

Tool Policy

Tool use is another important aspect of Forest School. By learning how to safely and appropriately use tools, learners are able to take supported risks, experiment and learn new skills, use their imaginations, get creative, build their confidence, and connect to nature.

- All tools will be transported and kept in a safe, sturdy, and closable container.
- All tools will be stored in the locked storage shed.
- All tools must be counted when being given out and counted back in again at the end of each session.
- Children must not help themselves to tools. They must ask an adult first.
- We don't wear gloves when working with tools.
- No loose/dangling clothing when using tools (such as scarves or long necklaces)
- Long hair must be tied back.
- The Forest School Leader is responsible for checking, cleaning, and maintaining the tools. This will be done after each session where they have been used.
- A risk assessment will be completed for each activity that includes tool use.

Tools We May Use:

Knives:

- All laws pertaining to knives will be followed.
- Knives will be checked before each use to ensure that the blade, handle, and sheath are in good condition. They should be checked for nicks or cracks in the blade, bends in the blade, damage to the handle: make sure the blade is secure in the handle, and that the blade is sharp.
- All knives should be covered in a sheath when not in use.
- Knives will be maintained/cleaned after each use by the Forest School Leader.
- Before using the knife, the user will ensure that there are no other people within 2 arms lengths of them.
- When using a knife, the user will assume a safe and stable position.

- Knife users will use a firm grip on the handle.
- Any staff/volunteers assisting with knife use should be positioned either behind or to the side of the learner (side without the knife)
- After use, all knives will be counted back in and stored securely.

Saws:

- Blade guards should be kept on the saw blades when they're not in use.
- Saws should be checked before each use. They should be checked for damage to the blade, frame or handle, bends or cracks in the blade, and to make sure that the blade is securely fitted into the frame/handle.
- Raker blades should be used for green wood.
- Peg toothed blades should be used for seasoned wood.
- When using saws, the user should ensure that they have a safe and stable cutting position. This can be with an A frame, or by using two logs next to each other as a saw bench.
- Saw blades can sometimes jump out of their cuts. To lessen this risk, each cut should always start with 3 initial pulls towards the user, before then using a back-and-forth motion for the remainder of the cut.
- For beginner or nervous saw users, a staff member/volunteer can hold the opposite side of the saw to assist them.
- An assistant (staff, volunteer, or other learner) can help hold the wood steady if needed.
- After use, all saws will be counted back in and stored securely.

Secateurs / Loppers:

- Secateurs/loppers should be checked before each use. They should be checked for damage to the blades or handles, ease of movement for use, sharpness of the blades.
- Always check the immediate area before using secateurs/loppers to ensure safety. You may need to move any items or obstacles that could get in the way, and make sure that no cut branches will fall in a dangerous way.
- Make sure that nothing too thick is being cut. Maximum diameter should be no more than 1.5" for loppers, and less for secateurs. If the diameter is bigger than this, then do not cut it with these tools.

- After use, all secateurs/loppers will be counted back in and stored securely.

Hand Drills / Palm Drills / Gimlets:

- All drills/gimlets should be checked before each use. They should be checked for damage to the shaft or handles and checked for sharpness.
- Any wood being drilled should be kept on a safe and secure surface.
- Make sure hands are kept around the edges, and not on top or underneath the piece being drilled.
- After use, all drills/gimlets will be counted back in and stored securely.

Dated: 1 st April 2023	Reviewed: 1 st April 2024	Signed: C.Howells	C. Howells
--	---	-----------------------------	-------------------