



Forest School Fire Policy

At North Wootton Academy Forest School, campfires are an important element of a Forest School session. The experience of a camp fire encourages learners to listen to one another, listen to camp fire stories, join in with camp fire singing and ultimately, cooking and sharing food.

“Staring into a fire can reduce blood pressure and induce a trance like state which can result in long term advantages such as reduced blood pressure, better quality sleep and a calmer mind. These all contribute to an improved health and well-being”.

<https://www.charltonandjenrick.co.uk/news/2020/05/the-psychological-benefits-of-a-warming-fire/>

North Wootton Academy Forest School aims to ensure that learners participant with fire as safely and enjoyable as possible.

Preparation for a Camp Fire

- The location of the camp fire will be the same every session. Location of the camp fire is in the centre of the seating circle near the forest entrance. The camp fire will be in a shallow fire pit surrounded by damp small tree trunks.
- The camp fire area will be assessed to ensure the ground is clear of any trip hazards, e.g. new growth of weeds.
- Learners will be educated and will agree to follow the camp fire rules before participating in the camp fire experience. If camp fires are used in sessions with Early Years children, additional staff will be required to ensure highest safety.
- The seating circle stumps are positioned approximately 1.5 metres away from the camp fire with reasonable gaps between each stump to ensure exit points are frequent and clear.
- The seating circle stumps are securely positioned in the ground to ensure they remain stable, without wobbling.
- Learners must never walk within the seating circle. Learners must always walk around the outside to find their seating stump and the seating circle must never be crossed.
- A fire blanket must be positioned close by with a watering can full of water and the first aid kit.

Lighting the Camp Fire

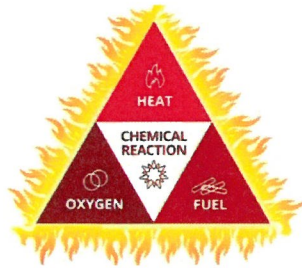
- The camp fire will always be lit by the Level 3 Forest School Leader (Emma Bond) and it will be supervised by the leader at all times. Children in Early Years and Key Stage 1 are too young to be near the fire.
- Nothing must be thrown onto the fire at any point.
- Learners may use long bamboo sticks to hold food over the fire. Learners may only leave their seating stump if instructed by the Forest School Leader.
- Learners must kneel beside the fire or in a stable position.
- Any loose clothing (scarves) must be removed before approaching the fire and hair must be tied back.
- A fire glove must be worn at all times when assisting the fire.



Forest School Fire Policy Continued

- Learners should avoid sitting in the direction of smoke. If a seating stump is available on the other side of the circle, learners are encouraged to walk around the outside of the circle and change seats.
- If there isn't a free seating stump, learners should cover their face with their hand, close their eyes or simply turn their head away.
- Fires must only be ignited using matches or a fire steel. Lighters must not be used!
- Fires should only be built up using wood (twigs and sticks). Any materials, other than wood, should not go on the fire.

In order for the fire to be lit, learners will be educated about the 'Fire Triangle'.



<https://www.firerescue1.com/fire-products/apparatus-accessories/articles/what-is-a-fire-triangle-4HSY7X5xagWZR5KQ/>

Learners will be able to participate in the lighting of the camp fire by collecting the resources needed.

- **Tinder:** dry grass, very dry leaves, dry bark, very fine (match stick size) twigs, dry pine cone needles.
- **Kindling:** dry very small twigs (thickness of a toothpick), dry small twigs (thickness of a pencil), larger twigs (thickness of a thumb).

Wood needs to be very dry which makes a nice snapping sound when snapped or broken.

Putting out the Camp Fire

Ideally, the camp fire should be extinguished when the fire has burnt down to ash. However, due to time restraints, this may not always be possible. The camp fire will be extinguished by the Level 3 Forest School Leader only!

- The Forest School Leader will carefully pour small amounts of water over the fire.
- Cinders and ash will be moved around to reduce the levels of oxygen before adding more water on.
- Smoke levels will be assessed and water will be poured on gradually when smoke levels have reduced.
- The Leader will use a large poking stick to move the fire remains around to allow it to cool quicker.
- Water will continue to be poured on until there is no smoke left.
- All camp fires will be put out at the end of every session.
- Water will be the only material used to distinguish the fire.
- Camp fires cannot be left unattended at any time until all the smoke has gone.

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