



ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Last reviewed:	December 2025
Next review due:	January 2026

Statement of intent

The Little Firefly Forest School supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals and is taking steps towards achieving these goals. Sustainable Development Goals | United Nations Development Programme (undp.org)

We have regular tree surveys and where necessary, work is carried out to manage the health of our woodland at our Upton forest school site.

The main purpose of our environmental and sustainability policy is to set out how we will interact with, maintain and help to restore a healthy and bio-diverse environment both locally and globally. Within our natural forest school setting we aim to:

- Model best practice
- Provide children with environmental and sustainable resources
- Encourage and promote problem solving, creative thinking and idea sharing about sustainable solutions.
- Provide first hand, play based learning experiences.

Aims and objectives

It is important for the The Little Firefly community to have an awareness and understanding of the effects of their actions upon the environment in which we play each day. In order to do this, we need to take responsibility for our own actions and we need to have a sense of duty and care for the world in which we live. We encourage both our educators and our children to continually think about their environment and how their actions and play may impact upon it. To this end we encourage and reinforce environmental education in all aspects of everyday life in the forest. The ways in which we will strive towards this goal is to reduce the amount of materials we use and waste we produce, recycle and re-use materials wherever possible, restore what is deemed to have been destroyed and respect our neighbours and our environment.

Re-use, recycle and restore: When using appropriate materials in the forest, we aim to re-use, recycle and restore wherever we can. Within our working day ,staff are given time to tidy and

safely store resources to help maintain their condition. Where possible we repair broken/damaged resources. Children are encouraged to treat all of our equipment with respect. We accept donated materials to limit our need to buy from new.

Resources

Energy

- Neither of our settings have access to electricity. We rely on battery and solar operated lamps and torches predominantly through the months of November - February. We aim to turn off any lights when they are not needed to preserve power. Existing stock and resources will be used but when they no longer work will be replaced by solar powered lights and if necessary, rechargeable batteries.
- During colder months, when indoors (tipi, log cabin) we will keep external exits shut to reduce heat loss.

Water

- Neither of our settings have immediate access to water. Water is sourced from outdoor taps located on the farms. We will model responsible water consumption, avoiding unnecessary waste, so children can begin to appreciate this natural resource. We will transport water in re-usable containers and, where possible, repair them when they leak.

Paper

- We use a limited amount of paper in the forest but when we do use it, we encourage the children to use both sides of the paper. We recycle all paper materials wherever we can.
- We will choose natural and re-usable materials above paper when appropriate.

Plastic reduction plan

We recognise that plastics, particularly micro-plastics are harmful and detrimental to the natural environment and biodiversity. Our aim is to reduce our use of plastics and switch to biodegradable or re-usable materials.

Resource	Plan	Timescale
Plastic shopping bags	Food shopping to be transported in re-usable shopping bags. Check staff have a supply of re-usable bags.	October 2023
Baby wipes For wiping children's faces clean	Use plastic free, biodegradable wet wipes and dispose of in the compost bin	October 2023
Baby wipes for nappy changing	Use plastic free, biodegradable wet wipes and dispose of in the compost bin	November 2023
Bin bags including: landfill, recycling, food waste, small	Buy recycled plastic bin bags	Once existing stock is depleted to start purchasing

bins in toilets and nappy bins.	Be economical with bag use to reduce use Depending on local authority collection service, use compostable bags for food waste and/or take to allotment or use in vegetable garden.	recycled plastic bin bags and agree to reduce use of bags November 2023
Small plastic craft materials e.g. Glitter and sequins We are aware of the harmful effects to wild animals caused by these items.	Avoid all use in forest school	Any small plastic craft items (glitter and sequins) can be used carefully and sparingly but will not be replenished once used Biodegradable glitter can be used
Non-recyclable single use plastic packaging Recyclable single use , recyclable plastic will be reused or recycled	Buy loose fruit and veg. Check staff have reusable fruit and veg bags. Research most environmental supermarkets and where possible e.g. online ordering possible, switch to more environmental supermarkets e.g. Lidl Take recyclable plastic bags to local collection points (Co-op in Haddenham and Chinnor)	Team leaders to agree timescale
Washing up cloths and brushes	We use washable cloths for cleaning and drying dishes	Ongoing
Use of plastic ropes	Have a range of ropes e.g. natural and synthetic that include those less harmful to the environment e.g. don't shed plastic fibres. Ensure ropes hung on trees are removed and stored at the end of each day.	Purchase some natural ropes to add to stock. Remove ropes at the end of each day.

Transport

In order to reduce our forest school community carbon footprint we will continue to encourage:

- Families to walk or cycle to forest school, to lift share, or use an environmental forms of transport wherever possible
- Staff and volunteers to share transport, cycle, walk or use public transport to work whenever realistic and possible.

Maintain and protecting our natural habitats and biodiversity

Wildlife & Environment:

Children are encouraged to be gentle and kind with the natural environment. This includes:

- Avoid handling living things that can be damaged by human touch e.g. insects
- Return things to their natural habitat
- Encourage children to adopt a 'leave no trace' ethos
- Avoid walking on ground where wildlife is vulnerable to trampling
- Avoid damaging plants and trees
- Minimise campfire impact - campfire contained in fire bowl
- Learn about wild animals through quiet observation and from a distance so they are not scared or forced to flee
- Removing all ropes from trees at the end of each day. We encourage children to learn how to use ropes safely, develop key skills and prevent damage to trees.
- To avoid damaging trees e.g. use of nails, screws and leaving ropes attached.

At times, areas that have been damaged by footfall are closed off for a period of time to allow the habitat to recover.

Invasive species

We are aware of the environmental impact when invasive species are inadvertently introduced to different natural environments. e.g. processionary moths, rhododendron.

To reduce the spread of invasive species, visitors are made aware of the benefits of cleaning footwear especially when moving between different natural environments.

Food

Buying local and pro-environmental behaviours within the community

- At our Kingston Blount site, we aim to support 'The Lock Down Larder' a pop up farm shop that sells locally sourced and environmental products.
- We rent an allotment at Kingston Blount and have developed a forest vegetable garden at Upton where the children gain hands-on experience of growing and eating food together.
- All food that we serve is vegetarian and, where possible, vegan.
- Where possible we will buy fairtrade products.

Fire

We support the Clean Air Strategy and aim to limit particulate pollution from fires. In conjunction with our Fire Risk Benefit Assessment, we will only use fire when the benefit outweighs the environmental risk e.g. for warmth and providing educational/ learning experiences. All the wood we burn is untreated, seasoned and locally sourced. We use environmental fire lighters.

Litter and minimising waste

Litter picking of the area takes place every day to reduce any waste.

- Children eating packed lunches take their litter home with them. Parents are informed of our environmental and sustainability policy and we encourage them to reduce the use of single plastics in their children's lunch boxes.

Crop spraying

We ask our land owners to share information on crop spraying and we aim to move our children off-site/to a safe distance on these days.

Clothing

To reduce consumption, we encourage parents and staff to purchase or exchange second hand clothing.

Policies, procedures and risk assessments referred to in this document:

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External references:

- [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development](#)