



EXTREME WEATHER

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Date reviewed: August 2024 by Claire Hughes *Aug25 CSH*

We are committed to reviewing our policies annually.

This Policy shall be applied during all Woodland Nuture sessions.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Health and Safety; First Aid; Accident and Incident; safeguarding, code of conduct.

Woodland Nuture's overarching priority is to keep all participants safe at all times.

By the very nature of our provision being completely outdoors, we are subject to the elements and equipped to deliver sessions in a wide range of weather conditions.

We are able to manage most weather conditions by expecting all our participants to attend equipped with the right level of clothing as set out in our clothing policy.

Sometimes there are weather conditions which create circumstances out of our control:

Cold Weather:

- We have a large amount of spare clothing including gloves, hats, scarves, socks, thermal layers, jumpers, leggings, outer trousers and waterproof coats.
- We have hot water bottles, hand warmers and can heat up stones to hold and provide hot drinks as required.
- We can light a moderate fire to provide comfort and warmth.
- We acknowledge that keeping moving is a key to keeping warm and encourage movement through games and activities.
- Sometimes a child may get extremely cold and be unable to bring up their core body temperature despite us applying a wide range of strategies that can help. This mostly occurs when a child has arrived under dressed or is feeling ill. There may be times when we feel that being exposed to the cold is too much for the individual child and we have to make a phone call home for the child to be collected.

Thunder Storms:

- It is unsafe to be in the woods during a thunder storm due to the chance of being struck by lightning or having tree branches fall on participants.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of severe weather warnings prior to the session and throughout the day.

- If the likelihood of a thunderstorm is high, Claire Hughes retains the right to cancel the session, giving as much notice as possible.
- If a thunderstorm occurs during the session, the 3 whistle procedure will be used to call all the children, the children will be collected, registered and taken to the nearest building (usually the Games Room at Woodland Lodge) for safety. Parents will be called to collect the children should the storm show signs of persisting. A collections of books and games will be made available to the children whilst in the games room.

High Winds:

- We acknowledge that there are potential dangers in the woods when there is a high wind and high gusts due to breakages of branches and other hazards.
- We continuously monitor all weather types, it is noted on our planning and our daily checks.
- Prior to a session we keep a close eye on the wind speed, including the direction of the wind and wind gusts.
- We use the Beaufort Scale (see appendix 1) to guide our decisions.
- We know that winds speeds above 40mph are unlikely to be safe in the woods.
- If we know prior to the session that winds are likely to exceed 40mph for the majority of the day and we see no alternative solution, we contact parents to inform them of our decision to cancel, giving as much notice as possible.
- During every session we keep close eyes on the weather and how the trees are responding to the wind, the frequency and strength of the gusts and make dynamic risk assessments accordingly.
- We acknowledge that all woodland is different and responds differently at different times.
- If the strong wind is only for a part of the day and we deem it safe to do so, we seek alternative areas of the farm, such as the vegetable garden; on the open grass land at Gallows site; along the riverside for a "windy walk" or even consider walking to Rufford Park where it is often more sheltered.
- If the wind is coming from a certain direction, it may be possible to use a more sheltered area of the woods. For example, if it is a westerly wind, the orange zone will be quite exposed but it is possible that the yellow zone will be protected.
- We teach the participants to be aware of the weather and the wind; encouraging them to look at the canopy to see how the trees are responding to the wind.
- We recognise that the wind can affect mood and may alter the behaviour of participants.
- We teach the participants to respond to three whistles in case we need to evacuate the woods if the wind speed increases to a dangerous level.
- If the wind becomes too strong and we see no alternative, we contact parents to come and fetch the children as soon as possible.
- We can use the polytunnel to seek shelter if necessary.
- In severe cases, we can use the Games Room at Woodland Lodge for shelter until parents collect their children.

Appendix 1:

The Beaufort Scale

Wind Speeds				
Scale	Description	miles per hour	Effects	Risk
0	Calm	0-1	smoke rises	
1	Light air	1-3	Smoke drifts	
2	Light breeze	4-7	Leaves rustle	
3	Gentle breeze	8-12	Twigs move	
4	Moderate breeze	13-18	Leaves and small branches sway	
5	Fresh breeze	18-24	Small trees sway	
6	Strong breeze	25-31	Large branches sway	
7	Moderate gale	32-38	Whole trees in motion	
8	Fresh gale	39-46	Twigs break off trees	
9	Strong gale	47-55	Branches break off trees	
10	Whole gale	56-64	Trees uprooted	
11	Storm	65-74	Widespread damage	
12	Hurricane	75+	Devastation	

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