



## Fire Policy

At The Nurture Circle we love a good fire to build community, keep us warm, have a cook out and tell stories and sing songs around. It's a huge part of the forest school experience and offers children so many valuable skills and personal development opportunities. We considers fires and use of Kelly kettles as part of the forest school experience for children, parents & practitioners alike and all Nurture Circle staff understands their duty of care towards all client groups and the importance of vigilance to fire safety hazards.

All staff & client groups are made aware of our fire policy in the Nurture Circle introduction pack and are taught the fire safety procedures as set out in this policy in their practise. The Nurture Circle aims to ensure that all children and adults participating in Forest School sessions with fires and/or storm kettles will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

Prior to any client group signing up for Back to Nature session additional permissions will need to be signed as part of the terms and conditions of using our service and it will be the responsibility of the client to ensure the correct supervision of the children are met including ratios for safety around our fire area.

### **An introduction to Fire**

Whilst use of our fire pit is a huge part of our ethos safety always has to come first and this is why for the first six weeks we spend time teaching children and adults alike the safety elements of fire and offer them the chance to learn the knowledge and skills needed to build a safe and successful fire.

Any group attending Nature Club sessions will not be expected to have use of fires for the first six weeks of sessions or until the Group Leader from The Nurture Circle feels all clients within the group and confident and able to follow the safety rules in place.

During these six weeks we will be exploring different safety games about the use of the fire area, learning to use the respect position and exploring the elements of heat, fuel and oxygen that make up the fire triangle, depending on age appropriateness and level of understanding. It is important that both the children, parents and the supervising staff have a firm understanding of fire and it's management.

## Before Each 'Nature Club' Session

A member of the nurture circle team will conduct a thorough check of the fire area and ensure all elements of our risk assessment for use of fires are met. Any additional safety precautions will be considered.

A member of the nurture circle team will check for any tree damage in the surrounding area and check the wind levels to ensure lighting the fire is safe

If it is a rainy day a suitable high shelter may be erected over the fire area where possible and dry tinder and fuel for the fire provided to ensure it can be lit with minimum smoke output

Fire safety equipment will be placed by the fire square to ensure we can manage the fire effectively. This will include – 2 buckets of water with cups inside, one fire blanket, a burns first aid kit and two sets of child and adult sized fire safety gloves.

## Location of Fire

At The Nurture Circle each Nature Club Site will have it's own designated fire area and this will be the only area where campfires and use of the Kelly kettles will be allowed. This enables children and adults to clearly follow the safety rules determined and to minimise the risk of injury or damage to the woodland area.

The fire area within each site will be cleared of all debris and clearly defined by logs along the perimeter at least 2 metres from the fire pit to offer safe distance seating for all to enjoy the fire. The campfire will be enclosed by large branches making a fire square to create an additional safety boundary and prevent the spread of fire outside of the square. Depending on the site the fire will either be built on the ground directly within the fire square or contained within a fire pit (Please see individual site drawings for more detail).

Kelly kettle's or their bases for small contained fire will only be used on flat ground that has been cleared of debris and allocated by a Nurture Circle staff member.

## Use of the Fire Area

Each fire area is clearly defined by logs at least 2 metres from the fire square representing the fire boundary. The boundary will be in a horse shoe shape with a defined entrance and exit to the fire square.

Any adult or child is allowed to sit on the logs in the fire area by swinging their legs over to sit down but they must never enter the fire square without an invitation from the Fire Leader (TNC staff). To enter the fire square the child or adult must walk around the outside of the fire perimeter and enter through the designated entrance.

If there is a clear wind direction seating within the smoke area will be avoided. If the wind direction is variable wherever possible we may rearrange the seating.

## Preparing the Fire

At the Nurture Circle knowing how to manage a fire responsibly is a really important part of practise so we actively encourage children and adults to help prepare the fire and to collect fuel to leave in the designated area at the top of the fire circle. An understanding of types of tinder and fuel and basic fire preparation will be explored with the children during their first six weeks of sessions before the fire is lit.

For each session we ask every child and adult to collect a piece of fuel for the fire to start our session.

On cold days the main campfire will be prepared by the fire leader using a waffle grid at it's base before groups arrive to provide warmth for the group.

## Lighting the Fire

For the main campfire the Group Leader (TNC) or a designated member of the team will be responsible for lighting the fire. Once the fire is lit it will always be supervised by a Nurture Circle staff member. They will be the designated fire leader and can be identified by a yellow nurture circle band on their arm.

The fire will be lit using a fire steel and natural tinder and fuel. In really wet conditions we may use cotton wool and Vaseline to help light the fire. No other flammable liquids or man made products will be used to light, accelerate or fuel the fire.

For sessions where the children are supervised to use fire steels or light small fires they will be supervised closely by the fire leader for that session and clients will be expected to meet the ratios for fire safety specified in their terms and conditions.

## Around the Fire Square – Fuelling the Fire

Any child's readiness to enter the fire square will be determined only by the fire leader from the nurture circle. This is to ensure that the safety and welfare of the child is placed at the centre of the decision based on a qualified assessment.

Long sleeved tight fitting tops and trousers are required to be worn within the fire square to avoid exposing skin to the fire.

No more than four children (or two children with supporting adults) may be within the fire square at any time and this will be at the discretion of the fire leader depending on how much support the individual child needs. Whilst by the fire square both adult and child must kneel in the respect position.

Anything within the fire square is hot and can only be handled using a fire safety glove, with adult supervision.

If / When invited by the fire leader, a child may, with one to one supervision and using a fire glove on the hand holding the fuel for the fire, add a stick or wood placing it on from the side. They must never put their hand directly over the flames.

## Cooking on a Fire

One of the most exciting elements of fire can be cooking over it making simple snacks such as toasting marshmallows, popping popcorn or baking chocolate bananas. At the Nurture Circle we will offer these opportunities to children as part of their sessions.

Depending on the site any food will either be prepared in the on-site kitchen or prepared before the sessions, stored and transported safely to site ensuring we meet food hygiene standards. Any of our team taking responsibility for food preparation hold their food hygiene certificate and have training in food management for forest school.

To enable cooking over a fire we need to ensure we have long log fuel that burns slower and requires little fuel so we can concentrate on the task at hand. Suitable cooking equipment for campfire cooking will be provided to ensure the safety of anybody taking part.

If children are toasting marshmallows over the fire they will need to be kneeling in the respect position behind the square boundary holding the marshmallow out on a long green stick wearing a fire glove.

## Extinguishing the Fire

At The Nurture Circle we believe we have a responsibility to teach both children and adults about safe practises with regards to fire and keeping our woodlands safe. As such where the building and lighting of the fire may be the beginning of the cycle we sometimes share with our groups the end of the fire, the extinguishing, will be done at the end of every Nature Club session.

At the end of the session the fire will be doused with water, taking turns to pour a cup from our fire buckets onto the fire and offer something we've enjoyed this session. Once it is completely doused on all corners the fire leader will stir it with a big stick until all the steam and smoke has stopped.

Ideally any fire built will have been done so that any fuels added are just enough to burn to ash during the session. In the eventuality there are any large remains of wood, they will be separated and dried ready for future use.

Depending on the site – if the fire pit is a temporary one then the fire leader will return and scatter the ash and fire remains back into the woodland once cool. If it is a permanent fire site once there is a build up of potash the same will be done. This is in order to return what we have borrowed from the woodland back so it can naturally decompose and add to the cycle of the woodland.

## Use of Kelly Kettles

Kelly kettles are an excellent tool for providing hot drinks on colder days on site, particularly on those that don't have working kitchens, and offer a fun and exciting way for children to be involved in the process.

Kelly Kettles should only be used in a designated area within a fire square to ensure children and adults have an awareness that they are hot once lit.

It should be placed on flat, clear ground and a waffle base fire built into the bottom of the fire base. Children can help to build the fire into the fire base but once it is placed inside the fire square it is only the fire leader or supervising adult who can light the Kelly kettle.

Once the Kelly kettle is filled and placed on top of the fire base the stopper should be removed and placed outside of the fire square. It is not safe to boil the kettle with the stopper still in.

The fire leader will then light the fire pan using a fire steel and supervise its ignition making sure it is adequately fuelled and the blue flame can be seen burning from the middle.

Children can feed the Kelly kettle once it's going if supervised one -to-one. They must wear a fire glove on the feeder hand, kneel in the respect position and hold the stick from the end dropping the stick in without placing their gloved hand directly over the hole, keeping it to the side. This can only be done on the invitation of the fire leader.

The Kelly kettle will be removed from the fire pan once boiled and sat down within the fire square as it is still hot. They will be responsible for the safe use of the water and must not leave the Kelly kettle until the water has cooled or been distributed.

Once the Kelly kettle has boiled, if the fuel hasn't burnt itself out, it must be extinguished using water and returned to the woodland once cool (follow extinguishing fire protocol).

### Emergency Procedure in the event of out of control fire:

Ensure all children, parents and staff are alerted by blowing the fire whistle

All equipment and belongings to be left and Staff to remain calm and collected and follow evacuation procedures in a supportive and quick manner.

Staff members are to guide parents & children to a designated fire assembly point away from the fire area ( back at each site meeting point/ car park)

Forest School Leader to call fire brigade and inform them of fire location as soon as fire becomes out of control.

Staff member to undergo a register and ensure all staff, children and parents are accounted for. First aider on site to ensure any injuries can be treated.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the company	Date for review
07/06/2021	<i>Geri Weeks</i>	07/06/2022

