****

**Policies and Procedures**

**Contents**

1. **Site checks, set up and pack down**
2. **Safety talk policy**
3. **Emergency procedures**
4. **Weather, shelter and toilets**
5. **Fire safety**
6. **Risk assessments**

All staff and volunteers will be familiarised with the policies and procedures before a session. The document will be updated annually and be available publicly on the website.

1. **Site Checks Set Up and Pack Down**

Before each session a site check will be done to look for any dangerous objects, fallen trees, low hanging branches or other people using the space. Any dangerous objects/sharps will be removed with gloves and disposed of safely and anyone using the space (particularly fire circle) will be kindly asked to vacate. A check will be done using Met Weather to see if there is any adverse weather expected (see section 4). If there is rain due, the tarpaulin shelter will be put up. Boundary markers will be set up around the perimeter of the site.

Equipment for the session will be brought to the site from the storage container, and the water container filled. General use equipment will be set up (e.g. fire bowl, craft equipment, bug pots) and tools will be kept stored.

At least one member of staff will then meet the group by the Soanes Centre entrance. A register will be taken ensuring that all children have:

* A consent form if they are being left unsupervised
* An adult with them if they are under 6
* Paid for the session and are on the list

The group will be led on a walk to the site.

After the session, at least one member of staff will return to the entrance with the children, ensuring that each child either has their prearranged adult to pick them up or permission to leave alone if they are over 11.

A pack down will then be done, ensuring the site is left as it was at the beginning. All equipment will be put away.

1. **Safety Talk policy**

Each session will begin with a reminder of the key ways the children can stay safe whilst at forest school, as well as how to play/explore inclusively. This will include:

* No pick no lick (not picking plants or putting anything in mouths without instruction)
* Rules of exploring (always accompanied, not walking off with strangers)
* Rules for returning on whistle
* Dangerous plants
* No stick fighting
* No exclusive play
* No running inside the log circle
* What to do if dogs approach
* Taking care of the woods

If there are children who are there for the first time, a walk around the perimeter of forest school will be done to demonstrate the boundaries.

1. **Emergency Procedures**

Sessions will always be run by at least one member of staff with an up to date outdoor first aid certificate and first aid kit. All other staff members and volunteers will be briefed on the emergency procedures.

Missing Child:

If a child does not return on a whistle blow, or is absent from a head count, the first action will be for one member of staff to stay with the rest of the group, gathered in the log circle. Any other available staff members will search the forest school perimeter first. If they are not found in the perimeter, the staff will continue their search outside the perimeter and the parents will be called. If they are not found within 30 minutes, or their parents do not know of their whereabouts, the police will be called on 999.

In Case of Injury:

In case of an emergency, 999 should be called. Ambulances can be sent to the Soanes Centre in the North West of the park and a member of staff will be sent to meet them.

In all cases, the first aider will be called to the incident and an assessment will be made. Appropriate first aid will be given and an ambulance called if necessary.

If a child has to go to hospital, a member of staff will join them, unless their parent or guardian is present. Emergency contact number will then be called.

If there is only one member of staff, the rest of the group will be supervised in the log circle until the end of the session.

Any minor injuries will be logged as either accidents or incidents and parents informed if any first aid has needed to be carried out.

1. **Weather, shelter and toilets**

Sessions will only be cancelled in the event of storm conditions (above 40mph winds) or lightening. If either of these are forecast the evening before a session, a warning will be emailed out informing of a potential cancellation. This will be checked again the morning of a session and they will be cancelled (and money refunded) if conditions are predicted to be the same.

Children will be expected to come in appropriate clothing for the weather. This means waterproofs for rain, good shoes for being outside and sun cream/hats/sunglasses in the sun.

If rain is forecast, a tarp shelter will be erected in the morning to provide cover.

There are no toilets available on site so children will be encouraged to use the toilets before they arrive. If necessary, children can be shown a place to ‘wild wee’, accompanied by a DBS checked member of staff.

1. **Fire safety**

Fires will only take place inside the log circle. Children are instructed to only ever walk in this area. There will always be a fire bucket (water) and fire gloves that can be used to stay safe and ensure fires do not spread.

When a group fire is going, children will be seated and will observe fire circle rules of not walking across unless instructed to do so.

When children are starting fires themselves, they will be shown how to do so safely and will always work in pairs with one acting as fire safety assistant (equipped with a fire stick!).

All fires will be extinguished and ash emptied in the designated area.

****

1. **Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park Forest School – Area Risk Assessment**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Site: **Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park**  | Compiled by and date: | Max Martin | Date: | 15/01/22 |
| Who is at risk? | Children attending sessions, staff running sessions, volunteers and the general public. | Other risk assessments relevant | Bladed Tools, Pond Dipping, Fire Bowl |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hazard**  | Risk Rating | **Control measure** | Residual Risk  |
| Likelihood | Severity | Likelihood | Severity |
| Falling branches/trees. | L | H | Keep groups away from trees during high winds. Cancel session if winds above 40mph. Info from Met Office weather. | L | H |
| Whipping branches. | H | M | Advise members of group to hold branches back for others and to be aware of branches springing back especially towards faces. | L | M |
| Sticks or stones. | L | M | Groups carrying sticks will be shown by an instructor how to do so sensibly for the activity. Groups to be instructed not throw stones. | L | M |
| Building dens/using large sticks | M | L | Children shown how to carry sticks safely, pointing down. Children instructed not to sword fight with sticks. Dens only to be entered once a safety test is done | L | L |
| Risk of injury or infection from organic matter i.e. Animal Faeces, poisonous plants and poisonous fungi. | M | M | Everyone should wash hands with sanitiser or soap and water prior to eating or putting hands in mouths. Area to be visually scanned before leading an activity, use another area of the park if unacceptable. Instruct groups not to eat anything from the wild unless instructed by a leader. Instruct groups not to pick up animal faeces. | L | M |
| Litter (sharps such as cans, glass, needles) | M | H | Litter and site check done prior to each session | L | M |
| Strangers/getting lost/leaving the area | M | H | Children should be given clear boundaries when doing an activity, and staff/parents to always maintain visual supervision. Children instructed to approach staff or instructor only. Headcounts will be done at 15 minute intervals when doing activities not under direct supervision using 123 where are you. | L | H |
| Cuts from Brambles / stings from nettles/Holly | M | L | Risk of brambles, nettles and holly should be identified & explained. Children to be shown each plant during first session and reminded in safety talks. | L | L |
| Slippery slopes / mud / fallen leaves and trips over roots and fallen branches | M | L | Group leader to warn the group about potential for slips and trips. When wet, advise to take particular care. Wellies will be given to those with inappropriate footwear. | L | L |
| Medical Incidents (including allergic reactions) | M | M | First aid kit and mobile phone to be carried with the group. Necessary medication to be carried by parents or given to first aid trained member of staff. List of pupils with allergies or medical issues is requested as part of the child  | L | M |
| Dogs | M | M | Children instructed not to approach dogs and not to touch them if they come to the group. Children should stand still, arms folded until the owner takes the dog away.  | L | M |
| Falling from trees | L | H | Children to only climb up to 1.5m above the ground and to be supervised at all times when climbing. Also to be show how to climb safely using 3 points of contact. | L | M |
| **Tool Use** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Whittling knives | M | M | Tool talk to be given before use demonstrating use away from body and keeping covers on when not using.Tools to be kept away in the tool bag when not using. | L | M |
| Fire strikers | L | M | Tool talk to be given before use demonstrating use away from body. Always working in pairs with one acting as fire safety. | L | L |
| Group fires | M | H | Children explained rules for having fire – no walking across fire circle, using gloves to place wood, no throwing things, tying hair back when approaching fire. Water bucket kept at hand at all times. | L | M |
| **Risk Specific to Pond Area** |
| Pond water – drowning and injury | M | H | Instruct children to stay out of pond areas, unless accompanied by an adult. All pond based activities to be preceded by a demonstration of safe kneeling or lying to ensure maximum stability. | L | H |
|  |
| Adverse weather conditions | M | M | Staff need to be aware of changing conditions and act accordingly. If it is very cold or wet, an activity by the pond may be shortened to within comfortable limits or moved inside the classroom. Wellies and raincoats given to children with inappropriate footwear. | L | L |
| Water borne infections:- Hepatitus B, Leptospirosis, Tetanus, Algal infection, stomach infection | L | M | Leaders to be aware of the hazard. Follow Authority guidance particularly in reference to tetanus injection. Cover all cuts and wounds (plasters or gloves - pupils with an allergy to latex to use non latex gloves). Limit water contact with mouth or eyes as much as possible. In the event of flu like symptoms developing, contact a doctor immediately. First aid kit to be carried with the group. All users instructed to wash hands after contact with pond water. Not putting fingers into mouths is a part of the regular safety talk with children. | L | M |
| Injury from foreign objects in pond. i.e. litter, trolleys, bikes etc. | M | M | Instructors to visually check area before group arrives and objects to be removed. | L | M |