



Forest School Handbook

This document outlines all the policies related to our Forest School sessions at the back of Bennachie.

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Introduction

Forest School is a child-centred, inspirational learning process that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term program that supports play, exploration, and risk-taking.

At Old Rayne Preschool, we are entirely aligned with the ethos & recommended practices of the Forest School Association (FSA), from initial training of each leader by an FSA-approved trainer, to the full six principles agreed by the UK Forest School community in 2011. The six key principles:

Principle 1: Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

Principle 2: Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

Principle 4: Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and themselves.

Principle 5: Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

Principle 6: Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

Forest School is important for our children to connect with nature and is fundamental for their health and well-being. Every child needs nature, and nature is full of learning possibilities. Nature is filled with loose parts and plentiful opportunities for hands-on learning.

'Research suggests that exposure to the natural world helps human health, well-being, and intellectual capacity in ways that science is only recently beginning to understand.' Richard Louv

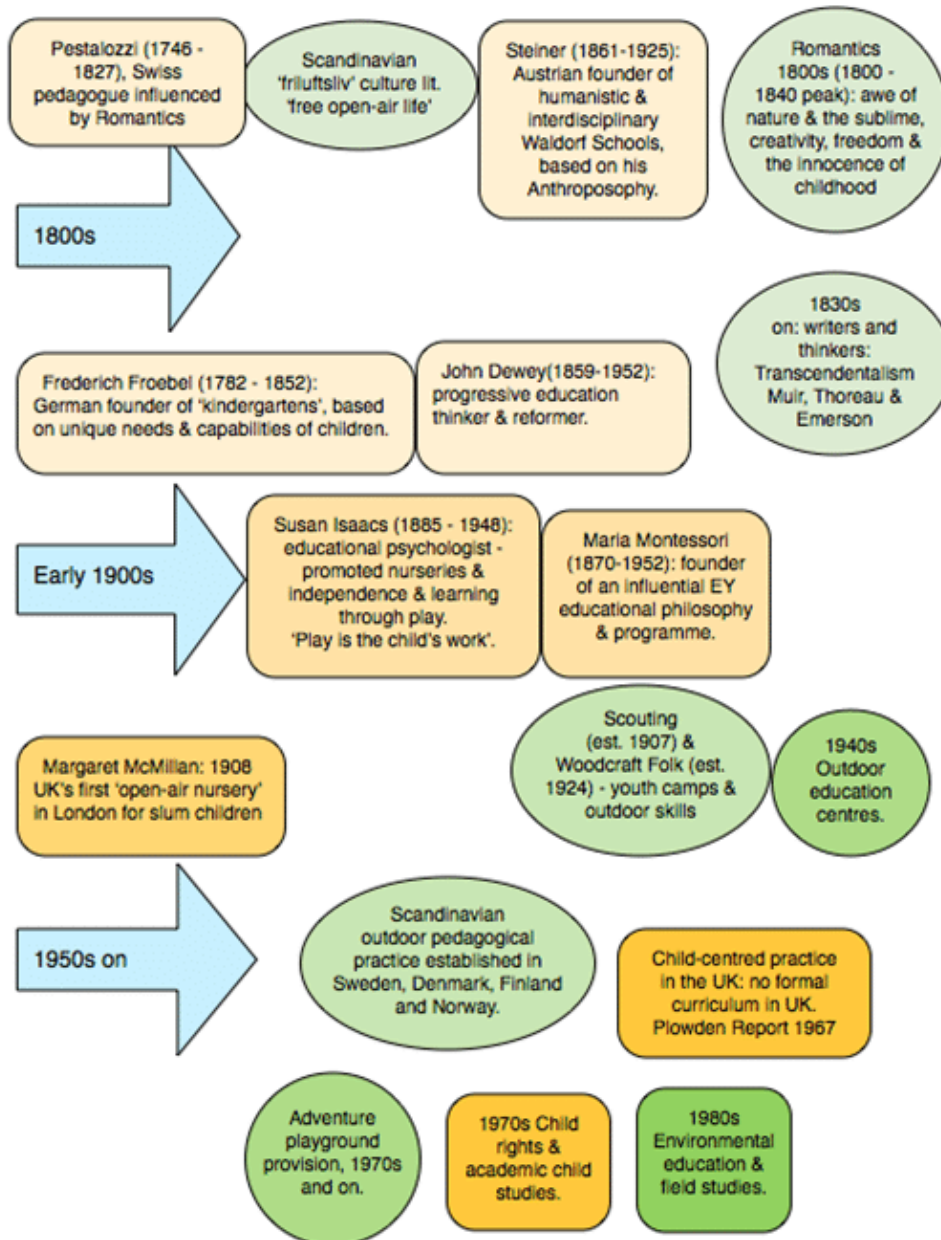
Forest school sessions can cover many curriculum outcomes, especially literacy, maths, science, and health and wellbeing, but they are also about the whole child, their approach to learning, and especially their self-esteem. The forest school experience and ethos are all about the child leading in their learning, following their interests, and engaging in their own curriculum.

In the UK, Forest Schools have increased by over 50% in the last five years, and this increase is likely to continue as more parents and educators find the benefits of Forest School. However, the love for Forest School goes back hundreds of years. The ethos of the



Forest School System developed from the influences of early philosophers, naturalists, and educators. The programme found its roots in the 1990s, when research into 'alternative' educational models was popular.

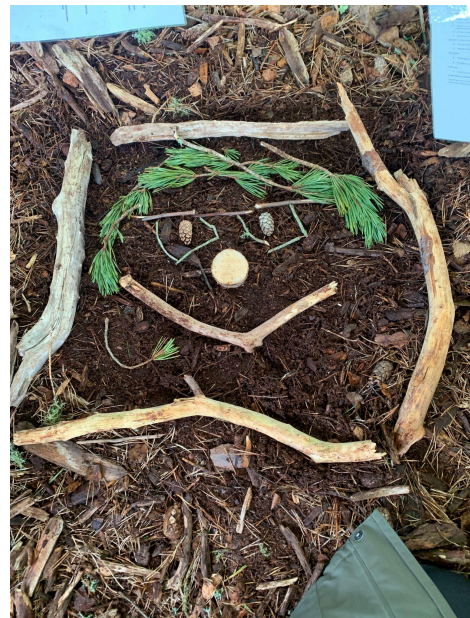
More information about the history of Forest School can be found here ([History of Forest School | Forest School Association](#))





Forest School development in Scotland has also continued to increase. Numerous groups locally use this inspirational process to help children learn and develop. One particular group is OWLS—Outdoor and Woodland Learning Scotland (owlscotland.org). OWLS is dedicated to increasing the use of Scotland's outdoor environments for learning.

At Old Rayne Preschool, we aim for every child participating in Forest School to be stimulated by the outdoors and the natural resources. Over time, they will develop and increase their self-belief, confidence, learning capacity, enthusiasm, communication, problem-solving skills, and emotional well-being.





Daily Operating Procedure

Before the session

The Forest School Leader will check that enough adults are present for the session and that the weather conditions allow it to occur.

The Forest School leader will review the Forest School checklist and ensure that all required resources and equipment are available.

The site will be checked for any hazards, and these will be removed.

The equipment required for the session will be assembled.

A session plan form will be completed, considering observations, interest areas and learning points from the previous sessions.

All adults will read the session plan form before the session.

Activity risk assessment forms will be completed/updated for each planned activity.

All adults will read the forms relevant to a particular session before it starts.

All staff will have read the latest Site Risk Assessment, which will be relevant to the current season.

A daily risk assessment will be completed.

All children will be registered when they arrive and checked to ensure they are prepared.

All children and adults will gather for a welcome meeting.

During the session

On arrival at Forest School, a headcount will be undertaken whenever the group is brought back together.

Adults will use walkie-talkies to headcount at least every half hour.

Risks will be continually assessed, and appropriate action will be taken to reduce or remove risks found.

After the session

A headcount will be undertaken at the end of the session.



If the toolbox has been taken to the site, the Forest School leader will check its contents to ensure no missing items.

After the children have left Forest School, the Forest School leader will clean, check and maintain tools and any other resources as required.

All equipment will be returned to the hall, checked, and replenished, ready for the following Forest School session.

The Forest School Leader and preschool staff will complete a session evaluation and any observations.



Forest School Policy: Promoting Positive Behaviour

Policy Statement

Our setting believes that children can flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour. Our Promoting Positive Behaviour policy can be found here: [Promoting Positive Behaviour.docx](#)

Quality play is paramount to our setting and helping meet the children's needs. Play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital for the enjoyment of childhood and social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Aberdeenshire's play policy can be found here. [ecs-033-cs---play-policy.pdf \(aberdeenshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights of others and their behaviour's impact on people, places and objects. This developmental task requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting the correct example. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

Procedures

Our leader, **Sophie Startin**, is responsible for our programme, which supports personal, social, and emotional development, including behavioural issues.

- We require the named person to:
 - Keep herself up-to-date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support;
 - Access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within our programme to support personal, social, and emotional development;
 - Check that all staff have relevant in-service training on promoting positive behaviour. We keep a record of staff attendance at this training.



- We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of – and respect – those used by members of the setting.
- We require all staff, volunteers, and students to model positive behaviour by treating children, parents, and one another with friendliness, care, and courtesy.
- We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the Promoting Positive Policy and its guidelines for behaviour.
- We expect all members of our setting—children, parents, staff, volunteers, and students—to follow the guidelines and require them to be applied consistently.
- We work in partnership with children's parents. Their key person regularly informs parents about their children's behaviour. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us understand the cause and decide how to respond appropriately.

Strategies with children who engage in inconsiderate behaviour

- We require all staff, volunteers, and students to use positive strategies for handling inconsiderate behaviour by helping children find appropriate solutions for their ages and stages of development. Such solutions include acknowledging and regulating their feelings so they can learn a more appropriate response.
- We ensure enough resources and activities are available so children are meaningfully occupied without unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns.
- We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
- When children behave inconsiderately, we help them understand the consequences of their actions and support them in learning to cope more appropriately.
- We never use a 'time out' strategy that excludes children from the group.
- We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.



- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property.
- Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of our setting leader and are recorded in the child's file. The child's parent is informed on the same day.
- In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we immediately make clear the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes by explaining rather than personal blame.
- We do not shout or raise our voices threateningly to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.

Children under three years

- When children under three behave inconsiderately, we recognise that strategies for supporting them must be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for older children.
- We recognise that very young children cannot regulate their emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them do this.
- Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviours of young children include tantrums, biting, and fighting. Staff are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.
- If tantrums, biting, or fighting are frequent, we try to discover the underlying cause, such as a change, upheaval at home, or frequent change of carers. Sometimes a child has not settled in well, and the behaviour may be the result of 'separation anxiety'.
- We focus on ensuring that a child's key person, their attachment figure in the setting, builds a strong relationship to provide security to the child.

Rough and tumble play, hurtful behaviour and bullying

Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes, such as superhero and weapon play; some children appear preoccupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour or bullying, although it may be inconsiderate at times and may need addressing using strategies as above.



- We recognise that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social, not problematic or aggressive.
- We will develop strategies to contain play that the children agree upon and understand, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
- We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies, such as blowing up, shooting, etc., and that themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies'. As such, fantasy plays offer opportunities to explore right and wrong concepts.
- We can tune in to the content of the play, perhaps suggesting alternative strategies for heroes and heroines. We make the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking and explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

Hurtful behaviour

We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying'. For children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognisance of the feelings of the person they have hurt. Our anti-bullying policy can be found here [Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.docx](#)

- We recognise that young children behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them.
- We will help them manage these feelings, as they lack the biological or cognitive capacity to do this for themselves.
- We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the physiological processes when triggers activate responses of anger or fear.
- Therefore, we help this process by offering support and calming the angry child as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. By helping the child return to a normal



state, we are helping the brain develop the physiological response system to help the child manage his or her feelings.

- We do not respond punitively to a young child's rage, as that would have the opposite effect.
- Our response to preverbal children is to calm them down through holding and cuddling. Verbal children will also respond to cuddling to calm them down, but we offer them an explanation and discuss the incident with them at their level of understanding.
- We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children identify their feelings by naming them and assisting the children to express them, making a verbal connection between the event and the feeling. "Adam took your car, didn't he, and you were enjoying playing with it. You didn't like it when he took it, did you? Did it make you feel angry? Is that why you hit him?" Older children will be able to verbalise their feelings better, talking through themselves the feelings that motivated the behaviour.
- We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact others' feelings. "When you hit Adam, it hurt him, and he didn't like that, and it made him cry."
- We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflicts over who has the toy. "I can see you are feeling better now, and Adam isn't crying anymore. Let's see if we can be friends and find another car so that you can play with one."
- We know that the same problem may occur repeatedly before skills such as sharing and turn-taking develop. For both biological maturation and cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem-solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries.
- We support social skills by modelling behaviour through activities, drama, and stories. We also build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- We help children understand the effect their hurtful behaviour has had on another child. We do not force children to say sorry, but we encourage this when it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and wish to show this to the person they have hurt.
- When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution. The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behaviour are that:



- They do not feel securely attached to someone who can interpret and meet their needs, whether in the home or in a setting.
- Their parent, or carer in the setting, does not have skills in responding appropriately, and consequently negative patterns develop where hurtful behaviour is the only response the child has to express feelings of anger;
- The child may have insufficient language or mastery of English to express him or herself and may feel frustrated;
- The child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse.
- Children have developmental conditions that affect how they behave.

Where our strategies are not working, we will contact the family's health visitor for further support.

Bullying

We take bullying very seriously. Bullying involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. It is characterised by intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying behaviour.

A child who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she can plan to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress in another.

If a child bullies another child or children:

- We show the children who have been bullied that we can listen to their concerns and act upon them;
- We intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children.
- We explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable;
- We give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied;
- We help the child who has done the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions;
- We ensure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on this behaviour.
- We do not label children who bully as 'bullies';



- We recognise that children who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves, or be subject to abuse or other circumstances causing them to express their anger in negative ways towards others.
- We recognise that children who bully are often unable to empathise with others for this reason, we do not insist that they say sorry unless it is clear that they feel genuine remorse for what they have done. Empty apologies are just as hurtful to the bullied child as the original behaviour.
- We discuss what has happened with the parents of the child who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling the child's behaviour; and
- We share what has happened with the parents of the child who has been bullied, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable behaviour methods.

Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People. This builds on the positive work which has already taken place in Scotland to address bullying, which can be found here. [Respect for All: national approach to anti-bullying - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Equality Policy

Old Rayne Preschool welcomes and respects all children, parents, staff, professionals and other members of the local community and will not discriminate against them on the grounds of their race or ethnicity, their disability, their gender or sexual orientation, their age or religion. We aim to be inclusive and positively celebrate society's rich diversity. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all. The Equality Act 2010 makes it illegal to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their race or ethnicity, their disability, gender or sexual orientation, their age or religion. We will exercise due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations.

Old Rayne Preschool's full policy can be found here. Equal Opportunities [Equal Opportunities.docx](#)





Child Protection Code of Conduct and Safe Practice
A guide for staff, visitors and volunteers whilst on Forest School

The designated Child Protection Leader is Sophie Startin.

Code of Conduct and Safe Practice

- The child's welfare is paramount (Children Act 1989)
- Adults working in pre-school are responsible for their actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions.
- Adults working in the pre-school must work and be seen to work to question their motivation or intentions.
- Adults should promptly discuss and /or seek advice from their line manager or another senior staff member about any incident that could raise concerns.
- A record of any such incident and decisions made/further actions agreed upon, should be kept.
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality.
- Staff should be aware that breaches of law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

All staff, volunteers and visitors to the preschool must:

- Be familiar with and work by the preschool's policies, including in particular our [Child Protection Policy Statement.docx](#) and [Child-Protection Policy.docx](#)
- Provide a good example and a positive role model to pupils.
- Behave in a mature, respectful, safe, fair and considered manner.
- Do not discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards any child.
- Ensure that your relationship with pupils remains on a professional footing.
- Do not develop 'personal' or sexual relationships with pupils. In particular, your attention is drawn to the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003



Clothing Policy at Forest School

Policy Statement

Old Rayne Preschool aims to provide a holistic learning opportunity for children, helping them to foster resilience, confidence, independence, and creativity. For children to feel comfortable, they need to have the appropriate clothing; this information will be relayed to parents/ carers.

‘There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing.’

Procedure

- **The Forest School Leader will send out information to parents about the best clothes to wear.**

In cold weather:

- Layered clothing on body (4-5 layers) consisting of the following:
 - ❖ Base layer (e.g. long sleeves thermals or t-shirt or vest)
 - ❖ 2nd base layer (e.g. short sleeves t-shirt)
 - ❖ Thermal layer (e.g. fleece)
 - ❖ 2nd thermal layer (e.g. fleece)
 - ❖ Outer layer (e.g. thin waterproof coat)
- Layered clothing on legs (2-3 layers) consisting of the following:
 - ❖ Base layer (e.g. thermals, thick tights)
 - ❖ Long trousers (e.g. flexible lightweight cotton)
 - ❖ Outer layer (e.g. waterproof trousers)
- Layered clothing on feet (2 layers) consisting of the following:
 - ❖ Thin socks
 - ❖ Thermal socks
- Sturdy footwear consisting of the following:
 - ❖ Hiking boots, sturdy trainers, or thermal / neoprene-lined Wellington boots
- Headwear consisting of the following:
 - ❖ Thermal hat



- Handwear consisting of the following:
 - ❖ Thermal gloves

In warm weather, It is cold under the trees, so it is still essential to wear warm clothing.

- Layered clothing on body (2-3 layers) consisting of the following:
 - ❖ Base layer (e.g. long sleeved t-shirt and fleece)
 - ❖ Outer Layer (e.g. waterproof coat)
- Layered clothing on legs (2 layers) consisting of the following:
 - ❖ Base Layer (e.g. leggings or jeans)
 - ❖ Outer Layer (e.g. waterproof trousers)
- Clothing on feet consisting of 1 pair of socks and / or Wellington socks
- Sturdy footwear consisting of the following:
 - ❖ Hiking boots, sturdy trainers, or thermal / neoprene-lined Wellington boots
- Headwear consisting of the following:
 - ❖ Rimmed waterproof / leather hat (e.g. cowboy / Australian style) or Sunhat
- Handwear consisting of the following:
 - ❖ Gloves

The Forest School Leader will ensure all children wear suitable clothing before the session starts. If they don't, the Preschool will lend them some if possible. Where this is not possible, preschool will be unable to accept the child for that session until appropriate clothing has been provided

Parents are asked to bring in spare clothes that are named and put them in a named bag so the children can change if needed.



Forest School Emergency Procedures Policy

All participants will be briefed on what to do in case of an emergency. Children and adults will be briefed during the introductory talk at the start of the session.

A whistle (or other agreed-sounding device or command) will be blown as a signal to stop what you are doing, gather with a member of staff, be silent, and wait for instructions.

The Old Rayne Preschool Forest School Leader will assess the situation and the nature and extent of the incident/injury/accident. They will ensure that the rest of the group, including themselves, is safe from danger and adequately supervised. They will attend to the casualty (or casualties), giving first aid if necessary. An incident report will be completed later.

In case of injury

If anyone sustains an injury or illness which cannot be treated by first aid on site (or at the activity location) and requires medical assistance:

- In serious cases, 112 or 999 should be dialled using a mobile phone carried by Old Rayne Preschool Forest School Leader, and then the parent / carer will be notified.
- Emergency services should be directed to the location providing the quickest and closest access to the incident:

Address: Back o' Bennachie

<https://forestryandland.gov.scot/images/corporate/design-plans/moray-aberdeenshire/bennachie-text-200217.pdf>

Tel: 07449958784

OS Grid Reference

NJ	661	245
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What Three Words

///scouting.teach.threading



- The rest of the group will be supervised away from the incident and, if in danger, moved to safety.
- One staff member or parent volunteer will meet the ambulance at the site entrance or the closest road location already identified to the emergency services and then direct the crew on arrival to the incident site.
- If the injured child is taken to the hospital, one member of staff will go with them, and the remaining staff will update the child's parent about the situation.
- In minor cases, Old Rayne Preschool Forest School Leader will arrange to contact the injured child's parent so that they can be collected and taken to the hospital, doctor or home.
- Steps taken are always considered to be in the injured child's best interests regarding quality and speed of care.

Emergency Contact Numbers

Ambulance / Police: 999 or 112

Sophie Startin - 07470094250

Requesting attendance by Emergency Services

Dial 999 or 112 and ask for the emergency service. Be ready with the following information:

1. Mobile telephone number
2. Details of your location



Forest School Fire Safety Policy

Campfires and storm kettles are important parts of Forest School activities, and they are used in many sessions.

Old Rayne Preschool Forest School aims to ensure that all children and adults participating in Forest School sessions with fires and/or storm kettles will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible, while also experiencing the positive benefits related to this.

Location

- Only previously agreed-upon areas will be used for campfires; the Forest School Leader will determine these.
- Campfire areas are enclosed by logs, large stones, or bricks to prevent the spread of fire. Fires are placed in a raised bowl.
- Storm kettles are only used on flat ground, and any woodchip or leaf litter must be brushed away before use.

Positioning of Children and Adults

- Seating benches surround fire areas

The Fire bowl will have a barrier of logs around it (green wood or damp).

- When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area between the benches and the fire without permission.
- Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.
- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire or stoke the fire without direct permission from the Forest School Leader.
- Advice on the appropriate way to deal with smoke will be given where necessary, and this will normally require repositioning the child due to wind direction. If children need to reposition, they will move outside of the seating area away from the fire and walk to the new position unless directed by the Forest School Leader.
- Weather conditions, such as long dry spells and windy conditions, will be continually monitored to help decide if a fire will occur and if it is safe.



- If there is a clear wind direction, sitting in the line of smoke is to be avoided.
- If wind direction is variable, the leader should rearrange the seating if at all possible

Fires will be laid, lit and managed by the Forest School Leader. We will leave no trace!

- Criss-cross fires are used to provide a large amount of heat and light
Plus, they are fast-burning.
- Long Log fires are suitable for cooking as they are slow-burning and require little fuel.

Safety and Responsibility

- Only adults are permitted to light fires, unless children are under the direct supervision of the Forest School Leader.
- Fires are lit using tinder/cotton wool and a fire steel (magnesium alloy) stick.
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- No plastics are to be burnt.
- If sessions involve children adding kindling or logs to the fire, this must be done with one-to-one adult supervision.
- Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire.
- Care must be taken when pouring hot water (e.g. from a storm kettle) into a mug. This must only be done with the mug on the ground with no hands nearby.
- Safety equipment, such as fire gloves, a fire blanket, first aid supplies, and a burns kit, will be available.

Extinguishing

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.



- Whenever possible, all fuels (wood) should be burnt off to ash.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased, and we will leave no trace.
- Large buildups of potash from several fires need to be dispersed. This must only be done when the soil has totally cooled, preferably the following day. It should be finely scattered throughout the woodland to enable natural decomposition.

Storm (Kelly) Kettles

- Only adults are to light the fire in the fire pan unless the Forest School Leader directly supervises children.
- The storm kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground.
- Children must be seated at least 1.5 metres from the storm kettle.
- Children can feed the fire with one-to-one supervision, but they must have been shown how to do so safely (i.e. stick held at the end and dropped in from the side; hand should never be placed over the top of the kettle)
- Fuel (wood) should burn itself out, but if it doesn't it must be extinguished with water
- Storm kettles should never be boiled with the cork in.
- With children present, care should be taken only to warm the water (i.e. not to boiling) to ensure the temperature of their drink (e.g. hot chocolate) is drinkable without scalding mouths
- Hot water from the storm kettle can be poured into mugs positioned on the ground or other solid, stable locations, only provided that hands are nowhere near the mugs during pouring

Fire guidance can be found here [Fire Guidance – OWLS \(owlsScotland.org\)](https://www.owlsScotland.org)



Forest School Health and Safety Policy

The health and safety of the children and adults is of the highest importance. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 can be found here [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/75/section-1)

In order that Old Rayne Preschool Forest School sessions may be run safely, the Forest School Leader will:

- Ensure that at least one appropriately qualified first aider is on-site.
- Establish and maintain a safe and healthy environment by:
 - Establishing, maintaining and evaluating appropriate procedures, policies and risk assessments
 - Ensure the provision of sufficient information and instruction for all adults so that they can contribute to their health and safety and that of the children they are working with
 - Establish and be utterly familiar with all emergency procedures, including the reporting and recording procedures.
 - Ensure that risk assessments and pre-site visits occur before children are permitted onto the site.
 - Ensure alternative plans are in place should a planned activity be compromised by health and safety concerns.
 - Ensure that Forest School staff and volunteers know their responsibilities towards the children.
 - Investigate accidents and use information gathered to inform future risk assessment and policy making.
 - Teach all members of the party to maintain their own and others' health and safety by involving them in the risk assessment process at appropriate opportunities.
 - Maintain the legal adult child ratio of 1:6.
 - Ensure that safety equipment is in good working order and is used appropriately.
- The Forest School Leader assumes responsibility for maintaining the First Aid Kit, Kit Bag(s) and any tools used for lessons/sessions..



Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Old Rayne Preschool Pre-school Forest School Leader

- To plan and lead all Forest School activities
- To ensure that planned activities are within the capabilities of the children taking part, plans should be amended to provide inclusive lessons/sessions and an inclusive curriculum in its broadest sense.
- To take responsibility for discipline during Forest School sessions (re Behaviour Policy)
- To have an up-to-date Outdoor Paediatric First Aid qualification
- To ensure that all participants follow the Clothing Policy
- To carry out risk assessments as described in the Risk Assessment Policy
- To assist with the use of toilet facilities for children if they request help
- To ensure all Forest School policies are regularly reviewed and that review is informed by observations and developing knowledge of the Forest School setting

Responsibilities of Accompanying Staff and Volunteers

- To take an active role in Forest School activities and assist with any discipline issues within the group (in line with [Promoting Positive Behaviour.docx](#))
- To assist with the walking of children by the roadside
- To assist the Forest School Leader in ensuring that equipment meets safety standards and to report any concerns about the state of equipment immediately
- To assist the Forest School Leader in teaching children to maintain their own and others' health and safety
- To report accidents or hazards to the Forest School Leader immediately
- To take responsibility for making themselves aware of safety issues, such as the whereabouts of the first aid kit
- To ensure that inhalers and EPI-PENS are carried with them during the Forest School sessions and that the staff are aware of their location
- To provide their own suitable outdoor clothing and footwear

Responsibilities of the Children

- To begin to learn to take personal responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety of others
- To listen to and follow the safety information given to them
- To bring appropriate clothing and footwear to the Forest School sessions.



Legislation

- RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) is a legal requirement set by the HSE to guide action in the case of a workplace or school accident. It applies to every workplace across the UK. Under RIDDOR, employers are legally responsible for reporting certain workplace incidents, occupational diseases, and dangerous occurrences or near misses.
- Employers must comply with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002. The guidance explains how to avoid, assess and reduce the risk of injury from manual handling.

The Health and Safety Work Act can be found here [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 – legislation explained \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)



Forest School Healthy Eating Policy

Old Rayne Preschool recognises that raising awareness of the countryside, woodland, and general outdoors environment increases children's exposure to and interest in edible fruits and berries, such as apples and blackberries.

Old Rayne Preschool operates a 'nil-by-mouth' Eating Policy for Forest School activities. This is aimed at NOT encouraging children to attempt to eat wild fruit or berries without further education due to the potential risks associated with them. It is challenging to ensure that children fully grasp the differences between different fruits and berries at a young age. Therefore, we employ a 'nil by mouth' policy during Forest School sessions. Old Rayne Preschool will adhere to the Food Safety 1990 legislation, which can be found here: [Food Safety Act 1990 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/17/section/1).

Other more usual commercially produced food and drink that may be consumed are as follows:

- Hot drinks, e.g., Kelly Kettle, open-fire cooking pots, or other open-fire kettles, using commercially available products such as hot chocolate, tea, coffee, or soup, are only under the control of the Forest School Leader.
- Drinks and foods that link directly to the topic, such as elder cordial, will only be sourced from commercially available products.
- Squash drinks (commercially available) and water

Notes:

The Forest School Leader will be responsible for checking that no member of the group has a listed allergy to any of the products. If they do, the Forest School Leader will use her discretion to determine whether a substitute product or different activity will be most appropriate.

Our packed lunch policy fits within a wider context of promoting a whole setting approach to food and healthy eating and is again based on the guidance in 'Setting the Table' for early years settings and the Eatwell Guide <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/>

To ensure consistency and to keep packed lunches in line with this guidance, packed lunches brought into our setting should not contain the following:

- Fizzy / sugary drinks in cartons, bottles, or cans



- Confectionery such as chocolate bars and especially sweets
- Cakes and biscuits
- Sugared / toffee and salted popcorn.
- Crisps or any packet savoury snacks, high in salt and fat
- Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat sausages/chipolatas

Please be aware that we may have children and team members with severe allergies to nuts, so ask that these are not included in your child's packed lunches.

- Nuts

For more guidance and advice on what to include in a healthy packed lunch for your child, please see "Setting the table". If you have concerns about what your child will eat, please speak to Sophie Startin.

We ask parents to bring packed lunches in insulated bags with freezer blocks where possible to stop the food from spoiling. Consideration should be given to the independence of the children while eating, i.e., providing ready-to-eat fruits such as bananas, apples, and pears or prepared fruits and vegetables in snack pots, such as pineapple, cucumber, peppers, etc.

Food may only be consumed after hand washing.

Handwashing Procedure

Handwashing equipment, including hand towels and environmentally friendly soap, will be available. There will be a separate toilet hand washing station. All hand towels will be in a plastic bag and taken back to the setting to be disposed of. When food items are to be consumed during a session, warm water with soap will be provided for hand washing. Children and adults will be required to wash their hands immediately before preparing and/or eating food, as well as after using the toilet.



Forest School Kit Lists and First Aid Kit List Policy

Day-to-day requirements for children to bring to Old Rayne Forest School:

- Layered clothing
- Extra thick socks, hats and gloves
- Sturdy trainers or hiking boots (all seasons and all weathers)
- Wellington boots for wet weather (in addition to sturdy trainers or hiking boots)
- Always long trousers and long sleeves
- Coat and waterproofs
- Sunhat and sun cream in summer months / on sunny days and hot weather, sunglasses (optional)
- Spare clothing
- Small rucksack with packed lunch (depending on activities/session)

Kit bag(s) to contain the following:

- Risk Assessments
- Medical Forms
- Consent Forms
- Contact Forms
- Drinking water
- First aid kit
- Pen knife or equivalent
- Whistle
- Cups



- Tissues
- Wet wipes
- Fire steel
- Cotton wool
- Snacks
- Rope
- Carrier bag / bin liner
- Spare clothes (children's)
- Foil
- Children's inhalers / medication
- Mobile phone
- Medical and consent forms with contact telephone numbers

Fire Safety kit list (at Old Rayne Preschool Forest school):

- Buckets (to be filled with stream water)
- Fire blanket

First Aid kit list:

- Antiseptic wipes
- Eye irrigation solution
- Large plasters
- Medium plasters
- Small plasters
- Triangular bandages
- Large self-adhesive wound dressing



- Small self-adhesive wound dressing
- Crepe bandages (X2)
- Pair of protective gloves
- Roll of micro-pore tape
- Tic remover tool
- Burn gel dressing
- Steri strips



Forest School Missing Child Policy

Old Rayne Preschool Forest School's highest priority is the safety of the children.

This Policy shall apply whether the group is at the School site at "Back o' Bennachie" or another site (e.g., hiking).

If it is discovered that a child is missing from the group, the situation will be taken very seriously from the outset, and the following emergency procedure will be implemented: [Missing Child Procedure.docx](#)

1. The Forest School Leader shall be informed immediately.
2. Activity for the rest of the group shall be suspended so that up to two staff members, including the Forest School Leader, may be released to conduct a search that will last no more than five minutes.
3. The remaining children will be given a low-risk activity to complete, within a close, nearby area, by the remaining adults, being mindful not to increase the anxiety of the group.
4. If the child has not been located after the five-minute search, the Forest School Leader will phone 999 and alert the police.
5. The parents and the chair of the preschool will be contacted to inform them of the situation.
6. Staff should corroborate details of the situation, including the last known position of the missing child and any timing. These will be recorded on the Incident report.
7. The remaining children will be returned to preschool or sent home with their parents. The Forest School Leader will continue to look for the children.
8. The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group/outing, and what was the staff member designated responsible for the missing child?
 - When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
 - What has occurred in the group or outing since the child went missing?
 - The time at which it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.



- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents (policy): Health and safety.
- If disciplinary action is necessary, the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council will be informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

Managing People

- Missing child incidents are immensely worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves, and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger, and they may be afraid. The pre-school leader needs to ensure that the staff under investigation are treated fairly and receive support when they feel vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff and single out one staff member over others; they may direct anger at the preschool leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the leader and the other should be the chairperson of the management or representative. No matter how understandable the parents' anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They, too, may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them must focus on their needs and not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- Depending on the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The chairperson and management committee will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.
- Care Inspectorate must be contacted and informed of incidents by the Preschool leader/chairperson.



Forest School Risk Assessment Policy

Safety and Suitability of Premises, Environment and Equipment

Policy statement

Our setting believes that children's health and safety is paramount. We make our setting a safe and healthy place for children, parents, staff and volunteers by assessing and minimising the hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment.

The basis of this policy is risk assessment. Our risk assessment processes follow seven steps as follows:

- Identification of risk: Where is it and what is it?
- Who is at risk: Childcare staff, children, parents, committee members, volunteers, students, cleaners, etc?
- What are the benefits of the activity/experience?
- Do the benefits outweigh the risks?
- Assessment of whether the level of risk is high, medium, or low. This takes into account both the likelihood of it happening and the possible impact if it did.
- Control measures to reduce/eliminate risk: What will you need to do, or ensure others will do, to reduce that risk?
- Monitoring and review: How do you know if what you have said is working, or is thorough enough? If it is not working, it will need to be amended, or maybe a better solution exists.

Procedures

- Our risk assessment process covers adults and children and includes:
 - Determining where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments about specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how we are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers and inspectors;
 - checking for and noting hazards and risks outside, about our Forest School;
 - Assessing the level of risk and who might be affected;
 - Deciding which areas need attention; and



- Developing an action plan that specifies the action required, the time-scales for action, the person responsible for the action and any funding required.
- Risk assessment is written and reviewed regularly.



Location: Back o' Bennachie			
Grid Ref: Emergency Access Point: What 3 Words	Forecast:	Date: 11th March 2023	Manager Contact Sophie Startin/Lisa Henderson (chairperson)
Postcode: AB54 4SJ	Assessment Carried Out by: Sophie Startin	Signature:	

Areas to check	Hazard	Risks	Level	Control Measures	Level
Access to the site: Public access Roads Parking etc	vehicles public use	Children being struck by a vehicle abduction	H	adults to stay vigilant Children to be made aware of boundaries communication between staff and helpers talk about safety measures with staff and children	M
Canopy Layer: Deadwood Leaning, dead trees	falling branches	head injuries	M	leader to access the site prior to session and check any possible risks. Children and adults to stay vigilant . Children climbing trees will be supervised by an adult. Leader to be aware of the weather forecast as well as previous weather, particularly windy weather.	L



Shrub Layer: Deadwood Branches sticking out	falling branches branches at eye level	Injury to the eyes and face	M	The leader needs to access the site before the session, which will include a demonstration and discussion with the children about moving through low branches by pushing branches away from the face.	L
Areas to check	Hazards	Risks	Level	Control Measures	New Level
Field layer: Prickly plants Poisonous plants	poisonous plants prickly plants allergies	blindness sickness cuts, grazes and stings irritation to skin, eyes, mouth, nose, sickness, diarrhoea, anaphylactic shock, death	M	Discussion with children. Zero hand-to-mouth policy. Staff and helpers are bivalent. Washing hands, amenities, and measures are in place. Washing hands before eating. First aid and clean water to wash eyes. Children were reminded not to pick plants. Children's medical forms are up to date and completed, informing us of any allergies children may have.	L



Ground Layer: Logs Holes in the ground Water Rubbish/glass Fungi Dog faeces etc	tripping sickness	broken limbs, sprained ankles, cuts, bruises, injury	M	The leader should check the site before the session, pick up any dog faeces, and dispose of them safely. The leader will also check the ground layer for any holes that could cause injury. The leader should discuss with the children how to move around the site cautiously. The children will have a change of clothes and a stream close by to clean their boots if need be.	L
Structures: Shelters benches Fire pit	tripping	cuts and scratches sprains, broken bones bruises head injury	M	The leader should check the site before the session. Walk around with the children and identify risks together. Leader to ensure the site is tidy before the session (fire pit). Dispose of or move anything that could be a potential risk.	L
Other: Hammock	falling hanging	head bump, cuts, bruises, scrapes, sprains, and death	M	Ensure loose rope is tidied, and demonstrate how to get in and out of the hammock. Adult supervision	L
Weather Forecast	hot weather cold weather windy weather rain lightning strike	dehydration, headache, sore and blistered skin chilblains, chapped lips and skin bumps to the head, bruises,	M	The leader should look at the weather forecast before the session starts. If a storm is imminent, then FS will be cancelled. If there is an Amber or red warning, FS will be cancelled. Children are asked to wear waterproof clothing and have a spare set of clothes—the leader is to take spare clothing. Parents are reminded to dress the children in correct clothing for the weather. The leader checks if the children are suitably	L



		cuts, broken limbs, concussion, and death.		dressed before parents leave the setting. Children and adults should wear sun hats, sunscreen, and children should take drinking water. Extra water will be available. A FS messenger group has been set up to communicate with parents about the weather. If the weather changes during the session, parents will be contacted by email and Messenger to pick up the children as quickly as possible.	
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Forest School Safeguarding Children Policy

Policy:- Safeguarding children and child protection [Child-Protection Policy.docx](#)

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

Policy Statement

Our setting will work with children, parents, and the community to ensure their rights and safety and to give them the very best start in life.

Procedures

Old Rayne Preschool is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

Staff and volunteers

- Sophie Startin (manager) is our designated person (s) who coordinates child protection and is the current chairperson.
- We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures, and that parents are made aware of them too.
- All staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Candidates are informed that they must carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with Disclosure Scotland before posts can be confirmed.
- Applicants are informed of the requirement to register with the Scottish Social Services Council.
- Where applicants are rejected because of disclosed information, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by requirements regarding references and Criminal Record checks for staff and volunteers to ensure that no disqualified or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We record information about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed, including;
 - The disclosure reference number;
 - the date the disclosure was obtained; and
 - Details of who obtained it.
- We inform all staff that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children.
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) requirements regarding any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would



otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern. This will be reported to the Scottish Social Services Council and Disclosure Scotland.

- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure that we control who enters the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
- We take steps to ensure children are not photographed or filmed other than for legitimate reasons.

Old Rayne Preschool is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to working with statutory agencies by the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2006)

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated;
 - o significant changes in their behaviour;
 - o deterioration in their general well-being;
 - o their comments, which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure);
 - o changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
 - o unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
 - o Any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting
- We take into account factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parents' drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parents' learning disability.
- We are aware of other factors that affect children's vulnerability such as, abuse of disabled children; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, such as through internet abuse; and Female Genital Mutilation; that make affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision.
- We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour-based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children and young people whom we may come into contact with.
- Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors, we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection concerns.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the staff member who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored in the child's personal file.
- We refer concerns to the local authority's children's social work department and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.
NB in some cases, this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Social Work Department.
- We take care not to influence the outcome by speaking to children or asking them questions.



Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that gives cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect that member of staff:
 - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
 - does not question the child;
 - Makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
 - the date and time of the observation or disclosure
 - the exact words spoken by the child, as far as possible
 - the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
 - the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept securely and confidentially in the child's personal file.
- The member of staff acting as the 'designated person' is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity.

Informing parents

- Parents are usually the first point of contact. We discuss concerns with parents to gain their view of events, unless we feel this may put the child in greater danger.
- We inform parents when we record concerns in their child's file and that we also note any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
- If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the guidance of does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed in greater danger.
- This is usually the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the social workers will inform the parents.

Liaison with other agencies

- The preschool operates by the Care Inspectorate and local authority guidelines. Confidential records, kept on children about whom the group is anxious, will be shared with the Social Work Department if the preschool group feels that adequate explanations for changes in the child's condition have not been provided. If a report on a child is to be made to the authorities, the child's parents will be informed at the same time as the report is made, unless there are suspicions that the parents are implicated. Once reported, the preschool will maintain ongoing contact with the local authority. It will have a record of individual social workers' names, addresses, and telephone numbers to ensure that it is easy for the preschool and the Social Work Department to work well together in an emergency. The preschool will ensure that it is up to date with reporting procedures.

Allegations against staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include allegations of abuse.
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with the children, which includes:



- o Inappropriate sexual comments;
 - o Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images.
- We follow the guidance of the child protection partnership when responding to any complaint made by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting.
- We respond to any disclosures by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting may have taken place, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by social care in conjunction with the police.
- Where management and social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson will suspend the staff member on full pay or the volunteer for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place but is to protect the staff, children, and families throughout the process.

Disciplinary action

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify Care Inspectorate and Disclosure Scotland.

Old Rayne Preschool is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong and resilient, being listened to, and following the Forest School Ethos.

Training

- The organisation will ensure that all staff and volunteers know and have access EARLY YEARS SCOTLAND's Child Protection Guidelines and Policy for Early Years Workers. Staff and parents will be asked to sign a statement confirming they have read and understood the document. The organisation will seek out training opportunities for all early years workers involved in the play group to ensure that they recognise the symptoms of possible physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse and are aware of child protection procedures. The committee/employers will keep documentary evidence of courses attended and their comprehension by staff and volunteers. It will ensure that staff know and understand the group's child protection policy and procedure.s

Planning

- When at Forest School, staff ensure that they work in an open space, and they avoid private or unobserved situations.
- No child is left alone with volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

Curriculum

- At Forest Schools, we introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme. We promote the personal, social, and emotional development of all children so that they may grow to be strong, resilient, and listened to and so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.



- Within the Forest School Setting, we create a culture of value and respect for the individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, and cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a developmentally appropriate way for the children.

Confidentiality

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know.

Support to families

- The preschool will take every step to build trusting and supportive relationships between families, staff and volunteers in the group. Where abuse at home is suspected, the pre-school will continue to welcome the child and family while investigations proceed. With the proviso that the care and safety of the child must always be paramount, the preschool will do all in its power to support and work with the child's family.



Forest School Severe Weather Policy

Policy Statement

Old Rayne Preschool aims to provide children with a holistic learning opportunity, helping them foster resilient, confident independence and become creative learners. This must be done in a safe environment where daily and monthly risk assessments are dynamically conducted. The forest School Leader assesses the site, considers the weather conditions and forecast, and decides whether to run the Forest School session. We believe the children's welfare is paramount (Children's Act 1989).

Procedure

- The Forest School Leader will check the site for damage to trees and paths before the session begins and complete a risk assessment.
- Before every session, the Forest School Leader listens to the weather forecast and checks the Beaufort Wind Force Scale via the MET Office weather app.
- The Forest School session will not continue if the weather is severe enough. The Forest School Leader will make this decision.
- The Beaufort Wind Force Scale will be consulted, and if it is forecast to be 25 miles per hour, the decision will be made not to go out to the woods.
- Parents will be advised via phone as soon as possible and will be given the reason. The children will attend an in-session day at the village hall.
- The children will be able to remain in the preschool for the session.

A Forest School session may also be cancelled if we cannot meet the ratio requirements, for example, because of staff illness. In that event, we would hold a session at the hall.



Forest School Toileting Policy

- Toilet facilities will be explained to the children at the beginning of the session, and if necessary, they will be shown.
- Children will be permitted to use a secluded area for 'toilet' use, e.g. behind a tree.
- If the child asks for help with toileting, they are only allowed to be accompanied by a staff member from Old Rayne Preschool or their parent.
- Children can use the single cubicle public toilets, which are checked by a member of staff before each use.
- When using the public toilets, a staff member will take a toileting go bag with them in case it is needed. The bag will include toileting wipes, antibacterial wipes, gloves, an apron, nappy snacks, and a loo roll.
- When a staff member takes a child to the public toilet, they should stand in the doorway to supervise and be on hand if needed. One foot in the door ensures the child's privacy and allows the staff member to be in sight of others in the group as much as possible.
- When a staff member takes numerous children to the toilet, they will remain outside the cubicles, sending children in individually. If the staff member needs to enter a cubicle to assist, they will indicate to the group that they need the help of another adult to supervise the remaining children.
- Children and staff will wash their hands with soap and water after each use of the toilet using the toilet hand washing station.

Transport to and from the site

The child's parent or carer will be responsible for transporting the child to and from Forest School.

Boundaries

The children will be shown the boundaries of our Forest School, which are around the outside of the large field. If a child wishes to venture outside the boundary, adult supervision is required.





Confidentiality Policy

The confidentiality policy protects children, parents, carers, families, and staff and ensures that everyone using the service is clear about confidentiality issues and the procedures and routines. Underpinning the policy is the service provider's recognition that the safety and well-being of children and families is paramount, as is respect for the privacy of those involved in the service.

Working with Children and Families

The preschool service recognises that its work with children and families sometimes involves staff and committee members dealing with confidential information. All information, verbal or written, provided by parents or carers will be treated confidentially and will not be disclosed to a third party without the consent of the individuals concerned, unless it is a Child Protection issue.

In respect of recorded information:

- Parents or carers will be informed of records being kept on their child.
- Parents or carers will have access to their child's records only.
- Children's records will be kept in individual files and stored securely in a locked cabinet.
- Records will be available at each session but only be accessed by staff.
- Committee members, staff, and adult helpers will not discuss matters relating to the children and their families publicly.
- Staff will not discuss children with any other person, other than for curriculum development and service development purposes, without the parents' or guardians' knowledge and consent, unless it is a Child Protection matter.

Full policy can be found on our website, [Confidentiality Policy \(oldraynepreschool.com\)](http://oldraynepreschool.com)



Use of Tools

Using tools in forest school sessions offers children a unique and engaging learning experience. At Old Rayne Preschool, we incorporate tools like bow saws, knives, and ropes to help children develop essential life skills. There are numerous benefits of using tools in a forest setting, backed by studies and our own experiences at Old Rayne Preschool, which can be seen throughout our floorbook.

Benefits include

- Offers children a unique and engaging learning experience
- Fine motor skills development
- Gross motor skills development
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Safety Awareness
- Sense of Accomplishment
- Respect for the Natural World

OWL tool guidance can be found here

Tool Use Guidance can be found using the link below

<https://owlsotland.org/resources/tool-use-guidance/>



Forest School Volunteer Contract Policy

(VOLUNTEER) I AGREE....

- I must not take any child to the toilet or to change their nappies unless I have PVG clearance and approval from the Forest School Leader
- I must not use my phone unless in cases of emergency
- To dress appropriately (see Clothing Policy)
- Please sign to say you have read and acknowledge the preschool policies and procedures.
- To maintain confidentiality
- To act responsibly and with initiative at all times
- To help maintain a safe and secure environment
- To be aware of the Forest School routines
- To communicate effectively with adults/children
- To be friendly, willing and helpful
- To support the staff in helping with the activities as requested, playing with the children, and role modelling using positive praise.
- Any issues or concerns, I will report to the Forest School Leader

(Forest School Leader) I AGREE.....

- To make the volunteer feel welcome and accepted at Old Rayne Preschool Forest School.
- To inform the volunteer of the Forest School Planning.
- To offer support, guidance, advice and constructive criticism.

SIGNED: Volunteer

.....

Print Name

.....

Forest School Leader

.....

Print Name

.....

Date.....



Ecological Assessment & 3 year management Plan

Name of Woodland Site/Location Bennachie	Location Back o' Bennachie
Owner/Contact Details Forestry and Land Scotland	Other Stakeholders
Grid Ref – What3Words <i>scouting.teach.threading</i>	
Is the site designated? <i>Nature conservation designations at https://sitelink.nature.scot/map</i> If so, are there any implications of the designation for Forest School?	
Are there protected species on site? red squirrel	
Brief history of the site and its management – <i>Looking down the northern slopes of the hill, the forest at Back O'Bennachie is a delight. There's a large, open picnic area where you can have a barbecue or play a game of forest football, and trails through atmospheric forest. On the hillside above the forest, you can find the remains of the quarry that supplied stone to build local villages, and a superb circuit that takes in three of Bennachie's summits.</i> <u>Ancient history of the area</u> Some believe the peak had religious significance to the Bronze Age people who inhabited this area. The large number of standing stones in the surrounding area supports this theory. The importance is believed to be connected to the profile of the hill, which is	



shaped like a female breast, which is reflected in the name "Mither Tap" (Mother Top) and "Bennachie" (*Beinn na Ciche*: 'hill of the breast'). It has been suggested as a possible site of the battle of Mons Graupius. An alternative Gaelic etymology from **Beinn a 'a'Chath*, i.e. 'hill of the battle', is a possibility.

Recent Management

The range of hills is a popular destination for walkers since it is relatively close to Aberdeen. The Gordon Way is a waymarked trail traverses the Southern flank of Bennachie between the Visitors Centre in the East and Suie Car Park to the West. Most of the Bennachie range is owned by Forestry and Land Scotland, which maintains a network of paths on and around the hills, several car parks and a visitor centre located at the eastern foot of the range.

Who else uses the woodland?

The public

Description of landscape/topography / features of the site

Though not particularly high, compared to other peaks within Scotland, the mountain is very prominent, owing to its isolation and the relative flatness of the surrounding terrain, and dominates the skyline from several viewpoints.

Description of habitats/wildlife corridors/dead wood resources

Bennachie is home to a great diversity of wildlife, including the charismatic red squirrel, and many different species of birds.

Description of natural processes occurring, e.g. natural succession, seasonal changes, natural regeneration of woodland, life cycles

The woodland is diverse, mainly composed of conifers with some areas of broadleaves. The vast open land is primarily composed of upland heathland at the top of the hills.

Landowner's Agreement

The Forestry Commission acquired land on Bennachie in 1938 and still manages the hill today.

The chosen site is already part of an existing management plan:

This plan complements existing plans:



How factors identified in environmental impact assessment are managed:

Review and monitoring of the plan to demonstrate its effectiveness:

Name of Woodland/Site Back o' Bennachie Location: Nearest postcode: AB52 6RH Grid Ref: Grid Ref. NJ661245 What3Words: <i>scouting.teach.threading</i>		Name of Owner & Contact Details Forestry and Land Scotland Email: enquiries.east@forestryandland.gov.scot Phone: 0300 067 6380 (option 2)	
Frequency of use (who, how often, what for): Public use, frequent, leisure			
Consider the impact of factors such as activities, access, resources etc in Year 1			
Factors having an impact (activities, access, resources etc)	Level of impact (high, medium, low)	How will this affect the woodland?	How will you manage this?
Fire	low	We do not plan to have a fire this year.	If we do have a fire, we will ensure we leave 'no trace'. Ground cover, taking their firewood and removing all ash, etc
Access to site and designated seating area	low	The ground where we enter could be affected.	Continue to use the bridge and the pathways to access the site. We will only access the site once a week.
Den Making	low	potential to disrupt the ground layer	We will remove dens after each session



			and rotate where we build them.
Ground Cover	low	potential to disrupt the ground layers and species living underneath.	We will remove covers after each session and rotate where we lay them.
Wildlife	low	disrupting habitats	Educate the children and adults about looking after wildlife. Including insects.
Climbing trees	medium	breaking branches	Assess the trees being climbed

Methods and frequency of monitoring used & how the group is involved in this:

The Forest School Leader will monitor and review the impact Forest School is having on the Forest environment. The forest school leader will update the Ecological Impact Form if a new activity is added as and when it starts. It will be reviewed at the end of terms 1 and 4.

How does this feedback relate to the stewardship plan?

The Forest School leader will review and track each factor and make adjustments and changes when necessary.

Opportunities with wider woodland/site management include

Aims for year 2

With the support and advice of the local ranger, we aim to plant native flowers to improve biodiversity and monitor habitats.



Aims for Year 3

Continue to monitor habitats and help remove invasive plants, with the support and advice from our local ranger.



Google Maps 57°18'37.4"N 2°33'50.5"W

