



EcoWild is a Community Interest Company set up to enhance wellbeing and engagement with the natural world through outdoor experiences. We embrace the ethos of Forest School and encourage children and young people to discover, learn and play in an outdoor setting. We support adults to reconnect to their innate connection with the living world using the framework of regenerative ecopsychology. We believe that everyone has the right to access the great outdoors, to be at ease and to benefit from immersing themselves in the natural environment.

Our passion for the outdoors is at the heart of EcoWild, as is a creative approach to learning, play and wellbeing. Our sessions provide freedom for participants to be inspired by their surroundings, to develop practical skills with tools, and to understand/learn how to handle risk. In school and adventure sessions we give children small, achievable tasks to make their self-esteem and confidence grow with each session. We also give time to reflect on how they feel and what they have learnt, which allows them to develop positive values and attitudes about themselves.

Children

are encouraged to develop their imagination and creativity.

learn basic tool skills and will be able to carry out simple tasks with the tools.

may have an input into the session; in whatever way they feel comfortable.

get physical exercise and all the benefits that this brings.

develop self-esteem, confidence and their knowledge of the natural world.



learn and to be aware of all the senses and to encourage a sense of freedom

Code of Conduct and Forest School Rules

We involve children in decisions about safety risk and they are encouraged to learn and discover independently, but there are certain ground rules in place that they will be taught to engage with and understand throughout each session.

Have Respect For The Natural Environment

Learn to distinguish between living things and dead things, and understand not to pick growing flora or fauna, or indeed snap budding branches from trees. Awareness of seasons will help consolidate this mind-set as well as wildlife identification. Bug hunts or scavenger hunts are always introduced as a chance to observe life in its natural habitat, rather than a chance to take it home or kill it. A deeper knowledge of all life in the woodland helps children recognise the importance of conserving it and leaving it as they found it.

Pay Attention To The Boundaries Set

We set physical boundaries within a chosen area and these are negotiated with the children (when appropriate) at the beginning of the session. We identify which tree, or bush, or stream outlines our boundary and they understand that outside these boundaries there may be hazards that we are unaware of.

Tools and Fire lighting Under Adult Supervision Only

Children will be taught how to use tools and their confidence will grow by using saws, peelers, hand drills and secateurs. We encourage their tool skills but they are only to be used when adults



are supervising. The same applies to the Kelly Kettles or to fire lighting for cooking, the fire boundaries are set and they are only to help when invited to do so.

Consideration For Others At All Times

To make the most of everyone's experience, we ask that each participant treat the rest of the group with respect and consideration.



EcoWild Insurance

All Forest School Leaders need to be covered by comprehensive public liability insurance. This will cover all aspects of forest school activities, including fire and tool use. Our insurance is with Birnbeck Insurance Services. Details attached.

EcoWild Session Procedures

All our sessions differ in terms of activities and learning experiences, as well as weather! In order to ensure that adults and children are able to enjoy themselves safely, we have set in place certain procedures that need to be carried out before each session.

Prior To Each Session – Forest School Leader to carry out: -

Complete a Risk Assessment and Activity Planning Sheet for that day's activities.

Safety Sweep – just before children arrive, check for broken glass, any trip hazards, litter or any other changes in the site.

Weather check – go ahead in most weathers, but in the case of high winds or particularly strong storms the session will be transferred inside.

Check Kit Bag – including First Aid Kit, medical requirement information, tick list of tools and any water or food we will be bringing with us.



During The Session

When everyone is gathered and ready, we do a head count and a warm up activity,

Adhere to tools and fire lighting policies and procedures and make sure any volunteers or helpers are aware of these procedures.

After Each Session

Check fire is properly extinguished.

Clear everything away and make sure no litter is left.

Count the tools back in and store safely.

Head count of children before returning to class.



Essential Equipment To Be Carried For Each Session

Check we have the first aid kit, the safety bag, the tool pack and any food and water we are carrying with us. We are solely responsible for all this equipment to maintain and re-pack after each session.

First Aid Kit

Plasters
Triangular Bandage
Micropore
Bandages
Sterile gloves
Alcohol free sterile wipes
Tissues/wet wipes
Resuscitation aid

Safety Bag

Water
Handwash
Phone
Tarpaulin
String
Individual medication
Pen & paper
Rubbish bag
Rope

Tools

Kelly Kettles x2
Peelers x10
Hand drills x2
Bow saws x2
Bill hooks
Knives x5
Strikers

Activities

Session plan
Twine/wool
Felt tip pens
Marshmallows

For Fire Cooking

Fire grill
Newspaper
Strikers
Cotton wool
Kelly kettle kindling
Dry wood
Safety matches



Emergency Procedures

Medical Emergency

The Forest School Leader will co-ordinate the emergency procedure. If a child or adult seriously injures themselves or shows signs of illness during out session, the following procedure will be actioned: -

1. Leader to administer first aid to the injured person, whilst the remaining group are gathered to a spot nearby. Whoever is with the group is responsible for summoning help.
2. Whoever is administering first aid will stay with the injured person. The emergency services will be called and we will liaise with the head teacher/school office.
3. The rest of the group will be asked to gather tools, extinguish fire and be taken back to the classroom.
4. Further liaison with head teacher/school office re parent/guardian being contacted and who will accompany the patient to hospital.

Fire

If, for any reason, the fire spreads out of control and our attempts to extinguish it fail, follow these procedures: -

1. Forest school Leader immediately shout fire. All children and adults stop what they are doing and gather at a safe distance from the fire.



2. Leader to carry out a head count of the group and alert head teacher/school office immediately.
3. Call Fire Brigade.

Fire Lighting Policy and Procedures

The lighting of fires and cooking and the use of Kelly Kettles are a big part of the activities we offer. Understanding the risks and adhering to the safety rules around the fire is an excellent learning experience for children and adults.

Procedure for lighting a fire in a fire pit

1. We only use a designated fire pit
2. We mark out our 1.5m boundary using logs and children are asked not to come into the fire area unless invited to do so.
3. An adult must stay with the fire at all times.
4. We check all around for low hanging branches, or any hazards that could encourage a bigger fire than we bargained for
5. Long sleeves and long trousers should be worn.
6. Long hair must be tied back and scarves secured so they don't dangle into the fire.
7. Children are not permitted to throw anything into the fire.
8. If smoke is blowing directly at children, tell them to turn their head away or move to a different seat.
9. Children are not to cross the fire area, but to walk around the boundary only.

Toasting Marshmallows Over The Fire

1. Wait for the fire to die down to embers.
2. Children to find a stick as long as their arm from elbow to wrist.
3. Place a marshmallow at end of stick.
4. Only a small amount of children to toast marshmallow at a time, make sure there is plenty of space between each person.
5. Count to 20 before eating the hot marshmallow.



Using The Kelly Kettle

1. Establish a flat area, cleared of all debris.
2. Make sure there is water in the kettle.
3. Remove the cork
4. Gather small firewood and create waffle shape in the bottom of the fire tin.
5. Add fast burn and cotton wool.
6. Children can help to feed the fire but be aware of flame coming out of the top and the hot tin.
7. Do not lean over the top of the kettle.
8. Long hair tied back, scarves should be secured.
9. Adults to remove kettle from the fire and pour the water.

Extinguishing Fires

All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.

1. Water to be kept to hand by the fire.
2. Water to be used on the embers of the fire, stirred and damped down until all heat and smoke has gone.
3. Ashes to be mixed into the earth where possible.



Hand Tool Safety Policy and Procedures

We are keen to use tools in our sessions and are aware that these enable children to develop new practical skills that promote confidence and self esteem. Learning to use the full sized tools can be an activity in itself, but to develop tool skills and use them to create something to take home is also extremely rewarding. We have procedures set in place for activities with tools; we talk about safety and always follow a pattern of Explain, Demonstrate, Imitate, and Practice. If it is possible we increase our Adult/child ratio for days when we are practising our tool skills.

We lay out the tools on the tarpaulin and ask the children to gather round. We talk about what they might be used for. When we start to use them, our general considerations are always as follows:

1. Staff to child ratio will vary from 1-1/1-3 depending on which tool we are using.
2. They must be aware of those sitting either side, in front or behind.
3. They must be sitting down at all times.
4. Adults give out tools; children are not to help themselves.
5. Running and pointing with the tools is not allowed.
6. First Aid kit should always be to hand.

Specific Safety Instructions for Individual Tools

Bow Saw

We have 2 bow saws in our possession. We divide children into groups of 3 or sometimes 4 if a larger group, each group with 1 adult. Those who are holding the wood wear gloves on both hands, the person sawing wears a glove on the non-sawing hand. The wood to be sawed is laid across securely positioned logs. Two children hold



the wood still and one child sits opposite the leader at the sawing end. The leader removes the blade guard and makes a guide cut in the wood and then starts to saw. When the child is ready to join in, he or she holds the other side of the saw and they continue in a slow and steady rhythm, dual sawing until the wood is cut.

Peelers

We use peelers for whittling. Children are asked to sit down and find a space to work in. They always work the peeler away from their body when they are whittling. Return the peeler to the bag when not using.

Hand Drill

The hand drill should be used on a securely positioned log. Children can work in two's. One child can help to hold the piece being drilled whilst wearing gloves. The other child carefully drills into the wood. Adult supervision required.

Knives

We have a small amount of knives. Children need to make sure there is plenty of space around them and they are sitting down. We hand the knife out of the sheath. We make sure we have eye contact with the child before handing over the knife and say "This is a knife, it is sharp, please pay attention at all times when you are using it". Make sure the child understands and is concentrating. Ask them to return the knife to the sheath when they have finished.



Risk Assessment for Tool Use

Risk Identified	Control Measure
Medium Bow Saw	Explain, demonstrate, imitate, practice. First aid kit to be close by. One child saws with one adult, either end of saw. Adult to remove blade guard. Store back in tool bag when not in use. Glove to be worn on the non-sawing hand and both hands for those holding the wood.
Peelers	Explain, demonstrate, imitate, practice. First Aid kit close by. Peel away from the body, focus on the tool. Sit down whilst using the peeler. Make sure children/adults not sitting too close to each other. Count peelers back in to bag after use.
Knife	Explain, demonstrate, imitate, practice. First aid kit close by. Pass knife to child, get eye contact, and explain sharpness of knife. Knife to be put back into sheath when not in use.

Hand Drill	Explain, demonstrate, imitate, practice. First aid kit close by. Use sitting up with a straight back, do not lean on drill. Drill on a securely positioned log/flat wood.
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Safety sweep to be carried out before each session: -

Hazard	Location	Action
Slippery areas		
Dog faeces		
Broken glass/ cans/rubbish		
Fallen branches		
Fire pit area		
Poisonous plants/ fungi		
Barbed wire		
Others		



Adverse Weather Emergency Procedures

We appreciate our diverse weather and the amazing effects it has on the woodland – it enables us to access an ever-changing landscape. We tend to brave the weather whatever it throws at us but will never run a session if we feel it will have dangerous consequences for our group. Wherever possible we will re-think our activities or put plans in place so we can carry on and use the weather as part of our forest school experience.

Activities

The use of tools may be limited in particularly cold weather due to hands and fingers becoming numb with cold and affecting co-ordination. If the weather is foggy or misty, hiding games and searching/discovery games may also be substituted due to poor visibility.

Shelter

We hope to have semi-permanent structures set up that with the addition of a tarpaulin can be fairly waterproof. Activities will continue inside the shelter, but this creates a cosy atmosphere for telling stories and using the tools as well as creating artwork.



Appointment of Staff and Volunteers Policy

If and when we need to temporarily employ staff, we make sure of an up to date DBS check. We ask them to read our policy log and adhere to our procedures, particularly in relation to health and safety.

Recruitment of ex-offenders

As an organisation which uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to check the criminal records of individuals applying for certain positions of trust, EcoWild complies fully with the [DBS Code of Practice](#). We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against applicants because of convictions, cautions, reprimands or outstanding criminal proceedings.

We recruit individuals with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select candidates to work with us based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

A DBS check is only requested after a thorough assessment against the eligibility criteria.



Safeguarding Policy

EcoWild's first responsibility and priority is towards the children who attend our sessions. If we have any cause for concern, we follow these procedures. We understand that child abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or a mixture of these.

Procedure

Unless we believe that it would put the child at risk of further harm, we will discuss concerns with a child's parent if it is noticed:

- Significant changes in a child's behaviour
- Bruising or marks not consistent with a reported incident
- Any comments made by a child, which give cause for concern
- Signs of neglect

We protect ourselves and others working with us by ensuring our DBS is up to date and by minimising risks to children. The Forest School Leaders and helpers will try to avoid situations where they may be left alone with children.

We make sure appropriate steps are taken where concerns arise and report to the appropriate person.

If a child discloses an incident of abuse, this disclosure must be recorded as follows:

- The child's full name and address
- The date and time of the record
- Factual details of the concern, what the child said and who was present.
- Details of any previous concerns
- Details of any explanations from the parents
- Any action taken such as speaking to parents



It is not our responsibility to attempt to investigate the situation ourselves.

Data Handling Policy

This policy covers the Data Protection principles and an individual's rights as set down in the Data Protection Act 1998.

Data which may be held includes the following:

- List of names, addresses and home telephone numbers and emergency contact numbers of children attending and staff/ volunteers/ students whether on spreadsheet, paper or card indexes
- Information contained on e-mail which may mention the individual's name
- Laptop computers holding personal data
- Information provided to, or received from, external sources
- Photographs
- Incident reports

This list is not exhaustive and will be subject to change

Security of information

We will ensure that measures are taken to safeguard personal data. Each individual has a personal responsibility to ensure that any information of a personal or sensitive nature to which he/ she has access in the course of his/ her work is protected from unauthorised access and disclosure.

In particular, individuals must observe the following rules:

- Electronic storage of such material should be password protected
- Paper copies of personal data must be held in secure cabinets
- Information should be labelled as 'personal'



- Individuals must not disclose personal information except to authorised colleagues
- Particular care must be taken when exchanging information with third parties.
- Information must not be used for purposes other than that for which it was intended
- If records are taken off site (e.g. on laptops), appropriate security measures should be taken (e.g. laptops should never be left unattended in vehicles, and they should be stored security off site)