



## Forest School

# Policies and Procedures

The following policies are the minimum requirement for the safe running of Forest School activities.

All members of staff and volunteer helpers have a duty to follow these policies and should be familiar with their contents.

Policies and procedures are as follows:

- Missing Child Policy
- Behaviour
- Clothing Policy
- Eating Policy
- Emergency Procedures
- Fire Safety
- Hand Tool Safety
- Toileting Policy
- Equal Opportunities at Forest School

Updated June 2020

To be reviewed 2021

## **Little Legs Montessori Forest School Missing Child Policy**

This policy will be applied whether the group are working at our local woodland base. All children will be made aware of a meeting point and given other strategies to find their way back, for example a thorough exploration of the area, familiarisation with certain areas and a clear boundary.

If a child is missing from the group, the situation will be taken very seriously and the following emergency procedure will be implemented:

1. The Forest School Leader will be informed immediately.
2. The whole group will be asked for information on when the child was last seen.
3. Activity for the rest of the group shall be suspended in order that a member of staff, including the Forest School Leader if necessary, can conduct a search that will last no longer than 5 minutes.
4. The remaining group will be given a low risk activity to complete within the camp area, being mindful not to create anxiety. If appropriate the children will be led by an adult to follow out a search party.
5. If after ten minute from child missing, the child hasn't been located, the Forest School Leader will contact parents and police via mobile phone and follow police procedures.

Updated June 2020

To be reviewed 2021

## **Little Legs Montessori Forest School Behaviour Policy**

Little Legs Montessori Forest School aims to

- Build confidence, independence, motivation to play and learn
- Promote awareness, respect and care for other people, children, adults and for the natural environment
- Encourage creative thinking
- Support collaborative behaviour
- Develop interest and respect for the natural surroundings
- Develop in both children and adults a pride for their achievements
- Give children and adults opportunities to discover new talents and passions

### **Environmental Considerations**

- Forest School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos.
- Wherever possible environmentally friendly products and recycle materials should be used when appropriate.
- Good practice should be modelled by adults showing children that the world in which we live in should be cared for.
- Involving children in site checks and planning environmental games will help support this.

### **The Role of the Adults**

- Create a positive environment which encourages and reinforces caring, nurturing and respectful behaviour towards one another, the environment and equipment.
- Promote effective relationships in which all are accepted valued and treated equally
- Be mindful of the need to maintain safety at all times
- Facilitate each child's individual learning journey through observation and dialogue.

Updated June 2020

To be reviewed 2021

- Place the needs of the children, including needs linked to their preferred learning styles, social and behavioural needs at the centre of Forest School activities to maximise individual success and raise self-confidence.
- Give praise and witness children demonstrating hard work, helpful behaviour, cooperation and empathetic group work.

### **Role of the Children**

The children, to the best of their abilities and with or without support will:

- Explore and discover the natural environment.
- Listen carefully and respond to instructions concerning safety.
- Develop and maintain a collaborative and respectful attitude towards one another, the environment and all equipment.

### **Behaviour procedure**

Children are reminded **every session** about the 4 GOLDEN RULES each golden rule has specific rules that children are reminded of regularly.

- Keep yourself safe (e.g. Tools, fire policies.)
- Keep others safe (e.g. respecting other people's feelings and personal space)
- Keep nature safe (e.g. picking up litter, recognising rare and poisonous plants)
- Have fun!

If a child breaks any of the Golden rules the Leader will be informed.

At first children prompted to discuss with a leader how and which golden rule they have broken. They will also be given a moment alone (*a mindful moment around the fire*) to think about what they have done

If they put themselves, others or nature in danger the Leader will have to take the child out of Forest School activities and parents will be contacted for an early pick up.

We understand that there are accidents and we will endeavour to make sure that children are reminded of our safety rules.

## **Little Legs Montessori Forest School Clothing Policy**

Correct clothing is essential for the healthy and comfortable running of Forest School.

- All children will be informed on correct clothing.
- All parents will be given a list of what to wear. (e.g. waterproofs, warm clothes, long sleeves and trousers, wellies or boots)
- The Forest School Leader will contact parents for an early pick up if they are not wearing the correct clothing.
- Little Legs Montessori Forest School will provide a selection of waterproof clothes to maximise children's opportunity to participate.

Updated June 2020

To be reviewed 2021

## **Little Legs Montessori Forest School Eating Policy**

- There will be a nil by mouth policy, close monitoring by all staff to insure no berries or fruits from the forest are consumed.

### **The only exceptions will be:**

- ❖ Food identified by a leader
- ❖ Food brought from home
- ❖ Drinks and food cooked on the fire by the group, from commercially available products.

It will be the responsibility of the Forest School leader and assistants to check that no members have any allergies to the products; if they have, the Forest School Leader will use their discretion as to whether use a substitute product or change activity.

- Children will be taught reasons why berries and fruits from the woodland may not be eaten during Forest School sessions. They will be reassured that some fruits from the woodland can be safe to eat, but can be equally dangerous and that adult supervision (i.e. Leader or parent) is very important to insure the correct berry is eaten.

Updated June 2020

To be reviewed 2021

## **Little Legs Montessori Forest School Emergency Procedure**

- All participants will be briefed in what to do in case of an emergency.
- A whistle will be blown as a signal to stop what you are doing, gather with a member of staff, be silent and wait for instructions.
- The First aider will assess the situation, the extent of the injury/accident. The Forest School Leader will insure that the rest of the group are safe from danger and are adequately supervised.
- First Aider will attend to the casualty, giving first aid if necessary. An incident report will be filled in later.
- First aid and first aider will always be present.

### **In case of injury**

If anyone sustains an injury or illness which cannot be treated by first aid on site and requires medical assistance:

- In serious cases, 999 should be dialled using a mobile phone carried by Forest School Leader and then the school will be notified. The school will be responsible for notifying the parent.
- The rest of the group will be supervised away from the incident and if in danger, will be moved to safety.
- One member of the staff will meet the ambulance at the site entrance and direct the crew to the incident site.
- If the injured child is taken to hospital, one member of staff will go with them and the child's parent will be updated about the situation by the staff remaining at school.
- In minor cases, the Forest School Leader will arrange to contact the parent of the injured child so they can be collected and taken to the hospital, doctor or home.

Updated June 2020

To be reviewed 2021

# Call for Emergency Services Procedure

## Emergency Contact Numbers

Ambulance: 999

Hospital A&E: 01223 217118

## Requesting attendance by Emergency Services:

Dial 999 and ask for the emergency service. Be ready with the following information:

1. Telephone number: **Olinda** 07947952130 **Grace** 07792854360 **Preschool mobile** 07572121463
2. Details of your location

**Lode Water Mill  
Mill Road  
Lode  
Cambridgeshire  
CB25 9EN**

3. A brief description of the problem (for example, if you are requesting an ambulance, you will need to describe the symptoms of the person who is injured/ ill)
4. State that the emergency crew will be met by Lode Water Mill at the entrance to the location to the site.

Speak clearly and be prepared to repeat information if asked.

Updated June 2020

To be reviewed 2021



## **Little Legs Montessori Forest School Fire Safety Policy**

Campfire and the use of storm kettles are an important part of Forest School and are used in many sessions. The Forest School Leader aims to ensure that all children and adults participating in Forest School sessions with fires will do so safely and with as little risk to their safety as possible.

### Location

- Only previously agreed areas will be used for campfires.
- Fires will only be lit in the designated fire area.
- The fire must be on flat ground.
- Campfire areas are enclosed by logs or large stones, to mark the safety area.
- The fire pit is only to be used on flat grounds and any woodchip or leaf litter must be brushed away before use.

### Positioning of Children and Adults

- Fire areas are surrounded by seating logs at least 1.5 metres from fire pit.
- Children must not run though the fire circle, but walk sensibly around the seating.
- When campfire is in use, there will be a designated adult present at all times, children are to be closely supervised.
- Only when an adult is present are children allowed within the log seating around the fire.
- Children are not allowed to throw anything onto the fire.
- Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the children: They are advised to turn their heads to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes and count to 30
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke will be avoided.

Updated June 2020

To be reviewed 2021

## Safety and Responsibility

- Fires are lit using fire lighting blocks, newspaper, cotton wool and matches or a fire stick.
- Children will be supervised when lighting the fire or using spark-sticks
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- No plastics are to be burnt
- If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision
- Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire.

## Extinguishing

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt to ash.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam have ceased.
- The hot fire bowl must always be handled away from children and with the appropriate gloves.
- Forest School Leader will ensure that any large remains of wood, especially when using a long log fire, are separated from one another.
- Large build ups of potash, from several fires, need to be dispersed. This must only be done when totally cooled, preferably the following day. It should be finely scattered throughout the woodland to enable natural decomposition.

Updated June 2020

To be reviewed 2021

## **Little Legs Montessori Forest School Hand Tool Safety Policy**

The Forest School programme will support young children to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will even encourage early risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

- All use of tools will be risk assessed for each child with a one to one.
- All tools are to be used in the tool circle with the leader present
- Children must ask to enter the tool circle and check their 'blood bubble'
- Children will be reminded regularly about the importance of the safe use of tools and awareness of others around them.
- Children will be encouraged to become more independent with the use of simpler hand tools (e.g. Mallets, pegs, rope, fire steel...) and will begin to know which tool is best for the tasks.

**Knife** to use knives safely the leader will stand behind the child and with the knife in the child's hand and the adult's hand firmly on top the adult has complete control over the knife and directs the movement of shaving off the bark. As the children are more confident they can hold the knife themselves but be supervised one on one.

**Billhook** can be used to split wood with a mallet. The holds the billhook over the diameter of the wood and the child holds the mallet. The children are taught to look at the adult in the eyes and count to three before the mallet hits the billhook.

**Hand Saw** must be used on a wood horse and with an adult closely supervising the child makes the action of moving backward and forwards pointing the saw to the ground. The adult will start by having their hand over the children's hand and guide their movements until the child is more confident.

**Loppers** the children place the wood to be cut on the ground and with both hands on the two handles and the cutting part safely on the ground between their legs they squeeze really hard to cut. Some children may find it easier to put a whole handle against the ground and push down with the handle above.

**Drills and larger Augers** must be used on a secure clamp. The leader will check that wood is secure before starting. Leader can get the drilling started or help by keeping pressure on the drill while the child turns it.

Updated June 2020

To be reviewed 2021

## **Little Legs Montessori Forest School Toileting Policy**

Whilst at the Forest School site, children will be allowed to use a secluded area for toileting.

If the child asks for help with this, they are only allowed to be accompanied by a member of paid staff or their own parent.

- Use of closest toilet if available.
- A screened off camping toilet will be placed on site in a secluded area.
- This will be removed and cleaned by the staff at the end of the session.
- All waste will be bagged and disposed of appropriately off site.
- Toilet tissue will be supplied and disposed of appropriately.
- Children will be given warm water, soap and a hand towels to wash hands.

Updated June 2020

To be reviewed 2021

## **Little Legs Montessori Forest School Equal Opportunities Policy**

In Forest School sessions all persons should be treated equally.

We aim to and are committed to:

- providing a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
- including and value the contribution of all children and adults to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- make inclusion a thread which runs through all of the activities of Forest School

The legal framework for this guidance is:

- Race Relations Act 1976;
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986;
- Children Act 1989; and
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

### **The Above Policies Review:**

This policy was adopted by \_\_\_\_\_ *(name of provider)*

On \_\_\_\_\_ *(date)*

Date to be reviewed \_\_\_\_\_ *(date)*

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

Updated June 2020

To be reviewed 2021

Updated June 2020

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