



Foresteers Outdoor Preschool

Fire Policy Reviewed January 2026

Reviewed by Hayley Smith - Preschool Manager

Campfires are an important part of Forest School and are used daily. Sitting around the campfire as a group: learning, listening, singing, making and sharing food cooked on the fire is a wonderfully communal and magical experience for children. It will stimulate their senses by letting them feel its warmth. They will watch the flames dance and experience its rich smell. We hope it will capture their imaginations and enthusiasm!

The children at Foresteers will also learn why it is so important in our lives; how to respect fire; the dangers of fire; to be safe and responsible around it and will also learn about the fire triangle (oxygen, fuel and heat) and what is needed to build a small fire successfully.

Foresteers aims to ensure that all children and adults participating in Forest School sessions with fires will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

Location

- Only agreed area will be used – fire pit or log burner
- We have an open fire area with log surround fire square, surrounded by fixed benches.
- Adult present around the fire at all times when lit, will ensure that, if any child does approach, there are always at least 2 adults present at forest school.
- When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area without invitation for the adult.
- When allowed to access the campfire, children must walk around the outside of the seating logs and wait for permission to step over. Once permission has been given, they must sit, ensuring legs are drawn into the log and not outstretched.
- Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.
- Children will be taught how to change seats by standing, stepping over the log and then walking around the outside of the seating area. They must never cross the inner area. NO RUNNING
- Long sleeves and trousers must always be worn.
- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire.
- Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the children:
- They are advised to turn their head to one side, blink their eyes and move out of the smoke to a safe spot.
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.

Safety and Responsibility

1. Lighting and keeping fires burning

When lighting a fire the Forest School leader will take control of the operation and all accompanying adults will be briefed before we start. A lit fire will not be left unattended at any point. A fire may not be lit until it has been confirmed to all that our fire safety equipment is in place. Open fires will be built within a fire square.

- 🔪 No flammable liquids or plastics are to be used on the fire.
- 🔪 If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision.
- 🔪 Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- 🔪 At the end of the session, the fire must be extinguished with water until all smoke and steam has ceased.
- 🔪 These items will be essential whenever a fire is lit:

- Fire blanket
- Heatproof gloves or gauntlets
- Clean emergency water supply
- Burns first aid kit.

2. Extinguishing fires

- 🔪 All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- 🔪 Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- 🔪 Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
- 🔪 FS leader should ensure that any large remains of wood are separated from one another.
- 🔪 At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.

3. Education about fire and fire lighting

(notes for adults at FS sessions)

For a fire we need fuel, fire and oxygen – the fire triangle

- 🔪 Children will collect tinder (dry grasses, very dry leaves, birch bark from the floor, very fine twigs) to make an apple sized tinder bundle.
- 🔪 They collect their kindling. FS leader will also have alternative tinder if wet. Small twigs are best as it's the thickness not the length that counts! They will be separated into piles of different sizes - very fine twigs (a few mm diameter, size of a toothpick), slightly larger twigs (diameter of a pencil), and bigger twigs (approx diameter of adult thumb).
- 🔪 FS leader will explain that those that make a nice snapping sound when you break them are drier, and good for firelighting, whereas if they bend, then they're not very dry and not good for firelighting. Bone dry wood and small twigs make less smoke, and standing dead wood is better than wood from the ground.
- 🔪 FS leader will also have fuel: a few larger diameter pieces of dry wood, own supply of charcoal, dry sticks or small split logs.

Starting the fire

- 🔪 A few slightly larger pieces of wood will be put in the base of the firepit to create a dry platform and keep the tinder off the floor.

🔥 Tinder will be lit with a spark from fire striker (fire steel or matches). The finest tinder will then go on, e.g. paper thin bark, pine needles, dry grass, dry (dead) nettles, hay, super thin twigs.

🔥 Gradually add larger sized tinder and kindling. As one piece lights, add another - too much too soon can suffocate the fire of oxygen and put it out.

🔥 We will explain the purpose of a particular fire. For example, the above method is best for getting a fire started, 'grid fires' are good for cooking (a criss cross piece of metal over it, so that pans and kettles can be heated on a flat surface).

4. Log burner

🔥 An adult must be in the Kota grill hut while the log burner is in use with children inside

🔥 Safety equipment to be in the hut before the burner is lit

🔥 Children must be supervised by an adult, no children in the Kota grill hut while the log burner is on without an adult

🔥 Dry wood must be used to minimise smoke

- staff to have fire safety training as part of their induction

**This policy was adopted
on**

1st January 2026

**Signed on behalf of the
preschool**

Hayley Smith

Date for review

December 2026