture will be established through following the Forest School ethos.
- All reports of bullying will be investigated through discussion with those involved.
- Wherever possible individuals will be encouraged to resolve the conflict themselves, if needed the Forest School leaders(s) will step in and facilitate reconciliation.
- Outside agencies may be contacted for support such as the police, counsellors or the family.
- If the problem is extreme, or persists the individual may be asked to leave.

## Ratios, Roles and Responsibilities

### Ratios

At every session the forest school leader and at least one other adult will be with the group at all times.

There will be one adult for every 8 participants.

### Roles

#### **Adult Assistant/Volunteers**

- They will take part in pre-session briefings from the Forest School Leader, assisting groups with tasks such as using saws, knives or bill hooks.
- They will promote the ethos of forest school to raise self-esteem and confidence as an overarching aim.
- Assist in monitoring participants when walking to and from Forest School activities, assisting individuals with their kit, including waterproofs.
- To ensure the health and safety of all participants at all times
- To safeguard the participants
- To report any concerns to the Forest School leader
- To report any hazards to the Forest School leader
- To know the location of the First Aid kit.

#### **Forest School Leaders**

- To plan for the session based on the needs of the individuals and the group, to have clear outcomes for the group but to adapt to the changing needs of the group and unexpected outcomes.
- The Forest School leader will run sessions, taking into consideration all the Health and Safety issues that could arise and inform volunteers, assistant adults or parents clearly of their role.
- The role of the Forest School leader is to boost and develop participant's self-esteem, self-belief and confidence by suggesting small, manageable tasks and ensure that they have time and freedom to learn at their own pace without pressure.
- They will model appropriate behaviour at all times and encourage individuals to develop a greater awareness of their own and other's emotional needs.
- The Forest School leader will be responsible for liaising with all interested parties, completing health and safety and risk assessments, following procedures, administering any first aid and maintaining the first aid kit, counting equipment in and out and maintaining tools.
- Forest School leaders will always take into consideration the specific needs of a particular group or individual. The leader will ensure that every participant is respected as an individual, and that bullying is not tolerated and that the rules and guidelines are followed.

- In the event of an emergency they will direct the group to safety.

**Members**

- Members need to be willing to get involved and try out new experiences.
- They need to listen to the instructions given by the Forest School Leaders especially regarding Health and Safety for themselves and their peers.
- Members must show respect for wildlife and the environment.
- They must respect each other.

**Parents**

- Parents need to help the child access the activities by preparing them for the sessions.
- They need to support the Forest School Leader by encouraging their child to take part in the sessions and to appreciate the work that their child completes in the Forest School sessions.

## Play

Play is a complex, crucial and enormous part of a child's development and it is important that it is fully supported in our forest school sessions. We believe that it can continue to be an important tool for adults too in a forest school setting. This will be communicated to staff and volunteers, as well as parents and guardians where appropriate before a forest school programme begins.

- All staff and volunteers will be advocates of play, recognising that play can help develop: physical, emotional and intellectual skills development, as well as afford an exploration of personal, social and cultural ideas, contexts and beliefs.
- Sessions will be planned to allow for a variety of play styles to be explored, informed by Bob Hughes 16 Play Types. This includes considering the environment, the tools and materials available, the skills that could be taught and any starting points, contexts or stories that could be introduced to the group.
- Leaders will move between participant-led, participant-initiated, leader-led and leader initiated play depending on the needs of individuals and the group but there shall be an emphasis on participant-led play.
- Leaders and volunteers will make careful observations of play and share these insights in order to help inform what needs are being met, and how they can be better or further met in future sessions.
- Leaders and volunteers may need to intervene if they perceive an unacceptable level of risk. If possible this should be leader-initiated and guided but with the participant's involvement.

## 16 Play Types

<b>Symbolic Play</b> Using objects, or actions to represent other objects, actions, or ideas, e.g. using a cardboard tube like a telescope.	<b>Rough and Tumble Play</b> Discovering physical flexibility, generally friendly and positive.	<b>Socio-Dramatic Play</b> When children act out experiences, e.g. playing house	<b>Creative Play</b> Allows children to explore, try out new ideas and use their imagination.
<b>Social Play</b> Any social situation where it's expected that everyone will follow the set rules - like during a game	<b>Communication Play</b> Play using words, gestures e.g. charades, telling jokes, play acting, etc.	<b>Dramatic Play</b> Play where children figure out roles to play, assign them and then act them out.	<b>Locomotor Play</b> Movement for movement's sake, just because it's fun. Things like chase, tag, hide and seek and tree climbing.
<b>Imaginative Play</b> play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply, like imagining you are a bee, or pretending you have wings.	<b>Exploratory Play</b> using senses of smell, touch and even taste to explore and discover the texture and function of things around them	<b>Fantasy Play</b> child's imagination gets to run wild and they get to play out things that are that are unlikely to occur, like being a pilot or driving a car.	<b>Deep Play</b> Play which allows the child to encounter risky experiences and conquer fear like heights, snakes, and creepy crawlies
<b>Mastery Play</b> control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments, like digging holes or constructing shelters.	<b>Object Play</b> play which uses sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements, like using a paintbrush.	<b>Role Play</b> play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense nature, like brushing with a broom, dialing with a telephone..	<b>Recapitulative Play</b> play that allows the child to explore ancestry, history, rituals, stories, rhymes, fire and darkness.

## References

(Accessed 9th June 2018)

<https://www.forestschoolassociation.org/history-of-forest-school/>

<https://www.nordicoutdoor.co.uk/blog/discover-friluftsliv-scandinavian-outdoor-life/>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264869269\\_Friluftsliv\\_The\\_Scandinavian\\_Philosophy\\_of\\_Outdoor\\_Life](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264869269_Friluftsliv_The_Scandinavian_Philosophy_of_Outdoor_Life)

<https://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/stan/pages/forest-school-case-study>

<https://www.forestschoolassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/>

(Accessed 28th June 2018)

<http://www.forestschoolportfolio.com/unit-3-learning-and-development-at-a-forest-school-programme/2-3-explain-how-holistic-development-is-facilitated-through-forest-school/>

(Accessed 20th February 2019)

Infographic on Bob Hughes Theories of Play:

<https://www.encourageplay.com/blog/16-different-types-of-play>

Else and Sturrock *Four Perspectives on Play* (2007)

Sourced: Kindling NOCn Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF) Course Handbook (2017-2019)

## Risk-Benefit Assessments

Risk-Benefit management is an essential skill needed for people's safety and well-being. It is important that we can see when a situation might pose a significant chance of harm and understand how to make it safer. Staff have a duty of care towards participants and volunteers, however, this does not mean avoiding all risks. Forest School leaders have a responsibility to not only keep people safe, but also to enable them to learn to identify risks, but to balance them against benefits and make the experience acceptably safe.

A site risk assessment is undertaken periodically at each project setting and a daily risk assessment and check is made prior to every Forest School session. In addition, an activity risk assessment will be established prior to any activity undertaken in forest school where there is a chance for harm. The Forest School leaders will identify any potential risks, evaluate them and decide upon measures that will be taken to reduce the risk and allow members to access the benefits of taking part in that activity.

We acknowledge that being in this kind of environment, using tools and working with fire can cause minor harm, scratches and scrapes that are minor and pose no ongoing threat are part of being in these spaces. Continuing to participate when minor accidents happen helps build resilience and strength.

### **How is risk is beneficial to participants of forest school?**

When we take a risk we don't do it for the sake of being at risk, its a possible dangerous consequence of undertaking an action or activity. There is a chance that the risk might come to fruition but equally that it might not. We gamble. The risk might happen and we should be prepared to live with that, and it should not be so bad as to outweigh the benefit; the excitement, fun, learning, reward of what happens when it doesn't go wrong, or as well as it going wrong. We have to take a leap into the unknown, putting our skills, body, courage, determination and more besides to the test. From it we can build many positive outlooks that can be transferred to other areas of our lives and these vary from individual to individual, with activities and over time. We might learn that the dangers we think were being exposed to are not actually that bad and we will survive, building resilience and confidence. We might learn that we have capabilities beyond what we thought we had. We expand our world beyond what we're told is safe, and learn ways to explore the unknown without taking too big a risk.

Current Risk Assessments are all kept at the end of this document.

### Our Risk Assessment methodology

**Hazard:** Something which could cause harm.

**Risk:** What could happen as a result of that hazard.

**Likelihood:**

1. Will hardly ever happen or will only happen in extraordinary circumstances.
2. Will happen rarely.
3. Will happen occasionally.
4. Will happen most times the activity is undertaken.
5. Will happen every time the activity is undertaken.

**Severity:**

1. No adult intervention beyond reassurance.
2. First aid on site
3. Non-emergency hospitalisation.
4. Emergency hospitalisation.
5. Fatality.

**Risk Level**

1 - 5	6 - 12	Above 12
Acceptable risk	Acceptable risk, however consider ways to reduce risk	Unacceptable risk unless mitigating circumstances.

**FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT****Undertaken by: Bryony Purvis 17th July 2018****Reassessed by: Bryony Purvis 30th January 2019. Reassessed by: Bryony Jones 22 February 2020****Use in conjunction with site risk assessment.**

**Benefits:** Group learn how to light a fire, and cook food. They learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn about the different properties of different materials that can be used as fuel. They get to provide warmth and take care of themselves.

Hazard	Risk	Who is at Risk	Risk Level (likelihood x severity)	Control measures	Person responsible	Risk Level with control measures applied
Lighting fires	burns, setting surrounding vegetation alight	All	3 x 4 = 12	<p>Ensure water on site near fire, fire blanket, gloves and burn kit.</p> <p>Leader demonstrate lighting and extinguishing fires.</p> <p>Forest school leader checks fire and surrounding ground that the fire is extinguished before leaving site.</p> <p>Safety position (one knee down) adopted near fire.</p> <p>Group made aware and practise the fire policy, moving around the outside of the fire.</p> <p>Only enter the fire circle when invited to do so.</p> <p>Wear gloves when adding fuel to the fire.</p>	Forest School Leader	1 x 3 = 3
Cooking/eating from fire	Burns to mouth, face and hands	All	3 x 3 = 9	Food should be removed from the fire and cooled before being consumed.	Forest School Leader	1 x 2 = 2
Extreme weather	Surrounding vegetation more flammable, winds cause fire to spread or sparks to fly.	All	4 x 4 = 16	<p>When the ground and surrounding vegetation is dry from extreme heat, avoid fires. If possible the ground could be soaked before hand.</p> <p>If the winds are high remove any nearby branches or twigs. Continue if there is a safe enough distance between fire and surrounding vegetation. If not, postpone.</p>	Forest School Leader	3 x 3 = 9

Kelly Kettle	Burns, scalds	All	2 x 4 = 8	<p>Ensure that the ground is cleared around the kelly kettle. Make a boundary around the kelly kettle that no one can enter.</p> <p>Point the spout away from the wind.</p> <p><b>REMOVE THE BUNG</b></p> <p>Use gloves to hold the kettle when pouring and carrying.</p> <p>Never look down the top when the fire is going.</p> <p>Follow fire precautions listed above.</p>	Forest School Leader	1 x 3 = 3
Fuel/Wood	Smoke Inhalation/ Environmental Impact	All	2 x 4 = 8	<p>Only use dried wood for lighting fires. If wood kindling is needed from site ensure that it is NOT collected from the ground, and any mosses, lichen or other plant-life is removed before using on the fire.</p> <p>Be careful to check the type of wood/tinder you are burning to make sure it won't release harmful toxins, such as bracken.</p>	Forest School Leader	1 x 3 = 3

**HANDLING NATURAL MATERIALS RISK ASSESSMENT****Undertaken by: Bryony Purvis 17th July 2018****Reassessed by: Bryony Purvis 30th January 2019. Reassessed by: Bryony Jones 22 February 2020****Use in conjunction with site risk assessment.****Benefits:** The group learns about different species. They explore their curiosity and adventurous spirit.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Who is at Risk</b>	<b>Risk Level (likelihood x severity)</b>	<b>Control measures</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Risk Level with control measures applied</b>
Moving heavy items	Pulling muscles, crushing	All	1 x 3 = 3	Ensure that no one carries anything bigger than they can comfortably manage. Ask that if sticks/branches are bigger than your arm you ask a friend to help you carry them. Bend the knees when lifting to protect your back.	Forest School Leaders	1 x 2 = 2
Insects and plants	Stings, poison anaphylactic shock	All	2 x 4 = 8	No touching of any known toxic plants, no touching of any fungi. Avoid areas where there are large amounts of stinging plants such as nettles. Ensure that the group knows what plants may sting and that some insects can sting too. Keep gloves on site for collecting stinging plants.	Forest School Leaders	1 x 2 = 2
Sharp or spikes edges to plants and branches	scratches, bangs and cuts especially to eyes	All, especially children	3 x 3 = 9	Remind everyone of being careful about where the ends of their sticks are when they are being carried. Forest school leaders to watch and intervene when sticks are not being transported safely. Gloves to be worn when they are particularly sharp, or have spikes. No running.	Forest School Leaders	2 x 2 = 4
In extreme weather conditions	branches may be blown out of hands, hitting other people.	All, especially children.	3 x 4 = 12	No carrying sticks longer than your arm, or wider than 50p. Make sure you have a safe distance around you when carrying sticks.	Forest School Leaders	2 x 2 = 4

**ROPES, STRINGS AND SHELTERS RISK ASSESSMENT****Undertaken by: Bryony Purvis 17th July 2018****Reassessed by: Bryony Purvis 30th January 2019. Reassessed by: Bryony Jones 22 February 2020****Use in conjunction with site risk assessment.**

**Benefits:** Being creative, making impressively complex and big structures. Leaning to tie knots, build shelters, survival. Having fun building swings, ladders etc.

Hazard	Risk	Who is at Risk	Risk Level (likelihood x severity)	Control measures	Person responsible	Risk Level with control measures applied
Trip hazard	Tripping, entanglement	All	2 x 3 = 6	Use brightly coloured ropes/string. Mark with bags etc. Group to be made aware of rope, with instructions or with markers. All rope/string collected in at the end of the session.	Forest School Leader	1 x 3 = 3
Rope Burn	Friction burn	All	2 x 4 = 8	Activities involving rope pulling will be controlled by the leader. Long clothing must be worn when using ropes. especially trousers. Gloves worn when handling rope with weight on the end.	Forest School Leader	1 x 4 = 4
Structures Collapsing	Banging heads, entrapment, minor injuries	All, especially children	2 x 4 = 8	Group taught and practise knots and lashing. Adult supervision on all rope activities. Structures and shelters not to exceed adult head height.	Forest School Leader	
Protruding Branches	Banging heads, poking eyes.	All	2 x 4 = 8	Ensure group are aware of safe materials to use. ensure structures are in safe places that don't easily block paths or obstruct other activities. Adult supervision of where shelters are build to ensure avoiding and round ground, or protruding sharp items.	Forest School Leader	

In extreme weather	Falls from wind moving objects.	All	$3 \times 4 = 12$	No ropes and tarps in extreme windy conditions unless a sheltered location can be found by the group leader.	Forest School Leader	$1 \times 4 = 4$
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**TOOLS RISK ASSESSMENT****Undertaken by: Bryony Purvis 17th July 2018****Reassessed by: Bryony Purvis 30th January 2019 Reassessed by: Bryony Jones 22 February 2020****Use in conjunction with site risk assessment.**

**Benefits:** Group learn how to use tools safely and effectively, and how to keep themselves safe. They grow in confidence, and develop their motor skills. They produce items that they can be proud of and share with other people.

Hazard	Risk	Who is at Risk	Risk Level (likelihood x severity)	Control measures	Person responsible	Risk Level with control measures applied
Bow saw	minor and major cuts	All	2 x 3 = 6	Blade covers on saws when not being used. Stored in tool bag. Glove on non-tool hand. Tool talk given before use. Regular maintenance of blades.	Forest School leaders	1 x 3 = 3
Knives	Minor, major cuts and stabs.	All	2 x 3 = 6	Stored in locked box, key carried by forest school leader. Tool talk given before use. No glove to be worn. Regular maintenance of blades. 1-2 ratio of use.	Forest School Leader	1 x 3 = 3
Billhook and mallet	Minor and major cuts and stabs banging of hands.	All	2 x 3 = 6	Covers on bill hooks are stored in tool bag. No gloves to be worn. Regular maintenance of blades. Tool talk given before use.	Forest School Leader	1 x 3 = 3
Loppers	Minor and major cuts, severed digits	All	2 x 3 = 6	Stored in tool bag. Tool talk given before use. No gloves to be worn.	Forest School Leader	1 x 3 = 3

Hand drill	minor and major cuts	All	$2 \times 3 = 6$	Stored in locked box, key carried by forest school leader. Tool talk given before use. No glove to be worn. Regular maintenance of blades. 1-2 ratio of use.	Forest School Leader	$1 \times 3 = 3$
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**CLIMBING TREES AND SLACKLINES RISK ASSESSMENT****Undertaken by: Bryony Purvis 30th January 2019 Reassessed by: Bryony Jones 22 February 2020****Use in conjunction with site risk assessment.****Benefits:** Group gains a sense of adventure, through reaching new heights.More detailed advice from the Forestry Commission: [\\$FILE/fce-rope-swings-dens-fires.pdf](https://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/fce-rope-swings-dens-fires.pdf)

Hazard	Risk	Who is at Risk	Risk Level (likelihood x severity)	Control measures	Person responsible	Risk Level with control measures applied
Falls to the Ground	Broken bones, twisted ankles, wrists and fatalities bruises, cuts and scrapes	All	2 x 6 = 12	Careful selection of climbing site by session leader, informed by tree type, condition of branches, and ground conditions.  The ground should be clear of hazards and of a suitable material (e.g. soft, grass, wood chip). Group briefing before activity. Supervised at all times. No peer pressure, or support. Only climb up what you can climb down. Only climb to a distance of your own height above the ground (with the right conditions, this could be doubled). Consideration of the wind speeds taken by session leader. NEVER BEECH TREES	Forest School leaders	1 x 5 = 5
Becoming hung up by feet/limbs	twists/sprains, scratches, cuts and bruises.	All	3 x 4 = 12	as above	Forest School leaders	2 x 3 = 6

Kicked accidentally by other people climbing.	Bruises, breaks.	All	$3 \times 4 = 12$	as above	Forest School leaders	$2 \times 3 = 6$
Slips on wet wood/vegetation or slackline	Breaks, twists/ sprains, bruising.	All	$3 \times 4 = 12$	<p>Slacklines and tree climbing won't be an option in wet conditions.</p> <p>Advise caution for vegetation when climbing trees, that it may make it slippy.</p> <p>Avoid using trees that have too much vegetation cover.</p>	Forest School leaders	$2 \times 3 = 6$
Slackline falls	Twists/sprains etc.	All	$3 \times 4 = 12$	<p>Slacklines secured to tree only with the correct equipment.</p> <p>Slacklines attachment checked before use by the session leader.</p> <p>No greater than knee height of the smallest user.</p> <p>Not used in wet or damp conditions.</p>	Forest School leaders	$2 \times 3 = 6$