

## Health & Safety Policy

PowerWood CIC runs a range of activities, at workshops and camps for families and children of all ages.

Forest School sessions may include activities that are considered higher risk than usual for participants. We consider not only the risks of each activity but the potential benefits too. However, we seek to minimise risk by following appropriate procedures for more risky activities, such as tool use and fires, and by carrying out risk assessment covering key hazards that participants may come into contact with during a session.

### **Legislation**

PowerWood CIC fully accepts its legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The purpose of this act is to promote, stimulate and encourage high standards of health and safety at work. It protects not only all people at work, but also the health and safety of the general public who may be affected by the work activities.

### **Staff, Training and Ratios**

All our tutors are professionals with relevant qualifications and experience have undertaken DBS checks. At least one member of the on-site team will hold an up to date first aid qualification.

We will also aim to provide adequate training and support to ensure all staff, volunteers and freelancers are confident and competent when following the policies and procedures we have set out. When planning activities, we will calculate how many workers will be needed, on the basis of group size and types of activities offered. A typical ratio would be one Forest School leader with one assistant for a group of up to 15.

### **Risk / Benefit Analyses**

We believe that, while there are risks that must be considered, there are also a wide range of potential benefits that can be gained by those involved.

We also recognise that taking risks is an important part of learning and developing and we want to provide a safe and supportive environment in which participants can

learn about risks, challenges and personal safety. Consequently, we will use a risk/benefit analysis in our assessment of our sites and activities.

### **On Site Risk Assessment Procedure**

An overall risk assessment of the PowerWood site is carried out annually, and any issues that are raised are addressed. Additionally, risk assessments are carried out before each camp or session, relating to the specific activities and environment on the day.

Changing weather conditions and visitors to the site can create new challenges, such as fallen branches and litter. These will need to be assessed and may alter previously arranged activities. At camp, the weather forecast is checked each morning, and information displayed in the marquee.

Where checks are not possible prior to group's arrival a site sweep and assessment will be made with the group upon their arrival.

### **Shared Information & Responsibility**

In incidences where activities are carried out in partnership between PowerWood and other organisations, the sharing of responsibilities with respect to health and safety, and risk/benefit analysis will be agreed in advance.

Any special knowledge of the group - for example a participant may have a particular fear of dogs or a food allergy - can be useful when planning activities as we aim to make every session as beneficial to participants as possible.

Partner organisations, parents and schools must provide information on behaviours that may present risk to individuals and/or the group and, if necessary, a separate risk assessment prepared.

### **Insurance**

PowerWood CIC and its staff are insured by Birnbeck Insurance for £5 million public liability cover.

## **Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure**

Emergencies are never wanted, but they are a possibility, and so we ensure that all leaders are familiar with appropriate emergency procedures. Most emergencies can be resolved on-the-spot by the leader removing the group from potential threat and providing first aid. However, in the event of a serious incident which could arise as a result of an injury, illness or threat, emergency services should be contacted and the following procedure followed

1. Secure safety of whole group from further danger. Stop all work/activities if not safe. Call in and locate group promptly as agreed with group in advance. If possible, remove whole group from any further danger or threat of danger.
2. First Aider to attend to any casualties with adult helper and with regard for maintenance of required supervision ratios for the rest of the party. At least one first aider must be on site at all times. A record of changes in casualties' state and anything administered to them to be made if possible.
3. Emergency services contacted as necessary, ideally by an adult helper. Charged mobile phones are carried by staff. Despatch a designated driver to meet emergency vehicle at the entrance where possible/necessary. Give following grid references to 999 operator The grid reference for the site in case of emergency:
  - a. The grid reference for the site in case of emergency: SS 55152 28861
  - b. Grid Reference (6 figure): SS551288
  - c. X (Easting) : 255152 Y (Northing) : 128861
  - d. Latitude : 51.040797 Longitude : -4.0674748

If google maps is used for directions, let them search for '[PowerWood Camp Tawstock](#)' and it will bring them to the entrance of the land.

4. Safety of the rest of group is maintained by the remaining staff and adults away from the scene of the incident.
5. Informing next of kin should be carried out as soon as practical after the incident by PowerWood staff or by the designated member of staff of the partner organisation according to their own health and safety policy.
6. Inform management: PowerWood directors and managers of partner organisations must be informed of any major incident as soon as possible. Following this as soon as is possible the landowner of the site should also be informed.

7. The first aid book should be filled in on site if possible and then logged back at PowerWood Office. An incident report form should be filled in whenever the emergency plan is used even if no one was harmed and it was just a near miss.

## **Legislation**

- Ensure that all equipment involved in an accident or incident is retained in an unaltered condition in case it is required by the police.
- Do not focus on who is at fault.
- In all cases keep a careful written record i.e. a log, of all facts, events, times and circumstances and retain this record until all matters are finally settled.
- If possible take photographs.
- Do not allow anyone to interview any party member without an independent witness being present.
- An incident report or entry in the first aid book must be completed, signed and dated (at PowerWood office, if not done on site).
- Incidents leading to admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours or resulting in an injury preventing a person working for three or more days afterwards need to be registered with RIDDOR within 24 hours Tel 0845 3009923 (HSE - Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm). <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/>
- First aid kits must be restocked after use and a stock check carried out every 6 months.
- Any incident or near miss must be subsequently investigated by staff team to review existing controls and procedures.

## **Lost or Missing Person Procedure**

Unknown outdoor environments can be disorientating, especially if a participant is unused to this kind of environment. There are a number of ways we can prevent people getting lost.

- We encourage all our participants to take an interest in their surroundings so as to help them find their bearings. Ultimately we would like to inspire all who are able to become responsible for their own safety with respect to staying close to the rest of the group.
- Boundaries will be chosen, clearly marked and made known to the group. Going outside the boundaries will require all of the group to go or a sub group,

with at least one leader – allowing at least two leaders to stay with remainder of group.

- The group will be counted in and checked at start and end of day, then at other relevant points in the day – particularly after activities that include members splitting up.
- Good communication within the group will encourage collective responsibility for each other's' safety – leaders are always approachable and should be made aware if there are any concerns as to a participant's whereabouts.
- Competitive games involving hiding are discouraged.

**In the event of leaders fearing that a member of the group has gone missing:**

- All the group will be immediately called back in, by prearranged call or whistle, and counted and missing member determined. The time will be noted.
- The Group Leader must ensure the safety of remaining pupils. At least two adults must stay with them at all times.
- One or more adults should immediately start searching for the missing group member, calling and whistling as appropriate.
- If the missing group member is not found within 5 minutes, the group Leader must contact police by telephoning 999 (this will result in the emergency plan coming into action).
- Leaders must recall and write down a description of what the missing person was wearing and any distinguishing features.
- Any information on their last known location and time should be noted. Also if they have any special medical or learning needs then these need to be noted down.
- All information then must be passed to police or other agencies.

## Guidance on Knife Use

Using knives safely and well can be a valuable and creative learning experience for young people. Though there are always some risks involved, often these are outweighed by benefits, when the correct supervision is given.

### What the law says:

*It is illegal to:*

- *Sell a knife to anyone under 18 (16 to 18 year olds in Scotland can buy cutlery and kitchen knives) unless it's a knife with a folding blade 3 inches long (7.62 cm) or less, eg a Swiss Army knife*
- *Carry a knife in public without good reason - unless it's a knife with a folding blade 3 inches long (7.62 cm) or less*
- *Carry, buy or sell any type of banned knife*
- *Use any knife in a threatening way (even a legal knife, such as a Swiss Army knife)*

*Lock knives (knives with blades that can be locked when unfolded) are not folding knives, and are illegal to carry in public without good reason.*

<https://www.gov.uk/buying-carrying-knives>

Some children bring their knives to camp. These can be used within specific activities, with the permission of the session leader, and are otherwise limited to a family's own tent/camping area, under guidance of a parent.

- At other activities, such as Forest School workshops, the only knives used will be the property of PowerWood.
- Knives which cannot fold need to have an undamaged sheath
- We are not in favour of folding knives as they have a risk of cutting fingers when the knife folds during an uncontrolled action.
- After every action the knife has to be folded or put back in the sheath.
- If another person approaches you or your child while you or your child are working with a knife in front of your tent, stop your activity, put the knife in the sheath and ask the person to stay on a safe distance, the 'bloodcircle' + 1 metre before continuing. At all times consider the safety of yourself, your child or the bystander.

- Parents are responsible for the consequences of damages caused by a knife used by yourself or your child. Only except when participating in the forest school sessions under supervision of the forest school leaders
- We have zero tolerance policy against threatening or aggressive behaviour with knives or other tools.
- We reserve the right to remove any knife from a child, exclude anyone who uses a knife inappropriately, and contact the police if necessary, whether or not we have issued a warning to those involved.
- Session leaders will count how many knives have been issued, and count them back in afterwards.
- Knives will be stored securely in an area out of access to children.

## **Fire Procedure**

Fires and the use of storm kettles are an important part of Forest School and other sessions. We aim to ensure that all people participating in sessions with fires will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

Fires will only be used where it is appropriate to do so and where there has been an agreement with the site owner prior to the session.

- Leaders will explain to participants the importance of using only dead wood for fires and also the importance of dead wood as a habitat
- Smoke inhalation will be reduced by burning dead wood. Those in smoky areas will be encouraged to move to less smoky areas
- Fires will only be lit in suitable defined spaces or in a fire wok
- Participants will only be allowed to light fires under direct supervision of a trained leader using suitable materials and equipment
- All participants will be given clear guidelines about how to behave and move around the area when the fire is lit. Rehearsing the movements rather than just verbal instructions may help children to remember.
- A lit fire will be supervised by an adult at all times, as will all cooking activities
- Related safety equipment, including heat-proof gloves, a fire blanket, a burns kit and water will be kept within close range of fires
- All fires should be fully extinguished and all traces removed at the end of a session, except where using the designated fire pit



## General Session Safety & Group Guidance for outdoor activities

### **Weather & Clothing**

Clothing advice will be given to participants and their parents/carers prior to the visit e.g. Winter: waterproofs/coats, fleece/jumper, hats and gloves

Summer: waterproofs, fleece, sun hat, long sleeved tops and trousers

Footwear: wellies or strong/sturdy (ideally waterproof) outdoor shoes and warm woolen or manmade fibre socks (not cotton).

Where possible, we will keep spare sets of waterproofs in case of a participant arriving without adequate protection.

### **Toilets and washing**

Compost toilets are available on site. Children will be shown where the toilets are and how to use them, covering any waste with a handful of sawdust. Mains water is available next to the toilets, with handwashing facilities.

### **Drinking water**

Mains water is available for drinking at all times. Children are encouraged to carry drinking water on walks, and not to drink from streams.

### **Food Hygiene & Eating**

All participants on activities will be encouraged to wash their hands with water and soap, which will be provided, before eating food. During some sessions, we may cook items such as popcorn, damper bread or marshmallows over the fire.

Staff will ensure that food is handled in a safe and hygienic manner.

### **Hazardous Plants & Fungi**

Part of the risk assessment will be to identify any particularly hazardous plants and point them out to the group so that all members are aware of the dangers. The sap or hairs from some plants can cause rashes and blistering when in contact with skin, or after the skin is then exposed to sunlight.

Most rashes are caused by stinging nettles, though giant hogweed may also be a problem.



Both of these plants are easily distinguishable and if either is seen growing on site all members of the group will be taught how to distinguish and avoid coming into contact with it.

Serious poisoning from ingestion of leaves, berries or mushrooms rarely occurs, even when curious children are involved. However, ingesting even small amounts of some species can cause nausea, vomiting, and stomach cramps; and large amounts are potentially fatal.

We encourage participants to have a good understanding of which plants are edible, and to keep asking questions and researching this. If a member of the group is exposed to a hazardous plant or fungi, so that they have a reaction a leader must be informed and appropriate First Aid given. If the nature of the reaction is more serious the Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure must be followed.

### **Biting & Stinging Insects**

Insect bites and stings can be common, particularly in spring and summer, and usually cause only minor irritation. In rare cases, people can have a serious allergic reaction to a bite or sting that requires immediate medical treatment - if this is the case then a leader will refer directly to the Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure. If there is prior knowledge to suggest that a participant will have an allergic reaction if bitten, then PowerWood staff must be informed before any activities take place on site.

If ticks are known to exist in proximity to a site then all participants need to check or be checked for ticks as soon as possible following any activity on site. If a tick is found on a participant, a first aider will remove it as soon as possible. Parents will be informed and told what symptoms they should look out for.

Information on safe removal of ticks and the risks of disease can be found at <http://www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk/>

### **Tree Climbing**

Tree climbing is limited to dedicated, suitable trees. Children are not permitted to climb higher than 3 metres.

## **Cars 5mph**

Cars have access to the site, on dedicated tracks and parking areas. When the land is suitably dry, cars may also be able to access other areas for delivery. Cars are limited to 5mph on site, and this is clearly signposted.

## **Horses and Electric Fencing**

The horses should not be touched unless as part of a specified activity. People should wash their hands after contact with any animal. Respect boundary into horse paddock and do not cross electric fence. The fence can cause mild shocks, and should be avoided.

## **Safe Lifting**

Activities can be physically demanding for participants, volunteers and staff, for example when handling heavy objects, so it is wise to be aware of best practise. One of the greatest causes of back injury is lifting or handling objects incorrectly.

- Think and plan where and how you are going to move an object before you lift
- Keep the load close to your waist and the heaviest side of the load next to your body
- Adopt a stable position with feet apart and one leg slightly forward if possible
- Ensure a good hold on the load, hug it close to your body if possible
- Avoid bending your back, only bend at your hips or knees if possible
- Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways especially if bending at the back
- Keep your head up and look ahead, not down at the load once it is held securely
- Move smoothly
- Know your limits - don't lift or handle more than you can easily manage without help
- Put the load down if you need to adjust it
- Where possible, use ropes to drag objects such as trees

## **Lone working**

When preparing for a session, it may be necessary for one person to visit a site alone. In these circumstances, anyone carrying out the work should inform a member of staff before departing and ensure that each have the mobile and home/work telephone numbers of the other. The lone worker should leave details of where they

will be working and at what times. Contact should be made when the lone worker leaves the site. If the lone worker changes location they should inform the designated PowerWood staff member of the change. If no contact has been made by the lone worker at the agreed end of working time, then the designated staff member should attempt to contact them. If they are unable to contact the lone worker, then they should try their home number and inform the executive director of PowerWood. If no contact has been made in 24 hours, the director of the designated staff member should contact the police.

### **Group walking**

When the group goes for a walk the following procedures will be followed:

- The destination will be communicated to all adults present.
- Children will be counted at the beginning and end of the walk, and at any necessary points in between, such as after a rest or play stop
- Walking on roads will be avoided, but where necessary will be in single file, with an adult at the front and the rear, and remaining adults interspersed between children
- For longer walks and those which venture beyond the site, the route and projected timings will be communicated so somebody who is not with the group, and arrangements made for a check-in system between that person and the group leader

### **Administering medicines and sun cream**

At activities where families attend together, administering of medicines is the responsibility of the parent or guardian, with first aiders taking an advisory role if need be. At activities for unaccompanied children, parental permission should be given for any medicines that the child needs to take. Guardians will also be asked to provide details of allergies or relevant illnesses and to supply medicines where necessary (such as an epi-pen or asthma inhaler). It is expected that in the majority of cases a child would administer their own medication, supervised by a first aider. All medications must be securely and safely stored. Where a guardian does not give permission for medicines and creams to be applied, their wishes will be adhered to by staff.

### **Incidences of illness**

Parents will be notified to collect their children if illness occurs and children cannot continue with planned activities.

### **Reporting: incidents and accidents**

Any accidents that involve injury will be recorded into a first aid book. Major injuries that constitute 'reportable injuries' will be reported to the Health and Safety Executive via RIDDOR. Parents will be notified of injuries in keeping with the 'Emergency and Major Incidents' policy. 'Incidents', which include major behavioural incidents and any major negative occurrence that is not an accident, will also be recorded in an Incident Report.

### **Pro forma consent**

For sessions and workshops at which children are not accompanied by their parents or legal guardians, families will be asked to fill in a consent form beforehand. The completed consent form will give relevant medical details of the child, consent for the child to take part in activities and permissions to administer medicines and creams and to admit the child to hospital for emergency treatment.

The form also provides emergency contact details and optional permission to take and use photographs of the child for promotional purposes and reports.

PowerWood staff will keep copy of this form at all sessions attended by the child.