



**A Little Bit Wilder Ltd**

**Forest School**

# **Handbook of Policies and Procedures**

**2024 - 2025**

To be read by all Leaders, Assisting Staff and Visitors attending A Little Bit Wilder Ltd Forest Schools sessions.

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Handbook Read</u>	<u>Date</u>


Date document: July 2024

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## Introduction

Since its introduction in the United Kingdom, Forest School is proving a powerful tool for developing personal, social and emotional, physical and life-long learning skills in young people.

Forest School is an approach to outdoor education, which originated in Scandinavia, where outdoor living and learning are totally embedded in society. In Scandinavia, there is a strong belief that nature and movement are essential to a young person's overall development and well-being. Most young people, through their school years, spend one day per week engaged in learning activities outdoors, appreciating how to care for and respect the environment, while also looking after themselves and others.

Forest School is delivered by qualified staff at A Little Bit Wilder Ltd. We hope that its inclusion into the schools activities will help our young people overcome some of the difficulties they face on a day-to-day basis.

## Our Forest School Ethos

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd are extremely lucky to have access to a number of area's of woodland at the wonderful FarmEco Community Care Farm in Screveton, Stapleford Woods outside of Newark Nottinghamshire and Tuetoos wood near Scotter, North Lincolnshire. We believe that this is a valuable and vital resource in helping our young people explore, learn and discover possibilities far beyond the limits of the school and classroom. Our core values are - that of respect for others, our natural environment and ourselves.

Forest School gives young learners the chance to have first-hand opportunities within the woodland setting. The experiences in the woodland allow them to take safe and controlled risks, which help build their self-esteem and desire to find out more about the world around them. A Little Bit Wilder

Ltd provides learners of all ages, a very different environment in which they can find new ways of learning and have a chance to have a great sense of achievement. All young people are given equal opportunities to succeed in an alternative environment. Forest School provides an opportunity for young people to develop their emotional intelligence and well-being, through their interaction with the woodland and with each other.

Forest School provides a unique 'unstructured' platform for learning, in which the opportunities that arise, stem from the discoveries by the young people and the 'unexpected'. The Forest School Leader provides a safe and encouraging environment and sessions are very much based on the children's prior knowledge and desires. The Leader is a facilitator of their learning and our observations of the learners lay at the base of future session planning.

Within this learning programme, the young people are developing a variety of life skills; independence, competence, co-operation and communication and are encouraged to assess safety issues for themselves and others. It also intends to engender a sense of respect and appreciation for the rich habitat around us and begin to instil an environmental ethic.

## **Aims**

To foster the young person's well-being and motivation, natural curiosity and interest through the provision of a happy and stimulating learning environment within a woodland setting.

To acknowledge how young people need to develop as individuals - to play, to learn, to move and to communicate with each other.

To encourage autonomy, independence and confidence.

To provide a range of activities stemming from weekly observations, which give young people opportunities for exploration, investigation, imagination and creativity.

To take full account of the young person's interests, family and culture - building on previous experience.

## **Objectives for Our Young People**

To enjoy outdoor activity in the woods throughout the seasons, exploring both by themselves and with others.

To investigate and experiment, with a variety of natural resources.

To make discoveries using senses.

To use language to describe, explain, predict, ask questions and develop ideas.

To develop an appreciation of natural beauty and a sense of wonder.

To care for personal safety, as well as that of others.

To care for the woodland environment and create an awareness of wider environmental issues.

## **Play in the Forest School**

All freely chosen play is based on the following principles:

Play encompasses young people's behaviour, which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated.

Play is performed for no external goal or reward - so young people choose what they do, how they do it and why they do it.

Play is something that is created and developed by those who take part in it.

Good social play involves creativity, innovation and the ability to set aside your own wishes to perpetuate the game.

Play is about navigating real and imaginary worlds through pretence - relating external things to the internal world of the imagination.

Play is integrating - it allows young people to bring together ideas they have and things they know and to organise them through imagination and creativity.

Play is the most important activity that young people take part in at Forest School, as it is the means through which they find motivation, well-being and happiness, in order to grow physically, emotionally and intellectually. Free choice outdoor play, in our woodland environment, gives children the opportunity to experience 'loose unstructured dreamtime' (Richard Louv), doing their own thing and freedom from the watching eyes of adults. At these times they can:

- be in control.
- be on their own.
- collaborate with others.
- re-create events.
- make their own props.
- make sense of their experiences.
- move freely using a range of motor skills.
- work to the limits of their skills.
- make their own choices, decisions and rules.
- manipulate materials.
- use and explore language freely.
- test out knowledge.
- explore how to risk assess and keep safe from dangers.
- express themselves and be creative.

**Site Details and Travel to Forest School – Farm Eco site.**

**Site Details and Travel to Forest School – Stapleford woods.**

**Site Details and Travel to Forest School – Tuetoos wood.**

## **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd staff are responsible for:

- Planning and delivery of Forest School programmes and sessions from pre-school, EYFS – KS4 and beyond.
- Management of the Forest School sites, in liaison with the reinvent site managers and in accordance with conservation plans agreed, to ensure their sustainability as an educational and ecological site.
- Health and Safety Policies and Procedures, including producing relevant and up to date site, group and activity risk assessments.

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd lead practitioners have all obtained the following qualifications:

- Level 3 Forest Schools Practitioner / Bush-craft Competency certificate.
- Level 3 Outdoor First aid.
- Level 3 Paediatric First aid
- Level 2 Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults.
- Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate

All staff of A Little Bit Wilder Ltd have DBS Enhanced Disclosures. The certificates are held with Nicholas Exley, the Director of A Little Bit Wilder Ltd.

Please note that either school staff or parent/carers must provide the supervision for those learners who require 1:1 support throughout their activities on site. A Little Bit Wilder Ltd staff are not responsible for this.

## **Insurance**

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd holds full Public Liability Insurance and Employer's Liability Insurance Policy.

Insurer: Birnbeck Insurance Ltd

Policy: SALSALIA/R310057/0332/24

Renewal date: 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025

## Weekly Organisation of Our Groups

All learners, regardless of age or ability, are given the opportunity to access Forest School or Bush Craft sessions in planned events or programmed activities. Qualified and competent staff will be responsible for delivering these.

Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants can assist with the sessions, input knowledge of individual children in their care and are also responsible for observing and reflecting towards planning future sessions and the next steps. Their role is highly important in helping young people to develop through sensitive interventions and evaluations of the sessions.

Any staff wishing to book a Forest School slot or discuss an issue, know to contact A Little Bit Wilder Ltd.

## Cancellation Procedure

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd sessions will take place at the usual site in most weathers except for heavy snow, exceptionally heavy rain, high winds or where there is a risk of an electrical storm. In high winds (force 4 increasing to force 5 or more), Forest School will not take place also if there is the risk of an electrical storm or after heavy snow fall. The Forest School Leader will check the weather forecast the day before and on the Forest School session day. The responsibility of cancelling the session lies entirely with the Leader on the day and every effort will be made to ensure that the session is held, unless risk of injury or death is prevalent.

Customers or relevant school office and class teachers will be advised of the cancellation as soon as possible prior to the session.

For school sessions delivered on the school grounds, wherever possible the Forest School Leader will run an indoor Forest School session, doing activities such as woodland ID, weaving/collage using natural materials, mapping and drawing skills, learning about woodland habitats and environmental issues.

## Forest School Code of Conduct

Pupils and staff should embrace our Code of Conduct, which will be revised with the young people at every session.

- Look after your Forest School. Respect the fact that it is living.
- Check with your Leader about cutting or picking living things
- Do not put your fingers or anything else in your mouth unless told otherwise.
- Stay within the boundaries agreed - we do not go beyond them.
- Stay outside of the fire circle, unless invited in.
- Look above, below and around for hazards.
- Use tools safely and with regard to others around us.
- Show respect, care and co-operation for people around you.



## Weekly Site Management

All sites are to be checked daily in accordance with Risk Assessment Procedures. Any risk outside of these, should be noted on the Daily Site Assessment Sheet.

To minimise danger to young people - shelters, fire pit and seating are always checked for security, before or during each session, dependent on session objectives.

Trees on site, are inspected termly by one of the Leaders, or after inclement weather/observations by staff.

The contact names regarding tree safety, inspection and general site management are:

- David Rose – Owner FarmEco
- Amy Chandler - Education and outreach officer Forestry England
- Nicholas Exley – Director of A Little Bit Wilder Ltd.

## Impact on Our Environment

We aim to care for the environment and to minimise our impact on the site\_and surrounding woodland. We ask Leaders, young people and staff to consider the following:

- Instil concepts of responsible actions in the environment, by giving young people practise in decision making and helping them to formulate a Code of Behaviour about issues concerning environmental quality.
- Wherever possible, environmentally friendly products and recycled materials are used and woodland arts and crafts are made by using natural woodland resources.
- Adults model good practice by showing young people that the world we live in should be cared for. Involving young people in site checks, discussions and decisions about sustainability and managing the wood and playing environmental games support this.
- Ensure any equipment, such as tarps and rope, are cleared from the wood after a session.
- Always light a fire within a fire circle or fire bowl and disperse burnt ash.
- If using live wood, then collect wood from a wide area of the main site and with careful consideration.
- When collecting firewood, ensure large pieces of dead wood are left in situ for wildlife.
- Keep to main pathways and open spaces when working/playing, especially in April/May when the woodland floor is full of flora. Avoid muddy areas of the main woodland entrance.
- Encourage young people to report anything on the site which they are unsure of or feel unsafe with - e.g. poisonous plant, rubbish, dead branches.

## Forest School Routine

1. The Forest School Leader, developed from observations in the last session, will have prepared a Session Plan.
2. Activity/Risk Benefit Forms are completed for each planned activity. See Appendix 1.
3. A thorough sweep of the site will be done before each session, to check for any litter, glass, animal faeces, etc.
  - a. A written record will be kept of each sweep on the Daily Site Assessment Sheet. This shall state if any hazards were found and how they were dealt with.
  - b. Trees will be checked for any broken or dead branches, which may fall.
4. Check of weather conditions. If it is unduly windy - e.g. trees leaning or a thunderstorm is imminent or has commenced, then it will not be advisable to carry out a session. If there is fallen snow, we will assess if the session goes ahead or not, due to hazards below foot and the cold.
5. The Forest School Leader will outline the session with any assisting staff and go through any Risk Assessments/medical issues.
6. Any equipment is prepared and collected, with the help of some young people and staff, from the practitioners' vehicles or the tent on site.

## A Forest School Session

### Session Outline:

1. Go to the toilet.
2. Put on outdoor clothes and wellies (see Clothing Requirements). Leader to count/register the group. Ensure Next of Kin details are current.
3. Walk to Forest School site using designated trail, giving the opportunity to explore while en-route.
4. Sit down and revise daily safety issues.
5. Revise the boundaries/identify potential hazards.
6. Revise the call signal – shout of 123 back to me.
7. Time to explore or a warm up game
8. Provide instructions for the session, identifying resources, opportunities and session focus.
9. Main session.
10. At the end of the session, gather back at the circle and discuss session, allowing young people to feedback if they wish too.

### Procedures to be carried out at the end of each session:

1. Collect resources/attend to fire if appropriate and ensure Forest School area is tidy.
2. Do a head count.
3. Young people to walk back to class or back to transport, using trail designated by the Forest School Leader
4. Remove outdoor clothing. Wash hands.
5. The Forest School Leader will complete a Session Evaluation Sheet and records kept in the Forest School Planning Folder.

## Appropriate Clothing

The following clothing should be worn, as dictated by weather conditions:

- Woolly hat/sun hat if weather dictates.
- Jacket/waterproof coat.
- Fleece/jumper.
- Waterproof trousers/long trousers.
- Long socks
- Sturdy footwear - trainers/wellies/boots
- Gloves if cold weather.

The Forest School Leader will carry an emergency change of clothes and a carrier bag for dirty/wet clothing.

There will be extra clothing available in Leader safety bags, should young people not have adequate clothing.

## Toileting

For school visits the young people are requested to use the toilet prior to leaving the school building. When using the onsite classroom, a member of staff, to use a facility for all toileting requirements, will escort young people.

When visiting the Woodland sites, the following procedures will be used:

1. If a young person wishes to urinate urgently, then a member of staff will show them a suitable “wee tree” area away from the group and then leave the young person to toilet. The member of staff will ensure the young person has been given wipes/tissues and a plastic bag in which to put them.
2. If the toileting involves defecation, then the child should use the camping toilet/ composting toilet.

All visitors will be briefed up on how to use the camping/composting toilet on arrival.

## Equipment

### ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT:

A safety bag will be taken out to Forest School every session.

The safety bag is always positioned within the fire circle and every member of staff is familiar with this location.

The safety bag will contain the following equipment, which will be checked and updated as necessary:

- Emergency Procedures – laminated card.
- Medical information for each individual and emergency contact details for every member of the group (adults & young people).

- Risk Assessments – if required for a particular session, in a plastic pouch.
- Mobile phone
- Clean drinking water
- Whistle
- Emergency Life Blanket
- Medication for individuals (if not appropriate for the individual to carry the medication for themselves, it should be clearly labelled – staff must have been trained to administer it and parental consent must have been received)
- Wet wipes, hand gel
- Whistle
- Torch
- Cling film
- Spare clothing
- Chocolate/sugary food
- Plastic bags
- Emergency shelter
- First Aid Kit
  - Latex Gloves
  - Bandages – small, medium, large, triangular bandage
  - Plasters
  - Burns gel
  - Burn dressing
  - Dressings
  - Eye wash and eye pad dressing
  - Scissors and tweezers
  - Cotton wool
  - Antiseptic cleansing wipes
  - Medication for individual children
  - Tick removers
  - Sterile water
  - Adhesive tape

If a fire lighting activity is to take place: (see Fire Policy Appendix)

- Fire lighting kit – cotton wool, fire steel.
- Fire blanket
- Large containers of water
- Emergency fire kit/burns kit – burn gel, burn cream
- Fire retardant gauntlet gloves

## HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd – School/ Forestry England Health and Safety Policy - sets out a clear statement of intent regarding the School's/ Forestry England's approach to the Health and Safety of its students, staff and visitors.

The following is a list of additional measures relating directly to Forest School sessions:

1. However many members of staff accompany Forest School sessions, the person in charge is always the trained Forest School Leader.
2. The Forest School Leader has overall 'Duty of Care' for the children in his/her charge, but all members of staff are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure children are safe.
3. All attending members of staff must sign and date a form to show they have read this Handbook and appropriate Risk Assessments and understand and agree to comply with the General Operating Procedures for Forest School.
4. Whenever sessions are being carried out, the Forest School Leader will inform class teachers of the group's whereabouts and for how long we intend to stay.
5. The Forest School Leader or Assistant will carry the Emergency Bag and it is always positioned in an agreed location.
6. The Forest School Leader will ensure that the Emergency Bag contains all essential equipment.
7. In the event of an emergency, the Forest School Leader will ensure that the School contacts the emergency services.
8. The Forest School Leader will prepare and review the Risk Assessments before every session.
9. The Forest School Leader will ensure that any assisting members of staff are fully briefed regarding any planned activities available and relevant risks/hazards. All members of staff MUST read and understand the Risk Assessments appropriate to the session in which they are helping
10. When tools are used, the staff/student ratio will always be 1:1 to begin with, until confident.
11. The Forest School Leader is responsible for the maintenance and checking of all tools and equipment to be used at Forest School, prior to their use.
12. The Forest Leader is responsible in training students and staff in how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately.
13. The Forest Leader will be responsible for the pre-visit check of the Forest School site prior to a Forest School session.

## RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd aims to develop young people's self-esteem, independence and motivation to learn in a safe environment. In order that these aims can be met, the Forest School Leader will:

1. Consistently apply the five-step approach to risk assessment for all Forest School activities:
  - Look for hazards.
  - Decide who may be harmed and how.
  - Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing controls are adequate or whether more should be done.

- Record findings, including daily amendments to standing Risk Assessments, based on site visits or observations.
  - Review Risk Assessments on a regular basis (or if circumstances change, which may affect the rigour of the Assessment) and revise if necessary.
2. The Forest School Leader on sites to be used, prior to a day's activity, will carry out daily pre-visit checks – these must be done as near to the start of the activity as is reasonably practical. The findings will be recorded on the Daily Risk Assessment Form.
  3. Ensure all members of staff have read the relevant Site and Activity Risk Assessments prior to a session.
  4. Move activities indoors if, in the opinion of the Forest School Leader, weather conditions such as high winds or the threat/occurrence of electrical storms, make work outdoors unsafe.
  5. Inform members of staff and young people of potential hazards and methods of working in order to minimise their risk further.
  6. Involve members of staff and young people in the Risk Assessment, as appropriate, as part of learning.
  7. Ensure legal guidelines regarding off-site activities, such as adequate insurance and parental permission, are met.
  8. Ensure that all members of staff and young people are aware of the Emergency Procedures for the Forest School site.
  9. Be responsible for teaching young people adequate skills in order to keep themselves safe, particularly in relation to the use of hand tools and fire.
  10. Ensure members of staff and young people will have access to drinking water during sessions.
  11. Ensure a nil-by-mouth policy is adopted in all Forest School sessions, except for food cooked as part of a fully Risk-Assessed Forest School activity.

## TOOL POLICY

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd uses the following tools with pupils:

- Bow saw
- Loppers
- Billhook
- Auger
- Hand drills
- Sheath knife
- Small Forest Axe
- Draw knife and shave horse
- Spoon knives
- Secateurs
- Rubber/wooden mallets
- Folding saw
- Froe
- Scissors
- Chisels, gouges and adzes

The Forest School Leader uses a sheath knife and axe for woodland tasks.

Tools are used with close supervision initially, until proved competent and confident in use.  
All use of tools is to be at designated cutting stations

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd staff are responsible for overseeing safe use and maintenance of all tools, providing Risk Assessments for tool usage and guiding any support staff in their usage.

All tools are kept in a lockable storage box that is kept in a central location within the woodland, in sight of leaders at all times. In addition sheath knives are kept in a separate lockable 'Pelicase', which is kept locked in accordance with the UK Knife Law.

All tools are transported in a lockable box, to and from site, on a daily basis.

Tools are counted out and then counted in at the end of a session to ensure that all items are returned safely. The Forest School Leader supervises tool usage by all young people and supporting staff.

The Tool Box, which contains sharp tools such as knives and axes, is kept locked with a combination lock at all times.

Activity Risk/Benefit Assessments are completed for all activities involving the use of tools. These are held on file or on site specific to schools.

*Tool Safety Information Sheets and Risk Assessments are included in Appendix 3.*

## **FIRE SAFETY POLICY**

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd aim to ensure that all young people and staff participating in Forest School sessions with fires - will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

### *Location*

- Only previously agreed areas will be used for fires. The same fire sites are always to be used.
- The Leader will assess the forest floor (re. dry/damp material) and general weather conditions for suitability for having a fire safely.
- Campfire areas are enclosed and defined by logs to contain the fire area and discourage any young person from accessing the fire directly.

### *Positioning of young people and members of staff*

- Fire areas are surrounded by secure (i.e. wedged to prevent rolling) seating logs or stools, at least 2 metres from the fire pit – these are to be checked prior to fire lighting.
- When the campfire is in use, young people are not permitted to access the area without permission.
- When allowed to access the campfire, young people must walk around the outside of the seating logs/stools and wait for permission to step over. Once permission has been given, they must sit, ensuring legs are drawn into the log/stool and not outstretched.
- Once seated around the campfire, the young people must remain seated until directed by a member of staff to move.
- Young people will be taught how to change seats by standing, stepping over the log and then walking around the outside of the seating area. They must never cross the inner area.
- Long sleeves and trousers must always be worn.

- Any young person or member of staff with long hair should have it tied back (spare bands are in the Forest School kit bag).
- Young people are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire, but may add fuel under the direction of the Forest School Leader.
- Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the young people - they are advised to turn their head to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes or ask permission to move.
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.

### *Safety and Responsibility*

#### Lighting and keeping fires burning

- The fire will be lit under the direct supervision of the Forest School Leader.
- Other members of staff (who have been fully briefed and read the Risk Assessment) may supervise the fire area and attend/feed the fire.
- Fires are lit using a Fire steel, natural tinder or cotton wool.
- No flammable liquids or firelighters are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- If sessions involve young people adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with 1:1 staff supervision and they are shown how to kneel safely (with one knee on the ground) and how to sideways feed the fire.
- Hands should never go over the fire.

#### Safety Equipment

The following kit will be taken out to Forest School when lighting fires:

- Fire blanket
- Bucket
- Fire gloves
- Jerrican containing drinkable water
- First aid kit (with burn gel, dressings)

#### Extinguishing fires

- 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.
- The Forest School Leader should ensure that any large remains of wood are separated from one another.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.
- Large build-ups of potash, from several fires, need to be dispersed. This must only be done when it has totally cooled, preferably the following day. It should be finely scattered throughout the woodland to enable natural decomposition.

*Fire Safety Information Sheet is included in Appendix 4*

### **Emergency Procedures**



## *Accident and Emergency*

All members of staff and participants will be briefed on what to do in case of an emergency:

1. A verbal shout of 1,2,3 back to me is the signal to stop what you are doing, gather with a member of staff at our designated base and be silent and wait for instructions.
2. The Forest School Leader will assess the situation, the nature and extent of the injury/accident.
3. They will ensure that the rest of the group are safe from danger and are adequately supervised.
4. They will attend to any casualties, giving First Aid as necessary.
5. An Accident Form will be completed later by staff.
6. If the Forest School Leader is injured or becomes ill, a supporting member of staff will take charge of the situation, as all members of A Little Bit Wilder Ltd are Level 3 Outdoor First Aid trained. They will then follow the procedure below.

### In the event of Serious Injury:

If anyone sustains an injury or illness which cannot be treated by First Aid on-site and requires medical assistance:

1. In serious cases, the Emergency Services should be contacted giving the injury and site details (see below) using the Emergency Phone carried by the Forest School Leader, then the injured party's emergency contact will be contacted, using the Bookwhen system in place which conforms to GDPR.
2. The rest of the group will be supervised away from the incident and if in danger, will be moved to safety.
3. If the injured party is taken to hospital, one member of staff will go with them and a member of staff will update the injured party's emergency contact about the situation.

All emergency procedures are found on the laminated card attached to the Emergency Red Bag.

## **Accident and Emergency Scenarios**

### First aid

1. Ensure the rest of the group is safe – where appropriate delegate responsibility.
2. If appropriate, remove the danger or people from the danger.
3. Qualified First Aider called to check A-B-C, administer First Aid and if necessary call for further assistance (999).
4. Have Medical Form details available in Emergency Bag and call parent/guardian as appropriate,
5. Record full details through School Incident Procedure back at school.

### Lost or missing student

1. As soon as the young person is found to be missing, make the 1,2,3 call once again, make an immediate search of vicinity and use 1, 2, 3 procedure again.

2. Assemble rest of the group and ensure they are safe.
3. After 5 minutes call Emergency Contact to alert.
4. Continue to search for lost or missing student with all available personnel.

#### Death or serious accident

1. Follow First Aid procedure
2. Stay with casualty, but ensure rest of group is removed from the situation and is safe.
3. Staff to call parent/guardian/next of kin ASAP.
4. Gain advice on follow up from police.
5. Prepare report, using guidance from RIDDOR.

#### Irregular occurrence, uninvited person/stranger

1. The intruder will be challenged and asked to leave politely.
2. If a young person is involved, then the police should be called and the young person should be removed from the situation and made to feel safe.
3. Inform Designated Safeguarding Officer.

#### Poor weather conditions

1. If trees blowing more than 20 degrees, or if group leader feels uncomfortable, take emergency 'safe' route out ASAP.
2. Use indoor areas or shelter outdoors (away from trees) areas as alternative.

#### Behaviour problems

1. Trained members of staff to use de-escalation strategies.
2. Remove other young people from area of risk (if deemed necessary).
3. Individual's emergency contact should be called in order to remove them from site.
4. Subsequent meeting to discuss the individual's access to future sessions or how to integrate them back into sessions.

Please be aware than in cases of minor individual disruption or non-engagement, the session will not be stopped.

The Forest School Leader can decide to exclude a student, at any time, on the grounds of safety and behaviour.

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

All staff are responsible for keeping children safe. A copy of the Safeguarding Policy is available to all A Little Bit Wilder Ltd staff at all times.

All young people have a safe environment at Forest School in which to learn and develop:

- We practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff who work with young people.
- We continually raise awareness of child protection issues and equip young people with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- We develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse.
- We support young people who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed Child Protection Plan.
- We establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

**In addition, staff working within Forest School need to appreciate, that when young people feel comfortable and content, when their instinct to trust and risk take is encouraged, they**

**may be moved to disclose information which they might otherwise keep to themselves. Any member of staff who finds that a young person is telling them something which concerns them, should follow these simple steps:**

- **Listen**, but ask NO leading questions. Remember that you must not promise to 'keep a secret'. The general rule is that adults should make it clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the beginning of the conversation.
- **Comfort** the young person if appropriate.
- **Inform** the Designated Safeguarding Officer (Nicholas Exley), as soon as possible and make a record for subsequent investigation by Social Services.

## **INCLUSION POLICY**

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

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd is committed to the idea that there should be equal opportunity for all. Our policies help to ensure that we promote the individuality of all our students, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

We undertake to ensure that all our students:

- feel secure and know that their contributions are valued.
- appreciate and value the differences they see in others.
- take responsibility for their own actions.
- are able to participate safely in clothing that is appropriate for the task or connected to religious belief.
- are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success.
- have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles.
- are set challenging targets that enable them to succeed.
- participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs.

## **LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT**

### **Learning and Development in Forest School**

At the heart of our Forest School, is the ethos that we aim to develop the 'whole' student and that its very inclusive nature, means that young people of all abilities can gain a measure of success. Working with peers, we aim to develop self-confidence and reliance, development of language, decision-making, judgements and problem solving.

### **Planning and Observing**

The sessions are very much guided by the desires and interests of the students themselves and skills are developed over a period of time, as Forest School is an on going and regular part of our week. The Forest School Leader is very much a 'facilitator' as much as a teacher in a traditional sense.

A Session Plan is completed each week by the Forest School Leader and takes into account the feedback, desires and needs of the group as observed by themselves and staff during the session. The planning will also be guided by the time of year, staffing and the weather conditions etc. Observations are recorded after a session with annotated photos and written recordings.

*See Observation Sheet Example in Appendix 5*

Any learning needs or social issues are noted and certain students may be closely monitored, such as those with severe Special Educational Needs or low self-esteem. The Forest School leader briefs staff beforehand about the activities, their role and any Risk Assessments are noted.

A typical planned session will be structured as follows:

- Head count and walk to Forest School base carrying kit.
- Safety revisions of our Forest School rules/boundaries and tool/fire use.
- A choice of planned activities available with the necessary resources/or free choice.
- A circle time with hot drinks and chat/feedback/comments.
- Head count/tool collection/walk back to school.

During the main session, staff are encouraged to work with the students and to initiate talk with questioning and encouragement. The Forest School Leader notes any feedback from the staff on the Weekly Observation Forms.

### **On-going training**

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd staff strive to give the best possible standard of delivery throughout the year and staff are encouraged to attend CPD Courses when and where possible, to enhance their own skills. A Little Bit Wilder Ltd staff also attend regular staff meetings, to ensure that best practice is spread throughout all staff, regardless of experience and position.

## Appendix 1: Forest School Check Sheet

### A Little Bit Wilder Ltd

#### ACTIVITY OUTLINE RISK ASSESSMENT

Description of activity: Whilst on site members of the public will be involved in outdoor activities which, if led incorrectly, could lead to injury. All activities are to be carried out safely and all equipment is to be physically inspected prior to use and placed to one side if damaged. Team building activities are to be risk assessed on a daily basis as the weather will impact on how these activities are carried out. Woodland assault courses which are purpose built by ALBW will be physically checked prior to commencement of activity – all rope related obstacles will have knots checked and ropes conditioned if damaged. Water based activities will require closer supervision than others with respect to ages of learners and abilities. Learners with additional needs will be individually assessed either prior to arriving or on the day – the leader will have the final word in these matters should a problem arise.

<b>Hazard Or Activity</b>	<b>Harm</b>	<b>People at risk</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Preventative measures in place or identified</b>	<b>Further measures to be taken</b>	<b>Action – by whom and when</b>
Ground based team building activity	Falls, blows to body from materials	All	2	4	8	<p>All participants provided with kit list outlining minimum clothing requirements.</p> <p>Area used for activity to be cleared as necessary.</p> <p>All staff fully trained in Level 3 Outdoor and paediatric first aid.</p>	<p>Leaders to assess suitability of clothing prior to start of activity.</p> <p>Full brief to all participants prior to starting– stop activity if likelihood of injury to self or others.</p>	FS LEADER.
Off ground team building activity.	Falling from ropes, logs – impact injuries, collisions	All	2	3	6	<p>Any equipment that is roped off ground to be checked prior to use.</p> <p>Any additional equipment that is roped together by users to be checked visually during construction.</p>	<p>Ensure that personnel are placed in such a position to support a fall where possible</p>	FS Leader - all

People with additional needs	Physical limitations on activity	All	2	2	4	Leader to look at task and adapt where possible. i.e. make the individual the leader on the activity.	Ask individual if able to make decision – allow them to stand out if need be.	FS Leader and individual if able to make informed decision.
All activities	Accident or injury during activity	All	2	4	8	Staff trained in outdoor first aid (L3), risk management and hazard perception.  First Aid kits carried by trained and competent staff, emergency action plan to be rehearsed during staff training sessions. Mobile phones carried and signal checked.	Leader will take control of any accident /health situation.  Consent forms for the day to be carried at all times with emergency contact numbers	FS LEADER  FS LEADER
Uneven ground /dead wood causing slips trips and falls	Potential bruising, potential broken bones, though ground relatively soft	All	3	3	9	Verbal briefing given prior to session start. Reinforce no running within the setting.	Reinforce ground rules.	
Water based activities – looking at water borne life	Cold related injury due to getting wet, drowning in deeper areas of pond.	All	2	4	8	Pond dipping will only be conducted with children who are suitably dressed and with spare clothing in case of immersion. Pond dipping should only be done within a defined area with clear lines of sight.	Adult supervision required at all times.  Depth of water should be checked and monitored to ensure safety.	All adults in attendance.
Shelter building	Injury from lifting, moving heavy wood, cuts and bruises from swinging branches.	All	1	3	3	Briefing on lifting and safe carrying procedure. Ensure shelters are safely constructed throughout activity.	Intervene if shelter building is unsafe.  All timber used for shelter building to be assessed and retired to fire	FS LEADER ensure safe lifting techniques being used. <b>Connect collecting natural resources RA.</b>

							wood if no longer strong enough to support weight.	
Collapse of shelters	Pressure related injuries.	All	2	2	4	Group to have practiced knots and lashings before use on human size constructions. If using natural shelter building techniques then timber is checked prior to session to ensure it is useable.	Leaders to ensure that everyone in the group can effectively knot and lash as instructed. Leaders to check that children have used correct lashing technique	FS LEADER at the time of construction. <b>Connect use of natural materials RA</b>
Night time activities	Low light levels resulting in increase risk of incidents, particularly slips, trips and blunt trauma related injury.	All	4	3	12	Ensure that group has previous experience of site. If possible ensure that group arrives prior to darkness to help adjust eyesight.  Consider night walk around area to increase local knowledge.	Individual head torches/glow stick being worn for emergency or game use.  Head counts to be completed at the end of each activity.	Night time torch games to be confined to area of least problematic ground terrain and full rules explained. Adult support at hand for boundary identification.

Prepared by – Nicholas Exley – Director A Little Bit Wilder Ltd

Review – annually from July 2021 unless incident occurs.

Note – this is an example of risk assessments – up to date RA are held separately.

## Appendix 2

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd

### CHECK SHEET FOR TERM

Date/Time	Name	Area Checked	Observations	Signature




## Appendix 3: Tool Safety Sheet

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd

### TOOL SAFETY SHEET

ALL USE OF TOOLS IS STRICTLY UNDER SUPERVISION

<b>Tools used</b>	Folding saw      Froe      Draw Knife      Bilhook Bow saw      Spoon Knife      Sheath Knife      Carving tools Mallet      Bit and brace drill      Forest Axe
<b>General Rules</b>	<p>All tools to be kept in lock box when not in use.</p> <p>All tools to be used from the kneeling position.</p> <p>Cutting stations to be used.</p> <p>2 arms and a tool length must be enforced when using tools.</p> <p>Gloves to be worn when using all tools.</p> <p>All tools must be maintained and sharp.</p>
<b>Bow Saw</b>	<p><b><i>Used for cutting large diameter timber and hard wood</i></b></p> <p>Saw blade cover kept attached when not in use.</p> <p>Only to be used as a pruning/coppicing tool by instructor.</p> <p>Supporting hand kept away from cut.</p> <p>Use cross hand support if necessary.</p>
<b>Folding Saw</b>	<p><b><i>Used for cutting smaller diameter timber and harvesting working timber</i></b></p> <p>Saw blade kept folded when not in use.</p> <p>Supporting hand kept away from cut.</p> <p>Use cross hand support if necessary.</p> <p>Assistance must be provided if pruning/coppicing.</p>
<b>Mallet</b>	<p><b><i>Used for batoning firewood and driving pegs</i></b></p> <p>May be stored and transported out of the lock box.</p>

	<p>Ensure care is taken when starting the drive.</p> <p>No assisting hands as the start of the drive.</p> <p>Hands to be free of the drive area when completing the drive.</p> <p><b>If Instructor holds knife for batoning, gloves must be worn.</b></p>
<b>Sheath Knife</b>	<p><b><i>Used for firewood prep and whittling</i></b></p> <p>Users aware of critical triangle.</p> <p>To be re-sheathed when not in use.</p> <p>Blade edge never to be touched.</p> <p>Knives may never be passed to another user.</p> <p>Knives never to be forced into the ground.</p> <p>Cuts made away from the body.</p>
<b>Forest Axe</b>	<p><b><i>Used for firewood prep and timber shaping</i></b></p> <p>Only to be used at a cutting station.</p> <p>Head cover to be fitted at all times when not in use.</p> <p>Only to be used as a splitting tool by instructor.</p> <p>Supporting hand above axe cut at all times when used for shaping.</p>
<b>Spoon Knife</b>	<p><b>Used for spoon and bowl carving green wood.</b></p> <p>Users aware of critical triangle.</p> <p>To be re-sheathed when not in use.</p> <p>Blade edge never to be touched.</p> <p>Knives may never be passed to another user.</p> <p>Knives never to be forced into the ground.</p> <p>All child users to wear a glove on their helper hand unless a conscious decision has been made after discussion with the Lead Practitioner.</p>
<b>Draw Kinfe</b>	<p><b>Used for shaping green wood.</b></p> <p>Draw knife only to be used in conjunction with a shave horse.</p> <p>Users aware of critical triangle.</p> <p>To be re-sheathed when not in use.</p> <p>Blade edge never to be touched.</p>

	<p>Knives may never be passed to another user.</p> <p>Only to be used with both hands on the handles.</p> <p>Elbows to be locked into the side of the body.</p>
<p><b>Bowl Carving tools</b></p> <p><b>Adze, Chisel, Gouge</b></p>	<p>Bowl carving tools should only be used in conjunction with a method of securing the work piece. This could be a vice or dedicated carving block.</p> <p>Tools to be re-sheathed when not in use.</p> <p>Blade edge never to be touched.</p> <p>Unsheathed tools may never be passed to another user.</p> <p>Only to be used to cut away from the user.</p>
<p><b>Bit and brace drill</b></p>	<p><b>Used to create Holes in wood.</b></p> <p>To be used in pairs by children one applying downward pressure the other turning the handle.</p> <p>Drill bit should be carefully backed out of the hole after drilling.</p> <p>Work gloves to be worn if the work piece needs supporting during drilling.</p>

## Appendix 4: Fire Safety Sheet

A Little Bit Wilder Ltd

### FIRE SAFETY SHEET

ALL FIRES SET BY STUDENTS ARE STRICTLY UNDER CLOSE SUPERVISION

<b>Mandatory equipment</b>	<b>Safety</b>	Fire Bucket Fire proof Gloves Water Container and Water	Fire Blanket Burns Kit
<b>General Rules</b>		All fires are set on designated areas. All fires set under the direct supervision of the forest school leader No accelerants are to be used. The fire must never be larger than necessary. All students and staff must wear long sleeves and trousers. Students are not permitted inside the fire circle unless invited to add fuel to the fire. All movement must be around the outside of the fire circle.	
<b>Fuel and Tinder</b>		Fuel used for the fire must be collected from approved areas or provided. Acceptable tinder are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cotton Wool</li><li>• Char Cloth/ Punk wood</li><li>• Birch Bark</li><li>• Pine resin "Fat Wood"</li><li>• Tinder bundle</li></ul>	
<b>Fire Lighting</b>		All fire lighting by students must be under strict supervision Jute twine or grass nests must be held by the Leader only.	

	<p>Ferro rod and flint/steel use must be from the kneeling position.</p> <p>Gloves to be worn if practising friction fire methods.</p>
<b>Adding fuel to fire</b>	<p><b>Fuel may only be added to the fire by students only when invited to do so and under strict 1:1 supervision</b></p> <p>Only approved fuel is to be added to the fire.</p> <p>Fuel must be added from the kneeling position.</p> <p>Gloves must be worn.</p> <p>Hands must not go over the fire.</p>
<b>Smoke</b>	<p>Place students in the fire circle away from smoke drift.</p> <p>Brief correct smoke procedure.</p> <p><b>Close Eyes – Turn Head – Cover Mouth and Nose</b></p>
<b>Extinguishing the fire</b>	<p>All fire trays/fire bowl must be doused to extinguish fires.</p> <p>If possible burn fuel to ash.</p> <p>No movement from the fire circle until the fire is extinguished.</p> <p>The Forest School leader must dispose of all ash only.</p> <p><b>Students may be invited to douse the fire, but only under strict 1:1 supervision</b></p>

## Appendix 5: Session Observation Sheet

<b>Session date &amp; number</b>	
<b>Class &amp; Leader/s</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Overview of Session Delivery</b></li>   <li>● <b>Activities undertaken by group</b></li>   <li>● <b>Factors effecting delivery</b></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Learning &amp; Development Outcomes for the group – observations and comments from leaders and learners</b></li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Observations relating to learning, behaviour and development for individuals being followed</b></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Examples of play occurring in the Group that supports holistic learning and development</b></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Examples of interventions where leaders provided additional support or guidance aimed at encouraging appropriate behaviour and promoting learning and development</b></li> </ul>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General feedback from group</li> <li>• Input &amp; ideas for next session</li> <li>• Changes to following sessions</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety issues that arose during the session or near misses</li> <li>• How issues were dealt with</li> <li>• Recommended changes to policy or procedure to ensure issues are mitigated</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Aid Kit used</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Accident Log made</b></li> <li>● <b>What needs re-stocking</b></li></ul>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Signed:</b>

## **Appendix 6: Game Preparation and Cooking.**

Instructors need to be aware that game preparation can be an emotive topic and is something that needs to be approached with care and consideration. The benefits of learning about game preparation are that it allows learners to discover where their food comes from and how animals are prepared prior to entering the food chain. The activity also gives opportunities to learn about anatomy and physiology, healthy eating, history and sustainable and ethical sources of protein. But this must be balanced with the wishes of the group you're working with and the parents of the children.

The option to include game preparation and cooking within sessions should be discussed and agreed with the school's senior leadership team or organisation lead in advance of the activity being included within session plans.

Game preparation is the processing of a whole animal to be ready for cooking.

This could include the gutting, cleaning, plucking or skinning of the animal. Checking the internal organs for signs of disease or infection or parasites that would render the animal unfit for human consumption. Breaking the animal down into its needed cuts ready for cooking.

If agreed, the best practice is to allow time for permission to be given by the learners' parents if needed. The group should be briefed about the activity the week prior to it taking place, so that they have a chance to prepare themselves, to ask any questions they may have about it and for any concerns to be addressed.

Game animals should be covered or out of sight of the group if possible at the start of the session to allow the group to prepare themselves before seeing it.

This activity should be totally voluntary, learners should not be pressurised into taking part or to watch if they don't want to.

Best practice is to allow a progression in the size and complexity of game animals being presented starting with fish or game birds, moving onto small mammals such as rabbit or squirrel before moving on to larger mammals. This is to allow learners to get used to the activity and to develop the skills needed to tackle larger, more complicated animals.

Learners should be taught how to respect the animal being prepared.

As part of the activity learners should be aware of the law with regard to hunting and trapping and the safe and legal options for sourcing game.

Learners should be taught how to handle, work on, transport and store game meat safely to ensure that it is safe for human consumption, The food hygiene policy should be followed for this.

## **Practical considerations**

Ratios for game preparation will vary depending on the age and ability of the group and the size and complexity of the animal being prepared.

The maximum ratio for game preparation is 1:6

This ratio should be reduced as necessary.

The working area must be set up to allow good access to the animal, be free of obstructions and a safe distance from other participants. There must be a designated safe tool area. There must be a designated hand washing area with anti-bacterial soap and hot water. Any waste products must be disposed of in accordance with the site-specific rules.

Once prepared any game meat must be stored appropriately before consumption.

The guidance in this appendix is to be used alongside the site specific risk assessments, the tool use risk assessments and the food hygiene policy.