



# The Willows

— H O R R I N G E R —

# Handbook



Nurturing individuals through nature



# Contents Page

Statement of Ownership and Signing Page	3
Our Ethos	4
Health and Safety Policy	5
Our Forest School Staff	6
Risk Management and Risk Assessment	7
First Aid, Medication and Medical Needs	8
Emergency and Incident Procedure	9
Lost or Missing Child Procedure	10
Toileting Procedure	11
Parental Consent and Permissions	12
Tools	13-14
Fire at Forest School	15-6
Campfire cooking and Food Hygiene Procedure	17-18
Accessing the site and Visitor Policy	19
Cancellation Procedure	20
Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment	21
Daily Operating Procedure	22
Safeguarding Policy	23-24
Complaints Procedure, Confidentiality Procedure and Data Protection	25
Equality and Diversity Policy	26
Behaviour Policy	27
Play Policy	28
Planning and Observation Policy	29
Environmental Policy	30

## Appendices

One ~ Accident and Emergency Procedure
Two ~ Camp Fire and Campfire Cooking (food hygiene) Procedure
Three ~ Site Management Plan
Four ~ Site Risk Assessment
Five ~ Risk Benefit Assessments
Six ~ Tool Procedures
Seven ~ Insurance Certificates
Eight ~ Site Survey and Environmental Impact Assessment
Nine ~ HACCP Table
Ten ~ Ecological Matrix
Eleven ~ Disclosure Procedure

# Statement of Ownership

This handbook has been written by Rebecca Dodman for The Willows Horringer.  
Rebecca is a qualified Level 3 Forest School Leader.

First Written ~ Autumn Term 2021

*R Dodman*

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Signed by Rebecca Dodman

Updated ~ Autumn Term 2022

*R Dodman*

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Signed by Rebecca Dodman

Review Date ~ Autumn Term 2023

*R Dodman*

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Signed by Rebecca Dodman

## Signing Page

Please sign below to show that you have read and understood the contents of the handbook.

Name	Position	Signature	Date
Cathy Frankland	Forest School Assistant		
Fiona Hills	Forest School Assistant		

## Our Ethos

At The Willows Forest School we create opportunities for children to immerse themselves in our safe woodland environment: where we **nurture individuals through nature** and inspire learners to develop their personal, social and emotional skills; through taking risks, making choices and initiating hands on learning experiences; enabling children to create long term memories, to become successful learners and grow as unique individuals.

Our Forest School programme is offered to a variety of different groups of young people, including toddlers, pre-school and primary aged children. The Little Willows group runs very week in blocks of 6-week programmes; ensuring a vast number of children have the opportunity to experience the Forest School inspirational process at the beginning of their educational journey. The sessions take place regularly on Monday and Friday mornings for 2 hours at The Willows site, Horringer; enabling learners to develop relationships with the natural world. Rebecca also provides Alternative Provision for SEND children. During the school holidays Rebecca organises Wild Willow Camps and at weekends Go Wild! outdoor birthday parties for children to experience Forest School type activities.

Each Forest School programme encompasses the child-centred, learner-led approach that is responsive to the needs and interests of the individuals. Role play and child-initiated activities are an integral part of the Forest School process. Observations and reflective practice feature in each session to ensure achievements are celebrated and next steps are identified. Planned activities and learning experiences are tailored to the needs and development of each unique individual. The long-term Forest School programme is designed to build on their emotional intelligence: to inspire motivation and confidence to take risks and ownership of their learning and build positive attitudes and relationships with others and the natural world in which they grow.

# Health and Safety Policy

At The Willows we strive for children to be confident in taking and managing their own risks, while in a safe outdoor environment. Health and Safety underpins our ethos throughout our sessions. We consider all the potential risks of our site, the activities and the needs of individual children before each session. Guidance is provided to parents/carers about the sessions and permission is sought.

The Forest School Leader, Rebecca Dodman is responsible for the Site Risk Assessment. This involves identifying hazards, associated risks and implementing control actions for each area of the site. Each Forest School activity will be thoughtfully risk assessed; taking account of the hazards, but also the benefits the children will gain from participating in the activity. These Activity Risk Benefit assessments are shared with the children and they are taught how to use specific tools using associated 'tool procedures'. Older children (8+) attending The Willows are also involved in assessing the risks on site, through the Daily Site Check. Both the site risk assessment and activity risk benefit assessments are reviewed annually or if there are any changes that may impact provision at The Willows.

We adhere to Our Health and Safety aims:

- Provide and maintain a safe and healthy outdoor environment for all children to learn (see **Daily Operating Procedure, Risk Assessment and Risk Management**)
- Ensure two adults or more are always present when children are on the site (see **Ratios**)
- Children are closely supervised at all times, especially when using water or tools (see **Lost or Missing Child Procedure, individual Risk Benefit Assessments**)
- Ensure that the premises and equipment are maintained safely and are regularly inspected (see **Tool Storage and Maintenance**)
- Establish and maintain safe working procedures amongst staff, children and parents (see **Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, Equality and Diversity Policy, Behaviour Policy**)
- Have robust procedures in place in case of emergencies (see **First Aid, Emergency and Incident Procedure, Fire and Campfire Cooking and Food Hygiene Procedures**)

## Insurance

The Willows Forest School is covered by the appropriate Public Liability Insurance, which is reviewed annually. See Appendix 7.

## Manual Handling

Care should be taken when lifting heavy equipment, bending from the knees. Staff should ensure they do not lift anything that feels too heavy. Children should only be lifted when deemed necessary

## COSHH

At The Willows the Forest School Leader takes measures to ensure all on site are protected from coming in to contact with substances that have a risk of being hazardous to health. Most substances used within the sessions are of domestic standard and kept out of reach of children. Personal Protective Equipment can be used to protect staff.

## Our Forest School Staff

### Rebecca Dodman

- Forest School Leader
- Level 3 Forest School Practitioner
- Outdoor Paediatric First Aid trained
- Qualified Teacher with National Professional Qualified Headteacher
- DBS checked

### Cathy Frankland

- Forest School Assistant
- DBS checked
- Outdoor Paediatric First Aid trained
- Food Safety & Hygiene (Level 2) September 2022

### Fiona Hills

- Forest School Assistant and volunteer
- DBS checked

All Forest School sessions will be led by a Level 3 Qualified Forest School Leader. Forest School Leaders must hold a current First Aid at work or 16 hours Outdoor First Aid qualification. Other members of staff will support the sessions with roles and responsibilities agreed at the beginning of each session, with necessary guidance tool procedures and risk benefit assessments shared.

All staff have been DBS checked to an enhanced level, or if volunteering they will be closely supervised and have read and understood the contents of this handbook before supporting any session at The Willows. All staff have regular Health and Safety, and Safeguarding updates as required.

## Ratios

The ratio of adults (minimum) to children is:

- Toddlers attending Little Willows 1:1 (accompanied by a parent/carer)
- Pre-School aged children 2:8
- Primary aged children 1:6

Any additional helpers must adhere to the contents of this handbook and the policies referenced. They must also sign to say they have read and understood the contents of the terms and conditions document.

## Risk Management and Risk Assessment

For sessions to run efficiently and effectively at The willows, in a way that is safe for all, it is paramount that Risk Assessments and Risk Benefit Assessments are completed and reviewed as necessary (seasonally or if changes occur which impact provision). (See Appendix 5)

We encourage all primary aged participants, where possible, to be involved in the process of identifying and assessing possible risks; to promote the health and safety of all staff and children, therefore managing and reducing risk and harm.

The Forest School Leader will provide a written Site Risk Assessment, which involves identifying hazards, associated risks and implementing control actions to make each area of the site safe and suitable for the type of session at The Willows. Activity Risk Benefit Assessments are also written by The Forest School Leader, for each Forest School activity. Individual activities will be thoughtfully risk assessed; taking account of the hazards, but also the benefits the children will gain from participating in the activity. These Risk Benefit Assessments are shared with the children and they are taught how to use specific tools using associated 'tool procedures'.

The Forest School Leader will also instruct the Daily Site Check and lead a briefing with the team before the start of each session. The Daily Site Check may be carried out by a staff member of the Forest School team or primary aged children (with the guidance of an adult). Any potential risks will be recorded by a staff member of the Forest School team and highlighted to all those involved in the session before the activities begin.

In the instance that a child-initiated activity does not have a relevant assessment, an 'on the spot check' will be carried out by the Forest School Leader to assess the risks and make an informed decision if the activity is safe. A formal Risk Benefit Assessment will be written retrospectively after the session has ended.

*All participants are involved in risk assessment and responsible for risk management.*

## First Aid

The following staff are responsible for First Aid:

**Rebecca Dodman** ~ Forest School and Paediatric First Aid Trained. Training led by Peritia Training in November 2022. This will be reviewed every three years.

**Cathy Frankland** ~ Forest School and Paediatric First Aid Trained. Training led by ITC First in June 2023. This will be reviewed every three years.

### First Aid Kit

A First Aid Kit containing the following items will be kept in the Forest School bag at all times. The kit comprises all the materials needed to treat injuries and ailments that may occur during sessions at The Willows. It will be stored in two separate containers, one labelled 'Cuts' and the other labelled 'Burns'. This will enable efficient and effective administration of First Aid when required.

- Plasters of different sizes
- Bandages
- Triangular bandages
- Burns dressings
- Face shields
- Sterile pads
- Eye pads
- Sterile water
- Cling film
- Non-latex gloves
- Hand wipes/gel
- Tweezers
- Tick remover
- Safety pins
- Tape and Micro pore
- Tough cut shears
- Inhaler
- Cold pack
- Insulation mat
- Foil blanket
- Spare hats/gloves/scarf
- Whistle

## Medication and Medical Needs

Should a child require medication during a session, the required medication will be brought to the site where a member of staff (or the child's parent, if attending) will administer and log the medication given; as stated in the child's care plan or administering medication permission form. This paperwork will be gathered by the responsible First Aider and kept in the Confidential File in the Forest School emergency bag, together with the medication. Information regarding individuals' medical needs will be shared with all adults. The administration of medication outside will be discussed with parents prior to the session.

### Inhalers

We will ensure that children who are asthmatic have their inhaler for each session attending. They will be collected (if deemed necessary) before the session begins and stored in a separate clear box which will be placed by the emergency bag. A spare inhaler will be kept inside the First Aid Kit. Inhalers will be administered in line with the guidance on the prescription label attached and always under the supervision of a member of staff.



# Emergency and Incident Procedure


In the case of an emergency or incident it is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to assess the situation as a minor or major incident, then instruct the appropriate procedure and allocate roles to the staff team/parents.

## Minor incident

1. Child/adult assessed by a trained first aider.
2. Treat as required.
3. Complete Incident Log Book.
4. Inform parents/carers.

## Major incident

1. Forest School Leader will attend casualty, while one other member of staff will take care of the rest of the group and return to the fire circle or exit. If a third member of staff is present they will also assist the casualty; monitoring and recording.
2. Assess the situation. The Forest School Leader will call the emergency services if necessary.
3. Parents/carers are notified and a full account of the incident is given.
4. The Incident Log Book is completed.
5. Review policies/procedures.



### Accident and Emergency Procedure

In the case of an emergency, a **whistle will be blown** as a signal to **stop** what you are doing, **gather** with a member of staff, be **silent** and **wait for instructions**. The Forest School Leader will assess the situation, the nature and extent of the injury/accident. They will instruct roles to the staff team or adults present. One adult will become responsible for ensuring that the rest of the group are safe from harm and are taken to the main gate. The Forest School Leader will attend to any casualties, giving First Aid as necessary. If an adult on site is First Aid **trained** they will also assist the casualty, monitoring and recording. The Incident Log Book will be completed later after the session. A RIDDOR record will be created, along with details in the Incident Log Book for any serious, near-miss incident at or in the vicinity of the Forest School Site.

If the Forest School Leader is injured or becomes ill, the Forest School Assistant/or nominated adult will take charge of the situation as above and will call the emergency contact below.

In the event of an injury, or if anyone sustains an injury or illness which cannot be treated by First Aid on-site and requires medical assistance the following procedure will be followed:

**In minor cases:**

- o If parent/carer is not on site, The Forest School Leader will arrange to arrange to contact the injured party's emergency contact, so that they can be collected and taken to the hospital, GP or home, as appropriate.

**In serious cases:**

- o The Emergency Services should be contacted by the Forest School Leader or a nominated adult (if they are taken ill) using a mobile phone.
- o The injured party's emergency contact is then contacted by a member of staff (or a nominated adult, if the leader is taken ill). Emergency details can be found on booking/consent forms, on the session clipboard.
- o The rest of the group will be supervised away from the incident, by the main gate.
- o A nominated adult will meet the ambulance at the bottom of the drive and direct the crew to the incident site.
- o If the injured party is taken to hospital, one adult/parent/carer will go with them and the injured party's emergency contact will be updated about the situation.

Requesting attendance by Emergency Services Dial 999 and ask for an ambulance/fire brigade. Be ready with the following information:

- o Forest School contact No: Rebecca Dodman - Forest School Leader 07920096012
- o Address: Farm Cottage, Chevington Road, Herring, Suffolk, IP29 5SW
- o Grid Reference: TL 82700 61608

Rebecca's emergency contact details: Tristan Dodman (husband) 07818028009

## Recording and reporting Incidents

All incidents must be reported immediately to the Forest School Leader and recorded in the Incident Log Book. The incident should be recorded on site as soon as it has occurred. The Incident book is kept within the emergency bag. All incidents must be followed up with staff and parents. For Major incidents reports must be investigated further, and policies and procedures reviewed. Incidents leading to hospitalisation for more than 24 hours or resulting in an injury preventing a person from working for three or more days afterwards, must be reported with RIDDOR online or telephone 03453009923.

## Emergency Bag

The emergency bag will be available during every Forest School session. It will be placed/hung at a central point for all children and staff to see. It will be checked prior to each session to ensure it contains all the following items:

- o First Aid Kit, including Burns Kit
- o Survival bag
- o Fire blanket
- o Torch
- o Small tarpaulin
- o Tissues and paper towels
- o Fresh bottle of water
- o Sun cream
- o Insect repellent
- o Hand wash gel
- o Baby wipes
- o Snack bars
- o Emergency action plan and script
- o Incident book
- o Confidential File (including Safeguarding Forms)
- o Mobile phone (may be in staff pockets)

## **Lost or Missing Child Procedure**

During our sessions at The Willows, the children's safety is paramount. Therefore at the beginning of each session the children will be registered, rules explained and safety procedures (including boundaries) will be discussed. Throughout the session at points when the whole groups gathers together, the children will be accounted for. Staff will be made aware of the children within the group and any individual needs the children may have. If a member of staff believes a child is missing, they will call the group together (at the agreed central point using 1-2-3 Where Are You?). Children will be counted and the register called to make sure no other child has also gone astray. If the child has not be found we will follow the protocol:

### **Protocol if a child is lost or missing**

- The Forest School Leader will carry out a thorough search of the site.
- Staff keep calm and sit in a circle with the other children playing static games so the children don't become anxious or worried.
- The drive and boundaries are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby the child could have wandered out.
- The Forest School Leader will talk to staff to establish when & where the child was last seen and record this.
- One member of staff is asked to search the vicinity.
- If the child is not found after 15 minutes the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.
- An investigation will be carried out.

### **1-2-3 Where Are You?**

Children learn a game called 1-2-3 Where Are You? (similar to hide and seek) at the beginning of session one. The children are asked to hide and then on the call of '1-2-3 Where Are You?' they respond '1-2-3 I'm here'. The adult then calls '1-2-3 come back now' and the children respond '1-2-3 I'm coming', while walking to the agreed central point, where the emergency bag is hanging.

### **Boundaries**

The boundaries are also established at the beginning of the initial session. The boundary can be marked with rope or flags for the younger children, as a visual reminder, or until the trust between the children and staff has been established. The children are involved in the risk management process, to ensure they remain safe in the agreed boundaries. The boundaries can be 'beat' as an introductory game together with the game 1-2-3 Where Are You? If a child needs to leave the established safe area, they must ask a member of staff.

## Toileting procedure

Before each session all children will be encouraged to use/ to have visited the toilet. If a toddler needs to use the toilet they will be accompanied in the toilet station by their parent/carer. If a pre-school aged child uses the toilet, an adult will remain outside the toilet station and the cover will not fully conceal the entrance. If a child requires assistance, the door will be left open and the adult will wear latex gloves. If a Primary School child needs to visit the toilet, they must ask to use the toilet and then visit independently and on their own. They must use the toilet, wash their hands and then return to their activity. If a child requires assistance, the cover will be left open and the adult will wear latex gloves.

Children and adults are encouraged to put paper waste into the bag/bin provided and use the handwashing facilities available.

## Parental Consent and Permissions

Prior to starting the Little Willows programme or attending Wild Willow Holiday Camp, an information leaflet and parent permission and consent letter will be sent to parents/carers. The letter will detail the activities the children will experience and identify the tools the children may use. Parental consent must be obtained for each child to participate in these sessions and activities. If a child requires additional consent from their parent/carer (i.e. for the administration of medication) then individual parents will be contacted to be asked to complete further written consent, in addition to the general consent form completed by all parents/carers. The information collected will be stored in the 'Forest School File' then disposed of following GDPR guidelines.

### Photography

Photographs may be taken for observational, assessment and marketing purposes during the sessions; to be used on The Willows website and Facebook page. Children will not be identified by name in the photos, unless direct communication is made with the child's parents/carers. A collection of Forest School photos may also be displayed for staff, children and visitors to see.

Forest School volunteer helpers are not permitted to take photos of any children during a Forest School session.

In conjunction with the general consent form, parents/carers will also be, given the option for their child NOT to be photographed during Forest School. If photo consent is not granted, the child/children will be managed accordingly during the shot or their face will be distorted.

## Tools

At The Willows we use a variety of tools to develop the children’s skills and enhance their experiences. A guide to the tools used at Forest School can be found below and further guidance for each tool can be found in the ‘tool procedure’. The tool procedure must be adhered to at all times to ensure all participants remain safe. Before any tool is used children and adults must wear appropriate clothing and if required (see individual tool procedure) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Long hair must be tied back and clothing/accessories must not hang low. Tools will be counted at the beginning of the session and again at the end. Tools must be used within the designated ‘safe tool’ area under adult supervision.

### Tool Storage and Maintenance

All tools will be stored in a lockable, heavy-duty bag/box. The key will be the responsibility of the Forest School Leader. The Forest School Leader is also responsible for maintaining the tools after each session. This includes cleaning, sharpening and a safety check. Children aged 8+ may be taught how to clean and care for particular tools (under strict adult supervision), if they can demonstrate they can use the tools safely.

Safety issues must be reported immediately to the Forest School Leader.

### A guide to the tools used at Forest School

Bow Saws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Used for cutting wood (felling or wood cookies) with a diameter greater than a 10p piece (too thick to be cut by loppers).</li> <li>○ Safe tool use will be demonstrated by Forest School Leader on a 1:1 basis. Must be carried like a handbag to your side with the blade cover on. The blade must not touch the ground, it can be laid on a mat/tarp or hung on a tree.</li> <li>○ When passing, turn the saw so the person receiving the saw can take the handle.</li> <li>○ The bow saw can be used outside the safe tool area under adult supervision and within a safe ‘blood bubble’ (an arm’s length plus a tool).</li> <li>○ The blade cover must be in place when not being used.</li> <li>○ Store in the lockable bag immediately after being used.</li> <li>○ Adult to child ratio 1:1 for demonstration, progressing 1:3 for older children.</li> </ul>
Froe/ Billhook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Used for cleaving and splitting wood to make wooden craft items.</li> <li>○ Safe tool use will be demonstrated by Forest School Leader on a 1:1 basis.</li> <li>○ The froe/billhook must be carried in front of you with the blade facing down and pointing forward.</li> <li>○ When passing, turn the blade towards yourself so the person receiving the tool can take the handle.</li> <li>○ The tool must be used inside the safe tool area under adult supervision and within a safe ‘blood bubble’ (an arm’s length plus a tool).</li> <li>○ The correct position must be adopted when using the tool.</li> <li>○ It must be used with a mallet, on a secure/hard surface.</li> <li>○ Gloves must NOT be worn.</li> <li>○ Store in the lockable box immediately after being used.</li> <li>○ Adult to child ratio 1:1 for demonstration, progressing 1:2 for older children.</li> </ul>
Loppers/Secateurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Used for cutting wood with a diameter smaller than a 10p piece, for example small branches for wood craft (i.e. whittling).</li> <li>○ Safe tool use will be demonstrated by Forest School Leader on a 1:1 basis.</li> <li>○ The tool must be used in a ‘blood bubble’ (an arm and tools length).</li> <li>○ Use away from your body, with someone holding the branch behind you (if required).</li> </ul>

Hand Drill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Always carry by the handle with blades closed (safety clip on), facing down, beside you.</li> <li>○ When carrying loppers, make sure the blades are closed and you hold them by the handles tucked under your arm, facing forward.</li> <li>○ When passing, turn the blade towards yourself so the person receiving can take the handle.</li> <li>○ A glove can be worn on the non-dominant hand.</li> <li>○ Store in the lockable bag/box immediately after being used.</li> <li>○ Adult to child ratio 1:1 for demonstration, progressing 1:3 for older children.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Used to drill holes for wood crafts.</li> <li>○ Safe tool use will be demonstrated by the Forest School Leader on a 1:1 basis.</li> <li>○ Rest the item to be drilled on a hard/flat surface and use a clamp to secure the wood (if required).</li> <li>○ The tool must be held with the dominant hand on the handle of the wheel, and the non-dominant hand on the drill handle.</li> <li>○ Stand or kneel in the respect position, with a safe distance from others.</li> <li>○ To be carried by your side (with the drill bit removed) and returned to the lockable box when not being used.</li> <li>○ Adult to child ratio 1:1 for Pre-School children, 1:4 for older children.</li> </ul>
Fixed Blade Knives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Used to whittle small sticks, peel bark and cut string.</li> <li>○ Safe tool use will be demonstrated by Forest School Leader on a 1:1 basis.</li> <li>○ The tool must be used in a 'blood bubble', away from your body at 45 degrees.</li> <li>○ Always carry with the sheath on, by the handle; with the blade facing down, beside you.</li> <li>○ When passing, hold the knife by the sheath, so the person receiving the tool can take the handle.</li> <li>○ Never wear a glove on the dominant hand.</li> <li>○ Store in the lockable box immediately after being used.</li> <li>○ Adult to child ratio 1:1 for demonstration and 1:1 for Pre-School children, progressing 1:3 for older children</li> </ul>
Vegetable Peelers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Used to peel bark, sticks and vegetables; for practising the action of whittling.</li> <li>○ Safe tool use and position will be demonstrated by the Forest School Leader to the whole group.</li> <li>○ Rest the item to be peeled on the ground or on secure/hard surface (not on your leg). Hold the potato peeler away from your body and peel away from yourself towards the ground.</li> <li>○ Wear a glove on the non-dominant hand.</li> <li>○ Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work.</li> <li>○ Children must only use the peeler when sitting or kneeling.</li> <li>○ To be stored in a bag/box.</li> <li>○ Adult to child ratio 1:4 Pre-School children, 1:8 for older children.</li> </ul>
Tent Pegs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Used to hollow out elder piths and fix guy ropes into the ground.</li> <li>○ Safe tool use will be demonstrated by the Forest School Leader to the whole group.</li> <li>○ When using to hollow out elder rest the wood you are working with on a secure/hard surface. Poke out the piths away from your body towards the ground</li> <li>○ Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you.</li> <li>○ Do not run around with tent pegs in your hands.</li> <li>○ To be stored in a bag/box with the mallets and rope.</li> <li>○ Adult to child ration 1:4 Pre-School children, 1:8 for older children.</li> </ul>
Mallet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Used to apply force to tent pegs and tools, such as a throe and bill hook (see tool procedures for use and ratios). It can also be used for printing crafts.</li> <li>○ Safe tool use will be demonstrated by the Forest School Leader to the whole group.</li> <li>○ To be used at a safe distance (at least a tool and two arm's length)</li> <li>○ Bag with the mallets and rope.</li> <li>○ Adult to child ration 1:4 Pre-School children, 1:8 for older children.</li> </ul>

## Fire at The Willows

As part of the Forest school ethos, it is desirable to have an open fire to allow the children to take risks in order to *develop their personal and social life skills*. The experience of making, lighting and cooking on a fire creates opportunities for children to *immerse themselves in the natural environment through real-life, hands-on experiences*.

This section identifies the importance of fire safety hazards and the procedures adults and children will adhere to; to ensure fire is used safely, posing minimal risk to health and safety.

### The purpose of open fires at The Willows

Open fires created at The Willows are for the purposes of light, cooking and heating water. There are also social and emotional benefits from gathering around a fire.

Fires can only be made when a risk benefit assessment has been carried out and the benefits outweigh the possible risks a fire imposes. The fire procedure needs to be carefully planned and resourced. We would hope that during the session that all children would experience and observe a fire being made, lit and used safely.

### Location

Open fires are only permitted within the fire circle, which is an area with an approximate diameter of 5m+. The fire pit in the centre is marked with a double log barrier and is approximately 1m<sup>2</sup>. The outer circle of logs is stable for sitting on and gaps between the logs mark exit/escape routes.

The fire circle at The Willows has been thoughtfully established on a flat surface of grass, located near to the pond (overhanging trees will be monitored, as this could pose a risk). The site was chosen to take account of the nearby buildings and residents.

### Method

- The Forest School Leader or Forest School Assistant, will be responsible for lighting and maintaining the fire.
- There must be a large bucket of water containing 10 litres of water and a pouring vessel, close to the fire pit.
- A fire blanket must be hung next to the fire circle, so it is visible and easily accessible.
- The burns kit is kept in the Forest School emergency bag.
- Fires are lit using a flint and steel, together with tinder (straw/bark shavings), cotton wool (fairy blankets!) and firelighters (if required!). Matches may be used if the flint and steel is unsuccessful.
- When using a Flint & Steel, tinder should be placed in a non-flammable container, and ensuring the striking action is away from the individual.
- Once lit and the hot embers remain, children must not enter the fire circle unless accompanied by an adult.

- Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, into the side of the fire. If children are permitted to add fuel to the fire, they must be invited into the fire circle and supervised by an adult (1:1). See Fire Procedure in appendix one.
- Fire proof gauntlets are kept at the fire circle to allow adults to pick up hot items.
- Children will be encouraged to avoid sitting in the line of smoke and asked to turn their heads to one side during a change in wind direction.
- The exit points of the fire circle will be identified and children will be instructed to walk around the outside of the circle and NOT across it.

### Kelly Kettles

- The Forest leader may use a Kelly kettle to heat water. It is to only be used within the fire circle and must be placed on flat ground, clear of debris.
- The bung must be removed whilst heating water. *This is only to be in place during storage so as to keep the chamber clear from forest debris or insects and mini beasts.*
- A raft of sticks is laid in the bottom of the fire pan and sticks are placed on top to create a waffle effect. Tinder is placed on top and small (string like) sticks are used to create a tepee around it. Ensure nothing hangs over the edge of the fire pan.
- Kneeling in the respect position the Forest Leader will light the fire using a flint and steel.
- When the fire has successful lit, the kettle/chimney is placed on top.
- When lit, do not stand directly over, look or blow straight down into the kettle.
- The fire is fed with string like sticks through the hole in the side of the pan.
- When the water is heated, take care to lift the kettle off the fire pan. Pour out the water holding the bung chain in one hand and the handle with the other. To put the fire out, pour a small amount of water into the fire pan.

### Cooking with Skewers

- The children may have the opportunity to toast marshmallows or cook damper bread on a skewer over the open fire.
- For this activity the adult: child ratio for Toddlers 1:1, Pre-School children 1:2 and Primary School aged children 1:4.
- The children must enter the fire circle with precaution, following the Risk Benefit Assessment for 'Cooking with skewers'. They should kneel in the respect position and use a stick at least an arm's length. If they need to leave the fire circle they walk behind their peer and other adults and remain in the outer circle and follow instructions.
- If they skewer becomes inflamed and could cause harm, it is dropped and the Forest School Leader/Assistant will ensure it is distinguished appropriately.



# Campfire Cooking and Food Hygiene Procedure

Campfire cooking is one of the most exciting and important elements of Forest School. Children love preparing food and being responsible for cooking on an open fire. They take pleasure in sitting together whilst enjoying the food they have prepared and cooked. At The Willows we aim to offer children the opportunity to cook on a campfire safely and hygienically, as the rich learning experience enables children to develop their life skills. An example of the food/drink that they may prepare/cook includes:

- Hot chocolate
- Toasted marshmallows
- Damper bread/toast

Food hygiene and safety at The Willows is paramount, and this is reflected in our Food Hygiene Procedure. All participants follow our Food Hygiene Rules listed below. If anyone is concerned about food hygiene and safety, they must speak to the Forest School Leader, who holds a Level 2 certificate in Food hygiene, and an Allergy Awareness certificate, who is responsible for food preparation and cooking.

## Food Hygiene Rules at Forest School

- Hair must be tied back, and equipment must be clean and safe to use, to avoid contamination.
- Check the cooking area is clear of debris and tree pollution (use food nets and covering if concerned).
- All adults and children must wash their hands in the hand washing facilities provided, at the beginning and regularly throughout the session.
- If an adult or child has been poorly (such as diarrhoea or vomiting), they must not prepare or handle any food
- Sores and cuts must be covered with a blue waterproof dressing.
- When handling food use spoons, tongs or other suitable implements, ensuring they are clean first
- Keep meat and dairy products refrigerated until they are required.
- Use separate chopping boards for preparing different foods, especially raw and ready-to-eat food, colour coded as per the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points in the Appendices
- Prepare food on a suitable surface, e.g. chopping board, not on the ground.
- Keep food that is waiting to be cooked separate from food that is ready to be eaten.
- Store left over food in clean plastic containers with non-leaking lids.
- The Forest School Leader, or Forest School Assistant, will test the food before being consumed to ensure it is cooked thoroughly and of an appropriate temperature before serving. They will warn the children that it may still be HOT!
- All rubbish and food scraps will be disposed of at the end of the session to avoid attracting vermin. The site should show no trace of your presence.

## Food allergies and special dietary requirements

Before the session commences parents/carers are asked to state any food allergies and special dietary requirements their child may have on their Consent Form. This information will be used to plan what food and drink will be provided, to ensure all dietary needs are met.

## Hazard Analysis

The Willows follows a strict practise with food hygiene and safety, which adheres to the Food Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points, as in Appendix 9.

There are 3 types of food safety hazards:

- Microbiological- involving harmful bacteria
- Chemical- involving chemical contamination
- Physical- involving objects getting into food

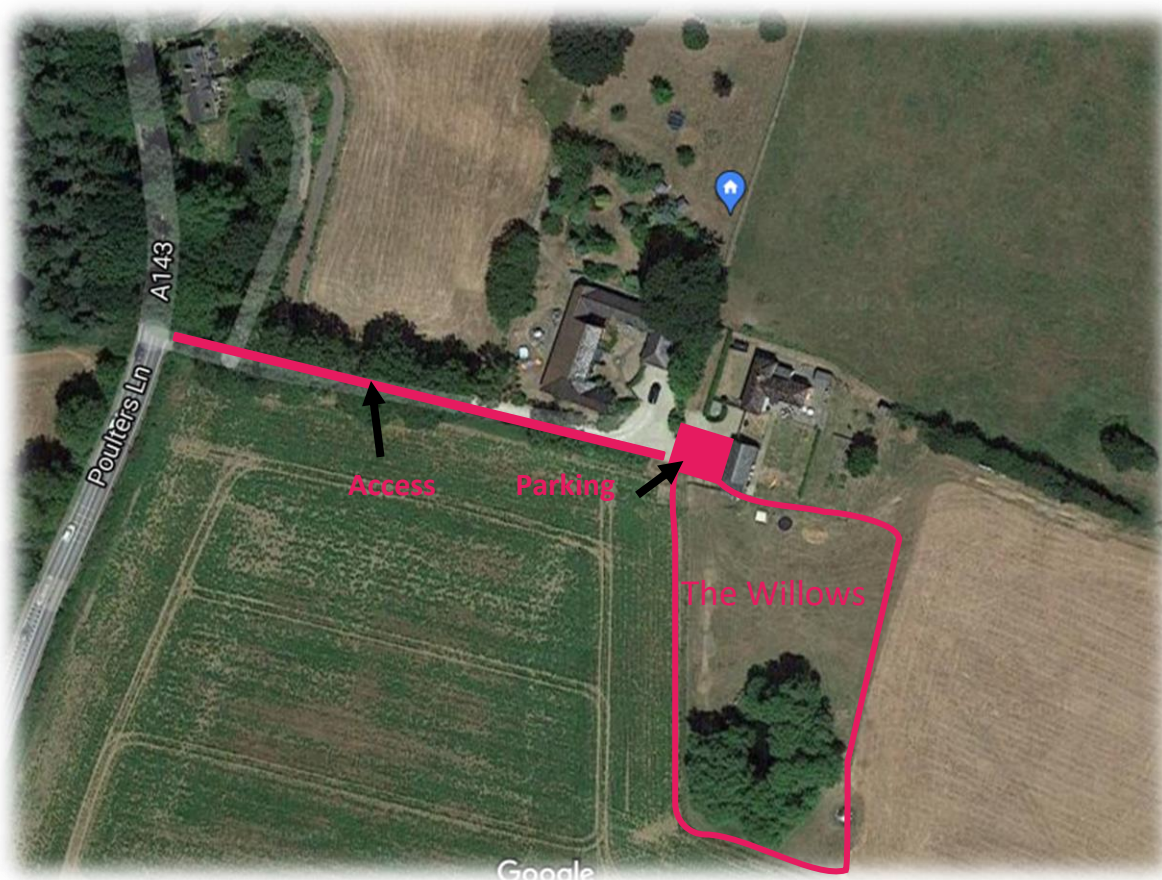
Being aware of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points- managing food hygiene and safety procedures. Food management procedures should be based on HACCP principles. Principles include:

- Looking at what could go wrong, and what risks there are to food safety
- Identifying critical control points to focus on to reduce risks
- Deciding what action to take if something goes wrong
- Making sure procedures are followed, and keeping records to show what could go wrong

## Accessing the site

We are very fortunate that The Willows is situated in a tranquil setting on the outskirts of Horringer, away from the A143 with a fenced boundary.

Our sessions take place in the field by the pond/Willow trees, as shown on the map below. Access can be gained from the A143 up a long gravel drive. Parking is available outside the fenced site and parents/careers and children are encouraged to Walk across the grass field to meet at the site. Cooking and fire lighting activities will take place in the fire circle at the bottom of the site. Children and adults will not be permitted to access the private garden area or use the recreational equipment.



## Visitor Policy

- The Forest School site is a secure area within privately owned (by the Forest School Leader) grounds. There should not be any visitors to the site unless arranged by prior appointment
- Invited visitors to The Willows must complete a visitor sign in form and have a briefing about the session from the Forest School Leader
- Uninvited visitors will be approached/managed by the Forest School Leader
- Children will be made aware at the start of the session of any visitors due that session

# Cancellation Procedure

## What happens if we can't attend the session?

If you are unable to make a session, please message or ring Rebecca on 07920096012 so that we know not to expect you. Unfortunately, we are unable to offer a refund for missed sessions. Sessions will still be charged.

## What happens if the leader cancels the session?

In the event of severe weather, insufficient adult/child ratios or significant health and safety risk resulting from the daily site check, sessions may have to cancel. The Forest School Leader will make an informed decision whether to cancel or adapt the session. Staff, parents and volunteers will be notified of the change in circumstances, as soon as the decision has been made; in person, by telephone or via email.

### Severe weather

Local forecasts and the Google Weather App will be used to monitor the weather in the area. In the event of high winds or electrical storms, sessions will be cancelled due to safety reasons. During extremely hot sessions, the children will be encouraged to have plenty of drinks and seek shade wherever they can. Consideration will be given as to whether it is deemed necessary to use the fire, due to the risk of it spreading.

### Insufficient adult/child ratio

At The Willows at least one member of staff must be Forest School and first aid trained. If the ratio of 1 adult to 6 Primary School aged children or 1 adult to 4 Pre-School children cannot be achieved the session will be cancelled.

### Daily Site Checks

Before each session commences a thorough Daily Site Check is completed. Should any hazards be identified which are deemed to be a significant risk i.e. unstable fallen trees, broken branches or limbs of trees the Forest School Leader will endeavour to rectify/reduce the risk. If this is not possible then The Forest School Leader will make an informed decision to cancel the session.

### Alternative sessions and refunds

If sessions have to be cancelled due to any of the hazards identified above an alternative session will be offered or a refund of 75% will be granted.

Please see individual booking/consent forms/service agreements/our website for further information for each group.

# Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment

It is very important that both children and adults are dressed appropriately for each session at The Willows, in order for them to enjoy the experience and opportunities it provides. The clothing identified below, will protect them from the elements and risk of harm. The two lists state the clothes that must be labelled, worn and/or brought with each child to every session. There will be a selection of spare clothing and additional gloves and hats in the Forest School clothing bag.

## Winter Clothing

- Waterproof coat
- Waterproof trousers
- Wellington boots
- Warm hat, scarf and gloves
- Warm trousers
- Long-sleeved jumper or fleece
- Long-sleeved top
- Vest and/or t-shirt
- Thick socks - thermal if possible or two pairs of cotton socks

## Summer

- Waterproof coat and waterproof trousers in bag
- Walking boots, trainers or wellington boots (sandals are not suitable)
- Sun hat
- Sunscreen
- Long-sleeved top or light shirt (to protect shoulders and arms from the sun and insects)
- Light trousers (shorts/skirts are not suitable)

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When using particular tools and open fire at The Willows it is particularly important that the following PPE should be adhered to:

- Fire ~ fire gauntlets should be worn when feeding, adding/removing items from the fire and while extinguishing the fire
- Peelers, Fixed blade knives, bow saws, froes, hand drills, and secateurs ~ gloves should be worn on the non-dominant/non-working hand at all times.
- Tree coppicing ~ protective hard hats must be worn

Further guidance regarding PPE can be found on Risk Benefit Assessments for each activity.



# Daily Operating Procedure

It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to perform the following procedures before, during and after each session.

## Before each session

- Visit the site to complete the Daily Site Check and amend/update the Site Risk Assessment, as necessary
- Remove trip hazards and mark off areas that are out-of-bounds
- Cut any overhanging vegetation
- Ensure risk assessments are completed for all activities
- Ensure Forest School site is safe/clear from faeces and meets requirements
- Set up hand washing station, if required for cooking activities
- Check that the Forest School Emergency Bag and clothing bag
- Collect the tools/resources needed for the session activities
- Check that all tools are planning to use are in good working order, and ensure that all relevant staff members have been trained for safe tool use
- Check the mobile phone is fully charged
- Check the weather forecast
- Check staff ratio/presence

## At the start of the session

- Take register and check all participants have suitable clothing and footwear
- Gather the tools and carry them safely to the site
- Tell/show the children the physical boundaries
- Remind children how they should behave and how to stay safe on site

## Throughout the session

- Remind the children to stay safe by highlighting potential hazards (see individual Risk Benefit Assessments), reinforcing the boundaries and asking adults to make the leader aware of any possible hazards
- Staff to lead/support and review activities, adapting if necessary
- All adults to ensure they model safe and responsible behaviour, reflecting the Forest School Ethos
- Carry out regular head counts to ensure all children are accounted for.
- Reinforce high expectations of behaviour at all times
- All staff take photos and make observations to assess learning; to ensure subsequent sessions are tailored to the needs and development of the children

## At the end of the session

- Count the children and dismiss them back to parents/carers/drivers/teachers
- Ensure all children wash their hands thoroughly
- Pack up all equipment/resources. Count/safety check tools. Lock bags/boxes
- Clear and tidy the site
- Record and report any first aid, behaviour or safeguarding incidents
- Evaluate and reflect on the session, the activities and the learning development

# Safeguarding Policy


At The Willows the welfare of all the children in our care is paramount. We create opportunities for children to immerse themselves in our safe outdoor environment where staff can protect and support children to be safe and prevent them from harm. Safeguarding is the responsibility of every adult at The Willows. We follow the guidance in the document Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018).

## Safeguarding Procedure

If you are concerned about the welfare or safety of a child, or a child makes a disclosure to you; you must raise your concerns with the Forest School Leader. Our Safeguarding Procedure details the process which must be followed if you are concerned about a child that attends The Willows Horringer. If you have **CONSERNS**, an allegation is made, are suspicious of abuse, or a child discloses a concern to you must follow our Disclosure Procedure; RECEIVE, REASSURE, REACT, RECORD, REMEMBER. The issue/incident will be recorded on a Safeguarding Report Form, which can be found within the confidential file, in the Forest School Emergency Bag. The form will include name, age of child, time and date of observation and signature of the recorder. All observations will be objective, describing circumstances without comment or interpretation. In case of disclosure, the exact words spoken should be recorded as accurately as possible. You must **CONSULT** with the designated Safeguarding Lead. You may speak to MASH on 03456061499 for advise. The Safeguarding Lead will take **ACTION** and may make (**CONFIRM**) a referral to Children and Young People's Services and/or the Police if they feel the child is at risk.

If you have a safeguarding concern about a member of staff/adult volunteer at The Willows, you must raise this immediately with the Safeguarding Lead. If you feel you are unable to consult with the Safeguarding Lead you should refer your concern to Customer First on 0800 800 4005. This is a 24-hour line. In an emergency call the Police on 999.

All employed staff at The Willows hold a valid DBS certificate. Adult volunteers that help for more than four consecutive sessions will require a DBS check. A record of DBS checked staff is held confidentially by the Forest School Leader.



### Safeguarding Procedure

**To be read with our Safeguarding Policy Statement**

If a member of staff or a volunteer at The Willows, has a concern about a child, it is their legal duty to refer it to their line manager, which is Rebecca Dodman (the Safeguarding Lead and Forest School Leader). This may result in the concern needing to be referred to an external body. The Safeguarding Lead will refer this information to Children & Young People's Services. If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the information should be passed to the Safeguarding Lead. If the member of staff feels unable to raise this with the Safeguarding Lead, it needs to be referred to 'Customer First'.

ANYONE can call Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board 'Customer First' on 0800 800 4005. This is a 24-hour line.

In an emergency call the Police on 999.

**Concerns** ~ Allegations or suspicion of abuse, disclosure, observations.  
Follow: RECEIVE, REASSURE, REACT, RECORD, REMEMBER.  
Complete the 'Safeguarding Report Form'.

↓

**Consult** ~ Speak with Forest School Leader, Rebecca Dodman, in person, or on 07920 096012. In her absence contact the designated Safeguarding Lead (details shared with you before the session). If you are unsure as to whether a referral is required, contact the Professional Consultation Line, to speak to MASH ( Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) on 03456 061499.


↓

**Action** ~ The Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to Children & Young People's Services and / or the police. Parents and Carers may be advised of this unless it puts the child at risk.

↓

**Confirm** ~ Verbal referrals must be followed up by a written referral in 24 hours.

**Safeguarding Report Form**

  
The Willows  
Nurturing children through nature


*Please use clear print and black or blue ink*

Your name:
Date/Time of incident/conversation:
Name of individual(s) involved in incident/conversation:
Details of incident/ conversation:
Brief outline of actions/advice taken or given, including any other services/people contacted at this point:
Was the young person informed that this information would have to be passed on? Yes / No
Details of any witnesses to incident/conversation including names:
Date form was completed:
Signature: ..... (person reporting the incident)

PLEASE PASS THIS FORM TO THE SAFE GUARDING LEAD (Rebecca Dodman)

Date form was passed on to the Safeguarding Lead:
Any further actions needed to be taken? If yes, please give details below of action taken
Signed by: ..... (Safeguarding Lead)

**Disclosure Procedure**

  
The Willows  
Nurturing children through nature

Children and young people will talk to adults who they trust. This could include disclosing abuse they have experienced, to an adult or another child during their session at The Willows. The Forest School Leader, Rebecca Dodman, is responsible for recording information and contacting the relevant authorities.

When this situation arises, follow these steps:

**1) Receive:**

- o Listen to what is being said
- o Do not display shock or disbelief
- o Take notes

**2) Reassure:**

- o Reassure the child/young person but be honest
- o Don't make promises you may not be able to keep
- o Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to refer
- o Reassure the child/young person that they were right to tell you. If the child/young person expresses guilt, point out that they are not to blame

**3) React:**

- o Do not interrogate for further details
- o Do not ask leading questions
- o Do ask open questions
- o Do not criticise the person the child is talking about
- o Do not ask the child to repeat what they are saying for someone else
- o Explain to them what you have to do next

**4) Record:**

- o Complete the Safeguarding Report Form as soon as possible
- o Do not destroy original notes
- o Record the time, date, place, noticeable non- verbal behaviour and the 'actual' words used by the child/young person
- o Draw a diagram to show any marks/bruises
- o Record what is said rather than your assumptions

**5) Remember:**

- o Follow the guidelines in our Sfeeguarding Policy and flow chart
- o Consult with the appropriate person as soon as possible
- o Ask for support from your manager (Rebecca Dodman) if needed, you have been dealing with a traumatic situation

## Anti-bullying and Prevent

The Willows will not tolerate any form of prejudice, offensive or intimidating behaviour. All participants, parents and volunteers will be expected to adhere to the Behaviour Management Policy, and to challenge any discriminatory behaviour. The Willows believes that an inclusive ethos encourages positive behaviour. Any incidents occurring will be recorded by the Forest School Leader and investigated further.

The Willows follows a Prevent procedure. In line with Section 26 of the Counter-terrorism and Security Act (2015), The Willows acknowledges that certain societal conditions lead to dis-enfranchisement and will exercise due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The Willows follows Prevent procedures.

The ethos of The Willows supports community cohesion with the implementation of all the six principles of Forest School. In particular the use of learner-centred processes creates a community for development and learning. Forest School encourages holistic development and relationship building, both with fellow participants and with the environment around them.



## **Complaints Procedure**

We are committed to following clear procedures should a complaint be made concerning provision at The Willows. If you are unhappy about anything during a session, please speak to Rebecca Dodman (Forest School Leader), in the first instance, who will try to address the issue immediately. If you feel the issue has not been resolved, please write a formal complaint to The Willows Horringer, Chevington Road, Horringer, Suffolk, IP29 5SW and we will respond within ten working days.

## **Confidentiality Procedure and Data Protection**

The Willows Forest School staff and volunteers will sometimes come into contact with confidential information (registers, registration/medical forms, observations and learning records). We respect the confidentiality of children, their families, staff and volunteers by upholding our associated Confidentiality Procedure with confidence and professionalism. Any personal data and medical information will be kept in a file marked 'CONFIDENTIAL' in the Forest School Leader's emergency bag.

Our collection and use of personal data follows the Data Protection Act of 1998 and 2018 and considers the rights of all those involved. The Willows aims to robustly implement the requirements of the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). The Willows ensures it adheres to the eight data protection principles. These must be satisfied when obtaining, handling, processing, moving and the storage of personal data. We are required to keep certain personal information, like registers, medical records and accident records for at least 3 years after your child has left The Willows.

Forest School staff (leaders) who manage registers, communication with stakeholders, and have access to records and data must complete the online GDPR Essentials training annually.

## Equality and Diversity Policy

The Willows is committed to providing a welcoming and safe outdoor environment where every child and adult is valued and respected. We aim to promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference. We feel that it is important for the children to value and respect others and their natural environment. This is supported by inspirational role models in a nurturing learning environment with opportunities for all children to interact and explore rich and diverse resources and experiences.

The staff at The Willows work with all those that attend, to ensure that ALL have equal access to the Forest School site and activities. We aim to provide a secure and accessible environment in which all children can flourish, and all contributions are considered and valued. We aim to continually improve our knowledge and understanding of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity. We do this through a variety of different ways: admissions, employment, training, curriculum and environment, valuing diversity in families, meeting dietary and cultural needs and ensuring we review all these processes.

At The Willows we recognise that each child has a variety of abilities and we believe that every child should participate to the best of their ability. Children identified as having a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) will require effective inclusion within the sessions and may require additional resources and support to enable them to access the activities and experiences. Individuals with exceptional needs will be welcome to participate after a consultation with parents/carers and staff. We believe with adequate provision we can meet the needs of these children and they too will develop their personal, social and emotional skills.

## Behaviour Policy

At The Willows we promote positive behaviour and consistently uphold high standards and expectations throughout each session. The staff model appropriate behaviour. At the beginning of a session we agree and remind the group of how we behave and look out for each other. Engaging activities and learning experiences are tailored to the needs and development of each unique individual. The sessions motivate children to make the right choices and develop their confidence to endure safe-managed risks. They are inspired to take ownership of their learning and build positive attitudes and relationships with others and the natural around them. Therefore, we strongly believe children will make the right choices, stay safe and respect each other and the woodland environment. At Forest School we follow the Restorative Approach:

- RESPECT - for everyone by listening to others and appreciating the world around you
- RESPONSIBILITY - taking responsibility for your own actions
- REPAIR - developing skills within Forest School so that every child has the necessary skillset to identify solutions that repair harm and ensure behaviours are not repeated.

### **Our three rules are:**

#### **Look after YOURSELF, Look after EACH OTHER, Look after the WILLOWS**

This follows the Forest School ethos, outlined by the Forest School principles.

If a child 'breaks the boundaries', doesn't RESPECT others and/or the environment they will:

1. Be reminded to be RESPONSIBLE
2. Be asked to 'miss time' and 'make up time' later on to REPAIR the issue.

At The Willows we create an environment that is safe for everyone. If a child does not adhere to the safety rules and is deemed to be at risk of harm to themselves or others, they may be asked to leave the session.

## Play Policy

Here at The Willows, we understand that child led play is greatly important to all areas of a child's learning and development. Child led play allows each child to learn through their own interests and ideas, without the restrictions often imposed by other environments. Free play is greatly encouraged and allows the child to lead their own learning. Play becomes much more meaningful to the child, as they follow their own innate motivation, and at their own pace.

The theoretical model of play, known as the Play Cycle, offers a universal expressive language that children use when they play. The play cycle blends well with the Forest School ethos and allows staff at The Willows to understand how to support play without interrupting it, being aware how their own presence can impact on a child's play direction. Observations of children's interests over sessions enables assessment of their development.

At The Willows we provide a safe and secure environment, but one that supports risky play. We promote the Forest School ethos of facilitating a child centred learning process that focuses on play, risk taking, and exploration. This encourages children to assess risk themselves, children are then able to test their ideas and learn from them, building their resilience, and increasing their confidence. The Willows offers a woodland environment, with a trained Forest School Lead, enabling children to engage with activities with managed risk.

At The Willows we follow the 2004 Playwork Principles, which provide an ethical framework for play. They Playwork Principles very much blend with the Forest School ethos. Children who attend The Willows are able to develop holistically, finding ways to play and communicate with others, reasoning, and persevering with tasks. Children are encouraged to make choices through independent play.

The Willows also recognises Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which recognises the rights of the child to be able to engage in play.

## **Planning and Observation Policy**

At The Willows, we follow the Forest School ethos, emphasising child-led learning; the leader becoming the facilitator, supporting children in exploring the areas that interest and motivate them. The child-led approach has significant benefits, supporting children in developing independence, confidence, creativity, perseverance and resilience, essential life skills. The session meets the needs of the whole child. We review our weekly plans based on the observations from the previous session and therefore these centre on the child's individual needs and interests.

Research evidences the importance of children spending time in natural outdoor spaces. Being part of Forest School increases a child's self-belief, confidence, learning capacity, enthusiasm, communication, problem solving skills and wellbeing.

## **Environmental Policy**

The Willows recognises the potential impact of woodland activities on the natural environment. Good practice is modelled by staff, showing a level of respect for the natural world, helping to maintain the sustainable use of the woodland and enhancing its biodiversity and ecological value. Staff show the children the importance of caring for the world we live in.

The Willows is aware of the ecological impact running a forest school programme can have on a site. By supporting the children to foster a love of nature, the ecological impact on the site can be reduced. Regular ecological impact assessments (Appendix 10) help to evaluate the impact, and utilising the outcome of those assessments help to inform our sustainable woodland management plan. See Appendix 3

### **Landowners Agreement**

The Willows is situated on a 3.5 acre field. The field is owned by Rebecca & Tristan Dodman. The Forest School site is situated in the south west corner of the field.

# Appendices