



Learning in Nature CIC & Beccles Forest Schools

HANDBOOK



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DECLARATION

This is to declare that all adults in a supporting role have read this handbook and agree to abide by its policies and processes, while working for or representing Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest School.

Signed:



Lou Walker (Director)



Rach Whitwood (Director)



Po Midwinter (Director)

Our Mission and Values at Beccles Forest Schools

NURTURE * WELLBEING * PLAY * CURIOSITY

Vision Statement

To make every day we spend in the natural world an opportunity to freely play- to explore our relationship with the nearby wild world, and each other, creating sustainable wellbeing for all.

Mission Statement

At Beccles Forest Schools, we fiercely protect the right to play freely. We are person-centred and wholly embedded in the natural world, which meets the learning, development and well-being needs of us all. We celebrate participants' autonomy over the spaces they explore, and foster their innate curiosity and connection, in a community that cherishes them.

We Are:

- Strong
- Resilient
- Qualified
- Experienced
- Community minded
- Flexible & responsive
- Passionate
- Diverse
- Empathic
- Reflective
- Supportive

Our Values Are:

1. Kindness, generosity and fairness
2. Learning in the widest sense of the word
3. Free play & fun at all times
4. Strong relationships & a sense of belonging
5. An unconditional positive regard for all
6. Integrity in all we do

Forest School: What is it?

“Forest School is defined by 6 core principles, which were agreed by the Forest School community in 2011. These pre-date the FSA, which was set up in 2012 to support and advocate for these principles. The principles are underpinned by criteria. The FSA has used these as a basis for a set of national professional standards that we can all aspire to.

In Forest School no single principle takes precedence over the others; instead, they work harmoniously, interlocking to create a unique environment for learning and growth.”

For more details: <https://forestschoollassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/>

How do Beccles Forest School make sure the sessions follow these principles?

1. Long-term principle. Bookings are taken half-termly to encourage regular attendance. The difference we see in children when they attend regularly is quite marked, as opposed to drop-in sessions. Sessions are the same time, the same day, every week, all year round. This means we all see the changing seasons and feel the weather and nature connection deeply.
2. Nature principle. Our site has woodland (young and mature), meadow, ponds and dykes. The marshland base for the soil supports the towering willow trees and the open meadow creates spectacular skeleton plants in the winter as well as grass taller than children in the summer. Our land is wild, and we fiercely protect that.
3. Risk principle. Children are free to balance over the dyke, dip in the pond, swing on ropes, climb trees and explore freely. Risks are everywhere and they are free to take them. Tools and fire are always supervised but always available.
4. The Holistic principle. Leaders make astute observations of children and link this to all parts of their development. If children attend school we work with the school to support their learning if needed. Our planning ensures children’s needs are met.
5. Leadership Principle. Our sessions are led by qualified Forest School Leaders, some of them also have qualified teacher status or Early Years qualifications. Ratios are 1:5 in all groups. Our policies are complete and far-reaching.
6. Community principle. This is intrinsic to our practice. The circles at the important parts of the day are a joy to behold, and connections are drawn between people as they eat, chat, laugh and debate. Adults observe without interfering and join in when invited. Relationships build every day and develop organically. Our reflective practice and observations feed these community connections.

This is why we hope that you will ensure that all six principles are expressed throughout our Forest School sessions.

The Role of Adults at Beccles Forest Schools

Within each group, we always have a Level 3 Forest School Leader present. This person is responsible for the planning and implementation of the sessions. With them may be other trainee Forest School leaders, or people with relevant childcare qualifications, such as Early Years Level 3, or QTS, volunteers or other supporting adults.

A full programme of induction is followed by everyone that joins Beccles Forest School, so that they understand how our Play Policy is implemented and how to stay safe within the riskier activities such as fire and deep water. In the induction, people shadow the Lead and work closely beside the existing members of staff until they feel confident to step out and be with the group without close proximity to the Lead. Reflection and reading outside of work is suggested and pointers given.

If a member of staff or volunteer is seen behaving in a way that contravenes the play policy, the Lead will speak gently to them about what they observed and make suggestions for different approaches in order to preserve the forest school approach.

Supporting adults are essential to the flow of the day. They assist with cooking snacks over the fire, making sure children toilet properly, encouraging children to drink water, tell stories at lunchtime, and assist with play in any way needed. Sometimes we're invited to join in with the play, sometimes the adults play a game and the children might join in or not. Adults all contribute to safeguarding and site security - we communicate via walkie talkie and monitor people passing the site with or without dogs. We listen to children when they need to talk and guide them with nature connection activities such as pond dipping. Adults all take part in the tool talk with children and help them work with sharp tools such as loppers, secateurs and knives. Adults often bring something to create an opportunity to play and explain their idea in the opening circle. They take part in site maintenance such as fence creation using dead material, and always include any young people who would like to join in.

Risk Assessment and Safety of Premises Policy Precip

Please see our full policy [here](#).

Policy Statement

At Beccles Forest Schools, health and safety is paramount. As such, we follow the guidelines of the Health and Safety Executive and the Food Safety Act, and ensure that all leaders are trained to practice level, such as with Level 3 Forest School Leadership (Health and Safety considerations, along with evidence of an ability to assess and manage risk, form fundamental elements of this training).

Safety

We design and follow policies and procedures in order to keep children and adults (including staff and volunteers) safe. These relate to site management, tool use and a wide range of activities. Forest School staff assess, reassess and update policies and procedures on a half-termly basis, whenever new resources, activities or site areas are introduced and in response to any incident, near miss or reported concern.

Due to the ethos of 'Risk-Benefit' which is key to Forest School, our job as leaders is to scaffold learning in order for students to learn to calculate appropriate risk. As such, we give careful consideration to whether the risks of any particular task outweigh the benefits to learners in question before we intervene.

Here, Risk Assessment is a dynamic process. When introducing a learner to a new, potentially risky, activity, we discuss the potential risks and how to counter them. We then observe closely (in case we do need to intervene!) until we are fully confident that each individual understands the risks they are taking and that the benefits outweigh the risks for them. At this point they are given greater autonomy to assess and manage these risks themselves. We still run thorough checks to ensure that resources used are safe, however, and continue to monitor their safe use - just in a more subtle way.

Research has shown that when young people are provided with opportunities to assess the delicate balance between risk and benefit, and given the autonomy to make their own decisions regarding appropriate risk, they learn to make wiser choices as part of life-long learning.

Procedures

Safety of Premises: Routines and Risk Assessment

A detailed daily risk assessment is carried out on the site before every session. Detailed site assessments are shared at staff induction. Daily assessments are shared with all staff working on that day. A further full risk assessment will be undertaken if we decide to take the children on to the common or offsite.

Site risk assessments are reviewed on a half-termly basis and in the event of extreme weather, incident or near-miss incident.

We clearly inform all FS attendees of site boundaries and any risks involved in engaging with the site, activities, and resources as part of our daily routine as well as when immediately relevant.

Daily risk assessments include a review of the impact of weather, fire evacuation access, ratios, defined areas of site, defined areas being accessed on rest of meadow, areas being visited off site, COSHH, other activities on site around early years site and planned play opportunities

COSHH: We assess the site daily to identify potential for exposure to substances that might be hazardous to health. This includes fire smoke, all cleaning products and play materials and resources that are brought onto the site. See COSHH Policy.

We ask assisting adults attending to sign an agreement to indicate that they understand that FS staff are modelling best practice and that they agree to follow the policies and procedures as modelled/ instructed. There is the expectation that visiting parents' children will do the same.

The space on The Wild Meadow is extensive and easily meets the needs in relation to the requirements of the Statutory Framework. (Children under two years: 3.5 m² per child, Two-year-olds: 2.5 m² per child, Children aged three to five years: 2.3 m² per child)

We have ensured there is an adequate number of toilets and hand basins available and that there are separate toilet facilities for adults. Children needing a change of clothes can use the cloakroom which provides a private and hygienic space. We also have nappy-changing facilities available for use in this area. Adequate handwashing facilities are provided at various points on the site including all toilet areas.

Staff may talk to parents and/or carers confidentially in a quiet area or in the adjoining shelter on the site if staff ratios allow.

Staff may take breaks away from areas being used by children and again use the adjoining shelters on the site.

Smoking is not allowed on the site. Nor is the consumption of possibly intoxicating substances (including certain medications).

Security

At the end of the day, children will only be released into the care of individuals who have been notified to the provider by the parent and must ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised.

We will prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises by keeping the main gate locked and main fences/ditch boundaries maintained. We will have an agreed password or photograph for adults other than the parents who may collect the children with prior agreement from the parents. The appropriate insurance (including public liability insurance) to cover all premises from which we provide childcare are accessible on devices on site.

Visitors

We are very lucky at Beccles Forest School that we operate on a gated site where there is no public right of way. However, The Wild Meadow is accessible from Beccles Common via the main gate. We do ask Forest Schoolers to only access the site when attending Forest School - if we were to allow access at other times we would be in breach of our rental agreement with Beccles Fenland Charity Trust and thus could lose the right to use the land for the purposes of Forest School. For insurance reasons, we also ask people to remain offsite until a Forest School Leader is present, or they are expressly invited.

In Case of Unexpected or Unwanted Visitors

During sessions, the main gate to The Wild Meadow is always locked and signs are up to invite visitors to give us a call if they need access to the setting. Once notified, a member of staff can go to the gate to meet them.

If anyone becomes aware that there is an unexpected or unwanted visitor onsite, they notify the manager immediately. They communicate with other staff present to inform them (verbally, such as by walkie-talkie) and they act to safeguard children if required. Leaders supervise children while the manager goes to greet the visitor to find out who the person is, why they are here and how they can be helped, etc.

If they say that they have come to collect or visit a child but they are unfamiliar to us, or we have not been notified in advance, the child's parent/carer who is known to us will be contacted using emergency contact procedures.

If the visitor does not have a clearly viable or permissible reason to be invited to stay, the manager will escort them politely back to the gate, arranging a more appropriate time for them to visit and chat if necessary.

If the visitor refuses to leave or there is cause for concern, Forest School Leaders will communicate via walkie-talkie and decide what to do to best safeguard the children in their care. If the visitor is seen as a threat in any way, the police will be contacted. The manager will do their utmost to ensure that the visitor does not encroach on areas where children are learning while awaiting police support.

Once the visitor has left, the manager will follow incident reporting procedures to review current practice if necessary.

If, for any reason, you are concerned that we are likely to have unwanted visitors at Forest School, or that a visitor may pose a threat to any child, it is essential you tell us. Please also let us know if anyone other than the parent/carer familiar to us will be picking up your child from Forest School.

Accident, Injury and First Aid Policy

Please see our full policy [here](#).

Policy Statement

At Beccles Forest Schools, the well-being of our attendees is a primary concern. A core principle of Forest School is giving learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves. As such, Risk Benefit Assessment is a fundamental part of our daily procedures.

When carrying out Risk Benefit Assessment and site Risk Assessment, consideration of acceptable risk and ensuring the safety of the children is paramount and undertaken using rigorous systems including dynamic risk assessment. Our first aid and accident procedures are regularly reviewed, and all staff are encouraged to attend first aid training. There is always at least one qualified first-aider on site during opening hours, who holds a full 12 hour paediatric first aid certification. Training in relation to safety and managing accidents is a mandatory part of the induction process.

Procedures

Directors check that consent forms and emergency contacts have been received for all attendees, and discuss any known allergies, or medical concerns or procedures with a child's parents/carers and appropriate staff.

A summary of this information for each child is accessible to all working staff during a session via registers stored on Basecamp and booking forms stored on Bookwhen.

A fully stocked First Aid Kit is stored in each main area of the site. First aid resources are checked regularly and restocked after use. If an item is needed but not yet stocked, this is discussed and acquired ASAP.

First Aid Procedures for Children

The following procedures are followed when an incident involving children or young people occurs:

- Ask others nearby to give space or cease activity.
- Calm and reassure attendee, and assess what has occurred.
- Offer help as needed.
- Alert other staff using walkie-talkie or by sending a responsible person to inform or fetch other staff member and fetch full first aid kit if required.
- Ask the casualty if we can administer first aid - administer either in situ or away from the scene of the incident if they are more comfortable with this.
- Monitor the casualty and reassure.
- Explain that we will need to write down what happened and contact their parent or carer, so that they know what has happened.

- Do this using the emergency contact details and incident reporting procedures as soon as is practical, and contact the leader on site to facilitate this.
- Continue to monitor the casualty for the remainder of the session.
- Provide follow-up care if needs be.
- First aid waste is tied up in a nappy bag and disposed of at the end of the session.
- All children with head injuries or bumps will be closely monitored and parents will be notified of signs of possible concussion.

It is the responsibility of Directors to ensure that staff first aid qualifications and certificates are up to date. Serious incidents may need to be reported through RIDDOR or to Ofsted (see below).

First Aid Procedures for Adults

If a member of staff is injured, this will affect adult:child ratios. The situation will be assessed and responded to accordingly. If it is observed that children are not immediately in danger or engaged in risky activity, such as tool use, then the situation is best addressed quietly and quickly so as not to cause undue panic. First aid and support for the casualty will be administered and outside help will be sought (by calling 999) if needed. Incidents involving staff may need to be reported through RIDDOR or to Ofsted (see below).

Priority will be given to the safety of children, however, and if any child is also in immediate danger, they will be assisted to move to a known safe place as quickly as possible. If other adults are present, they will be asked to supervise and assist. If necessary or deemed safer, children will be called to the main meeting point or a safe place by using the 'wolf howl' or by sending messages through responsible adults and asked to remain there until advised what to do next.

Serious Incidents

If more than basic first aid is required, or the safety of the group is at risk, outside professional help will be sought as soon as possible through phoning 999 (Forest School Leaders and Assistants have access to work mobile phones at all times when on site). If necessary to maintain group safety, an off-duty staff-member should be called upon for support. If necessary, all parents will be contacted in order to collect their children. All usual follow-up procedures will be undertaken. Serious incidents may need to be reported through RIDDOR or to Ofsted (see below).

Incident Reporting Procedures and Impact on Professional Practice

Any incident that involves the administration of First Aid, plus any incident outlined below, will be recorded with an 'Incident Report' through our incident-reporting procedure. Incidents must be reported as soon as possible after the event to assess whether the incident could have been preempted or prevented and to decide if and how policies and practices need to be amended to prevent future mishap. All staff will be involved in this process of review.

If appropriate, parents, other professionals and children directly involved in the incident may also be asked to contribute.

Missing Persons Policy

Please see our full policy [here](#).

Policy Statement

At Beccles Forest Schools, keeping children safe is our utmost priority. In order to ensure their safety, children are not permitted to leave the site unless given express permission to do so by a Forest School Leader (in case of emergency, for example.) The main gate to the site is clearly visible from the Forest School and Early Years areas. If children venture unaccompanied outside the EY area or along the path to the gate, they must be closely observed by Forest School staff and called back/intercepted if necessary.

Parents/carers of children aged 8 years and older need to let leaders know in advance if their child is to make their way home independently at the end of a session. All other children must be collected by a named adult.

Procedures

How we make sure we know where everyone is:

- Ensure site boundaries are clear and that children know not to cross these unless they are accompanied by or have permission from and have informed a Forest School adult - remind children of boundaries at the start of each session (and during is necessary)
- High staff-child ratios to facilitate vigilance, usually 1:5
- Always at least 3 staff members in attendance during drop-off sessions
- Staff allocation to designated areas and key workers keeping track of children's movements and engagement.
- Direct communication between staff (for example, using walkie talkies) to check all areas are covered if staff movement is required (for example, to support 1:1) and ratios are maintained.
- Constant observation, communication and flexible staff roles - if a child is seen to be leaving the main learning area, staff to call on management for back-up so the child can be observed, supported and re-engaged, if needed.
- Rapid response procedure if the whereabouts of any child is not immediately known (walkie talkie check).

If a child is thought to be missing (if no Leader knows of their whereabouts):

- Leaders walkie-talkie all staff to redo head-count and register
- If a child is still missing, call '123 where are you (name)' and adults search areas where they are working. If there is no answer, do wolf call to gather all children at a meeting point and sit down
- Repeat head-count
- Leader to ask all other people present when and where the child was last seen.

The rest of children stay by the central area under supervision of staff while:

- The 1st delegated adult runs and checks the last place seen, then checks areas of greatest risk on site (areas with access to dyke, under trees, through reeds, by main gate, areas with deadwood, etc.), calling the child's name - other adults present also called on to search, where possible.
- Check site perimeters & areas on Beccles Common by the main gate.
- If appropriate and staffing allows, 3rd delegated adult to check on Beccles Common.
- Call 999 for police support.
- Contact parents using emergency contact procedure, and ask if they have any idea where the child might go if they ran away.
- Ask parents to check these places, come to the site or head home - whatever police advise as the best course of action.
- Rest of children to resume play (with no 'risky' activities) under staff supervision.
- Non-supervising staff to continue searching and speak to parents and police, issuing updates and notifying others as soon as the child is found.

After the event:

Forest School Leaders and any other adults involved work together to complete an Incident Report. In this event, we would re-assess policies and procedures to prevent future incidents.

Ongoing Commitment to Preventing Missing Persons

At Beccles Forest Schools, the safety of children is our utmost priority. We regularly review our approach to issues such as missing persons to ensure we have the procedures in place should an incident like this occur.

Ratios and Supervision of Children Policy

Please see our full policy [here](#).

Policy Statement

We aim to protect and support the welfare of the children in our care at all times. The Directors are responsible for all staff, students and relief staff receiving information on health and safety policies and procedures in the setting in order to supervise the children in their care suitably.

Procedures

Supervision

We ensure that children are supervised adequately at all times by:

- Making sure that every child is always within sight and/or hearing of a suitably vetted member of staff.
- Monitoring staff deployment across the setting regularly to ensure children's needs are met.
- Ensuring children are fully supervised at all times when using or near water.
- Taking special care to adhere to the Beccles Forest Schools safety procedures when children are engaged in Forest School Activities such as working with tools, climbing trees, foraging and cooking round fires.
- Always supervising children when eating.
- Regularly checking the whereabouts of children and staff around the site by using a walkie talkie and registration process.

Early Years Ratios

Only those aged 17 or over are included in ratios and staff under 17 are supervised at all times. Students on long term placements and volunteers (aged 17 or over) and staff working as apprentices in early education (aged 16 or over) may be included in the ratios if the provider is satisfied that they are competent and responsible.

The ratio requirements below apply to the total number of staff available to work directly with children. Exceptionally, and where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, changes to the ratios may be made.

For children aged three and over, at any time where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status is working directly with children:

- There is at least one member of staff for every 13 children.
- At least one other member of staff holds an approved level 3 qualification.

For children aged three and over where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status is NOT working directly with children:

- There is at least one member of staff for every 8 children.
- At least one other member of staff holds an approved level 3 qualification.
- At least half of all other staff hold an approved level 2 qualification.

These above are the Ofsted ratios - we, however, frequently offer much higher ratios of supervision. It is incredibly rare that those ratios would ever happen at Beccles Forest School. For forest school groups we have a ratio of 1:5 and never exceed that.

If the supervision of the children is likely to be impacted due to staff sickness, if we cannot cover the sickness from bank staff then we cancel the session.

Safety is paramount and supervision is the key to safety and also enhancing the forest school experience.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Please see our full policy [here](#).

Policy Statement

At Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest Schools we work closely with children, parents, external agencies and the wider community to ensure the welfare of children and young people. All children and young people have the right to thrive, to be treated respectfully and to be protected from any form of abuse.

In this document, we define safeguarding as the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

Our setting supports the children and young people within our care, protects them from all forms of maltreatment and has robust procedures in place to prevent any impairment to children and young people's health and development. We promote acceptance of others' beliefs and cultures while striving to protect children and young people from the risk of radicalisation (please see our Equality and Inclusion Policy and our Prevent Duty Policy). Safeguarding is inevitably a broader subject than can be covered within this single policy. Therefore, this document must be used alongside the setting's other policies and procedures, listed below:

- Equality and Inclusion Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

Across the whole setting, we have DSLs and ADSLs who oversee the safeguarding practices of each area. At least one safeguarding lead is on site during drop-off sessions (and on call for all family sessions).

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads are:

DSL: Pauline Midwinter 07708619251 po.learninginnaturecic@gmail.com

ADSL: Tommy De La Bedoyere 07708619254 tommylearninginnaturecic@gmail.com

Policy intention

In order to effectively safeguard and ensure the welfare of children and young people, we will ensure that we:

- Create a safe and secure environment that encourages the development of positive self-image
- Provide positive role models for children and young people
- Develop a safe culture in which staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct
- Have robust reporting and recording systems
- Provide regular training, support and supervision for all staff at the setting and create an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention
- Train staff to notice the more subtle signs of abuse and know the appropriate action to take when they do
- Encourage children and young people to develop independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their stage of development
- Provide a trusting environment where parents and carers feel able to communicate concerns regarding children and their families
- Promote acceptance of all different beliefs, cultures and communities
- Help children and young people to understand how they can participate in decision-making
- Promote British values through play, discussion and role modelling
- Always listen to the voices of children, young people and staff, in all circumstances
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate

We know that abuse occurs in our society and we are vigilant in identifying and reporting concerns. Our practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children and young people. Due to the nurturing environment that we provide, staff are likely to be the first people to identify a concern. For instance, they may well be the first people in whom children, young people, parents or carers confide information, or they may spot changes in behaviour which are a cause for concern.

Our primary responsibility is the welfare of each child and young person in our care. As such, we strongly believe that we have a duty to children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with relevant agencies, such as the Suffolk Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), health professionals or the police (MASH, n.d.).

We will aim to:

- Keep the child at the centre of everything we do
- Ensure staff are trained- right from induction- to understand the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures, are aware of the different forms of abuse and alert to the

possible signs of these (including more subtle signs of abuse), understand what is meant by child protection, and understand that abuse can be perpetrated by anyone, including by other children through bullying or discriminatory behaviour

- Be aware of the range of difficulties that vulnerable or isolated families may experience in providing care to children and young people
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Ensure all staff undertake Prevent Duty training, recognise possible early indicators of radicalisation and terrorism threats, and know how to act on them appropriately in line with national and local procedures
- Ensure that all staff feel confident to act in the best interest of the child, share information and seek the help that the child may need
- Ensure that all staff are intimately familiar and updated regularly with safeguarding training and procedures, and kept informed of changes to local and national procedures
- Make child protection referrals in a timely fashion, sharing relevant information in line with procedures set out by the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership
- Make any referrals relating to extremism to the police (or the counter-extremism helpline) promptly, sharing relevant information as appropriate
- Ensure that information is shared only with those who need to know in order to protect the child or young person
- Keep the online presence of the setting safe, such as by restricting access to confidential information through the use of passwords, in line with our Online Safety Policy
- Ensure that comprehensive daily and dynamic risk assessments are completed to ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of staff
- Identify changes in staff behaviour and act on these as per the Staff Code of Conduct Policy and Supervision Policy
- Take appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working with children or young people or on the premises, including reporting allegations to Ofsted and other relevant authorities
- Ensure parents are fully aware of safeguarding policies and procedures when they register with the setting and kept informed of updates when they occur
- Regularly review and update this policy with staff and parents where appropriate and ensure it complies with legal requirements, guidance and procedures issued by the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership

Types and Signs of Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

At Learning in Nature and Beccles Forest Schools, we recognise the following as types of abuse, and signs (including the more subtle signs) that may signal a child is experiencing abuse, as outlined by the NSPCC. The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been

abused, but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

Bullying

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone.

Signs of bullying:

- belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
- physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
- being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
- not doing as well at school
- asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them)
- being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- problems with eating or sleeping
- bullying others.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. When a child or young person is exploited, they're given things, like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship. This is called grooming. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused.

Children and young people can be trafficked into or within the UK to be sexually exploited. They're moved around the country and abused by being forced to take part in sexual activities, often with more than one person. Young people in gangs can also be sexually exploited.

Signs of CSE:

- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Being frightened of some people, places or situations
- Being secretive
- Sharp changes in mood or character
- Having money or things they can't or won't explain
- Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy
- Having an older boyfriend/girlfriend
- Staying out late or overnight

- Having a new group of friends
- Missing from home or school
- Spending time with older people, other vulnerable people or in antisocial groups
- Being involved in a gang or criminal activities like selling drugs or shoplifting

Child Trafficking

Trafficking is where children and young people tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Children are trafficked for sexual exploitation, benefit fraud, forced marriage, domestic slavery like cleaning, cooking and childcare, forced labour in factories or agriculture, committing crimes, like begging, theft, working on cannabis farms or moving drugs.

Trafficked children experience many types of abuse and neglect. Traffickers use physical, sexual and emotional abuse as a form of control. Children and young people are also likely to be physically and emotionally neglected and may be sexually exploited.

Signs of child trafficking:

- Spending a lot of time doing household chores
- Rarely leaving their house or having no time for playing
- Being orphaned or living apart from their family
- Living in low-standard accommodation
- Being unsure which country, city or town they're in
- Being reluctant to share personal information or where they live
- Not being registered with a school or a GP practice
- Having no access to their parents or guardians
- Being seen in inappropriate places like brothels or factories
- Having money or things you wouldn't expect them to have
- Having injuries from workplace accidents
- Giving a prepared story which is very similar to stories given by other children

Criminal Exploitation

Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

It's not illegal for a young person to be in a gang – there are different types of 'gang' and not every 'gang' is criminal or dangerous. However, gang membership can be linked to illegal activity, particularly organised criminal gangs involved in trafficking, drug dealing and violent crime.

County Lines is the police term for urban gangs exploiting young people into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other markets - suburban areas and market and coastal towns - using dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines". Children as young as 12 years old have been exploited into carrying drugs for gangs. This can involve children being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation and selling and manufacturing drugs.

Signs of criminal exploitation:

- Frequently absent from and doing poorly in school
- Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons
- In a relationship or hanging out with someone older than them
- Being angry, aggressive or violent
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Having unexplained money and buying new things
- Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos
- Using new slang words
- Spending more time on social media and being secretive about time online
- Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or phones
- Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell
- Taking drugs and abusing alcohol
- Committing petty crimes like shop lifting or vandalism
- Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help
- Carrying weapons or having a dangerous breed of dog

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It can seriously harm children and young people and witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse. It's important to remember domestic abuse can happen inside and outside the home, can happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites, can happen in any relationship and can continue even after the relationship has ended and that both men and women can be abused or abusers.

Signs of domestic abuse:

- aggression or bullying
- anti-social behaviour, like vandalism
- anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts
- attention seeking
- bed-wetting, nightmares or insomnia
- constant or regular sickness, like colds, headaches and mouth ulcers
- drug or alcohol use
- eating disorders
- problems in school or trouble learning
- tantrums
- withdrawal

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child.

Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse, which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own. It can include humiliating or constantly criticising a child, threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names, making the child the subject of jokes, or using sarcasm to hurt a child, blaming and scapegoating, making a child perform degrading acts and/or never showing any emotions in interactions with a child, also known as emotional neglect.

Signs of emotional abuse:

- be overly-affectionate to strangers or people they don't know well
- seem unconfident, wary or anxious
- not have a close relationship or bond with their parent
- be aggressive or cruel towards other children or animals.
- use language you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- act in a way or know about things you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- struggle to control their emotions
- have extreme outbursts
- seem isolated from their parents
- lack social skills
- have few or no friends

Female Genital Mutilation

FGM is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting', but has many other names. FGM is a form of child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence in the UK. We know there are no medical reasons to carry out FGM, it's often performed by someone with no medical training, using instruments such as knives, scalpels, scissors, glass or razor blades, children are rarely given anaesthetic or antiseptic treatment and are often forcibly restrained and it's used to control female sexuality and can cause long-lasting damage to physical and emotional health. FGM can happen at different times in a girl or woman's life, including when a baby is new-born, during childhood or as a teenager, just before marriage and during pregnancy.

Signs of FGM:

- A relative or someone known as a 'cutter' is visiting from abroad
- A special occasion or ceremony is taking place where a girl 'becomes a woman' or is 'prepared for marriage'
- A female relative, like a mother, sister or aunt has undergone FGM
- A family arranges a long holiday overseas or visits a family abroad during the summer holidays
- Unexpected or long absence from school
- Struggling to keep up in school
- Running away – or planning to run away - from home

- Having difficulty walking, standing or sitting
- Spending longer in the bathroom or toilet
- Appearing quiet, anxious or depressed
- Acting differently after an absence from school or college
- Reluctance to go to the doctors or have routine medical examinations
- Asking for help – though they might not be explicit about the problem because they're scared or embarrassed

Grooming

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked.

Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time – from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative. A child is unlikely to know they've been groomed. They might be worried or confused and less likely to speak to an adult they trust.

Signs of grooming:

- being very secretive about how they're spending their time, including when online
- having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- having money or new things like clothes and mobile phones that they can't or won't explain
- underage drinking or drug taking
- spending more or less time online or on their devices
- being upset, withdrawn or distressed
- sexualised behaviour, language or an understanding of sex that's not appropriate for their age
- spending more time away from home or going missing for periods of time.

Neglect

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.

Neglect can be a lot of different things, which can make it hard to spot. But broadly speaking, there are 4 types of neglect:

1. Physical neglect, where a child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter, are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe;
2. Educational neglect, where a parent doesn't ensure their child is given an education;
3. Emotional neglect, where a child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need, e.g., through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them;

4. Medical neglect, where a child isn't given proper health care, including dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.

Signs of neglect:

- being smelly or dirty
- being hungry or not given money for food
- having unwashed clothes
- having the wrong clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter
- having frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants
- anaemia
- body issues, such as poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- medical or dental issues
- missed medical appointments, such as for vaccinations
- not given the correct medicines
- poor language or social skills
- regular illness or infections
- repeated accidental injuries, often caused by lack of supervision
- skin issues, such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- thin or swollen tummy
- tiredness
- untreated injuries
- weight or growth issues
- living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heating
- being left alone for a long time
- taking on the role of carer for other family members
- becoming clingy
- becoming aggressive
- being withdrawn, depressed or anxious
- changes in eating habits
- displaying obsessive behaviour
- finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities
- missing school
- showing signs of self-harm
- using drugs or alcohol

Online Abuse

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online, including social media, text messages and messaging apps, emails, online chats, online gaming or live-streaming sites.

Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know or from strangers. It might be part of other abuse which is taking place offline, like bullying or grooming. Or the abuse might only happen online.

Signs of online abuse:

- spending a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
- seeming distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
- being secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- having lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It includes hitting with hands or objects, slapping and punching, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning and scalding, biting and scratching, breaking bones and drowning.

It's important to remember that physical abuse is any way of intentionally causing physical harm to a child or young person. It also includes making up the symptoms of an illness or causing a child to become unwell.

Signs of physical abuse:

- bruises
- broken or fractured bones
- burns or scalds
- bite marks
- scarring
- vomiting
- drowsiness
- seizures
- breathing problems
- swelling
- being extremely sleepy or unconscious
- unusual behaviour, such as being irritable or not feeding properly

Sexual Abuse

When a child or young person is sexually abused, they're forced or tricked into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong. And they might be afraid to tell someone. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online. It's never a child's fault they were sexually abused – it's important to make sure children know this.

There are 2 types of sexual abuse – contact and non-contact abuse. And sexual abuse can happen in person or online. Contact abuse is where an abuser makes physical contact with a child. This includes sexual touching of any part of a child's body, whether they're clothed or not, using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child, forcing a child to take part in sexual activities and making a child undress or touch someone else. Contact abuse can include touching, kissing and oral sex – sexual abuse isn't just penetrative. Non-contact abuse is where a child is abused without being touched by

the abuser. This can be in person or online and includes exposing or flashing, showing pornography, exposing a child to sexual acts, making them masturbate, forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos, making, viewing or distributing child abuse images or videos and forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone.

Signs of sexual abuse:

- Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know
- Having nightmares or bed-wetting
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Self-harm
- Changes in eating habits or developing an eating problem
- Changes in their mood, feeling irritable and angry, or anything out of the ordinary
- Bruises
- Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy
- Spending a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
- Seeming distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
- Being secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- Having lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.
- Dropping hints and clues about the abuse

Monitoring children's attendance

As part of our requirements under the statutory framework and guidance documents, we are required to monitor children's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and no cause for concern. Parents should please inform the setting prior to their children taking holidays or days off, and all sickness should be called into the setting on the day so the management are able to account for a child or young person's absence.

If a child has not arrived at the setting within one hour of their normal start time, the parents will be called to ensure the child is safe and healthy. If the parents are not contactable then the further emergency contacts will be used to ensure all parties are safe.

Where a child is part of a child protection plan, or during a referral process, any absences will immediately be reported to the Local Authority Children's Social Care Team to ensure the child remains safeguarded.

This should not stop parents taking precious time with their children, but enables children's attendance to be logged so we know the child is safe.

Looked After Children

As part of our safeguarding practice, we will ensure our staff are aware of how to keep Looked After Children safe. In order to do this, we ask that we are informed of:

- The legal status of the child (e.g., whether the child is being looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order)
- Contact arrangements for the biological parents (or those with parental responsibility)
- The child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her
- The details of the child's social worker and any other support agencies involved
- Any child protection plan or care plan in place for the child in question.

Extremism and the Prevent Duty

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015), we have a duty to refer any concerns of extremism to the police. This may be a cause for concern relating to a change in behaviour of a child or family member, comments causing concern made to a member of the team (or other persons in the setting) or actions that lead staff to be worried about the safety of a child in their care. Alongside this, we will be alert to any early signs in children and families who may be at risk of radicalisation, on which we will act and document all concerns when reporting further. All staff undertake Prevent Duty training and are familiar with our Prevent Duty Policy.

Online Safety

We take the safety of our children very seriously and this includes their online safety. Though children and young people do not have access to the setting's electronic devices during sessions, it is important that they are protected from harm through our presence on social media and online storage of documents, and by keeping personal devices away during sessions. Children and young people are safeguarded online by:

- Ensuring we have appropriate antivirus and antispyware software on all devices and updating them regularly
- Using approved devices only to record/photograph in the setting
- Using secure communication to send personal and financial information, e.g., secure email and Basecamp
- Storing documents relating to Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest Schools on secure devices and cloud services
- Reporting emails with inappropriate content to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF www.iwf.org.uk)
- Integrating safety discussions into the setting's daily practice by discussing 'rules' deciding together what is safe and what is not safe to do, e.g., talking to children about 'stranger danger' and deciding who is a stranger and who is not
- Keeping passwords safe and secure
- Ensuring staff use IT equipment, e.g., work phones, for matters relating to the children and their education and care and not personal use.

- Asking children and young people with personal phones to keep these away during sessions, unless with express permission from leaders in a space away from the group

Please refer to the Online Safety Policy for further information on this.

Safeguarding Procedures both on LINCIC sites and when working with other agencies

In Case of Disclosure

If any child expresses a wish to talk to a member of staff in private and in confidence, this should be respected and the opportunity for them to do so should be provided as soon as possible. The adult should suggest a place to talk that is private. If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure details must be logged accurately. We ensure our procedures are accurate and up to date, in line with current guidance from the NSPCC, as follows:

1. Listen carefully to what they're saying. Be patient and focus on what you're being told. Try not to express your own views and feelings. If you appear shocked or as if you don't believe them it could make them stop talking and take back what they've said.
2. Give them the tools to talk. If they're struggling to talk to you, show them Childline's letter builder tool. It uses simple prompts to help them share what's happening and how they're feeling.
<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/getting-help/asking-adult-help/#Writesomeonealetter>
3. Let them know they've done the right thing by telling you. Reassurance can make a big impact. If they've kept the abuse a secret it can have a big impact knowing they've shared what's happened.
4. Tell them it's not their fault. Abuse is never a child's fault. It's important they hear, and know, this.
5. Say you'll take them seriously. They may have kept the abuse secret because they were scared, they wouldn't be believed. Make sure they know they can trust you and you'll listen and support them.
6. Don't confront the alleged abuser. Confronting the alleged abuser could make the situation worse for the child.
7. Explain what you'll do next. For younger children, explain you're going to speak to someone who will be able to help. For older children, explain you'll need to report the abuse to someone who can help.
8. Report what the child has told you as soon as possible. Report as soon after you've been told about the abuse so the details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly. It can be helpful to take notes as soon after you've spoken to the child. Try to keep these as accurate as possible.

Reporting Procedures

All staff have a duty to report safeguarding concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the DSL or ADSL as a matter of urgency. If working with other agencies or on other sites, for example with outreach work, LINCIC staff will still report it to LINCIC DSL or ADSL, who will then liaise with the agency or site staff to ensure the chronology is maintained and all information is accurately recorded.

- Staff will report all lower level concerns about children or families to the leader or manager of the session. All safeguarding concerns should be reported to the DSL or ADSL verbally. Where possible, the DSL or ADSL should interview the staff member directly at the earliest opportunity.
- A Record of Concern should be completed by the staff member with the support of the DSL or ADSL. This should be stored in the confidential Safeguarding folder on Basecamp, accessible only by the DSL and ADSL, and on the password-protected computer on which the form is being completed
- If appropriate, the incident will be discussed with the parent/carer. Such discussions will be recorded and the parent will have access to these records on request

As previous, immediately following a disclosure, in other instances of suspicion of abuse or following an incident which causes concern, staff will make a detailed, objective record of all observations and discussions, supported by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Alternative Safeguarding Lead (ADSL), using the Record of Concern form available on Basecamp. Staff should refer to The Checklist and Guidance for Completing Accurate and Detailed Safeguarding Records, also available on Basecamp, outlined below:

1. Complete a Record of Concern Form immediately, if staffing allows, and at the close of the session at the very latest, under the guidance of the DSL or ADSL, contactable by phone if not present.
2. Use the full name and role of the member of staff who observed the incident
3. Use the full name and age of the child(ren) involved
4. Quote exact words using quotation marks
5. Explain the context of the situation, for example, what were they doing or playing when the situation arose?
6. Describe exactly what was done and quote exactly what was said by the member of staff in response to the situation
7. Detail action taken
8. Detail who this information was shared with using full names and include the date and time
9. Immediately work with the DSL or ADSL to start a chronology form
10. Detail if and how a parent was informed and include the date and time
11. Detail if and how another agency or professional was informed if required
12. Ensure the information is shared with the safeguarding officer the same day
13. The safeguarding officer must share this information with another safeguarding officer as soon as possible and within two days. This must be recorded on the Record of Concern Form and the Safeguarding Chronology record.

14. Any further action or concerns must be fully logged on the Safeguarding Chronology form with references to other documents such MASH Forms or emails
15. The Record of Concern, Safeguarding Chronology and all supporting documents, including MASH reports, and emails copied onto a word documents, must be filed on Basecamp in the Safeguarding Leads folder, accessible only to the DSL and ADSL
16. All records must be reviewed and updated by the safeguarding team who will meet monthly
17. The safeguarding lead not directly responsible will check the records of the safeguarding lead involved in the incident
18. All records must be stored in their own folder on the secure safeguarding folder on Basecamp. There will be two sections: one of which will include a folder for active safeguarding concerns which involve situations being monitored, and a folder for records which are no longer active
19. Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about the concern, other than under the direction of the DSL or ADSL

Record of Concern and Safeguarding Chronology Forms

The Record of Concern must contain:

- Child's full name
- Child and date of birth
- Child's address
- Group
- Name, position and contact details of the adult reporting
- Nature of the concern, including quotations of exact words spoken by all parties, details of the incident, names of other persons present and the exact position and type of any injuries or marks seen
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- Date and time that the form was completed
- Signature of adult reporting
- Date and time that the form was received by the DSL or ADSL
- Action taken by the DSL or ADSL
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate)
- Feedback given to the child or staff
- Signature of DSL or ADSL

Once a Record of Concern is opened, a detailed chronology should be completed, summarising all records and communication with a clear reference to each of the documents. This should include:

- Date and time of contact
- Nature of contact
- Key issues discussed
- References to documents/emails
- Name and DSL role of person

Referring to Other Agencies

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with MASH and Ofsted, and/or a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) needs to be initiated. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a child directly to these agencies. All members of staff have a duty to cooperate with other agencies in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Where the Designated Safeguarding Lead believes the child or family to be at risk, they will:

- Contact the Suffolk Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or Norfolk CADS , Children's Advice and Duty Service, to report concerns and seek advice (if it is believed a child is in immediate danger, we will contact the police)
- Inform Ofsted
- Record the information and action taken relating to the concern raised on a Safeguarding Chronology Form
- File all documentation together in a confidential folder on Basecamp
- Speak to the parents (unless advised not do so by MASH)

The DSL will follow up with MASH if a response has not been received. (The timeframe for this will vary according to the severity of the concern.) We will never assume that action has been taken.

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and if, for whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the DSL or ADSL, they should call MASH or the NSPCC and report their concerns anonymously.

Informing parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the MASH/police does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from MASH. All documents are stored on Basecamp in the Safeguarding folder, accessible only by the DSL and ADSL.

Support to families

Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest Schools take every step in their power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff, students and volunteers within the setting.

We continue to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgemental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interest of the child.

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, if appropriate in line with guidance of MASH, with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Reporting to Ofsted

Ofsted will be informed about any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person at the premises who is:

- Living there
- Working there
- Looking after children there

Other serious childcare incidents that Ofsted will be informed about are:

- The death of a child
- Where a person's suitability to look after children might be affected, including involvement with children's social care or the police, or where something significantly affects their health
- events that might affect the smooth running of the childcare, such as a fire or flooding at the premises
- serious accidents, injuries or illnesses to a child
- food poisoning affecting 2 or more children

Pre-Existing Injury or Incident

A pre-existing injury is an injury that the child or young person already has when they arrive at our setting, which occurred while away from our setting. A pre-existing incident is an incident which occurred while away from our setting but which the child or young person is visibly upset about, or which they or their parent or carer report to a member of staff. Staff will report pre-existing injuries or incidents to a manager without delay and on the same day they receive the information.

The member of staff who sees or is informed of the injury or incident should record the objective details as soon as possible, with the parent. This should be recorded virtually using the Pre-Existing Injury or Incident Form, found on Basecamp. A record should be made on the 'body diagram', to detail where an injury is positioned on the child's body. Staff should record any details they are given, by child, young person, parent or carer, of how and when the injury or incident happened, who was present with the child or young person at the time, if medical assistance was sought for injuries and any treatment that was given, or if any other agencies were involved in the incident.

The Pre-Existing Injury or Incident Form must be signed and dated by the parent and staff member. (If the parent is not present, this can be done via email- a typed name and email submission will be considered a signature.) The completed form will be passed onto the DSL or ADSL to be checked and

signed. If the family has Local Authority Children's Social Care Team involvement, the injury will be reported to the child's social worker and a copy of the form must be sent without delay. The form will then be stored in the Safeguarding file on Basecamp. If appropriate, the DSL or ADSL will add the form to the appropriate ongoing case folder on Basecamp and add details from the form to an ongoing Safeguarding Chronology if one exists.

Staff will encourage parents to share details of children's pre-existing injuries with their key people or leaders at drop-off time, without using leading questions and in a neutral tone. This will be done on the same day, by telephone where parents are not present. The DSL or ADSL will consider the injury in the context of other information about the child or young person, such as stage of development, SEND and any pre-existing Safeguarding Chronology.

Employees, Students and Volunteers of the Setting

To ensure cover at all times, we have several designated safeguarding leads across the setting; at least one of these members of staff is on site during sessions. This enables safeguarding to stay high on our priorities at all times. There will always be at least one safeguarding lead on duty at all times our provision is open. This will ensure that prompt action can be taken if concerns are raised. These designated persons receive comprehensive high level safeguarding lead training at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis.

All staff attend safeguarding training (groups 2-3) through an official body and receive initial basic safeguarding training during their induction period. This includes the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children and young people at the setting. Compulsory Internal training is organised for all staff on an annual basis. We also share safeguarding instructions, updates and suggestions throughout the year. This keeps the staff fully up-to-date with policy, procedure and the law. During induction, staff are given contact details for the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer), the Local Authority Children's Services team, MASH and Ofsted to enable them to report any safeguarding concerns, independently, if they feel it necessary to do so.

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We only allow adults access to children and young people following an enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), or following a comprehensive, documented risk assessment while a DBS check is pending during which time they will be in sight and earshot at all times. All staff are subject to a rigorous recruitment procedure to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children and young people; this is outlined in our Safer Recruitment Policy.

We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting and 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. All visitors and contractors will be supervised whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use. As a staff team, we are fully aware of how to safeguard the whole environment and be aware of potential dangers on the nursery boundaries such as drones, Pokémon hotspots, strangers lingering. We ensure the children remain safe at all times.

All staff are aware of the Staff Code of Conduct Policy in place that supports us to monitor staff and changes in their character. Staff are aware of the need to disclose changes to circumstance. All staff have access to and comply with the Whistleblowing Policy which enables them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner

All staff will receive regular supervision meetings where opportunities will be made available to discuss any issues relating to individual children, safeguarding training and any needs for further support. Staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children, whether received before, or at any time during, their employment with us. All staff are made aware of up-to-date safeguarding reporting procedures. Discussion about professional development ensures that the care we provide for children and young people is at the highest level and any areas for staff development are quickly highlighted. Peer observations allow us to share constructive feedback, develop practice and build trust so that staff are able to share any concerns they may have. Any concerns are raised with the DLS or ADSL and dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner.

Allegations Against Adults in Our Setting

In the event that an allegation is made against a member of staff, student or volunteer or any other person who lives or works on the premises, regardless of whether the allegation relates to the setting or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

1. The allegation will be reported to the manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation then this should be reported to another director.
2. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the first instance.
3. Ofsted and the LSCB will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly
4. If, as an individual, you feel this will not be taken seriously or are worried about the allegation getting back to the person in question, then it is your duty to inform the LADO yourself directly
5. A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted, LSCB) to determine how this will be handled
6. The setting will follow all instructions from the LADO, Ofsted and MASH and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
7. Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LADO support and advice
8. The setting reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation
9. All enquiries, external investigations and interviews will be documented and kept in the secure Safeguarding folder on Basecamp for access by the relevant authorities.
10. Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated
11. Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the Local Authority Children's Social Care Team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police, and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The nursery will also notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated

12. All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary re-investigation
13. The setting retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
14. Counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and the parents.

Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO)

Working Together to Safeguard Children refers to local authorities having a designated officer or a team of designated officers involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people that work with children. The LADO has management and oversight of the investigation process from beginning to end following an allegation against people in a position of trust who work with children.

The LADO is not the decision maker – this remains with the employer, but they will provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaise with police and other agencies and monitor progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair and thorough process. The LADO process applies to everyone who works or volunteers with children.

If anyone has concerns about an adult working with a child under the age of 18 that you would like to report, please contact LADO. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a person who works with children and young people including those who work in a voluntary capacity are dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. The framework for managing allegations is set out in statutory guidance contained in Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2018).

Working Positively with Families

Signs of Safety

Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest Schools ensures it closely follows the guidance of the Suffolk Signs of Safety and Wellbeing document (SCC, n.d.). This resource has been created to support the workshop learning programme that is open to everyone working collaboratively with children, young people, and their families across Suffolk. Signs of Safety has been adopted by Suffolk County Council Children and Young People's Services as the overarching practice framework for all of its work with children and families. It describes a purposeful and collaborative way of working with families to secure the best outcomes for children and young people. As we have chosen to apply the approach across all of our services, our programme is called Suffolk Signs of Safety and Wellbeing.

Early Help

Effective early help relies upon us all working together, providing local support as soon as a problem arises at any point in a child's life, from early years through to the teenage years and into early adulthood. Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. By identifying emerging problems, sharing information with other professionals and targeting assessed needs, positive outcomes for children, young people and their families are increased.

Early help is about stopping problems escalating. It relies on accurate early identification of difficulties and early action which is targeted and evaluated. It can involve intensive intervention or lighter touch support and is usually based on a clear support plan, with identified actions, responsibilities and outcomes, which is then reviewed. Early help is a form of targeted activity, with a specific action or actions being put in place to address a defined issue or combination of issues. It therefore forms part of a continuum of activity in supporting families.

At Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest Schools, we understand the value of early help and will work together with families and agencies to facilitate engagement in this.

Ongoing Commitment to Safeguarding

Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest Schools have an ongoing commitment to safeguarding children. The wellbeing of children is at the centre of what we do. As such, all information in this policy is reviewed regularly and updated where appropriate. Details of frameworks and references informing this document are listed below, and copies of blank forms are available on request. The policy is comprehensively reviewed annually, and the safeguarding team meets regularly, with minutes of meetings, and if regulation changes in any way, the team works together to update the policy.

Appendix 2: Other Agencies' Contact Information

(Accurate as of 7th July 2023)

MASH Suffolk Professional Consultation Line on 0345 606 14 99

MASH SUFFOLK referral : Customer First on 0808 800 4005

Local Authority Children's Social Care Team: 0808 800 4005

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 0300 123 2044 LADO@suffolk.gov.uk

LADO Norfolk LADO@norfolk.gov.uk

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

Non-Emergency Police: 101

Emergency Police: 999

Department for Education's Counter Extremism Helpline: 020 7340 7264

NORFOLK CADS (professionals) 0344 800 8021

NORFOLK CADS (public) 0344 800 8020

Norfolk Out of hours: 0344 800 8020

Safeguarding Lead Out of Hours : Anne Emerson-Smith 07821 315440

Confidentiality

In addition to our full confidentiality policy ([link below](#)) it is essential that medical information is kept with the lead of each session, in case of emergency. Each lead has a clipboard folder, that keeps paper dry in wet weather. This folder is kept carefully in a sealed box, which children do not have access to, but staff do. It is not locked away but shut away. At the end of each half term, the register is scanned in and uploaded to Basecamp as a record of our attendance. The paper copy is then shredded and composted. Emergency information is also recorded on Bookwhen as our booking system. Leads and administrators can access Bookwhen at any time, this is password-protected. Between sessions the emergency information is in the Lead's possession, not left on site.

Photographs are only taken of children whose parents have given permission. Only the work phone is used for photographs, and these are backed up to the Google Photos of the Lead of the session. Please see our Data Retention Policy for how long we keep photographs of staff and participants according to the law. Photographs of children no longer attending are deleted from our Google Drive immediately, and if parents request a change in permission then we go through and delete previous photographs. Photographs are kept for 3 years then deleted.

Behaviour Policy

Please see our full policy [here](#).

Policy Overview

At Beccles Forest School we aim to provide a safe and supportive space to meet the wide range of physiological and emotional needs of the children and young people who attend our setting. We believe that behaviour is a form of communication which requires a varied and dynamic response.

As children develop, they learn about boundaries and the difference between more and less respectful, kind behaviour. They consider the views and feelings, and needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects.

The development of these skills requires adult guidance to help encourage and model appropriate behaviours and to offer intervention and support when children struggle with conflict and emotional situations. In these types of situations, staff can help identify and address triggers for the behaviour and help children reflect, regulate and manage their actions.

Please see our related policies:

- Play Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Early Years Learning and Development Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Procedures

We ensure that all basic needs are met by providing warmth, food, and physical and emotional safety.

Children and young people are encouraged to be involved in the development and review of group agreements in ways that are appropriate to their individual learning style and stage of development.

We provide the space to support children's development and allow them to express a range of emotions and find a space to reflect.

We are mindful of children's different experiences and the need for a dynamic and flexible response to children. In order to support children's emotions, we consider the age and context of children's learning and experiences. Certain behaviours are expected as children transition through each stage of the early years, childhood and adolescence. Very young children may prefer solitary or parallel play and find it difficult to share the play resources and play spaces. Older children may enjoy cooperative play and learn to empathise, but not all children find this easy. In addition, children have different experiences at home of boundaries and routines, and of exploring their feelings and how this affects the way they behave.

We give value to the importance of self-regulation by supporting children to develop their own strategies for managing difficult situations. We believe in supporting and guiding children to help them develop skills to manage their own feelings rather than encouraging dependence on adult directed 'discipline'. We help children to understand the effect of their actions and never give warnings or punishments which offer no understanding for the child.

We value the importance of self-reliance and a dynamic response to conflict resolution. When conflict arises, we only intervene when required and if necessary, listening and encouraging calm communication and problem-solving, making the most of the valuable learning opportunity that an initial situation of conflict can offer in terms of social understanding and development. Whenever appropriate, we use such opportunities to allow children to reflect upon and resolve conflict as a group.

We are constantly mindful of our safeguarding and safety policies to ensure that any behaviour is supported while maintaining the safety of other children.

Children are regularly reminded of our key safety and behaviour expectations – usually at the start of each session (and during, if required). If a safety issue arises, we talk about this explicitly and work with children to develop a group consensus to clarify appropriate boundaries to be respected.

In such instances (or in any near-miss situation), an Incident Report will be completed by leaders (working closely with other session staff) and this will be shared and reviewed with the whole team to develop future professional practice. Parents may also be informed and engaged in this process.

We believe that children flourish when they know how they and others are expected to behave. Children gain respect through interaction with caring adults who act as good role models, show them respect and value their individual personalities. Our setting actively promotes British Values and encourages positive and caring behaviour, providing an environment where children learn to respect themselves, other people and their surroundings. We ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the policy and we provide opportunities for support and reflection.

Understanding

We believe that there is always a reason for less desirable behaviour, and it is our responsibility and concern to identify that reason in partnership with both children and parents. Examples of this could be a new baby, moving home, parental separation and illness. This may result in bullying or outward aggression to other children.

A child's key person will ensure that strategies are put into place and communicated to other staff members to ensure a consistent and positive approach which can be monitored and reviewed in cooperation with parents. Incident forms are filled in for each incident to provide evidence and for monitoring.

How a particular type of behaviour is approached will depend on the child's age, level of development and the circumstances surrounding the behaviour.

Children need to develop non-aggressive strategies to enable them to stand up for themselves so that adults and other children listen to them. They need to be given opportunities to release their

feelings. If a child requires help to develop positive behaviour, every effort will be made to provide for their needs

Through partnership with parents and formal observations, staff make every effort to identify any behavioural concerns and the causes of that behaviour. From these observations and discussions an individual development plan is implemented.

We use a dynamic assessment approach to assess what may be causing a child to feel angry or upset and support the children using a range of methods.

We always ensure the following is true:

3.59 Providers must not give or threaten corporal punishment or any punishment which could negatively affect a child's well-being. Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure that corporal punishment is not given by anyone who is caring for or is in regular contact with a child, or by anyone living or working in the premises where care is provided. Any early years provider who does not meet these requirements commits an offence. A person will not be considered to have used corporal punishment (and therefore will not have committed an offence), if physical intervention was taken to avert immediate danger of personal injury to any person (including the child) or to manage a child's behaviour if absolutely necessary.

3.60 Providers must keep a record of any occasion where physical intervention is used, and parents and/or carers must be informed on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

Ongoing Commitment to Understanding Children's Behaviour

Behaviour is communication, which requires a varied and dynamic response. We are committed to ensuring that this understanding permeates throughout Beccles Forest Schools and Learning in Nature CIC, so that we can continue to provide a safe and supportive space that meets the wide range of physiological and emotional needs of the children and young people who attend our setting.

What do we do if a child behaves in a way that hurts other children or themselves?

What do we do if a child picks on another child or other children persistently?

We always listen to the children's side of the events, and offer a safe space to be heard. We avoid passing judgement on actions, instead we encourage children to speak about how the behaviour may have made them feel. We find that with a safe circle, with all the parties present, and an adult to advocate for everyone, we can usually find a middle ground on which to calmly discuss what has happened and what should happen next. It might take time as emotions are likely running high, so we might share a drink in the fire circle as we talk, or even a snack, to do something together. If you let people with heightened emotions speak then they often come to a better understanding of how they feel.

Telling children to separate only postpones the issue, so we avoid making decisions on their behalf. We never say 'calm down' or 'just keep away from each other' as these tactics create division rather than find a way through together. If children are unable to ascertain how another child is feeling, we try things like "Do you think X looks happy when you say that to him? Can you think why he might be unhappy?" or "Can you hear how X's voice sounds a little higher than usual? Why might that be?" to try to ask children to think for themselves. There are occasions where we cannot find a middle ground and we have to try again later. In that case, we would ask that they may have words between them but they must not hurt each other, as we cannot allow that. If they agree then they may go and play again.

Suggestions, Concerns and Complaints Policy

Please see our full policy [here](#).

Policy Statement

At Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest Schools, we believe that children, young people, parents and carers and adult attendees are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We really value feedback, as it shapes all we do, and we welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting.

Because of this, we anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly, by an informal approach. However, if this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We strive to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

In line with the requirements of all settings, we keep a written record of any complaints that reach Stage 2 and onwards, including details of the outcome. We investigate written complaints relating to how they are fulfilling the EYFS requirements, and notify the person who made the complaint of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint. This will be made available to parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.

We also make available to parents and/or carers the details about how to contact Ofsted if they believe we are not meeting the EYFS requirements.

Concerns and Complaints Procedure

Concerns and Complaints: Stage 1

Any parent/carer who has a concern about an aspect of our setting's provision should talk over their concerns with either of our managing co-directors, first of all.

Po Midwinter
(Early Years Manager, Forest School
Manager and Co-Director)

07708 619251
po.learninginnaturecic@gmail.com

Rach Whitwood
(Administrative Manager and
Co-Director)

rachel4learninginnature@gmail.com

Most complaints will be resolved amicably and informally at this stage. We record the issue, and how it was resolved, in the attendee's file. We aim to discuss any concerns within 7 days of their referral.

Concerns and Complaints: Stage 2

If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent should move to Stage 2 of the Concerns and Complaints Procedure by putting the concerns or complaints in writing. A Complaints Form is available, and will be provided to parents where complaints have not been resolved as Stage 1. For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints themselves, a Complaints Form may be completed with the support of a managing co-director and signed by the parent.

Our setting stores all information relating to written complaints from parents in the attendee's personal file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, our managers may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file, designated for this complaint, in addition to the personal file.

When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the appropriate manager will provide a written review of the outcome and offer to speak with the parent to discuss the outcome. We inform parents of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of them making the complaint.

When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points, including the conclusion, which is made available to Ofsted on request.

Concerns and Complaints: Stage 3

If the parent or attendee is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they must request a meeting with our company directors, listed above. The parent is entitled to have a friend or partner present, if they prefer. The session manager will have the support of the wider management team.

An agreed written record of the discussion is made, as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, we log the summative points and store them in the child's or attendee's personal file.

Concerns and Complaints: Stage 4

If, at the Stage 3 meeting, the parent, carer or attendee cannot reach agreement with us, we will invite an external mediator to help to settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers, but can help us to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.

The mediator will keep all discussions confidential. They can hold separate meetings with our staff and the parent, carer or attendee, if this is decided to be helpful. The mediator may keep an agreed

written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice they give. We will keep an agreed written record of any communications and store this in the attendee's personal file.

Concerns and Complaints: Stage 5

When the mediator has concluded their investigations, a final meeting between the parent, carer or attendee and our company directors is held. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediator's advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediator is present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached.

A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, is made. Everyone that is present at this meeting will sign the record and receive a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

Signposting

Where they feel it is necessary, parents and carers may approach Ofsted directly at any stage of this Concerns and Complaints Procedure. In addition, where the parent or carer believes there to be a possible breach of the setting's registration requirements, it is essential to involve Ofsted as the registering and inspection body with a duty to ensure the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are adhered to (see Appendix 1).

Parents can complain to Ofsted about Early Years Settings by telephone or in writing at:

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Mail: Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Phone: 0300 123 1231

Parents can complain to Ofsted about Childcare Providers by telephone or in writing at:

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Mail: Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Phone: 0300 123 4666

Safeguarding

If a child appears to be at risk, we follow the procedures of the local safeguarding partners. In these cases, we follow our Safeguarding Policy. Both the parent or carer and our setting are informed and our Designated Safeguarding Lead, or Alternate Safeguarding Lead, works with Ofsted or the local safeguarding partners to ensure a proper investigation of the complaint, followed by appropriate action.

Data Handling

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) can be contacted at any time during the Concerns and Complaints Procedure where you have made a complaint about the way your data is being handled and remain dissatisfied after raising your concern with us. For further information about how we

handle your data, please refer to our Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy, our Information Sharing Policy and our Transfer of Records to School Policy, provided to you when you registered your child at our setting.

The ICO can be contacted at:

Mail: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Live Chat: [ICO Live Chat](#)

Phone: 0303 123 1113

Records

All records of concerns and complaints reaching Stage 2 or beyond in relation to our setting are kept for at least 3 years. These will include names, dates, details concerning the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed, third parties involved in the resolution and the outcome of investigations and discussions. These records will be made available for Ofsted inspectors to view on request. The outcomes of all concerns and complaints reaching Stage 2 or beyond will be available to parents, carers and attendees.

Ongoing Commitment to Complaints

At Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest Schools, we understand that sometimes circumstances mean that parents, carers and attendees have concerns about our setting. We are always open to taking these concerns on board. We consistently review our Suggestions, Concerns and Complaints Policy to ensure that any concerns are dealt with in the most effective manner.

Appendix 2: Complaints Form

Complaints Form

Recording Form for Complaints Reaching Stage 2

Parents/attendees can complete this form and **submit it by email to the manager handling the complaint** in the event that a complaint is not resolved amicably at Stage 1.

Information Required	Enter Information Here
Name	
Name of attendee, if different, and relationship to them	
Group/Session	
Contact Details <i>E.g., phone number, email, address</i>	
Today's date	
Approximate date upon which the concern was first raised	
Name of Manager handling the complaint	
Names of other staff involved	
Any other agencies involved in the issue	

Information Required	Enter Information Here
<p>Please give FULL details about the concern</p> <p><i>(Please include a detailed summary of the issue, when you first became aware of the problem, the names of persons involved and their roles, if known, how you/your child have been affected, what you think could have been handled differently and what needs to happen now to put things right.)</i></p>	
<p>Final outcome of complaint</p>	
<p>Complainant's signature</p>	

Information Required	Enter Information Here
Date	
FOR LINCIC USE:	
Manager receiving complaint	
Date of acknowledgement	

Policies and Procedures

All of our policies and procedures are on Google Drive, and links are here for all of them. This means whenever you read the policy it is the most up to date version.

[W](#) [Absence Policy \(April 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Accident, Injury and First Aid Policy \(April 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Behaviour Policy \(April 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Bookings Policy \(April 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [British Values Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Children's Records Policy \(April 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [COSHH Policy \(September 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Early Years Learning and Development Policy \(May 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Ecological Impact Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Equality and Inclusion Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Extreme Weather Policy \(October 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Fire Safety and Evacuation Policy \(April 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Food Hygiene Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Forest School Activities Risk Assessment Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Gifted and Talented Policy \(May 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures Policy \(April 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Health and Medication Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Health, Illness and Infection Control Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Induction Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Information Sharing Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)

[W](#) [Manual Handling Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)

- [W Missing Persons Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Online Safety Policy \(April 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Parental Involvement Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Planning and Observation Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Play Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Prevent Duty Policy \(April 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Privacy Notice \(Attendees\) \(May 2025\)](#)
- [W Privacy Notice \(Staff\) \(May 2025\)](#)
- [W Ratios and Supervision of Children Policy \(October 2024\).docx](#)
- [W Retention of Records Grid \(May 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Risk Assessment and Safety of Premises Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy \(October 2024\).docx](#)
- [W Safer Recruitment Policy \(October 2024\).docx](#)
- [W Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Staff Code of Conduct Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Staff Training and Professional Development Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Student and Apprenticeship Policy \(April 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Suggestions, Concerns and Complaints Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Supervision of Staff Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)
- [W The Role of the Key Person and Settling In Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Transfer of Records to School Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)
- [W Whistleblowing Policy \(July 2025\).docx](#)

Landowner's Agreement

We have a Common Law Tenancy between Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Fenland Charity Trust for the Grazing Marshes that we rent. The tenancy currently runs to 2026.

Ecological Impact Assessment

	Ground Layer: Fungi and small plants	Field Layer: Nettle and bramble height	Shrub Layer: Shrubs and small trees	Canopy Layer: Tall trees	Invertebrates: Spiders, snails, worms, insects, etc.	Nesting Birds	Animals: Mammals, amphibians, reptiles, etc.	Water in Dykes
Climbing Trees	Only affected when dismounting LOW	Only affected when dismounting LOW	May be disturbed MEDIUM	May be disturbed MEDIUM	May be disturbed LOW	May be disturbed MEDIUM	May be disturbed LOW	No correlation LOW
Campfire and Fire Building	Footfall and heat from fire HIGH	Footfall and heat from fire MEDIUM	May damage with smoke LOW	May damage with smoke LOW	If using same pit LOW	May disturb with smoke LOW	May disturb with smoke LOW	Use water from dyke to extinguish LOW
Shelter Building	Footfall and poles, etc. may disturb MEDIUM	Footfall and poles, etc. may disturb MEDIUM	If used in process MEDIUM	Use for ropes LOW	Footfall LOW	Noise and vibrations LOW	Noise and vibrations LOW	No correlation LOW
Toilets	Minimal ground covered and urine emptied onto trees further away LOW	Trimmed back for access LOW	No correlation LOW	No correlation LOW	No correlation LOW	No correlation LOW	No correlation LOW	Particular care to be taken that toilets do NOT affect dyke- urine emptied 10m+ from water HIGH
Minibeast Area	Compacted through use MEDIUM	Trimmed back for access MEDIUM	No correlation LOW	No correlation LOW	Disturbed turning over logs- must be replaced precisely HIGH	No correlation LOW	Disturbed turning over logs- must be replaced precisely HIGH	No correlation LOW

Walking, Playing and Footfall	Try to stick to paths HIGH	Regular passing prevents wild growth HIGH	Branches broken when passing MEDIUM	No correlation LOW	May disturb LOW	May disturb LOW	May disturb LOW	Paddling and throwing things into dyke may disturb LOW
Noise Level	No correlation LOW	No correlation LOW	No correlation LOW	No correlation LOW	May disturb LOW	May disturb LOW	May disturb LOW	No correlation LOW

Woodland Management Plan

Area	Management Actions	Monitoring
Grey Willows	Monitor for diseases, prune and cut back longer branches when needed. Use a tree surgeon for the canopy layer if needed. Check for damage from climbing or wind. Watch for over-use for crafts, etc.	Termly by detailed observation and maintenance. Invite tree surgeon if concerned. Track with photos of areas and compare. Measure heights of branches and record.
Wild Willows	Monitor for disease, prune and cut back any dead branches. Check for damage from climbing or wind – cut back if needed. Use a tree surgeon for the canopy layer if needed. Watch for over use for crafts, etc – leave time to rest	
Ground Layer	Check ecological impact and rotate areas and paths when the ground layer becomes too compacted. Monitor for poisonous plants and make all staff aware of species with pictures and locations. Add these to risk assessments.	Yearly, Termly and every session. Poisonous plant growth is alerted to all at the start of all sessions.
Shrub/Field Layer	Cut back nettles and grass around paths, fire circles and play areas during summer months if they pose a risk. Leave to die back naturally in the winter months. Encourage rewilding of these sites. Introduce new paths in the winter months if needed. Monitor for poisonous plants and make all staff aware of species with pictures and locations. Add these to risk assessments. Plant new trees where applicable.	Termly and during sessions - staff to use set up / pack down time for site maintenance. Volunteer work parties.
Flatland and No-Go Area	Leave to rewild	Year-round
Pond	Introduce new plants where applicable. Monitor wildlife in the summer months through pond dipping with the children. Introduce more plant growth, habitat piles and rocks around the outside. Trim back overgrowth.	Termly and yearly by staff and participants.
Dyke	Monitor for invasive species of pond weed or algae. Inform landowner if present. Avoid contamination with products used on site and from and toilets on site. Do not use the water from here, other than to extinguish fire.. Monitor wildlife present through pond dipping. Test water occasionally.	Termly and ongoing - haul items out at the end of sessions.

Beyond the site management - we use Suma products to refill hand wash and washing up liquid, we refill all water bottles including hand wash and drinking water. We compost waste greens, cardboard, paper and food. We aim to buy local produce where the budget allows and we aim for low food miles and less packaging where possible.

Certificate of Insurance

We have full insurance for the Forest School- please ask to see our most recent certificate if you need to.