



Forest Schools Policies and Procedures

Reviewed May 2020

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Overview

It is the policy of Horton Community Farm be as inclusive as possible, as we come from, are part of, and serve the community in which we are based. We aim to be friendly and approachable to all, including staff, volunteers, clients, contractors, guests and members of the public. We believe in the benefits of play as a way of children being able to know themselves and learn in a child-centred way and therefore offer Forest Schools and other forms of Outdoor Learning in line with [Playwork principles](#).

We believe no-one should miss out on the opportunity to participate in our site and activities. In order to make our Forest Schools accessible as possible we outline the following policies and procedures for Forest Schools.

Equal Opportunities

We aim to ensure all our practices and procedures are as inclusive as possible. Where we do exclude people from our activities the reasons should be perfectly clear and should not be discriminatory. Forest Schools activities may be age restricted depending on the activities and funding sources.

Accessibility

We are working towards making the site as physically and intellectually accessible as possible. We endeavour to communicate in plain language and where possible ensure that our activities are illustrated visually, so that no one of a different age, background or ability should be excluded. In order for our activities to serve the community we will make our admissions procedures as simple as possible.

Duty of Care

We expect school that we work with to collect all relevant data for the children from their parents/carers and that this information (eg medical) should be shared with us so that we can comply with our Duty of Care whilst the children are on our site or in our care (if off site). Without relevant medical emergency information, we will not agree to take any child in to our care for activities.

Bullying

We will not tolerate any form of bullying and will challenge any bullying behaviour where it occurs, whether this be spoken, physical, psychological or any other form of bullying. We will deal with the incident in the first instance and aim to modify behaviour. Should the bullying persist we may need to contact the parents/carers. Any child with persistent bullying behaviour may be excluded from our provision, where it affects other children accessing our services.

Staff Recruitment

We adhere to an equality and diversity policy. All applications to employment will be treated equally and will go through our recruitment process. We will exclude someone from working with us if their employment contravenes our statutory duties. In the case of Forest Schools, people with certain restrictions would not be suitable for working with children. As with all recruitment, potential employees will be subject to an enhanced DBS check. Similarly, any volunteer who may be in 1:1 contact with a child (or vulnerable adult) would be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Child Protection

We have a nominated Child Protection Officer (Charlie Gray) who is responsible for ensuring all relevant staff are trained accordingly and that all Policies and Procedures are updated in line with statutory regulations and government guidelines. All Policies will be renewed on an annual basis at our AGM.

Complaints Procedure

We have a stack of cards in order that people (of any age or background) can make a complaint about any aspect of the organisation. As we work as a cooperative, the complaint should be dealt with by the member of staff working on that project or with a particular individual at that moment in time. If the member of staff does not feel they have the relevant skills for dealing with the complaint, or you would prefer to speak to another member of staff, then the matter should be brought to a team meeting. Should we be unable to deal with a complaint at a team meeting we can seek support from CVS (Community and Voluntary Services) or other relevant organisations. All complaints must be dealt with.

Hygiene

Hygiene is of utmost importance when dealing with food and wounds on site, as we are dealing with plant and soil pathogens. We also must consider the safety of users on our site when using our composting toilet facilities. Whilst HCF staff are on site for a session we will provide sanitising hand gel. We can also provide water and soap. When supporting children, we will provide water and soap for handwashing as well as sanitizing hand gel to ensure hands are free from any debris as well as bacteria.

Confidentiality

When we have children on site, we require any medical problems or support issues to be made known to us through an admissions form so that we can provide for their needs. This information will be kept confidential, limited to those staff who need to know and accessible only through use of a lockable filing cabinet or secure digital means.

Transport

We encourage all staff and service users to use the most environmentally sound forms of transport but would encourage all individuals to access the site in any case. We cannot currently offer transport as a general service, but wherever possible will include this in funding bids should it increase the chances of people accessing our site and services.

Risk Assessment

We conduct a risk assessment each time we have a group on our site and for the activities involved. We also have a series of generic risk assessments as detailed in our General Risk Assessment for site and activities.

First Aid

For Accident Procedures, Incidents and Near Misses please see our First Aid Procedures Policy. We will only be able to administer medicine according to the documentation and medication with which they come, assuming it is in date.

Referrals

We will only be able to accept children onto our sessions with parental/carer permission or with information via a school.

Further Policies

Please see the following Policies and Procedures for further information on our organisation, the guidelines we follow and how we implement them:

- HCF Child Protection Policy
- HCF Environment Policy
- HCF Equality and Diversity Policy
- HCF First Aid Procedures
- HCF Health and Safety Policy
- HCF Mechanical Equipment and Machinery Procedure Policy
- HCF Personal Protective Equipment Procedure

This policy will be reviewed annually by the board of directors to ensure it remains fit for purpose.