

Equal Opportunities Policies and Procedures

Nature Explorers believes that the Forest School ethos nurtures and fosters resilience, creativity, confidence and independence in all learners and that all learners deserve an equal chance to be part of programmes. Our projects open to all groups and individuals on condition that they keep to the boundaries that ensure their safety. It is the responsibility of all employees, members and supporters to enforce this policy at all times.

Nature Explorers welcomes all people irrespective of gender, race, culture, colour, creed, sexual orientation, age, class, religion, political belief or disability. We will not tolerate any form of prejudiced or offensive behaviour although we understand that some participants may carry prejudiced or offensive views.

Anti-bullying and 'Prevent' Policies

Whilst we understand that some participants may arrive at Nature Explorers holding prejudiced or offensive views, we will not tolerate behaviour that allows any member of the group, or of society in general, to feel ostracized, intimidated, or inadequate.

In line with Section 26 of the Counter-terrorism and Security Act (2015), Nature Explorers acknowledges that certain societal conditions lead to dis-enfranchisement and will exercise due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Anti-bullying Procedures

Nature Explorers will not tolerate any form of prejudiced, offensive or intimidating behaviour. All participants, parents and volunteers will be expected to adhere to the Behavioural Management Policy and to challenge any discriminatory behaviour. All members are expected to model positive behaviour and anyone who is found to be acting in a manner contrary to this will immediately be asked to leave Nature Explorers, and will not be welcome to return. Nature Explorers believes that an inclusive ethos encourages positive behaviour. Any incidents occurring will be recorded by the Forest School Leader, and investigated further. Anyone suspecting incidents of bullying must report it to the Forest School Leader initially, who will decide what action is required. Depending on the severity of the situation, it may be necessary to inform the parents/guardians of the child, or the relevant authorities, including local Social Services or the Police.

'Prevent' Procedures

PREVENT is part of the Home Office and the Police counter-terrorism strategy and aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism by working with individuals and communities to address issues before they become a criminal matter to stop people moving from extremism into terrorist-related activity. There are various societal conditions that may lead to disillusionment or dis-enfranchisement with society, including religious beliefs and customs, conditions at home and exposure to media coverage of violent and extreme behaviour. If any participant or adult has any suspicions, they must immediately notify the Safeguarding Lead (Forest School Leader).

The ethos of Forest School supports community cohesion with the implementation of all of the six principles. In particular, the use of learner-centred processes creates a community for development and learning. Forest School encourages holistic development and relationship building, both with fellow participants, and with the environment around them. It promotes a sense of responsibility to care for the local wildlife and to work together, providing opportunities for risk-taking, teamwork and problem-solving.

If the Forest School leader becomes concerned about the mental health of a member of the group, they will follow the Safeguarding Procedures, ensuring careful observation and recording those observations. If relevant and necessary, the parents of the individual will be consulted.

Behaviour Management Policy (Conduct Policy)

Nature Explorers accepts the feelings and emotions affecting conduct at Forest School and works to help learners understand, celebrate and manage those feelings as appropriate to themselves and others.

Behaviour Management Procedures

There are various factors which affect the behaviour and conduct of Forest School participants, including direct factors such as the weather (too hot, cold, wet etc) and hunger or thirst. Other factors include tiredness, or any ongoing pain from an injury, length of time attending Forest School sessions, and any outside factors like problems at home or with friends.

The conduct of individual Forest School participants can impact on the rest of the group's learning and development in a positive or negative way. Positive or negative behaviour can affect the dynamic of the group. Continued negativity can erode the resilience of others, while positive energy can enhance learning and development. An individual's conduct can impact on their own learning and development by affecting their experiences at Forest School. By not participating fully, they miss out on the social benefits and the sense of community and teamwork.

Nature Explorers will strive to encourage and maintain appropriate conduct at Forest School in a positive way. Where possible, the situation will be up to the participants to resolve, but if necessary, the Forest School Leader may step in to mediate. We will use positive strategies for handling inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for their age and stage of development. By modelling positive behaviour, the Forest School Leader and any volunteers will be setting an example of the desired conduct at Forest School. Children will be supported to understand their feelings, and every effort will be made to help them develop self-esteem and confidence. At no point will a child be humiliated or shamed for undesirable behaviour. If their behaviour is endangering them or any other children or adults, we may remove them from the group for everybody's safety. Staff will only raise their voices when the Health and Safety of members of the group is at risk.

At Forest School, in order to work safely and take appropriate risks, it is necessary for the children and adults present to be aware of what is expected of them. Every activity will be explained and will be immediately stopped if there are any incidences that jeopardise the safety of any of the participants. Nature Explorers will promote an environment where children feel able to confide in a staff member and know that shared information will be dealt with sensitively and acted upon as appropriate. Inappropriate behaviour will be challenged in a calm but assertive manner. Initially, they will be offered alternative options to redirect them elsewhere. During the session, there will be a time for reflection, during which the children will be encouraged to discuss their feelings about their own or their peer's behaviour.

Any incidents that warrant further action will be recorded and, if necessary, shared with parents or the relevant local authorities.

Inclusion and Access Policy

Nature Explorers works with participants and their carers to ensure that all have equal access to the Forest School site and to the ethos of Forest School. The Forest School leader will work to ensure children with special educational needs are able to experience the six principles of Forest School.

Inclusion and Access Procedures

The ethos of Nature Explorers will be communicated to potential participants and their carers via email. It will also be available to view on the website at www.natureexplorers.org.uk

Nature Explorers operates from a site within West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village, which is very accessible to wheelchair/pushchair users. Any condition that may affect participation must be explained to the Forest School Leader before taking part in a session. Those participants who may need extra help with mobility or medical needs will need to have a parent or carer with them. All efforts will be made to adapt the sessions to be inclusive to the abilities of those in the group.

Date policy completed: 5th January 2019

Completed by: S Holland

Date review due: 5th January 2020