

Safe Use, Storage and Maintenance of Tools Policy

This policy has been written with due regard to the following:

- Health and Safety Act 1974.
- The Prevention of Crime Act 1953.
- Knife Act 1997.

It is Bus Stop Forest School Training's policy that only staff members with an appropriate Forest School qualification at Level 2, 3 or 4 are able to use tools and or able to supervise Forest School students when using tools. Forest School students will be taught the safe use and handling of tools as part of their training and will be supervised at all times by a Forest School Trainer or Level 3 Leader when using tools independently or when working with the Pre-School children.

Under the Knife Act 1997, Bus Stop Forest School Trainers, understands that it is their responsibility to teach the safe handling and use of tools and will at no time suggest or encourage students to use tools in a violent way or for use in combat.

It is Bus Stop Forest School Trainings policy to ensure that all tools and equipment are used safely and are regularly checked and maintained. Visual checks of tools are carried out on and before each Forest School training day with Forest School students. If tools are found to be faulty, damaged or blunt they will be removed for repair or discarded.

A Tool Maintenance checklist is completed each time tools are used and checked, this is to ensure tools are safe and fit for use by students and Trainers. Please see the checklist content below:

- Name of Tool.
- Date it was checked.
- Signature of person carrying out check.
- Is it in good working order? i.e. do safety locks work?
- Repaired and reason why
- Discarded and reason why
- Sharpened (Oil stone/tool sharpener).
- Lubricated.

All Forest School tools and equipment are stored in the Forest School shed that is located in the Adult Teaching Garden. The shed is only accessed by staff members and or accompanied Forest School students.

When using tools during Forest School training, the tools being used are recorded on the Daily Forest School Risk Assessment, ensuring the team knows which tools have been used and need to be returned to the shed. Tools are transported in the Forest School Trolleys, ensuring they have blade covers on/in appropriate box/bag. At the end of the training day, the tools are returned to the Forest School shed and checks carried out, as stated below.

Tools and Equipment Maintenance:

- Complete Tool Maintenance checklist.
- Tools are clean and dried before putting away.
- Remove dirt with a cloth and or appropriate cleaning produce.
- Beware when cleaning blades that fingers do not come into contact with sharp edges.
- Check blades for sharpness and broken or bent blades,
- Blades should be lubricated and protected using an appropriate product for example WD40, all-purpose oil or similar.
- Blades to be sharpened using an appropriate file or stone.
- Check all moving parts for wear and tear and ensure nuts and bolts are tightened.
- Lubricate hand tools such as Bow-saws, Laplander saws, Palm drills and Secateurs with WD40, all-purpose oil or similar.
- Buy new blades and or new saws when no longer sharp, this includes: Bow-Saw, Laplander saws and palm drills.
- Ensure that all tools have appropriate blade covers.
- All tools should be stored in an appropriate box for example knives and peelers should be stored in a small lockable box. Larger tools such as saws and axes should be stored in a strong bag for transporting.
- Tools should be carried safely for example loppers should be carried under arm, holding the lower handle to ensure that the cutting edges stay closed together.
- Check and replace contents of fire bag, fire blanket, lightening resources and first aid equipment.
- Check PPE is returned – gloves are returned to appropriate Left and Right handed bags.

During Forest School training, students are shown examples of how to handle tool safely, transports tools, store tools safely for example in lockable tool boxes and to wear appropriate PPE. They are shown examples of how to number their tools and to add colour laces to tool handles so they can be easily identified in the woods. Students are shown how to maintain tools and are given the opportunity to sharpen tools, as part of their training. The above policy is clearly explained to them and they are supervised by the Forest School Trainer at all times.

Students are welcome to bring their own tools to Training to use as part of their practical skill sessions. Students who wish to bring their own tools are reminded to transport tools in an appropriate bag/tool box and not to carry tools for example, knives, upon their person when travelling to and from training, as this could be viewed under the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 section 1, as carrying an offensive weapon.

This policy was reviewed in May 2025, to be updated in September 2025.

Signed by Lead FS Trainer: _____ FS Trainer: _____