

Aldersbrook Primary School – Fire Safety Policy

Camp fires and the use of Kelly kettles are seen to be an important part of our forest school and may be used in many sessions. Aldersbrook Primary School aims to ensure that all children and adults participating in a forest schools session with fires and/or Kelly kettles will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

Location

- Only agreed areas will be used for any form of camp fires.
- Campfire areas are enclosed by logs or large stones to prevent the spread of fire.
- The use of the schools free standing fire pit will also reduce the spread of fire.
- Most fires will be set up in the forest schools area within the school playground however, from time to time this will be transferred to Wanstead Park. Should any fires be lit within the park, The Corporation of London MUST be notified.
- Kelly kettles will only be used on a flat area within the playground/forest. All leaf litter/wood chip must be brushed away before use.

Positioning of children and adults

- Fire areas are surrounded by seating logs at least 2 meters from the fire pit.
- When the campfire is in use, children are NOT permitted to access the area without permission.
- When the children are allowed to access the campfire, children must walk around the outside of the seating logs and wait for permission to step over. Once permission has been given to step over the logs, children must sit, ensuring that legs are drawn into the log and not outstretched.
- Once the children are seated around the camp fire, they must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.
- Children will be taught how to change seats by standing, stepping over the log (outside of the fire pit ring) and then walking around the outside of the seating area. They must never cross the inner area.
- Long sleeves and trousers MUST always be worn.
- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire.
- Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the children: They are advised to turn their head to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes and count to 30 (or ask an adult to count for them).
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.
- If wind direction is variable, the leader should rearrange the seating if at all possible.

Type of Fire

Training is provided for leaders regarding the best fire lay to use for a specific session.

- **Criss-cross** fires are used to provide a large amount of heat and light and are fast burning.
- **Long log** fires are good for cooking as they are slow burning and require little fuel.

Safety and Responsibility

- Only adults are permitted to light fires. This will usually be the forest school leader.
- Fires are lit using fire lighting blocks, cotton wool, flint and steel or matches.
- NO flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- No plastics are to be burnt on the fire.
- If any session involves the children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision.
- All sticks and wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over or across the fire.

Extinguishing

- All fires must be completely extinguished at the end of the session.
- Water should always be on hand during the campfire session.
- Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
- The forest school leader should always ensure that any large remains of wood, especially when using a long log fire, are separated from one another.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.
- Large build ups of potash, from the fire needs to be dispersed. This should be finely scattered throughout the woodland to enable natural decomposition.

Kelly Kettle

- Adults and children will light the fire in the small pans (see safety and Responsibility section)
- The Kelly kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground/table.
- Children can only feed the fire with one to one supervision but they must have been shown how to do so safely. (Hold the stick at one end and drop the twig/stick into chimney from the side; hands should never be placed over the top of the kettle).
- Fuel should burn itself out, but if it doesn't it must be extinguished with water (see above).

Policy agreed September 2021

Policy to be reviewed September 2022