



# Forest School Handbook





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# 1. The Forest School Ethos

Forest School provides children of all ages with opportunities to develop confidence, resilience, independence, creativity and problem solving skills. Wild & Green Outdoor Learning provides children with these opportunities as well as unique, limitless opportunities to explore the Early Years and National Curriculum in the 'classroom without a ceiling'.

Forest School began in Scandinavia, in Danish pre-schools. It was found that children who attended a forest school setting were greater prepared for school due to their strong social and communications skills, their ability to work individually and in groups effectively, and their higher levels of self-esteem and confidence. These foundations help children to raise their academic achievements and ensure greater preparation for school, and life.

Wild & Green currently offer Family Forest School sessions (where parents attend with their children), School-based sessions, and Birthday Parties. At Wild & Green sessions, children of all ages learn to take managed risks, use hand and power tools (safely and under supervision) to create anything from their imaginations or contribute to group projects. They have opportunities to safely light, tend to and put out fires as well as cook and make warm drinks on a fire.

Children also take part in activities designed to develop their personal, social, language and communication skills, work through practical problems and challenges, discover how they learn best, pursue knowledge that interests them, learn how to manage failures and build confidence in decision making and evaluating risk.

Children will develop practical skills, improve their physical motor skills, understand the benefits of a balanced and healthy lifestyle, explore connections between humans, wildlife and the earth, explore the world through all the senses available to them, regularly experience achievement and success and reflect upon their learning and experiences.





## 2. What to wear at Forest School

### Winter/Cold Weather

- Waterproof coat and trousers (or a waterproof onesie)
- Wellington boots or waterproof walking boots
- Warm hat, scarf and gloves
- Warm trousers (or trousers with a thermal layer underneath)
- Long sleeved jumper or fleece
- Long sleeved top
- Vest or t-shirt
- Thermal socks/thick socks (or two pairs of thinner ones)

### Summer/Warm Weather

- Waterproof coat and waterproof trousers in a bag
- Walking boots, trainers or wellington boots - sandals are not suitable!
- Sun hat
- Sun cream
- Long-sleeved top or light shirt - to protect shoulders and arms
- Light trousers - shorts/skirts are not suitable as they do not protect the legs and ankles

### What to bring to Forest School

- A camping chair or small mat to sit on (unless you are happy to sit on the ground, which is always encouraged!)
- Snacks (if you think your child will get hungry during the session - they will be active!)
- A bottle of drink to keep you/your child hydrated.





## 3. Safeguarding Policy

“Schools and colleges and their staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means they should consider at all times, what is in the best interests of the child”.

**(Keeping Children Safe in Education - DfE, September 2020)**

All Wild & Green staff and volunteers are committed to the safeguarding of children in our care and accessing our sessions. We are committed to:

- Taking all reasonable measures to safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of each child and young person in our care.
- The practice of safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people.
- Protecting each child and young person from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another child.
- Keeping our knowledge and training around safeguarding up to date with annual training courses for all staff and volunteers.

### **DBS Checks**

All staff and volunteers will require an up to date DBS before commencement of work or placement with Wild & Green. These will be reviewed annually by Emma Green (Wild & Green Manager).

### **Staff to child ratios**

1:3 - Under 2s

1:4 - 2-3 year olds

1:8 - 3-5 year olds

1:15 - children over 5 years old





## **Use of photographs and digital recording media**

All parents/guardians will be asked before digital media is taken of their child. If they request their child not be photographed, all members of staff will ensure this is the case. Parents/guardians will have full control over what images are allowed to be taken (including face or not etc) and will be asked for permission a second time before media may be used on Wild & Green social media/website.

## **Visitors and Volunteers**

Wild & Green welcome visitors and volunteers to sessions. These persons will need to provide identification and a current DBS before being allowed to support children and young people unsupervised. If they are not able to provide a current DBS, they will be supported at all times by a member of staff.

## **Disclosure: Recording and Reporting**

Adults working at Wild & Green appreciate that when children feel comfortable and safe, they may disclose information which they might have otherwise kept to themselves. Any volunteer, or staff member, who receives a disclosure or is witness to a concerning bit of information from a child should follow the course of Action detailed below:

- Listen to the child. Allow the child to lead the discussion. Do not press for details or ask leading questions.
- Keep calm and offer reassurance should the child need it. Accept what the child says without challenge.
- Make no promises. Do not agree to keep anything a secret. Calmly explain that you may have to pass on any information to help keep them safe.
- Inform the Child Protection Officer, Emma Green, or a deputy CPO.
- Keep an accurate, written record of the conversation, including the date, time, place, what was said and what was done and by whom. Keep the record secure and hand it to the Child Protection Officer.





## 4. Equal Opportunities and Behaviour Policy

Wild & Green appreciates and respects the individuality of all of our children, families, staff and volunteers. We are committed to giving each person equal opportunities to achieve the highest standards, regardless of ethnicity, religion, age, ability, gender, medical conditions, background or attainment. As part of our day to day practice, we seek to remove any barriers to learning which may hinder or exclude individuals or groups of children or adults. We aim to provide all of our children, families, staff and volunteers with the opportunity to succeed and to reach their highest levels of personal achievement.

### 4a - Equality, Diversity and Anti-Racism Policy

At Wild & Green we are committed to:

- Fostering an environment where all appreciate and value the differences in others.
- Ensuring that all children, families, staff and volunteers feel welcome, secure and know that their contributions are valid and welcomed.
- Ensuring that all participants take responsibility for their own actions and words.
- Ensuring all are able to participate safely, in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs.
- Using materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, learning styles and needs, without stereotyping.
- Actively fostering friendships and collaboration between children and adults.





## 4b - Behaviour Management Policy

In the first Forest School session, or sessions with new children or new families, both physical and behavioural boundaries are agreed with the participants. At the start of each session, these boundaries are revisited, reinforced and revised should adaptations need to be made.

At sessions where parents are attending with their children, they will be expected to oversee the activities their children take part in, and manage their behaviour accordingly.

Key boundaries include:

- "No pick, no lick"
- Be kind (to each other and our environment)
- The correct and safe way to sit around the fire circle (for meals, snacks, drinks or story time)
- The correct way to move around the fire circle (always around the outside and never through the middle)
- Fire position (when working with fire)
- Seated position (for working with specific tools)
- Being aware of your 'blubble' or the 'blubble' of others (when using tools). ('Blubble' will be explained to you in your sessions! Don't worry!)

Any children breaking these boundaries will be spoken to regarding their choices and reminded of the reasons behind our boundaries (to keep us safe). Any child consistently/deliberately breaking these boundaries or putting themselves or others in a position of danger will be asked to sit out or dismissed from the group.





## 4c - Inclusion and Access Policy

At Wild & Green we are committed to:

- Ensuring equality of access for all children and adults.
- Provide work in a wide range of learning styles, including individual and collaborative learning, so that children can value working collaboratively and learn to work as individuals.
- Take account of any difficulties involving access to learning or physical access to the site and work with the child and their parents/guardians to ensure they can access learning with Wild & Green.
- Ensure all children of all abilities can take part in risky play, with different levels of support, enabling us to keep all children safe.
- Seeking to involve all parents in supporting their child's education.
- Encouraging all children to participate fully in Forest School, regardless of disabilities or medical needs.
- Setting children challenging targets that enable them to succeed.
- Ensuring all children are taught in ways allowing them to experience success.
- Making best use of all resources to support the learning of all groups of children.
- Ensuring children with medical needs or disabilities can take part fully and safely in each Forest School session.





## 5. Health and Safety Policy

Wild & Green are committed to the health and safety of participants, staff, volunteers and members of the public with whom we share our space.

Sessions are always run by a first aider, trained in both Paediatric and Adult First Aid. The ratio of adults to children allows us to let participants safely take part in risky play activities like climbing trees, walking across logs, lighting (controlled) fires and using tools. This also means that the leader and parents are able to work one-to-one with individuals where needed.

All activities are thoroughly risk assessed and the site is risk assessed before each session. Participants are encouraged to learn to manage their own risk too, by completing a safety sweep at the beginning of each session and constantly assessing their own risk when taking part in activities.

Activity risk assessments are updated regularly and followed by the session leader and any volunteers. They may also be made available if parents/ participants wish to see them.

### **Pre-session procedures**

- Erect the parachute shelter (if using)
- Set up fire pit (if using)
- Set up hand washing station
- Ensure first aid kits are available in the usual position/in backpack
- Check any tools/equipment for the session is in good working order
- Count out tools/equipment to be used
- Check phone is charged and in working order

### **Safety sweep procedures**





- Observe any animal faeces/animal bones etc - these will not be removed but pointed out and avoided
- Remove any litter from the site
- Observe (but not remove) natural trip hazards
- View the boundaries and talk about the boundary rule
- Ensure all adults are aware of where first aid kits are located

### **Start of session procedures**

- Welcome and head count
- Safety sweep (see above)
- Remind participants of behavioural expectations
- Remind parents of their responsibilities

### **During session procedures**

- Carry out regular head counts
- Take photos and make observations of individuals
- Use restorative techniques for dealing with any behavioural issues

### **End of session procedures**

- Carry out a final head count
- Count and pack up tools/equipment back into the locked box
- Safely put out the fire and allow the fire pit to cool before packing it away
- Evaluate the session using the 'jar of awesome'

### **Poor weather procedures**

- We will not run sessions if the conditions are deemed dangerous such as high winds or during thunder storm
- Participants and families will be notified if a session is cancelled as soon as we think it may be unsafe to go ahead.





## 5a. Emergency and Serious Incident Action Plan

Emergencies and serious incidents will be prevented to the best of our ability, however, they are always possible. Most emergencies will be managed immediately by the leader removing the group from the potential threat and providing necessary first aid. However, in the event of a serious incident, arising as a result of an injury, illness or threat, emergency services will be contacted and the following procedure followed by the group leader:

1. Secure safety of the whole group by calling them in, to prevent further harm/danger. Stop all work and activities. If necessary, remove the whole group from the area.
2. First Aider (Group Leader) to attend any casualties, leaving the rest of the party in ratio with other adults/members of staff. At least one first aider will be on site at all times. A record of the casualties state, timings, progress and anything administered (including water) to be made.
3. Emergency services contacted as necessary, by staff member/adult. For Kingsway sessions, give the following reference to 999 operator: Kingsway Orchard, Newhaven Road, Kingsway, GL2 2SN. Adult to meet emergency services at the entrance/gate. For school sessions, give the school address. Next of kin of casualty contacted.
4. Safety of the rest of the group is maintained and they are kept a safe distance from the casualty.
5. School leaders/parents must be informed of any major incidents as soon as possible (if they are not in attendance).
6. Incident report forms or first aid book should be filled in on site. If working in a school, a copy must be passed on to the school office.
7. Aftercare programme for the person attending the incident/first aider: make sure they are okay. If they are not able to continue the session, it will be cancelled and parents will take their children home or the children will return to their classroom, depending on the setting.





## **Leader Emergency**

Should the Forest School Leader need first aid/be involved in an incident/emergency, another adult or member of staff must administer basic first aid and/or call emergency services/next of kin. The Leader's personal phone will be available with emergency contacts under their 'medical ID'. School settings will have the Forest School Leader's contact details including emergency contact information.

## 5b. Lost/Missing Persons Action Plan

All sessions aim to keep children safe as an utmost priority at all times. This policy will be applied wherever Wild & Green are operating within our Kingsway setting or on school sites.

1. As soon as it is found that the head count at any times, does not match the head count at the start of the session, the situation will be taken seriously. All staff will be informed, if not already aware.
2. If an immediate recount still shows a missing person, all activities will be suspended and 'Coo-ee' will be used to rally all group members. (They are very familiar with this call as it is used multiple times during each session).
3. One adult will be released to undertake a 5 minute search of the area, whilst another adult occupies the rest of the children with a game, story or song.
4. In a school setting, if the group leader does not succeed in finding the missing child, the senior leadership team and office staff must be notified to alert staff to be released to search the grounds. The Head of School may choose to alert Police and Parents.

In the Kingsway setting, if the group leader does not succeed in finding the missing child, one adult will remain with the group and the rest of the adults will carry out another 5 minute search. If this is not successful, Police will be notified immediately.





5. Forest School Staff should immediately make a record of events and timings and the last known position of the child, including what they were wearing. A record must also be made of where the child was found. These will be recorded on the Emergency procedures sheet and logged in the Forest School Incident book.

## 5c. Medicines and Treatments

At Wild & Green we strive to comply with relevant legislation and guidance in Health Guidance for Schools with regard to procedures for supporting children with medical requirements, including managing medicines.

When working at Kingsway Orchard, parents will be in attendance and will therefore be responsible for their own child/ren and any medical needs they may have. This includes application of suncream, use of inhalers etc.

When working with schools, children will attend the school office to receive their regular medications for the member of staff who usually administers them. Inhalers will be brought out to all sessions and may be administered by the child if they are capable, or by the first aid trained leader. No other medication will be brought out to the site, unless otherwise stated by the class teacher (diabetes kits/heart rate monitors etc). If these medicines/equipment are needed, a separate risk assessment will be provided by the school as a part of the child's Educational Health Care Plan.

## 5d. PPE for Tool Use

When using tools during Wild & Green sessions, some PPE is required. Children will not be permitted to use tools unless they are wearing the correct PPE.





PPE for tool use includes:

- One cut-proof glove, worn on the 'helping hand' (the opposite hand to the dominant one) The dominant hand is left bare as it is always behind the tool in use and wearing a glove can often limit hand use/inhibit grip.
- Goggles, to protect the eyes from any sawdust etc

PPE for fire:

- Welders gloves will be used by adults or children when adding or removing anything from the fire.

## 5e. Safe Lifting

A leading cause of injury at work is lifting or handling objects incorrectly. All adults and staff will be required to follow this safe lifting procedure when lifting heavy objects.

1. Think before lifting. Plan the lift, where is the object going? Will help be needed?
2. Lift with only a slight bend in the back (not stooping), bend the hips and knees.
3. Adopt a stable position, with one leg forward to maintain balance. Sensible shoes should be worn.
4. Ensure a good hold by keeping the load close to the body to reduce pressure on the back.
5. Do not twist as you lift, try to keep the back straight.
6. Look ahead and move smoothly when moving around with the load.
7. Know your limits and ask for help if needed.
8. Lower down the load and adjust.



## 5f. Dangerous Plants/Animals/Insects



### **Ticks**

Warmer weather and wearing less clothing means more skin is accessible to insects. Whilst most are harmless, we must be vigilant and look out for ticks. The quicker a tick is removed, the less risk there is of potentially contracting Lyme disease. Although there is a low risk of transmission, the treat must be taken seriously. The best defence is

regular tick checks and appropriate clothing. As leaders, we will get children to check themselves at the end of class during peak tick seasons. However, we can only do a superficial check (bare legs/arms etc). It is up to parents to do a more thorough check. Baths on Outdoor Learning days are always a good idea. This will serve to wash off any ticks that are still crawling around, and will give you a great opportunity to check their whole body. Ticks like warm, moist places. So arm pits, behind ears, on the scalp, behind knees, belly buttons, in the groin, are all important places to look. However they could be found anywhere on the body.

### **Dangerous plants/animals/insects (Specifically at Kingsway Site)**



#### Oak (Foliage and Acorns)

Gradual Poisoning

Affects Kidneys.

Symptoms appear after several weeks.



#### Holly Berries

Mild Poisoning

Vomiting and Diarrhoea



### Cuckoo Pint/Lords and Ladies (Roots and Berries)

Severe Poisoning

Intense irritation and burning of the mouth and tongue

Please note: When working on different school sites, the leader will assess potential dangerous plants/animals/insects on arrival and notify other adults and children of any threats as part of the learning process. The 'No pick, no lick' rule is used at school sites as we do not have prior knowledge of any dangerous plants.

## 5g. Lone Working

At all times in schools, the Forest School Leader must be accompanied by another adult (Teaching Assistant/Teacher). Any children requiring 1:1 support must attend with their Teaching Assistant. 1:1 Teaching Assistants do not count as an additional adult as they are only responsible for their 1:1 child.

At the Kingsway site, it may be necessary for the Forest School Leader to be working alone, however, other adults will be present as parents attend these sessions.



## 6. Environmental Policy and Procedures

At Wild & Green we are committed to working sustainably in our natural environments, working to enhance biodiversity and sustain our local wild areas for others to enjoy.

### **Litter and Waste Water**

All waste produced during Wild & Green sessions will be disposed of appropriately.

The Forest School Leader will provide waste containers and all waste produced on site will be collected. At the end of the session the leader will remove the waste for appropriate recycling/disposal.

A small amount of waste water is produced through hand washing and washing up. Any solid debris will be removed and placed in waste containers and the waste water will be disposed of in the woodland over a wide area.

### **Campfire**

Campfires will only ever be lit in the fire pit, raising the fire from the ground and therefore not contaminating or sterilising the ground. The campfire will also be lit underneath the parachute, allowing for adequate ventilation but also protecting the surrounding trees from any smoke.

### **Boundaries**

The boundary rule will be reiterated at the beginning of each session as a part of the safety sweep. Participants will learn the importance of keeping to our boundaries so as to preserve natural habitats of local wildlife.





## 7. Terms and Conditions

At Wild & Green we try to keep terms and conditions straightforward. We hope what we set out here provides clear guidelines of what you can expect from us and what we expect from you.

### 7a. Booking Process

Kingsway sessions must be booked in advance at [www.wildgreenol.com](http://www.wildgreenol.com), where payment will be taken in advance (£12 per family).

Schools/other group sessions and parties can be arranged by contacting Emma at [wildgreenol@outlook.com](mailto:wildgreenol@outlook.com) or through the 'contact' form on our website.

School/other groups will be provided with a quote before booking and will then be invoiced for the session one the day of the booking.

### 7b. Cancellations and Refunds

#### **Cancellation by Wild & Green**

Wild & Green sessions will go ahead in all weathers, except weather which has been deemed to pose an adverse risk, such as high winds and thunderstorms. In such an event, the session will be rearranged. If the rearranged session is not convenient, a refund will be offered.

If the session leader has to cancel due to illness or unforeseen circumstances, the session will be rearranged. If the rearranged session is not convenient, a refund will be offered.





### **Cancellation by Parent/Carer or School/Group**

Cancellation with expectation of a refund for a season related booking must be made at least 10 days before the start of the booked-for season or sessions, to allow enough time for others on the waiting list to be given the opportunity to attend or for us to arrange to attend another school/group. NB There are no refunds given for individual sessions missed during a series, or for one-off sessions.

## 7c. Feedback and Concerns

We encourage all participants, schools, and carers/parents to give us feedback about their experiences at any Wild & Green sessions. We actively encourage a two-way conversation about anything that has caused/is causing concern. Feedback can be given verbally, in person, by telephone, or in writing by email.

Our aim is to be as open, honest and as straightforward as possible with carers/parents in order to maintain a constructive two way flow of communication.





## 8. Accident/Emergency Report Form

This form should be completed if anyone is harmed as a result of an accident during a Wild & Green Outdoor Learning session.

This document will form the basis of a report should a claim be made. This form must be accurately filled out and must include all information to clarify the incident.

Name of injured person \_\_\_\_\_

Address of injured person \_\_\_\_\_

DOB of injured person \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the accident take place? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What's activity was taking place? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What happened? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of accident \_\_\_\_\_

Who else was present? \_\_\_\_\_

What action was taken? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was first aid delivered? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who delivered first aid? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Whom was notified and when? \_\_\_\_\_

Follow up/Further action required \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please delete as appropriate: Further information is/is not supplied overleaf

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_





## 8. Insurance Details

Wild & Green's public liability insurance is provided by Birnbeck and renewed annually.



### Schedule

1.1	<b>Policy Number:</b>	SALSALIA/J195804/0332/21	
1.2	<b>Wording:</b>	Liability Insurance Policy (SAUA Leisure PLPW0120)	
1.3	<b>Insured:</b>	Emma Green t/a Wild and Green	
1.4	<b>Insured Address:</b>	39 Hixon Walk, Kingsway, Gloucester, GL2 2JE	
1.5	<b>Period of Insurance:</b>	From: 4 January 2021	To: 3 January 2022
		Both dates inclusive Local Standard Time at the address stated above	
1.6	<b>Business:</b>	Forest school practitioner providing activities for children & adults of all ages. General forest school work including shelter building, use of hand tools (including knives), tree climbing to five (5) metres, use of swings rope swings and play equipment, occasional lopping/coppicing, felling (diameters less than 6"), foraging, low level charcoal making (twigs/tins/cans), green woodworking, gardening sessions including tuition, pond/stream dipping, face painting, birthday parties, camp fires, overnight camps etc.	
1.7	<b>Limit of Liability:</b>	<b>Employers Liability:</b>	Not covered
		<b>Public Liability:</b>	GBP 5,000,000 any one <b>Occurrence</b> , defence costs and expenses in addition
		<b>Products Liability:</b>	GBP 5,000,000 any one <b>Occurrence</b> and in the aggregate, defence costs and expenses in addition
1.8	<b>Excess:</b>	Property Damage GBP 250 each and every <b>Occurrence</b>	
1.9	<b>Premium:</b>	<b>Employers Liability</b>	N/A
		Adjustable on Clerical Employees at:	
		Adjustable on All Other Employees at:	
		<b>Public/Products Liability</b>	GBP 175.00
		Adjustable on United Kingdom Turnover:	
	<b>Insurance Premium Tax:</b>	GBP 21.00	
	<b>Total Premium:</b>	GBP 196.00	





## 9. Staff and Volunteer Sign Off Sheet

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understood this handbook and have had an opportunity to ask questions about it's contents and/or my role.

I understand that the Group Leader is in charge of activities within sessions and have read and understood the risk assessments for the activities which will take place during sessions I attend.

I have provided my emergency and medical details to the Group Leader.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

