



Forest School - Setting and Lighting of Fires Policy

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

Location

- Only previously agreed areas will be used for campfires
- Campfire areas are enclosed in a fire bowl to prevent the spread of fire.
- Storm kettles are only used on flat ground 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 the fire pit.
- When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area without permission.
- When allowed to access the campfire, children must walk around the outside of the seating logs and wait for permission to step over. Once permission has been given, they must sit, ensuring legs are drawn into the log and not outstretched.
- Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.

- Children 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.
- 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.
- If wind direction is variable, the leader should rearrange the seating if at all possible.

Type of Fire

Training is provided for leaders regarding the best fire lay to use for a session:

- Criss-cross fires are used to provide a large amount of heat and light and are fast burning.
- Long Log fires are good for cooking as they are slow burning and require little fuel.

Safety and Responsibility

- Only adults are permitted to light fires. This will usually be the Forest School Leader.
- Fires are lit using a fire steel.
- 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 off to ash.
- The Forest School Leader should ensure that any large remains of wood, especially when using a long log fire, 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.

Storm (Kelly) kettles

- Only adults are to light the fire in the fire pan.
- The storm kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground.
- Children must be seated at least 1.5 metres away from the storm kettle.
- Children can feed the fire with one to one 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 (see above)
- Storm kettles should never be boiled with the cork in.

Written October 2013

Reviewed December 2016

To be reviewed October 2017