

Use of Tools Policy (Forest School)

Statement of intent

Forest school programmes may include activities that are considered higher risk than usual for the participants. It is our general approach to consider not only the risks of each activity but the potential benefit too. We seek to minimise risks by following appropriate procedures and by carrying out risk assessments covering key hazards. We recognize that taking risks is an important part of learning and development and we will provide a safe and supportive environment where the children can learn about risks, challenges and personal safety.

Using a range of tools is an important part of our session as it allows the children to develop new practical skills that help develop self-confidence. The children will be able to participate in activities which enables them to learn about the environment and helps maintain the woodland. Children and adults will be trained through tool talks on safe handling of the tools and will work with an experienced member of staff to develop their own skills.

Aim

To allow children and adults to use tools safely, within the woodland setting.

Method

Before any tool is used a tool talk must be given to each child or adult who is new to the tool. Procedures must be followed at all times; this includes the position of the adult or child's body when they are using the tool.

Tools will be stored safely in a designated bag and only adults will remove them. The bag will be kept in the adult only area, next to the fire circle. All tools will be counted in and out at the start and end of each session to ensure no tools get left within the woodland or lost.

Most tools will require one to one supervision with children from the Early Years sector; bow saws may require two children to use the tool to work in teamwork. Children must not be left alone with tools.

Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup - Policy

All tools will be checked for damage or wear before use, damaged tools will be disposed of safely or repaired. Tools will be cleaned, repaired and maintained on a regular basis. Wooden handles will be checked for cracks and splintering. Metal heads will be checked that they are not moving and firmly in place. Blades will be checked for chips, dents, cracks or rust. Sheaths and guards will be kept clean, oils and waxes will be used to maintain handles. Oil such as WD40 will be used for moving mechanisms. Rust can be sanded off and blades sharpened by an adult using a sharpening stone.

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:

All staff, volunteers and committee members will sign to indicate they have read, understood and agreed with the above policy.