**Tool Use, Safety and Maintenance policy.**

The use of tools is an important part of Forest School. It allows children to develop new, practical skills that help develop their self confidence.

In order for this to happen, the following procedures will be adhered to:

* Children will only be able to use a hand tool when they have been taught by the Forest School leader how to safely handle and use one and have had the appropriate safety briefing. (see risk assessments in section 3.) The use of tool readiness will be assessed after 6 sessions by FS leaders in order to judge whether the child is ready and responsible enough to use a tool.
* All children must work within a safe working distance (‘Blood Bubble’) of 2 arms and a tool length apart from the next person.
* Tools will be cleaned, checked and maintained on a regular basis by the Forest School Leaders- at the beginning and end of each session.
* All tools will be kept sharp and checked regularly by FS leaders (beginning and end of each session.) Any tool sharpening will be done by FS leaders.
* TA’s/tutors/non Forest School trained staff should not be instructing tool use in any way- they can assist but must not instruct. If this occurs or a child needs to be stopped, then FS leaders will re-instruct before use can continue.
* All children will be required to wear safety gloves when appropriate on the correct hand when using the tool.
* Tools will only be used in designated tool areas (age and stage appropriate.)
* Running whilst holding tools is forbidden.
* Inappropriate and dangerous use of tools will result in exclusion from the Forest School group.
* The Forest School leaders will inspect the tools before and after each session to ensure safety.
* Children and adults will be taught how to handle tools properly and to treat them with respect.
* Tools will be kept sheathed when not in use.
* Tools will be sheathed when passed to anyone else.
* Tools will be kept locked and logged in the Forest School container after each session.
* All tools will be numbered and logged. The log will be kept with the tools.
* Any faults with tools during the session must be immediately reported by participants and Forest School leaders will take them and cover them with blue tape.
* Any tools that are deemed unsafe will be immediately taken out of circulation and disposed of properly.
* Pointing with tools is prohibited.
* Children will lose permission to use tools if the guidelines are not followed.
* Bow saws must have a blade guard on them when not in use.
* Adults and children must be given instruction and demonstration on the appropriate and safe position with which to saw.
* All participants must observe their own and others ‘blood bubble’ at all times at a distance of at least 2 arms and tool width apart, and not enter anyone else’s blood bubble without all tools sheathed.
* All participants must ensure they set themselves up in a safe working environment with no slip/trip hazards.
* All cuts should be made AWAY from one’s body/skin.
* Participants will always cut away from themselves and never have any part of their skin in front of the travel of the blade.
* Tools will never be left unattended.
* Participants will only work with one tool at any given time.
* Tool table will be situated away from the working area.
* When using tools, participants will ALWAYS cut down onto a HARD surface e.g. chopping block.
* Tools NEVER to be stored in the soil.
* Each participant is responsible for putting their tool BACK in the tool area safely.
* Fingerless gloves are not to be used if cold, don’t use the tool.
* Participants will always stand or sit with work to the side so that if the tool slips, no skin or clothing is in the travel path of the tool.
* When using tools, this MUST be the focus of attention with no distraction of anything else.
* **NEVER** USE ANY BLADED TOOL ON EITHER LEG DUE TO POTENTIAL CUT TO THE FEMORAL ARTERY.