

Leafy Legends Forest School – Emergency Procedures Policy

Purpose

To ensure all staff and volunteers are prepared to respond swiftly, safely, and calmly to emergencies during Forest School sessions, while maintaining emotional support and clear communication with children and families.

Types of Emergencies Covered

- Serious injury or medical emergency
- Fire or smoke hazard
- Missing child
- Extreme weather or environmental hazard
- Intruder or threat to safety
- Animal encounter (e.g. dog off-lead, wasp swarm)

General Response Principles

- Stay calm and reassuring
- Prioritise safety of children and staff
- Follow site-specific evacuation plan
- Communicate clearly and promptly
- Document and review the incident

Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Lead Practitioner	Coordinates emergency response, contacts emergency services, and oversees evacuation
Designated First Aider	Administers first aid and monitors injured child/adult
Support Staff/Volunteers	Comfort children, assist with evacuation, and help maintain calm
All Staff	Know emergency routes, kit locations, and communication protocols

Evacuation Procedure

1. **Signal:** Use agreed verbal cue or whistle to alert group
2. **Gather:** Children assemble at designated safe zone (e.g. base camp or fire circle)
3. **Headcount:** Immediate roll call using attendance register
4. **Evacuate:** Follow mapped route to safe location or exit point
5. **Contact:** Call emergency services if needed; notify parents/guardians
6. **Document:** Record incident and actions taken in logbook

Communication Protocol

- Emergency contacts for each child are kept on-site and in mobile phone
- Parents are contacted by Lead Practitioner or designated staff
- Clear, factual information is shared — no speculation or blame
- Follow-up communication includes incident summary and next steps

Site-Specific Notes

- **Fire Circle:** Burns risk — water and burns kit always nearby
- **Woodland Terrain:** Uneven ground — staff guide children during evacuation
- **Weather:** Sessions paused or relocated in high winds, lightning, or flooding
- **Animals:** Staff calmly redirect children and assess risk before intervening

Emotional Support

- Children are comforted with warmth and clarity
- Staff use gentle language to explain what's happening
- Debrief offered after incident to children and staff
- Comfort items (blankets, soft toys) available if needed

Review & Reflection

- All incidents are logged and reviewed within 48 hours
- Staff debrief held to reflect and improve procedures
- Policy reviewed termly and after any major event