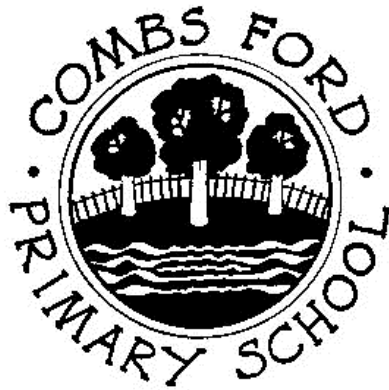


Combs Ford Primary School

Health and Safety Code of Practice

Fire



Successful Learners ~ Confident Individuals ~ Responsible Citizens

Declaration

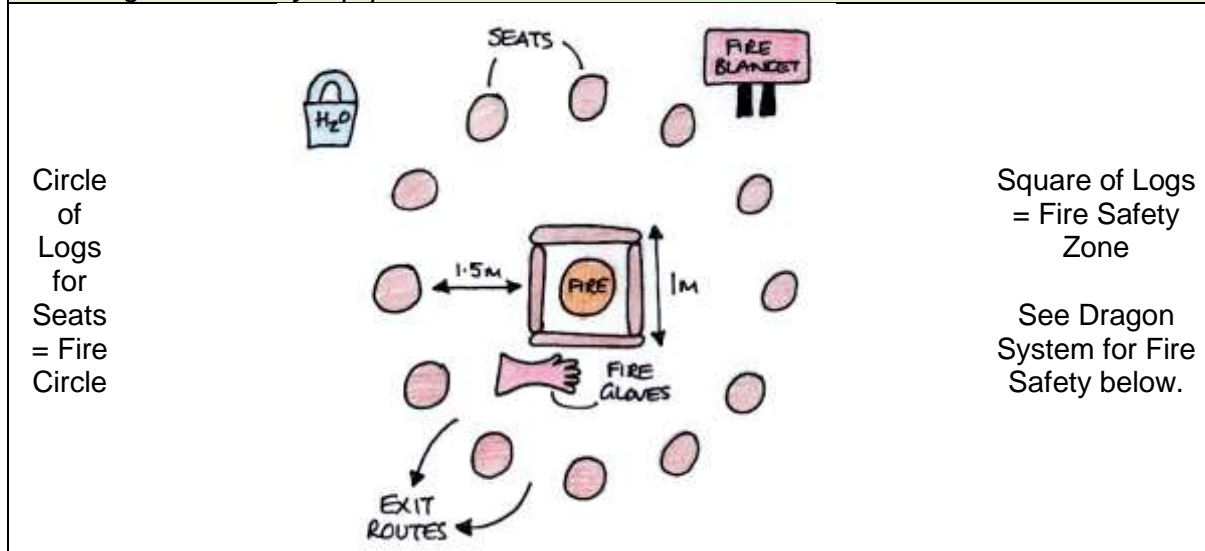
This Code of Practice is for all adults who support regularly Combs Ford Primary School Forest School sessions and must be read as part of their induction process. A copy is always available in the woodland for reference. This Code of Practice is based on documentation from Suffolk Wildlife Trust as recognised experts in Forest School training and delivery.

Updated On:	12 th October 2024
Updated By:	Kathryn Day (Headteacher and Forest School Leader)

Essential Requirements

- Adhere to the adult to child supervision ratios based on the age, ability and behaviour of the group.
- Qualified First Aider present (refer to the *Accident and Emergency Procedures (Including First Aid)* in the *Combs Ford Primary School Forest School Handbook* and the [First Aid Policy \(CET\)](#)).
- Hand-held radios for calling for support and the Emergency Service are always charged and in the woodland during Forest School sessions.
- *Risk-Benefit Assessments* for Fire are in place and adhered to.
- Guidance in the [Health and Safety Policy \(CET\)](#), [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy \(CET\)](#), and [First Aid Policy \(CET\)](#) must be followed.
- Staff and volunteers must have received relevant training and be suitably experienced in the activity.
- Where necessary, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be supplied and used.

A Forest School fire area showing the appropriate distances between seating and fire and the siting of fire safety equipment.



<p>Fire Triangle Fuel (sticks) – Oxygen (leaf) – Heat (dragon’s sneeze)</p> 	<p>Fire Safety Triangle Fire Gloves (fuel) – Fire Blanket (oxygen) – Water (heat)</p> 
--	---

Things to consider before creating a fire area – thinking about woodland and soil type, site conditions, different weathers, clothing, permissions, minimising ecological impact, and management of resources.

Woodland Type:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that the fire circle is away from tree trunks and low overhanging branches. • Beech trees are fairly fire resistant but it’s still best to light fires away from them. • Be very careful lighting fires in coniferous woodland because the sap makes them really flammable.
Soil Type:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peat → fire will travel underground.
Site Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canopy • Ground should be even. • Flint explodes when hot → don’t use it for fire places and clear from fire site.
Permissions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have permission from the land owner to make a fire?
Weather:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too dry? Look at ‘The Met Office’s Fire Severity Index (FSI)’ for guidance. • Too windy?
Clothing:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legs covered and closed-toe shoes. • Hair tied back. • No dangling scarves or toggles. • No loose clothing.

<p>Safety:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure children are safe, e.g. following adult instructions. • Make sure asthmatics are not near smoke. • Use the Dragon System for being in the Fire Circle. • Make sure there are clearly defined exit routes from the fire circle and that these are kept clear. • Be aware of wind direction and advise group to move if smoke/ash blowing directly at them. • Fires should be kept to a reasonable size for their purpose. • Never leave fires unattended. • Consider timing of fire within session, as fire pit needs time to cool before being removed. • Always put tinder on a non-flammable surface (scallop shell; fire bowl; colander). • Always strike downwards, away from your body and upwind of your tinder. • Always transfer lighted tinder to the fire using gloves and use a stick to push onto fire. • If younger children are creating a spark, they can shout 'Fire!' and adult will transport to the fire. • Dig a fire pit or use a fire bowl or BBQ to light the fire in. • Keep children at least 1.5m away from the fire, i.e. a safe minimum distance.
<p>Using a Tarpaulin Over a Fire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure good clearance between the tarpaulin and the fire. • Be aware of the need for the tarpaulin to be higher if windy. • Ensure guy lines and pegs are clearly marked with clearly visible means and pointed out away from the group. Pegs must be removed from the ground at the end of the session. • If the wind picks up or becomes gusty so lifts the tarpaulin and drops it to an unsafe level, then extinguish the fire and take down the tarpaulin.
<p>Minimising Ecological Impact:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose your fire location carefully to minimise damage to the woodland. • Use an area without low overhanging trees or bushes. • Clear ground hazards, for example leaf litter. • Leave as little trace as possible.
<p>Management of Resources:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't cut down trees to burn unless it's the right time of the year. • Create a covered wood pile to season wood. • Encourage children to collect twigs and sticks from the woodland floor – don't pick from trees or bushes.

Introducing fire safety with a group – go through all the steps of fire lighting, including what to do if the fire becomes too big or out of control, before fire-lighting begins.

1. Ask children why we might want to build a fire in the woods? Answer could be: warmth; cooking; light; drying clothes; discouraging insects; community – Forest School Principle #6; because they're awesome!
2. Ask children to collect wood and sticks from around the site and sort them into:
 - Spaghetti
 - Matchmaker
 - Chipolatas
 - Sausages
3. Ask, "What do we need to make fire?"
4. As they give answers, create the '**Fire Triangle**':
 - Fuel (sticks)
 - Oxygen (leaf)
 - Heat (Dragon's Sneeze)
5. Then ask, "How can we stop a fire from burning?"
6. As the children give answers, create the '**Fire Safety Triangle**':
 - Fire Gloves (fuel)
 - Fire Blanket (oxygen)
 - Water (heat)
7. Risk Assessment – introduce '**The 3 Umbrellas**' of what we need to look after:
 - **The Environment:** Is it too dry? Is it too windy? Is the ground even? What's the soil type (on peat, a fire will travel underground)? Is there are flint around (this will explode and shatter when heated)? Is the Fire Safety Zone swept clear of leaves and stick?
 - **Ourselves:** Is long hair tied back? Are scarves, toggles and loose clothing secured? Are there escape routes from the fire circle?
 - **Each Other:** Is everyone listening and following adult instruction? Is anyone asthmatic – make sure they're away from blowing smoke? Does everyone know where the water, fire blanket and fire gloves are? Does everyone know '**The Dragon System**' and understand that anyone can call them out?
8. Ask children where they think the best place to make a fire is. Remind them that we should only make a fire in the designated fire area because we've made sure that it's safe, i.e. it's away from tree trunks and low overhanging branches.
9. Ask the children where the '**Fire Safety Zone**' is. It's the **square of logs** that surround the fire. Ask the children if they think it's safe to cross the Fire Safety Zone. No! Not Ever!
10. Ask children where they think the '**Fire Circle**' is – it's the **circle of logs** that we are sitting on. Ask children if they think it's safe to cross the Fire Circle? Yes – but only if we follow 'The Dragon System' for fire safety.
11. '**The Dragon System**' for fire safety in the '**Fire Safety Zone**' and '**Fire Circle**'. Anyone can call them out – makes fire safety everyone's responsibility.
 - **Blue Dragon** – All OK!
 - **Amber Dragon** – OK if there's a reason to be in the 'Fire Circle', e.g. tending the fire.
 - **Red Dragon** – Unsafe! Get out of the Fire Circle!
12. Introduce '**The 5 Ps**':
 - **Permission** – Are we allowed to have a fire here?



Fire Triangle



Fire Safety Triangle



- **Preparation** – Have we got everything we need to make a fire and put a fire out close to hand (Fire Triangle and Fire Safety Triangle)?
- **Parallel** – Can you remember what parallel means? When we lay a fire, we start with a layer of logs parallel to each other.
- **Perpendicular** – Can you remember what perpendicular means? The next layer of sticks is laid perpendicular to the first layer.
- **Pyramid** – Can you remember what a pyramid is? We keep building the fire with smaller and smaller sticks to create a pyramid.

13. Show children how to create a spark to light the fire using a **Fire Steel**:

- Steels are used to create a spark.
- Kneel in the respect position – one knee on the ground and one foot on the ground.
- Take the fire steel and strike away from you, anyone else and upwind onto the tinder. You can check the wind direction by dropping a leaf and seeing which way it blows.
- Take the spark to the fire in a carrier (e.g., a scallop shell) and push it gently away from you onto the fire.
- You can gently blow onto the fire to help it light.

14. Ask children if they think it's safe to leave the fire alone and unattended?

- No – a fire should be looked after all the time.
- However, upside-down pyramid fires can be left without much attention.

Types of fire and methods of lighting including different types of tinder.

Types of Fire

Upside-Down Pyramid

- The fire burns downwards – as each layer burns, it sinks and falls and ignites the layer below.
- This means that the fire feeds itself.
- The advantages are that it burns for a long time and can be left without much attention.



Wigwam Fire

- Create a wigwam with sticks – smallest on the inside to largest on the outside – with a gap at the front.
- Place straw (or other kindling) in the gap to help light the fire.
- A wigwam fire is a much faster burning fire than a pyramid fire – it's good for quick heat (toasting marshmallows, boiling a kettle, cooking) but needs more maintenance. It can't be left unattended.



Types of Steel

- Have a Signing-out Chalk Board for fire steels.
- Have a mixture of steels.
- Use a red cord to tie them together so they're visible.
- Dragon Sneeze: what would it look like if a dragon sneezed?

Dragon's Sneeze ↓



Swedish Firestarter ↓



Fire Steel ↓



Types of Tinder

Charcloth

- Charcloth is a piece of fabric made from vegetable fibres (cotton, jute or linen) which can be lit by a single spark from fire steel.
- It creates a slow-burning fuel that will light tinder to start a fire.
- Put the charcloth on your fire carrier (e.g., Scallop Shell) and then use a fire steel to light it.
- Use a stick to transfer the burning charcloth onto the fire.

Dragon's Tissue and Snot

- Put your Dragon's Tissue (AKA Cotton Wool) on your fire carrier (e.g., Scallop Shell).
- Add your Dragon's Snot (AKA Petroleum Jelly) – use a stick, not your finger, to avoid a sticky mess.
- Dragon's Tissue will light quickly and burn out quickly – Dragon's Snot keeps it alight for longer.
- Use your Dragon's Snot stick to transfer it into the fire.

Types of Kindling

- Kindling is something to get the fire started and to keep the fire going.
- It can be anything that's light and fluffy.

Natural

- Birch bark
- Hazel peelings from whittling (dried first)
- Downy flower heads
- Reedmace
- Pampas grass tops
- Thistle heads

Synthetic

- Dragon's Tissue and Dragon's Snot. Always refer to it as Dragon Snot – you don't want groups making the association with something they may easily find in their home.

Types of Fire Carrier

- Scallop Shell
- Colander

When it might be appropriate to use fire at Forest School and when it isn't.

- If it's a really hot summer, take the fire pit out altogether.
- Only light a fire when you need one: warmth; cooking; light; drying clothes; discouraging insects; community – Forest School Principle #6; because they're awesome!

Things to consider when extinguishing the fire and leaving the site.

1. Douse the fire with enough water to make sure it's completely extinguished – the wood should be cool to the touch (including the Fire Safety Zone logs).
2. Throw the cold ash into the ditch or another designated place.
3. If the site isn't going to be used soon, clear away the charred wood and ash and cover with leaves.
4. You can douse the fire as the final act of the Forest School Day. Gather in the Fire Circle and share something that you've enjoyed today and something you'd like to do next time. Take a cup of water from the Fire Bucket and pour onto the embers.
5. If you haven't had a fire, you can still gather in the Fire Circle and throw leaves into the Fire Safety Zone as you share your thoughts for the day.