



Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd

COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Policy

Policy Statement

Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of all participants, staff, volunteers and visitors by ensuring that hazardous substances are identified, assessed, stored, used and disposed of safely in accordance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 (as amended).

The aim of this policy is to minimise the risk of harm from hazardous substances while maintaining a safe and enjoyable outdoor learning environment.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Forest School Leaders.
- Assistant Leaders and Volunteers.
- Participants, including children and young people.
- Learners on any Forest School training course.
- Visitors attending Forest School sessions.

Hazardous Substances

Hazardous substances used or encountered at Forest School may include:

- Hand sanitiser.
- Cleaning products.
- Disinfectants.
- Washing-up liquid.
- Fuel for camp stoves on Food Hygiene courses.
- Fire-lighting products (***Vaseline is the only accelerant that may be demonstrated by trainers but NOT to be used by any learner unless in an absolute emergency***).
- Insect repellent.
- Sunscreen.
- Paints, glues and craft materials.

- First aid supplies, including antiseptic wipes.

It is noted that if there are no hazardous pictograms on the item used then there will be NO requirement under law to list the item in the COSHH register.

Natural substances that may present hazards include:

- Toxic plants and fungi.
- Tree sap.
- Stinging nettles.
- Brambles and thorns.
- Animal droppings.
- Dead animals.
- Contaminated water.

Natural substances are unavoidable within the Forest School area as they are working habitats. The Forest School leader on site is to ensure that a walk of the area is completed prior to any sessions taking place and any animal droppings on equipment is to be removed where possible to prevent the contact hazard to learners.

Dead animals are to be either disposed of or moved to a safe area on site out of normal footfall for learners. Decay will occur naturally and not be a hazard to learners. Subsequent learning may take place once a skeleton is laid bare – gloves must be used if handling at all times.

Stinging nettles should be brushed back in high footfall areas – the use of natural stinging remedies (using the stinging nettle sap or use of a plantain balsam) may be used as an educational opportunity for learning.

Responsibilities

Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd

Dealing with man made COSHH items, the site will have the following available as applicable to COSHH items used:

- A central COSHH register for items requiring it.
- Carry out COSHH risk assessments where required. (Substances already form part of the existing risk assessments of the sites).
- Obtain and retain current Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for hazardous products if applicable.
- Ensure hazardous substances are securely stored.
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Ensure staff understand safe handling procedures.

- Review this policy annually.

Staff and Volunteers

Staff and volunteers must:

- Follow COSHH assessments where required.
- Wear PPE where required.
- Report damaged containers or spillages immediately.
- Never transfer chemicals into unlabelled containers.
- Dispose of hazardous waste safely.

Storage

All hazardous substances will:

- Be kept in their original labelled containers.
- Be securely stored away from children. All sites have a food hygiene secure box for storage when items not in use.
- Be transported safely to the Forest School site.
- Be protected from extreme weather conditions.

Safe Use

Before using any hazardous substance:

- Read the manufacturer's instructions.
- Follow the COSHH assessment.
- Wear appropriate PPE where identified.
- Avoid unnecessary exposure.

Spillages

In the event of a spill:

- Keep participants away from the area.
- Wear appropriate PPE.
- Contain and clean the spill according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Dispose of contaminated materials safely.
- Report significant incidents and record them.

First Aid

If exposure occurs:

- Follow the first aid advice on the Safety Data Sheet.

- Seek medical attention where necessary.
- Record the incident in the accident book.
- Inform parents/carers if a participant has been affected.

Personal Protective Equipment

Where identified through risk assessment, the following PPE may be used:

- Disposable nitrile gloves.
- Waterproof gloves for cleaning activities.

Training

Forest School Leaders and relevant staff will receive:

- COSHH awareness training.
- Instruction in reading Safety Data Sheets.
- Training in safe storage and handling of hazardous substances.
- Emergency procedures for accidental exposure.

COSHH Register

A COSHH register will be maintained and reviewed regularly. It should include:

- Product name.
- Manufacturer.
- Intended use.
- Location stored.
- Hazard classification.
- Safety Data Sheet.
- Date of assessment.
- Review date.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- New hazardous substances are introduced.
- Legislation changes.
- An incident indicates that improvements are required.

Related Documents

- Health and Safety Policy.
- Risk Assessment Policy.

- Fire Safety Policy.
- First Aid Policy.
- Environmental Policy.

Legislation

This policy is based upon:

- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended).
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations.

Policy Owner: Dave Churchward – Director Little Acorns Forest Schools Ltd.

Review Frequency: Annually

Next Review Date: July 2027

Signed: Dave Churchward

Date: 30 July 2026