

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

West Suffolk Hive CIC aims to provide a positive physical and emotional environment for all members and participants. Activities support appropriate risk taking and playful exploration.

EMERGENCY AND INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

West Suffolk Hive CIC understands the importance of a practiced plan in the case of emergency and of notifying appropriate organisations in the case of such emergencies or contingencies.

EMERGENCY AND INCIDENT PROCEDURES

In case of an accident requiring external assistance, the Course Leader and/or first aider will notify a member of the West Suffolk Hive CIC staff. Depending on the nature of the accident, the emergency services will be called 112/999 and an adult will be sent to wait for paramedics to arrive by the car park and direct them to the site. The parents or emergency contact will be notified as quickly as possible and will be updated on which steps have been taken, and if necessary, given directions to the hospital/doctor's surgery where the casualty has been taken.

In case of sudden illness, participants will be monitored and cared for by a qualified first aider, and the parents will be notified and asked to collect their child as soon as possible. If emergency medical treatment is required, the first aider/Forest School Leader will call 112/999 and follow the procedures as for an accident requiring external assistance.

The Course Leader is responsible for the children in their care when they are not accompanied by their parents. Those children whose parents are accompanying them, remain the responsibility of their parents at all times, although the Course Leader will endeavour to keep all participants safe and well. Any sick or injured members of the group will be attended to by a qualified First Aider. Both Steph and Claire are qualified to deliver outdoor paediatric first aid, and several of the West Suffolk Hive CIC team are fully trained first aiders.

All incidents will be recorded and a copy of the incident report will be sent to any parents involved, plus the management team at West Suffolk Hive CIC as soon after the incident as is possible. Steph will send digital photocopies of the form via email, but a hard copy can be made available upon request. A hard copy will be held on file according to our Data Protection policy.

Sessions may be cancelled at the Course Leader's discretion if he or she deems it to be unsafe to run the session, if the site has had to be closed for any reason, or if the Course Leader is unwell. Where possible, all participants and their parents will be given at least 24 hours' notice, but this may not always be possible. In the first instance, an email will be sent to all participants, as well as a text message. If these are not acknowledged, the participants will be called using the contact number given.

West Suffolk Hive CIC 

www.westsuffolkhive.org.uk

FIRE POLICY

West Suffolk Hive CIC believes that proper use of fire is an important part of children's learning.

FIRE PROCEDURES

West Suffolk Hive CIC sessions will often involve a fire in the fire pit area. There are many reasons for having a fire including heating water for hot drinks and cooking on, but also acting as a focal point for social activities like storytelling, singing and crafting. A fire brings a heightened sense of community, and awareness for their environment. Practically, there are skills involved in identifying suitable tinder and gathering tinder, as well as learning a variety of techniques to light fires, promoting survival skills. A key feature of Forest Schools is learning to manage appropriate risks and having a fire is a great opportunity to assess the risks involved.

West Suffolk Hive CIC are permitted to light fires according to our fire risk assessment, in the areas that have been designated for use.

Fire lighting may only take place under the supervision of a trained Forest School Leader or a trained Forest School assistant. Access to the fire lighting equipment will be limited to only the Forest School Leaders and assistants. A trained first aider must always be present, and a first aid and burns kit on site, along with water, a fire blanket, and at least two clear fire exit routes. All participants are to be made aware of the boundaries and rules when the fire is lit, and there will be a limit to the number of people using the fire at any one time. Everyone else must stay back behind the safety line, which is at least 1.5m out from the fire. Anyone working at the fire must have one knee contacting the ground at all times to lean over.

There will be a designated adult who will take responsibility for maintaining the fire, and they must ensure that if they switch roles with another adult, that the other adult is fully aware that the responsibility has passed to them. This is the only person who may stoke the fire, and add more wood and tinder. The fire areas are clearly marked and will be fully extinguished after each session. This must be checked by the Forest School Leader before they depart.

The fire site will be periodically maintained by West Suffolk Hive CIC to ensure the ground around the area is undamaged. As we are using a permanent pit, there will be less damage to the surrounding ground. If any hot embers remain at the end of a session, these must be removed from the site in a metal bucket or doused with water until cold to the touch.

FOOD AND EATING POLICY

West Suffolk Hive CIC believes food is an important part of nurturing community at Forest School and that food and eating are important teaching tools. Additionally, West Suffolk Hive CIC believes that Forest School provides a good opportunity for practising environmentally friendly behaviours

FOOD AND EATING PROCEDURES

For many of the West Suffolk Hive CIC sessions it will be necessary to incorporate a snack/mealtime during the session. There will normally be a dedicated time to stop for a break and some food, which will be made clear to all the participants. Participants are encouraged to bring their own snacks and lunches with them, but not to bring any nuts onto the site. There may be occasions where we have a celebratory meal on the fire, in which case, participants will be invited to bring in something to share. This must have any allergens clearly labelled.

West Suffolk Hive CIC 

www.westsuffolkhive.org.uk

West Suffolk Hive CIC will endeavour to promote healthy eating where possible, and we will often cover topics about sustainable food sources and locally sourced food during the sessions. Participants are asked to bring as little plastic wrapping as possible, and to dispose of any waste off the site. We hope to minimise any waste at the sessions, and where possible will try and recycle or decompose any waste. Most of the food that is provided by West Suffolk Hive CIC is locally sourced or grown on site.

Foraged foods such as berries, leaves and flowers may only be eaten with permission from parents after identification by a Forest School Leader. We will be able to collect elderflowers in the summer to make cordial, nettles to make tea, and apples and blackberries in the autumn. Under no circumstances should any fungi be eaten at Forest School sessions, and any foraged food from ground level will be carefully washed before eating.

HYGIENE POLICY

West Suffolk Hive CIC acknowledges the importance of good hygiene in keeping children and adults safe from infectious diseases.

HYGIENE PROCEDURES

All participants will be encouraged to wash their hands before eating and after any activity involving mud or water. Packed lunches may only be eaten once hands are all washed and are stored in a waterproof box until needed. The cups for hot chocolate are washed after each session. Participants will be encouraged to have their own water bottle and snacks within their bag, and to eat it away from the ground to avoid contamination.

INSURANCE POLICY

West Suffolk Hive CIC understands that all sessions must be covered by appropriate insurance

INSURANCE PROCEDURES

West Suffolk Hive CIC is insured by Intasure on behalf of Aviva Insurance Ltd, with effect from 09/09/2023 for a period of 12 months.

Details of policy: level of indemnity is confirmed at £5,000,000 public liability and employer's liability. A £250 excess applies to any claims.

Cover

Cover for: Public Liability Insurance/Employer's Liability Insurance
Policy Number: 020707/09/23
Period of Cover: 09.09.23 – 08.09.24
Insurer: Aviva Insurance Ltd, via Intasure

We also have specific Forest School Practitioner Insurance to cover our outdoor education sessions:

Details of policy: level of indemnity is confirmed at £5,000,000 public/products liability and employer's liability with a £250 excess applying to any claims.

Policy Number: SALSALIA/J279898/0332/23
Period of Cover: 20.09.2023 – 19.09.2024
Insurer: Gatlin, via Birnbeck Insurance Services and SAUA Ltd.

MEDICAL AND FIRST AID POLICY

West Suffolk Hive CIC understands that it is the responsibility of the course leader to ensure that all participants and visitors have access to appropriate first aid treatment.

The administration of medicines is at the discretion of the course leader but this should not contradict our Equal Opportunities Policy

MEDICAL AND FIRST AID PROCEDURES

All sessions run by West Suffolk Hive CIC will have a minimum of two adults present, and when possible at least one adult per five children over the age of five years. There will always be at least one adult present who has a level 3 outdoor paediatric first aid qualification and all volunteers will be encouraged to attend at least a basic first aid course for themselves.

There will always be a first aid kit on site, and in the possession of the first aider. It is the responsibility of the first aider to inform the management team if anything is used or needs replacing. The course leader will ensure that there is at least one charged mobile phone with signal in the possession of one of the adults present. The first aid kit contains all the essentials for outdoor activities including bandages and plasters, cool packs, gloves, scissors and safety pins. No medication will be administered to any children without specific consent and direction from their parents. Any regular medication they require must be in a labelled bag with their doctor's name and number and dosage details. This can remain with the course leader throughout the session.

Any medical conditions must be declared on the contact form, especially any serious allergies, heart condition, epilepsy, or physical disabilities. All staff have had training for delivering an auto-injector (Epipen) for anaphylaxis.

FIRST AIDERS: STEPH HOLLAND, CLAIRE UNWIN, HEATHER BREAM, CATHY FORDHAM

(Level 3 Forest School leader and Paediatric first aid)

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

West Suffolk Hive CIC understands that risk-taking is an essential part of holistic development, when it is appropriate to the child and the environment.

RISK MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

In order to manage risk at our sessions, we have clear and robust policies and procedures in place, which we adhere to. Benefit Risk Assessments are carried out for every activity and these are reviewed regularly. A qualified Forest School Leader is always present for outdoor education sessions with unaccompanied children. They will have appropriate First Aid qualifications, will maintain their CPD and follow all six Forest School principles.

By including risk-taking in our Ethos and following all of the Forest School principles, West Suffolk Hive CIC promotes appropriate risk-taking. Inductions are carried out with all adult volunteers and staff, who will have appropriate experience, training and qualifications for any activity they are supervising. All our policies and procedures are available for parents and volunteers to read, and all volunteers and staff will be asked to read and sign each one. Benefit Risk Assessments will be carried out and will be reviewed and updated regularly. West Suffolk Hive CIC will provide risk-taking opportunities that are appropriate for the age and ability of the participants.

West Suffolk Hive CIC 

www.westsuffolkhive.org.uk

Children who are allowed to take appropriate risks become stronger, more resilient, confident and resourceful. They learn to assess the level of the risk and use problem-solving and social skills to approach the risk.

An individual Benefit Risk Assessment will be carried out for each activity and these will be reviewed and updated annually, or as the need arises. They will be adapted to suit different age groups, environmental conditions and changes to equipment. A site risk assessment will be carried out at the start of each month and a daily site check will take place before each session.

An annual review of all risk assessments will be completed on 7th April 2025.

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT POLICY

West Suffolk Hive CIC acknowledges that tools are an important part of outdoor learning and operate best when they are well maintained.

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT PROCEDURES

Most of the activities during our sessions will not require special personal protective equipment, but occasionally it may be useful to wear gardening gloves when handling plants like nettles and brambles, fire gloves when cooking on the fire and protective gloves when using certain tools. At all times, participants should wear appropriate clothing for the weather/environment, including waterproofs and sturdy shoes.

All the tools are kept in a locked tool box within the locked shed on site. Only the West Suffolk Hive CIC management team has access to the keys. All tools and equipment will be checked weekly and will be cleaned before the next session if they are wet or dirty. Tools will be cleaned and maintained using the maintenance kit that is kept with the equipment at all times. Knives and saws will be sharpened when necessary, or have their blades replaced, and drill bits will be checked and replaced if necessary.

The safe operation of all tools will be explained before allowing any participants to use them. The course leader will demonstrate safe working techniques for the tool needed for an activity. Every tool will have a risk assessment carried out, which will be reviewed regularly.

Saws – these must be used in a clear area with plenty of space around them in a clear working area. They will need a stable surface to work on, and possibly a team mate to help them hold the wood still. The saw blade should be clean and sharp. When sawing, the dominant hand should control the saw, while the other hand should be passed through the blade to hold the wood steady. It may be necessary to wear a glove to hold the wood to avoid splinters. Periodically, the sawdust should be removed to give a clear surface for sawing.

Knives – there will be a limit to the number of participants who may sign out a knife at any point (maximum of three children or five adults at a time). They must sit down on a stable surface with a clear working space around them of at least 1m. They must keep their feet flat on the floor and their legs together at all times. The blade must be clean and sharp and ought to be held in the dominant hand. To use the knife, they must always move it away from their bodies and keep the other hand above the blade. Knives should only be used for a specific purpose and must be returned safely to the tool box when the task is complete. Always walk with the knife in its sheath and with the blade pointing down.

West Suffolk Hive CIC 

www.westsuffolkhive.org.uk

Drills – the drill should be in good working order with a sharp drill bit and with cogs that turn easily. Oil if necessary and replace any blunt or broken drill bits. Place the object to be drilled onto a flat, stable surface – like a log. It can help to ask a team member to help by holding the wood or object still while drilling. A glove may be helpful to avoid splinters.

Secateurs & Loppers – these should be stored in a dry place with the safety catch on and must be kept clean and sharp. When walking with them, ensure the blade is pointing down. A demonstration of safe and appropriate use will be given before they are used by participants.

Ropes – these should be stored in a waterproof bag to keep them clean and dry. When used, any loose rope should be secured around the tree to avoid causing a trip hazard. Any rope swings and bridges must be tested by an adult before any children use them, and a qualified Forest School Leader must check all knots are tied correctly.

All participants will need to be observed and supervised when using tools and equipment. There should be a clear working area when using saws, knives and drills, which participants must not enter if they are not using a particular tool. There will be a limit on how many people may use a particular tool at any time, and for some activities, there will be a ratio of one adult to two children. When using ropes, there should always be someone on the ground acting as a spotter, and limiting the number of people on the ropes at any one time.

WEATHER AND CLOTHING POLICY

West Suffolk Hive CIC enjoys all types of weather and sees opportunities for play and learning in them. Nevertheless, the safety of participants is never compromised.

WEATHER AND CLOTHING PROCEDURES

West Suffolk Hive CIC will monitor the weather forecast 24 hours, 12 hours and 2 hours before each session. If adverse conditions are forecast, staff will contact the participants with advice on how we will proceed. They will then be kept updated if anything changes.

Appropriate clothing and footwear for being outdoors is essential for all participants, both children and adults. Sturdy footwear with good grip is needed for all sessions. Waterproof clothing, warm layers and extra clothing are essential on cold days – gloves, hats and scarves are recommended throughout the winter. In the summer, a hat and suncream are necessary, as well as bringing a water bottle. Parents are responsible for their own child's attire while they are at Forest School. Children who attend a session in inappropriate clothing may not be permitted to take part. Should the weather conditions change suddenly during a session, the course leader will provide suitable shelter.

Date policy completed: 7th April 2024

Completed by: S Holland

Date review due: 7th April 2025

West Suffolk Hive CIC 

www.westsuffolkhive.org.uk