

Forest School Handbook of Policies & Procedures

**To be read by all adult leaders, volunteers and visitors for GREEN TREE
ADVENTURES forest school sessions.**

The GREEN TREE ADVENTURES handbook contains information, policies and procedures relating to the running of Forest School sessions or party in a safe and enjoyable way.

Our Ethos

We believe everybody should have regular, long-term access to a woodland or natural environment

which provides them with inspirational and challenging outdoor learning opportunities. Forest School offers a learner centred approach, where participants can learn through self-directed play and exploration. Participants who come to the site with GREEN TREE ADVENTURES will be given the opportunity to develop their curiosity, confidence, self-esteem, creativity, empathy, communication skills, knowledge of the natural environment and ability to assess risk.

Activities

Our activities will depend on the ability and experience of participants. Examples of Forest School

activities include:

- Woodland management and nature exploration
- Building dens and other structures
- Fires and cooking
- Games and invitations for imaginative play
- Natural crafts
- Using tools, such as knives and saws
- Scavenger hunts and adventure
- Seasonal celebrations

Local medical facilities

The nearest 24/7 Accident and Emergency department is WORCESTER HOSPITAL

Environmental Policy & Environmental Impact Assessment

We aim for all our participants and staff to engender a high level of respect for the natural world and encourage all to be involved in decisions about their environment and safety.

We aim to ensure that, where possible, GREENTREE ADVENTURES purchases products that have been assessed for having a lower impact on the environment. By operating in a way that minimises waste, optimises recycling and promotes the reuse of materials we hope to demonstrate and encourage a wider respect for the environment, as well as an understanding that all produce and waste is linked to the health of our planet as a whole.

On site activities such as fires will follow practices that minimise impact on wildlife through being mindful of what is burnt and how any residues are disposed of. Before leaving a site, we will ensure that litter is collected and disposed of suitably.

Minimising Impacts

Activity	Impact	Mitigation
Collecting wood	Dead wood is important to any woodland ecology as it has a multitude of uses, from homes for mini beasts to beds for fungi, so a lack of it is bad for any woodland habitat	Limit the frequency of fires and evaluate the amount of dry, dead wood before having a fire. Collect only the minimum amount required for any given fire. Reserve specific areas for dead wood conservation.
Fires	Changes in soil chemistry can lead to increases in PH levels, carbon, phosphorous, etc. which can be harmful to some plants, whilst other essential nutrients may be depleted. Fire can travel underground to roots even after appearing to be extinguished.	Designate fixed locations for fires on parts of the site that aren't particularly ecologically interesting or unique. If possible, dispose of ash into patches of nettles. Ensure that all fires are extinguished fully before leaving the site. Where needed, use a fire wok to contain fire.
Cooking	Food waste may attract animals to the site or increase	Inform participants of these impacts and provide a container

	numbers of certain species, potentially leading to adverse changes in biodiversity.	(to be taken away) or an ecologically sound place for food disposal.
Tree climbing, Shelter building & Swings	Damage to trees.	Restrict these activities to suitable trees that will tolerate them.
Collecting Natural Materials	Damage to plants – some plants are far more sensitive to losing their leaves or flowers than others and different seasons affect this too. plants are best to pick, if any.	Inform groups as to which plants are best to pick. Ensure leaves or flowers are taken from fallen parts where possible. Limit the frequency of this type of activity. Leave plants unpicked whenever picking is unnecessary
Toilet use	Wet wipes contain plastic. Human waste entering waterways.	Burying faeces and tissues ensures they biodegrade. Either buy biodegradable ones, refrain from using them, or dispose of them in a bag to be taken away. Designated toileting area will be at least 20 metres from a waterway.

Health & Safety

Health & Safety Policy

Forest School programmes may include activities that are considered higher risk than usual for participants. It is the general approach of GREENTREE ADVENTURES to consider not only the risks of each activity but the potential benefits too. However, GREENTREE ADVENTURES seeks to minimise risk by following appropriate procedures for more risky activities, such as tool use and fires, and by carrying out risk assessment covering key hazards that participants may come into contact with during a session.

Legislation

GREENTREE ADVENTURES fully accepts its legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The purpose of this act is to promote, stimulate and encourage high standards of health and safety at work. It protects not only all people at work, but also the health and safety of the general public who may be affected by the work activities.

Staff & Training

All our tutors are professionals with relevant qualifications and experience and have undertaken current DBS (CRB) checks. At least one member of the on-site team will hold an up to date first aid qualification.

Risk / Benefit Analyses

We believe that, while there are risks that must be considered, there are also a wide range of potential benefits that can be gained by those involved. We also recognise that taking risks is an important part of learning and developing and we want to provide a safe and supportive environment in which participants can learn about risks, challenges and personal safety. Consequently, we will use a risk/benefit analysis in our assessment of our sites and activities.

On Site Risk Assessment Procedure

Forest School sites must be safe and easily accessible, so with the help of the forestry department we will visit and assess sites before activities take place. During

our assessment we will seek to identify significant hazards and take action or precautions to reduce the risk to a safe level.

We will make agreements with landowner and explore specific site issues if necessary. Whilst doing this we will identify any hazards and implement the necessary controls, check for mobile phone coverage and access in case of emergency, and assess toilet facilities.

When and where possible, we will carry out a last check of a site prior to the arrival of a group.

Changing weather conditions and visitors to the site can create new challenges, such as fallen branches and litter. These will need to be assessed and may alter previously arranged activities.

Where checks are not possible prior to groups' arrival a site sweep and assessment will be made with the group upon their arrival.

There are five steps to risk assessment:

1. Look for the hazards, such as windblown trees or litter
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
4. Record the findings
5. Review the assessment and revise if necessary

Shared Information & Responsibility

The majority of site-based activities undertaken by GREEN TREE ADVENTURES are carried out in partnership with schools and other organisations. In these situations, the sharing of responsibility with respect to group safety and risk/benefit analysis will be agreed in advance. Any special knowledge of the group - for example a participant may have a particular fear of dogs or a food allergy - can be useful when planning activities as we aim to make every session as beneficial to participants as possible. Partner organisations and schools must provide information on behaviours that may present risk to individuals and/or the group and, if necessary, a separate risk assessment prepared.

Insurance

GREEN TREE ADVENTURES and its staff are insured by for £5 million public liability cover.

Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure

Emergencies are never wanted, but they are a possibility, and so we at GREEN TREE ADVENTURES ensure that all leaders are familiar with appropriate emergency procedures. Most emergencies can be resolved on-the-spot by the leader removing the group from potential threat and providing first aid.

However, in the event of a serious incident, which could arise as a result of an injury, illness or threat, emergency services should be contacted and the following procedures followed:

1. Secure safety of whole group from further danger. Stop all work/activities if safe. Call in and locate group promptly as agreed with group in advance. If possible, remove whole group from any further danger or threat of danger.
2. First Aider to attend to any casualties with adult helper and with regard for maintenance of required supervision ratios for the rest of the party. At least one first aider must be on site at all times. A record of changes in casualties' state and anything administered to them to be made if possible.
3. Emergency services contacted as necessary, ideally by an adult helper. Charged mobile phones are carried by staff. Despatch a designated driver to meet emergency vehicle at the entrance where possible/necessary.
4. Safety of the rest of group will be maintained by the remaining staff and adults

away from the scene of the incident.

5. Informing next of kin should be carried out as soon as practicable after the incident by GREEN TREE ADVENTURES.

6. Inform management of GREEN TREE ADVENTURES and managers of partner organisations must be informed of any major incident as soon as possible.

Following this as soon as is possible the landowner of the site should also be informed.

7. Incident report and/or first aid book should be filled in on site if possible and then logged back with GREEN TREE ADVENTURES (some visiting group staff may fill out their own incident report form) – see first aid kit for report form. This should be filled in whenever the emergency plan is used even if no one was harmed and it was just a near miss.

Legislation

Ensure that all equipment involved in an accident or incident is retained in an unaltered condition in case it is required by the police.

Do not focus on who is at fault. In all cases keep a careful written record i.e. a log, of all facts, events, times and circumstances and retain this record until all matters are finally settled. If possible, take photographs.

Do not allow anyone to interview any party member without an independent witness being present.

An incident report or entry in the first aid book must be completed, signed and dated (at GREEN TREE ADVENTURES office, if not done on site).

Incidents leading to admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours or resulting in an injury preventing a person working for three or more days afterwards need to be registered with RIDDOR within 24 hours Tel 0845 3009923 (HSE - Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm).

First aid kits must be restocked after use and a stock check carried out every 6 months.

Any incident or near miss must be subsequently investigated by staff team to review existing controls and procedures.

Lost or Missing Person Procedure

Unknown woods can be disorientating, especially if a participant is unused to this kind of environment. Many woodland sites are not surrounded by walls or fences, and whilst we appreciate this sense of freedom can be beneficial to all, there is also the possibility that a participant may get

lost. There are a number of ways we can prevent this:

- We encourage all our participants to take an interest in their surroundings so as to help them find their bearings. Ultimately, we would like to inspire all who are able to become responsible for their own safety with respect to staying close to the rest of the group.
- Boundaries will be chosen, clearly marked and made known to the group. Going outside the boundaries will require all of the group to go or a subgroup, with at least one leader – allowing at least two leaders to stay with remainder of group.
- The group will be counted in and checked at start and end of day, then at other relevant points in the day – particularly after activities that include members splitting up.
- Good communication within the group will encourage collective responsibility for each other's safety – leaders are always approachable and should be made aware if there are any concerns as to a participants whereabouts.

In the event of leaders fearing that a member of the group has gone missing:

1. All the group will be immediately called back in, by prearranged call or whistle, and counted and missing member determined. The time will be noted.
2. The Group Leader must ensure the safety of remaining pupils. At least two adults must stay with them at all times.
3. One or more adults should immediately start searching for the missing group member – calling and whistling as appropriate.
4. If the missing group member is not found within 10 minutes, the group Leader must contact police by telephoning 999 (this will result in the emergency plan coming in to action).

Leaders must recall and write down a description of what the missing person was wearing and any distinguishing features. Any information on their last known location and time should be noted. Also, if they have any special medical or learning needs then these need to be noted down. All information then must be passed to police or other agencies.

Tools, Fires & Activity Guidance:

Tool Use Procedure

Using a range of tools will be necessary in many site-based activities and is an important part of our work as it enables participants to develop new practical skills that help develop self-confidence. Green tree adventures aims to ensure that all people participating in sessions with tools do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible. Tools that may be used include potato peelers, bowsaws, pruning saws, loppers, knives, drills and hatchets. The following guidelines are to be followed when using tools:

- The forest school leader will check all tools are fit for continued use before the session
- Only tools that are in safe working order shall be supplied for use
- Correct and safe use of sharp tools will be demonstrated to all staff and participants
- Tools should be counted when handed out and counted back in again when finished
- All groups are to be supervised closely by competent leaders until deemed competent to work with limited supervision
- Tools should be kept in a designated safe area when not in use - none should be left unattended outside this area
- All knives will be closed/ sheaved immediately after use
- Saw guards will be replaced immediately after use
- Walking around with open/ unmasked tools will not be permitted
- Safe working distances and suitable ratios must be maintained at all times

All group members will wear suitable boots/shoes and outdoor clothing for the activity they take part in. Where any cutting or felling is taking place, helmets should be worn, and gloves provided for handling brash etc.

Guidance on Knife Use

Designate a specific zone for those using knives

Always carry knife with sheath firmly on

Always pass knife with sheath firmly on and in demonstrated manner

Always keep knife in sheath when not in use

Leader to count knives out & back in

Ensure participants have had demonstration before use (& leader is confident of participant's ability) including grip and body position

Knife work is always supervised by a responsible adult. Each person to sit well out of reach of others (blood bubble)

Fire Procedure

Fires and the use of storm kettles are an important part of Forest School. GREEN TREE ADVENTURES aims to ensure that all people participating in sessions with fires and/or storm kettles will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible. Fires will only be used where it is appropriate to do so and where there has been an agreement with the site owner prior to the session.

- Leaders will explain to participants the importance of using only dead wood for fires and also of the importance of dead wood as a habitat
- Smoke inhalation will be reduced by burning dead wood. Those in smoky areas will be encouraged to move to less smoky areas
- Fires will only be lit in suitable defined spaces or in a fire wok
- Participants will only be allowed to light fires under direct supervision of a trained leader using suitable materials and equipment
- All participants will be given clear guidelines about how to behave and move around the area when the fire or kettle is lit
- A lit fire will be supervised by an adult at all times, as will all cooking activities
- Related safety equipment, including heat-proof gloves, a fire blanket, a burns kit and water will be kept within close range of fires
- All fires should be fully extinguished and all traces removed at the end of a session, except where the landowner has agreed that a designated fire pit may be used repeatedly

Food Hygiene & Eating

All participants on activities will be encouraged to wash their hands with water and soap, which will be provided, before eating food.

During some sessions, we may cook items such as popcorn, damper bread or marshmallows over the fire. At least one member of GREEN TREE ADVENTURES staff will hold a current Food Hygiene Certificate and will ensure that safe procedures are undertaken accordingly.

General Session Safety & Group Guidance

Session Safety Resources

Whenever outdoor activity sessions are run there will always be the need for key items to meet the health and safety requirements of leading a group outdoors. The type, location & remoteness of the site, time of year and the group will have a significant impact on what resources are needed to run a safe and enjoyable session. A list is provided later this is not an exhaustive list but provides key points to consider when planning sessions.

Weather & Clothing

Clothing advice will be given to participants and their parents/carers prior to the visit e.g.

Winter: waterproofs/coats, fleece/jumper, hats and gloves

Summer: waterproofs, fleece, sun hat, long sleeved tops and trousers

Footwear: wellies or strong/sturdy (ideally waterproof) outdoor shoes and warm woollen or manmade fibre socks (not cotton).

Where possible, we will keep spare sets of waterproofs in case of a participant arriving without adequate protection.

Toileting

For sites without toilet facilities, the following procedures have been proven to work effectively and to comply with current child protection recommendations.

- Encourage everyone to use the toilet before coming on site.
- We will identify a suitable location away from the work area in advance of the session. A screen can be used to provide privacy and a toileting bag placed at this

location.

- The group should be introduced to wild toileting - participants encouraged to use a trowel to bury faeces and tissue if necessary - and any queries or uncertainties to be dealt with. At all times the emphasis needs to be on discretion and encouraging participants to do as much as possible independently.
- If a guardian/carer/parent who knows a participant is not available to help with their toileting, then ensure that they are supported by two CRB checked members of staff.
- Hand washing facilities should be available but if this is not possible wet wipes and cleaning gel can be used. All wet wipes should be placed in bags and disposed of off-site.

Toileting kits contain:

- Toilet paper
- Wet wipes and cleaning gel
- Nappy bags
- Small trowel
- Tarps to make a modesty screen
- Spare pants and jogging bottoms if younger children

Hazardous Plants & Fungi

Part of the risk assessment will be to identify any particularly hazardous plants and point them out to the group so that all members are aware of the dangers. The sap or hairs from some plants can cause rashes and blistering when in contact with skin, or after the skin is then exposed to sunlight.

Most rashes are caused by stinging nettles, though giant hogweed may also be a problem. Both of these plants are easily distinguishable and if either is seen growing on site all members of the group will be taught how to distinguish and avoid coming into contact with it.

Serious poisoning from ingestion of leaves, berries or mushrooms rarely occurs, even when curious children are involved. However, ingesting even small amounts of some species can cause nausea, vomiting, and stomach cramps; and large amounts are potentially fatal. Consequently, we disallow all participants from foraging and eating anything that has not been agreed safe by a Forest School leader.

If a member of the group is exposed to a hazardous plant or fungi, so that they have a reaction a leader must be informed and appropriate First Aid given. If the nature

of the reaction is more serious the Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure must be followed.

Biting & Stinging Insects

Insect bites and stings can be common, particularly in spring and summer, and usually cause only minor irritation. In rare cases, people can have a serious allergic reaction to a bite or sting that requires immediate medical treatment - if this is the case then a leader will refer directly to the

Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure.

If there is prior knowledge to suggest that a participant will have an allergic reaction if bitten, then GREENTREE ADVENTURES, and ideally the Forest School Leader, must be informed before any activities take place on site.

If ticks are known to exist in proximity to a site then all participants need to check or be checked for ticks as soon as possible following any activity on site. Where a tick is found on a participant, a plaster should be placed over it and parents/carers informed at the end of the session so that they can remove it safely. Information on safe removal of ticks can be found at

www.tickbitepreventionweek.org/tick-removal

Safe Lifting

Forest School activities can be physically demanding for participants and staff, for example when handling heavy objects, so it is wise to be aware of best practise. One of the greatest causes of back injury is lifting or handling objects incorrectly. Here are some tips:

- Think and plan where and how you are going to move an object before you lift
- Keep the load close to your waist and the heaviest side of the load next to your body
- Adopt a stable position with feet apart and one leg slightly forward if possible
- Ensure a good hold on the load, hug it close to your body if possible
- Avoid bending your back, only bend at your hips or knees if possible
- Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways especially if bending at the back
- Keep your head up and look ahead, not down at the load once it is held securely

- Move smoothly
- Know your limits - don't lift or handle more than you can easily manage without help
- Put the load down if you need to adjust it
- Where possible, use ropes to drag objects such as trees

Lone working

When preparing for a session, it may be necessary for one person to visit a site alone. In these circumstances, anyone carrying out the work should inform a member of GREEN TREE ADVENTURES staff before departing and ensure that each have the mobile and home/work telephone numbers of the other. The lone worker should leave details of where they will be working and at what times. Contact should be made when the lone worker leaves the site. If the lone worker changes location, they should inform the designated GREEN TREE ADVENTURES staff member of the change.

If no contact has been made by the lone worker at the agreed end of working time, then the designated staff member should attempt to contact them. If they are unable to contact the lone worker, then they should try their home number and inform GREEN TREE ADVENTURES.

If no contact has been made in 24 hours, the director of the designated staff member should contact the police.

Group walking

When the group goes for a walk, the following procedures will be followed:

- The destination will be communicated to all adults present
- Children will be counted at the beginning and end of the walk, and at any necessary points in between, such as after a rest or play stop
- Walking on roads will be avoided, but where necessary will be in single file, with an adult at the front and the rear, and remaining adults interspersed between children
- For longer walks and those which venture beyond the Forest School site, the route and projected timings will be communicated so somebody who is not with the group, and arrangements made for a check-in system between that person and the group leader

Administering medicines and sun cream

Permission will be sought from a guardian to give their child paediatric paracetamol, sting or bite treatments, antiseptic cream and sun cream. These permissions will be included in the pro forma consent form. Guardians will also be asked to provide details of allergies or relevant illnesses and to supply medicines where necessary (such as an epi-pen or asthma inhaler). Where a guardian does not give permission for medicines and creams to be applied, their wishes will be adhered to by the Forest School Staff.

Reporting: incidents and accidents

Any accidents that involve injury will be recorded into a first aid book. Major injuries that constitute 'reportable injuries' will be reported to the Health and Safety Executive via RIDDOR. Parents will be notified of injuries in keeping with the 'Emergency and Major Incidents' policy.

'Incidents', which include major behavioural incidents and any major negative occurrence that is not an accident, will also be recorded by the Forest School leader in an Incident Report.

Pro forma consent

Parents/guardians will be asked to fill in a consent form before their child begins a forest school programme with GREENTREE ADVENTURES. The completed consent form will give relevant medical details of the child, consent for the child to take part in the forest school activities and permissions to administer medicines and creams and to admit the child to hospital for emergency treatment.

The form also provides emergency contact details and optional permission to take and use photographs of the child for promotional purposes and reports.

The forest school leader will keep copy of this form with him or her at all sessions attended by the child.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Policy

It is the responsibility of GREEN TREE ADVENTURES to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults whilst in our care. We are committed to creating an environment which is safe from abuse and any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with.

GREEN TREE ADVENTURES Safeguarding Policy focuses on:

- Minimising the risk of abuse taking place through good planning and best practice
- Empowering those it works with to stay safe and speak out
- Taking appropriate action when any allegations arise

Disclosures, Recording & Reporting

Appropriate steps will be taken where concerns arise regarding the safety of a participant. Concerns will be reported to a designated safeguarding person, and we will ensure that disclosures are responded to sensitively and appropriately, in line with current best practise.

- Any concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon immediately
 - Positive action will be taken to ensure the protection of participants who are subject to any concerns
 - The safety of the rest of the group will be secured before taking further action if on site – if a crime has taken place call 999 and report this to the Police
 - Implicated adult(s) will be encouraged to leave the group until the disclosure is officially cleared/action taken
 - All appropriate staff/managers will be informed
 - Relevant information/evidence will be recorded in an appropriate and cooperative manner
 - In all child/vulnerable adult protection situations, confidentiality will be maintained at all times by disclosing information only to those who need to know
- NSPCC helpline can be used for children 0808 800 5000 or the Care Quality Commission for vulnerable adults 03000 616161

Staff & Assistants

All staff will have enhanced checks from the Disclosure & Barring Service, dated within 5 years and at the current home address. GREEN TREE ADVENTURES will not employ people with unsuitable DBS certificates.

All volunteers and visitors will be vetted by gathering references / employment history / record of qualification / or because we will have had prior personal knowledge of the person. If the visitor has a DBS certificate relevant to working with children or vulnerable adults, this will be checked by a member of GREEN TREE ADVENTURES.

Participants will not be left unsupervised with a visitor or volunteer where no DBS certificate has been seen.

Ratios

The following minimum adult ratios will ensure appropriate support and supervision of vulnerable

groups at all times:

For children

Foundation Stage: 1 adult: 4 children

Key Stage 1: 1 adult: 6 children

Key Stage 2: 1 adult: 10 children

These ratios are for guidance only for groups of children and suitable levels of support should be determined in advance depending on the types of activity and needs of the group.

For vulnerable adults

For groups of vulnerable adults, suitable levels of support should be agreed in advance with staff/carers.

In all cases a minimum of two staff should be present.

Toileting

Where possible only the group's supporting staff or the child's/adult's parents may assist children with toileting.

Photos & Video

Permission will be requested via pro forma consent for GREEN TREE ADVENTURES staff to take photographs of participants for monitoring and evaluation purposes and suitable use in publications for leaflets/materials/website. Where permission is refused, we will aim to avoid photographing and videoing that child and blur out faces wherever they do appear in recorded material.

Behaviour Policy

Everyone, including GREEN TREE ADVENTURES staff, volunteers and participants, have a responsibility to protect their own and other group members' health, safety and well-being. They should inform GREEN TREE ADVENTURES staff if anybody's actions are likely to jeopardise the safety or comfort of others.

We aim to promote:

- Self-esteem
- Self-awareness of personal abilities and limitations
- Respect and care for oneself, other people and the natural environment
- Co-operation and non-violent communication

Forest School Agreement and Ground Rules

In the course of the first session, an agreement will be sought between the staff and all participants for the conduct of the group. This will include items such as respecting oneself, each other and the environment and listening carefully to instructions when they are given. The group will be encouraged to contribute items to the agreement before it is 'sealed'. Ground rules are firmer non-negotiable rules, such as 'no violence' and will be explained along with the consequences of breaking them.

Physical Intervention

In accordance with the law, and our values, GREEN TREE ADVENTURES does not use, or threaten to use, corporal punishment and takes all reasonable steps to

ensure that corporal punishment is not administered by any person who is in contact with them. However, where necessary, physical intervention may be used in order to avert immediate danger to any person (including the child). Any occasion where physical intervention is used will be recorded in an Incident Report and parents/carers will be informed on the same day as the incident.

Behaviour expectations for leaders, assistants and visitors

- Be a positive role model for participants, particularly with regards to respecting each person and the environment
- Encourage and reinforce caring and nurturing behaviour
- Be vigilant with regards to common sense safety
- Facilitate from an egalitarian and liberal approach, avoiding unnecessary rigidity or petty rules
- Avoid coercive or manipulative behaviour management, or that based on personal negative messages, as we feel these damage morale, motivation and self-esteem and are counterproductive to the ethos and objectives of forest school.

Encouraging Positive Behaviour

We want to allow the greatest potential for each participant's forest school experience to be transformational and therefore wish to welcome each participant from an open and unbiased viewpoint with regards to their behaviour and abilities. Whilst recognising that it is useful to have previous information about participants' needs, we believe that no child is inherently 'naughty' and hope that the greater freedoms offered by a forest school environment will allow for a more flexible interpretation of positive engagement

We will work with each group to develop a clear set of boundaries and guidelines. Each participant will have the opportunity to voice their own feelings. Talking about how they wish to be treated and listening to the feelings of others is important as it will allow the group to work together, understand one another and ultimately become more supportive and cooperative. It will also contribute to making the forest school a safe and enjoyable space.

De-escalation

If a situation arises in which participants are behaving in a way that threatens the safety of the group, the forest school leader will ensure that the following steps are taken:

1. Recount the facts of the incident as observed, in simple language and without

judgement, and if possible, mutually agree on these. Remind the participants involved of any guidelines they have not followed.

2. Listen to the involved party or parties, if necessary, gently separate them from the group for this. Ask about how they feel about the incident, empathise with them to help them to express themselves and take responsibility for their feelings. Ask them to imagine how they think their behaviour has affected everyone else.

3. Talk with them to establish what their needs in the situation were and to understand how they were not being met. Discuss what their needs might be now and encourage them to consider the needs of everyone else present.

4. Help them to express any requests they might have clearly and in positive language. These can be requests of themselves, others, situations or of the environment.

5. Encourage discussion of new strategies, so that if a similar situation arises the participant(s) feel able to communicate their needs without resorting to negative behaviours.

Recording & Reporting

In all cases the forest school leader will complete an incident report form, and where necessary inform parents/carers.

Where relevant, any significant issues or incidents will be discussed with parents or carers in a private conversation, when the participant is not present.

Session Routines

Equipment

First Aid Kit Pro forma consent forms Risk-benefit analysis

First Aid book Incident log Emergency Procedure

Mobile phone Tools & fire lighting kit Handwashing kit

Fresh water/water carrier Personal protective equipment Emergency bivi-bag

Spare clothing Fire blanket Toileting kit

Setting Up

1. Carry out a session risk assessment of site and advise/act accordingly
2. Collect necessary equipment and restock first aid where necessary
3. Meet and register group
4. Check phone signal

Session Opening

1. Introductions of any new faces
2. Make the group aware of new hazards or medical considerations
3. Check that they are all wearing suitable clothing and footwear
4. Take the group to the location
5. Form an opening circle
6. Describe or walk the boundaries for the day
7. Engage children in the development of rules and guidelines for the day

Describe the day's activities

During the Session

- Visually check all equipment before use
- Check on pastoral needs of group
- Conduct a head count, as needed
- Ensure appropriate personal protective clothing is worn

Closing the Session

1. Extinguish any fires properly
2. Count any tools used into their bag
3. Remove structures
4. Check for litter etc.
5. Collect the equipment
6. Form a closing circle
7. Conduct some type of evaluation with the group (questions, talking stick or drawing)
8. Walk the group to the pick-up point
9. Bid farewell to the group
10. Thoroughly check equipment

Complete the appropriate evaluation forms

Incident log sheet

Complete the form for every accident leading to injury, violent or aggressive incident, ill health, disease or near miss.

Incident of date and time:

Location:

Person injured or subject of aggression:

Relationship to Woodland Adventures:

Was the incident:

- ☐ a near miss
- ☐ ill health/disease
- ☐ an accident leading to injury
- ☐ a violent or aggressive incident

What happened (describe below including the nature of any injury/illness):

Was anyone else involved (note names if so)?

Was anything damaged (e.g. vehicle)?

What action has been taken to prevent a recurrence?

Name of person completing form & relationship to Woodland Adventures: