

Working Document on Health & Safety – Handbook Guidance

Before working with your group of children on your introductory 6-week Forest School Programme you will need to create a working document on health and safety (which we call a “handbook”). This will show that you have checked and understood the Health and Safety legislation relevant to working in the outdoors, as well as showing that you will be working within all health & safety aspects related to your Forest school. This document is required as part of your coursework portfolio and may also be used to show to parents, governors and line managers.

The document should be easy to read, well structured and may refer to the source policies from the organisations you are working with.

Below is an extensive list of all the areas which should be considered within your handbook. You will see that these are very similar to those in the Module 3 & 4 Safe Practice Handbook. You can either fill in the Modular workbook as your handbook or create your own version by writing a short statement on each of the Health & Safety aspects listed below. This will detail how you deal with each of the aspects at your Forest School suitable for your client group. Do make sure that your statements are within the limitations set by legislation and your organisation’s existing policies.

A. Handbook Contents:

Your handbook needs to have a contents page and should be signed by the authors. Please ensure you have a review date to ensure this document is regularly updated.

1. Health & Safety aspects for Forest School:

- a. What is Forest School and who is **responsible** for running it, how are you insured
- b. **Staff** and helpers – what ratios do you work to, are they CRB/ Disclosure checked, is there Induction training
- c. **Risk management** and risk assessment – who is responsible and what RA are done
- d. **First aid** – who is responsible, what is their training and what kit do you carry
- e. Accident and **Emergency** procedure – who to contact, who is responsible, what happens to the rest of the group
- f. **Cancellation** procedure – under what weather conditions and what staffing ratios will mean you have to cancel the session. Also how do you cancel it (let school/parents know)
- g. **Toileting** Procedure – where at your FS, what hygiene equipment will you have and how is it going to be staffed
- h. **Parental Consent**
- i. Use of Photographs
- j. **Tools** used at Forest School – what tools are used, ratios for useage, who is responsible for overseeing safe use and maintenance. Any PPE for the staff and/or young people. A specific tool policy
- k. **Fire** at Forest School – safe siting, lighting and management of fire at FS, safe behaviour around fire, extinguishing procedure
- l. Food hygiene Procedure
- m. Campfire cooking procedure
- n. Transport to and from FS site – how is this done if walking or driving
- o. **Lost or Missing Child** Procedure – how will you ensure you have everyone and what will you do if someone is lost. How long before dialling 999
- p. **Equal opportunities** statement
- q. Signature and review date

2. Daily Operating procedure

- What to do before the session
 - Risk assessments
 - Staffing
 - Register
 - Equipment check
- What to do during the session
 - Ongoing risk assessment
 - Head count
- What to do after the session
 - Head count
 - Transport back
 - Tool check
 - Evaluation for next session

3. Safeguarding Children Procedure

- Who is responsible
- What to look for
- How to talk to children and what to say
- What to report in the event of concerns
- What happens if staff are accused?

4. Confidentiality Policy

- How will you keep records and registers
- What information will you carry during FS and how

5. Behaviour / Anti-bullying Policy

Please Note:

If your organisation already has a Forest School handbook, then you will need to review it and ensure it is up to date.

You will need to put in a statement at the front of the handbook to indicate:

1. That you have reviewed it
2. What you have reviewed
3. What changes you have made
4. Signature and Review date