



## **Environmental Sustainability Policy**

At Willow Banks Forest School we recognise the potential impact of Forest School activities on the natural environment and endeavour to ensure that the work that we do encourages learners to develop a high level of respect for the natural world, maintains the sustainable use of the woodland and enhances its biodiversity and ecological value. We achieve this through educating the learners who use the woodland and by taking steps to protect, conserve and develop diversity within the flora and fauna of the woodland.

We carry out an environmental impact assessment to evaluate the impact of activities in the woodland and surrounding areas and we use the outcomes of this to inform our sustainable woodland management plan.

Management activities are aimed at protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of the woodland and include:

- Coppicing
- Selective thinning
- Establishing habitats for insects and small mammals
- Replenishing tree stock through planting.
- Developing the ground flora through planting bulbs and seeds.
- Pathway creation and maintenance.

During Forest School sessions we teach learners to look after the woodland we discuss what that involves e.g. using natural resources from the woodland floor rather than picking leaves and flowers, taking care when looking for insects and ensuring that any found are returned to their habitat, foraging to not focus on one particular area so we don't remove all the food for wildlife etc.

Older students help with looking after the woodland, checking for pests and diseases, clearing dead wood from trees but creating wood piles for habitats and fungi

We involve learners in clearing away at the end of each session and leaving the woodland as they found it.

Willow BanksForest School holds environmental sustainability as a core value. When resourcing Forest School sessions we are mindful of reducing waste and of the need to recycle and reuse rather than buying new. Through doing this we hope to demonstrate and encourage a wider respect for the environment. We know that the choices we make as buyers and consumers have a wider impact on the environment and we take this into account in our purchases by ensuring that, where possible, we buy items which are

- Produced as locally as possible
- From sustainable or renewable sources
- Produced ethically with regards to the environment, and to workers' and animal welfare
- Packaged efficiently.