



Safeguarding Policy

1. Purpose and Scope:

The primary goal of this safeguarding policy is to ensure the welfare, safety, and protection of all children, staff, and visitors participating in Forest School activities. Everyone has a right to safety and well-being, and this policy provides guidelines to uphold these principles.

2. Policy Principles:

- **Child-Centered Approach:** The well-being and safety of children is our primary concern.
- **Right to Protection:** All children, irrespective of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion, or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- **Shared Responsibility:** Safeguarding is a collective responsibility. All staff, volunteers, parents, and children play essential roles in ensuring safety.

3. Roles and Responsibilities:

- **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):** This person is specially trained and is the primary contact for any concerns related to safeguarding. The DSO ensures all allegations are dealt with promptly and appropriately. The DSO for Ambleford School of Rural Skills is Emily Bradshaw.
- **Staff and Volunteers:** Everyone is responsible for understanding and following the safeguarding policy, reporting any concerns to the DSO.

4. Recruitment:

- All staff and volunteers undergo thorough vetting processes (Enhanced DBS), including background checks, to ensure they are suitable to work with children.
- Regular training will be conducted on safeguarding practices.
- Volunteers may assist for up to 3 sessions without a check but always working under direct supervision of a member of staff.

5. General principles:

At Ambleford School of Rural Skills we will adopt the following general principles in order to keep children safe and adults safe from accusations:

Physical boundaries will be explained to children at the beginning of a session and games and activities will be used to help them develop their understanding of the boundary area.

Boundaries will be clearly marked and children will be told that they should not leave the area unless an adult has given them permission.

- Children will be advised of what to do in the event that a stranger enters the woods to ensure that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

- Supporting adults should always work in a minimum of two; there will never be sole working with a single child.
- Supporting adults should always stay within sight of other adults (see also 'Toilet Procedure' below).
- Supporting adults should never be left alone with the group. The Forest School leader should always be present.
- All supporting adults should receive a safeguarding induction (this is the responsibility of Ambleford School of Rural Skills for any adults who work/ volunteer for this organisation)
- Children should be supervised at all times: 'supervision' means that at least one responsible adult can see or hear a child.

6. Toilet procedure:

Ambleford School of Rural Skills has a composting toilet that can be used during sessions. The leader will ensure all children know where the toilet is and how it works. All children will inform a member of staff or volunteer if they need to use the toilet facilities and this person will monitor their safe use. If an adult accompanies a child to the toilet, they must not enter the toilet with the child and must remain within sight of other staff at all times.

7. Reporting Concerns:

- Anyone with concerns about a child's safety or welfare should report these concerns to the DSO without delay.
- Confidentiality will be maintained at all times, sharing information only with those who need to know.
- If a child is in immediate danger, local authorities or the police should be contacted.

8. Responding to Disclosures:

- Listen carefully to the child without showing disbelief.
- Do not promise secrecy. Explain that you need to tell someone who can help.
- Record the conversation as soon as possible, noting the date, time, place, and any noticeable non-verbal behavior. Use only the exact words of the child, do not add interpretation. This should be recorded on Appendix 1 where at all possible (see below).

9. Training and Awareness:

- Staff and volunteers will receive regular training on safeguarding.
- Children will be educated about their rights, how to express concerns, and whom to approach for help.

10. Code of Conduct:

- Maintain a safe and open environment.
- Physical contact should be appropriate and conducted in an open environment.
- Relationships between staff/volunteers and children should remain professional at all times.

11. Partnerships with Parents:

- Parents play a critical role in safeguarding. Regular communication between the school and parents will ensure a collaborative approach.
- Parents should be informed of the safeguarding policy and procedures.

12. Review and Monitoring:

- The safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually or after significant incidents to ensure relevance and effectiveness.
- Feedback will be taken from staff, children, parents, and volunteers during the review process.

13. Policy Availability:

- This safeguarding policy will be available on the Ambleford website.

Conclusion:

At Forest School, we are dedicated to creating an environment where children can learn, grow, and thrive safely. By upholding this safeguarding policy, we ensure that the well-being of every child is prioritised, and any potential threats to their safety are addressed swiftly and effectively.

Appendix 1 – Child Protection Form

Please use clear print.

Your name:

Date/Time of incident/conversation:

Name of individual(s) involved in incident/conversation:

Details of incident/ conversation

Brief outline of actions/advice taken or given, including any other services/people contacted at this point

Was the young person informed that this information would have to be passed on?

Details of any witnesses to incident/conversation including names:

Date form was completed:

Signature: (person reporting the incident)

