

Fire Safety Policy — Outdoor Learning Environment

1. Policy Purpose and Scope

To ensure safe practices when planning and delivering fire-related activities as part of outdoor learning, recognising that fire skills can develop learners' confidence, risk awareness, and practical learning while maintaining a safe environment for all participants.

2. Principles

1. **Safety First:** All fire activities must be risk assessed and controlled so that risks are minimised and managed effectively. A qualified first aider must be available and on-site at all times.
2. **Educational Value:** Fire experiences must have clear learning outcomes, not be one-off thrills, and support children in understanding risk and safety.
3. **Supervision and Competence:** Only trained adults may light and manage fires. Children may participate where appropriate under direct, close supervision.
4. **Legal Duty:** The organisation must comply with relevant fire safety law and risk assessment duties where applicable.

3. Risk Assessment

Before any session that includes fire:

- Carry out a site and activity-specific fire risk assessment, reviewed regularly.
- Identify hazards (fuel sources, trip hazards, weather), control measures (clear fire area, water bucket), and staff roles.
- Fire activities may only proceed if risks are deemed acceptable and controls are in place.

4. Fire Area and Equipment

- Fires must only be lit in designated suitable areas, with controlled access.
- Maintain safety equipment close to the fire: water, fire blanket, protective gloves, burns first-aid kit.

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- Do not use flammable liquids or plastics; only safe, natural combustible materials should be burned.
- The Forest School Leader must ensure that the fire has been completely extinguished prior to leaving the site.

5. Safe Behaviour and Participation

- Children must be briefed on fire rules before participation (e.g., seating distance, movement procedures).
- Children may be taught fire skills progressively and given limited responsibilities (e.g., safe placement of wood) with supervision.
- Staff should model safe behaviour and intervene immediately if safety rules are breached.

6. Supervision and Ratios

- Maintain enhanced supervision ratios during fire activities appropriate to age and competence.

7. Emergency Preparedness

- Ensure mobile communication and emergency procedures are established before lighting a fire.
- All staff must be familiar with the Emergency Action Plan.
- Staff must be familiar with first-aid response for burns and smoke inhalation.

8. Review and Record Keeping

- Document all fire risk assessments, incidents, and safety briefings.
 - Review policy annually or after any significant accident, incident, or near miss.
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Benefits Recognised

Learning fire skills under structured guidance enhances children's:

- risk perception, confidence and resilience,
 - motor skills and problem-solving,
 - social cooperation and communication.
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