

Environment Policies and Procedures

Nature Explorers works with the Forest School Principles and sustainability guidelines to care and support the environment of Forest school.

Nature Explorers considers that the care and protection of the Forest School environment is the responsibility of all participants.

Sustainability Policy

The natural environment is key to Forest School. Building a connection to nature will help ensure care and respect for the earth. Nature Explorers aims to maintain a robust environmental and sustainably aware teaching environment. It is of the upmost importance that the Forest School site is managed responsibly and that all participants are encouraged to be involved with this.

Sustainability Procedures

By carrying out a site risk assessment every 6 weeks, Nature Explorers will monitor our environmental impact on the site. We will minimise waste by using natural resources where possible and preferably locally sourced materials. We will remove all waste from the site and dispose of it using the appropriate waste disposal units. We will only have fire in the designated fire pit area or in the stove to minimise damage to the ground and surrounding plants and trees. By using the entire country park we will minimise the degradation of our base, using the base for gathering and crafts, and the wider park for activities like den-building.

As our site is within a public venue, and inside an area of historical significance, Nature Explorers will strive to follow a leave no trace principle when outside of our base. We will remove any materials that we carry in, both natural and artificial waste, and we will replace anything that we move, for example logs and branches after den building. On our own site, we will not leave anything artificial in site of the village and visitor's centre - all equipment will be stored away after each session except for natural ropes above the shelter area.

Our participants are actively encouraged to take responsibility for looking after their forest school site and spend a certain amount of each session discussing how to manage this. This can be achieved by creating a sense of community among the participants and allowing them to have a significant role in designing and maintaining the site.

Woodland Management Policy

Forest School must balance with the integrity of each eco-system. Nature Explorers seeks to protect, maintain and improve the biodiversity of the site.

Woodland Management Procedures

The land is owned by the West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village Trust and is managed by St. Edmundsbury Borough Council. The Heritage Service management is the main provider of care for the area.

An Arboriculture officer is employed by St. Edmundsbury Borough Council who looks after the management policy for the authority on a four-year plan. Onsite visuals are completed by Heritage staff. All documents are kept by the officer and daily checks at West Stow by staff would record concerns and incidents.

West Stow staff deal with the day to day management of the park and the Arboriculture Officer deals with the longer-term plans and major works for example tree surgery.

The participants are able to care for their environment on our site by improving their ID knowledge and familiarising themselves with local wildlife at West Stow. We are permitted to make habitats for wildlife, like bird boxes, and maintain and survey these ourselves. We can also make an impact by picking up litter and helping to plant trees and coppice trees in the country park. By developing a deep connection and respect with nature, the participants will feel a sense of pride and responsibility for their forest school site.

Nature Explorers is permitted to use the site within the Anglo-Saxon Village after agreeing to a one-year contract with St Edmundsbury Borough Council. This relationship will continue to be evaluated at regular meetings with the management team at West Stow.

Date policy completed: 5th January 2019

Completed by: S Holland

Date review due: 5th January 2020