

# The Meadow



## Health & Safety Policy

Outdoor education programmes may include activities that are considered higher risk than usual for children. It is the general approach of The Meadow to consider not only the risk but also the potential benefits of each activity. We also believe that it is important to allow children to take responsibility for their own safety and that they must be allowed to take risks in order to develop skills and good judgement.

The Meadow seeks to minimise risk by following procedures for riskier activities, such as tool use and fires, and by carrying out risk assessments covering anything the children may come into contact with. We regularly review, update and if necessary practise the health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments.

There will be at least one person on site who has a current (outdoor-specific) paediatric first aid certificate. They carry an outdoor first aid kit, a mobile phone, parent's contact details and the telephone number of the local hospital.

### Legislation

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 attempts to provide a comprehensive system of law to cover the health and safety of people at work and it is a criminal offence not to comply with its provision.

Employers have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees by:

- Assessing all risks.
- Ensuring emergency procedures are in place.
- Providing adequate sanitary and washing facilities.
- Ensuring that all equipment is safe and in good working order.

- Providing adequate training on substances that may damage health.
- Providing protective clothing.

Employees are responsible for the health and safety of themselves and other people who might be affected by their acts.

Children's Act 1989/2004 key areas:

- Ratios for children's activities.
- Equal opportunities.
- Communication with parents and carers.
- Suitable persons - DBS checks.

### **Insurance**

The Meadow is fully insured to care for children on site and to undertake forest school activities, through specialist insurers Morton Michel.

### **Risk Assessment Procedure**

Risk assessment is required to assess whether a hazard is significant and whether it is covered by satisfactory precautions so that the risk is small.

A full, documented risk assessment of the site, to cover changing conditions, and any planned activities will be done once a year, with updates as required to accommodate any changes to the circumstances or to legislation.

At the start of each day at The Meadow a risk assessment of the site is carried out to identify hazards and action needed to reduce risk to a safe level. In addition, an activity risk assessment will be carried out for any activity that may require it, such as fire lighting or tool use.

There are five steps to risk assessment:

- Look for the hazards, such as windblown trees and litter;
- Decide who might be harmed and how;
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done;
- Record the findings;
- Review the assessment and revise if necessary.

### **Accidents, Incidents and Emergencies Procedure**

If there is an accident:

- We will reassure the injured child while making sure that other children are safe.
- Then, if possible, we will deal with the situation. If not, we will ring 999 for help.
- We would aim to tell parents immediately and arrange either for them to take their child to hospital or meet them there.
- If a member of staff must accompany a child to hospital, any other children will be left in the care of an individual who holds a valid DBS check.

- We hold written permission from parents to get emergency treatment for their child if it is needed.
- We have written accident / incident records that we need to keep and we will ask parents to sign an account of events, however minor.

### **Tool Use Procedure**

Tools that may be used at The Meadow include potato peelers, glue guns, drills, hammers [bow saws, loppers, knives, and billhooks]. It is important to introduce tools to groups in a structured way.

The following guidelines are to be followed:

- All adults and children are to be trained in correct and safe use of tools..
- All children are to be supervised by adults until deemed competent to work unsupervised.
- Tools are to be kept in a secure box or bag and returned to this place when not in use.
- Tools should not be left unattended.
- When using tools, a designated area will be marked for tool use. Those not using tools should not enter this area.
- All knives will be closed or put away in a case immediately after use.
- Saw guards will be replaced immediately after use.
- Walking around with open/ unmasked tools will not be permitted.
- A staff member will check and clean all tools after the session.

### **Protective Clothing & Safety Equipment**

All group members will wear suitable boots/shoes and outdoor clothing for the activity they take part in. Where any cutting or felling is taking place, helmets should be worn, and gloves provided for handling brash etc.

### **Fire Procedure**

Some days at The Meadow might include the use of open fires and cooking. In order to maintain the highest level of safety the following procedure will be used.

- Only fire trained individuals will teach about fires.
- Fire and fire safety will be introduced gradually.
- Children, assistants and other adults will be appropriately trained in fire lighting, maintaining and extinguishing.
- Fires will always be supervised by an adult.
- A first aid kit, including a burns kit, and water will be kept on site.
- Fires will only take place within the fire pit.
- By the end of the day fires are properly extinguished with water, ensuring the ground is not hot, and the ashes are scattered.

### **Parent/Carer Consent Procedure**

Parents/carers will be asked to fill in a Family Agreement before their child begins at The Meadow. The completed Family Agreement will give relevant medical details of the child, consent for the child to take part in activities and permission to take the child to hospital and administer emergency treatment.

The form also provides emergency contact details and optional permission to take and use photographs of the child. A copy of the Family Agreement will be kept at The Meadow at all times.

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