



Health and Safety Policy

Policy Code: FS-HS-001

Policy Name: Health and Safety Policy

Version: 2.0

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Review Date: Annually or following significant change/incident

Statement of Intent

At **Forest & Play**, we are committed to providing a safe, healthy and secure environment where children can learn, play and explore through meaningful outdoor experiences.

We recognise that Forest School involves managed risk and challenge. We believe children benefit from opportunities to assess risks, solve problems, develop resilience and build confidence through real-life experiences. Our approach is not to eliminate all risk, but to identify, assess and manage risks appropriately whilst maximising learning opportunities and children's development.

We comply with:

- EYFS Statutory Framework
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Food Safety Act 1990
- Relevant guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Ofsted and Buckinghamshire Council

Aims and objectives

The aim of this policy statement is to ensure that all reasonably practical steps are taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all persons using the premises.

To achieve this, we will actively work towards the following objectives:

- Maintain a safe and healthy environment throughout the nursery including outdoor spaces
- Ensure safe working practices and equipment usage



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- Provide appropriate health and safety training and information to all staff.
- Ensure adequate supervision of children at all times.
- Identify and reduce potential hazards through regular risk assessments
- Implement effective fire and emergency evacuation procedures.
- Follow safer recruitment procedures including written references.
- Ensure privacy and dignity in nappy changing and toileting procedures.
- Provide clear allergy management and safer eating protocols.
- Monitor and follow up on unexplained child absences promptly.
- Ensure whistleblowing procedures are accessible and known to all staff

Responsibilities

Registered Person / Director

The Registered Person has overall responsibility for ensuring effective health and safety arrangements are in place and reviewed regularly.

Forest School Leader / Manager

The Forest School Leader is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy, including:

- Monitoring site safety.
- Completing and reviewing risk assessments.
- Investigating accidents and incidents.
- Ensuring staff receive appropriate training.
- Maintaining health and safety records.
- Monitoring compliance with policies and procedures.

Staff, Volunteers and Students

All adults working within Forest & Play have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others.
- Follow all policies, procedures and risk assessments.
- Report hazards, defects, accidents and concerns immediately.



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- Work cooperatively to maintain a safe environment.
- Participate in health and safety training and supervision.

Failure to follow health and safety procedures may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

Risk Assessment and Risk-Benefit Approach

Forest & Play follows a risk-benefit approach to outdoor learning. We recognise that children learn best when provided with opportunities to experience challenge, develop judgement and take age-appropriate risks.

Risk assessments are completed and reviewed for:

- The woodland site and grounds.
- Fire activities.
- Tool use.
- Seasonal activities.
- Visits and outings.
- Individual children where necessary.
- Weather conditions.
- Equipment and resources.

Staff also carry out an opening and closing routine and a daily site sweep along with ongoing dynamic risk assessments throughout each session to respond to changing conditions.

Site Safety

We recognise that woodland environments are constantly changing due to weather, seasonal growth and natural processes. Maintaining a safe site requires ongoing monitoring and assessment.

Forest & Play operates within a woodland environment. The safety of children, staff and visitors is supported through site-specific risk assessments, daily site checks, dynamic risk assessment, regular woodland inspections, periodic tree inspections and professional tree surveys where required, together with supporting policies and procedures including Weather Safety, Water Safety, Wildlife and Insects, Poisonous Plants and Natural Hazards, Tool Use, Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation.



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We will:

- Carry out our open and closing routine and daily site sweep of the woodland area, cabin, fire circle, access routes and activity areas before children arrive each day.
- Regularly inspect site boundaries, gates and access points to ensure children remain within designated areas.
- Monitor the condition of trees, branches and woodland features, particularly following periods of adverse weather.
- Remove, isolate or appropriately manage hazards such as litter, broken glass, animal waste, unstable structures or damaged equipment.
- Ensure all shelters, seating areas, tools and resources remain safe and suitable for use.
- Maintain clear emergency access and evacuation routes at all times.
- Review site safety arrangements regularly throughout the year.

Supervision and Deployment

Effective supervision is essential to maintaining children's safety whilst allowing opportunities for exploration, independence and child-led learning.

We will:

- Ensure children remain within sight and/or sound of a member of staff at all times.
- Maintain statutory EYFS ratios at all times.
- Deploy staff effectively across the site to ensure all areas are supervised.
- Carry out regular headcounts throughout the session and whenever groups move between areas.
- Ensure staff know how many children are present and where children are located.
- Adapt supervision arrangements where children require additional support or monitoring.
- Ensure visitors, volunteers and students are appropriately supervised.



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Weather and Outdoor Conditions

Outdoor learning takes place throughout the year and in a wide range of weather conditions.

We will:

- Monitor weather forecasts and site conditions before and throughout each session.
- Encourage appropriate outdoor clothing and footwear for all seasons.
- Provide access to shelter, drinking water and shaded areas where required.
- Adapt activities to minimise risks associated with extreme heat, cold, high winds, thunderstorms, snow or ice.
- Carry out dynamic risk assessments throughout the day.
- Modify, postpone or cancel activities if conditions present an unacceptable risk.

Fire and Tool Use

The responsible use of tools and fire forms an important part of Forest School practice and provides valuable learning opportunities for children.

We will:

- Ensure all fire and tool activities are supported by suitable risk assessments.
- Only permit activities to be led or supervised by trained and competent staff.
- Provide children with clear safety instructions before participation.
- Maintain close supervision throughout activities involving tools or fire.
- Store tools, fuels and equipment securely when not in use.
- Regularly inspect equipment to ensure it remains safe and fit for purpose.
- Promote children's understanding of safe behaviour and personal responsibility.

Further information can be found within the Fire Safety and Tool Use Procedures.

First Aid and Accidents

Whilst every effort is made to prevent accidents, we recognise that minor injuries may occur as part of active outdoor learning.

We will:

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- Maintain appropriately stocked first aid kits on site at all times.
- All staff will hold a recognised Paediatric First Aid Qualification in accordance with EYFS requirements.
- Record accidents, incidents and first aid treatment provided.
- Inform parents of accidents involving their child.
- Review accident records to identify patterns and improve safety arrangements.
- Report incidents under RIDDOR where required.

Emergency Procedures

Forest & Play has clear procedures in place to respond to emergencies quickly and effectively. All staff receive training on emergency procedures during induction and through ongoing training and drills.

Emergency procedures are in place for:

- Serious injury or illness
- Fire or uncontrolled fire spread
- Missing child
- Severe weather events
- Site evacuation
- Intruder or unauthorised person on site
- Medical emergencies, including allergic reactions and anaphylaxis

In the event of an emergency, staff will:

- Remain calm and take immediate action to protect children and adults.
- Ensure children are moved to a safe location or designated assembly point where appropriate.
- Carry out headcounts to confirm all children and adults are accounted for.
- Administer first aid where required and within their level of training.
- Contact emergency services where necessary.
- Follow the relevant emergency procedure and risk assessment.
- Inform parents and carers as soon as reasonably practicable.



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- Record and review incidents to identify any lessons learned and improvements required.

Emergency Communication

Due to the nature of the woodland environment, effective communication between staff is essential.

Forest & Play uses a range of communication methods, including:

- **Walkie-talkies** to maintain communication between staff deployed across different areas of the site.
- **Whistles** to alert staff and children to stop, listen and return to a designated meeting point when required.
- **Howler alarm system** to signal an emergency, evacuation or immediate need for staff assistance.
- **Mobile phones** carried by designated staff members for emergency contact with emergency services, parents and carers.

All staff are trained in the meaning and use of emergency signals and communication systems. Emergency communication procedures are practised regularly through drills and scenario-based training.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event that the woodland area becomes unsafe, children and staff will be evacuated to the designated safe area identified within the Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation Procedures. Headcounts will be completed throughout the evacuation process to ensure all children, staff and visitors are accounted for.

This wording feels much more "Forest School" than a standard nursery policy and reflects the realities of having children spread across a woodland site with whistles, radios and your howler system.

Food Safety and Hygiene

We are committed to maintaining high standards of food hygiene and allergy management.

We will:

- Follow good food hygiene practices when preparing, storing or serving food.
- Maintain appropriate handwashing and hygiene procedures.
- Support children with allergies, intolerances and medical dietary requirements.



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- Follow individual healthcare and allergy management plans.
- Take reasonable steps to minimise exposure to known allergens.

See separate Food safety & allergy policy

Infection Prevention and Hygiene

We will:

- Promote effective hand hygiene throughout the day.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment where required.
- Follow infection prevention and control procedures.
- Clean and maintain equipment appropriately.

Follow current public health guidance regarding infectious illnesses

Visitors and Contractors

To maintain the safety and security of the setting we will:

- Operate visitor signing-in procedures.
- Verify visitor identity where appropriate.
- Ensure visitors understand site safety requirements.
- Supervise visitors, contractors and external professionals where necessary.
- Prevent unauthorised access to the site.

Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Smoking, vaping, alcohol and illegal drugs are prohibited on the Forest & Play site and during working hours.

Any member of staff attending work under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be subject to disciplinary procedures.



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Training

All staff will receive appropriate health and safety training relevant to their role, including:

- Paediatric First Aid
- Safeguarding
- Risk Assessment
- Fire Safety
- Food Hygiene
- Allergy Awareness
- Manual Handling
- Infection Control
- Tool and Fire Safety (where applicable)

Training needs will be reviewed through supervision and appraisal processes.

Clothing and Personal Equipment

Appropriate clothing is essential to ensure children can participate safely and comfortably in outdoor learning throughout the year.

We will:

- Provide guidance to families on suitable clothing and footwear for all weather conditions.
- Encourage children to wear waterproofs, appropriate footwear and suitable layers.
- Ensure children have access to sun protection and shade during warmer weather.
- Keep a supply of spare outdoor clothing and waterproofs where possible.
- Work with families where clothing may be a barrier to attendance, ensuring no child is excluded from participating in Forest School experiences.

Recording and Monitoring

- Accidents, incidents and near misses are recorded
- Patterns are reviewed to improve safety
- Risk assessments are updated accordingly

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Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following:

- An incident
- Changes to legislation
- Changes to site or operations