

Learning in the Leaves

Policy : Tool Use Policy



Aim:

As a forest school practitioner you have a priority to ensure the safety of your clients and also the conservation of your forest area. This policy aims to provide clear guidelines for the use of tools within the forest school environment. This policy should be used in conjunction with the individual tool cards.

Tools and their storages:

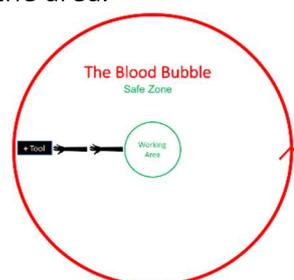
As a practitioner you should:

- Ensure tools are stored in a dry, secure location when not on site.
- Tools should be checked regularly and well maintained.
- Faulty and damaged tools should be removed from circulation. They should be either be fully repaired or safely disposed of.
- When on site tools should be stored in a dry lockable box to ensure the safety of your clients.

Before using Tools in the Woodland:

Ensure these elements are completed before the use of tools is taught:

- Designate an area in the woodland where tools will be stored when not in use. Ideal practice would be to create a tarp shelter to keep tools dry and make the storage area very clear.
- Designate and create a safe environment for the use of tools. This may require the movement of ground layer materials to provide a safe, trip free environment.
- When considering the safe area for use of tools refer to the blood bubble. The safe working space around an individual or pair of individuals is referred to as the 'Blood Bubble'. The name is designed to show that this is the safe distance bystanders should stay out of to avoid being hurt, when a tool is in use. The 'Blood Bubble' is given a consistent size (two arms and a tools length) so pupils easily remember. With younger children it may be necessary to mark out the 'Blood Bubble', as they may not be able to visualise the size of the area.



Working with Tools with Clients:

When teaching clients:

- Clients should be briefed about the importance of using tools safely and ensuring we are respectful of the woodland environment when using them.
- Before starting to use tools clients should learn the Tool Talks for any tool being used. The clients should be able to give their own tool talks fluently, so they thoroughly understand their safe use.
- As a practitioner you have to assess the client groups abilities and behaviours to decide whether independent use of tools can be allowed. Before allowing clients to use tools independently, the correct use should be modelled repeatedly, then the use should be closely supervised until you are comfortable with independent use.
- Smaller group sizes should be considered when working with tools. An appropriate level of practitioner supervision is required, especially when working with children.
- As a practitioner if you feel clients are causing a risk to themselves or others during the activity (through use of tools or their behaviour), you have to be prepared to stop the activity and reteach or discontinue the activity.
- Ensure tools are locked away at the end of the activity. Tools should be cleaned, safety checked and stored correctly for when they are used next.