



Leafy Legends Forest School Campfire & Tool Use Policy

Purpose

To ensure that all campfire and tool-based activities are conducted safely, respectfully, and in alignment with our nature-rooted values. These activities are powerful opportunities for skill-building, emotional regulation, and connection — and must be held with care, clarity, and confidence.

Guiding Principles

- **Safety with soul:** Risk is embraced gently, with clear boundaries and emotional attunement
- **Respect for tools and fire:** Children are taught reverence, not fear
- **Child-led learning:** Activities are paced to match each child's readiness and interest
- **Emotional presence:** Adults remain calm, grounded, and available
- **Environmental care:** Fire and tool use honours the land and leaves no trace

Campfire Safety

Preparation

- Fire circle is clearly marked and risk assessed
- Firewood is dry, local, and sustainably sourced
- Water bucket, fire blanket, and first aid kit are always present
- Fire is lit by trained staff only, using safe methods (e.g. fire steel, matches)

Boundaries

- Children are taught the “**Respect Circle**” — a visual and verbal boundary around the fire
- No one enters the circle without invitation and supervision
- Seating is arranged at safe distance, with backs to logs or mats

Behaviour

- Children approach fire calmly and with consent
- No running, throwing, or sudden movements near the fire
- Hair is tied back, loose clothing secured
- Staff model safe posture, movement, and tone

Activities

- Cooking is done with long-handled tools and gloves
 - Children are invited to help prepare food, tend embers, or toast items with supervision
 - Fire stories, songs, and rituals are used to deepen connection and calm
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Tool Use Safety

Tools Included

- Peelers, knives, saws, loppers, hammers, hand drills, fire steels
- All tools are age-appropriate and risk assessed

Introduction

- Children are introduced to tools slowly, with clear demonstration
- Safety rules are taught through story, role-play, and repetition
- Consent is always sought before participation

Supervision

- 1:1 or small group ratios for sharp tools
- Staff remain within arm's reach during use
- Tools are stored safely and checked regularly

Behaviour

- Children sit or kneel while using tools
- Tools are passed handle-first, never thrown
- Focus and calm are encouraged — dysregulated children are gently redirected

Skill-Building

- Children are supported to whittle, saw, drill, or build with pride
 - Mistakes are framed as learning, not failure
 - Emotional safety is prioritised alongside physical safety
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Emotional Safety & Inclusion

- Children may opt out of fire or tool activities without pressure
- Emotional states are noticed — anxious or dysregulated children are offered co-regulation
- Activities are adapted for sensory needs, neurodiversity, and physical ability

- Staff use gentle language, curiosity, and encouragement
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Monitoring & Review

- Risk assessments are updated termly and after any incident
 - Staff receive regular training in tool use, fire safety, and emotional attunement
 - Incidents are logged and reviewed with safeguarding lead
 - Policy is reviewed annually with staff and parent input
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Related Policies

- Risk Assessment Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour & Emotional Wellbeing Policy
- Eating & Food Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

F&T-2025-V1 Date 29/08/25

