



## Use of Tools Policy

At the Nurture Circle we believe that the use of hand tools is an important element of forest school experiences allowing children to develop new skills, manage their own risks and care for, manage and create in their woodland environment. We see the benefits that use of tools can offer to the child's holistic development and foster each child's development within safe boundaries so they can find autonomy within their natural environment.

In order to do this successfully we recognise the importance of ensuring safety is at the heart of all we do. Therefore the below steps are in place;

### Storage of Tools

- When tools are not in use they will be stored in lockable tool chests in the back of the Nurture Circle van or off site in a storage space of the registered address for the business.
- When tools are in use they will be transported in the van to site and then the locked tool boxes will be kept in a designated tool area.

### Safety Checks & Risk Assessment

- Prior to the use of tools each tool introduced will have a full risk assessment completed with due consideration to the use of the tool and the group of children/adults using it.
- An inventory of tools will be checked at the beginning and end of every session to ensure all tools are present and safe to use and that no tools are left on any of the Nature Club sites.
- The tool box will have a designated tool area within the fire square so it is supervised at all times. No access will be given to children in the toddler & preschool or older groups where tools will be managed by the forest school leader.

### Introduction to tools

- The use of tools is never introduced until the forest school leader has had an initial 6 weeks of sessions with the children or until they feel confident that all children within the group are ready and able to follow the safety rules for use of tools.
- Tools should only be introduced to the children by the trained Forest School Leader. This should always be done by using the recommended tool talks and demonstration by the Leader; they should only be used when the Forest School Leader feels that the children understand how to use them safely.

## Example of a Tool Talk

### Bow Saw Tool Talk



This is a bow saw.

When I want to use my bow saw I remove the safety cover like this

This is the handle, this is the blade and this is the cutting edge

when I am not using my bow saw I put the safety cover back on like this.

I hold my bow saw like this (from the top/handle with one hand with blade pointing downwards to avoid injury or dragging on the ground)

I walk with my bow saw like this and I pass my bow saw like this

when I am using my bow saw I use it two arms width and a tool length away from anybody except my partner and I wear a safety glove on my helper hand like this.

When I am not using the bow saw I place it on the ground like this with the handle to the outside and the blade facing inwards

When I have finished using the bow saw I return it to the tool box or designated tool area.

### Use of A Bow Saw



We use the Bow saw cut wood bigger than the size of a two pence piece - if it has a raked or ripper blade then we can use it for green wood and dead wood. When we use the bow saw we use it in a group of four;

1) holds the handle of the saw and is in charge of the process

2) holds the other side of the bow saw handle and works in partnership with person 1 following their instruction

3) holds the wood steady with their foot so it is easier to cut

4) is the health & safety officer and stands at a safe distance and keeps the area clear of others

Each person in the group will get a turn at each position before the group is finished.

When we saw the wood both the person in charge and the support wear safety gloves on their helper hands.

They position the wood across a support piece at a 90 degree angle. Person three holds it in place with their foot.

Both the person in charge and the support kneel in the respect position at opposite sides and across from each other

The person in charge places the bow saw lightly onto the wood at the cutting point making sure they have a clear line to move the saw without any obstructions (supporting log/ limbs)

Both the person in charge and the support place their gloved helping hands through the arch of the bow saw so they are holding the line steady for the blade to make a clean cut

The person in charge makes sure the support is ready and then they begin to move the saw backwards and forwards saying "to me" when they are pulling in their direction. Do not push the bow saw towards your partner- always let them pull it.

Once the blade is making a cutting line into the wood and is embedded they remove their gloved hands, check that they are ready and then continue to saw until the wood is sawn through.

Once finished they would wipe the blade of the saw with a glove from above and then replace the safety cover and return the bow saw to the designated tool area

## Use of Tools

- The tools should always be used in the designated tool area in the Forest School. The Forest School Leader should make sure that this area is always kept clear of dangers and trip hazards and that the group understand the need to walk sensibly around this area.
- Children and adults can only use tools if they are appropriately dressed in long trousers and if they are wearing a safety glove on their non-tool hand.
- Tool safety talks will always be conducted prior to the use of tools
- Tool use will be done on a ratio of 1 adult: 4 children and tool introduction will be delivered with a graduated approach starting with smaller and simpler tools such as potato peelers for whittling and secateurs for cutting, hammers and mallets for simple tool work etc. before other tools such as the bow saw, knife & bill hook are introduced.
- First Aider & First aid kit always on site at time of using tools.

Please see the below overview for tool use with specified ratios and considerations for each tool;

### Potato Peeler

The potato peeler should be initially introduced to younger children in a 1:1 situation but as they become more able can be done in a group of up to 4 children. For older children (6+) these can be done in a group of up to 6.

### Hammer/Mallet

The mallet can be used in a group of up to four children (1:4 ratio max.) with higher levels of supervision on 1:2 with children under the age of 3 years if using nails.

### Hand Drill/ Scotch Augur

The hand drill or scotch augur can be used with a group of up to four children with two children per drill, initially when introducing the hand drill or scotch augur the child should partner with the supervising adult but as they get more competent can use it with another peer under supervision.

### Secateurs/ Loppers

The loppers shall be used in pairs with one child and the Forest School Leader helping them position them and squeeze them together, as needed, and the other child holding the wood steady wearing tool safety gloves on both hands. 1:4 ratio max with two children per tool or one child with adult as support for younger children under 5 years.

### Bow Saw

The bow saw may be introduced on a 1:3 ratio max with one bowsaw - three children and supervising adult as part of group. For children under 5 years they must always be partnered with the supervising adult when using the saw

## Bill Hook

The bill hook may be used with a 1:4 ratio with supervising adult always responsible for holding the billhook/ one child using mallet & other two supporting/ H&S inspectors

## Kinfe

The knife will only be used with children in our 5 years plus clubs and on a 1:1 ratio with supervising adult in close range for their initial introductions, only ever increasing to a 1:2 ratio when they are more competent. All knives must be counted in and out by the supervisor as each child finishes.

## Maintenance of Tools

- The Forest School Leader is responsible for cleaning and maintaining the tools after each use. Any defective tools are to be removed immediately and replaced before they are used again.

## Emergency Plan for severe injury caused by use of tools;

Please follow our emergency plan in our accidents policy under the heading '@in the event of a serious injury/accident'

In addition to this please also stop all tool work and return them to the tool safety area immediately to prevent further possible harm or accident

Full accident and review to be conducted after the event into how the accident happened and report written – any recommendations or reviews for policy and procedure made.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and is used in conjunction with a tool risk assessment that takes into consideration the client group using the tools to make sure safety is always at the centre of our practise. If you wish to see a full copy of our policy or risk assessment then please email the office for an electronic copy or go to our website [www.thenurturecircle.co.uk](http://www.thenurturecircle.co.uk)

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