



## Behaviour Policy

Staff, volunteers and participants at Wheatfen Forest School all have a responsibility to protect their own and others' safety during sessions.

We aim to promote awareness, acceptance, respect and care of oneself, other people and the natural environment. We aim to promote a culture of community rather than a culture of compliance.

"He has done something bad; he must see the consequences by something bad being done to him"  
(compliance)

"We have a problem here, how are we going to solve it together?" (community)

*Kohn, A. (1996) Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community.  
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Virginia.*

### What is behaviour?

We see behaviour as an expression of an individual or group attempting to meet their needs. While some behaviour may be unsafe or challenging, we believe that no one is inherently bad or naughty. We therefore aim to welcome each participant in a non-judgemental way. We think that the freedom offered by the Forest School environment allows for a holistic interpretation of what constitutes good or bad behaviour.

### Expectations for participants

During the first session for any group or individual we will introduce three core expectations which are: to look after yourself, to look after others and to look after the environment. Staff will explain that any rules at forest school are rooted in our need to prevent harm to people and the environment.

Every participant will have the opportunity to express their feelings and listen to the feelings of others during Forest School sessions. Expression, listening and reflection will promote awareness, acceptance and respect of oneself and others, and promote behaviour which meets the needs of the group to make sessions safer and more fun.

### Expectations for staff

In order to keep everyone safe and promote a culture of community, WFS staff and volunteers aim to:

- Be a positive role model for participants, respecting every person and the environment.

*Is my behaviour setting a good example?*

- Value risk but be vigilant with regards to safety and dynamic risk assessment.

*Could this cause physical or emotional harm?*

- Practise authenticity.

*Am I being honest with myself and others?*

- Avoid unnecessary rules and rigidity.

*Why am I asking/enforcing/denying something? Can I communicate this to participants?*

- Practise non-judgement.

*Am I responding to someone's behaviour or am I judging the person themselves?*

- Avoid using manipulative behaviour management, such as sanctions and rewards.

*Why am I praising, rewarding, punishing or criticising? Is there an alternative?*

- Practise empathy.

*How does this person feel and why?*

-Reflect on observations and practice.

*Could I have done something differently?*

- Facilitate problem solving, discussion and conflict resolution by participants.

*Do I need to get involved and if so, how?*

### **De-escalation and conflict resolution**

If participants' behaviour threatens their own safety or the safety of an individual or the group then staff will aim to de-escalate the situation and facilitate discussion.

Begin by making a simple, factual observation about unsafe behaviour. Explain how this makes you feel and explain the underlying need to keep the group safe. If necessary, make a simple, clear request.

Ask those involved how they feel about the incident/behaviour and listen to them. It may be best to give time and space before a conversation. It may be necessary to speak to people separately or it may feel appropriate to facilitate a discussion. Encourage participants to:

-Think about how they are feeling and why.

-Imagine how someone else feels and why.

-Listen to how others feel.

-Think about what they want from the situation.

-Listen to what others want from the situation.

-Explore strategies for achieving what people want.

-Discuss and try strategies.

### **Physical Intervention**

Physical intervention will only be used by staff to avert imminent harm to a person or people and must maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned. Any occasion where physical intervention is used will be recorded in an incident report and parents/carers/teachers will be informed on the same day as the incident.

### **Reporting, recording & discussing**

Staff and volunteers will share any concerns about participants' behaviour with the forest school leader. If an incident has caused harm, the forest school leader will complete an incident report form and where necessary inform parents/carers/teachers. The forest school leader may choose to discuss unsafe or concerning behaviour with parents/carers/teachers and the participant together or with parents/carers/teachers when the participant is not present.

### **Pausing or stopping participation**

We want Wheatfen Forest School to be as inclusive as possible and provide a safe, positive experience for all. However, if a participant puts themselves or others at significant risk of harm and if - working with the participant and their parents/carers/teachers - we are unable to reduce this risk to an acceptable level then that person's participation at Forest School may have to pause or stop.