

North East Wilds CIC

Handbook of Policies and Procedures 2021

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Our Mission Statement

North East Wilds is a not-for-profit organisation aiming to improve mental health and wellbeing through supporting people and communities to engage in outdoor activities that connect them with nature.

Awareness, Compassion, Self-belief and Connection is at the heart of everything we do.

Awareness - being in the moment without judgement, learning about yourself and accepting who you are.

Compassion - looking after yourself and your needs, as well as taking care of each other and the environment.

Self belief - discovering your skills, learning new ones and celebrating your successes.

Connection - building friendships, connecting with the natural world, finding purpose.

Aims

1. Deliver outdoor activities in local accessible settings to people of all ages.
2. Support communities to access outdoor activities which reconnect them with nature, especially where there is a greater mental health need or barriers to overcome.
3. Inspire and engage people and communities to independently take part in outdoor activities in order to support their mental health and wellbeing long-term.

Our Approach

We run long-term woodland wellbeing programmes, gardening and food growing projects that are evidence-based and community-led.

We also run adventurous, social, creative and educational clubs and events for all ages based on the forest school model of outdoor experience. We use the revenue generated from this to fund some of our programmes.

We use the Forest School model in our programmes. It teaches us to work with individuals, and to see their well-being as holistic - our projects are there for the whole person and through long-term, user-led, personalised engagement, signposting, collaboration and progression we aim to support people and communities to lead rich and fulfilled lives. Forest School is based on the following 6 principles:

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

Why our Sessions Work

1. They are outside

Nature relieves stress, it reduces cortisol levels, anxiety and depression. It connects us to something bigger than ourselves,

2. With others

We are social beings. It's been shown that social isolation is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

3. They are active

We encourage exercise which causes the body to release endorphins, these chemicals trigger positive feelings. Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety.

4. People are learning about wellbeing

We teach formally and informally about wellbeing. It may be in conversation; what works for you? Or it may be sitting down and doing mindfulness practice together. We teach DBT skills and WRAP (Well-ness Recovery Action Planning) Proven to be effective tools for managing your own wellbeing.

5. People are mastering new skills

There is nothing quite like mastering the ability to light a fire, or indeed sitting around it afterwards sipping a cup of hot tea. It gives you a moment to feel proud and an opportunity to forget about your worries and focus on the positives.

6. And are working with purpose

Taking care of the environments we're in, through surveys, tree-planting, litter-picking, coppicing or learning and sharing knowledge about our natural environments is both important to the future of our planet, but it also adds purpose and meaning to life.

Holistic Development

These are some of the ways our practitioners promote Holistic Development:

Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The leader lets the participants lead the activities, encouraging ownership and supporting self-awareness.• Structure activities for the level, character and ability of the group, so that tasks are achievable and can support personal satisfaction.
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflective activities at the start and/or end of activities to encourage thoughtfulness and self-awareness.• Try to give members the chance to talk through conflict, share successes and ideas to encourage conflict management skills and empathy.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create opportunities for members to lead activities, to work together and support each other.• Offer activities that rely on non-verbal communication to encourage a deeper communication and awareness of others.• encourage different pairings/groupings through shared interest to broaden friendship experiences.
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use review and reflecting time to internalise learning and help make it transferable knowledge.• Use ID books and guides to help develop knowledge of flora and fauna.
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach a variety of skills to help develop skills• Create opportunities for members to develop fitness through movement.

Spiritual

- Encourage the sharing of different points of view and beliefs.
- 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.

Policies and Procedures

The following are the minimum requirements for the safe running of all of North East Wilds' activities. All directors, practitioners and volunteers working on our projects have a duty to follow these policies and should be familiar with their contents.

Our policies and procedures are in support of the site's existing procedures and ours 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, their contact details can be found in the SITE RISK ASSESSMENTS.

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 the Directors.

This handbook of procedures and risk assessments was reviewed:

By Bryony Jones, director

on the 25th March 2021

Communicating with everyone involved

Starting a new group

- To help prepare members for programmes, the lead practitioners/directors will explain what is to be expected 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 whatsapp, 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 incidents to the organisations we work with and arrange a review 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 our Programmes.

All freelancers working with North East Wilds read and agree to follow our policies and procedures before leading sessions with us.

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.
- Confirmation 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.
- 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.
- Check 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.
- Discuss the three look-afters: yourself, each other and the environment

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/equipment cleaned and 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 the lesson, and what to focus on next time.
- A session review is completed after each session.

Missing child

North East Wilds aims to encourage exploration and adventure in its participants, but with this sense of freedom comes the risk of straying too far.

To minimise the chance of a participant getting lost, the group leader will:

- Encourage an awareness of the surrounding area through games and discussion
- Agree with participants physical boundaries though the use of games and markers
- Agree with participants specific call or whistle to signify regroup

In the event of a missing child or participant, the leader will:

- Call participants back to a designated area using a pre agreed call or whistle
- Do a head count against the session register
- Ensure safety and supervision of group
- Conduct search of area
- Call 999 if the participant is still missing after 5 minutes. At this point the emergency procedure

would be followed.

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 an online report.
- 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.
- Record in session review.
- 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 the incident.
- Complete incident form online.

- All incidents 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.
- Lead practitioners are responsible for making sure there is an outdoor first aid kit, appropriate to the sessions on site at all times.
- 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 as well as improving mental alertness and concentration.
- Publicise walking routes, local physical activity classes and facilities.
- Provide details of the government's 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 healthy 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 judgmentally, 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 a 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)

[Childline](#) – for children and young people under 19

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

Fire Procedure

During our sessions, 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 lead and support staff. Any disregard for the Fire Circle rules needs addressing by the lead practitioner immediately.

Refer to the site risk assessments for any fire notifications that need to be made on the day.

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 the 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 the 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.

Before starting a fire

Establish a Fire Circle and introduce participants to 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 the equivalent of your knee.
- Prior to lighting a fire check with the 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)

HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICES (NEWCASTLE): 0191 2116102 (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 considered for 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 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 surfaces 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.

Healthy Eating

We will try to follow the school meals healthy eating standards:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-meals-healthy-eating-standards>

- high-quality meat, poultry or oily fish
- fruit and vegetables
- bread, other cereals and potatoes

There can't be:

- drinks with added sugar, crisps, chocolate or sweets in school meals and vending machines
- more than 2 portions of deep-fried, battered or breaded food a week

We do permit fire-baked cakes, biscuits and hot drinks in moderation.

Useful Contacts

(Health and Safety Officer - Gateshead Council)

GordonSmiles2@gateshead.gov.uk

NeilKilgour@Gateshead.Gov.Uk

(Food Safety Service - Newcastle Council)

0191 2116102

psr@newcastle.gov.uk

All lead practitioners are encouraged to follow government Food Hygiene guidelines here:

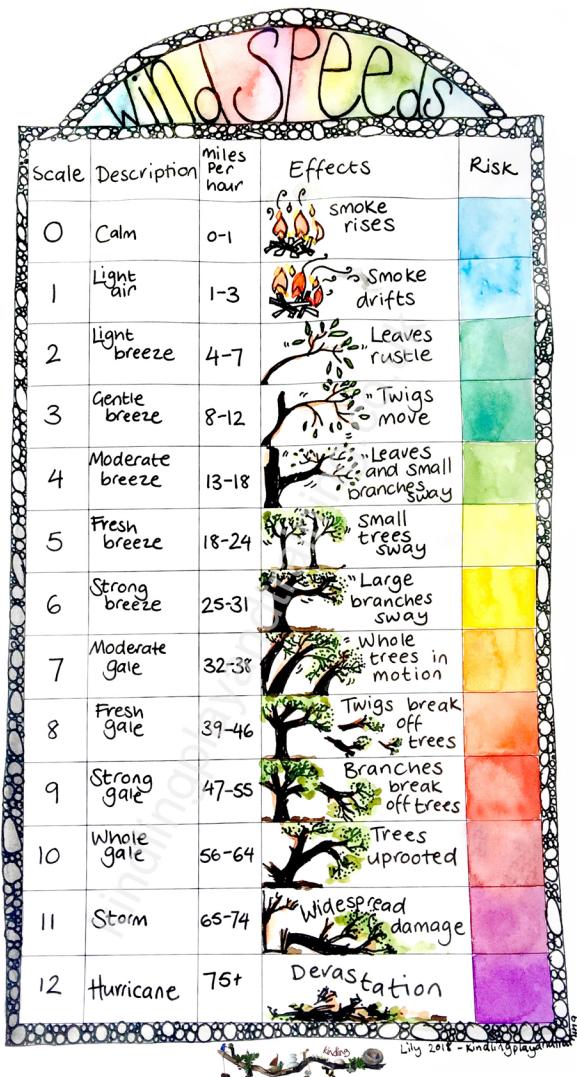
https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/sfbb-childminders-pack_0.pdf

Manual Handling

- Inspect the load to be lifted or moved for sharp edges, and cover/be mindful of.
- 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 locations which are beyond reach.

Weather

"There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing". Our sessions run in all weather with the exception of strong winds and thunderstorms. Before the session, the leader will do an appropriate risk assessment of the site and the weather and make sure the participants are correctly dressed for the session. As many of our participants are vulnerable, their physical well-being and emotional capacity to handle cold, wet weather must be balanced against the benefits.



Conditions for cancelling or moving a session

- Winds or gusts 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.

Directors/administration will discuss cancellation with lead practitioners on the day/leading up to the event.

Protection and comfort

- If children are getting cold, they can play an active game, sit by a fire or share a shelter.
- There will either be fresh water supplied or children will be asked to bring their own supply of drinking water.
- 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 participant records, which will be made available to Forest School Leaders working in those sessions.
- Medication will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians or participants.
- No pain-relief medication will be given out to participants.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent can only be offered with consent/agreement from parents/guardians.

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.
- Toilets will be in reach of each site, sometimes that this will be a short walk away at other times it will be a portable camping toilet.
- 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, or participants will be notified to bring their own water supply to sessions.
- 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.
- Participants will 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.
- Toilet waste will be double-bagged, taken off site and binned appropriately.

Forest School Tools and Activities

Using a range of tools is an important part of our sessions 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 and risk assessment.

Maintenance

- All tools in the first instance are cleaned, maintained and stored safely by the lead practitioners.
- Prior to use, the lead practitioner 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 lead practitioner 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.
- Tools should be put away after use.
- You should never run when carrying a tool.

Bow Saw	<p>What is it used for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>How</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Walk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold it like a handbag with the blade facing downwards. <p>Pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the blade facing down and pass the handle end towards someone. <p>Put down or away</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When it's not being used, return the cover and place it to your side with the blade end facing towards you. • When it's finished, return to its tool bag. <p>Glove</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No glove on tool hand, glove on the other hand holding the wood.
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BILLHOOK	<p>What is it used for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Splitting or timing wood. <p>How</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place the wood to be split/trimmed on a tree stump. • 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. • Start with small taps and then move the bigger ones. • Use a clear question and answer 'are you ready' 'this will be a little tap'. <p>Walk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold next to the leg with the hook facing backwards. <p>Pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the blade facing down, hold the top of the tool and pass the handle towards the other person. <p>Put down or away</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always return the sheath. • Place by your side with the hook facing inwards and the handle facing outwards. • When it's finished with, return to its tool bag. <p>Glove</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No gloves on the tool.
KNIVES (Sheath Knife, Spoon Knife, Hand drills and Peelers)	<p>What is it used for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carving and whittling wood. <p>How</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blade always faces and pulls away from you. • Cross your arms over your body so the wood and knife are working on the outside of your body. • Have a hard surface below you and where the knife pulls down. <p>Walk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold next to the leg with the blade facing backwards and the sheath cover on. <p>Pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding the sheathed blade, pass the handle towards the other person. <p>Put down or away</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always return the sheath. • Place down on the work surface or by your leg with the blade facing towards you. • When finished with return to the tool bag. <p>Glove</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glove only worn on the non-knife hand.

LOPPERS	<p>What is it used for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting anything smaller than a 2 pence piece. <p>How</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A partner holds the end of the wood to be cut. • Open handles to open blade ends and place around wood. • Close tightly and firmly to cut the wood, making sure fingers nowhere near. • Close and lock handles together when not using. <p>Walk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold under the arm across your body like a chicken. <p>Pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure blades are closed and locked, hold just below the handle and offer the handle to the other person. <p>Put down or away</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always lock the blades together when not in use. • Place on a work surface, or back in the tool bag when not in use. <p>Glove</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No gloves on this tool.
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Pruning Saw	<p>What is it used for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pruning small branches on trees. • Sawing/cutting small pieces of wood. <p>How</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firmly holding the handle, unfold the blade away from the body until it clicks into position. • Keep the blade horizontal. • Rest your hand on the wood above where you are cutting. • Always saw away from hands, legs and body. <p>Walk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold next to the leg with the saw opening facing backwards. <p>Pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold the folded away blade end and pass the handle to the other person. <p>Put down or away</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always close the saw when not in use, make sure it clicks into place. • Place on a work service or by your leg with the saw facing towards you. • When finished with, return to its tool bag. <p>Glove</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glove worn on the hand supporting the wood.
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Flint and Steel	<p>What is it used for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating a spark to start a fire. <p>How</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kneel on one knee.• Find a clear but not a dry area to work (if not in the fire circle itself).• Two arms lengths away from anyone else.• Hold the flint in your non-dominant hand and the steel in your other.• Strike the steel away from the body, altering the angle, the speed, the side or direction till you get a spark.• Aim at the cotton wool/kindling. <p>Put down or away</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place down on the work surface.• Return to the tool bag when finished with. <p>PPE, clothing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NO protective clothing is necessary.• Don't use loose or flammable clothing, or near flammable materials.
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<p>Kelly Kettle/Storm Kettle</p>	<p>What is it used for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating/boiling water. <p>How</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a clearing of an adult stride in radius and mark the perimeter. • Work out the wind direction and mark the side opposite this, this will be avoided as the wind will blow smoke in this direction. • Point the hole in the base towards the wind. • <u>REMOVE THE CORK/PLUG</u> • 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. • Kneel on one knee and keep feeding the fire. • Once the water boils, remove the kettle from the heat using a glove and place carefully on the ground. • Always use a gloved hand to pick up the kettle after it has been on a fire. • Never look down the kettle when the fire is lit. • Hold the handle and tip the base with a gloved hand to pour. <p>Storage</p> <p>Make sure the fire is completely out, pour out embers and use water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cork/plug can be added when the water inside is cooler to protect it from contamination. <p>Gloves</p> <p>Always wear a glove on the hand adding wood to the fire or moving the kettle.</p>
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Ropes and Tarps	<p>What is it used for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Used to make shelters• Used to build ladders, swings and seats. <p>Before Starting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss friction burns.• Discuss how the rope cannot be used to tie anyone up.• Ropes checked regularly for frays or damage.• Check the tree for dead wood or fungal growth.• Check for obstacles (tree string).• Maximum swing height (at its highest swing point) should be 1.5 metres.• Check the fall site for sharp objects. <p>Supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead practitioners should check knots before being used.• An adult must always be present for tree-climbing. <p>Gloves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have gloves available for use if needed/wanted.
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Pond dipping	<p>How</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach the pond slowly. Kneel on one knee, both knees or lie on your belly near the pond when retrieving creatures or water from the pond. <p>Safety Precautions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pond will be signposted as a potential hazard. All members will be made aware of the risks of the pond. Only walk near the pond. Children are always supervised by adults when near the pond. Wash hands after pond dipping. Cover any wounds when pond dipping. Rinse pond-dipping equipment after use. <p>Environmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return all creatures and plants back into the pond at the end of the session.
Handling natural materials, flora and fauna	<p>Safety Precautions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate clothes and shoes need to be worn onsite, including closed shoes. Hands should be washed after handling any creatures or plants. Remind participants not to eat any wild plants without being invited to by a forest school leader. When carrying logs/wood, consider using long sleeves/gloves or rope. <p>Environmental</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return all creatures and plants back to their natural environment after use.
Tree Climbing	<p>Safety Precautions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees that are safe to climb will be identified and checked by the lead practitioner, they will be free from fungal growth and dead wood and have low branches strong enough to support an adult's weight. These trees will be marked and individuals notified. • Individuals will not climb higher than 1.5 metres. • An adult will always be present when someone is climbing the tree. • 3 points of contact on the tree at all times. • No climbing near the fire.

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

The Deputy Safeguarding Officer is:
Clara Warden 07976 905762

This Safeguarding Policy was reviewed: 25 March 2021
Next Review March 2022

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.

All practitioners will complete safeguard training to a relevant level.
<https://www.newcastlesafeguarding.org.uk/training-category/safeguarding-children-courses/>

<https://www.newcastlesafeguarding.org.uk/training-category/safeguarding-adult-courses/>

Prevention and Vigilance

- Practitioners will be committed to safeguarding all members of the course, by following the procedures in this handbook and the Forest School principles.
- All lead practitioners, assistants and volunteers will have necessary DBS certificates.
- All sessional leaders and assistants 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 Practitioners 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.
- Practitioners should be aware of the different types of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.
- Practitioners 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 practitioners 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

- If the child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, remain with them and call the police.
- 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.
1. Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the disclosure. This could make things a lot worse.
 2. If it is an emergency situation call 999.
 3. Remove the child or vulnerable adult from harm's 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).
 4. Contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer, who contacts 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. 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.go.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:

Safeguarding Partnership: <https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/index.html>

Contacts in Newcastle: https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_newcastle_contacts.html

LADO Contacts in Gateshead: https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/files/gateshead_what_is_a_lado.pdf

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

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

In an emergency

999

Online Support:

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

<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 in our sessions. 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 Lead Practitioners 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.

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 quotes 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 freelancers.
- Never access North East Wilds CIC personal data on 3rd party servers.

Any practitioners 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 CIC is the data controller for the purposes of data collection and use.

by email to: 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

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 an 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 or voluntary position.
- 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.

Equal Opportunities

North East Wilds is committed to promoting equality. We have a number of policies in place that support this commitment, including our ex-offenders policy and fair pay policy.

We're committed to promoting equality by taking positive action for those that are under-represented in outdoor activities such as women, non binary and LGBTQ+ young people, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups, Differently Abled and Neurodiverse young people and families.

We are developing our organisation to be led by those with lived experience, promoting equality in the workplace for those with mental health conditions. We do this through making sure our sessions are led by the participants, through project consultations and through training opportunities for members that help them progress in their role within our organisation.

North East Wilds CIC is committed to paying its staff fair pay and keeping in line with our industries standards.

The directors of North East Wilds CIC have taken part in diversity and inclusion CPD, so that this will influence the work that we deliver at every level, from project planning to delivery.

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 hairlines.
- 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

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 our activities regardless of age, ability or gender.
- We will do our best to accommodate all special educational needs within our sessions, however may sometimes be dependent upon additional support which will be discussed and arranged in advance.
- We will meet/communicate with carers, support workers and family members where appropriate prior to beginning 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 boundaries agreed with the Lead practitioner.
- 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/abusive behaviour occurs, then the lead practitioners 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 lead practitioner and at least one other adult will be with the group at all times.

There will be at least one adult for every 8 participants.

SESSIONAL LEAD PRACTITIONER

Hours: 2 - 6hrs per session, flexible as required

Reports To: Directors

Responsible For: Assistant Practitioners during sessions

Budget Responsibilities: Details in Job Outlines, specific to each project.

MAIN PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE JOB

- To carry out the duties of a Forest School Leader for a variety of client groups, in accordance with North East Wilds' policies and procedures, under the direction of the Directors.

DUTIES AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- To plan, prepare and deliver a range of sessions to clients, with guidance/instruction from the Directors and support from assistants as appropriate. Client groups will include children's after school and holiday clubs, preschool groups, and school visits as well as adult events and woodland mental health programmes.
- To ensure there is a first aid kit on site at all times.
- To have phone contact at all times.
- To assess the site prior to the start of each session.
- The lead practitioner 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 lead practitioner 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.
- All hours are negotiable/flexible but agreed in advance.
- To liaise with clients on the day of sessions to manage last minute changes, cancellations, sickness, early pick-ups etc.
- To liaise with clients prior to sessions on some occasions as directed by the directors to ensure plans are appropriate and all needs and expectations are met.
- To ensure the environment is safe for the sessions to proceed including on the day site risk assessments and weather checks.
- To supervise and support clients with varying needs while delivering sessions.
- To create and maintain an engaging, fun safe and supportive environment, demonstrating flexibility in planning and running sessions in response to varying/changing needs of both children and adults.
- To manage equipment safely and carefully, ensuring it is safely and carefully stored after sessions.
- In the event of an emergency they will direct the group to safety.
- For longer term programmes, to develop longer-term planning as well as support and monitor holistic development and the successful progression of projects.
- To ensure that all sessions are well prepared.
- To keep an accurate register of who is present in sessions.
- To be aware of and comply with all North East Wilds' Policies and Procedures.
- To participate in training and other learning activities/meetings as required.
- To administer basic first aid as the need arises.
- To observe confidentiality at all times.
- To undertake all duties reasonably requested by the Director.
- To complete session reviews after every session.
- To supply or upload photos (that have consent) and a description of activities for marketing purposes.
- To follow up on serious incidents with incident reports.
- To monitor and evaluate their own work and the success of the project and contribute towards their successful development.

SESSIONAL ASSISTANT PRACTITIONER

Hours: 2 - 6hrs per session, flexible as required

Reports To: Lead Practitioner/Directors

Responsible For: None

Budget Responsibilities: None

MAIN PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE JOB

- To carry out the duties of a Forest School Leader for a variety of client groups, in accordance with North East Wilds' policies and procedures, under the direction of the Directors.

DUTIES AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- To support the delivery of a range of Forest School sessions to clients, with guidance/instruction from the Lead Practitioners and Directors. Client groups will include children's after school and holiday clubs, preschool groups, and school visits as well as adult events and woodland mental health programmes.
- All hours are negotiable/flexible but agreed in advance.
- To support the Lead Practitioner on the day to ensure the environment is safe for the sessions to proceed including on the day site risk assessments and weather checks.
- To supervise and support clients with varying needs while delivering sessions.
- To create and maintain an engaging, fun and supportive environment, demonstrating flexibility in planning and running sessions in response to varying/changing needs of both children and adults.
- To support holistic development.
- To be aware of and comply with all North East Wilds' Policies and Procedures.
- To participate in training and other learning activities/meetings as required.
- To administer basic first aid as the need arises.
- To observe confidentiality at all times.
- To undertake all duties reasonably requested by the Director.
- To support the lead practitioner to follow up on serious incidents.
- To monitor and evaluate their own work and the success of the project and contribute towards their successful development.
- To safeguard the participants
- To report any concerns to the lead practitioner.

- To report any hazards to the lead practitioner.
- To know the location of the First Aid kit.

PAY STRUCTURE

The Pay Structure will be reviewed annually against industry and local standards. Any increases in client fees will be reflected in practitioner rates of pay.

The number of delivery hours/preparation time and budgets will be detailed in the 'Freelance Job Outline'. The preparation time and expense budget will be allocated by the directors and will take into consideration the needs of the project and group as well as the funds available.

All job outlines are only provisional and are not guaranteed days of employment. If sessions need to be cancelled or postponed North East Wilds CIC may not be able to continue with the agreed payment.

Members

- Members need to be willing to get involved and try out new experiences.
- They need to listen to the instructions given by the lead practitioners especially regarding Health and Safety for themselves and their peers.
- They must complete a referral form online and agree to follow our members agreement.
- There must be no abuse or disrespectful speech.
- 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 lead practitioner by encouraging their child to take part in the sessions and to appreciate the work that their child completes in the 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, assistants 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

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

Infographic created by www.encourageplay.com

Play Type Information from Hughes, B. (2002) A Playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types, 2nd edition, London:

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 beneficial to participants in our sessions?

When we take a risk we don't do it for the sake of being at risk, it's 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 we're 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.

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.

Lone-Worker Procedure

Working alone can present challenges and situations that need to be carefully managed to keep you safe. We expect freelancers for North East Wilds CIC to follow the following steps to keep safe when working along.

Visiting homes/deliveries

- Your delivery route and departure time needs to be communicated to one of the directors of North East Wilds CIC before your departure.
- Always take a charged phone with you on delivery routes.
- Only deliver during daylight hours and avoid areas that are unsafe, such as dark/undercover alleyways etc.
- Do not take any valuables with you when completing home deliveries.
- Areas that are known to be violent should be attended with an assistant.
- When you have completed your deliveries, you need to notify the same director of your safe completion.
- If any incident arises during the deliveries, please record an incident report form and notify the safeguarding lead immediately.
- Do not enter a participants home/premises when working for North East Wilds CIC.
- Do not make arrangements to visit the homes of participants outside of work agreements.
- In an emergency call 999.

Equality and Diversity

Individuals with different cultures, perspectives and experiences are at the heart of the way we work. We want to work with and for all people regardless of their background. At North East Wilds we are guided by our values in everything we do, and recognise that being a diverse and inclusive organisation helps us fulfil our responsibility to make a difference for our communities. We work within the spirit and the practice of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting a culture of respect and dignity and actively challenging discrimination, should it ever arise.

Every participant and contractor is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. North East Wilds CIC will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed because of a protected characteristic: sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin), disability, sexual orientation, religion and or belief, and age.

Where this applies:

This policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and also to conduct outside of the workplace that is related to your work (e.g. at meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues) or which may impact on North East Wilds' reputation (e.g. the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy).

Training

Directors of North East Wilds CIC will undertake equality and diversity training.

Promotion

All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit, and will not be influenced by any of the protected characteristics listed above. Promotion opportunities will be monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers to promotion.

Positive Action

We're committed to promoting equality by taking positive action for those that are under-represented in outdoor activities such as women, refugee and asylum seekers and those with mental health difficulties.

Pay

North East Wilds CIC is committed to paying its staff fair pay and keeping in line with industry standards (see fair pay policy).

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