



## **Forest School Handbook**

**Outlined in this document are 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 supported 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 6 principles agreed by the UK Forest School community in 2011. The 6 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 to 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

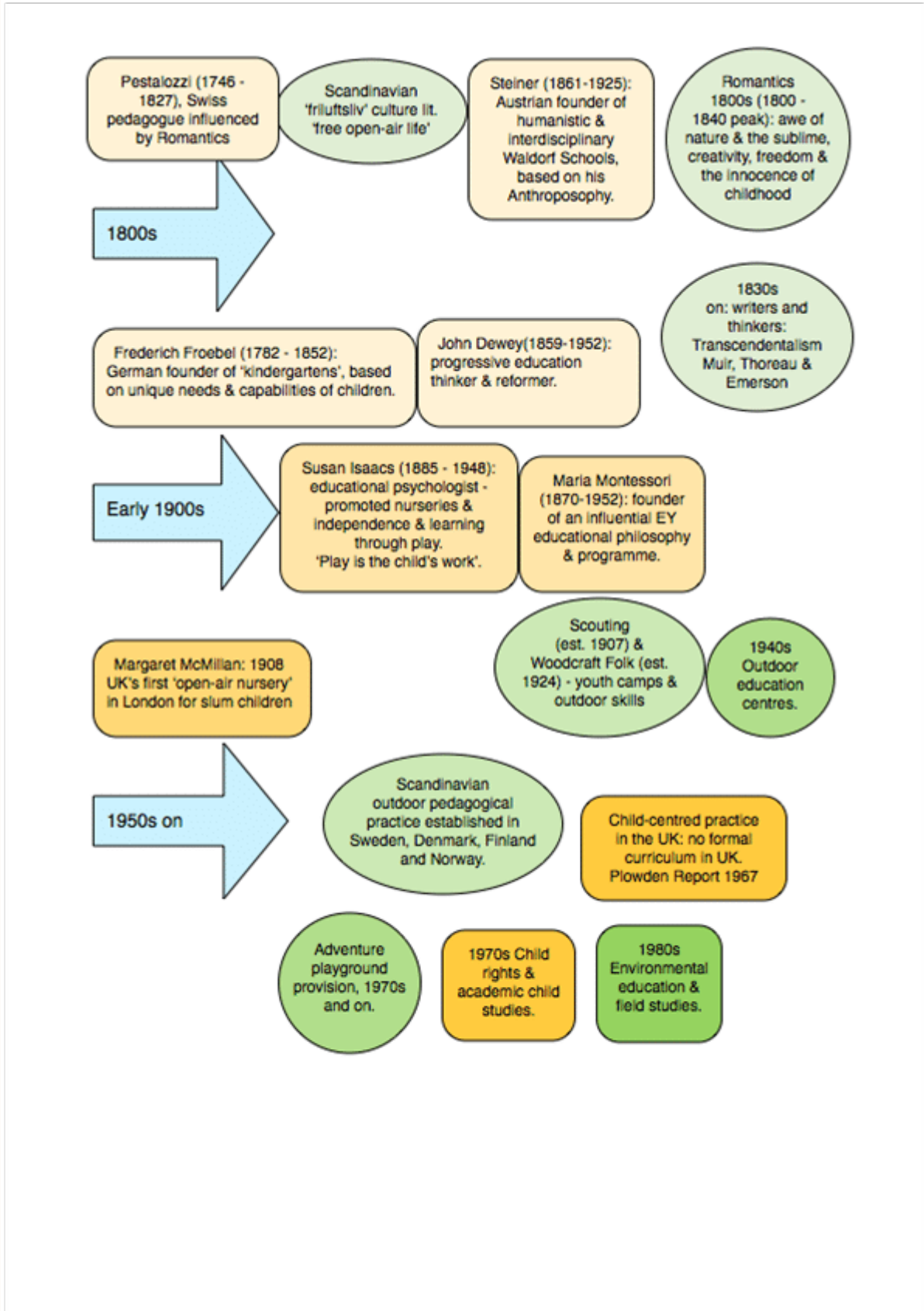
Forest School is important for our children to connect with nature and fundamental for their health and wellbeing. Every child needs nature and nature is full of learning possibilities. Nature is filled with loose parts, plentiful opportunities for hands-on learning.

*'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 outcomes of the curriculum, especially literacy, maths, science and health and wellbeing, but it is also about the whole child, their approach to learning and especially about their self-esteem. The forest school experience and ethos is 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 early philosophers, naturalists and educators influences. The programme found its roots in the 1990s where research into 'alternative' educational models was popular.

Forest School History at a glance ([History of Forest School | Forest School Association](#))



Forest School development in Scotland has continued to increase also. Locally, there are numerous groups using this inspirational process to help children learn and develop. One

particular group, **Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland (OWL)** is dedicated to increasing the use of Scotland's outdoor environments for learning.

Their link can be found here, [OWLS – Outdoor and Woodland Learning Scotland \(owlsotland.org\)](http://owlsotland.org).

At Old Rayne Preschool, our aim is for every child who takes part in Forest School to be stimulated by the outdoors and the resources that are naturally found. 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 to go ahead and that the weather conditions allow it to take place.

The Forest School leader will go through the Forest School checklist and ensure 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, taking into account observations, interest areas and learning points from the previous sessions.

All adults will read the session plan form prior to 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 check that they are prepared.

All children and adults will gather for a welcome meeting.

### **During the session**

A headcount will be undertaken on arrival at Forest School and whenever the group is brought back together.

Adults will use walkie talkies to headcount every half hour.

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

### **After the session**

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

If the tool box has been taken to the site, the contents will be checked by the Forest School leader to ensure that no items are missing.

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 and checked and replenished, ready for the following Forest School session.

A session evaluation will be completed by the Forest School Leader and preschool staff, along with any observations.

# Forest School Policy Achieving 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.

Quality play is paramount to our setting and for helping meet the children's needs. Play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital for the enjoyment of childhood as well as 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 the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. This is a developmental task that 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

The leader, Sophie Startin, is the named person who has overall responsibility for our programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development, including issues concerning behaviour.

- 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 for supporting personal, social and emotional development; and
  - 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 provide a positive model behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
- We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the setting's Behaviour management Policy and its guidelines for behaviour.
- We expect all members of our setting – children, parents, staff, volunteers and students – to keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently.
- We work in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by their key person. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly 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 any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Such solutions might include, for example, acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what was not acceptable, and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
- We ensure that there are enough resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for 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 in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how 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 personal file. The child's parent is informed on the same day.
- In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
- We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.

#### *Children under three years*

- When children under three behave in inconsiderate ways we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate and differ from those for older children.
- We recognise that very young children are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them do this.
- Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviour of young children include tantrums, biting or fighting. Staff are calm and patient, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.
- If tantrums, biting or fighting are frequent, we try to find out the underlying cause – such as a change or 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 a child's attachment figure in the setting, their key person, is building 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 pre-occupied 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 and not as problematic or aggressive.
- We will develop strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.

- We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies, blowing up, shooting etc., and that themes often refer to ‘goodies and baddies’ and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
- We are able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of ‘teachable moments’ to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to 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 whom they have hurt.

- 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 have neither the biological means nor the cognitive means 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 that take place when triggers activate responses of anger or fear.
- Therefore, we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. By helping the child to return to a normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child be able to manage his or her own feelings.
- We do not engage in punitive responses to a young child’s rage as that will have the opposite effect.
- Our way of responding to pre-verbal children is to calm them 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 to their level of understanding.
- We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally 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 on 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 conflict 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 you can both play with one."
- We are aware that the same problem may happen over and over before skills such as sharing and turn-taking develop. In order for both the 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 through modelling behaviour, through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- We help a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child; we do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this where 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 together. 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 – this may be in the home and it may also be in the setting;
  - their parent, or carer in the setting, does not have skills in responding appropriately, and consequently negative patterns and developing 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;
  - the child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave.

Where our strategies are not working we will contact the family's health visitor to access 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 is able to 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 are able to 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 make sure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate 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 circumstance 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 ways of behaving.

*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 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. Our aim is to be inclusive and to positively celebrate the rich diversity in society. 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 the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Old Rayne Preschool's full policy can be found here. [Equal Opportunitites \(oldraynepreschool.com\)](http://oldraynepreschool.com)

**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*  
*The designated Child Protection Deputy (at forest school) is Kimberlee Taylor*

**Code of Conduct and Safe Practice**

- The child's welfare is paramount (Children Act 1989)
- Adults working in pre-school are responsible for their own 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 discuss and /or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff about any incident which could give rise to concern.
- A record should be kept of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed.
- 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 in accordance with the preschool's policies including in particular our Child Protection policy statement and Child Protection policy (a copy is available on request).
- 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.
- 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 become creative learners. In order 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 informing them of 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 or sturdy trainers or thermal / neoprene-lined wellington boots
- Headwear consisting of the following:
  - ❖ Thermal hat
- Hand wear 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 or sturdy trainers or thermal / neoprene-lined wellington boots
  
- Headwear consisting of the following:
  - ❖ Rimmed waterproof / leather hat (e.g. cowboy / Australian style) or Sunhat
  
- Hand wear consisting of the following:
  - ❖ Gloves

The Forest School Leader will check that all children have suitable clothing on 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 in a named bag so the children are able to change if needed.



## Forest School Emergency Procedures Policy

All participants will be briefed on what to do in case of emergency. Briefing of children and adults will be carried out 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.

Old Rayne Preschool Forest School Leader will assess the situation, the nature and extent of the incident/injury/accident. They will ensure that the rest of the group, including themselves, are safe from danger and are 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 quickest and closest access to the incident:

Address: Back o' Bennachie

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, will be moved to safety.
- One member of the staff or parent volunteer will meet the ambulance at the site entrance or closest road location already identified to the emergency services and then directs the crew on arrival to the incident site.
- If the injured child is taken to hospital, one member of staff will go with them and the child's parent will be updated about the situation by the remaining staff.
- In minor cases, Old Rayne Preschool Forest School Leader will arrange to contact the parent of the injured child 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 in terms of quality and speed of care.

### **Emergency Contact Numbers**

Ambulance / Police: 999 or 112

Sophie Startin - 07449958784

### **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**

Camp fires and the use of storm kettles are an important part 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 whilst also experiencing the positive benefits related.

### **Location**

- Only previously agreed areas will be used for camp fires and these will be determined by the Forest School Leader.
- Camp fire areas are enclosed by logs, large stones or bricks to prevent the spread of fire. Fires will be 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**

- Fire areas are surrounded by seating benches

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

- When the camp fire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area between the benches and 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 by Forest School Leader.
- Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given where necessary and this will normally require repositioning of the child due to wind direction. If children need to reposition then 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 will be continually monitored to help decide if a fire will take place and if it is safe to do so. For example, long dry spells and windy conditions.
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating 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 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 good 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 normally 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 carried out with the mug on the ground with no hands nearby.
- Safety equipment will be available such as, fire gloves, fire blanket, first aid and burns kit.

### **Extinguishing**

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- Water should always be to hand during camp fire sessions.
- Whenever possible, all fuels (wood) should be burnt off to ash.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased and we will leave no trace.
- Large build ups of potash, from several fires, needs to be dispersed. This must only be done when it 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 children are directly supervised by the Forest School Leader.

- The storm kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground.
- Children must be seated at least 1.5 metres away 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 to only warm the water (i.e. not to boiling) to ensure the temperature of their drink (e.g. hot chocolate) is drinkable without scolding mouths
- Hot water from the storm kettle can be poured into mugs positioned on the ground or other solid, stable location, only provided that hands are nowhere near the mugs during pouring

Fire guidance can be found here [Fire Guidance – OWLS \(owls.scot.nhs.uk\)](http://www.owls.scot.nhs.uk/Fire-Guidance)

## **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 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/75)

In order that Old Rayne Preschool Forest School sessions may be run safely, 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 own 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 of procedures
  - Ensure that risk assessments and pre-site visits take place before children are permitted on to 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 are aware of their responsibilities towards the children
  - Investigate any 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
  - Ensure that safety equipment is in good working order and is used appropriately
- The Forest School Leader assumes responsibility for the maintenance of 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, amending plans to provide inclusive lessons / sessions and 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 (re Behaviour Policy)
- To assist with the walking of children by the road side
- To assist the Forest School Leader in ensuring 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 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 have a legal responsibility to report certain workplace incidents, occupational diseases and some 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 and interest in edible fruits and berries which may be found such as apples and blackberries.

For Forest School activities, Old Rayne Preschool operates a 'nil-by-mouth' Eating Policy. This is aimed at NOT encouraging children to attempt to eat wild fruit or berries without further education due to the potential risks associated. It is difficult to ensure that children will fully grasp the differences between different fruit and berries at young ages, 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).

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

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

### Notes:

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

Break time snacks and packed lunches provided by parents / guardians / carers and brought by the children may be consumed by the children whilst on Forest School activities. Lunch boxes must be balanced and healthy, limiting treat foods such as crisps and chocolate. No fizzy juice is permitted. Consideration should be given to the independence of the children while eating-ie providing ready to eat fruits such as bananas, apples and pears or prepared fruits and veg in a snack pots-pineapple, cucumber, peppers etc.

Food may only be consumed after hand washing.

### Handwashing Procedure

Handwashing equipment will be available, including hand towels and environmentally friendly soap. 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 dispose 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 prior to 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
- Spare clothing
- Small ruck sack 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 be applied whether the group are 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:

1. The Forest School Leader shall be informed immediately.
2. Activity for the rest of the group shall be suspended in order that up to two members of staff, including the Forest School Leader, may be released to conduct a search which shall 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, after the five-minute search, the child has not been located, The Forest School Leader will phone 999 and alert the police.
5. The parents will be contacted to inform them of the situation, and the Chair of the preschool.
6. Staff should corroborate details of the situation, including last known position of the missing child and any timing. These will be recorded on the Incident report.
7. Remaining children to be returned to preschool or sent home with their parents. Forest School Leader to continue to look for child.
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 the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
  - When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
  - What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
  - The time 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.

- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Care inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council will be informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

### **Managing People**

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as clam 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 staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may 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 parent's 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 need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is 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 any 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 the health and safety of children is of paramount importance. 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 risk?
- Assessment as to whether the level of risk is high, medium, low. This takes into account both the likelihood of it happening, as well as the possible impact if it did.
- Control measures to reduce/eliminate risk: What will you need to do, or ensure others will do, in order 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 there is a better solution.

### Procedures

- Our risk assessment process covers adults and children and includes:
  - determining where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments in relation to 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, in relation to our Forest School;
  - assessing the level of risk and who might be affected;
  - deciding which areas needs 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 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 eyes and face	M	leader to access the site before the session. demonstration and discussion with children about how to move through low branches by pushing branches away from the face.	L
<b>Areas to check</b>	<b>Hazards</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Control Measures</b>	<b>New Level</b>
Field layer: Prickly plants Poisonous plants	poisonous plants prickly plants allergies	blindness sickness cuts, grazes and stings irritation to skin, eyes, mouth, nose, sickness, diarrhea, anaphylactic shock, death	M	discussion with children. zero hand to mouth policy. staff and helpers bigalent. washing hands, amenities and measures in place. washing hands before eating. First aid and clean water to wash eyes. children reminded not to pick plants. children's medical forms up to date and completed, informing us of any allergy children may have.	L
Ground Layer: Logs Holes in ground Water Rubbish / glass Fungi Dog faeces etc	tripping sickness	broken limbs, sprained ankles, cuts, bruises, injury	M	leader to check the site before the session and pick up any dog faeces and suppose in a safe way. Leader to check the ground layer for any holes that could cause injury. discussion with the children about moving around the site in a cautious way. children will have a change of clothes and a stream close by to clean boots if need be.	L

Structures: Shelters benches Fire pit	tripping	cuts and scratches sprains, broken bones bruises head injury	M	leader to check the site before the session. Walk around with the children and identify risks together. Leader to ensure the site is tidy before session (fire pit). Dispose of or move anything that could be a potential risk.	L
Other: Hammock	falling hanging	head bump, cuts, bruises, scrapes and sprains, death	M	ensure loose rope is tidied, 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 bangs to head, bruises, cuts, broken limbs, concussion, death.	M	leader to 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 asked to wear waterproof clothing and have a spare set of clothes. Leader to take spare clothing. Parents are reminded to dress the children in correct clothing for the weather. Leader to check if the children are suitably dressed before parents leave the setting. children and adults to take sun hats, sunscreen and adults and children to take drinking water. Extra water will be available. A FS messenger group has been set up to communicate with parents about weather. If the weather turns during the session parents will be contacted by email and messenger to pick the children up as quickly as possible.	L

## Forest School Safeguarding Children Policy

### **Policy :- Safeguarding children and child protection**

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

### **Policy Statement**

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children 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*

- Our designated person (s) who co-ordinates child protection is: Sophie Startin (Manager) and 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 an 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 clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Candidates are informed of the need to 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 information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by requirements in respect of references and Criminal Record checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person 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 of reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children
- We abide by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) requirements in respect of 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 have control over who comes into 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 work with statutory agencies in accordance with 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;
  - significant changes in their behaviour;
  - deterioration in their general well-being;
  - their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure);
  - changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
  - unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
  - any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.
- We take into accounts factors affecting parental capacity, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, parent's drug or alcohol abuse, mental or physical illness or parent's 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 force 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 who 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 member of staff who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- We refer concerns to the local authority 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 either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.
- We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse is suspected we follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account, but the setting may override the young person's refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

#### *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 in the child's personal file which is kept securely and confidentially.
- The member of staff acting as the 'designated person' is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity

#### *Informing parents*

- Parents are normally 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 make a record of concerns in their child's file and that we also make a note of 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 will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases, the social workers will inform parents.

#### *Liaison with other agencies*

- The preschool operates in accordance with the Care Inspectorate and local authority guidelines. Confidential records, kept on children about whom the group is anxious about, 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, and will have a record of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of individual social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the preschool and the Social Work Department to work well together. The preschool will ensure that is 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 allegation of abuse.
- We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff or any other person working with the children, which includes:
  - inappropriate sexual comments;
  - 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 that 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, 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 the management and social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson will suspend the member of staff 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 as well as 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, resilient and listened to and following the Forest School Ethos.

#### *Training*

- The organisation will ensure that all staff and volunteers have knowledge of and access to EARLY YEARS SCOTLAND's Child Protection Guidelines and Policy for Early Years Workers. Staff and parents will be asked to sign a statement confirming that they have read and understood the document. The organisation will seek out training opportunities for all early year's 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 of their comprehension by staff and volunteers and will ensure that staff have knowledge and understanding of the group's child protection policy and procedures

#### *Planning*

- When at Forest School staff ensure that they work in an open space, 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. To 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.
- We create within the Forest School Setting a culture of value and respect for the individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate 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 in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships between families and 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 a holistic learning opportunity for children helping them to foster resilient, confident, independence and become creative learners. It is essential that this is done in a safe environment where risk assessments are done dynamically, daily and monthly. It is up to the Forest School Leader to assess the site, taking into consideration the weather conditions and the forecast and make a decision whether to run the Forest School session. We consider the welfare of the children to be 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.
- The Forest School Leader will listen to the weather forecast and check the Beaufort Wind Force Scale via the MET office weather app before every session.
- If the weather is severe enough, the Forest School session will not continue. This decision will be made by the Forest School Leader.
- The Beaufort Wind Force Scale will be consulted, and if it is forecast to be 25 miles per hour then a decision will be taken not to go out to the woods.
- Parents will be advised via phone as soon as possible and will be given the reason why. 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 are unable to meet the ratio requirements, for example because of staff illness. In that event, we would hold a session at the hall as normal.



## **Forest School Toileting Policy**

- Toilet facilities will be explained to children at the beginning of the session. If necessary, the children will be shown the facilities.
- 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 member of staff from Old Rayne Preschool or their own parent.
- Children can use the single cubicle public toilets, cleaned 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, it will include toileting wipes, anti-back wipes, gloves, apron, nappy snacks, loo roll.
- When a member of staff 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 at a time, they will remain outside the cubicles sending children in individually, if the staff member needs to enter a cubicle to provide assistance, they will indicate to the group they need the assistance of another adult to supervise the remaining children
- Children and staff will wash hands with soap and water after each use of the toilet using the toilet hand washing station.

### **Transport to and from 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 is around the outside of the large field. If a child wishes to venture out of boundary, adult supervision is required.

## Confidentiality Policy

This policy exists to protect children, parents, carers, families and staff, and to ensure that everyone using the service is absolutely clear about issues of confidentiality and what the procedures and routines are in respect of this matter. Underpinning the policy is the service provider's recognition that the safety and wellbeing of children and families is of paramount importance, 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 will only be accessed by staff.
- Committee members, staff and adult helpers will not talk publicly about matters relating to the children and their families.
- Staff will not discuss children, other than for curriculum development and service development purposes, with any other person/s without the parents or guardian's 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)

## Forest School Volunteer Contract Policy

(VOLUNTEER) I AGREE....

- That I must not take any child to the toilet or to change their nappies unless I have PVG clearance and an approval from the Forest School Leader
- I must not use my personal phone unless in cases of emergency
- To dress appropriately (see Clothing Policy)
- Please sign to say that 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, advise and constructive criticism.

SIGNED:

Volunteer .....

....

Print

Name .....

Forest School

Leader .....

Print

Name .....

Date.....

## Ecological Assessment & 3 year management Plan

<b>Name of Woodland Site/Location</b> <b>Bennachie</b>	<b>Location</b> <b>Back o' Bennachie</b>
<b>Owner/Contact Details</b>  <b>Forestry and Land Scotland</b>	<b>Other Stakeholders</b>
<b>Grid Ref –</b> <b>What3Words</b> <i>scouting.teach.threading</i>	
<b>Is the site designated?</b> <i>Nature conservation designations at <a href="https://sitelink.nature.scot/map">https://sitelink.nature.scot/map</a></i>  <b>If so, are there any implications of the designation for Forest School?</b>	
<b>Are there protected species on site?</b> red squirrel	
<b>Brief history of the site and its management –</b>  <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 area</u>  Some believe that the peak had religious significance to the Bronze Age people who inhabited this area. This theory is supported by the large number of standing stones in the surrounding area. The significance 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" ( <i>Beinn na Ciche</i> : 'hill of the breast'). It has been suggested as a possible site of the battle of Mons Graupius. An alternative Gaelic etymology from <i>*Beinn a' Chath</i> , i.e. 'hill of the battle', is perhaps 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 that 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.	
<b>Who else uses the woodland?</b>	

The public
<p>Description of landscape / topography / features of site</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Description of habitats/wildlife corridors/dead wood resources</p> <p>Bennachie is home to a great diversity of wildlife, including the charismatic red squirrel, and many different species of birds.</p>
<p>Description of natural processes occurring e.g. natural succession, seasonal changes, natural regeneration of woodland, life cycles</p> <p>The woodland is diverse, mainly composed of conifers with some areas of broadleaves. The wide area of open land is mainly composed of upland heathland at the top of the hills.</p>
<p>Landowner`s Agreement</p> <p>The Forestry Commission acquired land on Bennachie in 1938 and still manage the hill today.</p>

**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 plan to demonstrate its effectiveness:**

<p><b>Name of Woodland/Site</b>  <b>Back o' Bennachie</b>  <b>Location: Nearest postcode: AB52 6RH</b></p> <p><b>Grid Ref:Grid Ref. NJ661245</b>  <b>What3Words: <i>scouting.teach.threading</i></b></p>	<p><b>Name of Owner &amp; Contact Details</b></p> <p><b>Forestry and Land Scotland</b>  Emailenquiries.east@forestryandland.gov.s  cot</p> <p>Phone: 0300 067 6380 (option 2)</p>
<p><b>Frequency of use (who, how often, what for):</b>  <b>public use, frequent, leisure</b></p>	

<b>Consider the impact of factors such as activities, access, resources etc in Year 1</b>			
<b>Factors having an impact</b> (activities, access, resources etc)	<b>Level of impact</b> (high, medium, low)	<b>How will this affect the woodland?</b>	<b>How will you manage this?</b>
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 own 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 ground layer	We will remove dens after each session and rotate where we build them.
Ground Cover	low	potential to disrupt 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 group is involved in this:**

The Forest School Leader will monitor and review the impact Forest School is having on the Forest environment. The Ecological Impact form will be updated by the Forest School Leader if a new activity is added as and when the activity starts. It will be reviewed at the end of term 1 and 4.

### **How these feedbacks to stewardship plan:**

The Forest School leader will review and track each factor, as well as making adjustments and changes when necessary.

**Opportunities with wider woodland/site management include**

**Aims for year 2**

*We aim to plant native flowers to improve biodiversity and monitor habitats, with the support and advice from the local ranger.*

**Aims for Year 3**

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