

# Forest School Handbook

Author Janet Lavender September 2021



*Stay grounded*

*Connect with your roots*

*Turn over a new leaf*

*Bend before you break*

*Enjoy your unique natural beauty*

*Keep growing*

This handbook is provided by LavenderForest to inform all stakeholders, participants, parents and carers about what to expect during our Forest School Provision. LavenderForest provides risk/ benefit assessments, current first aid certification and emergency plans, enhanced DBS certification and designated safeguarding lead alongside, public liability insurance for all activities.

LavenderForest is providing Forest School Sessions in partnership with the stakeholders listed below. In the context of this handbook the term stakeholder means any organisation that has booked or licenced the LavenderForest services, or in the case of LavenderForest's own groups, themselves.



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## **What is Forest School? What does Forest School look like with LavenderForest?**

Forest school is a unique and inspirational learning process where participants can develop their self-worth, while enriching all areas of their learning in a real-life context. It is a process that children are privileged to be a part of, where they use the natural environment to deepen their learning and take the time they need to reflect and be inspired. It is a hands on, active learning experience, personalised for each participant and motivated by their interests and passions.

We believe that developing emotional intelligence, self-esteem and social skills are the key foundations that a person needs, and time is taken to develop these.

During Forest School, participants will be offered the opportunity to be motivated and feel empowered to achieve tasks and activities that challenge their individual aspirations in ways that they learn best.

In Forest School, participants will develop an understanding and connection with the natural world, appreciate our natural surroundings, work with tools, play, explore, and learn the boundaries of behaviour and self-regulation by managing risks. Our activities and Forest School sessions will depend on the interests, ability and experience of participants.



### **Examples of Forest School activities include:**

- ❖ Exploring the natural environment through their sense of 'awe and wonder'.
- ❖ Developing a relationship with the environment where participants wish to learn how to nurture and manage the natural environment.
- ❖ Building dens and other structures to enrich their games and imaginative play.
- ❖ Fires and cooking.
- ❖ Tree climbing.
- ❖ Natural crafts.
- ❖ Using tools, such as knives and saws.
- ❖ Scavenger hunts and adventure.
- ❖ Team games.
- ❖ Shelter building.
- ❖ Seasonal activities.
- ❖ Storytelling, using the natural world to enable stories to come to life.



Forest School is a rich learning environment that will further enhance the creative, enquiry-based teaching that already happens in the classroom or at home. In order for our forest school to be a fun and enjoyable place, with happy and successful life-long learners, we all want to reflect the Forest School ethos.

### **Forest School Rules:**

Each group of participants will be given the opportunity to discuss and create their own Forest School rules. This will begin their journey with high expectations while empowering them and giving them ownership over their sessions. The rules below reflect the values and rules that LavenderForest will guide the participants to follow and will underpin all that we do. The participants are reminded of their forest rules before beginning each session. In addition to these rules, separate rules will be discussed and created for more specific activities (such as fire, tools...etc).

Listen: really listen and connect

Look...really look: Notice

Be active

Think: Keep Learning

Respect: Give remember 'you are really welcome here'.

### **Staffing and Responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of LavenderForest and the stakeholders to ensure that the leader has the correct insurance to cover the activities carried out in Forest School sessions.

First aid will be carried out by a 'Forest School first aid' trained staff member or the school's/ settings own first aider. The forest school leader's outdoor first aid qualification must be renewed every three years. Any first aid incident will also be logged into a 'near miss and accident log book' to enable the Forest School leader to review and monitor safety and risks and a copy given to inform parents and carers. The book will be kept by the Forest School leader.

A minimum of 2 adults will run each session where children are left, however the ratios in correspondence with the risk assessments may limit the activities available for the children. A level 3 forest school leader must always be present for a Forest School session with at least one other. If no Forest School leader is present, outdoor learning sessions could still happen in the forest area, but Forest School related activities must not take place.

Parent and toddler groups and family groups can be led by the level 3 forest school leader alone.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that they follow the stakeholder policies and the LavenderForest instructions and ethos.



**It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to:**

- Either carry out, or work with stakeholders to carry out and check ongoing risk assessments.
- A dynamic risk assessment of the forest area must occur before each session, or on arrival with the children for educational purposes.
- In addition to this and formal activity-based risk assessments, dynamic risk assessments will be carried out for each activity that may occur during the session (such as any individual tools being used, fire, shelter building...etc).
- Ensure the tools and kit used are safe for use, looked after, and stored correctly
- Inform all staff involved in a Forest School session about the risks and how to manage them by showing them the risk assessments or talking and demonstrating safe practice.
- Advise participants of how to best keep safe when involved in different activities.
- To ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed precisely by all participants
- To spread the Forest School ethos across the setting. Involve and inform people wherever possible about the principles of Forest School (such as by running an information meeting, displaying information on the stakeholder's website, via social media pages).

## **Health and Safety at Forest School**

The Forest School approach values the importance of managing risks and enabling children to take risks. This not only teaches them the importance of being safety conscious, but it also empowers participants to be trusted and responsible for themselves. A risk-benefit analysis will be carried out by the Forest School leader in advance to ensure that the benefits of the activity outweigh the risk, and identify any control actions that can be followed to reduce the likelihood of a risk occurring. We will carry out seasonal risk assessments as well as a dynamic risk assessment prior to each session, and specific activity risk assessments.

At LavenderForest we will follow the '5 Step process' when managing risks to ensure that the risk assessments are thorough and effective:

1. Look for the hazards.
2. Decide who may be harmed and how.
3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing controls are adequate or whether more should be done. Forest School activities may only proceed if the remaining risk is deemed to be low (green on the risk management grid).
4. Record findings on our forest school risk assessment sheets (seasonal, daily, or specific activity risk assessments depending on the risk). Add in any daily amendments to standing risk assessments.
5. Review assessments on a regular basis by discussing with the participants (if circumstances change that could affect the rigour of the assessment) and revise if necessary.



## Risk Management Policy:

We believe that, while there are risks that must be considered, there are also a wide range of potential benefits that we do not want children to miss out on being a part of. 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. We will always ensure that appropriate and regular risk assessments are carried out, or involve the participants in carrying out the risk assessments too. Wildlife and different weather conditions can create new challenges and changes to the forest area. These will need to be assessed prior to each session and may alter previously arranged activities.

The following diagram will be displayed on the 'health and safety toolbox' in the forest area

**Risk Matrix**

Likelihood ↑	Very likely	<b>Acceptable risk</b> Medium 2	<b>Unacceptable risk</b> High 3	<b>Unacceptable risk</b> Extreme 5
	Likely	<b>Acceptable risk</b> Low 1	<b>Acceptable risk</b> Medium 2	<b>Unacceptable risk</b> High 3
	Unlikely	<b>Acceptable risk</b> Low 1	<b>Acceptable risk</b> Low 1	<b>Acceptable risk</b> Medium 2
What is the chance it will happen?		Minor	Moderate	Major
		Impact → How serious is the risk?		

to help support adults and children in managing and reducing risk. Adults will be encouraged where possible to do risk assessments together with the children to increase awareness, have professional discussions regarding risk management, and provide a broader perspective.

Adults and children can use the table to increase awareness and assess risks to then reduce the probability and likelihood of an accident happening. The table allows us to think about the severity of a risk, alongside how likely it is to happen to weigh up its safety. Activities must only occur if they fall

into the green 'low' risk area. If an activity falls into the red 'high' area, the activity must not take place. If an activity falls into the orange 'medium' risk area, control actions must take place and a judgement must be made as to whether or not it is an appropriate risk to make (if it can be reduced to a green 'low' risk).

Procedures can happen in response to a risk assessment (such as making specific rules to reduce the risk) to then enable an activity to move into the green 'low' risk area, allowing it to then take place. Although unlikely, we are aware that due to changes in circumstance and the child-initiated approach to Forest School, risks may change or new ones arise. In order to manage these risks effectively during the forest sessions, discussions with participants must be had to revise the risks, promote awareness and make sensible decisions. Staffing in out of school club provision should be a minimum of 1 adult: 15 children, but preferably 1 adult: 10 children ratio or higher. One of the adults' present must be a level 3 Forest School leader.

## Cancellation Procedure

It is ultimately up to the Forest School Leader to decide if a Forest School session should be cancelled. This decision can be advised by the stakeholder. If Forest School is cancelled, it is the responsibility of the stakeholder to contact participant's parents and carers.

Circumstances where Forest School would have to be cancelled:

- If no Forest School leader is present. In this case, outdoor learning sessions may still happen in the woodland area, but Forest School related activities must not take place.
- If only 1 member of staff is available to run a session where children are left.
- In extreme weather conditions (such as strong winds 42mph or above) or lightening risk. In the case of lightening the group will retreat to the nearest building or return to cars.





## **First Aid, Accident and Emergency Procedure**



### **Minor Incident:**

1. Casualty assessed by Forest School Leader (first aid trained).
2. Treat as required (first aid kit stored in 'health and safety toolbox'), gaining additional assistance if necessary.
3. Record incident in the 'near miss and accident

log book' and ensure parents carers are informed and have copy of record. This is kept by the Forest School leader.

### **Major Incident**

#### **TOOL DOWN SIGNAL: MOBILE TELEPHONES CARRIED BY LEADERS AT ALL TIMES**

1. Forest School Leader to attend to casualties immediately ('outdoor first aid' trained member of staff).
2. Ensure the rest of the group have 'tools down' and are safe with other adult, go to group seating area.
3. Assess the situation and distinguish between walking wounded (person is able to walk to get help e.g., broken arm), or a more serious accident (person is unable to walk- e.g., unconscious).
4. Forest School Leader to ring emergency services if required using What3words location.
5. To follow stakeholder policy if on school grounds
6. Parent/ carer/ next of kin (as appropriate) to be informed as soon as person is stabilised.
7. Forest School Leader to carry all contacts during sessions
8. When children are left, Forest School Leader to remain with children whilst assistant liaises with parent/ carers.
9. If the casualty is an adult, the same process (above) applies. Tools must go down immediately and an adult must inform the stakeholder as soon as possible to enable a first aid trained member of staff to come to the casualty.
10. The participants must be taken to a safe place as soon as possible and appropriate actions must be followed according to the step-by-step process above.

## **First Aid Kits**

A forest first aid kit and a fire safety first aid kit will always be available in the forest area for quick and easy access. They will be kept in the 'health and safety tool box in the group seating area. It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to ensure that the first aid kits are replenished after use.

### **The forest first aid kit will contain:**

- ❖ Disposable gloves
- ❖ First aid forms and a pen/ Near miss and accident log book
- ❖ Cool packs
- ❖ Bandages
- ❖ Paramedic scissors
- ❖ Tweezers
- ❖ Foil blanket
- ❖ Eyewash
- ❖ Alcohol free wipes
- ❖ Safety pins
- ❖ Plasters
- ❖ Micropore tape
- ❖ Medical information and medication for individuals

### **The emergency fire safety kit will contain:**

- ❖ Fire blanket
- ❖ Pair of fire gloves
- ❖ Burns kit
- ❖ Water container to store emergency water

## **Administering Medicines/items to children**

Individual personal inhalers and epi pens can be carried in the medical bag by the stakeholder or leader. It is the responsibility of the parents/ carer to ensure medication is brought to the forest school site and taken home. If sun cream or insect spray is required, parents and carers are encouraged to apply before session. Information on specific children and their medication (if necessary) will be available in the stakeholder's forest school registration system and shared with the Forest School leader as appropriate.

## Fire Safety Procedures

### Fire Policy Statement



Fire is hugely powerful and often creates a calming atmosphere that encourages people to self-reflect. Fire can ignite a rich sense of awe through its power and beauty. Fire is mesmerizing and can fascinate people for hours, stimulating the senses through its vibrant colours, unique smell, warm glow, and atmospheric crackling sounds.

### **Fire Preparation**

- ❖ The fire will always be lit in a safe place. This safe place has already been prepared in the centre of the woodland space. The fire will be lit in a fire pit and always positioned in the centre of the circle away from low canopy branches.
- ❖ Check the floor in the fire circle to ensure there are no tripping hazards (pull up any weeds etc).
- ❖ Participants must all understand and agree to follow the fire rules before being a part of the experience.
- ❖ The seats are around 1.5 metres from the fire pit with exit paths at regular intervals between log seats. The seats must be stable and sturdy.
- ❖ Participants must always walk around the outside of the fire circle.
- ❖ A fire blanket must be hung close by the fire pit along with the fire emergency kit.

### **Fire Lighting**

- ❖ A Forest School leader or trusted adult must light the fire, and be at the fire at all times.
- ❖ Do not throw anything onto the fire.
- ❖ Sitting in the line of smoke must be avoided. A way to deal with smoke can be given to the participants if required. They can be advised to turn their head to one side, put their hand across their face, closing their eyes and counting to 30. they can also be advised to leave the fire circle and find a seat out of the smoke.
- ❖ Participants must only go towards the fire pit (such as for cooking) under the direction of the Forest School leader or allocated adult. When at the fire pit, children must be kneeling to avoid tripping into the fire. Participants must be reminded about waving sticks (skewers), and also hot food and drink.
- ❖ Fires must be lit using matches, fire flint, or fire steels. Sticks and wood (no plastic) must be placed onto the fire from the side and not over the flame.

## Fire Extinguishing:



All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session. Water must always be available to extinguish the fire. There must be no smoke or steam left. Large remains of wood must be separated. Preferably, the fire should be put out once the fire has burned down to ash. When extinguishing the fire, the Forest School leader or

allocated adult will use the container of water (part of the fire kit) to gradually pour water onto the fire, controlling the smoke levels by letting it burn down before adding some more water. Using a long stick, the ash/water can be stirred to ensure all of the fire is put out. Participants must still be reminded that the fire pit and the ash is very hot and the fire rules still apply. Once the water and ash are cool and there is no smoke or steam left, the ash and water can be removed from the fire pit. All of the fire safety equipment must be put away in a locked toolbox.

## Tool Policy

Using 'real tools' enables participants to learn a life skill alongside developing physically, achieving ambitious goals, and developing self-confidence. Trusting participants with powerful tools is empowering and enables them to feel like their potential is limitless.

General rules to be followed when using tools:




Tools must only be taken by a participant under the permission of a Forest School leader (preferably) or allocated adult. Children will always have adult supervision when collecting, transporting and using tools.

Tools will be monitored and counted in and out by a responsible adult at the end of the session. Tools must be stored and locked away safely when not in use. Children will lose permission to use tools if they do not follow the tool and forest school rules.

- Hand tools are to be maintained kept in 'good working order' by the Forest School Leader.
- The Forest School Leader will inspect the tools before use to ensure safety and that the tools are in 'good working order'. It is worth modelling this to the children for educational purposes.
- Participants will be taught how to handle tools properly and to treat them with respect.

- Whilst using tools the staff to participant ratio is dependent on the tool in use and the person using the tool. The ratios will vary depending on the group/age/ability/needs of the participant.
- Tools will be kept in a padlocked container and only removed by the Forest School leader or responsible adult.
- No running, pointing or gesturing with tools.
- The blade guards must be on all tools when not in use (hand saw, bow saw, knife sheaf). Adults must remove and put back the guards unless the children are deemed capable.
- Children must never touch the blades.
- Nothing can be 'dangling' when using tools. It is the responsibility of the Forest School leader or allocated adult to ensure that long hair is tied back, and suitable clothing is worn (no scarves dangling). No gloves to be worn when using tools.
- A safe working space, along with being aware of what a 'blood bubble' is (sufficient space around the tool/tool user) must be considered when using tools.
- Participants understand that when they hear 'tools down' they must safely put down their tools.

The Forest School leader will decide if the age group/ individual child is ready and safe for using each individual tool, and if it is the correct tool for the job at hand.

					
<p><b>Whittling wood, cutting cord, chopping food (including peelers).</b></p> <p>The Forest School leader will demonstrate safe use with children and adults in small groups or on a 1:1 basis when initially using the tool. Starting with the 3 point safety stance or safe seated position and checking there is a safe distance from others around the tool user ('blood bubble'). The Forest School leader demonstrates the scraping technique away from themselves. The other hand manipulates the stick above the whittling area, keeping the knife work safely away from the body. The adult will closely supervise the child behind their non dominant hand whilst using the tool. No throwing.</p>	<p><b>For making small holes.</b></p> <p>The Forest School leader will demonstrate safe use with children and adults in small groups or on a 1:1 basis when initially using the tool, demonstrating the technique on an appropriate wooden block to show how to hold the tool safely, keeping vertical, and how to support the wood securely. Wood must be braced securely and the gimlet must not be waved around. Keep your hands at the safe side of the wood. No throwing</p>	<p><b>For bashing, den building, wedging.</b></p> <p>The Forest School leader will demonstrate safe use with children and adults in small groups or on a 1:1 basis when initially using the tool. Standing or kneeling in a sturdy position, use the mallet to bash the job at hand, ensuring the other hand is either on the mallet or in a safe position (behind their back or out of the way). Checking the mallet is held securely, hit the mallet away from your body, and ensure you are a safe working distance from others. Do not throw the mallet. Keep your face to one side to avoid the mallet bouncing back and hitting your face</p>	<p><b>For cutting green wood such as tree branches and shrubs, or sawing logs to size.</b></p> <p>The Forest School leader will demonstrate safe use with children and adults in small groups or on a 1:1 basis when initially using the tool. Starting with the safe standing stance, brace the wood securely, and checking the 'blood bubble', the Forest School leader will demonstrate the sawing technique with the blade cover on first, showing the children how to hold the tool safely in the knuckle grip and how to keep the other hand safe from the blade. If this is tricky, it may be suggested that the child holds the saw with both hands securely and safely and another adult/child to help support the wood at a safe distance. Depending on age and ability, the leader may take the opposite end of the bow saw to assist the child with the sawing motion, taking it in turns to push-pull, this could also progress to two children working together. It is useful to do several cuts in one direction before sawing. When sawing wood, hands must be kept away from the blade and the wood must be braced securely. No throwing</p>	<p><b>For drilling holes into wood.</b></p> <p>The Forest School leader will demonstrate safe use with children and adults in small groups or on a 1:1 basis when initially using the tool. The Forest School leader will demonstrate the drilling technique on an appropriate, braced, wood block, showing how to hold the tool safely with both hands, keeping vertical, and pressing down while turning the handle. Be careful of pushing too hard that the drill bit snaps. Do not apply too much pressure to initially in case it slips. No throwing</p>	<p><b>For pruning and cutting smaller branches with less effort.</b></p> <p>The Forest School leader will demonstrate safe use with children and adults in small groups or on a 1:1 basis when initially using the tool. Check around for a 'blood bubble' of space around the tool user. Ensure that only the task at hand is in the way of the blades. Carefully push the handles together to cut as they would with scissors. Always hold the blade closed when not in use. Do not throw</p>



## Food Hygiene and Campfire Cooking Policy

- All participants on food activities will be expected to wash their hands with provided water and soap, before preparing, cooking, or eating food.
- Chopping and preparing food must be on a clean surface, clean chopping boards will be provided. The boards must be cleaned with antibacterial spray prior to use and laid on to a flat surface above ground level.
- All food waste must be disposed of to avoid rodents.
- Food that needs to be refrigerated or frozen, or pre-cooked food must be kept in a plastic tub with a lid indoors and carried to the session in a cool box. The lid must be closed tightly during storage.

				
<p><b>Kettle</b> To boil water for hot drinks and cooking.</p> <p>□ A child must not touch it.</p> <p>□ Adults must only pick up by holding the handle.</p> <p>□ Be careful that it is not too full (as water could bubble out of the spout). Also be careful that it is not too empty.</p> <p>□ Be careful of the steam coming out of the spout. Do not lean over it.</p> <p>□ Remind children that it contains boiling water.</p> <p>□ When pouring, place the cup on the ground or sturdy log, and pour away from the child (never pour into a cup that a child is holding in case it splashes).</p> <p>□ Make sure the lid is securely on.</p> <p>□ Be careful when removing the lid.</p> <p>□ Ensure it is in a stable position.</p>	<p><b>Grill</b> To provide a surface to cook foods or boil kettle.</p> <p>□ Do not touch it.</p> <p>□ Only go towards it under the permission of an adult.</p> <p>□ Always kneel around the fire pit.</p> <p>□ Always use cooking utensils to move the food on the grill.</p> <p>□ Check it is sturdy.</p> <p>□ Do not touch it even when the fire has been extinguished (adult to use fire gloves).</p>	<p><b>Skewers</b> To push food onto to cook over the fire.</p> <p>□ Do not wave around.</p> <p>□ Remind children that the end is sharp and pointed.</p> <p>□ Ensure there is plenty of handle space to hold the food over the fire, put it down and pick it up.</p> <p>□ Be careful when putting the hot end into their mouth.</p> <p>□ If dropped or touches the floor, get a new one and do not eat from it.</p> <p>□ Do not share skewers with others.</p>	<p><b>Pots and Pans</b> To cook food in. □</p> <p>Do not touch the pans.</p> <p>□ Only touch the handles.</p> <p>□ Children must only stir or serve using utensils under the instruction and supervision of an adult. The fire glove must be available to use if necessary.</p> <p>□ Do not lean over the pans (and be careful of the steam when stirring).</p> <p>□ Stir gently to avoid splashing.</p> <p>□ Do not let foods boil dry.</p>	<p><b>Food and Drink</b> To enjoy! (and taste new things)</p> <p>□ Remind children that food and drink cooked on the fire is boiling hot and they must be sensible in waiting for it to cool down before eating and drinking.</p> <p>Adults are to help advise the children on suitable times to begin eating and drinking.</p> <p>□ Prior to Forest School session, pre-cooked and other food is to be stored in the fridge or freezer. When bringing it to the farm, it must be kept in a cool box, or in the visitor centre in the fridge/freezer as appropriate. It must be kept in a plastic tub with a lid until use.</p> <p>□ A clean chopping board from the cookery box can be used for a clean surface if needed to prepare food.</p> <p>□ Hands must be washed.</p>

## Toileting Procedure

Before a Forest School session, children will be given the opportunity to go to the toilet by stakeholders or parents and carers. During a Forest School session, participants needing the toilet will use the Forest School method of 'wee behind a tree, poo in the loo'. If absolutely necessary the stakeholder will take the child to the public toilet or in the case of Bullock Hills provide a shovel to bury waste. This must be discussed and managed between the adults. The Forest School Leader will remain behind with other children with tools down. Participants on school grounds will go inside.

## Clothing

There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing".

Participants will take part in Forest School sessions in almost all weathers, to enjoy the forest throughout the four seasons. Before entering the forest, all participants will be dressed appropriately for the weather. At LavenderForest we request that children bring a 'Forest School Essential Kit' to ensure that parents take responsibility to ensure their child is appropriately dressed. Children will be asked to bring a weatherproof coat (preferably waterproof coat and trousers), and appropriate shoes (wellies, boots or old trainers) from home, as well as warm joggers, hoodie, spare socks and waterproof trousers.

If the participants are getting cold, adults can initiate an active game to play, sit by a fire or share a shelter to help warm up. Parents and carers will be informed and reminded to provide their children with additional layers if the weather is forecast to be particularly extreme. If the weather is due to be hot, it will be advised that children are still dressed in lighter long sleeves and trousers to protect from nettle stings, ticks and bring a hat/sun cream to protect them from the sun. Insect repellent is recommended during the spring, summer and autumn. **Please check your child for ticks when home, they are particularly prevalent in our local area.**

## Drinking Water

The children are asked to bring a bottle of their preferred drink to Forest School no fizzy or energy drinks please. The children will be allowed to bring it to their Forest School session and leave in a designated area, the children will have access to drink their water as frequently as they like. If a child has no water left, they will be able to refill their own bottle from a shared container. During family groups parents and carers are responsible for their child's needs.

## **Child Protection and Equality Safeguarding procedure**

At LavenderForest it is our responsibility as teaching staff and as adults to promptly report any concerns to the stakeholder's safeguarding lead. All leaders will have fully enhanced DBS checks and had safeguarding training, and know the process to report any concerns. It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to make volunteers aware of the appropriate way to record any safeguarding concerns according to the school's safeguarding policy. This must be recorded on the child protection form.

Dates, times, and a context must always be recorded and signed by the adult. No leading questions can be asked and adults must not promise to keep anything a secret. Ensure that any notes that are made are disposed of by shredding them or burning them after writing them up onto the form. It is important that any notes are accurate. It is not the responsibility of LavenderForest to investigate welfare concerns (such as by asking further questions to the child), or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. For more information, please see the 'Safeguarding Policy' on the stakeholder's website. In the case of LavenderForest being the main stakeholder we refer to the statutory document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

### **Confidentiality Procedure**

An electronic or manual register will be taken in the forest by the stakeholder on arrival at the forest meeting area. The leader will record the number of participants present for that Forest School session. Any confidential documents needed will be kept in a file by the stakeholder in close proximity and be accessible if required.

### **Photography and video**

During Forest School we occasionally take photographs/videos of participants for promotional materials. Please inform us by email if you do not want your child to be included in this. In family groups we ask you to be mindful of taking images of other children and sharing on social media.

### **Mobile phones and electronic devices**

All personal electronic devices (e.g. iPads, Nintendo DS, etc.) are prohibited at our sessions. If you wish your child to carry a mobile phone and they are seen using it inappropriately, the instructor will confiscate it until the end of that session. LavenderForest will not take any responsibility for the damage or loss of any electronic devices that are brought into the session

## **Unwanted Visitor Procedure**

### **Unknown Visitors**

In the event of an unknown visitor to the Forest School:

The Forest School leader or assistant will greet and ascertain the reason for the visit.

### **Unwanted Human Visitor**

In the event of an **unwanted** human visitor to the Forest School:

- The Forest School leader will immediately call for tools down and signal all to come together.
- The Forest School Leader will call the stakeholder security network or the police. The participants will be taken by the Forest School Leader to the nearest safe place. If necessary, police will be called by the stakeholder/ Leader.
- Forest School Leader to remain in contact with the stakeholder / police via mobile phone until danger is deemed to have gone. The Forest School Leader will inform parents and carers on collection if necessary.

**Unwanted Animal Visitor (Please note Bullock Hills is a popular dog walking area and as such there is additional risk of doggy visitors and animal faeces)**

In the event of an **unwanted** animal visitor:

- The Forest School Leader will immediately call for tools down and signal to come together.
- The participants will be taken by the Forest School Leader and assistant to a safe place.
- The Forest School Leader will inform the stakeholder and record incident.
- Stakeholder guidelines will be followed
- Forest School Leader to remain in contact with the stakeholder/ police until the danger is deemed to have gone and will inform parents and carers.

## **Missing Child Procedure**

This procedure will be the same as for any on-site outdoor activity at the setting. A prevention plan means adults and children must communicate where they are (e.g. if a child goes to the toilet, or to get some water), to avoid any unnecessary worry. Regular head counts will also occur to monitor the children, including one at the end of the session when the children gather together. **In family groups parents and carers are responsible for their children at all times.**

### **If a child is missing:**

Tools down

Forest School leader to ensure other participants are gathered together, supervised and safe area. Head count revisited.

Next steps according to the stakeholder policy or in the case of family groups conduct search of immediate area.

If child still missing police to be called after 10-minute search

### **Equal Opportunities and Inclusion in Forest School**

At LavenderForest we promote the individuality of all children and adults irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. We want everybody to feel empowered and equally valued. Wherever possible activities can be adapted to include everyone and provide no barriers to learning. Information on participants' additional needs will be gathered prior to the session, as well as the Forest School leader having additional ideas to differentiate activities as required.

### **Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy**

During the first Forest School session, participants will discuss and agree on their 'forest rules' regarding respect, supporting one another, and behaviour. We will approach the subject of 'bullying' and discuss it positively through the importance of kindness, helping one another, and sharing. The participants will be reminded of these rules and agree to follow them at the beginning of each Forest School session. We want everyone to **feel safe, happy, and comfortable**. Any behaviours that jeopardise the health, safety and wellbeing of others will be recorded by the Forest School Leader and stakeholder, reported to the parents and carers, and reconsidered for joining in with Forest School.

### **Parental Consent and Agreement**

Parents and carers will be given information all about Forest School to help gain interest, excitement, and promote the Forest School ethos by the stakeholder. This form will be attached to the terms and conditions and consent form and also in the case of Bullock Hills and Sandringham Estate includes an agreement that parents and carers after all stakeholder risk assessments are in place. use the public 'common' woodlands at their own risk.

The information form will also include examples of the activities that may be included in their Forest School programme, so that there are no surprises to parents. Regular news bulletins on websites and social media will promote the benefits of Forest School throughout the year and are the responsibility of the LavenderForest and the stakeholder.

## Daily Operating Procedure

### **Before the session:**



Check enough adults are present and the weather is suitable.

Do a daily risk assessment of the forest area and read the relevant activity specific risk assessments.

Check the planning and inform as necessary.

Gather and set up any activity-based resources (including water/soap for hand washing, water to extinguish fire...etc).

Write down the number of participants present and any medical requirements or additional needs to be aware of.

Parents and carers to ensure children have all been to the toilet.

Get dressed in appropriate clothing (coats, waterproof trousers, gloves, wellies or trainers, sun cream, hat...etc).

Gather water bottles to take if necessary.

### **Beginning:**



Meet leaders in the forest area and re-cap the forest rules/promise to follow the rules.

Gather around the fire circle for the session stimulus (a letter, a gift...etc) and discuss ideas.

Warm up observational activity.

### **Middle:**

Participant's choice of learning opportunity.

FS Leader and assistant to model FS activities for children to choose from (risks will be continually assessed and appropriate action will be taken to reduce or remove any risks found)

### **End:**

Tidy up the forest area, making sure everything goes back where it belongs

(FS leader to check all tools have been returned safely and are in good working order).

Gather around the fire circle for a story or for a reflection activity.



Farewell

**After the session:**

Check for/dispose of or recycle any rubbish.

Clean tools and make sure the resources are tidy, organised, and topped up (e.g. first aid kits, legal paperwork etc...)

FS leader to evaluate and reflect on the session, making plans for future sessions based on the participants' interests and progression.

**Covid 19:**

Necessary precautions will be taken according to government guidelines and the structures the stakeholder has in place.

**References:**

The layout/ contents/ and design ideas for this complete Forest School Handbook were influenced by and adapted from:

Our Forest School Adventures Heacham Infant and Junior School Forest School Handbook Example

<file:///C:/Users/Owner/Desktop/Forest%20Skills/Forest%20School%20Handbook%20Example.pdf>.

Photographs of children in Forest authors own,

Practical Tips for Forest School Practitioners Tools, Fire, Cooking, Weather, Sites & Activities, Forest School Training Company

Working Document on Health & Safety - Handbook Guidance, Forest School Training Company 2011

Wellbeing benefits from natural environments rich in wildlife: A literature review for The Wildlife Trusts Dr Rachel Bragg\*, Dr Carly Wood, Dr Jo Barton and Professor Jules Pretty 2017. A literature review for The Wildlife Trusts: By the University of Essex.

Quotes, tool images etc taken from Google images.