



## Environmental Impact Policy

### Purpose of the policy

This policy outlines the ways in which Wildwood Nature School monitors its environmental impact on the woodlands and outdoor spaces we use to carry out our Forest School sessions. We aim, wherever possible, to reduce negative impact upon the environment by following the procedures outlined below.

### Procedures to minimise negative environmental impact

Environmental awareness is at the heart of our ethos at Wildwood Nature School. We want to nurture a deep relationship between our children and nature, and in doing so, model how to look after our precious earth.

Below are some of the procedures and steps we take to minimise any negative impact our Forest School activities might have on the environment:

- Wherever possible, and appropriate, environmentally friendly products and recycled materials are used. We aim to ensure that Wildwood Nature School purchase products that have been assessed for having a lower impact on the environment. By operating in a way that minimises waste, optimises recycling and promotes the reuse of materials, 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.
- Environmental good practice is modelled by adults, showing children that the world in which we live in should be cared for. Involving children in site checks, recycling of waste and considerations of how we leave our site will help to support this.
- We bring in materials such as logs and kindling for the fire, and remove waste and dispose of fire remains with care and consideration for the environment.
- The fire pit is in the same location to reduce our impact.

- We bring in water to reduce our ecological impact
- We will monitor the site to identify any impact we are having on the environment.
- Any rubbish will be removed after each session.
- We move sites for our camps every term, so that the land can rest.
- The sites will be rested during school holidays and over the summer to help with regeneration.
- We will create log pile habits to encourage insect life.

## Assessment of impact of Forest School activities

There are many ways that running Forest School sessions can affect the ecology of a site in both negative and positive ways. There is a significant positive impact of fostering a love of nature in our next generation, through their knowledge and love of nature, the ecological impact of the next generation can be a gentle one.

This is a summary of our ecological impact assessment:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>How can this be reduced/managed?</b>
Walking/ running and playing in the woods	Compacted earth/ creating pathways  Reduction in biodiversity/ fauna and flora growth	Ask all children and staff to tread carefully, follow the existing path if there is one. Rest areas of woodland/ routes when possible.
Fire	Damage to soil or heat damage to trees  Change in pH of the soil (especially if ash is left behind) which can be harmful to plants, and can cause mineral depletion	Consider the frequency of fires, choose the position of the fire pit carefully, in areas that are not of ecological significance, avoiding overhead tree branches and also distance from large trees to mitigate root damage  Dispose of ash – remain in fire pit

	Risk of fire spreading if left or not properly extinguished	Extinguish thoroughly and carefully
Cooking/ eating	Litter dropping from food remains or packaging may attract animals to the site that aren't usually there	Take all litter away with you – leave no trace  Be careful of food waste/ spills and remove from site when you leave
Collecting natural materials/ deadwood	Damage to plants and or habitats/ loss of food for wildlife if acorns/ seeds collected and removed  Damage to plants/ trees if branches/ leaves/ flowers removed  Deadwood important habitat for many creatures and bed for fungi	Make agreements about the collecting of natural materials, limits on number of leaves from one tree, only flowers from the ground or seeds etc. where there are a large number of them and impact will be negligible  Inform about plants and any rare species or protected plants  Limit collecting and picking activities
Climbing trees	Damage to tree branches/trunk or plants on the forest floor	Restrict to suitable trees-identify to children
Making shelters/ rope swings	Trampling on flowers and plants on the forest floor  Damage to trees by use of ropes/ risk of breaking branches	Ask children to take care when walking especially in the Spring when flowers are emerging on the forest floor – e.g. bluebells  Take care when placing rope swing to minimise damage to trees and use only suitable trees that can withstand the forces
Toilet	Used toilet paper will have an ecological impact	All human waste should be emptied from camp toilet and disposed of in the toilets.

	Wet wipes contain plastic and are not provided for use at our sessions	
Recycling and waste	<p>Litter could be a hazard to wildlife, chemicals from waste could affect the soil and damage plants</p> <p>Waste materials have a negative ecological impact</p>	<p>We separate our rubbish into recycling, compost and landfill waste</p> <p>Children are aware and we explain the benefits of recycling and which type of rubbish goes in which bucket</p> <p>All types of waste are then removed from site for appropriate disposal</p>

We periodically carry out environmental impact assessments to evaluate the impact of our activities in the woodland, utilising outcomes of those assessments to inform our planning and activities.

**Policy review**

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Last reviewed:

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