



# Tool Use Policy – Forest School

**Policy Code: FS-HS-009**

**Version: 1.0**

**Effective Date: 24.03.2026**

**Review Date: Annually or following significant change/incident**

## Statement of Intent

Nurture & Grow Forest & Play recognises that the safe use of tools is a valuable part of Forest School practice. Tool use supports children’s development of confidence, coordination, independence, and risk awareness.

We are committed to ensuring that all tool use is managed safely, appropriately, and in line with children’s age and stage of development.

## 1. Aims

**We aim to:**

- Provide opportunities for children to use tools safely
- Teach children how to assess and manage risk
- Promote independence and responsibility
- Ensure staff are confident and competent in supervising tool use

## 2. General Principles

- Tools are introduced gradually and appropriately
- Children must demonstrate understanding before using tools
- Tool use is always supervised by a competent adult
- Clear safety rules are explained and reinforced
- Tools are used only in designated areas

## 3. Types of Tools Used

**Tools may include (depending on age and ability):**

- Peelers
- Hammers



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- Hand drills/palm drills
- Bow saws
- Loppers

### All tools are:

- Age and stage appropriate
- Checked before use
- Stored safely when not in use

### 4. Supervision and Ratios 👁️

- Tool use is always directly supervised
- Staff position themselves to maintain clear visibility
- Ratios are adjusted depending on the activity and risk level
- Higher-risk tools require closer supervision

### 5. Teaching Safe Tool Use

**Children are only introduced to new tools once they have demonstrated readiness in both behaviour and understanding.**

Before using tools, children will be taught:

- How to carry tools safely
- How to use tools correctly
- How to maintain a safe working distance ("blood bubble")
- How to be aware of others around them

**Children must demonstrate understanding before being allowed to use tools**

### 6. Safety Rules

- Tools must only be used in designated areas
- Children must remain seated or stable when using tools where appropriate
- Tools must be carried safely (e.g. blade down, close to body)
- Tools must never be thrown or misused



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- Children must stop immediately when instructed

### 7. Risk Assessment

Tool use is supported by:

- Activity risk assessments
- Dynamic risk assessment during sessions
- Individual risk assessments where required

### 8. Maintenance and Storage

- Tools are checked before and after use
- Damaged tools are removed immediately
- Tools are stored securely out of children's reach when not in use

### 9. First Aid and Injury Response

**A qualified Paediatric First Aider is always present**

- First aid kit is accessible during tool use
- Any injury is recorded and reviewed

### 10. Inclusion

**All children are given the opportunity to use tools where appropriate.**

**We will:**

- Adapt tools or activities where needed
- Provide additional support
- Ensure all children can participate safely



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## 11. Staff Responsibilities

### All staff must:

- Be trained or confident in tool use
- Model safe behaviour
- Supervise effectively
- Reinforce safety rules
- Intervene where necessary

## 12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following:

- An incident
- Changes to practice
- Updates in guidance

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tracey Doidge'.

**Name: Tracey Doidge**

**Role: Director / Registered Provider**

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026**