

*“Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow”*



**Bishops Down Primary School**

[www.bishopsdownprimary.org](http://www.bishopsdownprimary.org)

# Forest School Fire Safety Policy

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Reviewed and updated by: Forest School Lead Headteacher

Campfires are an important part of Forest School and are used in many sessions. Sitting around the campfire as a group: learning, listening, singing, making and sharing food cooked on the fire is a wonderfully communal and magical experience for children. It will stimulate their senses by letting them feel its warmth. They will watch the flames dance and experience its rich smell. We hope it will capture their imaginations and enthusiasm!

The children at Bishops Down will also learn why it is so important in our lives; how to respect fire; the dangers of fire; to be safe and responsible around it and will also learn about the fire triangle (oxygen, fuel and heat) and what is needed to build a small fire successfully.

Bishops Down School aims to ensure that all children and adults participating in Forest School sessions with fires will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

### **Location**

- Only agreed area will be used for campfire (fire circle with raised benches and 1m gaps between them – built following all safety measures). Kelly Kettles will be also be used in this area.
- All children and adults in the school have been briefed on this.
- There will be a lock on Early Years gate and rest of school are not allowed in woods on Wednesdays and Thursdays (or any additional forest school days).

### **Positioning of Children and Adults**

- Fire areas are surrounded by seating benches at least 2 metres from the fire pit.
- When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area without permission. They need to ask, 'May I enter?'
- When allowed to access the campfire, children must walk around the outside of the benches and wait for permission to step over. Once permission has been given, they must sit, ensuring legs are drawn into the log and not outstretched.
- Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.

- Children will be taught how to change seats by standing, stepping over the log and then walking around the outside of the seating area. They must never cross the inner area.
- Children will be taught the RESPECT position if they are cooking on the fire. This position allows children to move away from danger, quickly.
- NO RUNNING
- Long sleeves and trousers must always be worn.
- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire.
- Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the children:
  - They are advised to turn their head to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes and count to 30 (or ask an adult/peer to count for them)
  - If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.
  - If wind direction is variable, the leader should rearrange the seating if at all possible.

Fires will not be lit in strong winds!!!

## **Safety and Responsibility**

Tie back long hair!

### **1. Lighting and keeping fires burning**

When lighting a fire, the Forest School leader will take control of the operation and all accompanying adults will be briefed before we start. **A lit fire will not be left unattended at any point.** A fire may not be lit until it has been confirmed to all that our fire safety equipment is in place. Open fires will be built within a fire square.

- Storm kettles are only used on a stone slab and any woodchip or leaf litter must be brushed away before use.
- No flammable liquids or plastics are to be used on the fire.
- If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision.
- Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be extinguished with water until all smoke and steam has ceased.

- The bowl will be filled with water (this will drain through the holes at the bottom) and the lid placed over it.
- These items will be essential whenever a fire is lit:



### **Fire – what you need**

#### **NEED:**

- WATER! 1 x 10 x litre container and 1 x 20 l container
- Children's medical information to hand in FS medical bag
- Heatproof gloves
- Trug
- Torch
- Whistle
- Fire gloves
- Ice pack
- Fire blanket
- Toilet roll
- Wipes
- Burns kit
- Scissors
- Storm kettle
- Fire steel and matches
- Cooking equipment
- Grill
- Washing up bowls (washing up liquid, tea towels, bowls, cups etc)
- Tinder and kindling boxes if wet

Fire starter box – emergency matches, cotton wool, striker, choc tin with natural ingredients

## 2. Fire Risk Assessment (see separate risk assessment and FS Handbook)

- The FS leader may teach a small group how to build a small fire.
- Fires are lit using tinder of various kinds, fire steels or matches.
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- No plastics are to be burnt.
- If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision.
- Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire.
- The hand should never go over the fire.

## 3. Extinguishing fires

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
- FS leader should ensure that any large remains of wood are separated from one another.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.

## 4. Education about fire and fire lighting (notes for adults at FS sessions)

For a fire we need fuel, fire and oxygen – the fire triangle



- Children will collect **tinder** (dry grasses, very dry leaves, birch bark from the floor, very fine twigs, pine needles or open pine cones) to make an apple sized tinder bundle.

- They collect their **kindling**. FS leader will also have alternative tinder if wet. Small twigs are best as it's the thickness not the length that counts! They will be separated into piles of different sizes - very fine twigs (a few mm diameter, size of a toothpick), slightly larger twigs (diameter of a pencil), and bigger twigs (approx diameter of adult thumb).
- 3 different thicknesses of wood (pinky, finger, thumb or breakfast, lunch and dinner sticks)
- FS leader will explain that those that make a nice snapping sound when you break them are drier, and good for fire lighting, whereas if they bend, then they're not very dry and not good for fire lighting. Bone dry wood and small twigs make less smoke, and standing dead wood is better than wood from the ground.
- FS leader will also have fuel: a few larger diameter pieces of dry wood, own supply of charcoal, dry sticks or small split logs.

### **Starting the fire**

- A few slightly larger pieces of wood will be put in the base of the firepit to create a dry platform and keep the tinder off the floor.
- Tinder will be lit with a spark from fire striker (fire steel or matches). The finest tinder will then go on, e.g. paper thin bark, pine needles, dry grass, dry (dead) nettles, hay, super thin twigs.
- Someone compared tinder and sizes of kindling as gears in a car. You need to go up all the gears in a car. You need to go up all the gears in order. If you skip a gear, you're in danger of not having enough power and your fire faltering. Gradually add larger sized tinder and kindling. As one piece lights, add another - too much too soon can suffocate the fire of oxygen and put it out.

Make waffle with chipwood

Put tinder on top

Cotton wool and tepee around it

Make fire star around it (if in sunken pit and wet)

Catch spark on cotton wool or other tinder using fire steel (strike away from body)

- We will explain the purpose of a particular fire. For example, the above method is best for getting a fire started, 'grid fires' are good

for cooking (a criss cross piece of metal over it, so that pans and kettles can be heated on a flat surface). Long fires are long burning and are good for keeping us warm overnight but we will not be using these at Bishops Down as we have no need to. Fires will be built with the session length in mind and with an aim for them to extinguish naturally by the end of the session.