

Use of Fires Policy (Forest School)

Statement of Intent

Forest school programmes may include activities that are considered higher risk than usual for the participants. It is the general approach of Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup to consider not only the risks of each activity but the potential benefits too. Taking risks is an important part of learning and development helping children to discover and explore the world through real experiences.

We aim to provide a safe and supportive environment in which the children can learn about risks, challenges and personal safety. Risk assessments are completed for each activity and key hazards are identified. We recognise that fires are dangerous and the children will be taught how to keep themselves safe.

Aim

To use fire safely as part of the Forest School experience.

Method

Fires must only be lit after a risk assessment has been carried out and they must only be in the fire pit, within the fire circle area. There must always be a trained adult present within the fire circle when a fire is lit or hot embers remain, a fire should never be left unattended.

Prior to the fire pit being built the soil or bedrock must have been assessed to avoid a fire being lit on a flammable surface such as peat. The fire pit should be surrounded by stones; the fire should not be too big and must be kept under control at all times. Fires should not be lit under overhanging branches or if the conditions are unsuitable e.g. during a spell of hot, dry weather or on very windy days (discretion of session leader).

There must be an adequate supply of fire water close to the fire pit to ensure there is enough water available to extinguish the fire if it gets out of control. A fire blanket and fire proof gloves should be kept at the fire area. A burns kit and first aid kit should be available.

Prior to setting off the forest school leader contacts the local fire service and gives details of the fire including location and time fire is alight.

At the start of each session children should be reminded of the fire circle rules; if necessary they should be demonstrated for the children to see.

- When fire is in use children are not permitted to access the area without permission.
- Once seated around the fire the children should remain seated until directed by an adult to move
- Children must sit ensuring legs are drawn in to leg and not outstretched as this could be a tripping hazard

- Children will be taught how to change seats by standing, stepping over the log and walking around the outside of the seating area. They must never cross the inner area.
- Children will be advised how to deal with smoke if it is causing distress. For example, turn back on fire, move to another part of the circle.
- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire.
- Any person attending to the fire adopts a safe stance of one knee up one knee down (or two knees for small children) so you can move backwards easily and remain stable.
- Always keep two feet away from the fire and do not lean over the fire.
- Long hair should be tied back and scarves removed.
- If children are invited into the fire circle for activities such as roasting marshmallows each child will be supervised by an adult.
- At the end of the session the fire must be extinguished. The fire must be doused with water and the ashes stirred until all smoke has ceased and they are cool enough to prevent any injury to wildlife.
- At the end of term the fire pit will be cleared of any build up of ash, these will be safely disposed of.

Suggested fire box contents – to be brought up to site at each session and stored safely

Fire lighters

Fire striker

Vaseline/cotton wool

Extra long matches or lighter

Tin of tinder

Knife for cutting wood

Mallet (left on site)

Kneeling pad (left on site)

Use of Kelly kettle

Place the base on a level non-flammable surface as the Kelly kettle has a high centre of gravity.

The Kelly kettle must never be left unattended when a fire is lit.

The air hole should be on the opposite side to the spout, keep the spout away from you to avoid splashes, remove the cork when the kettle is placed on the flames.

Feed the fuel through the chimney and have the fire gloves nearby.

Use fire gloves to lift the kettle off the base and when pouring the boiling water.

When the task is complete empty any remaining fuel/embers into the fire pit. Allow kettle to cool before re-packing.

Ensure there is ample water nearby to douse flames.

Ensure there is a first aid kit with burns kit included.

Cooking at the forest school

If food is to be cooked at the forest school, the session leader is responsible for ensuring that the food has been transported, cooked and stored correctly.

This procedure was adopted at a meeting of Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup.

Held on:

Date to be reviewed:

Signed on behalf of the committee:

Name of signatory:

Role of signatory: