



Silverwoods Forest School – Health & Safety Policy

(Last updated: 3 November 2025)

At **Silverwoods Forest School**, the health, safety, and wellbeing of all children, staff, volunteers, and visitors are our top priority.

We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and stimulating outdoor learning environment where children can explore nature confidently and responsibly.

This policy outlines how we manage health and safety across all our activities, both at our woodland site at **The Weald C of E Primary School** and at external school or community locations.

1. Our Health & Safety Principles

- We believe outdoor learning should be both **safe and adventurous**.
- All participants have the right to enjoy nature in a **secure, well-managed environment**.
- We actively encourage children to assess risk, build resilience, and learn how to stay safe through experience and guidance.
- Everyone involved in Silverwoods Forest School has a shared responsibility for health and safety.

2. Legal Framework

Silverwoods Forest School complies with:

- The **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**
- The **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- The **Children Act 1989 and 2004**
- Current **Health & Safety Executive (HSE)** guidance for outdoor education and Forest

School practice

All staff follow industry best practice as outlined by the **Forest School Association (FSA)**.

3. Responsibilities

Victoria Hofgartner – Lead Forest School Practitioner

is responsible for overall implementation of this policy and for ensuring:

- All risk assessments are in place and reviewed regularly
- Equipment and tools are safe, well-maintained, and appropriate for children's use
- Staff and volunteers are trained in emergency procedures, tool use, and first aid

- Health and safety standards are maintained across all Silverwoods sessions and sites

All staff, assistants, and volunteers have a duty to:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others
- Follow Silverwoods Forest School safety procedures and instructions
- Report any hazards, accidents, or near misses immediately

4. Risk Assessments

- Full **site and activity risk assessments** are carried out for all sessions.
- Dynamic (on-the-spot) risk assessments are completed throughout each session as conditions or activities change.
- Children are encouraged to participate in assessing and managing age-appropriate risks.
- All risk assessments are reviewed termly or whenever new activities are introduced.

5. First Aid and Medical Needs

- Silverwoods Forest School always has at least one **Paediatric First Aid-qualified practitioner** on site.
- A fully stocked first aid kit and tick kit are carried to every session.
- All accidents, injuries, and incidents are recorded and reported in line with HSE guidance.
- Parents and carers are informed of any minor injuries or incidents at the end of each session (or immediately if more serious).
- Medical details and emergency contact information are collected during booking through **Ticket Tailor** or **school registration forms** and are kept confidential and accessible to staff during sessions.

6. Fire Safety

- Campfires are a valuable part of Forest School learning and are only lit under adult supervision in a **designated fire circle area**.
- Firewood is sustainably sourced, and fires are kept small and manageable.
- A **fire safety water bucket** is kept within reach at all times.
- Clear fire safety rules are taught and reinforced with all participants before lighting fires.

7. Tool Use

- Tools such as peelers, knives, saws, or mallets are introduced progressively and only when children demonstrate readiness.
- Children are taught correct handling, carrying, and storage procedures under close supervision.
- All tools are checked before and after each session for damage or wear.

8. Hygiene and Welfare

- Children wash their hands before eating and after toileting, using **eco-friendly soap and warm water**.
- Toilets and hand-washing facilities are located a short walk from the woodland area at **The Weald C of E Primary School**.
- Drinking water is always available, and snack times are supervised.
- A strict **No Nuts Policy** is in place for all sessions.

9. Weather and Outdoor Conditions

- Sessions continue in most weather conditions, promoting resilience and connection to the natural environment.
- Activities are adapted to suit the weather (e.g. shelter building in rain, sun safety measures in summer).
- Sessions are cancelled or postponed only when weather presents a **serious safety risk**, such as:
 - Wind speeds exceeding 42 mph
 - Thunderstorms or lightning
 - Flooding or severe frost hazards
 - Parents are notified of any cancellations by email or text by 5pm the day before.

10. Site Safety and Maintenance

- The woodland site is inspected before each session to check for hazards such as fallen branches, sharp objects, or unsafe terrain.
- Equipment, ropes, and shelters are regularly maintained and replaced when worn.
- Boundaries are clearly marked, and children are reminded of safe exploration limits.
- Wildlife and habitats are respected and protected at all times.

11. Emergencies and Evacuation

- An **Emergency Action Plan** is in place for all sites used by Silverwoods Forest School.
- Staff are trained in evacuation procedures and communication protocols.
- The meeting point and safe zones are identified at the start of each session.
- Emergency contact numbers and first aid kits are always on site and accessible.

12. Review and Monitoring

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, staffing, or site conditions.

All risk assessments and safety procedures are reviewed termly to ensure continual improvement.

Last reviewed: November 2025

Next review due: November 2026

13. Contact

For any health and safety queries, please contact:

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Summary

Silverwoods Forest School takes every reasonable step to ensure that outdoor learning is both safe and inspiring.

Through careful planning, training, and respect for the natural environment, we provide children with the freedom to explore, discover, and learn safely in the great outdoors.

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