



## **Our School in the Woods Policies: Updated December 2021**

Who we are:

In the policies we refer to Core Members and Practitioners. Our Core Members are responsible for the management of the organisation – as well as delivering care and learning in the woods. Practitioners always work alongside a Core Member and help us deliver Our School in the Woods.

Contacting us:

Our School in the Woods is a not-for-profit organisation.

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Our website is: [www.ourschoolinthewoods.co.uk](http://www.ourschoolinthewoods.co.uk)

Our Facebook account is: [ourschoolinthewoods](https://www.facebook.com/ourschoolinthewoods)

Our Core Members are:

- Ellen Tickle (Co-director and designated safeguarding officer, telephone: 07305182101)
- Amanda Williamson (Co-director)

Our School in the Woods offers nature-inspired outdoor learning to 5-12 year old children in Paupers' Woods. Our approach is to make learning fun, hands on and to use the natural resources on offer in the woods where we are based. We aim to provide a loving environment in which each child's innate desire to learn is encouraged to thrive. We aim to foster curiosity, confidence, creativity, and compassion in our children. A key aspect of our approach includes the use of non-violent communication (NVC) and Thomas Gordon's parent effectiveness training (PET).



The core values that underpin our approach:

- Nature connection
- Needs based focus to our communication
- Playful, hands-on learning
- Compassion and empathy
- High expectations of how we all behave to each other
- Building relationships and mutual respect
- Structures that foster safety and community

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### 1. Health & Safety for All

Running our activities in woods brings real benefits. However, working predominately outdoors means children and practitioners encounter some risk. We appreciate that these challenges are themselves part of the learning process. However, it is vital that we hold these risks in a safe way – ensuring that both our children and practitioners are kept safe from harm.

Our School in the Woods has a working understanding of Health and Safety law and ensures that appropriate policies and procedures are in place, allowing our Practitioners to facilitate acceptable risk opportunities for the learners "appropriate to their needs and experience". For definitive guidance on Health and Safety in the UK we refer to the Health and Safety Executive website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk). The Health and Safety at Work Act was originally written to support industry workplaces. However, it is still applicable to all workplaces including Our School in the Woods. It is important to remember that these duties are to be met as far as reasonably practicable. Much of the debate around health and safety issues is about 'reasonability' – which is subjective to each individual. What may be reasonable to one person may be unreasonable to another. The following Core Team duties are taken from the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 outlines the duties employees have to the employer and each other.

Our School in the Woods Core Member's duties to practitioners and children include:

- Deciding what could cause harm whilst working for Our School in the Woods and the precautions to stop it. This is part of the risk assessment process.
  - Explaining simply and clearly how risks will be controlled and tell them who is responsible for this. These are documented in the Our School in the Woods risk assessments.
  - Ensuring practitioners bring with them the appropriate equipment and protective clothing (PPE) they need to run the agreed activities and events.
  - Providing hand washing facilities and setting up, checking and cleaning the compost toilets on site.
  - Providing adequate first-aid facilities.
  - Reporting injuries, diseases, and dangerous incidents at work to the HSE.
- Having appropriate insurance that covers all practitioners and children for



tasks undertaken. Display a hard copy or electronic copy of the current insurance certificate at the entrance to the woods.

Our School in the Woods Practitioners' duties to the organisation include:

- Following the training they have received when using any work items, tools and equipment.
- Taking reasonable care of their own and other people's health and safety.
- Co-operating with each other on health and safety.
- Reporting to one of the Our School in the Woods' Core Members if they think the work or inadequate precautions are putting anyone's health and safety at serious risk.

Taking care of our children

A safe site

- The Paupers' Wood site has been thoroughly risk assessed and copies of this are on our website. Hard copies of all risk assessments are stored in a file on-site. Any other site to be used for Our School in the Woods will be risk assessed prior to any work commencing and the Site Risk Assessment to be made available to all Practitioners.
- Dynamic safety checks will be made on activity site before each session. These safety checks will scan for: trip hazards, 'sharps', boundaries, canopy assessment (especially after high winds), checking the fire area is safely constructed, checking that all tools are stored appropriately and, if needed, stored safely and out of reach of unsupervised access by children.

Safe activities

All activities will have been risk assessed. If the activity is new or different to RA a Dynamic Risk Assessment shall be completed before the activity takes place. A form for this is in the OSITW resources folder.

- At every Our School in the Woods event or activity there will be at least one practitioner who is first aid trained.
- Forms will be available in the procedures file for the reporting of accidents and incidents.
- Equipment is checked regularly, stored well and any damaged equipment will be removed to be mended or discarded.



- The layouts of activity sites will allow young people and adults to move safely between activities.
- All dangerous materials, including medicines are stored out of reach of young people.
- Young people will not have unsupervised access to any hazardous materials or tools.
- No one will walk about with hot liquids or place them on a surface where they may be easily knocked over.

#### Safe working practices

- All practitioners are aware of the system for arrivals and departures.
- A register of both adults and young children is to be completed so that an accurate record of all those present is available in any emergency.
- A correctly stocked first aid kit is always available.
- Fires blankets are available.
- Large equipment is erected with care and checked regularly.
- Activities and tools used are always with the correct ratios, procedures and supervision, these will always be age and maturity appropriate.

#### Safely working in inclement weather

- Minor risks associated with being outside in all weathers will be mitigated by children wearing or having, seasonally appropriate clothing, food and drink.
- Practitioners will bring a welfare bag (or stored in the cabin) with them with spare gloves, hats, jumpers and leggings. These are for emergency use only.
- Risks associated with getting too cold or getting over exposed, will be mitigated by having access to a variety of shelters. These might include the cabin in Paupers' Wood or tarp structures.

#### Cancellation and site closedown

- Greater risks of injury and harm can occur if the weather becomes unusually severe, including extremely heavy rain; sleet, ice and snow; strong winds. In severe weather, if there are not good enough accessible shelters, practitioners will consider whether to shorten or cancel the session.
- If wind speed is forecast to be at Beaufort Wind scale 7 (average wind speed over or above 32mph but consideration of gusts also considered). Practitioners will consider shortening or cancelling the session.



- If there is a high likelihood of flooding, practitioners will consider the risks associated with the session continuing and the journeys to and from home. In these instances, practitioners will consider shortening or cancelling the session.
- The decision to cancel should ideally be made by 6pm on the day before the session is due to run. However, in the interests of safety, practitioners may cancel a session at any point, including during the session itself.
- Our School in the Woods are unable to refund the costs of a session to children or the client if cancellation takes place due to adverse weather conditions.

## **2. Safe arrivals and Departures**

Arrivals and departures are a key area to focus on to promote safety. For children this is the moment that the duty of care is handed over from one responsible adult to another. Especially for children it is essential that this transition is handled seamlessly. At Our School in the Woods we do this by asking practitioners to follow the following procedures:

### Arrivals

Our School in the Woods cannot accept children and vulnerable adults unless there are at least two practitioners present.

- One practitioner will supervise the children who have arrived and lead introductory games or activities.
- One practitioner will liaise with parents / carers and mark the child's arrival on a register. They will: check the child has appropriate food, drink and clothing. If there are worries that a child's clothing is inadequate for the weather, they may not be accepted.
- Confirm the pick-up time.
- Accept any medication required by the child and ensure the Permission to Administer Medication Form is completed on the file. The medication will be looked after by the Lead Practitioner. It will be stored in the cabin out of reach to children. If a practitioner feels unable or unwilling to give the medication, they can refuse.



- In the case where a child's challenging behaviour is being addressed, the parent / carer will be reminded they may need to collect the child early – and to ensure there is a means to contact them.

## Departures

- There will always be two practitioners managing departures.
- No child will be allowed to leave unless they have been collected by the parent / carer who dropped them off. The only exceptions to this are where parents / carers have delegated collection to another responsible adult and informed the Our School in the Woods team either in person or by phone.
- When a child leaves the Our School in the Woods site, their departure will be marked on the register and any medicines will be returned to the collecting adult where appropriate.

## Late pick ups

- If a parent / carer is more than 15 minutes late collecting a young person, Our School in the Woods Practitioners will contact all the parents / carers using the contact details on the registration form.
- No child will be left by themselves. A minimum of two practitioners will stay with any child. If the child has not been picked up by 4pm, two practitioners will walk to the nearest café (approx. 200m away) and wait until a parent/carer can pick up. The wood and cabin are not suitable once the sun has set. If, after 6pm and no contact has been made the team will call Social Services for further advice.

Manchester City Council on 0161 234 5001.

## Child falls ill during the session

Should a child fall ill during the day, practitioners will contact the emergency contact numbers on the register and advise the parent / carer that the child is ill and needs collecting. Ideally the parent / carer will come to the site where the group is working. If this is not possible, one practitioner will take the child to the agreed pickup point, wait with them until they are collected and then return immediately to the group. The child will be marked out on the register and a note made that they left early and for what reason.



### 3. Fires, tools, trees & taking care of the wood

Fire use: working with fire can bring real confidence and benefits to people as they forge a deeper connection to the wild and themselves. Knowing how to build a fire from scratch can save lives; using a fire to cook food or make warm drinks can warm and feed a group; fire is the hearth around which a group can gather. However, fire also poses a threat to life through fumes, smoke, burning and structural collapse. The aim of our fire safety policy is to minimise the risk of fire by taking adequate fire precautions and to teach children how to work with fires sensibly and safely.

#### General principles of working with fire

- The use of fires shall follow our Fire Risk Assessment. Fires will only be lit when they are needed to support an activity or keep children warm and dry. They will only be lit in suitable defined spaces or in a fire bowl, where we have permission of the landowner.
- The fire pit must be constructed on appropriate ground (not on peaty soil, fluffy or woody material or leaf litter, all of which can be flammable), in appropriate space (eg. not within 5m of overhanging branches) and surrounding flammable material cleared.
- Practitioners will supervise children in all aspects of using a fire: choosing a safe site; choosing tinder and fuel; building a fire; tending it; cooking on the fire; using the fire and embers for linked activities; extinguishing the fire.
- The level of supervision shall be adjusted for the age, competencies, and skills of the children in the group. Where there is a perceived risk of arson, extra supervisory measures will be put into effect.
- If appropriate to the activity, key skills will be modelled and taught around how to ignite, build, manage, and extinguish a fire safely.
- To facilitate the safe use of a fire for activities, key skills will be assessed in children and taught where needed. These skills include safe handling of toasting sticks; safe positioning of cooking equipment; use of the fire gloves; wind direction; safe sitting distance from the fire; numbers of people near to the fire at any time; how to place a stick on the fire safely; how to move around the fire.
- At the end of an activity the fire will be extinguished safely: the fire will be spread out and embers allowed to die down; water or sand used to extinguish the fire fully.
- Our 'leave no trace' approach shall be used where fire pits are temporary.





## Fire prevention

Preventing unintentional fires is crucial and rests upon the removal or control of available fuel and ignition sources and availability of materials to put out a fire.

Therefore:

- Waste materials will not be allowed to accumulate on the site.
- Flammable liquids will never be stored on site and any use will be in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Gas cylinders will not be used, and all smoking prohibited.
- Fire lighting equipment will be safely stored.
- Fire blankets and water will be within reach.

## Minimising injury from working with fires

- Smoke inhalation will be reduced by burning dry/dead wood. Children will be encouraged to move to avoid smoke. Fire safety equipment and first aid supplies (including a burns kit and water) will be kept within close range. Seating round the fire shall be at least 1.5m away.
- Tool use: working with tools can bring real benefits. Working with natural materials forges deeper appreciation of the woodland environment – for example understanding the diverse properties and use of a particular tree. Working with these natural materials often necessitates using tools. Developing a mastery of these tools builds fine and gross motor skills, confidence, resilience, and self-esteem and further fosters a connection to the specifics of place and season. However, tool use also comes with some risks. Our Working with Tools policy aims to minimise the risk of accident and injury whilst using tools.

## General principles of working with tools

- The use of tools shall follow our Using Tools Risk Assessment. Tools will only be used when they are needed to support an activity. They will only be used in spaces agreed by the Practitioners.
- Tools likely to be used in Our School in the Woods activities include (but are not limited to): scissors, loppers, secateurs, bill hook, bow saw, pruning saw, vegetable peeler, sheaf knife, carving and chopping axes, spoon carving knives, shave horse.



- Practitioners will supervise children in all aspects of using tools: understanding the 'blood bubble'; safe distances from those using tools; using a glove when needed; ways to carry tools; storage of tools; communicating with a partner when working together; clearing the site of trip hazards.
- The level of supervision shall be adjusted for the age, competencies, and skills of the children in the group.
- If appropriate to the activity, key skills will be modelled and taught to build children's understanding of the purpose of each tool and their mastery of how to use it.
- At the end of an activity tools shall be safely stored and cleaned and sharpened when necessary.
- Our 'leave no trace' approach shall be used to tidying the site after tool use.
- Well stocked, up to date, first aid kits will be within reach of the tool work area.

### Playing on trees

Being off the ground provides children with the opportunity to challenge themselves whilst having fun and exercise. Climbing trees and playing on rope swings brings children into contact with nature, stimulates deep imaginative play and calms and soothes some children. Climbing trees and swinging stimulates the senses and is a great way to build a child's self-confidence. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents says this about tree climbing: "Climbing trees and falling out of them is all part of growing up and having small injuries helps children learn about risks. We take the view that it's a good thing to try to equip children and young people and help them make informed decisions about the risks that they take". ROSPA

### General principles of supporting play in and up trees

- Practitioners shall teach the children to conduct dynamic risk assessments of the trees they wish to climb – learning about dead wood, how risks are increased in the wet, and how to test for weight bearing properties of a branch.
- Children shall not be allowed to climb further than 2.0 metres from the sole of their feet to the ground.
- Children will not be helped to climb a tree – so they are limited by their own ability and strength as to how high they go.
- If a practitioner feels uncomfortable with how child / children are climbing a tree, they will stop the activity.



- When swings are built with or by the children, the swing arc must not be more than 1.5 metres. The area underneath the swing must be free of debris, impalement objects and 'safe enough' to land upon.
- Well stocked, up to date, first aid kits will be within reach of the main activity area.

### Taking care of the woods

Being a healthy community also involves taking care of our environment. Our School in the Woods is committed to sustainability and strives to contribute to a sustainable future through our working practices and through how we educate the children in our care.

Our commitment to sustainability is focused on:

- Acknowledging the impact by human action on life sustaining natural environments. Contributing to the development of an understanding of and commitment to actions that diminish or remove those impacts. Thereby ensuring a legacy for future generations.
- Enabling individuals and communities to achieve their potential in ways which protect their future as well as enhance the wellbeing and resilience of each individual as well as the planet's life support systems. Developing an understanding that cultural, economic, social, environmental, and technological change processes are dynamically interconnected and mutually impacting.
- Our School in the Woods recognises that it operates as an educator of a generation of young people living in a world of increasing complexity and uncertainty; we will strive to make a small contribution to the development of knowledge of the natural world and the role of each of us can take through the medium of education and play.

### Leaving no trace and leaving the site safely

- The woods will be left in a safe and orderly manner at the end of each session.
- All tools and materials will be cleared away and stored safely.
- All left over food and litter will be removed and disposed of.
- Tarps and ground sheets are to be taken down and stored securely at the end of each session unless inclement weather forecast, when a corner will be dropped to reduce likelihood of damage to the tarp.
- The fire pit will be completely extinguished.



- Any gate or entrances to site will be secured.
- At the end of the day, if there is any lost property, please collect it all together and return to the Lead Practitioner who will either bring it back for the next session or return it to a Core Member for storage.
- Children will participate in tidying up the woods and through activities, its care.

#### **4. Participant Information**

When children register to attend Our School in the Woods, we collect information to help us run the event well and care for children skilfully. This is how we look after, store and take care of that data.

Storing participant information and keeping it secure

We only collect information that we need for a specific purpose or to keep children safe. We keep our information secure. We use the following password protected methods to store data: Google Drive; and Tapestry (a secure online programme used by many childcare organisations that functions as a register, parent feedback and assessments and monitoring system). We ensure the information we keep is relevant and up to date. We only hold as much as we need, and only for as long as we need it. If requested, we allow the subject of the information to see it and delete their data. We never pass on participant data to other organisations – unless there are safeguarding concerns. Hard copy information is kept at a minimum and only used to facilitate the safe running of the project. Daily paper registers are kept for safeguarding purposes and are stored in a locked filing cabinet. No paper copies with personal information on children are stored long term, except safeguarding notes – which are stored in a locked filing cabinet at on-site. As such we comply with the General Data Protection Regulation, 2016.

We gather information to keep children safe, care for them well and respect our children's confidentiality:

- We keep a file on each child that attends Our School in the Woods. Any information about significant life events, accidents or behaviour management issues, learning and development issues are stored here in date order. This allows us to track how a child is progressing and monitor any increasing or decreasing issues.



- Our School in the Woods practitioners will not discuss information held on individual children with anyone else (other than with the individual themselves, or, in the case of children, their carer).
- Our School in the Woods will though use information provided for the purposes of planning and group management.
- Information given by the parent / carers to Our School in the Woods practitioners will not be passed on without permission unless the personal safety of the child is in question. Then the Child Protection policy will then override confidentially.
- Any concerns relating to a child’s well-being and safety will be kept in a confidential document.

### Images of children

On courses run directly by Our School in the Woods, we ask children for consent to take photographs and occasionally films. We do this at the point of booking and in the case of children, we ask the permission of their parent and carers. These images and films are used for marketing and communication purposes – including on social media. We do not use images of any participant if consent is not given. Consent by any participant (whether a child or adult) can be withdrawn at any time. If a child does not want their picture taken then this is respected, even if parent / carers have given their consent.

Practitioners will only take pictures of the activities they are running on work phones. If these are not available for some reason, they may on occasion, take images on their personal phones. We ask that they email these to the Our School in the Woods Core Team and then delete these images and films from their devices. If pictures are taken on a smart phone, this device must be password protected. Images will be then stored on Our School in the Woods’ password protected Google Drive for storage.

	Our School in the Woods session	
Practitioners’ information	From the last time that they have been employed by us	7 years
Corporate information		7 years



Where Our School in the Woods's work is commissioned by an external organisation, such as a school, we collaborate with the commissioning organisation to ensure we follow their policies on image consent and the use of images around marketing.

### Information held long term

We keep some information long term for legal and safeguarding reasons. Below we list the information held long term and for how long:

Type of information	Kept from when	Length of time kept
Information about Children	From last time they attended an Our School in the Woods session.	3 years
Accident forms & Exclusion forms	From the last time that they have attended an Our School in the Woods session	5 years
Serious accidents	Any accidents requiring medical treatment	Until the child's 21 <sup>st</sup> birthday
Child protection	Any files relating to a child protection referral	Until child's 25 <sup>th</sup> birthday
Parent / carers information	From the last time that they have attended a Our School in the Woods	5 years

## 5. Being in community

Coming to Our School in the Woods allows children to experience deeper connection with the natural world, themselves and others. As such, they practice at being part of a healthy community. Its therefore important that all children behave in a way that works for the whole group, as well as themselves.

### Equal opportunities

The policies and activities of Our School in the Woods embody the principles that everyone is equal and will receive equal treatment at all times. All Practitioners will ensure that no one will be granted privilege or be discriminated against because of their race, skin colour, national origin, religion, age, physical or intellectual disability, marital status, gender, gender identification or sexual orientation. Practitioners will



bring to the attention of an Our School in the Woods Core Member any incidents where they feel discrimination has taken place.

## Core Routines

Our core routines inspired by both the Wood School Manchester and the 8 Shield Nature Mentoring Model. These routines foster connection and practice the skills needed to be a positive member of a community. They also create a sense of safety and a sense of belonging.

9:00 Gates open for arrivals

9:00 – 9:30 Meeting friends and play

9:30–10:30 beginnings in a circle

- A warm welcome from the practitioners.
- Reminder of the ground-rules: Look after each other, look after self and look after nature.
- If new to the group: orientation to the site, boundaries of the site, where they can go to the toilet, and any health and safety information about the site, practicing the call to return.

A good beginning such as: sharing news, mindfulness, social games, practicing names if new; sharing gratitude; a sensory activity.

10:30 –11:15 snack and playtime

11:15 – 12:15 Group Session

Starting with something to ignite interest and imagination that might include a story, song, seeing a new object. Leading to activities to build learning, connection and group cohesion – such as working in small groups, games, discussions, practical skills work, challenges, whole group activity.

12:15 – 1:15 lunch and playtime

1:15 – 2:15 Group Session



A different focus to the first session, but the same approach.

2:15 Free play around the fire circle with optional activities

3:00 Final snack time, sharing cooked food and singing

3:15 Gates open for departure

## 6. Promoting compassionate behaviour

(With thanks to The Wood School Team who developed this policy)

### Compassionate Behaviour

We define compassionate behaviour as behaviour that is: respectful, peaceful, empathetic and open to finding ways of ensuring everyone's core needs get met where possible. This is the behaviour that we want to encourage in our community: between adults, between children and between adults and children. This we see as essential in creating a safe environment in which children and adults can thrive, contribute and learn.

### Our rules

To make this aspiration around behaviour accessible, we have three 'rules' which guide everyone's behaviour at Our School in the Woods. These are to:

- Take care of yourself
- Take care of others
- Take care of the wood

We use these as reference points – from which we discuss things with the children and work out ways of being together that is safe for everyone.

### Practices that support compassionate behaviour:

We understand that unless peoples' core needs are met, it is very hard for them to act compassionately towards themselves or others. Based on the work of Marshall Rosenberg, we understand these core needs as falling under the following headings: Physical well-being; Connection; Honesty; Peace; Play; Autonomy and Meaning (a





full list of needs as defined by the Centre for Non-Violent Communication is attached at the end of this policy).

Therefore, we pay great attention to the practices and systems that ensure it is possible for children and adults to get these core needs met – examples of how we do this are shown in the table at the end of this section. Crucially however we recognise that children with strong connections to their caregivers and companions are more likely to support the requests of those people. So, we seek to build trustful connection with children by working and playing alongside them, being interested in their experiences and attentive to their needs (both for support and for challenge) and supporting them to build connections with other children at the school.

Sometimes things go wrong

Whilst good connections and supportive structures go a long way to supporting compassionate behaviour in children, we acknowledge that some children need more support than others at managing their behaviour and understanding the impact of their actions. We also recognise that our setting, which allows children some choice through the day, does require children to contribute to managing their own time and their relationships – and that this is difficult for them at times. Therefore, sometimes things do go wrong between the children and their behaviour is not always as compassionate as we would wish it. Crucially, we view ‘challenging’ behaviour as a child striving to meet their needs but doing so in a way which is interfering with other people getting their needs met. We reject notions of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ behaviour – as we feel this is reductive and misses a sense of trying to explore why things have gone wrong. We do not operate a punishment or rewards system as we feel this develops behaviour that on the surface seems ‘good’ but can be motivated by fear or greed. However, we are not a permissive setting: we stop challenging behaviour and address it – and then strive to foster intrinsically motivated compassionate behaviour.

Compassionate Communication helps the children and adults to:

- acknowledge when something has gone wrong
- explain what has happened in a non-judgemental way
- express how they feel and hear how others feel
- explore what it is they and others were, and are needing
- to think creatively about how everyone’s needs can be met assisting with understanding of needs



- to explore how to repair relationships that might have been damaged by something going wrong

The steps we take to resolve problems when they occur

Staff learn about issues that need resolving by either witnessing a conflict or children reporting to a member of staff if something has ‘gone wrong’ between themselves and another child. Here we set out the key steps that we take to resolve this conflict and improve the likelihood of future compassionate behaviour.

- Firstly, we always believe a child when they say they need help or there is a problem. Sometimes we suggest an approach they might take but are always available and willing to come and help assist in resolving the problem.
  - Our priority in a conflict situation is to ensure that everyone is safe. This might mean removing a child from a dangerous situation or using our voice to say ‘Stop’ very clearly.
  - We then try to offer empathy to both ‘sides’ in the conflict – saying for instance ‘something seems to have gone wrong, hasn’t it?’
  - During the ensuing discussion we: listen and help children to articulate their feelings and needs; model and encourage empathy to others; state clearly what behaviour is not an acceptable way of getting ones needs met.
  - If the issue looks very heated, we separate the children and talk through what has happened with them individually.

Repair and reconnect

In our experience forced apologies do not work to repair relationships. Recent research demonstrates that children who receive a false apology feel worse rather than better. Therefore, when things have calmed down after a conflict, we work with all the children concerned to explore what they want to happen next, how they might reconnect and repair their relationship.

We hold the expectation that when their feelings have subsided, and everyone feels adequately listened to and understood, then they will want to find a way to restore kindness between them. Once the child is no longer angry, we work to support them repair things with their friend. Repairing and reconnecting between children often looks like: finding a game they might play together, beginning a new investigation round the wood, having a chance to read a book together, planning for their activity for the next day at the woods.



We know in our own lives that sincere remorse can be expressed (and felt) through words or gestures. Actions can sometimes speak louder than words. We don't hold out for a 'grand gesture' to restore the relationship. We notice that small kindnesses can go a long way to rebuild trust between children. We support this by pointing these actions out to the children. E.g, we might say: "I see that Isla is still here whilst we talk. I am guessing she didn't mean to scare you and wants to check you're OK."

Finally, we know we as adults are vital role models and will support children to repair relationships after a conflict. This may include wishing that a hurt had not occurred, that they will not do the same action again and that they can move on. In a conflict, we express our sadness that feelings and bodies have been hurt and our wish is to find ways to repair the damage. When we as adults have a conflict with a child, we make sure we share our feelings and find ways to reconnect and repair.

Core human need	How we seek to meet these needs at Our School in the Woods
Physical well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regular set times to eat</li> <li>● Drinking water available in the warmer weather</li> <li>● Heated space to warm up in</li> <li>● Shelters put up in inclement weather</li> <li>● Lots of opportunities for movement and exercise</li> </ul>
Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Circle times build our sense of community</li> <li>● Activities are offered which bring children together and build their connection with each other and with adults</li> <li>● Friendships are valued and supported and extended where possible</li> <li>● Listening as a key element of how children and adults relate</li> </ul>
Honesty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Adults strive to act with integrity and authenticity</li> </ul>
Peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A regular and consistent structure to the day</li> <li>● Being in a natural and beautiful woodland environment</li> <li>● Adults available to help resolve problems</li> <li>● Adults to remind and clarify the three core rules</li> <li>● Through dynamic risk assessments we explore awareness of hazards (like play fighting in the wood or traffic when on excursions)</li> </ul>
Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children's play is valued, respected, and supported</li> <li>● Time is made throughout the day for play</li> <li>● Humour is key part of our daily life</li> </ul>
Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children have times of the day when they can structure their own activity</li> <li>● Where possible key decisions about activities are made with children's involvement and contribution</li> <li>● Children have time and space to focus on their own 'work'</li> </ul>
Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Activities are offered which enable the children to contribute to the life of the school – such as cooking – and which promote creativity and learning</li> <li>● Key events are celebrated together – with performances, discussions, songs, shared food.</li> <li>● Issues which might need mourning are also given space and time.</li> </ul>



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**CONNECTION**

acceptance  
affection  
appreciation  
belonging  
cooperation  
communication  
closeness  
community  
companionship  
compassion  
consideration  
consistency  
empathy  
inclusion  
intimacy  
love  
mutuality  
nurturing  
respect/self-respect

**CONNECTION continued**

safety  
security  
stability  
support  
to know and be known  
to see and be seen  
to understand and  
be understood  
trust  
warmth

**PHYSICAL WELL-BEING**

air  
food  
movement/exercise  
rest/sleep  
sexual expression  
safety  
shelter  
touch  
water

**HONESTY**

authenticity  
integrity  
presence

**PLAY**

joy  
humor

**PEACE**

beauty  
communion  
ease  
equality  
harmony  
inspiration  
order

**AUTONOMY**

choice  
freedom  
independence  
space

**MEANING**

awareness  
celebration of  
life  
challenge  
clarity  
competence  
consciousness  
contribution  
creativity  
discovery  
efficacy  
effectiveness  
growth  
hope  
learning  
mourning  
participation  
purpose  
self-expression  
stimulation



## **7. Dealing with difficulty**

Our School in the Woods practitioners will work to actively minimise the possibilities of challenging behaviour by:

- Ensuring that children are supervised: ‘supervision’ means that during activity sessions practitioners can see or hear every child or know with reasonable certainty where they are (eg. in the toilet).
- During playtimes, one practitioner will base themselves at the centre of the wood, so children can find them easily in case of problems. In addition, at least one practitioner will also rove through the woods to check for issues. When there has been an incident, frequency of roving will be increased.
- Explaining physical boundaries to the children at the beginning of each session. If needed the size of space that children can play freely in will be limited.
- Making sure the group has enough breaks, warmth and refreshments and other basic needs are met.
- Pacing the session to keep the group stimulated and engaged.
- Provide empathetic care and support when children experience strong emotions such as fear, sadness, disappointment, loneliness, jealousy.
- Ensuring children with identified additional needs come with the extra support they need to participate successfully.
- Positive behaviour will be reinforced with encouragement – framed in terms of gratitude and focusing on specific examples and the effect they have had. For example: ‘Wow – you guys have worked so hard picking up all those tools – I’m really grateful – that’s saved so much time’.
- Giving clear “I” statements will be used to alert children to behaviour that is starting to worry a practitioner and to explain the effects of that behaviour. For example: “Oh! I’m feeling worried about you passing me the knife like that – the sharp edge pointing at me might cut my hand!”
- Acting as positive role models by modelling generosity and empathy.
- Comparative praise, generalised praise and rewards will not be used.

### **Managing unacceptable behaviour**

Unacceptable behaviour includes any behaviours that:



- Causes, or is intended to cause, distress to another.
- Prevents themselves or others from participating in the session.
- Is likely to cause harm to themselves or another.
- Might lead themselves or others into danger

Strategies that practitioners will use to deal with unacceptable behaviour include:

- Stopping the harm or potential harm and ensuring all the children are safe (using restraint only if absolutely needed to keep everyone safe).
- Stating clearly and assertively that the behaviour (rather than the person) is unacceptable.
- Dealing with unacceptable behaviour quickly, clearly and calmly.
- Giving empathy, care and distraction to all the children involved and supporting them to move from freeze/flight/fright mode to a calmer state where they can reflect, repair and problem solve.
- When the children are calm enough, practitioners will encourage and facilitate mediation between children to try to resolve conflict through negotiation, compassion and empathy.
- After an incident, practitioners will reflect on what the specific trigger was for the incident (both immediate and more underlying) and use this insight to plan person-specific strategies to reduce unacceptable behaviour.
- In the case of children, significant or persistent unacceptable behaviour shall be recorded on a behaviour incident form and shared with parent / carers to enlist their support in dealing with the issue.
- Where unacceptable behaviour persists or becomes repetitive, the 'Take a break' and Anti-Bullying policies shall be followed.

## **Dealing with bullying**

Bullying and aggressive acts can include:

- physical – hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings
- verbal – name calling, insulting, repeated teasing, racist or sexist remarks
- psychological – spreading nasty rumours, exclusion from groups, moving away as a person approaches, leaving notes, failure to speak to or acknowledge a person
- technological – the use of threatening, insulting or frightening text messages, photographs or video and Internet messaging
- sexual – any bullying with a sexual component.



Bullying differs from one off acts of aggression because it is:

- It is repetitive and persistent – though sometimes a single incident can be intimidating and can have a similar impact as persistent behaviour.
- Is behaviour that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally – though occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are responsible.
- It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.
- It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities.
- It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.
- It causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are at the receiving end.

It may not be bullying when: two people of roughly the same strength/status have a fight or disagreement. In addition, a person or child may be struggling to self-regulate and be generally aggressive – rather than targeting their aggression on one person.

Strategies to deal with bullying include:

- Creating a culture of care in which everyone involved with Our School in the Woods are aware that any form of bullying or aggression will not be tolerated and will be challenged.
- Creating a culture of trust in which children feel able to tell the Our School in the Woods practitioners that something has happened that has upset them.
- Using robust reporting and recording of unacceptable behaviour, to ensure that a pattern of repetitive incidents will be identified more effectively.
- In the case of children, ensuring that parent / carers of the children concerned are: informed; enlisted in supporting the situation to improve; and informed of steps that will be taken if the situation does not improve.
- Ensuring that any individual who has been the victim of aggression or bullying receives support and care: they will be closely supervised, and regular checks will





be made on their welfare and additional care offered to comfort and raise confidence.

Bullying behaviour will in the first instance be dealt with using strategies around tackling unacceptable behaviour. If aggressive behaviour persists, practitioners will instigate 'call and collect' – sending the child home as soon as possible after an aggressive incident. This functions both to highlight the seriousness of the incident and to ensure the child concerned can be supported on a 1-1 basis by their family. Where unacceptable behaviour persists the 'Take a break' and Exclusion policy shall be followed.

#### The 'Take a Break' policy

- At Our School in the Woods we recognise that sometimes a person or child is not able to sufficiently self-regulate, even with support, to function as a positive member of a group. In these cases, they may well need to take a break from Our School in the Woods to get the care and 1-1 support they need. This might be for a one-off incident, for a set of sessions, or the break could be long term. However, we know that for many children, with support they can mature and develop the skills needed to re-join Our School in the Woods sessions.

For one off incidents (and as part of a strategy to tackle repeated problems) children can be sent home immediately. Here practitioners will call the parent / carers and ask them to collect the child – partly so they can support the child in the 1-1 way they need. Sending a child home in this way happens when a child's behaviour is dangerous, aggressive or very frightening – to themselves, others or the environment. In these instances, the team on the day are likely to conclude that they cannot run the session safely and successfully if that child remains. Following sending a child home in this way, an incident report will be completed by the practitioners. They will then discuss with parent / carers if the child should return to future sessions or if a break should be taken away from Our School in the Woods. Specific support will then be enlisted in writing from the child's parents/family to work on the issues the child is struggling with and where possible Our School in the Woods will try and suggest some reading or activities that they or other parents have found helpful.



Taking a break from several sessions will only be considered once the challenging behaviour has been extensively explored and discussed with the child and their parents and after a range of child-specific strategies have been trialled for several sessions. The child will be given the opportunity and support to find other, more acceptable ways of managing and articulating their strong feelings.

If after support and discussion the child's behaviour still poses a threat to the well-being and effective functioning of the group, then practitioners can recommend that the child takes a long-term break from Our School in the Woods. The reasons for the decision will be outlined in a letter to the parents and carers concerned. Taking a long term or permanent break from our setting is a very serious decision. If it is possible to work with the child and their parent / carers to enable them to continue to attend, then this is always a preferable solution.

## **8. Safeguarding and child protection**

Making sure that children and vulnerable adults are safe and thrive in our care, is central to Our School in the Woods' ethos and values. As such this policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989, the Education Act 2002 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVGA) 2006. Our School in the Woods takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults in our care – this is our primary concern. As such we:

- We undertake robust background checks to ensure that no one works with us who has been assessed as unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults. As such all Our School in the Woods practitioners will have a DBS check, before they are allowed to work unsupervised with young people. Each worker will enrol with the DBS update system within 30 days of a new DBS check, or already be subscribed.

Provide an environment in which all children feel safe, secure, valued, and respected and feel confident and know how to approach practitioners if they are in difficulties – believing they will be effectively listened to.

- Raise awareness of all practitioners of the need to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- Have a clear procedure in cases of suspected abuse.



- We have a nominated designated Safeguarding Officer (Ellen Tickle) who has undertaken the Designated Child Protection Officer training and subsequent refresher course every two years. We have a second member of staff (Amanda Williamson) who will act in the Designated Officer in case of absence.
- We ask that all practitioners working for Our School in the Woods have accessed Child Protection Training every two years.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer:

If there are concerns of possible abuse, the Officer will refer a child or vulnerable adult to the Multi ADVICE AND Guidance Hub and acting as a focal point for the Our School in the Woods team to discuss concerns. A written record of the referral will be sent to the Assessment Team by the end of the working day the referral is made.

In addition, the Officer will:

- Ensure the team keep written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- Ensure that all such records are kept confidentially and securely.
- Liaise with other agencies and professionals.
- Ensure that they attend any Child Protection Conferences, core groups or other multi-agency meetings, contributes to assessments and provides a report which has been shared with the parent / carers.
- Ensure the wider Our School in the Woods Team has accessed Child Protection Training every two years.

Key Numbers:

- Practitioners reporting concerns and seeking guidance about a child or vulnerable adult should contact the Manchester Advice and Guidance Hub on 0161 234 5001
- Practitioners can also contact Safeguarding in Education Lead at Manchester City Council, Sue Fletcher on 07908259973 or [s.fletcher1@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:s.fletcher1@manchester.gov.uk)
- The Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team for children is on 0161 234 5001 (Manchester City Council)

Supporting children to speak up safely

We recognise that a child or vulnerable adult who is abused or who witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves and find it difficult to



develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child or adult in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn. Our School in the Woods supports all children and vulnerable adults to speak up by:

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness.
- Creating a caring, safe and positive culture.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children
- Notifying the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as there is a significant concern.

## Disclosure

Any disclosure by a child or vulnerable adult will be recorded and appropriate action will be taken in all cases. If there are any concerns about a participant's behaviour, physical condition or appearance these will be recorded as a Note of Concern and the appropriate action will be taken. If a young person discloses information that concerns a practitioner about their well-being, then practitioners are asked to do the following.

- Listen, do not interrupt, give them time, do not ask leading questions, do not promise to keep the information a secret.
- Make a written record of what the young person has said on a safeguarding incident form. This should be exactly as the young person has said in their language, without interpretation. Respect a young person's confidentiality in line with the confidentiality policy
- Report any disclosures to the Designated Safeguarding Officer for Our School in the Woods, who will take the next appropriate steps.

If a practitioner believes a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate risk, then they will contact the Manchester Advice and Guidance Hub (MAGH) directly. They will not allow the child or vulnerable adult to return home if they believe that to do so would place them at further risk.

## Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The Safeguarding Officer will disclose any information about a child or adult on a need-to-know basis only. All practitioners must be aware that they have a professional



responsibility to share information with other agencies to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. All Practitioners must be aware that they cannot promise a child or adult to keep secrets which might compromise their safety or wellbeing. We will undertake to share our intention to refer a child to MAGH with their parent / carers – unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt we will consult with the relevant body.

### Supporting practitioners after a disclosure is made

We recognise that practitioners working in Our School in the Woods who have become involved with a child or adult who has suffered harm or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such practitioners by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Safeguarding Officer and to seek further support as appropriate.

### Safeguarding Practitioners and Lone Working

All Practitioners should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child or vulnerable adult. With these groups, Our School in the Woods Practitioners will always work on sessions in pairs, however they may work individually within the session with groups of children or vulnerable adults. If a Practitioner escorts a child to the toilet, another member of practitioners must be informed. Levels of adult/young person ratios agreed at the start of the project will be maintained on site at all times. In the event that an Our School in the Woods Practitioner needs to assist a child in leaving the session, they will go directly from the site to the meeting point with the parent / carer. This will only take place with the written permission of the parent / carer (in a text, letter or email). Our School in the Woods Practitioners will never arrange to meet a young person outside the site.

### Allegations against practitioners

We understand that a participant may make an allegation against a member of the Our School in the Woods Team. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Officer on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with Manchester City Council's Sue Fletcher or the MCC Designated Officer on 0161 234 1214 (formerly the LADO).

### Whistleblowing and complaints



We recognise that children and vulnerable adults cannot be expected to raise concerns in a culture where practitioners and parent / carers fail. All practitioners should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If a member of the Our School in the Woods team has a concern about any practice, they feel contradict the policies of the organisation, or other areas as listed above, they should immediately contact one of the school's Core Members, in writing, to raise their concerns. Any member of the team who follow this procedure, will be protected from unfair or discriminatory treatment for the action they have taken if it was made in good faith.

If the concern is regarding all the Our School in the Woods Core Members, then the member can whistle-blow to OfSTED on 0300 123 3155.

#### Other adults at sessions

Parent / carers will not be allowed to remain on site for the sessions except in special circumstances. If a child needs a carer / parent with them, then the practitioner team will have been advised prior to the session and will have confirmed that the carer is DBS checked. Parents will be supervised in the woods at all times. All volunteers working for Our School in the Woods will be DBS checked.

#### Complaints

- All concerns will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated by the Company Directors, with support from the relevant organisations, with the outcome communicated to both accuser and alleged perpetrator.
- Any complaints made from parents / carers / children to Our School in the Woods will be recorded on a Complaints Form. Verbal complaints made to the team in person will be transferred by practitioners to this form. Our School in the Woods view these comments as constructive and an aid to creating a better service. Complaints will be handled by Our School in the Woods Core Members, who will work to ensure that they are fully investigated, the complainant feels heard and that a mutually satisfactory action plan has been agreed following the complaint and that this is communicated in writing.

### **9. Emergencies & Serious Incidents**

Emergencies and serious incidents are always a possibility. As such we will ensure that all Our School in the Woods Practitioners are familiar with appropriate



emergency procedures. Most emergencies can be resolved on-the-spot by Practitioners removing the group from potential threat and providing first aid. However, in the event of a serious incident, which could arise because of an injury, illness or threat, emergency services should be contacted, and the emergency procedure outline below followed:

### Reducing risk

- At least one first aider must always be on site.
- Charged mobile phones must be carried by all practitioners.
- Practitioners are responsible for performing regular head counts or mini registers during the day.
- Once a hazard has been identified and assessed, practitioners will secure safety of whole group from further danger by: stopping all work / activities; recalling all the children; moving the group to a nearby safe place if possible and keeping them away from the scene of the incident.
- First Aider to attend to any casualties and makes them as comfortable as possible given their circumstances. A record of changes in casualties' state and anything administered to them to be made if possible.
- Emergency services contacted if additional help required. The grid reference / address will be written on the site risk assessment.

### After the incident

- Informing others: once the whole group is safe, parents / carers / next of kin of the affected children will be informed as soon as practicable after the incident by a Practitioner. Our School in the Woods will then inform the landowner of the site.
- If the injury has required transfer to hospital, then a Core Member **MUST** be called immediately. Also, the children will also need to be debriefed about this by one of the Practitioners.
- An Incident report should be filled in on site if possible. This should be filled in even if no one was harmed and it was 'a near miss'.
- If the accident / incident affected a child, the parent / carer must be told about the incident and given a copy of a completed incident form.



- Any incident or near miss must be subsequently investigated by Our School in the Woods Core Members to review existing controls and procedures.
- First aid kits must be restocked after use and a stock check carried out every six months. Each practitioner is responsible for the maintenance of their own First Aid Kit.

### Compliance with legislation around accidents

To ensure Our School in the Woods complies with their legal responsibilities around reporting serious incidents and accidents, Practitioners will:

- Ensure that all equipment involved in an accident is retained in an unaltered condition in case it is required by the police.
- An Incident Report or Accident Form must be completed, signed, and dated ASAP. This shall be a careful written record of all events, times and circumstances pertaining to the incident. If possible, photographs will be taken. This needs to be given to Our School in the Woods Core Members as soon as possible after the incident.
- Ensure that there is an independent witness present if any of the party needs to be interviewed.
- RIDDOR need to be informed of the following types of incidents:
  - accidents resulting in the death of any person
  - accidents resulting in specified injuries to workers
  - non-fatal accidents requiring hospital treatment to non-workers
  - dangerous occurrences the responsible person must notify the enforcing authority without delay. This is most easily done by reporting online at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm#online>

Alternatively, for fatal accidents or accidents resulting in specified injuries to workers only, you can phone 0345 300 9923.

**NB: A report must be received within 10 days of the incident.**

### Emergency evacuation

An emergency evacuation from the site will take place if practitioners determine the site is no longer safe. Examples of this include: sudden onset of adverse weather conditions; a natural freak event such as a fire, flood or tree collapse; intrusion on





the site by people and animals who are threatening or frightening; accidents or injuries from with equipment and tools. In cases:

- All children will be called together, a head count undertaken and then as a group they will leave the site in an orderly fashion. The nearest and safest exit route shall be used.
- Once in a safe location, a headcount will be undertaken to check everyone is accounted for.
- If working with children, one practitioner will then commence holding activities to help the children remain calm and secure.
- Once the group is safe, and if appropriate, the practitioners will contact emergency services to inform them of the situation and / or request support. If appropriate, all the children' parents and carers or next of kin will be contacted.
- Once the evacuation is completed safely, an incident form will be completed.

#### Missing child

- Our School in the Woods is run in a private woodland with secure boundaries and entrances that can be locked. However, children can hide within the wood and, if they try hard, could escape the wood.
- At the start of every session a call back signal will be agreed by the group. When this call is made everybody should be made to understand they are to come back immediately to the agreed meeting point (usually the fire circle) and registers or head counts undertaken.

If it is discovered that a child is missing:

- All children will be recalled back to the fire circle and remain there until the missing child is found. They will be asked for information as to the last sighting of the missing child.
- One practitioner will stay with the group and run a holding activity to keep the group occupied, calm and secure.
- The other practitioner/s and volunteers will search for the missing persons for a set time depending on the venue/site.



- If the child has not been found after a comprehensive search has taken place, then the police will be informed and the person's parents/carers can be contacted. A search will not go on for longer than 45 minutes.
- The Lead Practitioner will meet the police and then follow their advice. If they recommend all children to be collected, then the parents will be contacted and asked to collect their children.
- An Incident form will be completed for any child that goes missing, even if the child is then found by the Practitioners.

## **10. Visitors Policy**

Our School in the Woods will ensure that the exact number of visitors is recorded for emergency, insurance and registration purposes. All visitors are valued for whatever reason, but the children are our priority and must come first. All visitors will be welcomed, and their enquiries dealt with as soon as possible, however, due to the nature of the site, visits should be prearranged whenever possible. Visitors will be requested to sign in and out of the premises, giving their reason for the visit. Children and parents are welcome to visit us prior to joining the setting. No visitor will be left alone with children or accompany children to the toilet.

### **Procedure**

- If a visitor calls unannounced;
- Ask for identification, who they wish to see and request the purpose of their visit.
- Show them to the fire circle, where they can wait accompanied by staff until someone is free to speak to them.
- Explain that the setting is busy and they may have to wait (whilst supervised) until the staff member is free to deal with them. Give the option of waiting or making an appointment.
- Ensure that the visitors' register has been signed.

**WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE ENTRY TO AN INDIVIDUAL IF WE ARE UNSURE OF THEIR PURPOSE.**



A visitor with an appointment:

- Visitor will contact Our School in the Woods' phone and member of staff will greet them at the appropriate entrance.
- Visitor signs in and out of the register.
- Visitor moves around the wood only accompanied by a member of staff.
- Visitor is accompanied to the appropriate exit.

## 11.Sickness Policy

**Please note that we follow up-to-date government guidance on COVID-19. As of January 2023 there are no COVID-19 restrictions in the UK. Our previous COVID-19 policy have been superseded by advice found on:**

**[www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus). However we can make it available on request.**

This policy sets out the procedures which need to be followed should a child happen to be unwell. It has been put in place for the protection and wellbeing of all the children in our care. We understand the work commitments you have and endeavour to offer you a service to meet your needs. In the case of the common cough and cold, which all children suffer from time to time we are prepared to look after your child, so long as they are well enough to be with the other children and engage in play. If they have a temperature or more serious symptoms, we ask that they do not attend our setting.

It is in the interests of our staff and the other children in our setting that parents do not bring their children for childcare if they are suffering from a contagious illness. This is necessary not only to minimise the spread of infection but also for the comfort of the child who is unwell. We do not feel that we would be able to offer the necessary attention and care required for an unwell child without compromising the time spent with the other children in our setting, who's care has also been entrusted to us.

Should your child be suffering from sickness or diarrhoea it will be necessary for them to be kept away from the setting until 48 hours has passed since the last



occurrence of either. Symptoms such as these can be highly contagious, and we aim to reduce the risk of infection to staff and the other children. Should your child have been prescribed antibiotics for a contagious infection we would again ask that 48 hours from commencement of medication is left before they return to the setting to enable it to take hold.

If your child becomes unwell whilst at our setting, we will make them comfortable and reassure them. We will call you or a designated person immediately to discuss arrangements for collecting your child, dependent on the severity of illness and the appropriateness of them remaining in our childcare setting.

As required under registration we will notify Ofsted of any serious illness and infection and act on advice given by them. We work under the Public Health England guidelines for infection control in schools and other childcare settings. We aim to prevent the spread of infection by ensuring good personal hygiene practice in our environment. We aim to provide a safe setting for all children attending and this sickness policy has been implemented with that in mind.