

Evergreen Forest Nursery



**Climbing, Fire &
Tools Policy**

Climbing

As with any climbing on playground equipment, climbing trees can entail significant risks: children may climb to heights from which a fall could lead to serious injury or death. We will therefore strike a balance: recognising the significant benefits of tree climbing whilst seeking to reduce or eliminate those risks that lie outside of the direct control of each child.

- We recognise that the following factors could increase the risks:
- Lack of awareness among staff regarding safe play
- Lack of education for children about safe tree-climbing practices
- Climbing above hard surfaces or protrusions, such as stone paths or fences
- Taking ropes or other equipment up a tree
- Fighting or dangerous play at height
- Peer pressure to go higher
- Climbing on weak branches (i.e. thinner than child's wrist)
- Weather conditions
- Footwear and clothing
- Climbing in areas out of sight of a supervising adult – when the above risks may not be controlled
- A pupil's disability
- Lack of routine inspection and maintenance of safe areas and trees
- The presence of moveable objects under trees (e.g. logs, wheelbarrows, toys etc.)

Procedure

To mitigate the above risks, we will:

- Zone and identify trees suitable for climbing to maximise visibility for break duty staff and eliminate risks of falling onto obstacles.
- The designated climbing areas are selected to avoid hard ground and/or protrusions.

- Safe trees will be identified in appropriate risk assessments which will be reviewed from time to time.
- Install woodchips and maintain these on the ground under the climbing areas to ensure that, should a child fall from a tree, the landing will not be on hard ground, thereby, reducing the risk of injury.
- Educate staff on rules regarding outdoor play to support them enforcing rules based on the hazards identified above.
- Ensure that the area underneath the tree is clear of any moveable objects that a child could fall onto

Fire Safety Policy

Storm Kettles and campfires are a highlight of Forest School and will only be used once the children have been introduced to the safety procedures and the Forest School Leader is confident, they can participate with as little risk as possible to their health.

Location of fires

We have two fire point sites:

- Breakfast area - under roof next to the red door.
- fire pit area in our play field.

Fire Safety Policy: This Policy should consider the who/where/when/how of the fire to ensure it is run safely. It should also be linked to an evacuation/emergency policy in case of injury or spreading fire. The Fire Safety Policy should be in line with that of where you are practicing and if you have your own woods you need to carefully consider the emergency procedures.

Fire Safety Rules

- Ratio of [1] adult : [1] fire adult is always present when fire is ongoing and NEVER LEAVE FIRE without designating another person to take your role.
- Fire area is surrounded by a 2 metre boundary.
- Children will sit on logs or branches outside this boundary.
- When the fire is in use children are not permitted within the fire circle unless they are invited by the adult.
- Children are not permitted 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 head to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes and count to 30 (or ask an adult/peer to count for them)
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.
- Ensure water is available for extinguishing.

Safety and Responsibility

- Only adults are permitted to light fires, unless children are under the supervision of the Forest School Leader.
- 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 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 off to ash.
- 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

- Only adults are to light the fire in the fire pan unless children are under the supervision of the Forest School Leader.
- The storm kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground or paving slab
- Children must be seated at least **4 metres away** from the storm kettle.
- 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)
- Fuel should burn itself out, but if it doesn't it must be extinguished with water
- Storm kettles should never be boiled with the cork in.

- Kettles should only be removed from fire by an adult wearing fire safety gloves (hold each side of handle and lift off. Take care not to put hand above chimney of kettle or over spout)

Tool Policy

Practical skills and safe tool use at Forest School

General rules for tool use

- The Forest School Leader is nominated to ensure safe storage of tools on the premises.
- All staff ensure safe storage whilst at the Forest School Site
- We do not walk around with tools, wherever possible tools should be kept clean with oily rag, sharp and checked before every use
- Tools should only be used with a designated trained adult

Knives:

- Children must be supported 1:1 or 1:2 depending on age range by an adult, preferably the Forest School Leader, initially demonstrating good practice
- Users should preferably be sat down in a designated area
- Knives should be used away from the body
- Ensure knives are clean and covered when not in use.

Bow-Saw or Pruning Saw:

- Children will be supported 1:1 by an adult preferably the Forest School Leader and good practice demonstrated
- Guard is in place when not in use
- Use in a designated area away from others
- Use with a glove on the non-sawing hand
- Use a saw-horse where possible with the bow saw.

Loppers:

- Children must be supported 1:1 by an adult preferably the Forest School Leader and good practice demonstrated
- Use in a designated area, away from others
- Loppers must be kept closed except when in use

- Loppers must only be used above the ground if possible.

Ropes and Knots:

- All equipment to be regularly checked for fraying etc.
- Children should not wrap rope around their bodies
- Children should be encouraged to learn to tie and undo simple knots
- If tying between trees, the rope should be able to be seen and not cause a trip or hazard.

Hammers

- Children must be supported 1:1 by an adult preferably the Forest School Leader and good practice demonstrated
- Equipment to be checked regularly for signs of damage or rust.
- Equipment to be stored away after use.