

# Woodland Play Sessions



## **HANDBOOK OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

To be read by all staff, volunteers and visitors to Cambusbarron Playgroup Woodland Play Sessions

This revision: Nov 2018

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### **Introduction**

This Cambusbarron Playgroup handbook contains information, policies and procedures relating to the running of Woodland Play Sessions.

The Handbook is made available to staff and parents/carers prior to participation. The Handbook is subject to annual review and to immediate review if required.

### Background

#### Our Ethos

The contemporary forest school movement was brought to the UK from Scandinavia in the 1990s but it is predated by many British traditions, such as the Woodcraft Folk, Scouting and Guiding. It draws inspiration from these traditions, along with various educational philosophies, including Rousseau, Froebel, Steiner and Montessori. Woodland Play Sessions aim to be learner-led, play-centred, holistic and experiential. When taking part in our sessions a participant is engaging with nature in wild spaces in an exploratory, sensory and physical way. We believe it's important to create, where possible, a long-term relationship between a location and a group of participants - giving all participants a chance to get a feel for how an environment changes over time.

At Cambusbarron Playgroup we believe everybody should have regular, long-term access to the woodland or natural environment which provides them with inspirational and challenging outdoor learning opportunities. Woodland Play Sessions offer a learner centred approach, where participants can learn through self-directed play and exploration. Participants who come to Woodland Play Sessions will be given the opportunity to develop their curiosity, confidence, self-esteem, creativity, empathy, communication, independence, resilience, co-operation as well as a deeply personal knowledge, respect and care for our environment.

Participants will be encouraged to take constructive risks in order to develop skills, good judgment and to learn and develop through managing their own and others' risks. In planning activities we consider not only the risks but also the potential benefits for the learner.

#### Role of the Adult

All adults involved in Woodland Play Sessions should be conscious that it is an exploratory experience for children. Children will be encouraged to play and learn as independently as possible, often without demonstration or suggestion. If invited to provide support then adults do, but otherwise merely observe, allowing the experience to be learner-directed.

It is the role of playgroup staff to take a lead in planning, delivering and evaluating the Woodland play programme. They also take primary responsibility in ensuring that policies and procedures, rules and guidelines are adhered to. Volunteers and other adults such as committee members may help with these responsibilities where they wish to and are able and/or qualified to.

#### Activities

Our activities will depend on the ability and experience of participants. Examples of Woodland Play activities include:

- Woodland management and nature exploration
- Building dens and other structures
- Fires and cooking
- Games and invitations for imaginative play
- Natural crafts
- Using tools, such as knives and saws
- Scavenger hunts and adventure
- Seasonal celebrations

### **Our Setting**

Gillies Hill is located south of Cambusbarron, west of Stirling and the M9, and north of the Bannock Burn in Central Scotland. Gillies Hill covers a 140 hectares (350 acres) crag and tail which rises from a height of 79 metres (259 ft) at the Bannock Burn Bridge near Sauchie Craig to an elevation of 162 metres (531 ft) at a point which overlooks the former quarrying operation to the west and Stirling Castle to the east. The hill lies north of the Bannock Burn, northeast of Sauchie Craig (an area designated SSSI, Site of Special Scientific Interest), east of the Touch Hills and Murrayswood, south of Cambusbarron, and west of Stirling and the M9.

Gillies Hill is the hill from which Robert the Bruce's camp followers, or Gillies, descended onto the field of the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 turning the tide of the battle which granted Scotland nearly 400 years of independence. The majority of Gillies Hill has been classified as a Semi-natural Ancient Woodland by the Woodland Trust using aerial surveys and by a follow-up Phase 1 habitat survey conducted in 2010. To date 21 Scotland & 38 United Kingdom ancient woodland indicator species have been documented on the hill demonstrating that the woodland's understory and sections of its tree cover have been cloaked in woodland for centuries; the earliest mapped confirmation of trees on the site dates back to the 1580s.

### **Getting here, parking & access**

By bus

Cambusbarron is served by the First Scotland East company, service B12 and C12. Please check with the bus company for up to date service information.

By car or bike

Cambusbarron is easily accessed from Stirling via Birkhill Road or St Ninian's Road.

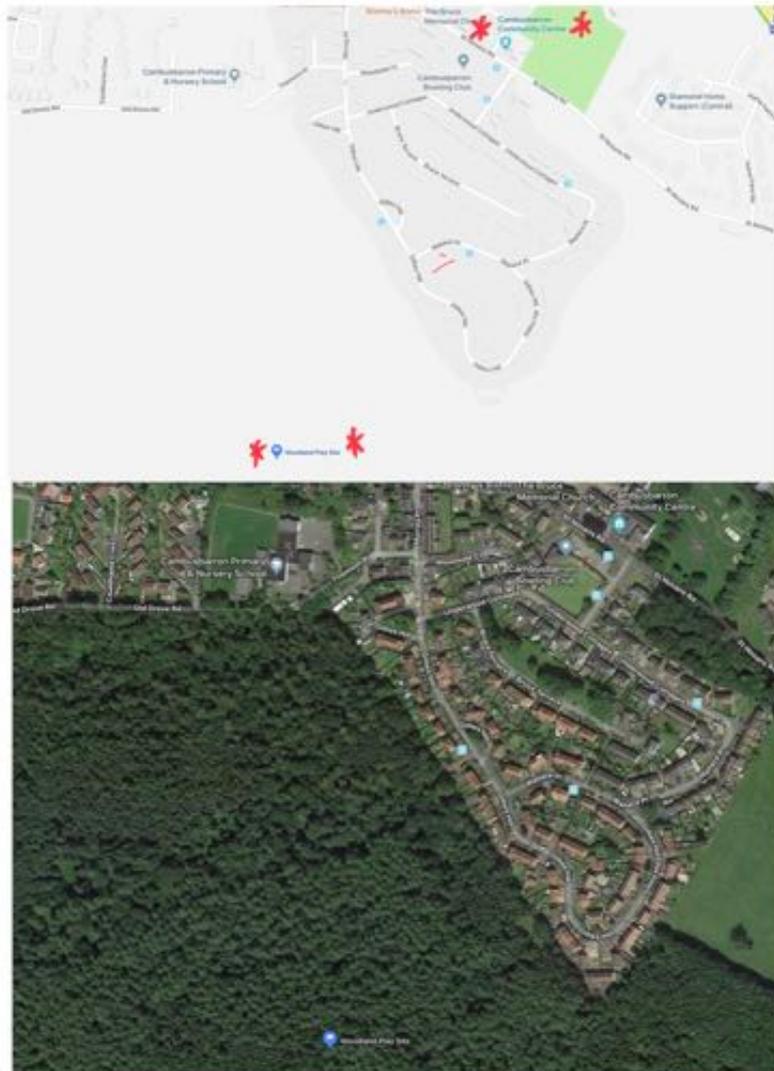
# CAMBUSBARRON PLAYGROUP

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## Location

Woodland Play Site : 56.1043049, -3.9699929

The Garages : 56.1066533, -3.9680376



### **Local medical facilities**

Minor Injuries Unit (9am-9pm daily)

Stirling Community Hospital

Livilands Gate

Stirling

FK8 2AU

Phone: 01786 434036

Accident and Emergency department

Forth Valley Royal,

Stirling Road,

Larbert,

FK5 4WR,

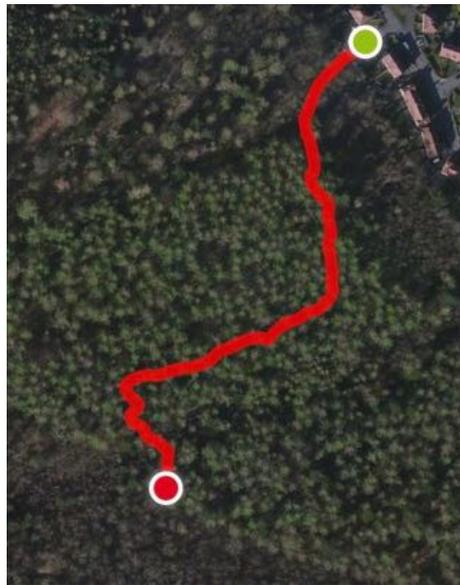
Phone: 01324 566 100

### General Session Information

#### When and Where to Meet

Avery effort will be made to ensure all playgroup children have regular opportunities to attend Woodland Play Sessions. Parents will be given advance notice of which sessions their child will be invited to attend. Woodland Play Sessions will begin at 9:15am and parents should meet staff at the entrance to the Gillies Hill Woods known locally as The Garages. Children should arrive dressed and ready to leave. If a child is unable to attend, or will be late, please inform staff as soon as possible so that the group is not waiting unnecessarily.

Children, staff and adult helpers will leave from The Garages and walk to the site. There are several different trails to the site however the map below shows the preferred route.



#### What to Bring

“There is no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong clothes.” This is almost true; strong winds are probably the one real exception. We aim to go out in all seasons, so for each we need participants to dress appropriately. Our sessions are relatively active, but in winter spending hours outside can mean getting very cold if a participant isn’t wearing several layers, warm socks, a hat, gloves, scarf, etc. It’s also advisable always to wear long trousers and sturdy boots or wellies in all weathers in the woods. Our site is beside a burn so there is always access to water which is a huge attraction for children. Spare clothes are a must, several changes are advisable and these should be wrapped in labelled waterproof bags. A spare plastic bag is useful for staff to put wet clothes in.

We would prefer that special or valuable toys are not brought to Woodland Play Sessions as Cambusbarron Playgroup cannot take responsibility for any personal property that is lost or damaged during sessions.

#### Equipment

The following equipment will be considered “standard” and will be provided and transported to the site by staff or accompanying adults :

First Aid Kit	Contact and personal information	Risk-benefit analysis
First Aid book	Incident log	Emergency Procedure
Mobile phone	Tools & firelighting kit	Handwashing kit
Fresh water/water carrier	Personal protective equipment	Toileting kit
Spare clothing	Fire blanket	

### **Procedures for Setting Up the Site**

(Carried out on arrival at the site)

1. Carry out a session risk assessment of site and advise accompanying staff and adults accordingly
2. Set up necessary equipment ensuring all is fit for purpose
3. Meet children and parents, collate register of attendees.
4. Ensure group (children and adults as appropriate) is aware of new hazards or medical considerations
5. Check that they are all wearing suitable clothing and footwear
6. Take the group to the location
7. Describe or walk the boundaries for the day
8. Engage children in the development of rules and guidelines for the day

### **During the Session**

1. Visually check and monitor all equipment
2. Check on pastoral needs of group
3. Conduct regular head counts as needed
4. Ensure appropriate personal protective clothing is worn when appropriate

### **Closing the Session**

1. Extinguish any fires properly
2. Count any tools used into their bag
3. Remove structures
4. Check for litter etc.
5. Collect the equipment
6. Walk the group to the pick-up point
7. Thoroughly check, clean and store equipment

### **Weather & Clothing**

Clothing advice

Winter: waterproofs/coats, fleece/jumper, hats and gloves, thermal vests and long johns

Summer: waterproofs, fleece, sun hat, long sleeved tops and trousers

Footwear: wellies or strong/sturdy (ideally waterproof) outdoor shoes and warm woollen or manmade fibre socks (not cotton).

We have some spare waterproofs in case of a participant arriving without adequate protection. Spare clothes are essential, particularly changes of socks and trousers. Children will be given the responsibility of carrying their own spare clothing etc in their own rucksacks.

### **Toileting and Nappy Changing**

During Woodland Play Sessions we aim to

- Comply with our Infection Control policy
- Locate the camp toilet away from the play area
- Encourage children to use the toilet as independently as possible
- Assist children who are not able to go to the toilet independently.
- Ensure hand washing facilities are available.
- Remove all toilet materials from site after the session ends and dispose of them via a domestic waste stream.

We have basic toilet facilities on site although we encourage everyone to use the toilet before coming on site. Our toileting and nappy changing facilities consist of a tent which offers privacy and a portable “potty”. Children will be encouraged to use the “toilet” independently but will be supported when appropriate. Children wearing a nappy will be changed in the tent and parents should provide a suitable changing equipment (wipes, nappy sack and mat) for this purpose. Soiled equipment will be returned to the parent in the child’s bag.

We always strive for high standards of the environment, both indoor and outdoor, and will consider requirements, standards and good practice guidance to aim for the best possible outcomes for the children using the service. Best practice guidance for hand hygiene from Health Protection Scotland is to use running water and environmentally friendly liquid soap whenever practicably possible with paper hand towels available. We accept that there may be occasions where it is not practical or possible to follow this advice and in such instances will adopt a common sense approach.

Guidance from SEPA (Management of hygiene waste produced as a result of personal care) suggests that hygiene waste, ie waste that is produced from human hygiene activities”, is not considered to be infectious or hazardous and, in the small quantities produced during Woodland Play Sessions, can be mixed in with the black bag or domestic waste stream for disposal in landfill facilities or municipal waste incineration facilities.

### **Snack**

Woodland Play Sessions offer opportunities for children to eat outside and provide a broader range of eating experiences. Not every child may get to enjoy a picnic, cook food over a fire or feel the steady warmth of a hot drink sipped on a cold day. They may not have opportunities to transfer the skills acquired through eating snack inside playgroup to other contexts. Many children’s experiences of food may be screen-based as they watch TV or the computer whilst eating, thereby losing out on the social aspect of eating and sharing a meal together. The snack provided during Woodland Play Sessions may not conform to Government recommendations on healthy eating, particularly for very young children. However, outdoors, and particularly in winter, the emphasis has to be on eating and drinking that keeps us warm, nourished and gives us more energy than is needed when playing inside. Staff use their professional judgement when deciding which snacks are appropriate.

Drinks on cold days may be hot chocolate, hot juice or, occasionally, hot soup. Foods generally consist of a plain biscuit and some fruit or vegetables. During some sessions, we may cook items such as popcorn, damper bread or marshmallows over the fire.

Plates, cups and cutlery are provided as is drinking water. Dishes will be removed at the end of the session, washed and returned ready for the next session.

Infection control procedures regarding food and hand hygiene will be maintained.

### **Collection**

At the close of the session staff will walk the children back to the pick up point at The Garages. Collection from Woodland Play sessions will be at 12:25pm.

### **Feedback**

We encourage all children and carers/parents to give us regular feedback about their experience and also to talk to us about anything that is causing concern. Feedback can be expressed verbally in person or in writing by email. We will always endeavour to be as open, honest and as straightforward as possible with carers/parents with regard to any issue; maintaining a two way flow of information can lead to resolutions before problems arise or escalate. All communications regarding formal feedback or concerns will be logged and records kept.

In the event of a concern being about our practice, we will investigate this and feed back our conclusions with 28 days.

### **Cancellation**

In the case of extreme weather it may be necessary to cancel our Woodland Play Sessions. In such circumstances playgroup will take place as normal in the Community Centre. We will endeavour where possible to give advance notice of a cancellation however in many cases this will not be possible as decisions may have to be made at very short notice. In such circumstances we will inform the child's primary contact via text message that the session has been moved to the Community Centre.

### Health & Safety

Whenever outdoor activity sessions are run there will always be the need for key items to meet the health and safety requirements of leading a group outdoors. The location of the site, time of year and the group demographic will have a significant impact on what resources are needed to run a safe and enjoyable session. Cambusbarron Playgroup has legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The purpose of this act is to promote, stimulate and encourage high standards of health and safety at work. It protects not only all people at work, but also the health and safety of the general public who may be affected by the work activities. Our staff are appropriately qualified professionals who are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), who are members of the Protection of Vulnerable (PVG) scheme and who hold an up to date first aid qualification.

Our Woodland Play site is considered to be safe and easily accessible. Our staff will assess the site prior to a session and will seek to identify significant hazards and take action or precautions to reduce the risk to a safe level. The location of the site and its grid reference are noted in the Site Information page of this Handbook. All staff and parents will have access to this information in case the session leader is unable to attend to an incident.

All staff and accompanying parents should be aware of the risk assessment prior to an activity. Changing weather conditions and visitors to the site can create new challenges, such as fallen branches and litter. These will need to be assessed and may alter previously arranged activities.

### Shared Information

Any special knowledge of the group - for example a participant may have a particular fear of dogs or a food allergy - can be useful when planning activities as we aim to make every session as beneficial to participants as possible. Parents must provide information on behaviours that may present risk to individuals and/or the group and, if necessary, a separate risk assessment prepared.

### Medication

In accordance with the group's policy on the administration of medication, staff will not dispense any medication without prior arrangement or suitable permissions. Guardians should provide details of allergies or relevant illnesses. No treatment will be administered against parental wishes. Sun cream should be applied by a parent/carer prior to a session.

### Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure

Emergencies are never wanted, but they are a possibility, and so we must ensure that all adults are familiar with appropriate emergency procedures. Most emergencies can be resolved on-the-spot by the session leader removing the group from potential threat and providing first aid. However, in the event of a serious incident, which could arise as a result of an injury, illness or extreme change in weather the following procedures will be followed:

- Secure safety of whole group from further danger. Stop all work/activities. Call in and locate group promptly as agreed in advance. If possible, remove whole group from any further danger or threat of danger. If the group is removed from the site the emergency assembly point is at **The Garages**
- First Aider will attend to any casualties with adult helper and with regard for maintenance of required supervision ratios for the rest of the party. At least one first aider must be on site at all times. A record of changes in casualties' state and anything administered to them to be made if possible.

- Emergency services contacted as necessary, ideally by an adult helper. Charged mobile phones are carried by staff. If possible/necessary an adult will meet emergency vehicle at **The Garages**
- Safety of the rest of group will be maintained by the remaining staff and adults, as far as possible away from the scene of the incident.
- Informing next of kin should be carried out as soon as practicable after the incident by the designated member of staff or accompanying parent.
- Incident report and/or first aid book should be filled in on site if possible. This should be filled in whenever the emergency plan is used even if no one was harmed and it was just a near miss.
- Ensure that all equipment involved in an accident or incident is retained in an unaltered condition in case it is required by the police. In all cases a written record i.e. a log, of all facts, events, times and circumstances, will be retained until all matters are finally settled. If relevant this will include photographs.
- An incident report or entry in the first aid book must be completed, signed and dated.
- Incidents leading to admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours or resulting in an injury preventing a person working for three or more days afterwards need to be registered with RIDDOR within 24 hours Tel 0845 3009923 (HSE - Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm).
- Inform Cambusbarron Playgroup committee of any major incident as soon as possible.
- First aid kits must be restocked after use and a stock check carried out every 12 months.
- Any incident or near miss must be subsequently investigated by staff team to review existing controls and procedures.

### **Lost or Missing Person Procedure**

Unknown woods can be disorientating, especially if a participant is unused to this kind of environment. Many woodland sites are not surrounded by walls or fences, and whilst we appreciate this sense of freedom can be beneficial to all, there is also the possibility that a participant may get lost. There are a number of ways we can prevent this:

- We encourage all our participants to take an interest in their surroundings so as to help them find their bearings. Ultimately we would like to inspire all who are able to become responsible for their own safety with respect to staying close to the rest of the group.
- Boundaries will be chosen and made known to the group. Going outside the boundaries will require all of the group to go or a sub group, with at least one leader – allowing at least two leaders to stay with remainder of group.
- The group will be counted in and checked at start and end of day, then at other relevant points in the day – particularly after activities that include members splitting up.
- Good communication within the group will encourage collective responsibility for each others' safety – staff are always approachable and should be made aware if there are any concerns as to a participants whereabouts.

In the event of leaders fearing that a member of the group has gone missing:

1. All the group will be immediately called back in, by prearranged call or whistle, and counted and missing member determined. The time will be noted.
2. The Group Leader must ensure the safety of remaining children. At least two adults must stay with them at all times.

3. One or more adults should immediately start searching for the missing group member – calling and whistling as appropriate.
4. If the missing group member is not found within 5 minutes, the group Leader must contact police by telephoning 999 (this will result in the emergency plan coming in to action).

Leaders must recall and write down a description of what the missing person was wearing and any distinguishing features. Any information on their last known location and time should be noted. Also if they have any special medical or learning needs then these need to be noted down. All information then must be passed to police or other agencies.

### **Hazardous Plants & Fungi**

Part of the risk assessment will be to identify any particularly hazardous plants and point them out to the group so that all members are aware of the dangers. The sap or hairs from some plants can cause rashes and blistering when in contact with skin, or after the skin is then exposed to sunlight. Most rashes are caused by stinging nettles, though giant hogweed may also be a problem. Both of these plants are easily distinguishable and if either is seen growing on site all members of the group will be taught how to distinguish and avoid coming into contact with it. Serious poisoning from ingestion of leaves, berries or mushrooms rarely occurs, even when curious children are involved. However, ingesting even small amounts of some species can cause nausea, vomiting, and stomach cramps; and large amounts are potentially fatal. Consequently, participants will not be allowed to forage or eat anything that has not been agreed safe by a member of staff.

If a member of the group is exposed to a hazardous plant or fungi, so that they have a reaction a leader must be informed and appropriate First Aid given. If the nature of the reaction is more serious the Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure must be followed.

### **Ticks and other Biting or Stinging Insects**

Parents/carers should be aware that ticks exist around the site. Parents should be aware that some ticks are infected with a bacterium which can be transmitted to humans causing Lyme disease. Information on safe removal of ticks can be found at <http://stopthetick.co.uk> and on Lyme disease at <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Lyme-disease/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

Insect bites and stings can be common, particularly in spring and summer, and usually cause only minor irritation. In rare cases, people can have a serious allergic reaction to a bite or sting that requires immediate medical treatment - if this is the case then a leader will refer directly to the Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure.

If there is prior knowledge to suggest that a participant will have an allergic reaction if bitten then staff and committee must be informed before any activities take place on site.

### **Dogs & Members of the Public**

Our site is open to and is accessed by the public and so there may well be other people out enjoying the woods. Most people will be happy to pass by without hindering activities, but there is the possibility of attention from a passer-by. If this event causes concern to anyone involved a member of staff will step in and assure the member of public that if they wish to raise any issues, then they should contact a committee or staff member at a time convenient to both parties. In the unlikely event that the situation is considered to cause alarm or be dangerous staff will use a mobile phone to call the police and use the Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure.

Some participants may be unused to or afraid of dogs. If this is known to be the case for any particular participants please inform staff prior to starting sessions. If a dog appears the fearful participant can be joined by at least one member of staff. If a dog approaches the group and appears likely to cause trouble children will be advised not to run or act excitably - ideally keep arms by their sides, voices low and stay as still as possible. Staff will speak to the owner.

### **Ropes and Tool Use Procedure**

Using a range of ropes and tools will be necessary in many site based activities and is an important part of our work as it enables participants to develop new practical skills that help develop self-confidence. Cambusbarron Playgroup aims to ensure that all people participating in sessions with ropes and tools do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible. Tools that may be used include potato peelers, bow saws, pruning saws, loppers, knives, drills and hatchets. Please refer to our Risk Benefit Analysis on use of Tools and on Ropes for more information.

### **Fire Procedure**

Fires and the use of storm kettles are an important part of our Woodland Play Sessions. We aim to ensure that all people participating in sessions with fires and/or storm kettles will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

- Leaders will explain to participants the importance of using only dead wood for fires and also of the importance of dead wood as a habitat
- Smoke inhalation will be reduced by burning dead wood. Those in smoky areas will be encouraged to move to less smoky areas
- Fires will only be lit in suitable defined spaces or in a fire wok
- Participants will only be allowed to light fires under direct supervision of a trained leader using suitable materials and equipment
- All participants will be given clear guidelines about how to behave and move around the area when the fire or kettle is lit
- A lit fire will be supervised by an adult at all times, as will all cooking activities
- Related safety equipment, including heat-proof gloves, a fire blanket, a burns kit and water will be kept within close range of fires
- All fires should be fully extinguished and all traces removed at the end of a session. Please refer to our Risk Benefit Analysis on use of Fire for more information

### **Safe Lifting**

Woodland Play Sessions activities can be physically demanding for participants and staff, for example when handling heavy objects, so it is wise to be aware of best practice. One of the greatest causes of back injury is lifting or handling objects incorrectly. Here are some tips:

- Think and plan where and how you are going to move an object before you lift
- Keep the load close to your waist and the heaviest side of the load next to your body
- Adopt a stable position with feet apart and one leg slightly forward if possible
- Ensure a good hold on the load, hug it close to your body if possible
- Avoid bending your back, only bend at your hips or knees if possible
- Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways especially if bending at the back

- Keep your head up and look ahead, not down at the load once it is held securely
- Move smoothly
- Know your limits - don't lift or handle more than you can easily manage without help
- Put the load down if you need to adjust it
- Where possible, use ropes to drag objects such as trees

### **Lone working**

There will be occasions when it may be necessary for staff to be on site alone, particularly when setting up, clearing away or on planning visits. It is not anticipated that this should cause any problems or issues. Should circumstances arise such that staff feel uncomfortable being on site alone the group will consider suitable processes and procedures.

### **Reporting: incidents and accidents**

Any accidents that involve injury will be recorded into a first aid book. Major injuries that constitute 'reportable injuries' will be reported to the Health and Safety Executive via RIDDOR. Parents will be notified of injuries in keeping with the Critical Incidents policy.

'Incidents', which include major behavioural incidents and any major negative occurrence that is not an accident, will also be recorded per playgroup procedures.

### **Pro forma consent**

Parents/guardians will be asked to fill in a consent form before their child begins Woodland Play Sessions in recognition of the different location and nature of sessions. The completed consent form will give relevant medical details of the child, consent for the child to take part in Woodland Play Sessions and permissions to administer first aid treatments and to admit the child to hospital for emergency treatment.

The form also provides emergency contact details and requests permission to take and use photographs of the child for promotional purposes and reports.

Staff will keep a copy of this form with him or her at all sessions attended by the child.

### **Insurance**

Cambusbarron Playgroup is insured through Early Years Scotland (underwritten by Royal Sun Alliance)

### Safeguarding

Cambusbarron Playgroup work to ensure the safety of children whilst in our care. We are committed to creating an environment which is safe from abuse and any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with.

Cambusbarron Playgroup's Safeguarding Policy focuses on:

- Minimising the risk of abuse taking place through good planning and best practice
- Empowering those it works with to stay safe and speak out
- Taking appropriate action when any allegations arise

### Staff

All staff are members of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme. Children will not be left unsupervised with an adult who is not a scheme member

### Ratios

The Health and Social Care Standards do not specify the number of adults to children required in any setting however commit a service to ensuring that (among other things) a child's needs are met by the right number of people (3.15) and staff have time to support, care and speak to children (3.16).

To ensure appropriate support and supervision at all times the Care Inspectorate has set the following ratios<sup>1</sup> :

- Children aged 2 years to under 3 years: 1 adult to 5 children
- Children aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school: 1 adult to 10 children

Owing to the nature of Woodland Play Sessions we aim however to work to the ratio of 1 adult to 4 children. In all cases a minimum of 3 adults should be present

### Toileting

Children will be encouraged to use the toilet independently however when this is not possible only staff members will be allowed to accompany a child to the toilet or to change nappies.

### Photos & Video

Permission will be requested via pro forma consent for playgroup staff to take photographs of participants for monitoring and evaluation purposes and suitable use in publications for leaflets/materials/website. Where permission is refused, we will aim to avoid photographing and videoing that child and blur out faces wherever they do appear in recorded material.

### Disclosures, Recording & Reporting

Appropriate steps will be taken where concerns arise regarding the safety of a participant. Concerns will be reported to the group's Child Protection Officer and we will ensure that disclosures are responded to sensitively and appropriately, in line with current best practice.

- Any concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon immediately
- Positive action will be taken to ensure the protection of participants who are subject to any concerns
- The safety of the rest of the group will be secured before taking further action if on site – if a crime has taken place call 999 and report this to the Police
- Implicated adult(s) will be encouraged to leave the group until the disclosure is officially cleared/action taken

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/ELC\\_adult-child\\_ratios\\_-\\_final\\_29.3.18.pdf](http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/ELC_adult-child_ratios_-_final_29.3.18.pdf)

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- All appropriate staff/managers will be informed
- Relevant information/evidence will be recorded in an appropriate and cooperative manner
- In all child protection situations, confidentiality will be maintained at all times by disclosing information only to those who need to know.

### Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Cambusbarron Playgroup is committed to equal opportunity for all and we wish to provide an environment in which people feel equally valued. Our policies help to ensure that we promote the individuality of all, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

We aim to adapt activities to ensure that everyone can participate and, where possible, we will keep spare sets of waterproof clothing to ensure that bad weather is not a barrier to taking part.

### Behaviour Policy

Everyone involved with Cambusbarron Playgroup has a responsibility to protect their own and other group members' health, safety and well-being. They should inform staff if anybody's actions are likely to jeopardise the safety or comfort of others.

We aim to promote:

- Self-esteem
- Self-awareness of personal abilities and limitations
- Respect and care for oneself, other people and the natural environment Cooperation and non-violent communication

### Woodland Play Sessions Agreement and Ground Rules

Children and adults will be expected to maintain the standard of behaviour normally expected during a playgroup session. This includes respecting oneself, each other and the environment and listening carefully to instructions when they are given. Ground rules are non-negotiable rules which will be enforced. Children will be given regular reminders about the expected standard of behaviour.

### Physical Intervention

In accordance with the law, and our values, Cambusbarron Playgroup does not use, or threaten to use, corporal punishment and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that corporal punishment is not administered by any person who is in contact with them. However, where necessary, physical intervention may be used in order to avert immediate danger to any person (including the child).

### Adult Behaviour

We encourage all adults attending Woodland Play Sessions to

- Be a positive role model for participants, particularly with regards to respecting each person and the environment
- Encourage and reinforce caring and nurturing behaviour
- Be vigilant with regards to common sense safety
- Facilitate from an egalitarian and liberal approach, avoiding unnecessary rigidity or petty rules

- Avoid coercive or manipulative behaviour management, or that based on personal negative messages, as we feel these damage morale, motivation and self-esteem and are counter-productive to our ethos and objectives.

### **Encouraging Positive Behaviour**

We want to allow the greatest potential for each participant's Woodland Play Session experience to be transformational and therefore wish to welcome each participant from an open and unbiased viewpoint with regards to their behaviour and abilities. Whilst recognising that it is useful to have previous information about participants' needs, we believe that no child is inherently 'naughty' and hope that the greater freedoms offered by woodland play environment will allow for a more flexible interpretation of positive engagement.

We will work to develop a clear set of boundaries and guidelines. Each participant will have the opportunity to voice their own feelings. Talking about how they wish to be treated and listening to the feelings of others is important as it will allow the group to work together, understand one another and ultimately become more supportive and cooperative. It will also contribute to making the woodland site a safe and enjoyable space.

### **De-escalation**

If a situation arises in which participants are behaving in a way that threatens the safety of the group, staff will ensure that the following steps are taken:

1. Recount the facts of the incident as observed, in simple language and without judgement, and if possible mutually agree on these. Remind the participants involved of any guidelines they have not followed.
2. Listen to the involved party or parties, if necessary gently separate them from the group for this. Ask about how they feel about the incident, empathise with them to help them to express themselves and take responsibility for their feelings. Ask them to imagine how they think their behaviour has affected everyone else.
3. Talk with them to establish what their needs in the situation were and to understand how they were not being met. Discuss what their needs might be now and encourage them to consider the needs of everyone else present.
4. Help them to express any requests they might have clearly and in positive language. These can be requests of themselves, others, situations or of the environment.
5. Encourage discussion of new strategies, so that if a similar situation arises the participant(s) feel able to communicate their needs without resorting to negative behaviours.

### **Recording & Reporting**

In all cases staff will complete an incident report form, and where necessary inform parents/carers.

Where relevant, any significant issues or incidents will be discussed with parents or carers in a private conversation, when the participant is not present

### **Communication and Evaluation Strategy**

This communication strategy explains how participants, parents, those involved with delivering the Woodland Play programme and other stakeholders are kept informed with the delivery and outcomes.

#### **Children**

Children will be asked to evaluate the programme through verbal feedback, videos, writings and drawings. These will be opportunities for them to express how they feel the programme is going and to engage with the process of developing the future sessions.

#### **Parents/Carers**

Cambusbarron Playgroup will request that parents/carers read our Handbook before their child attends for their first sessions. Parents/carers of each child will be asked to complete a consent form.

Verbal feedback will be sought from parents on a regular and informal basis, and a more formal evaluation form will be requested at the end of the year.

Parents can address feedback to a committee or staff member

Parents will receive information about the outcomes of the sessions through Playgroup's website and Facebook page.

#### **Parent Helpers**

All adults must sign to a form to confirm that they have read and understood this handbook. Feedback at the end of each session will be welcomed from helpers.

#### **Interested Persons**

Following an evaluation of the sessions a case study or report may be produced and this will be shared with others who may have expressed interest.

Staff will request evaluation forms be completed at least annually and a reflective report will be compiled and presented at the group's AGM.

**Appendix 1 : Environmental Information**

**Environmental Impact**

We aim to engender a high level of respect for the natural world and encourage everyone involved in our group to be involved in decisions about their environment and safety.

We aim to ensure that, where possible, Playgroup purchases products that are considered to have a lower impact on the environment. By operating in a way that minimises waste, optimises recycling and promotes the reuse of materials, we hope to demonstrate and encourage a wider respect for the environment, as well as an understanding that all produce and waste is linked to the health of our planet as a whole.

On site activities such as fires will follow practices that minimise impact on wildlife through being mindful of what is burnt and how any residues are disposed of. Before leaving a site we will ensure that litter is collected and disposed of suitably.

**Minimising Impacts**

Activity	Impact	Mitigation
Collecting Wood	Dead wood is important to any woodland ecology as it has a multitude of uses, from homes for mini beasts to beds for fungi, so a lack of it is bad for any woodland habitat.	Limit the frequency of fires and evaluate the amount of dry, dead wood before having a fire. Collect only the minimum amount required for any given fire. Reserve specific areas for dead wood conservation.
Fires	Changes in soil chemistry can lead to increases in PH levels, carbon, phosphorous, etc. which can be harmful to some plants, whilst other essential nutrients may be depleted. Fire can travel underground to roots even after appearing to be extinguished. Designate fixed locations for fires on parts of the site that aren't particularly ecologically interesting or unique.	Designate fixed locations for fires on parts of the site that aren't particularly ecologically interesting or unique. If possible, dispose of ash into patches of nettles. Ensure that all fires are extinguished fully before leaving a site. Where needed, use a fire wok to contain fire.
Cooking	Food waste may attract animals to the site or increase numbers of certain species, potentially leading to adverse changes in biodiversity.	Inform participants of these impacts and provide a container (to be taken away) or an ecologically sound place for food disposal.
Tree Climbing, Shelter Building & Swings	Damage to trees.	Restrict these activities to suitable trees that will tolerate them.

Collecting Natural Materials	Damage to plants - some plants are far more sensitive to losing their leaves or flowers than others and different seasons affect this too.	Inform groups as to which types of plants are best to pick, if any. Ensure leaves or flowers are taken from fallen parts where possible. Limit the frequency of this type of activity. Leave plants unpicked whenever picking is not necessary.
Toilet Use	Wipes and nappies contain plastics Human waste entering waterways	All toilet waste sealed and bagged to be taken away at the end of each session

### **Sustainable procurement**

Cambusbarron Playgroup is part of the Eco-schools project and aims to encourage environmental sustainability. We believe that the choices we make as buyers and consumers is a large part of our footprint and therefore strive to take this into account in our purchases. We aim, where possible, to buy, use and promote items which are produced locally, are from sustainable or renewable sources and which have been produced ethically, with regards to environment, and workers' and animal welfare; and with minimum packaging.