

# Woodland Play Sessions

## HANDBOOK



This revision: April 2023

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### Version History

Version 1	May 2018	Original	JMB
Version 2	Nov 2018	More details on suitable clothing	JMB
Version 3	Jan 2019	Revised to include procedures for disposal of waste	JMB
Version 4	June 2019	Annual review	JMB
Version 5	Aug 2019	Rebrand to CVN	JMB
Version 6	Oct 2019	Addition of Fairy Circle site and extended sessions	JMB
Version 7	Dec 2019	Revisions for Forest Leader workbook	JMB
Version 8	Aug 2020	Revised for session 2020/2021 and COVID-19	JMB
Version 9	Aug 2021	Revised for session 2021/2022	JMB
Version 10	August 2022	Revised for session 2022/2023	JMB
Version 11	Jan 2023	Revised for session 2023/2024	JMB
Version 12	April 2023	Review print layout	JMB

### Introduction

This handbook contains information and a summary of policies and procedures relating to the running of Woodland Play Sessions. It should be read in conjunction with the main Nursery Handbook and CVN's Policies and Procedures.

This handbook is made available to staff and parents/carers prior to participation. It is subject to annual review and to immediate review if required.

### Background

Reports that children in the UK now spend less time outdoors than the prison population<sup>1</sup> reinforce concerns that, for reasons such as increased parental employment, busy modern lifestyles, digital technology etc, children are being deprived of the outdoor learning and development experiences that research shows has a positive impact on their physical, cognitive, social, mental health and emotional development.<sup>2,3</sup>

Woodland Play Sessions aim to compensate children for these lost opportunities by offering regular, frequent and enjoyable opportunities to learn outdoors in a natural woodland setting, throughout the year, in almost all weathers. These sessions are more than just taking the children outside to play. Children flourish when playing outdoors in all weathers. Feeling sun, wind, rain, snow and ice first hand is important as it connects us as human beings to the planet we live on.<sup>4</sup> Woodland Play Sessions are active, challenging, multi-sensory play and learning experiences where adults step back and allow children to direct their own learning, make their own decisions and assess their own risk. Children develop curiosity and imagination and build resilience, self-esteem and confidence which enable them to make decisions, persevere and handle situations independently. These life skills and competencies not only lead to children's who are healthier both physically and mentally, children also have an increased capacity to learn and a better understanding of nature and their environment.<sup>5</sup>

### Our Ethos

Woodland Play Sessions draw inspiration from the contemporary forest school movement, from British traditions such as the Woodcraft Folk, Scouting and Guiding and also from various educational philosophies, including Rousseau, Froebel, Steiner and Montessori. Woodland Play Sessions aim to be learner-led, play-centred, holistic and experiential. When taking part in our sessions a participant is engaging with nature in wild spaces in an exploratory, sensory and physical way. We believe it is important to create, where possible, a long-term relationship between a location and a group of participants - giving all participants a chance to get a feel for how an environment changes over time.

Participants will be encouraged to take constructive risks in order to develop skills, good judgment and to learn and develop through managing their own and others' risks. In planning activities we consider not only the risks but also the potential benefits for the learner.

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<sup>1</sup> The Guardian (2016). [Three-quarters of UK children spend less time outdoors than prison inmates - survey.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government (2020). [Realising the Ambition : Being Me](#)

<sup>3</sup> Nicol, R, Higgins, P, Ross, H and Mannion, G (2007), *Outdoor education in Scotland: a Summary of recent research*, Inverness: Scottish natural Heritage

Davy, A. (2009). *Changing Landscapes, Changing Lives*. Journal of the British Association For Early Childhood Education

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Government (2020). [Realising the Ambition : Being Me](#)

<sup>5</sup> Care Inspectorate (2016). My World Outdoors Care Inspectorate (2016). [My World Outdoors](#)

### Our Curriculum

Experienced practitioners deliver Woodland Play Sessions with the knowledge that children learn best in environments which inspire them to be curious. The outdoor environment offers experiences which are set in meaningful contexts and supplies endless opportunities for child-led learning and development which encompass many of the experiences and outcomes prescribed by the Curriculum for Excellence<sup>6</sup> and the Scottish Government's objectives to create a country which is smarter, healthier, safer, stronger, greener, wealthier and fairer<sup>7</sup>.

The Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning<sup>8</sup> states that all children and young people should be able to participate in a range of planned, progressive and creative outdoor learning experiences that are part of the curriculum. These should be frequent, regular, enjoyable and challenging opportunities that take place throughout a child's school career and beyond. Outdoor learning frequently involves teamwork and an ethos of learning in a less structured environment which can lead to lifelong interest in a particular subject area. Each curriculum area lends itself to learning in the natural environment and there are benefits within each subject. Accessing natural resources and witnessing the impact of our presence in the natural environment encourages learners to interact with the living world in a climate of safety and respect.

### Our Staff

In addition to the the progressional qualifications required for registration with the Scottish Social Services Council our staff are also trained as follows in delivering high quality play and learning in the natural environment

#### Woodland Play Session Coordinator

Jane Bain : Forest Leader (level 8); Outdoor First Aid 2 days; Forest Kindergarten including Fire, Ropes and tools; Learning through Landscapes Accredited Professional.

#### Leaders

Jennifer Gairns : Outdoor First Aid 2 days, Forest Leader (level 6)

Lynda Simpson : Outdoor First Aid 2 days, Forest Leader (level 6).

#### Assistants

Jordan Sutherland : Paediatric First Aid

Helen O'Toole : Paediatric First Aid

Jennifer MacLeod : Paediatric First Aid

### Role of the Adult

All adults involved in Woodland Play Sessions should be conscious that it is an exploratory experience for children. Children will be encouraged to play and learn as independently as possible, often without demonstration or suggestion. If invited to provide support then adults do, but otherwise merely observe, allowing the experience to be learner-directed. Play in this way becomes deep engagement in learning where they can use first hand experiences and rehearse their future.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Education Scotland (2016). [Outdoor Learning. Practical guidance, ideas and support for teachers and practitioners](#)

<sup>7</sup> Learning and Teaching Scotland, (2010). [Curriculum for Excellence Through Outdoor Learning.](#)

<sup>8</sup> Learning and Teaching Scotland, (2010). [Curriculum for Excellence Through Outdoor Learning.](#)

<sup>9</sup> Scottish Government (2014). [Building the Ambition.](#)



It is the role of nursery staff to take a lead in planning, delivering and evaluating the Woodland play programme. They also take primary responsibility in ensuring that policies and procedures, rules and guidelines are adhered to. Volunteers and other adults may help with these responsibilities where they wish to and are able and/or qualified to.

### **Activities**

We encourage all of our children to be part of the process of planning and developing our woodland play sessions. This allows staff to gain a better understanding of what interests and motivates our learners and results in experiences which are more likely to engage them.

Our activities will depend on the ability and experience of participants. Examples of Woodland Play activities include:

- Woodland management and nature exploration
- Building dens and other structures
- Fires and cooking
- Games and invitations for imaginative play
- Natural crafts
- Using tools, such as knives and saws
- Scavenger hunts and adventure
- Seasonal celebrations

### **Our Setting**

Cambusbarron Community Development Trust (CCDT) recently purchased 64 hectares of Gillies Hill as a community resource and welcomes the use of the hill for educational purposes. Gillies Hill is located south of Cambusbarron, west of Stirling and the M9, and north of the Bannock Burn in Central Scotland. Gillies Hill covers a 140 hectares (350 acres) crag and tail which rises from a height of 79 metres (259 ft) at the Bannock Burn Bridge near Sauchie Craig to an elevation of 162 metres (531 ft) at a point which overlooks the former quarrying operation to the west and Stirling Castle to the east. The hill lies north of the Bannock Burn, northeast of Sauchie Craig (an area designated SSSI, Site of Special Scientific Interest), east of the Touch Hills and Murrayswood, south of Cambusbarron, and west of Stirling and the M9.

Gillies Hill is the hill from which Robert the Bruce's camp followers, or Gillies, descended onto the field of the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 turning the tide of the battle which granted Scotland nearly 400 years of independence. The majority of Gillies Hill has been classified as a Semi-natural Ancient Woodland by the Woodland Trust using aerial surveys and by a follow-up Phase 1 habitat survey conducted in 2010. To date 21 Scottish & 38 United Kingdom ancient woodland indicator species have been documented on the hill demonstrating that the woodland's understory and sections of its tree cover have been cloaked in woodland for centuries; the earliest mapped confirmation of trees on the site dates back to the 1580s.

### **Getting here, parking & access**

By bus

Cambusbarron is served by the First Scotland East company, service B12 and C12. Please check with the bus company for up to date service information.

By car or bike

Cambusbarron is easily accessed from Stirling via Birkhill Road or St Ninian's Road.

# CAMBUSBARRON VILLAGE NURSERY

## Location

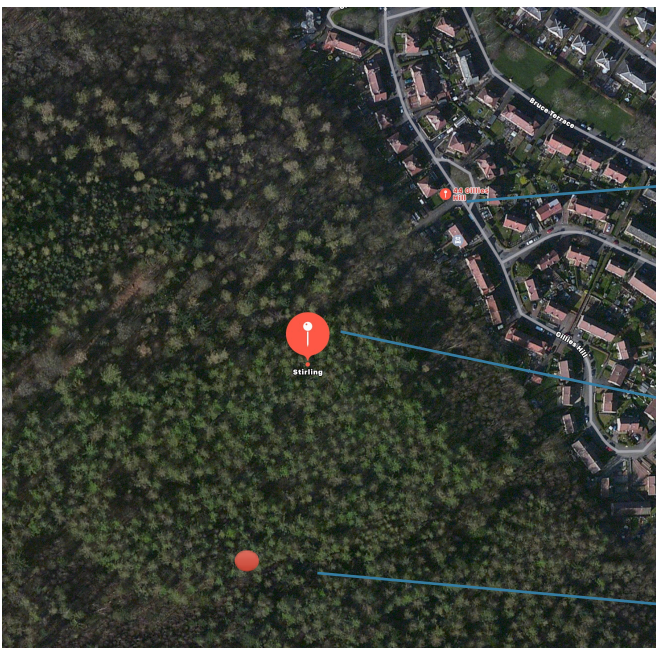
We have a few different sites within the woods that we use depending on interest, weather or ability. Our base site is usually adjacent to the Walled Garden.

Location	Latitude, Longitude	What3Words
Bendy Tree Site	56.10356, -3.969572	Grand.gossip.garden
Fairy Circle	56.105609, -3.969523	Finely.report.defend
Main Site	56.104315, -3.970007	Prop.years.royal
The Garages	56.10666, -3.968025	Crest.rocks.hurt
Walled Garden	56.103707, -3.963742	recall.bounty.cards
Sycamore Tree	56.103609, -3.964830	mole.improving.shells



Walled Garden

Sycamore Tree



The Garages

Main Site



### **Local medical facilities**

Minor Injuries Unit (9am-9pm daily)

Stirling Community Hospital

Livlands Gate

Stirling

FK8 2AU

Phone: 01786 434036

Accident and Emergency department

Forth Valley Royal,

Stirling Road,

Larbert,

FK5 4WR,

Phone: 01324 566 100

### General Session Information

#### When and Where

We aim to be in the woods at least twice weekly to ensure all children have regular opportunities to attend. A flexible approach allows us to determine the right amount of time for each session in the woods, particularly important in the colder winter months. It also means that we can take as many opportunities as we can to spend time in the woods. In consequence, children should always come to nursery prepared to spend time in the woods. Please see below for appropriate clothing and equipment. On a woods day staff will help children get themselves ready and then we will all walk to the chosen play site together. This “walk-in” provides an additional opportunity for children to develop awareness of locations within their community as well as road safety skills. Children will carry their own rucksack (provided by CVN) containing spare clothes, water bottle etc. promoting independence and a sense of responsibility.

We have a nominated woodland gathering point at the entrance to the Gillies Hill Woods known locally as The Garages (adjacent to No 44 Gilles Hill). In some circumstances we may arrange to meet a parent there for drop off or collection.

#### WhatsApp Group Chat

We maintain a WhatsApp group chat to keep parents/carers updated with information about sessions. This is particularly important for any short notice changes. Please ensure that you have access to this method of communication.

#### What to Bring

Children should always come to nursery prepared to go to the woods. Please remember that the weather can change quickly so additional layers are always useful. One of our woodland sites is beside a burn and there is usually always access to water which is a huge attraction for children. Spare clothes are a must, several changes are advisable and these should be wrapped in labelled waterproof bags. A spare plastic bag is useful for staff to put wet clothes in. Children will be given the responsibility for carrying their own spare clothes in their rucksacks.

Lunches are delivered to the woods (Walled Garden) and we usually picnic there.

We would prefer that special or valuable toys are not brought to Woodland Play Sessions as we cannot take responsibility for any personal property that is lost or damaged during sessions.

Please note that we do have spares sets of clothes available and staff will always make sure children are dressed appropriately for conditions. Where children use nursery clothing we ask that they are washed and returned as soon as possible. Please do not wash our waterproof suits with any type of detergent, they should be rinsed only. Detergent removes the waterproof coating and reduces their effectiveness.

#### Kit List

We recommend that children have the following clothing:

##### General

- Waterproofs (jacket and trousers or all-in-one suit) are an essential piece of Woodland Play Kit and should be brought or worn every session as, even if it isn't raining, water in all forms is always a major attraction for young children. We have spare suits available if you don't have one.

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- Layers. We recommend that children wear a few layers of clothing as then they can add or take off as necessary. We don't recommend cotton/denim as it takes a while to dry and doesn't provide the same insulation. Fleece or fast drying/wicking fabrics are good options.
- Wellies. We recommend that waterproof trousers are put over the top of wellies to keep rain and water from running into the top.
- Spare clothing (pants, vests, socks etc) in a waterproof bag so that children can change if necessary. Children will be given the responsibility of carrying their own spare clothing etc in their own rucksacks.

### Winter

In addition to the above a good thermal base layer is recommended with plenty of layering options on top. Please be aware that snowsuits are great for keeping children warm but are primarily designed for ski seasons and are often not waterproof. Cold feet can make the difference to a session and, while wellies are essential all year round, please remember that feet can get very cold. It might be useful to invest in thermal wellies (many of our parents recommend WarmWellies and we have a discount code with them - please speak to staff for details. We've also heard recommendations for Demar wool lined wellies) or good waterproof walking boots and/or several pairs of good thermal socks for colder weather. Hats, scarves and waterproof gloves are essential.

### Summer Wear

Waterproofs, fleece, sun hat, long sleeved tops and trousers. Note that long sleeves and trousers not only protect from the sun but also from bites, scratches and stings.

On sunny days sun hat, sun cream, sunglasses may be appropriate as may midgie repellent/midgie nets

### Equipment

The following equipment will be considered "standard" and will be provided and transported to the site by staff or accompanying adults :

First Aid Kit (see Appendix A)	Contact and personal information
Accident Log	Toileting Kit
Mobile phone	Tool & Firelighting kit
Fresh water/water carrier for drinking	Personal Protective Equipment
Water to extinguish fire	Hand washing kit
Risk-benefit analysis	

### Procedures for Setting Up the Site

#### On arrival at the site

1. Confirm register of attendees
2. Carry out a session risk assessment of site and advise accompanying staff and adults accordingly (see [appendix B](#))
3. Set up necessary equipment ensuring all is fit for purpose.
4. Ensure group (children and adults as appropriate) is aware of new hazards or medical considerations

5. Describe or walk the boundaries for the day
6. Engage children in the development of rules and guidelines for the day

### **During the Session**

1. Visually check and monitor all equipment
2. Check on pastoral needs of group
3. Conduct regular head counts as needed
4. Ensure appropriate personal protective clothing is worn when appropriate

### **Closing the Session**

1. Extinguish any fires properly
2. Count any tools used into their bag
3. Remove structures
4. Check for litter etc.
5. Collect the equipment
6. Walk the group to the pick-up point/community centre
7. Ensure children are collected by an authorised parent/career per their Personal Plan
8. Thoroughly check, clean and store equipment

### **After the Session**

1. Staff debrief recording what went well and what needs to be improved
2. Debrief with children recording their interests and activities
3. Use information to plan for the following session

### **COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced much of our practice with enhanced hygiene measures instigated to reduce the risk of infection spread. The outdoor environment does not allow viruses and infections to spread as easily however we aim to maintain high standards of infection control while in the woods. Hand washing remains key to reducing the spread of infection and children will be reminded to wash their hands regularly throughout the session as well as before eating and after using the toilet. See our policies on Infection Control for more information.

### **Toileting and Nappy Changing**

During Woodland Play Sessions we aim to

- Comply with our Infection Control policy
- Locate the camp toilet at a distance from the play area
- Encourage children to use the toilet as independently as possible
- Assist children who are not able to go to the toilet independently.
- Ensure hand washing facilities are available.
- Remove all toilet materials from site after the session ends and dispose of them via a domestic waste stream.

Our toileting and nappy changing facilities consist of a tent which offers privacy and a portable toilet. Children will be encouraged to use the toilet independently but will be supported when appropriate. Children wearing a nappy will be

changed in the tent and parents should provide a suitable changing equipment (wipes, nappy sack and mat) for this purpose. Soiled equipment will be returned to the parent in the child's bag.

We always strive for high standards in the environment, both indoor and outdoor, and will consider requirements, standards and good practice guidance to aim for the best possible outcomes for the children using the service. Best practice guidance for hand hygiene from Health Protection Scotland is to use running water and environmentally friendly liquid soap whenever practicably possible with paper hand towels available. We accept that there may be occasions where it is not practical or possible to follow this advice and in such instances will adopt a common sense approach. Hand sanitiser will be available for occasions when running water and soap is not.

Guidance from SEPA ([Management of hygiene waste produced as a result of personal care](#)) suggests that hygiene waste, ie waste that is produced from human hygiene activities, is not considered to be infectious or hazardous and, in the small quantities produced during Woodland Play Sessions, can be mixed in with the black bag or domestic waste stream for disposal in landfill facilities or municipal waste incineration facilities.

### **Snack and Lunches**

Woodland Play Sessions offer opportunities for children to eat outside and provide a broader range of eating experiences. Not every child may get to enjoy a picnic, cook food over a fire or feel the steady warmth of a hot drink sipped on a cold day. They may not have opportunities to transfer the skills acquired through eating inside nursery to other contexts. Many children's experiences of food may be screen-based as they watch TV or the computer whilst eating, thereby losing out on the social aspect of eating and sharing a meal together. Picnicking in the woods is part of the Woodland Play experience and all children will be encouraged to sit down for a snack meal during a session. Outdoors, and particularly in winter, the emphasis is on eating and drinking that keeps us warm, nourished and gives us more energy than is needed when playing inside. Woodland Play Sessions snacks may not conform to recommendations on healthy eating but staff will use their professional judgement when deciding which snacks should be served.

Lunches at CVN are provided by Stirling Council catering services via Cambusbarron Primary School. These are generally delivered to the Walled Garden and eaten as a picnic in the woods. Non funded children should bring a packed lunch as usual or may purchase a "school" lunch (currently costing £2.20).

### **Toothbrushing**

Children at CVN take part in the [Childsmile program](#) and will be encouraged to brush their teeth after lunch in the woods following Childsmile guidance where possible. Currently only dry brushing is practised during Woodland Play Sessions.

### **Food Hygiene**

On occasion food will be prepared and cooked over an open fire. CVN aims to maintain a high food standard in relation to the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food in the outdoor environment.

In particular :

- Cooking on the campfire will only be undertaken by a staff member who is appropriately trained in food hygiene.



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- Food will be stored at the correct temperatures - chilled foods will be kept in a cool box until required.
- All chilled foods will be consumed within 2 hours. Hot foods (kept in vacuum flask) will be consumed within 4 hours
- Cooked foods will not be reheated
- Waste food will be disposed of correctly
- Plates, cups and cutlery are provided as is drinking water.

Snacks generally consist of a plain biscuit and some fruit or vegetables. During some sessions, we may cook items such as popcorn, damper bread or marshmallows over the fire.

Dishes will be removed at the end of the session, washed and returned ready for the next session.

Infection control procedures regarding food and hand hygiene will be maintained.

### **Feedback**

We encourage all children and carers/parents to give us regular feedback about their experience and also to talk to us about anything that is causing concern. Feedback can be expressed verbally in person or in writing by email. We will always endeavour to be as open, honest and as straightforward as possible with carers/parents with regard to any issue; maintaining a two way flow of information can lead to resolutions before problems arise or escalate. All communications regarding formal feedback or concerns will be logged and records kept.

In the event of a concern being about our practice, we will investigate this and feed back our conclusions with 28 days.

### **Cancellation**

Our flexible delivery pattern means that we can take appropriate opportunities to go to the woods and avoid occasions when the circumstances are not suitable. On some occasions however it may be necessary to cancel a planned Woodland Play Session.

For example :

Extreme weather : High winds (in excess of 25mph) or extremes of weather (high or low temperatures, snow etc) prompting a met office amber alert.

Staff Ratios : In the case of staff absence which compromises adult to child ratios a session may need to be cancelled at short notice.

In the event of a cancellation a normal session will take place as usual in the Community Centre.

### **Health & Safety**

Whenever outdoor activity sessions are run there will always be the need for key items to meet the health and safety requirements of leading a group outdoors. The location of the site, time of year and the group demographic will have a significant impact on what resources are needed to run a safe and enjoyable session. Cambusbarron Village Nursery has legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The purpose of this act is to promote, stimulate and encourage high standards of health and safety at work. It protects not only all people at work, but also the health and safety of the general public who may be affected by the work activities. Our staff are appropriately qualified professionals who are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), who are members of the Protection of Vulnerable (PVG) scheme and who hold a relevant first aid qualification.

### **First Aid**

A first aid kit is accessible to all adults at all times. See Appendix A for details of contents

All staff present will be aware of any specific medical information required. Children's emergency contact information is available to each member of staff via the Staff google drive. Staff are contactable at all times via mobile phone and woodland play WhatsApp group.

Our Woodland Play sites are considered to be safe and easily accessible. Our staff will assess a site at the start of a session and will seek to identify significant hazards and take action or precautions to reduce the risk to a safe level. The location of the main sites used and their grid references are noted in the Site Information page of this Handbook. Woodland Play sessions however are flexible and often involve a degree of exploration which may take us to new and/or different areas of the woods. The session leader takes responsibility for retaining a general awareness of the group's location and all staff have access to mobile phone maps at all times in the event of an emergency. All staff and accompanying parents should be aware of the risk assessment prior to an activity. Changing weather conditions and visitors to the site can create new challenges, such as fallen branches and litter. These will need to be assessed and may alter previously arranged activities.

### **Shared Information**

Any special knowledge of the group - for example a participant may have a particular fear of dogs or a food allergy - can be useful when planning activities as we aim to make every session as beneficial to participants as possible. Parents must provide information on behaviours that may present risk to individuals and/or the group and, if necessary, a separate risk assessment prepared.

### **Medication**

In accordance with the group's policy on the administration of medication, staff will not dispense any medication without prior arrangement or suitable permissions. Guardians should provide details of allergies or relevant illnesses. No treatment will be administered against parental wishes. Sun cream should be applied by a parent/carer prior to a session. If necessary sun cream will be reapplied by staff.

### **Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure**

Emergencies are never wanted, but they are a possibility, and so we must ensure that all adults are familiar with appropriate emergency procedures. Most emergencies can be resolved on-the-spot by the session leader removing

the group from potential threat and providing first aid. However, in the event of a serious incident, which could arise as a result of an injury, illness or extreme change in weather the following procedures will be followed:

- Secure safety of whole group from further danger. Stop all work/activities. Call in and locate group promptly as agreed in advance. If possible, remove whole group from any further danger or threat of danger. If the group is removed from the site the emergency assembly point is at **The Garages**
- First Aider will attend to any casualties with adult helper and with regard for maintenance of required supervision ratios for the rest of the party. At least one first aider must be on site at all times. A record of changes in casualties' state and anything administered to them to be made if possible.
- Emergency services contacted as necessary. Charged mobile phones are carried by staff. If possible/necessary an adult will meet emergency vehicle at **The Garages**
- Safety of the rest of group will be maintained by the remaining staff and adults, as far as possible away from the scene of the incident.
- Informing next of kin should be carried out as soon as practicable after the incident by the designated member of staff or accompanying parent.
- Incident report and/or first aid book should be filled in on site if possible. This should be filled in whenever the emergency plan is used even if no one was harmed and it was just a near miss.
- Ensure that all equipment involved in an accident or incident is retained in an unaltered condition in case it is required by the police. In all cases a written record i.e. a log, of all facts, events, times and circumstances, will be retained until all matters are finally settled. If relevant this will include photographs.
- An incident report or entry in the first aid book must be completed, signed and dated.
- Incidents leading to admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours or resulting in an injury preventing a person working for three or more days afterwards need to be registered with RIDDOR within 24 hours Tel 0845 3009923 (HSE - Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm).
- Inform Cambusbarron Village Nursery Board of Directors of any major incident as soon as possible.
- First aid kits must be restocked after use and a stock check carried out every 12 months.
- Any incident or near miss must be subsequently investigated by staff team to review existing controls and procedures. See Health and Safety Policy.

### **Lost or Missing Person Procedure**

Unknown woods can be disorientating, especially if a participant is unused to this kind of environment. Many woodland sites are not surrounded by walls or fences, and whilst we appreciate this sense of freedom can be beneficial to all, there is also the possibility that a participant may get lost. There are a number of ways we can prevent this:

- We encourage all our participants to take an interest in their surroundings so as to help them find their bearings. Ultimately we would like to inspire all who are able to become responsible for their own safety with respect to staying close to the rest of the group.
- Boundaries will be chosen and made known to the group. Going outside the boundaries will require all of the group to go or a sub group, with at least one leader – allowing at least two leaders to stay with remainder of group.
- The group will be counted in and checked at start and end of day, then at other relevant points in the day – particularly after activities that include members splitting up.
- Good communication within the group will encourage collective responsibility for each others' safety – staff are always approachable and should be made aware if there are any concerns as to a participants whereabouts.

In the event of leaders fearing that a member of the group has gone missing:

1. All the group will be immediately called back in, by prearranged call or whistle, and counted and missing member determined. The time will be noted.
2. The Group Leader must ensure the safety of remaining children. An adult must stay with them at all times.
3. One or more adults should immediately start searching for the missing group member – calling and whistling as appropriate.
4. If the missing group member is not found within 5 minutes, the group Leader must contact police by telephoning 999 (this will result in the emergency plan coming in to action).
5. Adults will prioritise searching areas which are considered higher risk such as running and lying water

Leaders must recall and write down a description of what the missing person was wearing and any distinguishing features. Any information on their last known location and time should be noted. Also if they have any special medical or learning needs then these need to be noted down. All information then must be passed to police or other agencies.

### **Hazardous Plants & Fungi**

Part of the risk assessment will be to identify any particularly hazardous plants and point them out to the group so that all members are aware of the dangers. The sap or hairs from some plants can cause rashes and blistering when in contact with skin, or after the skin is then exposed to sunlight. Most rashes are caused by stinging nettles, though giant hogweed may also be a problem. Both of these plants are easily distinguishable and if either is seen growing on site all members of the group will be taught how to distinguish and avoid coming into contact with it. Serious poisoning from ingestion of leaves, berries or mushrooms rarely occurs, even when curious children are involved. However, ingesting even small amounts of some species can cause nausea, vomiting, and stomach cramps; and large amounts are potentially fatal. Consequently, participants will not be allowed to forage or eat anything that has not been agreed to be safe by an appropriately knowledgeable member of staff.

If a member of the group is exposed to a hazardous plant or fungi such that they have a reaction, a leader must be informed and appropriate First Aid given. If the nature of the reaction is more serious the Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure must be followed.

### **Zoonoses**

#### **Ticks and other Biting or Stinging Insects**

Parents/carers should be aware that ticks exist around Gillies Hill Community Woodland and that they may be infected with a bacterium which can be transmitted to humans causing Lyme disease. Although cases of Lyme disease have been reported throughout the UK only a small proportion of ticks carry the bacteria that cause Lyme disease, so being bitten doesn't mean you'll definitely be infected. However, it's important to be aware of the risk and seek medical advice if you start to feel unwell.

Many people with early-stage Lyme disease develop a distinctive circular rash at the site of the tick bite, usually around three to 30 days after being bitten. The rash is often described as looking like a bull's-eye on a dart board. The affected area of skin will be red and the edges may feel slightly raised. The size of the rash can vary significantly and it may expand over several days or weeks. Some people with Lyme disease experience flu-like symptoms in the early stages, such as tiredness (fatigue), muscle pain, joint pain, headaches, a high temperature (fever), chills and neck stiffness.

We recommend that parents check their child for ticks regularly and particularly after a woods session. If a tick is found on a child staff will complete an accident/incident form and inform the parent on collection. Staff will not attempt to remove the tick.

Information on safe removal of ticks can be found at <http://stopthetick.co.uk> and on Lyme disease at <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Lyme-disease/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Insect bites and stings can be common, particularly in spring and summer, and usually cause only minor irritation. In rare cases, people can have a serious allergic reaction to a bite or sting that requires immediate medical treatment - if this is the case then a leader will refer directly to the Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure.

If there is prior knowledge to suggest that a participant will have an allergic reaction if bitten then staff and committee must be informed before any activities take place on site.

### **Weil's Disease (Leptospirosis)**

Leptospirosis is rare in the UK and more common in tropical areas of the world (latest figures show only 9 confirmed cases in Scotland in 2020). Leptospira bacteria are often carried by rats and excreted in their urine thus contaminating water and muddy soil. The bacteria can enter the human body through cuts, grazes, mouth or mucous membranes such as those which line the nose and ears.

Infection with the bacterium causes an illness which has similar symptoms to flu – temperature, muscle aches and nausea. In mild cases these symptoms can be easily treated and patients will likely recover in a few weeks.

### **Dogs & Members of the Public**

Our site is open to and is accessed by the public and so there may well be other people out enjoying the woods. Most people will be happy to pass by without hindering activities, but there is the possibility of attention from a passer-by. If this event causes concern to anyone involved a member of staff will step in and assure the member of public that if they wish to raise any issues, then they should contact a committee or staff member at a time convenient to both parties. In the unlikely event that the situation is considered to cause alarm or be dangerous staff will use a mobile phone to call the police and use the Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure.

Some participants may be unused to or afraid of dogs. If this is known to be the case for any particular participants please inform staff prior to starting sessions. If a strange dog appears the fearful participant can be joined by at least one member of staff. If a dog approaches the group and appears likely to cause trouble children will be advised not to run or act excitably - ideally keep arms by their sides, voices low and stay as still as possible. Staff will speak to the owner.

### **Ropes and Tool Use Procedure**

Using a range of ropes and tools will be necessary in many site based activities and is an important part of our work as it enables participants to develop new practical skills that help develop self-confidence. Cambusbarron Village Nursery aims to ensure that all people participating in sessions with ropes and tools do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible. Tools that may be used include bow saws, pruning saws, secateurs, knives, hand drills and axes.

Please refer to our Tool Risk Benefit Analysis on use of Tools and on Ropes for more information.

### **Fire Procedure**



Fires and the use of storm kettles are an important part of our Woodland Play Sessions. We aim to ensure that all people participating in sessions with fires and/or storm kettles will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

- Leaders will make sure participants have an understanding of the properties of wood for burning. In particular the potential for toxins to be emitted into the atmosphere when wood is burned and the importance of dead wood to support the woodland ecosystem.
- Leaders will carry in wood for burning where ever possible
- Smoke inhalation will be reduced by burning carried in wood (dry wood is less smoky green and wet wood). Those in smoky areas will be encouraged to move to less smoky areas
- Fires will only be lit in suitable defined spaces or in a fire bowl
- Participants will only be allowed to light fires under direct supervision of a trained leader using suitable materials and equipment
- All participants will be given clear guidelines about how to behave and move around the area when the fire or kettle is lit
- A lit fire will be supervised by an appropriately trained adult at all times, as will all cooking activities
- Related safety equipment will be kept in close proximity to the fire (including heat-proof gloves, a burns kit and a sufficiently large container of water to extinguish the fire)
- All fires should be fully extinguished and all traces removed at the end of a session. Please refer to our Risk Benefit Analysis on use of Fire for more information

### **Safe Lifting and Moving**

Woodland Play Sessions activities can be physically demanding for participants and staff, for example when handling heavy objects, so it is wise to be aware of best practice. One of the greatest causes of back injury is lifting or handling objects incorrectly. Here are some tips:

If you cant avoid the task then try to find some way of making it easier

- Think and plan where and how you are going to move an object before you lift
- Keep the load close to your waist and the heaviest side of the load next to your body
- Adopt a stable position with feet apart and one leg slightly forward if possible
- Ensure a good hold on the load, hug it close to your body if possible
- Avoid bending your back, only bend at your hips or knees if possible
- Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways especially if bending at the back
- Keep your head up and look ahead, not down at the load once it is held securely
- Move smoothly
- Know your limits - don't lift or handle more than you can easily manage without help
- Put the load down if you need to adjust it
- Where possible, use ropes to drag objects such as trees
- If there is any risk of a foot being crushed or hit by an object then safety shoes should be worn

### **Lone working**

There will be occasions when it may be necessary for staff to be on site alone, particularly when setting up, clearing away or on planning visits. Staff will not be asked to be on site alone if this causes them any concerns or if they are not familiar with the woodland environment. When working alone a staff member will always have a remote "buddy". The staff member will make regular contact with their buddy at pre-agreed intervals using mobile phone. The staff member will inform their buddy when they have left the woods. Staff who are working alone will always have access to first aid facilities. See also the Lone Working Policy.

### **Reporting: incidents and accidents**

Any accidents that involve injury will be recorded into a first aid book. Major injuries that constitute 'reportable injuries' will be reported to the Health and Safety Executive via RIDDOR. Parents will be notified of injuries in keeping with the Critical Incidents policy.

'Incidents', which include major behavioural incidents and any major negative occurrence that is not an accident, will also be recorded per nursery procedures.

In the case of certain accidents, incidents or injuries, by law, the nursery must inform the Care Inspectorate immediately

### **Consent**

Parents/guardians will be asked to give consent as part of their child's personal plan before their child begins Woodland Play Sessions in recognition of the different location and nature of sessions. The child's personal plan contains relevant medical details of the child and whether consent to administer first aid treatments or to admit the child to hospital for emergency treatment is available

The form also provides emergency contact details and requests permission to take and use photographs of the child for promotional purposes and reports.

### **Insurance**

Cambusbarron Village Nursery is insured through Early Years Scotland (underwritten by Royal Sun Alliance)

### Safeguarding

Cambusbarron Village Nursery work to ensure the safety of children whilst in our care. We are committed to creating an environment which is safe from abuse and any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with.

Cambusbarron Village Nursery's Safeguarding Policy focuses on:

- Minimising the risk of abuse taking place through good planning and best practice
- Empowering those it works with to stay safe and speak out
- Taking appropriate action when any allegations arise

### Staff

All staff are members of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme. Children will not be left unsupervised with an adult who is not a scheme member.

### Ratios

The Health and Social Care Standards do not specify the number of adults to children required in any setting however commit a service to ensuring that (among other things)

- a child's needs are met by the right number of people (3.15),
- staff have time to support, care and speak to children (3.16) and that
- the size and composition of the group is right for each child (1.8).

To ensure appropriate support and supervision at all times we adhere to the Care Inspectorate ratios<sup>10</sup> :

- Children aged 2 years to under 3 years: 1 adult to 5 children
- Children aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school: 1 adult to 8 children

### Toileting

Children will be encouraged to use the toilet independently however when this is not possible only staff members will be allowed to accompany a child to the toilet or to change nappies. All waste products will be removed from site. If a child needs to use the toilet en-route to or from the designated site and toilet facilities are not available it may be necessary for the child to "wild-wee". Children will be supported to find a suitable spot to use. Staff will remove any solid waste and hands will be washed in running water as soon as possible afterwards (wet wipes will be used as an intermediary measure).

### Photos & Video

Photos and videos may be taken and will be held with regard to nursery policies. Permission will be requested via pro forma consent for nursery staff to take photographs of participants for monitoring and evaluation purposes and suitable use in publications for leaflets/materials/website. Where permission is refused, we will avoid photographing and videoing that child and blur out faces wherever they do appear in recorded material.

### Disclosures, Recording & Reporting

Appropriate steps will be taken where concerns arise regarding the safety of a participant. Concerns will be reported to the group's Child Protection Officer and we will ensure that disclosures are responded to sensitively and appropriately, in line with current best practice and CVN's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

### Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

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<sup>10</sup> [Guidance on adult to child ratios in Early Learning and Childcare \(ELC\) settings](#)

Cambusbarron Village Nursery is committed to equal opportunity for all and we wish to provide an environment in which people feel equally valued. Our policies help to ensure that we promote the individuality of all, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

We aim to adapt activities to ensure that everyone can participate and, where possible, we will keep spare sets of waterproof clothing to ensure that bad weather is not a barrier to taking part.

### **Behaviour Policy**

Everyone involved with Cambusbarron Village Nursery has a responsibility to protect their own and other group members' health, safety and well-being. They should inform staff if anybody's actions are likely to jeopardise the safety or comfort of others. During Woodland Play Sessions staff act as facilitators and supporters who are also learning along with the children. This equitable footing allows us to build strong relationships to support children's social and emotional needs in a natural way. Our approach is to see behaviours as forms of communication and behaviour "mistakes" as opportunities for learning. The staff role, as facilitators and supporters, is to understand and respond to the language of these behaviours. We believe that, with this support, along with the outdoor environment offer an intrinsic opportunity for children to develop self control and responsibility for their own behaviour that will, in time, be transferred to other settings and situations.

We aim to promote:

- Self-esteem
- Self-awareness of personal abilities and limitations
- Respect and care for oneself, other people and the natural environment
- Cooperation and non-violent communication

During Woodland Play Sessions children are encouraged to maintain the standard of behaviour normally expected during a nursery session. This includes respecting oneself, each other and the environment and listening carefully to instructions when they are given.

### **Physical Intervention**

In accordance with the law, and our values, Cambusbarron Village Nursery does not use, or threaten to use, physical punishment and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that physical punishment is not administered by any person who is in contact with them. However, where necessary, physical intervention may be used in order to avert immediate danger to any person (including the child).

### **The Role of the Adult**

We encourage all adults attending Woodland Play Sessions to

- Be a positive role model for participants, particularly with regards to respecting each person and the environment
- Encourage and reinforce caring and nurturing behaviour
- Be vigilant with regards to common sense safety
- Facilitate play and avoiding unnecessary rigidity or petty rules
- Avoid coercive or manipulative behaviour management (such as sarcasm, bribery, controlling) or that based on personal negative messages, as we feel these damage morale, motivation and self-esteem and are counter-productive to our ethos and objectives.

### **Encouraging Positive Behaviour**

We want to allow the greatest potential for each participant's Woodland Play Session experience to be transformational and therefore wish to welcome each participant from an open and unbiased viewpoint with regards to their behaviour and abilities. We hope that the greater freedoms offered by woodland play environment will allow for a flexible interpretation of positive engagement.

We will work to develop a clear set of boundaries and guidelines. Each participant will have the opportunity to voice their own feelings. Talking about how they wish to be treated and listening to the feelings of others is important as it will allow the group to work together, understand one another and ultimately become more supportive and cooperative. It will also contribute to making the woodland site a safe and enjoyable space.

### **De-escalation**

If a situation arises in which participants are behaving in a way that threatens the safety of the group, staff will ensure that the following steps are taken:

1. Recount the facts of the incident as observed, in simple language and without judgement, and if possible mutually agree on these. Remind the participants involved of any guidelines they have not followed.
2. Listen to the involved party or parties, if necessary gently separate them from the group for this. Ask about how they feel about the incident, empathise with them to help them to express themselves and take responsibility for their feelings. Ask them to imagine how they think their behaviour has affected everyone else.
3. Talk with them to establish what their needs in the situation were and to understand how they were not being met. Discuss what their needs might be now and encourage them to consider the needs of everyone else present.
4. Help them to express any requests they might have clearly and in positive language. These can be requests of themselves, others, situations or of the environment.
5. Encourage discussion of new strategies, so that if a similar situation arises the participant(s) feel able to communicate their needs without resorting to negative behaviours.

### **Recording & Reporting**

Where relevant, any significant issues or incidents will be recorded on an incident form and discussed with parents or carers in a private conversation, when the participant is not present



### **Communication and Evaluation Strategy**

This communication strategy explains how participants, parents, those involved with delivering the Woodland Play programme and other stakeholders are kept informed with the delivery and outcomes.

#### **Children**

Children will be asked to evaluate the programme through verbal feedback, videos, writings and drawings. These will be opportunities for them to express how they feel the programme is going and to engage with the process of developing the future sessions.

#### **Parents/Carers**

Cambusbarron Village Nursery will request that parents/carers read our Handbook before their child attends for their first sessions. Parents/carers of each child will be asked to indicate consent to attend in their child's personal plan form. Verbal feedback will be sought from parents on a regular and informal basis, and a more formal evaluation form will be requested annually. Parents can address feedback to a Director or staff member. Parents will receive information about the outcomes of the sessions through Village Nursery's website and Facebook page.

#### **Interested Persons**

Following an evaluation of the sessions a case study or report may be produced and this will be shared with others who may have expressed interest.

Staff will request evaluation forms be completed at least annually and a reflective report will be compiled and presented at the group's AGM.

## Environmental Information

### Environmental Impact

We aim to engender a high level of respect for the natural world and encourage everyone involved in our group to be involved in decisions about their environment and safety.

We aim to ensure that, where possible, Cambusbarron Village Nursery purchases products that are considered to have a lower impact on the environment. By operating in a way that minimises waste, that promotes the reuse of materials and optimises recycling, we hope to demonstrate and encourage a wider respect for the environment, as well as an understanding that all produce and waste is linked to the health of our planet as a whole.

On site activities such as making fires will follow practices that minimise impact on nature through being mindful of what is burnt and how any residues are disposed of. Before leaving a site we will ensure that litter is collected and disposed of appropriately.

### Minimising Impacts

Activity	Impact	Mitigation
Fires	Changes in soil chemistry can lead to increases in PH levels, carbon, phosphorous, etc. which can be harmful to some plants, whilst other essential nutrients may be depleted. Fire can travel underground to roots even after appearing to be extinguished.	Most fires built are very small and are more about the process of making a fire than the end product. Designated and fixed locations for fires on parts of the site that aren't particularly ecologically interesting or unique to minimise/restrict impact. Ensure that all fires are extinguished fully before leaving a site. Where possible, dispose of ash into patches of rough ground and scatter well. Where needed, use a fire wok or similar to contain fire.
Collecting Wood	Dead wood is important to any woodland ecology as it has a multitude of uses, from homes for mini beasts to beds for fungi, so a lack of it is bad for any woodland habitat.	Fire wood brought in (kiln dried to prevent spread of disease/contamination) or wood identified as wood fuel by CCDT used. Limit the frequency of fires using collected wood and evaluate the amount of dry, dead wood before having a fire. Collect only the minimum amount required for any given fire. Reserve specific areas for dead wood conser-
Cooking	Food waste may attract animals to the site or increase numbers of certain species, potentially leading to adverse changes in biodiversity.	Inform participants of these impacts and provide a container (to be taken away) or an ecologically sound place for food disposal.

## CAMBUSBARRON VILLAGE NURSERY

Tree Climbing, Shelter Building & Swings	Damage to trees.	Restrict these activities to suitable trees that will tolerate them.
Collecting Natural Materials	Damage to plants - some plants are far more sensitive to losing their leaves or flowers than others and different seasons affect this too.	Inform groups as to which types of plants are best to pick, if any. Ensure leaves or flowers are taken from fallen parts where possible. Limit the frequency of this type of activity. Leave plants unpicked whenever picking is not necessary. Encourage a 1 in 20 rule (only 1 item for every 20 present should be picked)
Toilet Use	Wipes and nappies contain plastics Human waste entering waterways Animals may be attracted to human waste. World Health Organisation guidelines on sanitation	All solid toilet waste sealed and bagged to be taken away at the end of each session. According to the <a href="#">World Health Organisation</a> urine is considered to be relatively harmless but peeing close to water sources should be avoided. Peeing on gravel or rocks is less likely to attract animals
Toothbrushing	Toothpaste contains chemicals that may be damaging to the environment	All toothbrushing waste removed at the end of the session

### Sustainable procurement

Cambusbarron Village Nursery is committed to encouraging environmental sustainability throughout our practice and service. We believe that the choices we make as buyers and consumers is a large part of our footprint and therefore strive to take this into account in our purchases. We aim, where possible, to buy, use and promote items which are produced locally, are from sustainable or renewable sources and which have been produced ethically, with regards to environment, and workers' and animal welfare; and with minimum packaging.

## Appendices

### Appendix A



### First Aid Kit Contents

2 x Burn dressings 10cm x 10cm	3 x wound pads 10cm x 10 cm
3 x Sterile Guaze pads 7.5 cm x 7.5 cm	1 x sterile eye pad 6cm x 8 cm
2 x instant ice pack	2 x triangular bandages
3 x emergency foil blankets	2 x wound dressings 5cm x 5cm
1 x non adherent dressing 5cm x 5cm	Assorted plasters
3 x Disposable gloves	1 x disposable apron
Wound wash/saline solution	4 x burn cool gel sachets
10 x hand wash wipes	2 x bandage 5cmx4.5m
2 x bandage 7.5cmx4.5m	1 x crepe bandage 7.5cmx 4m
Roll of micropore tape	Tweezers
Safety pins	Scissors
2 x triangular bandages	

### Appendix B

#### **Site Risk Assessment**

Before a site is used a risk assessment will be carried out by a Forest School Leader. The site risk assessment will be updated as and when there are any permanent or seasonal changes to the site which are not recorded on daily site assessment below.

#### **Daily site risk assessment**

A daily site risk assessment (safety sweep) will be carried out before the site is used to ensure that there are no changes to the site which could cause harm. This should be taken with extra caution following high winds and other bad weather. It should be carried out by the session leader who will make the decision whether PPE should be worn when carrying out checks. Following the daily site risk assessment the session leader will carryout anything that is needed to make the site safe (e.g. remove any hazards, mark off any unsafe areas). At the same time will consider specific circumstances which make it appropriate to cancel a woodland play session.