

Health and safety procedures

3.8 Outdoor Play and Forest School

This policy covers all outside areas and outside play. The areas are always staffed with at least 2 staff members and usually 3. At least one is fully First Aid trained.

- All gates and fences are childproof, safe, and secure. All gates are checked daily.
- Risk assessments are carried out and documented daily.
- Areas are checked daily to make sure animal droppings, litter, glass etc. is removed. Staff wear rubber gloves to do this.
- Bushes or overhanging trees are checked to ensure they do not bear poisonous berries.
- Stinging nettles and brambles are monitored and removed if necessary.
- Broken climbing equipment or outdoor toys are removed and reported to the Administration Manager for report or disposal to be organised.
- Children are always supervised within ratios outside.
- Children are suitably attired for the weather conditions and type of outdoor activities.
- Parents are reminded that sun cream is to be applied before drop off. Hats are worn during the summer months. Shade is provided during hot or extreme weather.
- Children are supervised on climbing equipment, especially younger children.
- Water play is not left out but is cleared, cleaned and stored after each use.
- Receptacles are left upturned to prevent collection of rainwater, this is important in areas where there are vermin to prevent urine/faeces contaminating the water.
- Sightings of vermin are recorded and reported to the Administration Manager who reports this to Valley Pest Control so that they can investigate and take necessary steps.
- Outdoor areas that have flooded are not used until cleaned down and restored. Grassed areas are not played on for at least one week after the floodwater has gone.
- If paddling pools are used, a risk assessment is conducted, and consideration given to the needs of disabled children or those less ambulant.

Forest School – Statement of Intent

- Ensure the Forest School site has safe access and egress for all staff, pupils and visitors.
- Provide adequate facilities and arrangements for welfare.
- Provide and maintain safe plant and safe systems of work without risks to health.
- Ensure safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles, including tools.
- Provide suitable information, training, instruction and supervision to keep all staff, pupils and visitors safe.
- Ensure risk assessment is carried out and document daily.

Forest School Leaders Responsibilities

- To ensure that this policy is reviewed annually, or before if there are any changes in circumstances.
- To ensure all supporting adults have read the handbook, including ALL risk benefits assessments , and are aware of the risks when using the forest school site.
- To undertake risk assessments, record significant findings and review annually, or before if there is a change in circumstances. This includes visual risk assessments of the site before each forest school session.
- To ensure that emergency evacuation procedures are in place and tested with each new group of participants.
- To ensure that adequate first aid provision is available and kept up to date.
- To report any health and safety issues to the Pre-School Leader and Administration Manager on a regular basis.

Forest School Ethos and Principles

Cullompton Pre-School will stay true to the ethos and principles as described by The Forest School Association (FSA). All children will experience Forest School where they will have the opportunity to engage in open ended, practical experiences set in the natural environment. We will provide children with the space and time to develop their confidence, love of learning and their ability to achieve within our friendly and supportive setting.

All forest school participants and parents/carers must understand that risks can be minimised, but they cannot be eliminated altogether, and health and safety concerns need to be balanced against the potential benefits of any activity.

Children and adults will suffer occasional bumps, cuts and bruises which are a part of everyday life. The application of common sense with the training of the Forest School Staff will ensure that everyone is as safe as they can be, whilst enjoying all the physical and intellectual challenges of Forest School.

Procedure for Accident and Emergency Response

In the event of a serious incident or the need to alert emergency services this procedure will be followed:-

- Forest School staff will use an emergency whistle to signal that all participants need to come back to the main area. This is a drill that we practice and we blow the whistle 3 times sharply to alert the team and children if an incident has occurred that means we must go inside immediately for safety.
- If a participant or supporting adult is injured the one forest school member of staff will alert the office and they will phone the emergency services whilst staying with the casualties. The other staff member will alert the Pre-School Leader and request an additional member of staff.

Forest School staff will wait with the casualties until emergency services have arrived and accompany them to the hospital if necessary.

Another member of staff will secure the site and return to the main pre-school building where parents/carers will be contacted.

Forest School Staff will complete a full and comprehensive account of the injury or incident.

The Administration Manager will liaise Devon County Council over the incident and will notify Ofsted if necessary.

A full meeting with the Forest School staff, others members of staff present, Pre-School Leader, Administration Manager and the Chairperson will be called to review and amend relevant policies and procedures.

In minor cases, the Forest School staff will arrange to contact the injured party's emergency contact so that they can be collected and taken to the hospital, doctors or home, as appropriate.

Emergency Contact Numbers

Emergency Services: 999

Pre-School Office: 01884 35018

Requesting attendance by Emergency Services

Dial 999 and ask for the relevant service(s). Be ready with the following information:-

Our address: Cullompton Pre-School, Brook Road, Cullompton, Devon, EX15 1DS

Our What 3 Words reference – tripods.sway.nurses

Prior to lighting any kind of fire

- The person managing the fire is suitably trained/qualified.
- Emergency procedures are understood and to hand.

- Risk assessments are to be completed with dynamic risk assessment taking place when any fire is alight.
- The area will be level and deemed suitable for having fires.
- Check the suitability of the weather conditions. Fire will not be lit in strong winds/gusts or extremely hot /droughts conditions – the Forest School staff will decide if the weather conditions are suitable for having a fire.
- Clear the area free from debris, trip hazards and overhead hazards.
- Soil assessment to be carried out to ensure area is not flammable and that the fire is sited on non-flammable pad. Fires will usually be contained with the designated fire pit area.
- The fire pit area is contracted approximately 1m in diameter which means the fire is kept small, management and suitable for purpose.

- The fire pit seating area is contracted a minimum distance of 1m away from the fire pit area and is kept free from any potential trip hazards with openings left amongst the seating for easy entry/exits.
- Seating is constructed around the fire at the safe distance of and everyone is briefed as to the fire circle protocol i.e., to walk around the outside of the seating area and when moving from one side to another.
- Supply of seasoned non-toxic kindling and wood is available for the fire, collected from sustainable sources.
- The participants who are tending the fire need to ensure their clothing and hair is not loose over the fire.
- A bucket of cold water and cloth, fire extinguisher, fire blanket, burns first aid kit is to be kept near the fire circle.
- Enough water to extinguish the fire fully will be available.

Forest School Fire Safety Rules

1. Ratio of 1 adult : 1 fire
2. Fire area is surrounded by a boundary of at least 1m from the fire pit or storm kettle.
3. Children will sit on the bench outside the boundary.
4. When the fire is in use children are not permitted within the fire circle unless they are invited by the adult.
5. Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire.
6. Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the children: they are advised to turn their head to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes and count to 30 (or ask an adult to count for them).
7. If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.
8. Ensure water is available for extinguishing the fire and fire blanket is available for emergency use.

9. Fires are lit using a fire steel and tinder card, building the fire in stages – ember, tinder, kindling, and fuel.

Fire Safety and Responsibility

1. Only adults are permitted to light fires, unless children are under the supervision of forest school staff.
2. No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
3. No plastics are to be burnt.
4. If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with adult supervision.
5. Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire.

Extinguishers

1. All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
2. Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
3. Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
4. At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.

Storm (Kelly) Kettles

1. Only adults are to light the fire in the fire pan unless children are under the supervision of the forest school staff.
2. The storm kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground or a paving slab.
3. Children must be seated at least 1m away from the storm kettle.
4. Children can feed the fire with supervision but they must have been shown how to do so safely (Stick held at the end and dropped in from the side; hand should never be placed over the top of the kettle).
5. Fuel should burn itself out, but if it doesn't it must be extinguished with water.
6. Storm kettles should never be boiled with the cork in.
7. Kettles should only be removed from the fire by an adult wearing fire safety gloves (hold each side of handle and lift off taking care not to put hand above chimney of kettle or over spout).

Tool Use

As a forest school setting we have a priority to ensure the safety of our children and also the conservation of our area. This policy aims to provide clear guidelines for the use of tools within the forest school environment.

Forest School staff we will:-

- Ensure tools are stored in a dry, secure location when not in use.
- Tools should be checked regularly and be well maintained.
- Faulty and damaged tools should be removed from circulation. They should be either fully repaired or safely disposed of.
- When on site tools should be stored in a dry lockable box to ensure the safety of children.
- When considering the safe area for use of tools refer to the blood bubble. The safe working space around an individual or pair of individuals is referred to as the 'Blood Bubble'. The name is designed to show that this is the safe distance bystanders should stay out of to avoid being hurt when a tool is in use. The 'Blood Bubble' is given a consistent size (two arms and a tool's length) so children can easily remember. With younger children it may be necessary to mark out the 'Blood Bubble' as they may not be able to visualise the size of the area.

Working with tools and children:-

- Children should be taught about the importance of using tools safely and ensuring we are respectful of the environment when using them.
- Staff must assess the children's abilities and behaviours to decide whether independent use of tools can be allowed. Before allowing children to use tools independently the correct use should be modelled repeatedly, then the use should be closely supervised until staff are comfortable with independent use.
- Smaller group sizes should be considered when working with tools. An appropriate level of adult supervision is required, especially when working with children.
- If staff feel that children are causing a risk to themselves or others during the activity (through use of tools or their behaviour), they have to be prepared to stop the activity and reteach or discontinue the activity.
- Ensure tools are locked away at the end of the activity. Tools should be cleaned, safety checked and stored correctly for when they are next used.

Food Hygiene and Cooking at Forest School

Cullompton Pre-school maintains high food hygiene standards in relation to the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food. Staff and Children wash their hands before eating.

Procedure for storing, preparing and using food in forest school

- A full risk assessment will be completed for any activity involving the preparing and/or consuming of food items. This will include attention to the purchase, storage, preparation and service of any food items to prevent growth of bacteria and food contamination.
- Cooking on the campfire will ONLY be undertaken by Forest School staff who have completed the Level 3 qualification.
- Food ingredients will be stored at the correct temperatures prior to the session and checked to ensure that are in date and not subject to contamination by pests, mould etc.
- Unrefrigerated food will be serviced to children within four hours of preparation.
- All utensils, crockery etc. will be checked to ensure that they are clean before use.
- Waste food will be disposed of promptly and in the correct manner.
- When food items are to be consumed during a Forest School session, all children will clean their hands with antibacterial gel.
- Forest School staff will ensure that they are familiar with children's allergies, food intolerance and dietary requirements.
- Cooked food will not be reheated.
- The Forest School staff oversee all campfire cooking following the guidance received on the food hygiene course.
- Food will be stored correctly, in cool bags if necessary.
- Pupils will have a safety briefing specifically about the storage of food in the natural environment.
- If using a storm kettle, following the safety section contained within this policy.
- No wood to be placed on the fire if it is being used for cooking.

Extreme Weather

Cullompton Pre-School Forest School is accessible to participants throughout all seasons and weather. In the event of extreme weather, at the discretion of the Pre-School Leaders, Forest School can be cancelled. In the event of cancellation of a forest school session, children will return to the main pre-school building.

Forest School staff will assess all weather before the beginning of each session. This will include a visit to the Forest School site for the session begins.

Weather assessment will include, but is not limited to:

- Wind speed (Beaufort Scale)
- Wind chill chart
- Local weather reports

If the weather is deemed to be extreme forest school will be cancelled.

Forest School will be cancelled in all cases where an electrical storm is present.

Drones

If there are concerns about a 'drone' being flown over the outdoor area, that may compromise children's safety or privacy, the setting manager will contact the police on 101.

- Children will be brought inside immediately using our 'three whistle' blow technique.
- Parents will be informed that a Drone has been spotted flying over the outdoor area and will be advised fully of the actions taken by the setting.
- The police will have their own procedures to follow and will act accordingly.
- If at any point following the incident, photographs taken by a drone emerge on social media that could identify the nursery or individual children, these are reported to the police.
- A record is completed in the Notifiable Incident Record unless there is reason to believe that the incident might have safeguarding implications, for example:
 - the drone has hovered specifically over the outdoor area for any length of time
 - there is a likelihood that images of the children have been recorded
 - is spotted on more than one occasion
 - if the Police believe there is cause for concern

Where this is the case the Safeguarding Lead will be informed and will take the necessary action.

Further guidance

Reportable Incident Record (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2015)

Cullompton Pre-School Forest School Handbook

1.21 First Aid Policy

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

Held on

Date to be reviewed

Signed on behalf of the management
committee

Name of signatory

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)

Cullompton Pre-School

13th June 2023

June 024

name of setting

(date)

(date)

J Madge

Jack Madge

Chairperson

This policy has an annual review period and, as such, will be reviewed and signed off at a management committee meeting of Cullompton Pre-School each year, as shown below.

Previously reviewed on:-	3 rd October 2022	By	Hannah Tilley
Previously reviewed on:-	13 th June 2023	By	Jack Madge
Previously reviewed on:-	11 th September 2024	By	Nick Moore
Previously reviewed on:-			

Reviewed by Staff on:	10 th December 2025
Reviewed by Committee on:	12 th December 2025
Date of next review:	December 2026
Signed on behalf of the Management Committee:	Emilie Haine
Name of Signatory (printed):	Emilie Haine
Role of Signatory (e.g. Chairperson)	Committee Member