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Badger Wood Adventures Forest School

Policies & Procedures

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**Badger Wood Adventures– a vision statement**

At Badger Wood Adventures we strive to provide support and encouragement, in a beautiful environment, so all that visit may gain a sense of wellbeing and calm.

Our aim is to enable participants to develop trust in others and themselves, to build relationships with others, themselves and their environment and so build a supportive community.

By empowering participants to make decisions and take an active role in taking care of the woods, as well as giving participants time and space to explore, experiment, construct, play and be creative, enabling a sense of achievement and a better understanding of their own needs and abilities.

We will:

* give participants regular opportunities to experience and build a relationship with the outdoor, natural environment.
* allow participants to learn at their own pace; and through appropriate support and encouragement, develop confidence and a sense of self-efficacy.
* through leader-initiated activities, aid development of life skills such as resilience, language and communication skills and decision making.
* enable appropriate risk taking, an integral component of the Forest School ethos, learning the importance of boundaries, assessing risks and problem solving.
* work with natural materials and learn how to use tools safely.
* spend time in the natural environment and so encourage an understanding and appreciation of that environment - preparing children to be the future guardians.

Forest School develops, supports and enhances all areas of learning. The activities intrinsically cover all areas of the curriculum, from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 2.

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# **Session Procedures**

These are general procedural guidelines. They will be adapted for individual Forest School sites and user groups.

## Equipment

* Forest School equipment is securely stored in one place with an inventory list
* Equipment is prepared in advance of the session
* Equipment is inspected before the session (is anything broken, is it all safe to use) and any equipment deemed unsafe to use is removed
* Equipment is carried in suitable containers or bags
* An appropriate amount of equipment is used ensuring it can be easily carried to the site. Ensure equipment is not too heavy for the group to transport and checking that no one is getting left behind
* Every session will require first aid kit, safety sweep form, a register, consent forms for children, mobile phone and information about additional needs within the group

#### Leaving the School Premises

* Make a register of names of children (and adults) who are going to the session
* Make sure every child has the correct clothing (waterproofs, warm jumper, sensible shoes) and equipment (medication, lunch or drink); if children are not adequately dressed and appropriate clothing cannot be provided they should not take part in the session
* Make sure every child has been to the toilet before you leave school
* Check whether every child is happy and ready to go
* Count the children before leaving the premises

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## Walking to site

This will obviously vary from one Forest School to another and the notes below should be adapted for each situation;

* If crossing roads, make sure children know the procedure for crossing the road
* Have an adult at the front, at least one in the centre of the group and one at the back, making sure no one gets left behind or lost
* Decide on how the group will walk – in pairs, single file, groups
* Explain where the Forest School site is – do you have to walk through the woods; how far is it

#### Arriving at the Forest School Site

* Count children (sticky elbows/sticky toes)
* Encourage children to do own risk assessment – what do we need to look out for; can you see any hazards
* Assess weather conditions – is it safe to go into the woods
* Explain / discuss / remind about the rules for Forest School
* Define clear boundaries
* Explain what you are going to do during the session
* Enjoy it!

### Leaving the Forest School Site

* Collect all equipment ready to take back to school; check you have got everything by ticking off the list
* Check that no rubbish or equipment has been left behind

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* If you have had a fire, make sure that it is fully extinguished and any trace removed
* If you have been using tools to cut wood etc, make sure no hazards are left for other users of the woodland e.g. branches left across paths
* If you have been building shelters, make sure they are being left in a safe condition if the wood is used by the general public
* Count children as you leave site

## Returning to the School Premises

* Count children on return to school
* Make sure all children wash their hands immediately, and especially before eating or drinking
* Children should change into spare clothes if necessary, e.g. if they got wet in the rain
* Put equipment away and record that it has been returned
* Ensure any accidents / injuries (cuts etc.) are reported in the school accident book

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**Health & safety Policy**

Badger Wood Adventures provides play-based experiences for children in woodland and other natural environments in line with the ethos and practice of Forest Schools.

Forest Schools allow children to engage in risky activities – using edged tools and open fires – allowing children opportunities for risk assessing, by following Forest School procedures under competent leadership. I believe that this is an important skill for children to learn and enables them to build confidence in their ability to make considered decisions throughout their life.

Procedure

Forest school sessions will be run only by a qualified Forest School Leader qualified to Level 3. We work in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 by ensuring that:

Full risk-benefit assessments, which weigh up risks against benefits to children, are reviewed once every term for the environment and the activities.

Safety sweeps are carried out before each session.

Dynamic risk assessments are used as part of on-going assessment during sessions. If circumstances change action is taken to ensure everyone’s safety.

Children are given opportunities to assess risks for themselves, appropriate to their stage of development and level of understanding.

All equipment is suitable for its intended use and is correctly maintained and used.

Adults and children are aware of the fire procedure and regular evacuation drills are carried out.

Adults and children are aware of the procedure in case of accidents.

All adults are familiar with the Health & Safety policy.

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Emergency procedures are put into place if an emergency occurs and are reviewed with volunteers at each session.

There is no smoking in the woodland.

There are no contractors in the woodland during a session.

Weather reports are checked prior to a session and in the event of extreme weather, when it may be too dangerous to be in a woodland environment, the session will be cancelled or postponed.

Children and adults are required to have appropriate clothing and, if possible, protective clothing may be provided if required.

First Aid

The Forest School Leader has completed an Outdoor First Aid course which includes paediatric first aid and will be the Trained First Aider during Forest School sessions.

The first aid kit is kept clean and is replenished and items replaced when necessary. I regularly check expiry dates and keep a log of all items and dates. Sterile items are kept sealed until needed and once opened any unused items are discarded.

The first aid kit is kept in the emergency rucksack and all adults are made aware of its location during sessions.

Medication

If a child is on prescribed medication the following procedures will be followed:

If possible the parent/carer should administer the medicine. If not, then the medication, which must be clearly labelled with the child’s name, dosage and any instructions, will be administered by the Forest School Leader.

Before administering any medicine, a medication consent form will need to be completed by the parent/carer giving permission and clear instructions on dosage and how to administer the medicine.

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The medication consent form will be filled out each time the medicine is given to the child; recording the date and time of each dose, the amount given, any notes and the Forest School Leader’s signature. The parent/carer will be asked to sign on pick up to acknowledge that this has been done correctly.

Children will not have access to any medicines.

Children’s individual health care plans for long term medical conditions will be adhered to; following information and instructions provided by the parents on their child’s registration form.

Any notifiable illnesses will be reported to the Local Authority.

Ticks

Ticks are increasing in number all over the UK. In Gloucestershire the risk of getting bitten by a tick is med – high. They have been found in gardens and parks as well as woodlands. Some ticks carry diseases.

Incidents of children and adults picking up ticks have increased.

It is important to raise awareness of how to prevent tick bites. We are committed to being more vigilant and proactive in preparing children for the woods and checking for ticks.

We provide parents with information on ticks and how to prevent bites and keep information available during sessions

When parents and children arrive, we check that their clothing is appropriate, we ask children to tuck tops into trousers and trousers into socks, we apply insect repellent if we have permission or ask parent to apply it, if present.

We keep to pathways cut through the bracken and long grassy areas as much as possible.

Before children leave the woods, we check them for ticks on exposed skin. If found, we remove them as soon as possible, put them into a clear

plastic bag and fill in the incident form. Parents are given the tick and a leaflet on what to do next.

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Records

A register is completed as the children arrive so a complete record of those present is available in an emergency. High adult: child ratios will be maintained and will vary depending on the age and number of children. Good supervision by all adults is essential.

A record is kept of emergency contacts, doctor’s numbers and children’s medical details. An accident book is used to record accidents and an incident book is used to record any incidents which occur during sessions. I inform the parents/carers of any occurrence, they will be required to sign the relevant book and will be given a copy of the record. Children will leave only with authorised adults.

Any accidents which require hospital treatment will be reported to the Local Authority.

All details of accidents and incidents are kept in a locked file.

Hygiene

At some sessions an eco-toilet may available at the woodland for the children and adults to use. The seat and surrounding area are cleaned before every session using anti-bacterial spray. After visiting the toilet an anti-bacterial hand gel is available for primary cleaning and clean water and hand soap are supplied for secondary cleaning. Everyone is asked to wash their hands before eating and before and after food preparation. Paper towels or individual hand towels are used for drying hands and disposed of in a designated bin.

Rubber gloves are worn when cleaning up any spills of bodily fluids.

## National Health and Safety Legislation

## Work environments are governed by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which states that the employer has a “duty of care” so far as is reasonably practicable, for the health, safety and welfare of their employees while they are at work. This means that the employer should:

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* Ensure that the provision and maintenance of plant and systems of work are safe and without risk to health.
* Ensure safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
* Provide information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of their employees.
* Maintain the place of work under their control, in a condition that is safe and without risks to health and provide and maintain a means of access to and from the place of work which is safe and without such risks.
* Provide and maintain a working environment which is safe, without risk to health and has adequate facilities and arrangements for their employees welfare at work.

Employees also have a duty under the Act to take reasonable care for the health and safety at work of themselves and any other people who might be affected by their actions or omissions and to co-operate with their employers and others to enable them to comply with statutory duties and requirements. Also, they must not intentionally or recklessly misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any aspect of health and safety law.

These regulations apply outdoors as well as indoors.

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## **The role of staff, volunteers & visitors**

When working with children and young people all staff and volunteers are acting in a position of trust. It is important that staff and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by children and young people and must act in an appropriate manner at all times. It is important to:

* Operate within Badger Wood Adventures policies and procedures.
* Follow the Badger Wood Adventures safeguarding policy and procedures at all times
* Demonstrate integrity and respect for children and young people
* Act as positive role models and display high standards of behaviour
* Ensure that activities are appropriate to the child’s or young person’s level of development and understanding
* Be positive, enthusiastic and give feedback in a constructive manner
* Be appropriately dressed for the activity.
* Listen to and respect children and young people at all times
* Treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
* Value and take children’s and young people’s contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
* Ensure any contact with children and young people is appropriate and in relation to the activity
* Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.
* Give verbal praise to children and young people demonstrating good work, good behaviour, cooperation and good group work.
* If a child or young person specifically asks for or needs some private time with you, ensure other staff know where you and the child or young person are.
* Respect a child or young person’s right to personal privacy.
* Encourage children, young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.

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## You must not:

* Patronise or treat children and young people as though they are silly.
* Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
* Use any form of physical or emotional punishment.
* Allow bullying or bad behaviour by children, young people or adults.
* Do things of a personal nature that children or young people can do for themselves.
* Let allegations from a child or young person go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted on.
* Let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number, address or social media contact details).
* Allow or engage in inappropriate touching.
* Make inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality.
* Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.
* Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
* Rely on your reputation or that of the organisation to protect you.
* Take unnecessary risks.

Should a member of staff accidentally hurt or distress a child in any way or the child misunderstands something which that person has done, it should be reported as soon as possible to the Forest School Leader. The incident should also be noted on a Badger Wood Adventures Incident Form. Parents or carers should be informed of the incident and asked to sign the form.

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**Placement student policy**

Students undertaking a degree in Early Childhood Studies or Education Studies at the University of Gloucestershire are given the opportunity to carry out their placements as part of their course at Badger Wood.

This enables them to experience working with children in a Forest School setting and is hugely beneficial for the students in understanding how children learn and develop using the Forest School approach. The children also benefit from the presence of adults who are able to support their learning.

Before students have any contact with children they are interviewed to ensure that they are suitable. References are obtained from the University staff. The students must have an enhanced DBS check which specifies that they can work with children.

We only accept DBS disclosure notices obtained via another organisation if it is an enhanced level check and the position applied for states ‘child workforce’.

All students will be over 18 years of age and any unchecked person will not be left unsupervised with children.

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**Tools and equipment**

The use of hand tools forms an important aspect of Forest School. Their use enables children to develop new practical skills that facilitate their development and build self-confidence.

Badger Wood Adventures policy is as follows;

* Staff to child ratios will be low and an appropriate level of supervision will be used based on the competence level of the child/children and which tools are being used.
* If safety guidelines are not being followed, the user (child or adult) will not be allowed to use tools.
* Hand tools will be maintained in good order by the Forest School Leader and will be inspected before each session to ensure that they are safe to use.
* Tools will be kept in the tool box until they are required.
* An appointed adult will monitor the tool box and tools will be counted back into the tool box at the end of the session.
* All children and adults will be shown how to handle the tools properly and to treat them with respect before tool use.
* All tools will be used within a “work bubble” away from other people. i.e. a circle around the user; the radius of which is an arm length plus a tool length in size. There will be no exceptions to this rule unless;
  + Two people are required to operate the tool.
  + The Forest School Leader or Assistant are training the user for the first time.
  + The Forest School Leader or Assistant are required to enter the “work bubble” to prevent imminent (either deliberate or accidental) harm by the user to themselves or another session attendee.
* Running with or pointing/waving of tools is prohibited.
* Bow saws must have a blade guard on them when not in use.
* Sheath knives must be kept in their sheaths unless they are actively being used.
* Wood being sawn must be supported appropriately.

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# Tool Storage Policy

* All tools with a blade of any type will be treated as though they are knives. As such the relevant legal aspects of knife law apply. This statement applies to items such as knives, potato peelers, axes and saws of all types. All ‘knives’ will be stored in a locked container until they are required; e.g. the tool box/locked knife box. When not in use they will be stored with their blade cover (if they have one) in place over the blade. When they are no longer required for an activity they will be returned to the container.
* All tools which do not have a blade of any type will be considered safe tools and will be stored as determined by the Forest School Leader.

# Tool Maintenance Policy

* The Forest School Leader will check the tools on a regular basis and before the Forest School session commences.
* Tools with blades will be maintained with sharp, clean blades.
* Blade covers will be checked for safety. Where they are found to be failing, the tool will be removed and repaired or replaced.
* Any wooden handled tools will be checked by the Forest School Leader to ensure that they are secure on the tool.

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# **Risk Assessment & Management Policy**

Children need and want to take risks when they play. It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to ensure that children have exciting, challenging and engaging play opportunities whilst ensuring that they are not exposed to unacceptable risk of harm, such as death or serious injury. Badger Wood Adventures aims to provide an environment with well managed risks to encourage the development of children’s own risk awareness and management, self-esteem, independence and motivation.

# **Risk Assessment & Management Procedure**

In order that these aims can be met, the Forest School Leader will:

* Carry out Risk-Benefit assessments, which balance the risks against the benefits of activities carried out during sessions.
* Consistently apply the following approach to risk assessment for Forest School sites and activities:
  + Look for hazards.
  + Decide who may be harmed and how.
  + Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing controls are adequate or whether more should be done.
* Record findings, including daily amendments to the generic risk assessments based on site visits or observations.
* Review the assessments on a regular basis (or if circumstances change which may affect the assessment) and revise as necessary.
* Carry out full risk assessments on each site where Forest School activities will take place.
* Do safety sweeps prior to the session commencing and as near to the start of the activity as is reasonably practical.
* Cancel the session if weather conditions such as high winds or electrical storms make running the session unsafe.
* Inform the assistants, children and visiting adults of potential hazards and methods of working in order to minimise the risk.

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* Involve the assistants, children and visiting adults in risk assessment, as appropriate, as a part of the learning process.
* Ensure legal guidelines are met. (E.g. having adequate insurance and parental permission).
* Ensure that all assistants, children and visiting adults are aware of the emergency procedures for the site.
* Be responsible for teaching children adequate skills in order to keep themselves safe, particularly in relation to the use of hand tools and fire.
* Ensure assistants, children and visiting adults have access to drinking water during sessions.

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**Food safety management plan**

Forest School Sessions

During Forest School sessions at Badger Wood children are given a biscuit and a cup of hot chocolate for snack. Before providing these items the adults will wash their hands with soap and warm water. Before eating the children also wash their hands with soap and warm water. Disposable paper towels or individual hand towels are provided for drying hands.

During Forest School sessions where water and soap are not available the adults and children clean their hands using wet wipes before eating or handling food.

The instant hot chocolate is prepared with water at home prior to the session. It is carried in a flask which is tempered beforehand to keep the hot chocolate at a high temperature and prevent bacteria forming.

On the final session the children toast marshmallows over a fire. Either disposable bamboo skewers are used or whittled hazel sticks. The hazel sticks are inspected beforehand use to ensure that they are clean and not too dry. If they are not clean the ends are whittled to make them clean. Hazel is not a poisonous wood.

Forest School Birthday parties

Sausages are re-heated over a fire during birthday parties. The sausages are cooked beforehand according to the manufacturer’s instructions and checked to ensure they are cooked through. They are then allowed to cool before being put into the fridge to prevent bacteria forming. They are transported to the woodland in a cool bag containing ice packs. They are then heated over the fire until heated through.

The bread rolls, ketchup, crisps and drinks provided are checked to ensure they are within the use by or best before date.

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# **Accident/Incident Policy**

Participant’s safety is paramount, and we will take reasonable and practicable measures to protect participants from hurting themselves. However sometimes accidents do happen, especially given that Forest Schools sessions take place in a natural environment and incorporate the use of tools and fire.

Should an injury occur, it is important that parents keep us informed regarding their child’s condition following an accident and whether they have sought medical advice.

# Accident/Incident Procedure: Injured Participant (child/adult).

The following procedure lays out how we will deal with such a situation:

1. We will ensure the safety of the group.
2. We will comfort the child/adult and reassure them.
3. We will assess the extent of their injuries and if necessary, call for immediate medical support/an emergency ambulance.
4. We will administer any first aid procedures that are necessary and that we have been trained to do. This will be undertaken with reference to the injured child’s/adult’s Medication and Consent form.
5. **If the injured child/adult does not require immediate emergency ambulance or hospital treatment;**
   1. The Leader will contact the Head Teacher, if appropriate, as soon as practicable advising of the accident/incident.
   2. Alternatively, the Leader will contact the named emergency contact to advise them of the accident/incident and, if necessary, to ask them to attend to care for the child/adult.
6. **If the injured child/adult do require immediate emergency ambulance & hospital treatment;**
   1. The Leader (or whoever is able) will immediately call for an emergency ambulance.
   2. The Leader (or whoever is able) will contact the named emergency contact to advise them of the accident/incident and, to ask them to meet them at the hospital.

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* 1. The Leader (or whoever is able) will abort the session and, if appropriate, contact the Head Teacher requesting that all the children be collected as soon as possible.
  2. The Leader will go with the injured child/adult to hospital and act ‘In Loco Parentis’ (as applicable) until such time as the named emergency contact arrives at hospital.

1. The Forest School Leader will then record the details in the Accident/Incident book which is to be countersigned by the parent of the child.
2. All reportable accidents and incidents are reported to the Health and Safety Executive in accordance with RIDDOR.

Calling 999

You will need to have the following information available when calling 999:

**The address where you are - including the postcode or OS coordinates, these can be found on the first aid bag**.

**The phone number you're calling from** (in the case the line gets interrupted and the call taker needs to call you back)

**What has happened**

You will also be asked some additional questions while ambulance staff are on the way:

The patient's age, sex and medical history

Whether the patient is conscious, breathing and if there is any bleeding or chest pain

Details of the injury and how it happened

## **What can you do before help arrives?**

Stay with and comfort the patient

Have the patient's GP details and medical details to hand.

Stay calm

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**Positive Behaviour Policy**

At Badger Wood at the beginning of each session safety rules and boundaries are discussed. Therefore, everyone knows what is expected of them and children can play without fear of being hurt or hindered by anyone else. Through clear communication, mutual respect and encouragement children can develop self-discipline and self-esteem.

Behaviour management

Leading by example shows children how to behave socially and co-operatively and providing positive role models for children encourages positive behaviour. This is further enhanced by being welcoming and treating everyone with respect, care and courtesy. Through consistency children know what to expect and can develop good habits of behaviour.

Disagreements are discussed and mediated by the forest school leader, allowing children the time and space to resolve disputes and make amends, building skills that the children can use in similar future situations.

Discipline

Long term Forest School experience enables children to develop an internal locum of self-discipline and control through development of empathy and social skills. How this is done will vary with each child.

No physical punishment will ever be used or threatened. None of the staff will shout or raise their voice in a threatening way. No techniques intended to single out and humiliate a child will be used.

Challenging behaviour is seen as a child’s way of communicating their needs. Children who display challenging behaviour will be given one-to-one support to understand the root of the behaviour and steps will be taken, with the child, to meet the child’s underlying needs, taking into account the child’s level of understanding and maturity.

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In any cases of racial or other abuse, the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes will be made clear immediately by means of explanation rather than personal blame.

Recurring problems will be dealt with in partnership with parents with the use of observations to establish an understanding of the cause.

Some challenging behaviour may arise from changes in circumstances, frustration or additional needs and these are monitored and addressed through observations and communication with parents/carers.

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**Equal opportunities policy**

At Badger Wood Adventures our aim is:

* To treat all people with equal value
* That everyone be treated with understanding and respect

Everyone who is involved with Badger Wood Adventures is assured that we do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their race, nationality, colour, gender, physical or mental ability, creed, religion, language, culture, age, class, political beliefs, or personal circumstances.

We will actively oppose and tackle all forms of direct and indirect discrimination carried out on the grounds of race, nationality, colour, national origin, disability, sex or marital status.

Everyone who is a member of and who works or volunteers for Badger Wood Adventures is expected to carry out his or her responsibilities and duties with due regard to the equal opportunities policy ensuring fairness towards others.

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# **Inclusion policy**

Badger Wood Adventures will welcome adults and children from all backgrounds & levels of attainment. However, by its very nature, activities are generally carried out in a woodland environment. Therefore, it may be difficult for wheelchair users and people with motor disabilities to gain access to the woodland. If required, efforts will be made to enable access as much as reasonably acceptable given the uneven ground.

Badger Wood Adventures recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to;

* have a written inclusion policy,
* not discriminate against people;
  + because of their sex,
  + because of their race,
  + because of their disability,
  + because of their religion or belief,
  + because of their sexual orientation,
  + who are pregnant,
  + who have undergone/are undergoing gender reassignment.
* not ask health-related questions of volunteers, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work.

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# **Restraint Policy**

There is no place for violence in Forest School sessions. Restraint should only be used if;

* The child is in an imminent life-threatening situation where to do nothing would be in breach of our duty of care.
* To prevent a serious assault on another child or adult.
* To prevent serious damage to property.

Should restraint have been necessary during the session the incident will be recorded in the Badger Wood Adventures Incident book and the teacher/parent/guardian will be informed of the incident at the end of the session. They will be required to sign the form to confirm that they have been made aware of the incident. Where a teacher signs the form, they will be responsible for advising the child’s parent/guardian.

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**Safeguarding policy**

Mindy Pickering is the Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL) at Badger Wood Adventures, our primary objective is ensuring the welfare of children in our care. If there is cause for concern it will be reported, following the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) procedures (included in file).

All staff have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate and attend regular training which enables them to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect.

All volunteers and staff at Badger Wood Adventures are required to produce their DBS certificate a record is kept of the details. References are taken up before recruiting any staff or volunteers who will be in contact with children.

As Volunteers and staff are required to familiarise themselves with the safeguarding policy and procedures and take online safeguarding training before working with children. They are taken through an induction and training process, which includes supervision and support, as required. No other adults will be left alone with the children.

Through showing respect for children’s choices they are encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence with adult support in making choices and in finding names for their feelings and safe ways to express them. This enables children to have the self-confidence and vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.

**Procedure**

Initial responses

If a member of staff or volunteer has any concerns regarding a child’s welfare, they have a duty to immediately inform the DSL. If a child arrives with an injury, they will firstly be given medical attention as required.

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If there are signs that something is amiss such as suspicious marks or changes in behaviour patterns, these concerns will be discussed with the parent or carer (if this does not put the child at further risk or affect a police investigation). Efforts are made to build good relationships with parents and something as simple as moving home or the arrival of a new baby can affect a child’s behaviour. The situation will be carefully monitored and any concerns noted.

It is acknowledged that due to children covering their arms and legs and usually wearing coats to Forest School sessions it may be difficult to pick up on marks on the body. Therefore, adults will need to be aware if a child is moving with difficulty or seems to be experiencing pain.

If any unexplained marks or changes in behaviour are noted, or any disclosure made, they will be kept confidential and will not be discussed with the family, friends or colleagues of the DSL or other staff members.

We will:

Remain calm, sensitive and focussed on the child’s best interests.

Take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the safety of the child.

Listen carefully to the child and offer reassurance.

Keep accurate, factual records.

If appropriate/possible ask the child to sign and date the record.

If there are urgent concerns, we will contact the Children and Families helpdesk on 01452 426565.

Keeping records

If any worrying changes in a child’s behaviour, physical condition or appearance are observed, a specific and confidential record will be set up. This will be kept separate from any usual on-going records of children’s progress and development.

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The record will include, in addition to the name, address and age of the child:

Times and dates of observations, describing factually the child’s behaviour/appearance.

Details of previous concerns.

Any actions taken, such as speaking to parents/carers.

Details given by parents.

The date, name and signature of the member of staff making the record.

These records will be kept in a secure location and will only be accessible to the members of staff and DSL.

In the event of a child or young person disclosing abuse of any kind, we will:

Not ask leading questions.

Not agree to confidentiality as the need to protect overrides this.

Write an account of what was said.

Contact the Children and Families helpdesk on 01452 426565 as soon as possible.

Liaison with other professionals

We work in accordance with the Local Authority guidelines.

If a child is considered at risk the DSL will contact the Children and Families helpdesk on 01452 426565. Advice may be sought from the Referral and Assessment Team and, if required, the DSL will complete a Multi Agency Service Request Form and attend meetings as necessary.

Any written reports will be given to the GSCB if requested and they will take responsibility for any further enquiries.

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Allegations management process

In the event that allegations are made against the forest school leader or one of the staff or volunteers, every Local Authority appoints a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

* behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
* possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child, or
* behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk to children. (Working Together 2018)
* Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The LADO ensures that all allegations or concerns about professionals or adults working or volunteering with children are recorded appropriately, monitored and progressed in a timely and confidential way. The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case. The LADO provides advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaising with the police and other agencies and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.

In Gloucestershire the LADO is **Nigel Hatten,**who is supported by Tracy Brooks and Jenny Kadodia, the Allegations Management Co-Ordinators.  If you are looking for general Allegation Management advice, please contact either Tracy or Jenny on the following number 01452 426320.

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**Mobile phone/camera policy**

The forest school leader’s, staff and volunteers mobile phones are considered an essential piece of equipment as a means of contacting others in an emergency, they must be fully charged and available. Any information stored on them must be secure, so details are not misused if lost or stolen.

The use of mobile phones or cameras by parents or visitors is prohibited in the presence of children at the setting, unless express permission has been sought. This is to prevent unauthorised photographs, videos and recordings being taken.

If an older child brings a mobile phone to the provision which also has a camera they are not permitted to access the internet or use their camera during sessions.

Express permission will be sought from children and their parents/guardians to take any photographs of children either to record activities and/or share their progress.

Photos of children in the setting will not be published or shared without permission, unless required by law. This may include sharing them with Ofsted, local authority development workers, the child’s parent /carer or XXXXX if there is a safeguarding concern.

Staff will avoid putting themselves or the children into any compromising situation which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations.

If there are any queries or concerns regarding this, please do not hesitate to contact Mindy Pickering on 07840 186816.

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**Confidentiality Policy and Procedure**

At Badger Wood Adventures we:

• Develop a professional relationship with all parents/carers; treating information shared as confidential (unless this compromises a child’s safety or welfare, in which case we will be required to disclose sensitive and confidential information to appropriate agencies).

• Store confidential information and records about children in a secure place; only accessible and available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.

• Comply with our responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

We are registered with The Information Commissioners’ Office (ICO) under the GDPR, as we may keep the following information:

1. Children’s records on a computer.

2. Digital photographs on a camera or any other digital device such as a mobile phone or any visual/audio equipment.

To be compliant with these requirements we will:

• Renew ICO registration annually and make the certificate available to parents and/or carers.

• Ensure that staff, volunteers and assistants understand the need to protect children’s privacy and the legal requirements relating to children’s information.

• Enable a regular two-way flow of information with parents and/or carers, and with other early year’s providers, if a child is attending more than one setting.

• Seek parental written permission to obtain information from other providers.

• Enable Parents and/or carers to inspect all records about their child at any time, provided that no relevant exemptions apply under the GDPR.

• Seek parents and/or carers consent to share information directly with other relevant professionals, if considered helpful.

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**Compliance with GDPR 2018**

As detailed on page 35 we gain information related to the children and adults/volunteers who attend sessions through the consent form, which must be completed and signed by an adult with parental responsibility, before a child can attend.

In compliance with the GDPR regulations this information is collected on a ‘Legitimate Interests’ basis. It is used to keep children and adults safe whilst attending Badger Wood and to ensure we have emergency contacts, if required.

The information from the forms is transferred to a spread sheet and is shared only with other practitioners working with the children at Badger Wood Adventures.

The paper copies of forms, and any other information, are stored in a secure box and data shared electronically is stored on a hard drive which is password protected.

If there have been no incidents relating to a child during their time at Badger Wood then forms which are no longer needed are destroyed, and electronic records deleted, after 6 months if they are no longer attending sessions. If there has been an incident involving a child their form is kept for 6 years after attendance.

On the consent form clients are given the option to supply an email address if they would like to be contacted regarding future events. Clients may request that their data be deleted at any time. They are able to unsubscribe via email and if they choose to unsubscribe their details will be added to a ‘do not contact’ list.

None of the information given on consent forms or otherwise is shared with 3rd parties without the express permission of the parent/carer with parental responsibility for the child.

Parental permission is gained in writing for any photos of children or adults taken during sessions and used for promotional material or on social media.

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Some information is retained to maintain accounts and financial records.

Any breach of personal data will be reported to the ICO within 72 hours of occurrence and clients will be informed. Anti-virus and Malware software has been installed on computers and devices.

**Pet policy**

Children will be encouraged to treat all animals with respect and will learn how to handle them correctly.

Sometimes our ‘forest school dog’ Jasper (a border terrier) is present during sessions. Jasper is tethered away from base camp. The children are made aware of his presence and advised not to approach him if not comfortable with dogs.

All equipment used by the children is kept away from the dog and appropriate steps are taken to accommodate children who may have an allergy.

Children wash their hands after any contact with the dog.

They are taught that if they don’t know an animal they must not stroke it as not all animals are friendly, and they must always ask permission from the owner first. They will also be taught how to stand if approached by an unknown dog.

Any faeces found in the woodland are removed during the safety sweep before each session.

All Jasper’s vaccinations are kept up to date.

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# **Consent & Medical Declaration Policy**

Badger Wood Adventures has a strict policy for gaining consent and medical information from all participants prior to them joining any sessions. The consent forms require all adults/child’s’ parents/guardians to give the following information;

* Attendees name, date of birth, parent/guardians name, home address, postcode & telephone number.
* Attendees emergency contact information. In the case of children, the connection to the child is also required.
* Attendees medical details.
* Whether or not the attendee has a disability that we should be aware of.
* Whether or not the attendee suffers from any medical conditions.
* Whether or not the attendee will require any medication during the session.
* Whether or not the attendee suffers from any allergies.
* Any further information that may be required for children to take part in the sessions (e.g. dietary needs, fears, etc.).

The form then asks that the person completing the form to agree to the following conditions;

* I agree to/to my child taking part in Forest School Sessions.
* I agree to/to my child abiding by any rules set by the Forest School Leader or Assistants.
* Attend with/ supply their children with;
  + Appropriate clothing and footwear.
  + Additional items depending on the weather forecast.
* In the event of an emergency if I am unable to be present I give / do not give my permission for medical treatment as recommended by a doctor which may be necessary for my child.
* I agree to/to my child being transported in the Forest School Leaders vehicle to receive medical attention if required.

Without this form being completed to the satisfaction of the Forest School Leader, the person will not be allowed to join the session.

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**Lost or missing child procedure**

The prospect of a missing child is taken very seriously by Badger Wood Adventures. If it is discovered that a child is/children are missing from the group, the following emergency procedure will immediately be implemented:

1. The Forest School Leader shall be informed immediately by whoever believes the child is/children are missing.
2. The Forest School Leader will gather together the group and undertake a headcount to ensure that no other members of the group are missing.
3. The Forest School Leader and all members of the group will then search for the child in the immediate vicinity.
4. If after one minute the child does not respond the Forest School Assistant will assume control of the group.
5. The Forest School Leader and any other available adults will commence a search of the woodland. This search will last no longer than five minutes. If the Forest School Leader is the only adult with the group, the search will not be undertaken.
6. If the missing child has/children have not been located within the five minute search, or the search has not been undertaken, the Forest School Leader will dial 112/999 and alert the police.
7. Immediately following this the Forest School Leader will make contact with the child/children’s parents/guardians or the schools Head teacher reporting the child as being missing and aborting the Forest School session.
8. If the Head Teacher has been informed it will be their responsibility to make contact with the Child’s/children’s parents/guardians.
9. If there are other available adults (in addition to the Forest School Leader), they will continue to search for the missing child/children.
10. The Forest School Leader will then follow the Incident Reporting procedure taking evidence from the person who identified the child/children as being missing, the volunteers & the remaining group members.

Badger Wood Adventures will then inform the L.A. about the event in compliance with Standard 14.3 of the Children Act and our Insurance Company.

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**Uncollected Child Procedure**

If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed time the parents/guardians will be contacted. If we are unable to contact parents/guardians, then the named emergency contacts will be called.

We will continue to try the parents/guardians contact numbers but if after one hour from the agreed time we are unsuccessful we will contact the XXXX

During this time, we will ensure that the child is safe and comfortable.

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# Loose Dog Procedure

We recognise that dogs are let off the lead whilst being walked and that dogs will occasionally come into the woodland. It should be remembered that most dogs are friendly and playful and that their approach may be well-meant.

Should a loose dog be encountered at the Forest School site before, during or after a Forest School session the following procedure will be followed.

1. To prevent dogs coming in to Badger Wood via Barber Wood red ribbon will be put across the boundary.
2. Before the session commences the children will have been advised never to approach animals and shown how to behave if there is a loose dog, i.e. stand still with arms across their chest and turn away from the dog.
3. The child/children who see the loose dog are to advise the Forest School Leader that there is a loose dog in the vicinity.
4. The Forest School Leader will, if possible, position themselves between the group and the dog.
5. The Forest School Leader will look for owner and ask them to keep dog on lead.
6. If they are trespassing, the Forest School Leader will advise them of this and ask them to leave the grounds immediately.
7. If the dogs’ owner cannot be located, and the dog is threatening the group/causing a nuisance, (i.e. an emergency situation), the Forest School Leader will position themselves between the children and the dog and move the children away to a safe area. Any necessary first aid should be administered. The police should then be contacted advising them of the stray dog and requesting their assistance if necessary.
8. The Forest School Leader will then fill in an incident report.

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# **Unknown Person Procedure**

We understand that the general public will on occasion, knowingly or unknowingly, trespass into areas being used for Forest School sessions.

Should an unknown person be encountered at the Forest School site before, during or after a Forest School session the following procedure will be followed.

1. Before the session commences the children will have been advised never to approach unknown people whilst attending the Forest School session.
2. The child/children who see the unknown person are to advise the Forest School Leader that there is an unknown person in the vicinity.
3. The Forest School Leader will, if possible, position themselves between the group and the unknown person & then approach the unknown person in a friendly manner and ask them who they are and what they are doing there.
   1. If they are there for legitimate reasons connected with the Forest School session, the Forest School Leader will advise them to stay with the Forest School Leader until they can be given the appropriate forms to complete and policy documents to read.
   2. If they are there for legitimate reasons not connected with the Forest School session, the Forest School Leader will ask that they stay away from the group while the session is running.
   3. If they are trespassing, the Forest School Leader will advise them of this and ask them to leave the grounds immediately, making contact with the police if necessary.
4. The Forest School Leader will then complete an incident report.

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## **Emergency provision**

* The Forest School Leader will have a clear plan for what to do in an emergency
* A mobile phone must be taken to Forest School and the Forest School Leader must be aware of whether or not there is a signal
* Alternatively, they must locate the nearest public phone.
* They must know where the nearest houses are (if working remotely) and if possible, have contact with local people so they are aware in the case of an emergency
* Know the grid reference of the site
* Have clear directions to give to emergency services over the phone of how to get to the site
* Make the children and other adults/volunteers aware of who the first aiders are within the group and where the first aid kit is kept
* A clear chain of command – one person will be nominated to take over if the Leader is taken ill or has an accident

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**Refund policy**

Little Adventurers and Home School Adventurers Forest School sessions

Refunds will only be given in the event that a session is cancelled for any reason by the Forest School Leader and the service is not available.

Refunds may be issued if enough notice is given by the parent/guardian and the space can be filled by another child.

Refunds are not given for illness/no shows.

Fees may be amended if parents inform us beforehand of any holidays or dates they definitely cannot make before the start of the half term.

Holiday Activity days

Refunds will only be given in the event that a session is cancelled for any reason by the Forest School Leader and the service is not available.

Refunds may be issued if enough notice is given by the parent/guardian and the space can be filled by another child.

Refunds are not given for illness/no shows.

Badger Wood birthday parties

When a client (parent/guardian) pays a deposit to book a date for a party, that deposit will be at risk if the party is cancelled by them within 10 weeks of the date, no refund will be issued as it will be too short notice to book another party.  If we are able to book another party in for the same date and time slot then a full refund can be issued.

In the event that the party is cancelled by the Forest School leader, and the service is therefore not available, a full refund will be given.

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**Badger wood Adventures**

**Autumn term sessions 2020**

**Please note that the following policies and procedures are subject to change in line with government guidance. We will update them if the situation changes.**

**Covid-19 Policy**

The UK government has acknowledged that ‘*the risk of transmission outdoors is significantly lower*‘ and they suggest that people ‘*move activity outdoors if you can*‘.

Spending time in the outdoors and developing nature connection are important for wellbeing, mental and physical health. Our groups also promote a sense of community and build resilience in the participants.

It is our intention to follow the most current government guidelines concerning the coronavirus pandemic and to put in place procedures and practices to prevent the spread of the virus, protecting children and adults attending our sessions, as far as we possibly can.

According to the latest guidance, we are able to carry on with running sessions, the attendees must be kept in ‘bubbles’ of up to 6 people. Due to their age the children will not expected to socially distance. Social distancing between children and other adults will be maintained as much as possible, and as our sessions are for children, we will be doing this in a fun way. The staff members will also maintain a distance of 2 metres from each other and the other adults present.

Please note that government guidance is subject to change, possibly at short notice. If there are any changes to our sessions due to this, we will inform parents of any changes as soon as possible.

All parents/guardians must complete consent forms before children can attend. These contact details will be kept securely after the event so that if we need to, we will be able to get in touch with them after the event.

**Covid-19 procedures**

Health and safety

Preventing the spread of coronavirus involves dealing with direct transmission (for instance, when in close contact with those sneezing and coughing) and indirect transmission (via touching contaminated surfaces).

* minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend
* cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered

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* ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach
* cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products, such as detergents and bleach
* minimising contact and mixing
* wearing disposable gloves when cleaning up any spills of bodily fluids
* wearing of face masks and disposable gloves by the adult if social distancing is not possible
* Double bagging any PPE worn and cloths used for cleaning and disposing of appropriately

To reduce the risk of transmission it is advised that clothing is washed each day after attending a session.

Food and drinks

Parents are advised to bring snacks and drinks. Hot chocolate and a biscuit will be provided during the sessions. Hot chocolate will be prepared in accordance with the HSE Better Food Safer Business guidelines. Hands will be washed and a face mask worn when serving hot chocolate and biscuits and when toasting marshmallows over the fire.

Parents are also advised to bring their own hand sanitiser if possible, though hand washing soap and water will be available and used on arrival, after toileting, before and after eating and before leaving. We will also supply hand sanitiser for the children and adults to use if they don’t have their own. Hands must be washed thoroughly beforehand as hand sanitiser is ineffective if hands still have mud on them.

Activities

The participants will be put into ‘bubbles’ of 5 with one leader and kept in the same bubbles as much as possible during the 6 week block of sessions. Each ‘bubble’ will have their own colour-coded resources which will be shared within the group. Only activities which can be done in a social distancing way will be offered. Children will share resources and work spaces within their ‘bubbles’.

Handwashing

A watering can system will be used for hand washing (this enables hand washing from a distance without touching the water container), soap will be sprayed from a safe distance by an adult and individual paper towels will be provided, which will be disposed of in a bin bag. Hand sanitiser will be provided for use too. Tissues and bin bags will be provided for each group promoting the ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach.

Hands will be washed on arrival, before and after eating, after using the toilet and before leaving the site.

Attendance

Families should not attend if;

There is a member of the household who is vulnerable and/or shielding.

There is a member of the household who is in a higher-risk group.

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The higher-risk groups include those who:

* are older males
* have a high body mass index (BMI)
* have health conditions such as diabetes
* are from some black, Asian or minority ethnicity backgrounds

They have a new or expectant mother.

They have been in contact with anyone who is isolating due to being in contact with someone who has tested positive.

They or anyone in their household is displaying symptoms. According to the NHS website the symptoms are:

* a high temperature
* a new, continuous cough
* a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

They have recently returned from anywhere abroad and are required to self-isolate for 14 days upon their return.

If a child, parent, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they will be sent home, or if required, they will be supported in return home and advised to self- isolate for 7 days. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days. They should follow the guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection on the government website and get a test.

If the person tests positive for Coronavirus the other people in their bubble will be informed and advised to self-isolate for 7 days. If they develop symptoms during that time they must get a test.

The area which the symptomatic person has been in contact with will be cordoned off and any equipment will be disinfected.

As per our Refund Policy refunds will not be given for non-attendance due to illness.

This will be recorded in the incident book.

Administering first aid

In the event that a child hurts themselves and requires first aid to be given by the forest school leader, masks, aprons and gloves, included in the first aid kit, will be worn by the adult whilst administering the first aid.

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Cancellation

If the forest school leader displays symptoms of covid-19, or are told to isolate, all families will be contacted and advised of the situation, remaining sessions will not go ahead and will be cancelled and fully refunded.

Mental health and wellbeing

 We acknowledge that this has been a difficult time for many people. Lockdown may have impacted on emotional, physical and mental wellbeing for the children and families attending our sessions. We hope to provide a safe environment for our participants where they feel valued.

Coming out of lockdown it is important that children are given opportunities to play in and connect with nature as this is shown to be hugely beneficial for physical and mental health and a way for children to process their feelings and any anxiety they may have connected to lockdown and the Coronavirus.

During sessions the adults will endeavour to listen to any concerns they may have, be aware of emotional and behavioural signs of stress, look out for any changes in their behaviour and check in with them during the session.

We will also ask parents/guardians to let us know if there is anything that we specifically need to be aware of before the session.

Behaviour management

We understand that children may have been under considerable strain during lockdown and this may be shown through their play and through displays of challenging behaviour. As much as possible we will observe and listen to the child and try to understand the cause of any unusual or challenging behaviour.

Children displaying unsafe or intimidating behaviour such as deliberately coughing or spitting will be asked to stop, we will discuss the potential consequences of their behaviour with regard to Covid-19 and advise that they may be asked to leave if they continue. If the behaviour does continue, and we feel unable to keep the other participants safe from potentially getting the virus, they will be kept a safe distance from the other children and their parents will be called and asked to pick them up as soon as possible.

Restraint will only be used as a last resort and only if the child is in an imminent life-threatening situation where to do nothing would be in breach of our duty of care.

If the situation requires a child to be restrained the adult must wear a mask, disposable gloves and a disposable apron.

Safeguarding

Due to the social distancing measures we are following during the pandemic it is important to ensure that we are still able to maintain contact with children and their families. This is done through building relationships and trust during sessions and providing a safe space for children and families to talk to us if there is anything they are worried about and to provide support for families.

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Parents can be signposted to the Family Information Service and the parent advice line set up by the council. The advice line offers confidential advice, guidance and emotional support on any aspect of parenting and family life on 0800 542 02 02.

Having conversations with children and observing children during sessions may raise concerns about their welfare, we will be aware through safeguarding training of signs of abuse or neglect, such as children looking dirty or not changing their clothes, changes in behaviour, children being withdrawn or anxious. These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being abused, there could be other things happening in their life which are affecting their behaviour.

If we have any concerns about a child, they will be discussed with the child’s parents (if this does not put the child at further risk or affect a police investigation).

If there are urgent concerns, we will contact the Children and Families helpdesk on 01452 426565 and follow the GCSB procedures as detailed in our main Safeguarding policy and procedures.

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