



Kindling Forest School

Complete Set of Policies and Procedures

2024-25

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1. Safeguarding Children Reviewed August 24 by Pippa Edwards

Kindling Forest School believes that it is unacceptable for a child to experience abuse of any kind. We recognise that it is our responsibility, individually and as a setting, to safeguard the welfare of all children receiving our services; to protect them from maltreatment, prevent impairment of health or development, to provide safe and effective care, and to take appropriate action so that all children have the best outcomes. We are committed to working with the children, parents and our community to achieve this.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is:
Milla Adeney at Kindling Forest School CIC
Deputy Safeguarding Lead is:
Ellie Marshall at Kindling Forest School CIC

Our principles:

We recognise that the welfare of the child is paramount and that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage or religion, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. Children's welfare is promoted by working in partnership with parents, carers, other agencies and children themselves. At Kindling Forest School, children are valued, respected and listened to, which helps them to feel safe and able to talk freely about their concerns. All the adults here are safely recruited, vetted, checked and appropriately supervised. We ensure that they understand and accept agreed procedures for protecting children and that they understand that concerns about children's safety and wellbeing must be acted on, in accordance with requirements and guidance. Our policy is shared with both parents/carers and (appropriately) with children. This policy applies to the Owner/Manager and all staff, volunteers, students and visitors connected with Kindling Forest School. It provides guidance on the procedures to follow if they suspect a child is being harmed or is at risk of harm. It will be reviewed annually or more often in the light of changing statutory requirements and guidance.

Legal Framework and useful documents:

The Children Act 1989
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992
Human Rights Act 1998
The Protection of Children Act 1999
The Education Act 2002
Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
The Children Act 2004
The Equality Act 2010
The Children and Families Act 2014
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
The Prevent Duty 2015
Working together to safeguard children 2018
Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings 2019
Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth & Southampton (HIPS) Protocol for the Management of actual or suspected bruising or other injury in infants who are not independently mobile 2020
Domestic Abuse Act 2021
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

Contact details:

Children's Reception Team / Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (for professionals) **01329 225379**
Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) **01962 876364**
Children's Services (for parents/carers) **0300 555 1384**, email childrens.services@hants.gov.uk
Out of hours call 0300 555 1373
Hampshire Police 101, or for emergencies 999

NSPCC Child Protection Line 0808 800 5000

Childline 0800 1111

Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership <https://www.hampshirescp.org.uk>

Creating a Safeguarding Culture

All practitioners are aware of the categories of abuse, which are:



We ensure that all staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of these, and that they develop knowledge and awareness of current safeguarding topics, including (but not limited to) those below. We enable this through external training, induction, supervision, DSL updates and regular discussion at staff meetings. We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to abuse, for instance, children with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND), or children in a household where the 'toxic trio' of domestic violence, substance abuse and mental ill-health is present.

- Bullying
- Sexual Exploitation
- Criminal Exploitation (including County lines)
- Domestic Abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Gender Based Violence
- Peer on Peer Abuse
- Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism
- Relationship Abuse
- Trafficking
- Faith abuse
- Fabricated Illness
- Mental health
- Private Fostering

We build a culture of openness and challenge at Kindling Forest School; we reflect daily on our practice and encourage staff, parents and children to share their views and thoughts. Each member of staff is encouraged to think critically about their own practice and those around them.

Our Prevent Duty

From 1 July 2015, all schools and registered childcare providers are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the 'Prevent' duty. We aim to protect children from extremism and radicalisation by:

- Providing appropriate training for staff
- Being attentive to children's personal, social and emotional development and our inclusive practices, celebrating all faiths and cultures
- Building children's resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values of:
 - Democracy
 - Mutual Respect and Tolerance
 - Individual Freedom
 - Rule of Law
- Assessing the children in our care regarding their potential exposure to radicalisation, including whether they live in a Prevent priority area.
- Using the Vulnerability Assessment Framework to guide these assessments: that is, determining the level of concern we have about a child or family's Engagement with extremism, and their Intent or Capacity to follow this through.

- Reporting our concerns through our usual Safeguarding procedures if we have concerns about changes in family behaviour, changes in children's behaviour, comments made by them about other faiths, beliefs or cultures or any other signs that point towards extremism or radicalisation.

To seek guidance we will call the DfE dedicated help line 020 7340 7264 or email counter.extremism@education.gov.uk

For more immediate concerns we will call the police on 101, for emergencies 999.

Our duty to keep children safe online - It is our duty to protect young children from abusive exploitation online, and to keep them safe from inadvertent exposure to inappropriate online content. All devices brought into our setting are covered by strict procedures (see below) to ensure children are safe in this respect. However, we accept that many children in our care are "digital natives" and already adept with devices of all kinds. We raise the awareness of parents and children themselves about appropriate and respectful use of devices, images, recordings and online access. We do this through explaining our procedures, discussion, addressing the topic in our newsletters and sharing relevant articles and resources with parents. We role model awareness of privacy, and talk with the children about sharing images and what devices we use at Forest School. We only use apps with the children that we have agreed as a team, on our Kindling tablets which have no internet access in the woods. We discuss and respect appropriate boundaries in terms of social media, and do not 'friend' parents on social media from personal accounts. When we post photos of children on our Kindling social media, we ensure that they cannot be easily identified.

Procedures

Recruitment and Selection:

Our advertisement of posts and application process refer explicitly to safeguarding in the following ways:

- Advertisements and application forms state that posts are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, that an acceptable enhanced DBS disclosure will be required before confirmation of posts, as well as the receipt of 2 acceptable references, with one of these being from their current employer.
- Our job descriptions detail the individual's safeguarding responsibilities.
- Our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are provided to applicants.
- The interview process for applicants explores any gaps in their employment, their attitude to children and motives for applying, their physical and mental fitness for the role, and their acceptance of supervision and boundaries. Applicants will be asked to confirm their identity and provide evidence of their qualifications if appropriate.
- Successful applicants are given a full induction including explicit training on safeguarding procedures.
- The probationary period for new staff will include assessment of a new appointee's ability to follow our safeguarding procedures.

Vetting and Checking Volunteers, Students and Visitors:

- All volunteers and students must have an acceptable enhanced DBS disclosure.
- All volunteers and students will receive the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and an induction detailing their safeguarding responsibilities.
- A one-off visitor must be shown the Safeguarding Policy and be given an explanation of their safeguarding responsibilities, especially the prohibition on using phones to take images of children. Such visitors must be accompanied throughout their visit by a vetted and inducted staff member who has successfully completed their probationary period.
- We keep a record of any volunteers, students and visitors that come to the setting.

Training Staff to Understand the Safeguarding Policy:

Both our Owner/Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that all staff have the training and up to date information they need to follow our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures effectively by doing the following:

- Ensuring that all staff receive the appropriate safeguarding training and update this as needed, at least every 2 years.
- Keep their own training up to date (at least once a year) and attend the Local Authority Briefings on safeguarding.
- Use regular staff meetings and supervisions to update staff on safeguarding issues.
- Ensure safeguarding awareness raising materials are accessible to staff.

Signing In and Out:

- All staff and children will be signed in and out of the session using the register, showing the exact times of their arrival and departure to confirm their presence in the session.
- Visitors, students and volunteers will sign in and out using a visitor's section in the register, giving their details, times of arrival and departure and reason for visit. The session leader will ensure staff, visitors and volunteers understand and comply with regulation of phones and devices at Kindling Forest School.

Avoiding Lone Working and toileting:

- All staff will communicate with each other about where children are playing and who will support them. Sometimes, lone staff will be out of sight of other adults, but never out of hearing, and staff are always encouraged to be with a group of children in this case and not a lone child.
- If any children want to explore the woods beyond our main 'camp', they will always be accompanied by two adults.
- Children will always be toileted within sight of another vetted staff member. When toileting a child or moving away from other adults, staff should always communicate where they are going and why. (see also Emergency Procedure for what will happen in the case of an emergency)

Cameras mobile phones and other devices:

- No unauthorised use of phones or other devices will be permitted in session.
- Personal phones and devices must be kept in bags in transit to and from the woods and in the secure phone box when in the woods and only used in an emergency. The session leader will carry the work phone, on which parents can contact / be contacted by staff. The work phone has no camera or internet access.
- Only children for whom parent/carer permission has been given will be photographed or filmed. We model privacy awareness by asking children's permission when we take photos.
- Photos or film of children will only be taken on specified, agreed tablets/iPads, and only for educational purposes. These devices will be password protected and will not be linked to any other personal devices e.g. 'sharing' on with family members
- Specified devices will only be used by vetted staff working within safeguarding procedures.
- Visitors, students and volunteers must follow this procedure too.
- No adult will use a mobile phone for personal reasons in session, except in an emergency, in which case they must get permission from the manager, do so away from the children and under the supervision of another staff member. Phones and work tablets/iPads will be inspected, checked and signed off by the person in charge of the session at the end for inappropriate content.
- Smart watch notifications should be disabled while in session, and those that are capable of taking images must not be worn at all.
- All staff will sign a Confidentiality Agreement as part of their induction, confirming their commitment to using devices, information and images appropriately.
- Any inappropriate use of devices, sharing of inappropriate images, or social media misuse will be reported to our DSL.

Recognising and Responding to Concerns of Abuse

As part of the induction process, we will inform parents/carers of our professional responsibility to follow our own and our Local Safeguarding Children Partnership policies and procedures and stress that children's

wellbeing and safety is at the centre of our practice, and that of any setting. We will **always** act on any concerns about a child, or about an adult working with them.

Concerns about children

- Staff will be guided by the documents: What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HMG 2015), Working Together to Safeguard Children (HMG 2018) and the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership 'Thresholds Chart'.
- Staff are trained to recognise signs of possible abuse e.g. significant changes in a child's behaviour or deterioration in a child's general well-being, unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse, children's comments or play which give cause for concern, signs of neglect, unexplained periods of absence from the setting. There may be concerns about abuse within the setting, the child's home or beyond e.g. the local community, extended family.
- A staff member who is concerned about a child must seek advice from our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will ensure that the appropriate action is taken.

NB: It is not sufficient for a staff member to just report a concern to the DSL. They have a duty to check that a referral has been made/further action has been taken.

Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will:

- Listen carefully to the child, without asking leading questions or making assumptions
- Offer appropriate reassurance, without making any promise to keep the information to themselves
- Record accurately everything that has been said
- Report it to the DSL.

Recording and reporting suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff will record:

- Child's name, address, age, gender and ethnicity
- The date and time of observation/incident/disclosure
- An objective and factual record, including the exact words of the child, and using a body map or line drawing if appropriate
- The name of the person who raised the concern and who they reported it to
- The name/s of any others present at the time
- Details of any immediate actions, including any explanations or comments made by the parent/carer.

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

Any records of concern/child protection records will be transferred accordingly when the child leaves Kindling Forest School.

All members of staff know the procedures for recording and reporting concerns. Parents will be informed if a report is made, unless this would put the child at greater harm, in which case investigating officers will inform the parents.

A staff member who is concerned about a child must seek advice from our DSL, and with their support contact the Children's Reception Team, using an Inter-Agency Referral Form (IARF), or phoning if the concern is more immediate. The Children's Reception Team will pass any concerns on to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) if further investigation is required, and the setting may be contacted again by them.

Children's Reception Team (for professionals): 01329 225379.

An online 'Interagency Referral Form' must also be completed through Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website <https://www.hampshirescp.org.uk/report-a-concern/>

In an emergency, the police will be called on 999

Bruising Protocol - we follow the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth & Southampton 4LSCB Protocol for the management of actual or suspected bruising in infants or children who are not independently mobile: we recognise that bruises in infants who are not independently mobile are rare, with a prevalence of <1% ('Those who don't bruise rarely bruise'). We note that the NICE guideline also advises practitioners to 'suspect abuse' when we see injuries such as bites, lacerations, abrasions, scars and burns on a child who is not independently mobile and there is an unsuitable explanation.

Concerns about an adult:

- Staff will be alert for behavior that may harm a child, or that is inappropriate and demonstrates unsuitability for working with children e.g. sharing inappropriate images, making inappropriate sexual comments
- We will ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff and volunteer action within Kindling Forest School through our Complaints Policy
- We follow the guidance of the Children's Services Department when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child
- Staff will report concerns about an adult to our DSL, or to our Owner/Manager.
- The Owner/Manager or DSL will contact the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) immediately for advice on next steps.
- If it is not possible to discuss the concern with the DSL or the Owner/Manager, the member of staff who has a concern should contact LADO direct.

***Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) 01962 876364
Police 101 or 999 in an emergency***

Disciplinary Action

- Following guidance, the adult concerned will be treated fairly, helped to understand the process being followed and the outcomes of the process.
- Ofsted will be notified within 14 days of an allegation against any adult connected with our setting and advised of any action taken.

Disqualification and Suitability

- If Kindling Forest School becomes aware of relevant information that may lead to disqualification of a staff member, we will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of children. It is the responsibility of all staff to inform the manager/owner of any relevant information that may be considered unsuitable, e.g. medication or relevant convictions.
- We will notify Ofsted of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of any person who is in regular contact with children at Kindling Forest School.

Date for review: February 2025 or before, if new government guidance is issued.

2. Staffing reviewed May 2024 by Pippa Edwards

We understand that the daily experience of children in the setting depends on the practitioners who work with them. Our aim is to staff our setting with people who genuinely delight in working with young children, and develop those staff so that their qualifications, skills and knowledge of their roles create a safe, secure, high quality setting for all our children.

Employment:

Applicants will be considered based on their suitability for the post, regardless of marital status, age, gender, culture, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation (see also Safeguarding Policy). We will also ensure that the staff we employ have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the well-being of children in our care.

Induction:

Staff inductions will be overseen by the Owner/Manager and the Kindergarten Leader, although may involve other staff where appropriate. During the induction period (6 weeks), new staff will receive, read, discuss and demonstrate compliance with our policies and procedures, and identify their future training needs. Successful completion of the induction forms part of a probationary period which will usually last 3 months but may be extended by Owner/Manager if this is judged necessary.

Recording Staff Details:

All employment records will be kept and stored securely according to retention of documentation regulations. The name, address, DOB, contact details and next of kin of all staff will be recorded. Details of staff DBS checks will be recorded including number and date of issue, and held by the Owner/Manager.

Disclosures and Disqualification:

Staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions or court orders which may affect their suitability to work with children, whether before employment or during it. If the Owner/Manager learns of information which may lead to the disqualification of an employee, or if an employee resigns due to issues that would have led to their disqualification, the necessary steps will be taken to protect children and/or terminate that person's employment. We will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service and Ofsted in this instance. Staff must also disclose any medication they take which may affect their ability to care for children (see also Health and Medicines Policy).

Qualifications and Deployment:

The Kindergarten Leader will hold a minimum of a full and relevant level 3 early years qualification and a level 3 Forest School qualification. All other staff will be qualified or working towards level 3, either in an early years or a forest school qualification (with at least half of them having a level 3 in early years). There will be a named Deputy and SENCo. Due to the nature of our site, and the Forest School ethos, there will be a ratio of at least 2 staff to every 8 children aged 3 and over, however a ratio of 3:10 will be maintained wherever possible. (See also Key Person Policy). Staff counted in ratios will all have an up-to-date paediatric first aid qualification and at least 2 staff in every session will have an Outdoor First Aid qualification too. Staff will be deployed at all times so that children are usually in sight and always within hearing.

Supervision and training:

Each staff member will have a termly supervision session, with the Owner/Manager or the Kindergarten Leader, to be supported in their work with children. They will be expected and supported to undertake regular professional development, to keep their knowledge and skills updated. Annual appraisals for all staff (with the Owner/Manager) will help identify areas for development and further training needs. Regular staff meetings, both formal and informal, will give staff opportunities to share issues and identify solutions, and we will use the skills within the team to provide coaching and support where needed.

Date for review: May 2025

3. Key Person's Role and Settling In reviewed May 2024 by Pippa Edwards

We want children to be safe, stimulated and happy at Kindling, therefore we need to build good attachments with children and families. We provide a carefully managed settling-in process, giving consideration to children's individual needs from the start. Each child will have a key person who takes special care of them and works in partnership with their parents and carers.

The role of the key person:

Each child is allocated a key person before they start. A buddy key person is also allocated, if needed, for days when the primary key person is not working. The key person will support the child to settle in, and be emotionally and physically 'available' when the child needs. Going forward, they will oversee the care and learning of the child, document and plan for their progress, and share this regularly with parents/carers. If a child has any additional needs, the key person will be involved in plans to support that child and work with outside support agencies. When the child moves on to school or another setting, the key person will be involved in helping the child and their family prepare for this transition. They will ensure important information about the child is passed on to the next setting.

Pre-induction information:

Before a child starts we provide parents/carers with information in a variety of ways: through our website, Facebook page, through our handbook and forms, taster sessions or preliminary visits.

Induction period:

We make opportunities for visits to our setting before a child starts. This helps both children and parents/carers become familiar with our forest school and is an important part of settling in. The key person will spend time with the child and their parent/carer, building trust and familiarity, and finding out relevant information about the child, whilst also sharing information about Kindling. We understand that every child is unique, and some children may need several visits, or have their parent stay with them for the first few sessions, or build up their hours gradually in order to settle well. We discuss each child's needs with the parent/carer and plan the induction period accordingly. For most children, an introductory visit and then a settling visit, both with a parent, works well.

We don't currently offer home visits as a standard part of our induction, but would suggest it if we felt a particular child or family needed that support, at any point in their Kindling journey. Home visits will always be carried out by 2 members of staff.

The Tapestry learning journal:

Each child will have a secure online Tapestry learning journal documenting their learning, and to enable two-way communication with parents and carers. Families are invited to contribute pictures and observations of learning at home.

Documenting and sharing progress:

Within the child's first six weeks at forest school their key person will begin to document their progress in the prime areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. At the end of the settling-in period the key person will share this information with parents/carers and agree the child's possible next steps in their learning and development. If a child is not yet 3, this will constitute their 2 year check. Further information about a child's learning and development will be shared over the year, at parents' evenings, through Tapestry, and through informal discussion at beginning and end of sessions.

Date for review: May 2025

4. Safety and Suitability of Premises Reviewed January 2024 by Pippa Edwards

We believe that natural and wild spaces, like our woodland, offer superb opportunities and affordances for children's play. However, we take the safety and security of the children in our care very seriously, and so ensure that we have rigorously considered and risk assessed the spaces we use. Our 'site' includes our woodland - '3 Corner Wood' - off Watley Lane, and the walk to it, and including the field adjacent to it. We do not have a permanent indoor structure.

Risk assessments:

We follow risk assessments for all aspects of our 'site', including the walk to and from the Spinney and the forest school activities which take place there. These show steps taken to minimise risks for children and necessary staff ratios for safety (see Risk Assessments).

Shelter:

The forest school session at the Spinney is intended to be an outdoor experience and there is no permanent shelter at the site. We put up shelters to provide shelter and warmth when the weather makes this necessary. To keep themselves safe and comfortable, participants must wear correct outdoor clothing for the weather conditions. Parents/carers are provided with a full outdoor 'kit' for their children (warm fleece, waterproof coat and dungarees, hat, gloves, buff scarf) and staff have a clothing allowance, a rucksack and a kit list. We ensure families understand the importance of children wearing their correct kit and bringing spares, as part of our induction process for new families.

Outdoor play provision:

The Spinney is a private wood where children play for much of the session, with natural opportunities for risky play and exploration. All of our 'risky' activities have had a Risk/Benefit Analysis completed for them. Boundaries to the site are marked by wire fences and gates which can be secured so children cannot open them independently. Physical boundary setting and marking with the children is very much a part of our practice, using red flags that the children know not to go past without an adult. Equipment used is checked for safety and cleanliness before use and maintained following manufacturer's instructions. In the event of high winds or storms or any other conditions which make the woods unsafe, we will cancel the session (see Unplanned Day Closure policy). All serious accidents or injuries will be reported under RIDDOR www.hse.gov.uk/riddor and to Ofsted.

Supervision:

A high ratio of at least 1 adult to every 4 children is maintained for the walk to and from the Spinney and for the time spent there. If a child needs to rest or sleep at the woods, they are made comfortable in a sheltered space, and monitored by staff. Children will usually be in sight of an adult, and always within hearing. Staff will communicate regularly with each other about which children are playing where, and also if they themselves are going to go out of sight of other adults.

When a child arrives or departs from the session they will be checked in and out on our register and only released to individuals authorised by parents. Visitors meeting the group at the site will sign in on the visitor's section of the register, and will be supervised at all times (see Safeguarding and Staffing Policy). Encounters with members of the community will be carefully supervised. Unauthorised people will not be permitted access to the children and if such a person poses a threat, we will follow our Serious Incident Procedure and evacuate the children if necessary.

Parents/carers needing to talk confidentially to staff can move away from the group to do so, but staff must always communicate this to the session leader.

Toileting:

Children needing toileting or changing will be accompanied by a practitioner to a discreet spot, far enough away to provide privacy and prevent contamination of base camp, while visible enough to safeguard children. We do not toilet children out of sight. Practitioners will carry protective disposable gloves, plastic bags and wipes with them while in session and spares will be kept in the session leader's backpack. Children who need to lie down

for a nappy change will lie on a wipe-clean mat which will be cleaned afterwards. Wipes or fresh water and soap will be used for hand cleaning. Toileting needs will be discussed with parents/carers at registration and children's individual needs met.

(See Changing and Toileting policy)

Smoking:

We do not allow smoking or vaping anywhere at our Spinney site. Those staff who wish to smoke must do so before or after session, away from our woodland site, and away from any families still in the vicinity.

In case of emergency we will follow our Serious Incident Procedure, evacuating children if necessary.

Date for Review: January 2025

5. Uncollected Child. reviewed May 2024 Pippa Edwards

If a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of the session, we follow procedures which ensure the child is cared for safely by a qualified practitioner. Parents/carers are informed of these procedures so they know what will happen if they are unavoidably detained.

Ensuring contact details are full and correct:

When children start at our setting, parents/carers are asked to provide full and correct contact details for themselves and those authorised to collect their child. They are asked to keep the information they give us up to date. They are asked to inform us if there is a change to the people who have legal access to the child (See Information, Records and Confidentiality Policy). We check these details are up to date at least once a year.

Informing us of changes to usual collection routine:

We ask parents/carers to inform us in writing (an email or text is acceptable), or by phone call, if there will be a change to the usual routine for collecting their child, for example if they are going to be early or have arranged for another adult to pick up. We agree with them how to verify the identity of the person collecting their child. If a parent or carer is unexpectedly delayed and will be late picking up, we ensure they understand that they must phone us in session to advise us of this and of how late they will be, or what other arrangements they have made. We ensure parents have our contact phone number for this purpose. This is important for staffing arrangements and the child's peace of mind.

When a child remains uncollected:

If a parent or carer does not collect their child as planned and does not contact us to explain why, our procedure is as follows:

1. Two vetted practitioners must remain with the child at all times until they are collected.
2. 15 minutes after the session closes the practitioners will try phoning the parent, carer or adult authorised to collect the child that day. If this is unsuccessful, the child's emergency contacts will be called to collect the child. All reasonable attempts are made to reach these adults.
3. If this is unsuccessful the practitioners will remain with the child, phoning the contacts every 15 minutes for up to an hour.
4. After an hour the practitioners will contact Children's Services (see Safeguarding Policy) and remain with the child until they are collected by a social care worker. Children's Services will attempt to find the child's parent or carer. If they are unable to do so the child will become Looked After by the local authority.
5. We make a written report of the event which is kept on record. Ofsted will be informed.
6. Depending on the circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for additional time worked by staff remaining with an uncollected child.

Measures practitioners may not take:

We do not allow a child to remain alone with one practitioner. We do not allow a child to leave our setting with an unauthorised adult. Under no circumstances will practitioners go looking for a parent or carer, nor will they drop a child off at another person's house, or take a child home with them.

Date for review: May 2025

6. Health and Medicines Reviewed August 2024 by Pippa Edwards

We promote the good health of children and adults at Kindling Forest School, starting with the belief that Forest School itself exemplifies many elements of a healthy lifestyle. We also follow procedures which support good health and prevent the spread of infection. In addition, we take appropriate care of children that are ill and manage carefully the administering of medicines.

Preventing the spread of infection:

All participants in sessions will follow basic hand washing and toileting procedures that prevent cross- infection and ingestion of harmful bacteria. Everyone will wash their hands before eating, using fresh running water and soap (or antibacterial hand gel if away from tippy taps). **Hands will be dried on individual towels with named peg** (see also Food and Drink Policy). Hands will be washed after toileting, and adults will wear protective gloves for toileting where faeces are involved. Faeces will be double bagged and disposed of away from the site. Soiled clothing will be bagged for collection by parents.

Managing sickness and infection:

Parents and carers must keep children at home if they are ill, to prevent the spread of infection to others and for the child's own wellbeing. Parents should ring/text the Kindergarten leader on the work mobile to let them know, before the start of the session. If a child arrives at a session already showing signs of illness, they will not be permitted to remain. If a child becomes ill during session, we take the following steps:

1. Kindergarten Leader will call the parent/carer and request the child be collected as soon as possible.
2. If the parent/carer cannot be contacted and the Kindergarten Leader judges it necessary, the child's emergency contacts will be called and asked to collect the child.
3. While still in session, the child will be removed from the vicinity of other children and made as comfortable as possible. They will be monitored by a qualified first aider, and if their condition deteriorates seriously, an ambulance will be called and the parents informed.
4. Children may not return to sessions until they are no longer infectious and are well again. For sickness and diarrhoea, children must not return until 48 hours after the last bout. We follow Health Protection Agency guidelines on absences required for infectious diseases (see exclusion table for infectious diseases at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/children-and-young-people-settings-tools-and-resources>)

Recording and Reporting:

Children's early departure or absence from session due to illness will be recorded in the register. The Manager will inform other families of outbreaks of infectious diseases, verbally and/or by email. If a child or adult is diagnosed with a notifiable disease under Public Health Regulations (1988), the Manager will inform Ofsted and follow HPA guidelines, to ensure public safety. Serious injuries and diseases will be reported under RIDDOR www.hse.gov.uk/riddor

Children with Allergies:

Information about allergies is obtained on our registration form. If a child has an allergy this is discussed with the parent/carer as part of the induction process. It is our policy to manage allergies to enable children to take part in forest school. However, some allergens cannot be controlled at our outdoor site, for example native nuts, pollens and animal hairs. In very unusual cases the Manager may judge that a child's reaction to such allergens is so severe that the forest school setting is not appropriate for that child.

With all allergies, a risk assessment for the child is undertaken, and details of the allergy are recorded in both the register book, and on the child's file. If medication is required (e.g. an antihistamine or epipen), our procedures for administering medicines will be followed. The management of each allergy will be reviewed regularly with parents.

Administering Medicines:

We are guided by 'Managing Medicines in Schools and Early years Settings' (DfES 2005).

Children needing medicines must be well enough to attend forest school. Ordinarily, only medicines prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist, for that child, will be administered. The only non-prescription medicine we will administer is anti-histamine e.g. Piriton, in the case of severe allergic reaction.

Information about a child's existing need for medicines is obtained on our registration form, and discussed at the induction visit. Parents/carers must keep us up-to-date with this information and to advise us if a child develops a new need for medication. We review this information termly at with parents. Medication must be in its original packaging and in date. It will be stored in the Kindergarten Leader's waterproof backpack at all times. In the woods, this backpack will live under the food shelter and be available to all staff. The exception to this is inhalers for asthma, which will travel in the child's own bag wherever possible. We cannot refrigerate medicines in the woods. Emergency medicine must travel alongside the child on our walk between sites and on trips around the woods or to the field.

Parents must complete our Administering Medication Consent form. Copies will be kept in both the child's own file and in the container with the medicine. The form details the following:

1. Name of child and date of birth
2. Name of medication and strength, dosage to be given in setting, any possible side effects
3. Who prescribed it, who is authorised to administer it in session
4. Storage instructions and expiry date
5. Parent or carer's signature giving consent for administration, printed name and date.

A written log will be kept with the medication, noting date and time of administration, dose given and the person administering it. Parents/carers must be informed and countersign the log after each use. It must travel to hospital with the child and their medication in the case of an emergency.

The 'welfare bag' (stored out of reach of children) will contain medicines for staff e.g. painkillers. Staff will be overseen by another member of staff when taking medication. The person overseeing will check the dosage and record the details in the written log.

Managing complex medical needs:

Information about a child's medical needs will be obtained on the registration form and discussed as above. The Kindergarten Leader and Manager will make a judgement about whether these needs can be met in a forest school environment and, in very rare cases, may judge that they cannot. In other cases, the Kindergarten Leader and allocated key person will draw up a Health Care Plan with the family. The child may not attend until all elements of the plan are in place. This will incorporate any allergy risk assessment or administering medication information (see above) and also:

1. A letter from the child's GP/Consultant stating the child's condition and medication required
2. Details of medical intervention required either normally or in an emergency, and certificates evidencing staff have been trained to carry this out by an accredited trainer
3. Statement of the key person's role and information to be shared with other practitioners
4. Dated signatures and printed names of Kindergarten Leader, parents/carers and key person.

This plan will be kept in the child's file and reviewed termly with parents.

Administering First Aid:

We gain permission for children to receive first aid treatment and emergency treatment at registration. All practitioners at Kindling Forest School receive Ofsted-approved paediatric first aid training and this is kept up-to-date. At least 2 practitioners in every session will also have a current Outdoor first aid certificate. Each member of staff will carry a first aid kit in their backpack, which is replenished each term. We have additional burns equipment for administering care in outdoor conditions, stored in the green tin. Parents/carers will be advised if their child receives first aid and will countersign our accident book where all instances will be recorded.

We notify Ofsted within 14 days of serious accident, injury, illness or death of a child in our care.

Date for review: September 2025

7. Changing and toileting Reviewed January 2024 by Pippa Edwards

We believe toileting in the woods can be accomplished satisfactorily. No child is excluded from participating in our provision who is not yet toilet trained. We work with parents to achieve toilet training unless there are medical or SEN reasons why this may not be appropriate. We accommodate children who are not trained by adjusting our provision and hygiene practice. We see toilet training as a self-care skill that children can learn in our setting with the support of adults.

Personalised Arrangements:

Information is gained from parents or carers about children's toilet training progress when they start at Kindling. Where possible the Key Person will change the child, if they are in nappies, or need a change of clothes.

Hygiene:

Children will be toileted far enough away from other activities to provide privacy and avoid others playing at that site, but still within sight of other staff. A similar area will be found to lay children down if they need to have a nappy changed – a wipeable mat will be used, which will be cleaned afterwards. All staff are familiar with the requirement to wear gloves when changing children, and we carry spare outer adult clothes so that staff can change themselves if contaminated while changing a child. Usually staff can wipe or wash down their waterproofs. All staff will carry gloves, bags and wipes.

Pull-ups or nappies are bagged and disposed of hygienically after the session. Any faeces are gathered up in bags, double-bagged, stored out of reach of children and disposed of hygienically after session. Pants and clothes that have been soiled are bagged for the parent/carer to take home. Adults and children will wash hands after toileting and changing, with soap and water (preferable) or a hand wipe.

Respect and Self-Care:

We ensure that changing is a relaxed time, promoting independence in young children in every way possible. We are gentle, avoid pulling faces or making negative comments about children's competence or the state of their clothes. We never make inappropriate comments about children's genitals when changing them. Older children are encouraged to toilet themselves independently where possible.

Respect for the environment:

Practitioners explain to children about the impact toileting on the ground can have on the environment and how to minimise this. For example, using a watering can to rinse the area, or putting a liner in the potty to catch faeces. Children who are becoming independent are guided to take on these responsibilities themselves, where appropriate.

Safeguarding:

Staff should, if possible, be within sight of another staff member when toileting or changing a child. They must avoid situations where unvetted visitors can view children being toileted or doing so independently. We recognise it is common for pre-school children to be interested in body parts and may want to discuss these when being toileted or changed. Such conversations should not be initiated by staff, but responded to appropriately if they occur, remaining alert for observations that give any cause for concern.

Date for review: January 2025

8. Food and Drink **Reviewed January 24 by Pippa Edwards**

We regard snack and meal times as important for the whole group, helping children learn about healthy eating, hygiene and their physical needs in an outdoor environment. What we provide is balanced, nutritious and sustaining for children spending time outside being physically active.

Gathering information about children's needs and preferences:

We obtain information about children's dietary requirements, food allergies, cultural and personal preferences at registration (see also Health and Medications Policy). We share this information with all staff, so ensuring that appropriate food and drink is available for each child according to the information given by parents and carers. We review this information termly and ask parents/carers to advise us of changes.

Provision of water and other drinks:

Drinking water is always available for children and adults. A full water bottle is carried in all staff backpacks and children also bring their own water. For snack, children are offered water or milky hot chocolate made on site, and water with lunch. The rationale for offering a warm, sweetened drink mid-session is to keep children's energy levels up, especially in cold weather. Parents/carers may supply an alternative drink if agreed with the Kindergarten Leader, and in accordance with children's needs.

Provision of food:

The food offered in our outdoor setting is intended to be both healthy, but also sustaining, for children who spend most of their session outdoors in all weathers, being physically active. Children are offered a small carbohydrate and fruit/vegetable snack mid-morning. For lunch, we offer a balanced and nutritious menu of freshly prepared food. This menu is shared with parents and children and can be varied to meet individual children's needs in discussion with the Kindergarten Leader.

Choking hazards

We are aware of foods that can be potential choking hazards, and we discuss our menu termly, with those hazards in mind. Food is cut and served in appropriately sized and shaped pieces, and children are encouraged to thoroughly bite and chew foods as needed. Children are always seated to eat, with practitioners placed around the fire circle or eating area, so that we can observe children and be alert to any child who is choking. Every member of staff is fully trained in how to deal with a choking incident. We recognise that development of muscles in the mouth and tongue requires experience of different food textures, and so we continue to offer this, while still being vigilant to the risks of choking.

Hygiene:

All the practitioners who handle and prepare food have been trained in food hygiene. Sometimes children will be involved in food preparation, and we believe this helps children to learn about and try different foods. However, this is always done under supervision of an adult. All children and staff wash hands before preparing and eating food.

All dry food served to children is in-date and stored securely in its original packaging, or in containers with lids, for transport to the woods and protection from dirt, insects and vermin. Perishables are purchased fresh and transported similarly, with a cold pack to preserve freshness if required by weather or packaging instructions. Drinking water is fresh and transported in clean water bottles. Hot liquids are stored and transported in clean thermos flasks which are only handled by adults. On site, food is stored securely in lidded containers, all of which are only accessed by the adults. All sharp utensils are also stored out of reach of children. Preparation on site is kept to a minimum but any peeling or cutting up is done on a clean, non-porous cutting board immediately before consumption. All crockery, cutlery, food utensils and cooking pots are washed, dried and aired after each session. All rubbish and waste food is bagged and removed from the site at the end of session.

We report any incidence of food poisoning affecting two or more children in our care to Ofsted, the Environmental Health Department and Health Protection Agency as soon as possible and always within 14 days.

Date for review: January 2025

9. Behaviour Management Reviewed August 2024 by Pippa Edwards

We believe that children flourish when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and they have clear and developmentally appropriate boundaries for their behaviour. We support children in the process of learning to consider the rights of others and the impact of their behaviour on others. We believe that all behaviour is a form of communication, and that we need to interpret children's challenging behaviour as a need not being met, that we as the adults need to address.

The person with overall responsibility for behaviour management in our setting is Milla Adney, Manager, working in partnership with our SENCo, Ellie Marshall.

The basis of our code of behaviour:

We understand that codes for good behaviour vary between cultures, societies and families and we seek to make ourselves aware of these differences and have respect for them. We base our own expectations of good behaviour on a recognition of fundamental human rights (UN Charter of Human Rights, UN Charter of Rights of the Child). These incorporate respect for human dignity and respect for nature, espousal of intellectual freedom, charity towards others, acknowledgement of equality and participation in democracy. These values appear in many different cultures and are an expression of the forest school ethos and fundamental British values.

Adult responsibilities:

Young children are on a personal, social and emotional journey with many developmental challenges. We support them in working towards good behaviour in the following ways:

1. All staff, students and volunteers model the values set out above while in the presence of children in our group, treating one another with courtesy, care and fairness. We familiarise new practitioners, volunteers and visitors with these guidelines for behaviour through this policy when they join the group.
1. We work in partnership with parents and carers, familiarising them with our policies. The key person will inform parents/carers about children's behaviour regularly and work with them to address any concerns.

Things we do not do to manage behaviour:

1. We never use any form of physical or corporal punishment. We never threaten children with these.
2. We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way in response to unwanted behaviour.
3. We never single out or humiliate individual children in front of the group.
4. We do not exclude children from the group for "time out" alone (although a practitioner may take a very distressed or disruptive child aside if necessary).
5. We only physically restrain a child to prevent injury to themselves, adults or serious damage to property. This is considered a serious event. Details of any restraint are recorded in the child's personal file and the parent/carer informed the same day.

Working with children to achieve positive behaviours:

6. Our expectations of children and the boundaries we set are made clear to them in ways they can understand and that are age appropriate.
7. We address children's challenging behaviours positively, modelling desirable behaviours, explaining more appropriate actions and helping them begin to see the consequences of their behaviour.
8. When dealing with challenging behaviours, we get down to the child's level and talk to them calmly using age-appropriate language, recognising that they may be upset and angry. At forest school there is time, space and an adult ratio that allows children to name and work through emotions.
9. We encourage positive behaviour by acknowledging this when it occurs. We do this to build children's sense of self-esteem, competence and confidence, understanding that this enables them to feel a valued part of a group and to accept its values.

Date for review: August 25

10. Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

Reviewed February 2024 by Ellie Marshall

Our intention is to support all children, including those with special educational needs, to reach their full potential in our forest school and to also support their families in this endeavor.

We adhere to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (2015)

The Equality Act 2010 (identifying protection of rights of SEND children)

The Children and Families Act 2014 (covering children with SEND)

Our Kindling Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is Ellie Marshall

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015) defines special educational needs as follows:

“A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age,
- has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream-post 16 institutions.”

Initial information for parents and carers:

Through our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Offer we make prospective parents and carers aware of what our forest school can provide for special needs children, including raising awareness of any specialisms we can offer.

Gathering initial information from parents and carers:

Information about children’s needs or disabilities will be gathered at registration. Ellie, along with the child’s Key Person, will discuss these needs with parents and put in place measures needed to enable children to attend. In this, we comply with our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 (see Safety and Suitability of Premises Policy). In very few circumstances we may judge that a child’s needs cannot be met adequately through any reasonable adjustments to our outdoor forest school sessions and will inform parents or carers, making the reasons for this clear.

Initial information sharing and partnership working advice:

We will make clear to parents or carers at registration that we will work in partnership with them and with other agencies to meet children’s individual needs. We advise that this sometimes involve sharing information about children’s needs and progress with outside agencies. We seek parent/carer permission for this overall approach at the time of registration.

Identifying and meeting Special Needs during children’s attendance:

We identify the needs of children with SEN and meet those needs using a graduated approach. We put in place an individual educational plan (IEP) where appropriate, outlining strategies to support a child’s development. We implement, monitor, evaluate and review this plan in conjunction with parents, keeping them informed at every stage. We liaise with other professionals involved with children with SEN and their families including transfer arrangements to other settings and schools.

All staff in the setting are responsible for meeting the needs of children with SEN. The SENCO will support and co-ordinate the SEN provision across Kindling Forest School Kindergarten. The SENCO is also responsible for organising Education, Health and Care Plans and Transition Plans if appropriate.

Keeping records:

We keep records of assessment, planning, provision and review of SEN children confidentially and systematically, and ensure parents or carers have access to all records concerning their child.

Date for review: February 2025

11. Use of Tools Reviewed January 2024 by Pippa Edwards

Part of the Forest School ethos is to build children's self-esteem by helping them succeed at outdoor activities, such as using real tools to do meaningful work in the woods. Trained practitioners provide this experience in a safe way in our setting.

Ethos for using tools:

Tools will only be used with children in contexts that are meaningful to them: when their self-chosen activities require it or when they choose to take part in work done in camp, not for the sake of learning skills alone.

Risk assessment and general safeguards:

The tools used at our forest school will be the appropriate size, weight and sharpness for the age and stage of the children attending (3-5 years). The tools will be stored in a secure and waterproof toolbox, kept out of reach of children, and tools will always be returned to the box after use. They will be checked for good repair before use and their maintenance will be part of our regular tool use risk assessment.

Protocol for use of tools:

Tools will only be used on a 1:1 basis with a Level 3 Forest School Leader. This will be in a clear area away from others. Children and adults will only use tools if they are wearing reasonably protective full-length clothing and sturdy footwear. The practitioner will adopt a safe position for helping to use the implement and teach children to adopt a safe, stable stance for working with each tool. Children will be taught to clean tools and make them safe after use.

Date for review: January 2025

12. Use of Fire Reviewed January 2024 by Pippa Edwards

An integral part of Forest School is experiencing all the natural elements, including fire. We teach children to manage fire safely and to learn how it can be used for warmth and cooking.

Circumstances in which fire will be used:

Fire at the Spinney will be used in a cleared area away from trees and not during a hose-pipe ban. The Kindergarten Leader will judge whether gusty winds or high temperatures make fire use too dangerous. The fireplace will be cleared down to bare earth to a distance of 1.5 metres and the perimeter of this area marked clearly with logs. The hearth will be constructed of pegged green logs which will be renewed when necessary. A Forest School Leader level 3 will light, maintain and supervise the fire. Lighting kit will be stored out of reach of children. A covered fire bucket containing clean water, a fire blanket and first aid kit (including a specific burn wound dressing) will be kept close to hand. The fire will be extinguished with water after use by an adult who will ensure it is properly out, hand-checking for residual heat and re-watering if necessary.

Supervision of children near fire:

Both adults and children will walk around the outside of the fireplace keeping a safe distance from the hearth, never across the middle. Children may approach the fire one or two at a time, supervised by a qualified practitioner, to help lay and light it, place wood on it, stir the food or help extinguish it. Children will be taught to do this safely, ensuring hair is tied back, dangling scarves and clothing are tucked away and a stable stance is maintained. If a larger group is going to gather around the fire hearth, an additional practitioner will assist.

Date for review: January 2025

13. Information, Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Reviewed January 2024 by Pippa Edwards

It is in children's interests to have a full and accurate flow of information between us and their parents or carers. We recognise the importance of records being accessible to those who need them, but also stored securely and only shared with regard to requirements for privacy and confidentiality under the Data Protection Bill 2017 and EU GDPR requirements 2018 (this passed into UK GDPR requirements in 2020, and is now subject to UK review).

Information about children:

Parents or carers of children entering our setting fill out a registration form detailing:

1. child's name and date of birth and any medical needs or allergies
2. name and address of every parent and/or carer and information about who the child lives with
3. information specifying everyone who has parental responsibility for the child
4. emergency contact details for parents and/or carers

Information about our setting for parents or carers:

We provide parents or carers online access to the following information via our Handbook and policies:

- how we deliver the EYFS at forest school, how parents can learn more and share learning at home
- our daily routines including the food and drinks provided and activities on offer
- how we support children with special educational needs and disabilities
- our policies, our staffing arrangements and the role of the key person
- details about how to contact Ofsted if they have concerns about our setting
- the emergency telephone contact for our forest school.

We also notify parents when an Ofsted inspection takes place and make available a copy of the report to parents and carers.

Core Setting Information:

We keep the following accurate and up-to-date documentation:

1. name, home address and telephone number of the manager and all staff
2. name, home address and telephone number of anyone else who will regularly have unsupervised contact with children attending our setting.
3. a daily record of names of children attending, their hours and their key person
4. our certificate of registration and public liability insurance certificate, available in our daily register book for parents or carers to see.

Storage of records:

Information about children, families and staff is treated as confidential. The provider is a Data Controller registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and records are stored securely at the Manager's home when not in use. They are only made accessible to those who have a right or professional need to see them. Documents brought to session are carried with practitioners in their rucksacks when needed.

Under the **Data Protection Bill 2017** anyone connected with Kindling has a "right to be forgotten" and may ask us to wipe their personal data from our records. Kindling also recognises that people have a right to ask social media sites to wipe all their pre-age 18 posts, to be exempt from email lists and mail-outs and from algorithmic profiling based on their online data. Kindling recognises that it is an offence under the act to re-identify people from anonymised data by reassembling multiple pieces of information and to tamper with data requested by an individual.

Requirements of the GDPR regarding the protection of personal data:

The GDPR requires us to implement reasonable data protection measures to protect parents' personal data and privacy against data loss or exposure. Article 5 of the GDPR summarises the most important principles

and requirements regarding the management of personal data:

- **Lawfulness, fairness and transparency:** personal data should be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- **Limited purpose:** personal data should be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes
- **Data minimisation:** personal data should be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are collected
- **Accuracy:** personal data stored and managed should be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- **Storage limitation:** personal data should be kept in a form which permits the identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed
- **Confidentiality and integrity:** personal data should be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.

Handling and Sharing:

Staff, students and regular volunteers are trained in maintaining confidentiality at their induction and sign a confidentiality agreement. Parents/carers have access to their own children's records but not those of other children. Parents/carers are informed about any additional records we keep, relating to them or their child (see SEN Policy) and have access to all such records. They are also informed about when we share information with other settings their child attends and other agencies, and the circumstances in which we would be obliged to share information without their consent. They actively opt in by signing an Information Sharing Agreement to say they understand this when their child starts.

Retention of Documents:

We retain documents for the lengths of time given below. They are stored securely at the Manager's home and will be destroyed by shredding when the time has elapsed:

Accident and medication records	3 years
Staff accident records	indefinitely
Registers	5 years
Staff employment records	7 years
Financial and HMRC records	7 years
Complaints log	10 years
Records pertaining to the future welfare of children - SEN, incident, child protection files	22 years
Insurance documents	40 years

Notifying Ofsted:

We notify Ofsted of the following changes to our provision, giving new details as required:

- the address of the premises
- the premises themselves affecting the space available to children and the quality of provision
- the name and address of the provider or their other contact details
- the names and addresses of other people working in our provision
- any changes to the hours of our provision
- any significant event likely to affect the suitability of the provider or other staff.

These notifications will be made in advance where possible but always within 14 days.

Date for review: January 2025

14. Complaints reviewed August 2024 by Pippa Edwards

We believe that families are entitled to have prompt and courteous attention paid to their queries, suggestions or concerns about our setting. We aim to give such attention in every case, preferably through discussion, or following the procedures set out below.

Procedure for raising a concern:

Talk First: A parent, carer, staff member, student, volunteer or visitor who has a concern about an aspect of our provision should first raise this and talk it through with the Kindergarten Leader or Owner/Manager. Most concerns will be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Write if Necessary: If the matter is not resolved, or reoccurs, the person concerned should put the matter to the Owner/Manager in writing. It will now be treated as a formal complaint. Emails and texts are acceptable and will be printed/transcribed for the record. The Owner/Manager will investigate the complaint and inform the complainant of the results of this in writing within 28 days. A file will be created and an entry made in the complaints log (see below).

When/if to Inform Outside Agencies: If the complainant wishes to inform Ofsted or another agency of their concern or cannot address the Manager with a serious complaint for any reason, they should send a copy of their written complaint to the relevant agency at any point. In some unusual and urgent cases (e.g. a safeguarding concern) a complainant should phone Ofsted or other outside agencies directly. The number for contacting Ofsted is: **0300 123 1231**. (See also Safeguarding and Whistleblowing Policies). The setting will then be required to follow the investigatory procedures of those bodies.

Meet Again: If the complainant does not wish to take the matter to an outside body but is still not satisfied with the Owner/Manager's investigation and report, a second discussion between the Owner/Manager and complainant may be held. Both parties may invite another person to attend for support. The meeting should be minuted and the minutes and any agreed resolution or actions included in the record of this complaint.

Use a Mediator: If a resolution has not been reached after taking the above steps, a final meeting may be held to attempt to resolve the matter in the presence of an invited outside mediator. This will be a confidential meeting and should be minuted, the minutes and any outcomes included in the record. Whatever the outcome of this final meeting, our complaints procedure is deemed to be concluded at this point.

Investigating Complaints:

We investigate all complaints that have been put in writing and notify complainants of the outcome within 28 days of receiving the complaint.

Keeping Records:

We keep a written record of any complaint that has been put in writing and requires a written response. The full record will be treated as confidential (see Information, Record Keeping and Confidentiality Policy). We will also keep a complaints log containing a summary of the complaint and its outcome. This will be available to parents, carers and Ofsted.

Date for review: A u g u s t 2 0 2 5

15. Whistleblowing Reviewed August 2024 by Pippa Edwards

Whistleblowing is raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation. Our setting is an organisation committed to delivering high quality provision, promoting organisational accountability and maintaining public confidence.

Protection of whistleblowers:

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 encourages people to raise concerns about misconduct or malpractice in the workplace in order to promote good governance and accountability in the public interest.

Concerns may be about:

- a criminal offence
- failure to comply with legal obligations
- a miscarriage of justice
- health and safety lapses endangering an environment or individual
- deliberate concealment of information about any of the above.

(NB this policy is not intended to stand in place of safeguarding reporting requirements).

Individuals who raise such concerns in our workplace must be confident they are protected from punishment or victimisation if they are acting in good faith. Confidentiality will be maintained in the case of such a disclosure and the employee or volunteer will not suffer any personal detriment as a result of raising any genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice.

Procedure:

A whistleblower should in the first instance inform the Kindergarten Leader or Owner/Manager of their concern. The person informed will then advise on the best course of action to take to investigate and resolve the matter immediately. If the employee or volunteer feels the matter cannot be discussed with either of these people, they should contact the Local Safeguarding Designated Officer (LADO) and Ofsted before the end of the working day.

The Local Safeguarding Designated Officer (LADO) can be contacted on 01962 876364

If the whistleblower judges the situation to be an emergency they should call 999.

Ofsted Whistleblowing hotline: 0300 1233 155

Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Date for review: August 2025

16. Unplanned Day Closure reviewed January 2024

We aim to give parents advance notice of all setting closures. In the event of an unplanned closure, we will ensure families are alerted promptly, the relevant bodies informed and reimbursements made as needed.

Reasons for unplanned closure:

- Staff illness/children's attendance below 3
- Severe weather conditions: very high winds, electrical storms, temperatures below -5 degrees.
- Occasional use of site by other bodies (e.g. the local Hunt coming through the woods).

Procedure when a closure occurs:

1. The Owner/Manager informs Parents and carers by phone / WhatsApp and email as soon as possible.
2. If any family cannot be reached, a member of staff will stay at our gathering point on the field/Hunter Park to inform anyone who arrives having missed the message.
3. A notice will be put on our Facebook page and on our website if appropriate.
4. The Owner/Manager will inform Ofsted of closure within 14 days should there be a significant effect on childcare .

Reimbursement:

We will reimburse parents/carers or offer a day in lieu for all unplanned closures.

Date for review: January 2025



17. Use of Tapestry Reviewed Aug 2024 by Pippa Edwards

All children attending Kindling Forest School Kindergarten have an online Personal Learning Journal on Tapestry, which records photos, observations and comments, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage. We use observations of the children's individual planning, needs and interests to build up a record of each child's achievements during their time with us.

Security

- The Tapestry on-line Learning Journal system is hosted on secure dedicated servers based in the UK. All data held on our Tapestry account is owned by Kindling Forest School; we are registered controllers of data with the Information Commissioner's Office and are bound by the Data Protection Act.
- Access to information stored on Tapestry can only be gained by unique user ID and password.
- Parents can only see their own child's information and are unable to view other children's Learning Journals.
- The iPads and tablets are all password protected and these passwords only known by the Kindling staff that keep that device.
- Each user of Tapestry has their own personal password to access the system.

Procedures:

- Each child's Key Person will be responsible for overseeing that child's Learning Journal.
- Staff access allows input or amendment of observations and photos, and allows them to upload these for staff viewing only or for parents.
- The Kindergarten Leader will monitor observations posted.
- Kindling Forest School must have parental permission before they set up a Tapestry account for a child.
- In all written observations, all children are referred to by their first name only.
- Staff must be made aware of any children that are not allowed to be in photographs on Tapestry.
- **Any confidential information such as 'All about me' is uploaded for staff view only.**
- Any group observations will be 'split' into individual Learning Journals so parents cannot see details of other children in the observations (other than a photo and their first name), or comments that other parents have made.
- Parent's access allows input of new observations and photos or the addition of comments on existing observations and photos. Parent log-ins do not have the necessary permission to edit existing material.
- Kindling will discourage parent/staff use of Tapestry for 'messaging' on any other matters than the child's learning.
- Photographs stored on iPads and tablets are deleted on a regular basis by staff.
- If any member of staff suspects that their login details have been compromised in any way, they must inform Kindling Forest School owner/manager and new login details will be created.
- Shared settings may be added to a child's account, with their own log-in details and passwords, but only with the parent's permission.

Parents without internet

For parents without access to the internet, we will print all the information from Tapestry and collate it into a paper Learning Journal. This will be held by the Kindergarten for the parent to view and will be available to take home.

Transitions



When children move to another school or setting, we will transfer the Tapestry account to the new setting, if appropriate. A PDF of the child's Learning Journal will be shared with their parents. The child's information and their Learning Journal will then be permanently deleted from our Tapestry account.

Date for review: August 2025

