



Circle of Life Rediscovery Handbook 2026



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Section 1

Ethos and History

In the U.K we have a long tradition of taking children and young people into natural places, led by people who placed a strong emphasis on the natural world as a natural place for learning and well-being.

The Forest School Ethos resonates with important themes in the history of Western European educational theory since the 18th century: Rousseau, Froebel, Montessori and McMillan have all advocated the benefits of learning in the natural environment and insisted that children need to play, to experience space and movement and sensory stimulation for healthy development. It also draws on ways of thinking that have been preserved within indigenous worldview, that support a stewardship of the land and understanding that healthy culture is intimately linked the health of a person and the land.

The Forest School experience promotes sensory child-led outdoor play, encouraging stimulation, curiosity and absorption. Central to Forest School, is a long tradition of craftwork. Children learn to use real small hand tools, exploring the use of natural materials with the benefit of generations of traditional craft skills handed down to support them. They learn to assess risk, take on challenges and accept responsibility.

Forest School originated in Scandinavia where children are not formally educated until they are seven. Until then they learn through play. Unlike many parts of the U.K the forests are accessible and nature is part of everyday experience. Pedagogy in Scandinavia regards formal education as only part of the experience of a developing child in the context of his/her ecosystem. They regard the environment as a teacher, and play as the child's natural medium for expression. Their attitude towards risk is positive. Forest School in the UK has adopted many of these attitudes, encouraging risky play and self-directed learning.

Forest School has been developing throughout the UK since 1993, based on a Danish model adapted by Bridgewater College.

Circle of Life Rediscovery Principles

“The circle is the universal symbol of wholeness, where the end is also the beginning and represents the unity of all life. Life is a circle that moves from birth to old age to death and new life. The circle is the most common shape in nature. When people sit in a circle, everyone is equal.”

- We aim to teach participants to care for themselves, care for others and care about their environment.
- Our teaching relates directly to the land we find ourselves on – thus deepening participants' relationship with nature.
- We welcome people's different traditions, religions and spirituality and encourage the expression and sharing of these different beliefs.
- We offer outdoor programmes and training that integrate the head, heart and the hands.
- We offer practical skills for living on the land as an enjoyable way of building a greater understanding of and therefore a better relationship with the earth. We foster good feelings for the natural world, developing deep personal relationships with the earth, and its natural systems and communities
- We draw on teachings from psychology, environmental education, education for sustainable development, earth education, earth-based traditions, schools of thought that acknowledge the environment as a living, complex being and not as a resource to be exploited.

- We draw particularly on indigenous perspectives to support our activities and programmes.
- We explore ways in which different traditions and belief systems can sit side by side. We acknowledge both the spiritual and secular traditions and build bridges between traditional and modern ideas and customs.
- We encourage an awareness of how we include and exclude people and how our decisions impact on others. We value diversity, thus while validating our personal experience, we honour another's worldview.
- We believe that the experience of nature is as important as learning how to read and write
- We aim to work with young people where they are NOW and where they want to be in the FUTURE. We want to enable them to develop an optimistic vision for their future and give them the skills to get there.
- We try to buy ethical and fair trade products and recycle and reuse where possible. We plant trees on our camp programmes to replenish the wood that we use. All paper used in our administration is recycled.
- We want all people to have a direct and enjoyable experience of the natural world. We want to enable people to remember that we are a part of the natural world and that our wellbeing depends on the wellbeing of the land which provides us with our daily bread, our oil, our all.
- We work with organisations, schools and people from all walks of life to contribute positively to a sustainable future.

Communication

Please see **Appendices 1-3** for Communication leaflets with Schools, Parents and Volunteers.

Section Two

1. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Child abuse is never acceptable and a commitment to children's rights in general also means a commitment to safeguard the children and young people up to 25, and vulnerable adults with whom Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC is in contact.

The aims of this group set out in our Memorandum & Articles of Associations is:

- To offer self-discovery, experiential activities for young people.
- To provide safe and challenging field-based activities leading to meaningful and enhanced encounters with other participants and the natural world.
- To provide day training, workshops or tailored programmes in schools or local community events, including Forest School Programmes.
- To support young people to rediscover inner and outer skills that encourage self-esteem and promote diversity without distinction to race, self-image and expression, cultural background, colour, creed, sex, sexual orientation, class, religion, age, political belief or disability.

The groups will be taking young people away from home so rigorous child protection and procedures are in place. These include a behavioural policy, written consent from parents and a thorough registration form asking parents or carers concerning specific requirements or needs and relevant history of the young people.

A thorough risk benefit assessment of the site is carried out before activities, though the location is known to be suitable for these purposes. Add dynamic risk assessment procedures during sessions and supervision ratios specific to outdoor and nature-based settings, including safe toileting and changing protocols.

All staff will receive Associate Agreements and access to risk benefit assessments, policy and procedures to ensure clarity of duties and responsibilities. Staff will be required to sign that they fully understand these policies and procedures and agree to follow them at all times.

Staff and volunteers must also complete safer recruitment checks (identity verification, references, DBS) and disclose any change of circumstances that may affect their suitability.]

What we will do:

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC will meet its commitment to safeguard all children [UPDATE → and vulnerable adults] through the following means:

- Awareness: Ensuring that all staff, volunteers, members and officers are aware of the problem of child abuse and safeguarding risks including neglect, exploitation, radicalisation, online abuse, and peer-on-peer harm.
- Prevention: Ensuring, through awareness and good practice, that staff and others minimise the risks to children.
- Reporting: Ensuring that staff and others are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding safety of children.

- Responding: Ensuring that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

To meet these standards we will:

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are subject to satisfactory enhanced checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). DBS re-checks may be requested periodically or if circumstances change.
- Staff and volunteers will be subject to careful selection and vetting process that includes identity checks and references.
- Take seriously any concerns raised.
- Take positive steps to ensure protection of children who are the subject of such concerns.
- Support children, staff and other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns.
- Act appropriately and effectively in instigating or cooperating with any subsequent process or investigation.
- Follow Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) procedures for allegations against staff or volunteers.
- Guide through the child protection process by the principle of “best interests of the child”.
- Listen to and take seriously the wishes of and views of children.
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children.
- Uphold safeguarding as everybody’s responsibility, with at least one Director/Trustee holding oversight of safeguarding practice.
- All young people will be informed of our policies and procedures at the beginning of each event, and who the nominated child protection representative is.
- All activities are planned beforehand to ensure appropriateness, meeting of health and safety standards, and staff awareness of necessary precautions.
- All staff and volunteers sign an agreement that among other responsibilities ensures that they read, understand and follow the Policies and Procedures, including Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities, Code of Conduct, Child Protection and Confidentiality (see policies included in this document). All staff & volunteers will meet before each event and be made aware of Circle of Life Rediscovery’s policies and procedures.
- Require staff and volunteers to inform the Director about any ongoing or past investigation into them or someone they have a significant relationship with (including family, partners, members of the same household) which relates to any child or adult safeguarding allegation, concern or disclosure.
- Highlight accountability - never assume someone else has responded to a concern.

- Sign post to annual safeguarding training refreshers for all staff/volunteers
 - Policies and procedures will be reviewed on a two yearly basis or sooner if legislation or best practice guidance changes.
-

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies & Procedures

Recognising Harm

We recognise and respond to all forms of harm, including:

- Abuse – Physical, emotional, sexual and domestic abuse, including non-recent abuse, online abuse, child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment between peers, and harmful sexualised behaviour.
- Bullying – Deliberate behaviour that causes physical or emotional harm to another person.
- Child criminal exploitation – Manipulating or coercing children and young people into committing crimes.
- Child sexual exploitation – When a child or young person is given things (e.g. gifts, drugs, money, status or affection) in exchange for sexual activities.
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) – When a female’s genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. Staff who are regulated professionals have a mandatory duty to report known cases of FGM to the police under the Serious Crime Act 2015.
- Grooming and harmful sexual behaviour – Building trust with a child or young person in order to manipulate, exploit, and abuse them.
- Harassment – Unwanted behaviour that intimidates, humiliates, or degrades a person.
- Neglect – Ongoing failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult’s basic needs.
- Radicalisation – Persuading or coercing a vulnerable person to support extremist views or actions.
- Trafficking – Tricking, forcing or persuading children or young people to leave their homes, after which they are exploited or sold.
- Domestic abuse – Recognising that children are victims in their own right if they see, hear, or experience the effects of domestic abuse, in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Mental health and trauma-related safeguarding concerns – Recognising the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the need for trauma-informed responses.
- Online safety harms – Including exposure to harmful content, coercion, image-based abuse, and unsafe use of images or digital platforms.

Reporting Concerns

If you are concerned about the safety of a child or vulnerable adult because:

- You see or suspect abuse
- An allegation of abuse is made
- A child or adult at risk discloses abuse

You must:

1. Report your concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
2. If the DSL is unavailable, report to the Deputy DSL.
3. If the concern involves the DSL/Deputy DSL, report directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (for concerns about staff/volunteers) or to Children's Social Care.
4. If someone is in immediate danger, call 999 without delay.

If Someone Discloses to You

- Listen carefully and reassure them they have done the right thing.
- Stay calm and avoid showing shock or disbelief.
- Explain that you cannot keep it a secret – you may need to share it to keep them safe.
- Do not investigate, but ask open questions for clarity if needed.
- Record what was said as soon as possible, using their exact words. Sign, date, and store securely.
- Complete a safeguarding report form and pass it to the DSL/Deputy DSL immediately.

Recording and Next Steps

- All concerns must be reported within 24 hours (or sooner if urgent).

- Records will be kept securely in line with GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018, accessible only to the DSL and authorised safeguarding staff.
 - The DSL/Deputy DSL will decide on next steps, which may include:
 - Contacting Children’s Social Care / Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
 - Contacting the LADO if the allegation concerns staff/volunteers
 - Seeking advice from the NSPCC Helpline (0808 800 5000)
 - Informing the police if a crime has been committed or there is immediate danger
-

Urgent Action

Where serious concerns exist and there is immediate risk to the child or adult at risk:

1. Act without delay. Call 999.
2. Inaction may place the individual at further risk.

Nominated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC- Director Marina Robb

Email: info@circleofliferediscovery.com

Tel: 01273-814226

Mobile: 07966 514469

Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL):

Alana Avery: Operations & Development Manager

Mobile: 07542915809

If the DSL is unavailable or implicated, concerns must be reported to the Deputy DSL or directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Children’s Social Care.

2. Physical Contact with Children and Young People Policy

At Circle of Life Rediscovery (CLR), we recognise that appropriate physical contact can play a positive role in supporting children and young people’s wellbeing, safety, and sense of trust.

We also acknowledge that some children we work with may have experienced loss, neglect, or abuse that affects how they experience touch. Our approach is guided by safeguarding best practice, trauma-informed care, and the principle that all physical contact must be safe, proportionate, and respectful.

Guiding principles

- Physical contact should always be **in the best interests of the child or young person.**

- Staff must remain **vigilant to safeguarding risks** and follow CLR's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy at all times.
- Consent and comfort are key: staff must pay attention to the child's **verbal and non-verbal cues** and respect their personal boundaries.
- Physical contact should be **open, age-appropriate, and non-intimate**.
- Any use of physical restraint must only be as a **last resort**, to prevent harm to the child, other people, or property, and must follow recognised guidance.

Examples of acceptable contact

- Acknowledging or praising by placing a hand briefly on the child's shoulder or upper arm.
- Shaking hands as a form of greeting or recognition.
- Offering a side hug or arm around the shoulder when a child is distressed **only if the child initiates or clearly accepts this comfort**, keeping hands above the waist and body contact minimal.
- Placing an arm around the shoulder to provide reassurance following an injury or incident, where appropriate.

Unacceptable contact

- Any physical contact that could be misinterpreted as sexual, aggressive, or intrusive.
- Contact with areas of the body that are private or could cause embarrassment.
- Rough handling or unnecessary physical intervention.

Recording and reporting

1. If a child or young person becomes distressed and requires prolonged physical comfort, or if physical restraint is used, this must be **recorded in writing** and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
2. Concerns raised by a child, parent, or staff member about physical contact will be taken seriously and dealt with in line with safeguarding procedures.

3. Code of Conduct Policy

Purpose

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected from all staff, volunteers, contractors, and others working with or on behalf of Circle of Life Rediscovery (CLR). It is designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk, and to uphold CLR's ethos of respect, inclusion, and integrity.

All staff and volunteers are expected to act in line with CLR's Safeguarding Policy, Equality & Diversity Policy, and relevant UK legislation, including:

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)*
- *Equality Act (2010)*
- *Data Protection Act (2018) and UK GDPR*

Principles

All those representing CLR must:

- Place the safety and wellbeing of children and young people above all else.
- Treat all participants with dignity, fairness, and respect.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times, in person and online.
- Act as positive role models, upholding CLR's values of care, courtesy, and respect for people and the natural world.
- Challenge and report poor practice, discriminatory behaviour, or safeguarding concerns immediately.

Expectations of Conduct

Safe Practice

- Plan and organise activities to minimise risk and ensure visibility.
- Work in pairs or groups where possible; avoid being alone with a child unless unavoidable and risk-assessed.
- Encourage a culture of openness where concerns can be raised safely.

Respectful Behaviour

- Use positive, supportive, and non-judgemental language.
- Be mindful of trauma and autism-informed practice — behaviour may reflect distress, unmet needs, or attempts to communicate. Respond with empathy and curiosity.
- Treat all children fairly; do not show favouritism or exclusion.
- Respect personal boundaries and cultural differences.

Physical Contact

- Any physical contact must be appropriate, consensual where possible, non-intrusive, and in line with CLR's Physical Contact Policy.
- Avoid intrusive or rough physical play.
- Do not engage in physical affection when alone with a child.

Online and Digital Boundaries

- Do not exchange personal contact details or connect with children/young people via social media.
- Do not engage in private online communication with participants.
- Use only approved organisational channels for digital communication.

Prohibited Conduct

Staff, volunteers, and contractors must never:

- Hit, physically assault, or emotionally abuse a child.
- Develop sexual or exploitative relationships with children or young people.
- Use language, gestures, or behaviour that is offensive, abusive, or discriminatory.
- Sleep in the same bed/room or invite children to their home unsupervised.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.
- Shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children.
- Condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, or abusive behaviour.

Reporting Concerns

- All concerns about the conduct of colleagues or others must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.
- If the concern relates to the DSL, report directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Children's Social Care.
- CLR's Whistleblowing Policy provides protection for those raising concerns in good faith.

Breach of the Code

- Breaches of this Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action, termination of volunteer agreements, or referral to statutory agencies.
- CLR reserves the right to suspend individuals where allegations of misconduct or safeguarding concerns are being investigated.

Review

This Code will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or best practice changes.

Quick Staff Guide

Code of Conduct – Key Points



Do:

- Always put children’s safety and wellbeing first.
- Treat everyone with respect and fairness.
- Use positive, supportive language.
- Keep professional boundaries — in person and online.
- Follow CLR’s Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and Equality policies.
- Report concerns about children or colleagues immediately to the DSL.



Don't:

- Hit, shout at, shame, or humiliate a child.
- Use offensive or discriminatory language.
- Hug, kiss, or touch children in intrusive ways.
- Be alone with a child unnecessarily.
- Give personal contact details or add children on social media.
- Ignore poor practice or safeguarding concerns.

Trauma- and Autism-Informed Reminders:

- Behaviour may be communication of stress, unmet need, or trauma.
- Stay calm, non-judgemental, and curious.
- Allow processing time and avoid rapid-fire questions.
- Provide choices to give children a sense of control.
- Use neutral, safe spaces for de-escalation (outdoors, fire circle).

If in doubt, report it.

Never assume someone else will act. Speak to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately.

4. Disclosure and Barring Policy

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC is committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, while ensuring fair and equal treatment of staff, volunteers and applicants.

We will make every effort to prevent unfair discrimination against staff, potential staff, volunteers, or service users on the basis of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities, age, disability, or offending background that does not present a risk to children or vulnerable adults.

As an organisation working with children and vulnerable adults, certain posts are exempt from the **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**. Applicants for these roles are therefore required to disclose all convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings that are not “protected” under the **DBS filtering rules**.

3. All applicants will be informed at the recruitment stage if a role requires a **DBS check**, and at what level (standard, enhanced, or enhanced with barred list).
4. Having a criminal record will not automatically bar someone from working with CLR. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the relevance of the offence to the role, its seriousness, the circumstances, and the time elapsed.
5. Where a DBS check reveals information, CLR will conduct a **risk assessment** before making any appointment decision.
6. Any information disclosed will be treated in strict confidence and in accordance with the **DBS Code of Practice, UK GDPR** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**.
7. Criminal record information will be stored securely, used only for the purpose intended, shared only with those who need to know, and kept only for as long as necessary before being securely destroyed.
8. Staff and volunteers are required to inform CLR immediately of any new criminal investigation, caution, or conviction, or any safeguarding concern relating to themselves or someone in their household/close contact.

5. Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC is committed to respecting the confidentiality and privacy of all participants, staff and volunteers.

Confidentiality

- All information shared by participants will be treated as confidential and respected within the project/session.
- Confidentiality will only be broken if there is reason to believe that a child, young person, or adult is at risk of harm, or if an illegal action may occur. In such cases, information will be shared promptly with the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** or Deputy DSL, and with statutory services if required.

- Where possible, the individual will be informed of the decision to break confidentiality and the reasons why, unless doing so would place them or others at further risk.
- Information shared between staff and volunteers will also be respected as confidential within the project, except where disclosure is necessary for safeguarding or legal reasons.

Data Protection

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC processes all personal data in line with the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**. We follow the principles of:

- Collecting and using data lawfully, fairly and transparently.
- Only using data for specified, legitimate purposes.
- Minimising the data we collect and ensuring it is accurate.
- Keeping data secure and confidential.
- Retaining data only for as long as necessary and disposing of it securely.

Records and Storage

- Personal information relating to staff, volunteers or participants will be stored securely, with access restricted to authorised personnel.
- Safeguarding and incident records will be kept separately from general participant records, in line with safeguarding best practice.
- Records will be retained only for as long as necessary, in accordance with CLR's retention schedule, and securely destroyed when no longer needed.

Photography and Media Consent

- Signed, informed consent will always be obtained before using photographs or video recordings of children, young people or adults for CLR's website, printed materials, or social media.
- Individuals (or parents/guardians for under-18s) may withdraw consent at any time.
- Images will be used sensitively, in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

6. Data Protection and Privacy Policy

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC (CLR) is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), reference number **ZA305879**. We are committed to protecting your privacy and handling your personal information fairly, lawfully, and transparently in accordance with the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**.

What personal data we collect

We collect personal data that you provide to us, which may include:

- Contact details (name, address, phone number, email address).
- Date of birth, health or dietary information (where relevant to participation in our programmes).
- Payment details (where necessary for training, courses or events).
- Images or video, only where you have given explicit consent.
- For staff and volunteers: information needed for safer recruitment and safeguarding (e.g. NI number, references, DBS checks).

How we use your personal data

We use your data to:

- Deliver our programmes, training and events.
- Manage participation safely, including safeguarding and health considerations.
- Contact you with information about our work, events, and training (only where you have consented to receive communications, or where we rely on legitimate interests).
- Fulfil our legal and regulatory obligations, including safeguarding duties.

Legal bases for processing

We rely on the following legal bases:

- **Consent** – e.g. for newsletters, marketing communications, or the use of photographs and video. You can withdraw consent at any time.
- **Legitimate interests** – e.g. to run our events safely, manage bookings, or communicate with you in ways you would reasonably expect.
- **Legal obligation** – e.g. where we are required to share safeguarding concerns with statutory authorities.
- **Contract** – e.g. where you have booked onto a paid training course and we need your details to deliver the service.

Sharing your data

We will never sell or trade your personal information. We may share your data only with trusted service providers who support our operations (such as email or IT providers, event booking platforms, payment processors, or insurers). These providers only process data on our instructions and are contractually required to protect it.

Where information is transferred outside the UK (for example, where servers are based overseas), we ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place, in line with UK GDPR.

Storing your data

- Personal information is stored securely on encrypted systems with access restricted to authorised personnel only.
- Paper records are kept locked and destroyed securely when no longer needed.
- We retain personal data only for as long as necessary for the purposes collected. For example:
 - Safeguarding and incident records: 25 years.
 - Training and booking records: 7 years.
 - Mailing list data: until you unsubscribe.

Your rights

You have the following rights under the UK GDPR:

- To access the personal data we hold about you.
- To have inaccurate data corrected.
- To request erasure of your data (“the right to be forgotten”).
- To restrict or object to processing in certain circumstances.
- To request transfer of your data to another provider (“data portability”).
- To withdraw your consent at any time.
- To lodge a complaint with the **Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO)** if you are unhappy with how we handle your data.

For more information on your rights, visit the ICO website: <https://ico.org.uk>.

Contact us

If you have questions about this policy, or wish to exercise your data rights, please contact us at: info@circleoflifediscovery.com

6. Health & Safety Policy and Procedures

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC (CLR) is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of all staff, volunteers, participants, and visitors in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and other relevant legislation.

Insurance

CLR maintains Public Liability Insurance of at least £5 million (reviewed annually). Where required by commissioners or partners, higher levels of cover will be secured.

Responsibilities

- The Directors have overall responsibility for health and safety.
- All staff and volunteers share responsibility for following procedures and reporting hazards or incidents.
- Staff and volunteers must sign Associate/Volunteer Agreements confirming their understanding of health, safety, and safeguarding responsibilities.

Risk Benefit Assessments

- Site-specific and activity-specific risk-benefit assessments are carried out before each programme.
- Dynamic risk assessments are conducted during sessions to adapt to changing conditions.
- Risk assessments are reviewed regularly and updated in light of incidents, feedback, or legislative change.

First Aid and Emergencies

- At least one qualified Outdoor First Aider will be present at all sessions.
- A safety briefing will be held at the start of each session, covering rules, hazards, emergency signals, and “what to do if...” scenarios.
- Children will always be supervised by staff in close proximity, with a mobile phone available for emergency assistance.
- All incidents and accidents will be reported, recorded, and where required notified under RIDDOR. Parents/guardians will be informed as soon as possible.

Consent and Medical Information

- All participants must complete a Booking and Consent Form before attending, including medical and emergency contact information.
- For school sessions, schools are responsible for informing CLR of any relevant medical or behavioural needs.
- Consent is required for emergency medical treatment and for use of photographs/videos.

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

- All staff and volunteers must follow CLR's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Harassment, neglect, or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Any disclosures will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Mental health and emotional safety are recognised as part of overall health and wellbeing.

Tools, Fires, and Environmental Safety

- All staff and participants must follow the Safe Knife Protocol and Fire Safety Policy.
- Improper use of knives, tools, or fire will not be tolerated.
- Adequate precautions (water buckets, safe zones) will be in place for fire activities.
- Waste will be disposed of in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.
- Environmental hazards (e.g. weather, water safety, insects, poisonous plants) will be identified and managed appropriately.

Monitoring and Review

- The CLR Director must be notified of all accidents, near misses, and incidents.
- All reports will be reviewed to ensure learning and improvement.
- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by law, after incidents, or following new programme development.

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC (CLR) is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion in all areas of our work. We believe that everyone has the right to participate fully in our programmes and community, free from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

For CLR:

- *Equality* means fair treatment and equal opportunities.
- *Equity* means recognising that people's needs differ and making adjustments so that everyone can thrive.
- *Diversity* means valuing the unique contributions of different people and communities.
- *Inclusion* means creating safe, accessible, and welcoming spaces where everyone belongs.

Our commitments

CLR complies with the Equality Act 2010 and actively promotes equality of opportunity regardless of:

- Age
- Disability

- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In practice, this means that:

- We welcome all individuals and groups and will not tolerate prejudice, harassment, or offensive behaviour.
- We foster warm, respectful, and inclusive environments where people feel safe to challenge discrimination and inequality, and where conflicts can be resolved peacefully.
- We recognise that fair treatment does not always mean treating everyone the same. We commit to equity by identifying and meeting different needs, including making reasonable adjustments for disabled participants and staff.
- We value cultural diversity and recognise that people may have different relationships with land, nature, and community. We adapt our practice where appropriate to support full participation.
- We are committed to both physical and digital accessibility in our venues, outdoor sites, training materials, and communications.

Unacceptable behaviour

We will not allow:

- Verbal, written, or physical attacks on individuals or groups.
- Discriminatory name-calling, insulting remarks, jokes, or threats.
- The circulation or display of offensive or discriminatory material.
- Harassment or intimidation of any kind.
- Provocative behaviour such as racist insignia or symbols.

Responding to incidents

If harassment, discrimination, or other unacceptable behaviour occurs at any programme or event:

- Concerns can be reported to the lead facilitator, safeguarding officer, or a director. Reports will be treated seriously and confidentially.

- The incident will be addressed immediately by senior staff.
- CLR's position and expectations will be explained clearly to the perpetrator.
- The affected individual(s) will be supported and listened to.
- The perpetrator may be offered support or counselling, but serious or repeated behaviour may result in suspension or removal.
- In cases of physical attack, suspension will be immediate and steps taken to ensure safety.
- A record will be made of the incident and action taken, in line with safeguarding and disciplinary procedures.

Responsibilities

- All staff, volunteers, directors, and contractors are responsible for upholding this policy and challenging discriminatory behaviour.
- CLR will provide ongoing training, reflection, and support to ensure our team understands their duties under equality law and our organisational values.
- We will monitor participation, feedback, and barriers to inclusion to improve practice.
- We recognise that some people experience overlapping forms of discrimination (intersectionality), and we will take this into account in our work.
- The Directors are accountable for monitoring compliance and reviewing this policy annually, or sooner if required by law or best practice.

8. Risk–Benefit Assessment Policy

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC (CLR) is committed to ensuring that Forest School sessions provide opportunities for children and young people to develop self-esteem, independence, and motivation to learn in an environment that is safe, engaging, and respectful of nature.

We recognise that many Forest School activities involve an element of risk. Our approach follows **risk–benefit assessment**, in line with the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**, the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**, and guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Our approach

The Forest School Leader will ensure that risk–benefit assessments are consistently applied to all sites and activities. This includes:

- **Identifying hazards** – considering site, activity, tools, fire, weather, and environmental factors.
- **Considering who may be harmed and how** – including children, staff, volunteers, visitors, and vulnerable groups.
- **Evaluating risks** – weighing both risks and the developmental/educational benefits of the activity.

- **Deciding controls** – activities only proceed where remaining risks are considered low and proportionate controls are in place.
- **Recording findings** – assessments are documented, signed, and dated, with daily amendments noted.
- **Reviewing regularly** – assessments are reviewed at least annually, and sooner if there are changes to the site, activities, or participants.

Procedures

- A **full risk–benefit assessment** will be carried out for each Forest School site. Copies will be available with the Forest School Leader.
- **Daily pre-visit checks** will be carried out as close to the start of the session as possible.
- If conditions (e.g. high winds, lightning, flooding) make outdoor work unsafe, the activity will be **adapted, postponed, or cancelled**.
- Specific activity risks will be recorded on lesson/session plans.
- Staff, volunteers, and children will be informed of relevant hazards and safe working methods at the start of sessions.
- Where appropriate, children will be involved in risk–benefit discussions as part of learning.
- Adequate supervision ratios will be maintained at all times and factored into assessments.
- All staff and volunteers will be familiar with **emergency procedures** for the site.

Training and skills

- Children will be taught skills to keep themselves safe, particularly in the use of tools and fire.
- Staff and volunteers will receive training in risk–benefit assessment, tool use, and fire safety as relevant to their role.

Food and drink

- Children and adults will have access to drinking water throughout sessions.
- CLR's **Wild Food Policy** applies to all sessions.
- If facilitators are not trained in wild food safety, a **nil-by-mouth approach** will be followed, except for packed lunches and snacks brought from home.

9. Toileting policy

Before a Forest School session, children will be given the opportunity to go to the toilet.

1. Whilst working at a school site, children will be allowed back into school if the toilet is needed.
2. Children with special needs, including behavioural needs, who have an attached teaching assistant, will be escorted to and from the toilet.
3. When working at a woodland site, if there are no facilities available, children will be allowed to use a secluded area for toileting. If the child asks for help with this, they are only allowed to be accompanied by a member of staff or their own parent.
4. Children will be provided with a composting toilet, if there are no facilities available, which will be the responsibility of the Forest School Facilitator to dig prior to the visit.
5. The composting toilet hole should be at least 30cm deep, preferably more in order to hold waste matter.
6. The hole will be screened with tarps or a tent to provide complete privacy.
7. Toilet paper and a bag for disposable of same will be clearly provided, as will an agreed method to indicate when the toilet is engaged (eg cup on stick outside door flap, etc)
8. Handwashing facilities will be provided and all children must wash hands after using the toilet. (See **Handwashing Policy**)
9. It will be the responsibility of the Forest School Facilitator to return to the site after the visit to refill the hole, and return the area to its former condition.

10. Hand tool Policy

Using small hand tools is an important part of Forest School as it enables children to develop new, practical skills that help them develop self-confidence.

Hand tools are to be maintained in good order by the Forest School Leader(s) and will be inspected before each session to ensure safety. Children and adults will be taught how to handle tools properly and to treat them with respect.

1. Tools will be kept in the Forest School tool bags or box until children know the procedure and follow instructions
2. We follow an appropriate adult to child ratio dependent on the level of experience and ability
3. Staff follow adequate tool indicators when applying ratios
4. Running with tools is prohibited
5. Children will lose permission to use tools if the guidelines are not followed
6. Tools are only used when children know procedure and follow instructions
7. All tools must be counted back into the tool box/bag at the end of the session

8. Volunteer helpers must receive basic training on the use of individual hand tools before being allowed to use them with children.

11. Knife Safety Protocol

(To be used in conjunction with CLR's Tools Risk–Benefit Assessment.)

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC recognises that knife use is a valuable part of outdoor learning, developing skills, confidence, and responsibility. We are committed to ensuring knife use is always safe, appropriate, and lawful.

Types of knives

- **Folding knives** (e.g. Opinel, blade under 3 inches) may be used under staff supervision.
- **Fixed-blade knives** (blade over 3 inches, regulated under the Offensive Weapons Act 2019) may only be used for legitimate educational purposes under close supervision by trained staff.
- Staff may only carry folding knives (blade under 3 inches) for personal use. All knives must be transported and stored securely.

General principles

- Knife use is always supervised by a **trained Forest School Leader** or facilitator.
- Ratios are determined by the age, experience, and behaviour of the group. For competent young people: **minimum 1:10**, with at least one additional competent adult present to support/spot, preferably first aid trained.
- Staff conduct a risk–benefit assessment before each session, considering group maturity, behaviour, and environmental factors.
- Unsafe behaviour will result in immediate removal of the knife.

Procedures during sessions

- First Aid Kit must be available; at least one trained Outdoor First Aider should be present.
- Knives are stored in a locked box or secure location when not in use.
- Knives are numbered, counted in and out, and allocated individually. For higher-risk groups, names are recorded against knife numbers.
- Knives are only used in good light and when participants are alert.
- A group agreement is made before knife use begins.
- Beginners and younger children may start with **vegetable peelers** before progressing to knives.
- Participants must:

- Sit on a stable surface or log while using knives.
- Keep a safe working distance from others (“blood bubble” – an arm’s length plus the length of the knife).
- Never walk or stand with an unsheathed knife.
- Learn safe techniques for unsheathing, gripping, and cutting.
- Avoid stabbing knives into the ground or wood blocks.

End of session

- All knives are counted and returned to storage.
- Staff confirm knife numbers match before session ends.

Adult training and CPD

- A second adult should be present for first aid and monitoring.
- Trainers must assess the group’s capability and alertness before knife work begins.
- Participants are responsible for following safety instructions and protocols.
- If an injury occurs, the group will be reminded of safety protocols, and first aid administered.
- If more than one adult is injured (rare), all knife use will stop until the situation is resolved.

9. Fire Safety Policy

Campfires and the use of storm kettles are an important part of Forest School and are used in many sessions. Our Forest School 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.

Location

1. Only previously agreed areas will be used for campfires
2. Campfire areas may be enclosed by logs to prevent the spread of fire. In some cases the risk benefit assessment indicates that surrounding the fire may be a trip hazard, so this is left at the discretion of the Forest School facilitator.
3. Storm kettles are only used on flat ground and any woodchip or leaf litter must be brushed away before use.

General positioning of Children and Adults

- Fire areas are surrounded by seating logs approximately 1.5 metres from the fire pit, or where deemed appropriate by the staff.

- When the campfire is in use, children are shown how to access the area safely.
- Please refer to risk benefit assessment and age appropriate behaviour.
- Children will be taught how to change seats by standing, stepping over the log and then walking around the outside of the seating area.
- 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/peer to count for them)
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.

Specific notes on age and ability:

Primary age and under:

For ages under 12, unless doing a specific activity using the fire as a tool (eg. Cooking / charcoal making etc.) all students will follow fire risk benefit assessment and will feed and manage the main fire when instructed by adult staff. Only adults are permitted to light fires, unless children are under the direct supervision of the Forest School or equivalent facilitator.

Secondary age and more experienced:

- For those over 12 with new groups, the above protocol is appropriate.
- At times where long-term programmes occur and fire skills are developed this level of people-management around the fire may not be necessary and it may be more appropriate and beneficial for small groups to directly interact with fires.
- For groups with challenging behaviour, more rigorous boundaries and reinforcement of them early on may well be required
- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire.

Type of Fire

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

Indian Fire can be used for specific purposes such as cooking as the heat from them can be carefully controlled by regulating air flow.

Safety and Responsibility

Only adults are permitted to light fires, unless children are under the direct supervision of a Forest School Facilitator.

- Fires are often lit using cotton wool, petroleum jelly and a fire steel.
- We also use natural tinder bundles and charcloth
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- No plastics are to be burnt.
- If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision, unless risk assessment and age appropriate management assesses otherwise.
- Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire.

Extinguishing

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session
- Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions – 1 bucket/container must contain clean water for potential burns or injuries
- Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
- Forest School Facilitators should 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.
- Carefully check that the ashes are cold to the touch.
- If a fire has been alight for a long time it might also be necessary to make holes in the ground to allow water in to cool the ground below the surface.

Leave no trace

If you are not having a fire in a permanent fire circle or fire bowl then we use a 'leave no trace' policy.

This means any evidence of your fire must be cleared away and no trace of the fire left at all.

To do this:

- Extinguish your fire and ensure the ground and ash is cool to the touch (use the back of your hand to carefully test)
- Any larger remains of woods can be set aside for your wood pile, to be used again. Please ensure they are also cool to the touch
- Any remaining ash and small pieces of wood should be finely scattered throughout the woodland to enable natural decomposition.
- Leaf litter can then be scattered over your fire site, to cover the site of the fire and make it look as natural as possible.

Storm (Kelly) kettles

- Only adults are to light the fire in the fire pan unless children are directly supervised by a Forest School Facilitator (see Safety and Responsibility section)
- The storm kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground.
- Children must be seated at least 1.5 metres away from the storm kettle.
- Children can feed the fire with one to one supervision but they must have been shown how to do so safely. (stick held at the end and dropped in from the side; hand 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)
- Storm kettles should never be boiled with the cork in.

Being Safe with Fire:

To site a fire safely, you must check for:

- Permission from the land owner
- Canopy height (so not at risk of burning tree branches)
- Woodland ground cover (clear ground to bare earth to avoid ground fires)
- Surface roots, especially pine (minimal to avoid underground fire travelling)
- Check for widow makers (dead branches in trees that could fall)
- Check for prevailing wind and conditions (if windy fire risks are higher)
- Extra attention required if dry conditions

To light a fire safely, you must:

- Ensure fire protocol of behaviour is explained and agreed with group
- Be confident and practised with the method of fire lighting being utilised
- Ensure good preparation of materials and fuel has occurred
- Be in an appropriate proximity to where you have sited the fire

To manage a fire safely, you must:

- Ensure fire protocol of behaviour is understood and practised
- Set up protocol of walking outside the fire circle of seating for appropriate ages
- It is usually asked that logs are set up approximately 1.5 metres from the fire pit.
- Have a clear boundary of where it is not ok to go (if no seating this could be a rope line that children do not cross unless doing a specific, supervised activity.
- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire.
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.
- Children are not permitted to access the fire area without permission.
- Monitor size of fuel being put on fire and amount to maintain an appropriate sized fire
- Have 1 bucket of clean water nearby for burns and 1 bucket of water for extinguishing the fire or emergency such as any spreading of fire out of your control.
- Extinguish the fire fully and camouflage trace of the fire where appropriate.
- In areas with a peat soil or pine roots near the surface a fire directly on the ground would not be suitable – extra precautions would be required to prevent underground fires smouldering and spreading. Where small fires are light with these conditions, they must be put out fully with plenty of water.
- In areas where there is no water source, a fire should only be light where there is enough water being carried by the group / enough time to enable it to fully extinguish to ensure that the fire is left with no trace.
- The size of the fire should be appropriate to its purpose what is safe for that specific group.
- Fire risk is increased with high winds so where these conditions exist, fires may not be appropriate unless good wind brakes are established.

13. Weather and Extreme Conditions Policy

At Circle of Life Rediscovery, we aim to be outside as much as possible, in line with our ethos of connecting with the natural world. However, safety is paramount, and we follow a **risk–benefit approach** to weather conditions in line with the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** and the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**.

Facilitators will check weather forecasts prior to each session and make dynamic risk assessments during the session. Where necessary, sessions may be cancelled, adapted, shortened, or relocated.

General principles

- Participants must come suitably dressed, in line with CLR's **Clothing Policy**.
- A **sheltered space** will be provided when possible, to enable children to stay warm, dry, or shaded.
- If a session is cancelled due to extreme conditions, every attempt will be made to reschedule.

- In cases of repeated unmanageable weather, schools may be asked to provide an indoor or covered alternative space.

Heavy Rain

- Light or moderate rain: sessions continue with appropriate clothing and shelters.
- Torrential rain (sustained): session may be cancelled at the earliest opportunity.
- Staff will monitor for risk of flooding or hypothermia.

Wind

- CLR uses the **Beaufort Scale** to guide decisions.
- Sessions are normally cancelled or relocated when winds are at **Force 7 (near gale, 32–38 mph) or above**, or where gusts exceed this level.
- Dynamic risk assessment considers: tree species, size, age, canopy cover, overhanging branches, and ground conditions.
- In exceptional circumstances, and only if assessed safe, sessions may continue up to Force 8 with mitigation.

Extreme Heat

- In line with **UKHSA guidance**, staff monitor children closely, encourage hydration, and provide shade.
- Sessions will be adapted, shortened, or cancelled in line with **Met Office amber/red heat alerts**.
- Sun protection (hats, sun cream, light clothing) is expected.

Extreme Cold

- Sessions may continue if children are properly clothed.
- Hot drinks, fires, and active games will be used to maintain warmth.
- If temperatures pose a risk of frostbite or hypothermia, sessions will be shortened or cancelled.

Thunder and Lightning

- If thunder is heard, the **“30–30 rule”** applies: if the time between lightning flash and thunder is less than 30 seconds, move to shelter immediately and remain there for 30 minutes after the last thunder.
- Safe shelter includes: substantial buildings or fully enclosed metal vehicles.

- **Do not shelter under trees, tarps, or tents** during lightning. If no shelter is available, groups should spread out on low ground, away from tall objects.
- Avoid open fields, hilltops, water, and metal objects.

Met Office Weather Warnings

- **Yellow:** sessions may proceed with caution; facilitators adapt activities as needed.
- **Amber:** sessions may be shortened, relocated, or postponed depending on risk.
- **Red:** sessions will normally be cancelled in the interest of safety.

Beaufort Scale

Force	What it looks like	What it's called	Wind speed
0	Smoke rises straight up	Calm	0 mph
1	Smoke drifts, indicating wind direction	Light air	1-3 mph
2	Leaves rustle; weathervanes move	Light breeze	4-7 mph
3	Leaves and twigs move	Gentle breeze	8-12 mph
4	Branches move; flags flap	Moderate breeze	13-18 mph
5	Small trees sway; whitecaps on water	Fresh breeze	19-24 mph
6	Large branches move; flags beat	Strong breeze	25-31 mph
7	Whole trees move; flags extend	Near gale	32-38 mph
8	Twigs break; walking is hard	Fresh gale	39-46 mph
9	Signs blow down; slate blows off roof	Strong gale	47-54 mph
10	Trees uproot	Whole gale	55-63 mph
11	Much general damage	Storm	64-72 mph
12	Widespread destruction	Hurricane	72+ mph

Thunder and Lightning

Lightning strikes the best conductor on the ground - whether it has been struck before or not.

When you hear thunder you are already within range of where the next ground flash may occur; lightning can strike as far as 10 miles away from the centre of a storm.

Met Office

Met office weather warnings

The basic messages associated with each of the colours are:

No Severe Weather	Be Aware	Be Prepared	Take Action

What the colours mean

- **Yellow: Be aware.** Severe weather is possible over the next few days and could affect you. Yellow means that you should plan ahead thinking about possible travel delays, or the disruption of your day to day activities. The Met Office is monitoring the developing weather situation and Yellow means keep an eye on the latest forecast and be aware that the weather may change or worsen, leading to disruption of your plans in the next few days.
- **Amber: Be prepared.** There is an increased likelihood of bad weather affecting you, which could potentially disrupt your plans and possibly cause travel delays, road and rail closures, interruption to power and the potential risk to life and property. Amber means you need to be prepared to change your plans and protect you, your family and community from the impacts of the severe weather based on the forecast from the Met Office
- **Red: Take action.** Extreme weather is expected. Red means you should take action now to keep yourself and others safe from the impact of the weather. Widespread damage, travel and power disruption and risk to life is likely. You must avoid dangerous areas and follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities.

14. Clothing Policy

It is important that all children have appropriate clothing suitable for all weather conditions. Children should bring some spare items of clothing in case of any accidents or clothes becoming wet. e.g. spare gloves / socks.

Forest School Facilitators should ensure that they carry items of spare clothing in the kit bags. As a responsible person, the Forest School facilitator has the right to exclude any child they think is inappropriately dressed for Forest school activities.

Winter

- Vest or T-shirt
- Long sleeved top
- Hooded top / fleece or thick jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Thick socks (thermal or two pairs of thin ones)
- Trousers
- Waterproof trousers
- Wellington boots
- Hat, gloves and scarf.

Summer

- Long sleeved T-shirt or top
- Light trousers
- (Arms and legs must be covered in the woodland)
- Socks
- Trainers, shoes or Wellington boots.
- (Sandals and flip-flops are not suitable.)
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses (if required.)
- Participants are also responsible for providing their own insect repellent and sunscreen.

15. Lost Child Policy

At Circle of Life Rediscovery (CLR), our highest priority is the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in our care. This policy applies whether groups are working on school premises or at woodland/outdoor sites.

Preventative measures

- Clear boundaries will be established with the group at the start of each session.
- Regular head counts will be carried out, especially after transitions (e.g. moving sites, toilet breaks, activities).
- Children will be encouraged to stay within sight and sound of adults, and to use a buddy system where appropriate.
- Staff will remain vigilant at all times and ensure ratios meet or exceed recommended levels.

Procedure if a child goes missing

1. **Raise the alarm immediately** – Any staff member who notices a child missing must inform the Forest School Facilitator (session lead) at once.
2. **Confirm details** – Staff should corroborate the last known position, time last seen, and any distinguishing factors (clothing, behaviour, direction of travel).
3. **Supervise remaining children** – Activities are paused. Remaining children are given a calm, low-risk activity at basecamp, with adequate adult supervision to avoid panic.
4. **Initial search** – Up to two staff (including the facilitator if appropriate) conduct a quick search of the immediate area for no more than **10–15 minutes**, unless there is an **immediate danger** (e.g. water, road, abduction risk) in which case emergency services must be called **straight away**.
5. **Escalation** – If the child is not located promptly:
 - The facilitator will dial **999 (or 112)** and inform the police.
 - The school/organisation will be notified so they can contact the child's parents/guardians.
6. **Aftercare** – Other children will be reassured and kept safe until the situation is resolved.

Recording and reporting

- A full written record of the incident will be completed, including timings, actions taken, and by whom.
- The incident will be reported to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** at CLR and to the partner school/organisation.
- The Directors will review the incident, risk assessments, and procedures, and make adjustments to prevent recurrence.

15. Behaviour and Relationship Policy

At Circle of Life Rediscovery (CLR), our aim is to create a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment where all children, young people, staff, and visitors are treated with respect and care. We understand that behaviour is a form of communication and can be influenced by past experiences, trauma, neurodiversity, and individual needs.

Our commitments

- To maintain a culture of care, courtesy, and mutual respect for people, property, the environment, and the wider community.
- To respond to behaviour through a trauma-informed lens, recognising that unmet needs or distress may underpin challenging behaviour.
- To create supportive environments that allow children and young people to feel safe, valued, and able to express themselves.
- To celebrate individuality and achievements, and to foster intrinsic motivation and self-confidence.
- To work collaboratively with schools, parents/carers, and professionals to provide consistent support.

The role of children and young people

With support where needed, we encourage children and young people to:

- Listen to and respond to instructions, especially those linked to safety.
- Show care and respect for themselves, others, equipment, and the environment.
- Take responsibility, as appropriate to age and stage, for their actions and choices.

Behaviours of concern

Examples may include:

- Unsafe use of tools or equipment.
- Ongoing low-level bullying or unkind behaviour.
- Persistent disregard for agreed group expectations.
- Failure to follow safety rules (e.g. not wearing protective equipment).

Our response:

- Staff will use trauma-informed, autism-aware strategies, such as descriptive praise, co-regulation, sensory regulation tools, and the HELP approach (see Appendix 4).
- Where difficulties persist, the young person will be supported to create an action plan. This will be shared with the school/unit and parents/carers as appropriate.
- Repeated incidents will be reviewed collaboratively with the young person, CLR staff, school/unit, and parents/carers to ensure additional needs or adjustments are considered.

Serious behaviours of concern (“gross misconduct”)

These include:

- Physical or verbal assault on another child or adult.
- Theft, criminal damage, or arson.
- Possession or misuse of drugs or alcohol.
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- Serious or repeated unsafe behaviour putting self or others at risk.

Our response:

- The young person will be removed from the group immediately for safety.
- Parents/carers and the school/unit will be informed, and a meeting will be arranged to consider next steps.
- Decisions about continued participation will be made collaboratively, considering the needs of the individual and the safety of the group.

De-escalation and physical intervention

- CLR staff prioritise de-escalation and co-regulation techniques.
- Physical restraint will only be used as a last resort to prevent immediate harm to the child, others, or property.
- Any use of restraint will be recorded, reviewed, and shared with parents/carers and the school/unit.

Reflection and learning

- All incidents are recorded and reviewed to identify triggers, adapt practice, and improve support.
- Staff receive ongoing training in trauma-informed practice, autism awareness, and behaviour support.
- CLR promotes a culture of continuous learning, ensuring children, staff, and families can thrive together

16. Emergency Procedure Policy

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC (CLR) is committed to ensuring the safety of all participants. Emergency procedures are rehearsed, reviewed, and communicated to staff, volunteers, and participants as part of our risk–benefit approach to outdoor learning.

Participant briefing

At the start of each session, participants will be briefed on what to do in case of emergency. The agreed signal will mean:

- Stop what you are doing.
- Gather calmly with a member of staff.
- Be silent and await instructions.

Roles and responsibilities

- The **Forest School Leader** will assess the situation, administer first aid if required, and coordinate the response.
- Other staff/volunteers will ensure the group is safe, adequately supervised, and moved away from danger.
- A designated staff member will meet emergency services at the site entrance and direct them to the casualty.

In case of injury or illness

- **Minor cases:** The Forest School Leader may contact parents/carers (via the school/organisation) to arrange collection or medical treatment.
- **Serious cases:** Dial **999** immediately. Give details of the location, nature of the emergency, and symptoms. The school/organisation will be notified, and they will contact

parents/carers.

- If the injured child is taken to hospital, a staff member will accompany them until parents/carers arrive.

Emergency information to provide

When contacting emergency services, be ready to state:

- Mobile/telephone number you are calling from.
- Your location (grid reference, postcode, or what3words).
- Nature of the emergency and symptoms.
- Agreed meeting point, where staff will direct the crew.
- Nearest air ambulance landing site, if relevant.

Recording and reporting

- All incidents will be recorded on an accident/incident form.
- Serious injuries, hospitalisation, or dangerous occurrences will be reported under **RIDDOR** (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013).
- A debrief will be held after each incident to reflect and improve practice.

Safeguarding

Where an emergency involves a safeguarding concern (e.g. missing child, suspected abuse, serious injury through neglect), the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** will be informed and procedures followed.

Review

10. Emergency procedures are reviewed annually and updated as needed.
11. Site-specific emergency information (nearest A&E, medical centre, air ambulance landing sites, grid references) will be kept up to date and carried by staff on laminated cards.

18. Environmental Sustainability and Woodland Care Policy

At the heart of the Forest School ethos is respect for self, others, and the natural world. CLR believes that the best way to develop love and respect for nature is through meaningful play and learning in natural environments, alongside adults who model care and ecological awareness.

Our approach

- Forest School takes place in woodlands, forestry plantations, wildlife gardens, parks, school grounds, and other natural or semi-natural sites.
- Sites are chosen to be local wherever possible, enabling participants to build long-term relationships with place, learning how to care for it and use natural materials responsibly.
- Participants are encouraged to contribute to conservation tasks such as planting trees, protecting bluebells, litter removal, making bird boxes, and maintaining habitats.
- Environmental awareness is embedded in practice through daily routines such as carrying water, composting, firewood collection, and responsible waste management.

Legal and policy framework

CLR operates in line with:

- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**
- **Environment Act 2021** (biodiversity duty)
- **Countryside Code**

Site care and monitoring

- Before establishing a site, species of trees, plants, and wildlife will be surveyed and recorded.
- Sensitive habitats (e.g. bluebell woods, nesting sites) will be protected by path creation, barriers, or seasonal site restrictions.
- Ongoing monitoring (observation, recording, photographs, site logs) will track ecological impact, including trampling, litter, erosion, and fire scars.
- Sites will be rested or rotated as necessary to allow for natural recovery.
- Semi-permanent structures (shelters, seating circles) will only be used with landowner agreement.

Woodland safety and fire

- All fires will be managed in line with CLR's **Fire Safety Policy**, using contained fire pits and safe extinguishing procedures.
- Collection of wood will be sustainable (deadwood use, not stripping living trees).
- Sites will be left safe, clean, and as found, with all litter removed.

Responsibilities and agreements

- All programmes will operate with the written agreement of the landowner/manager, ensuring use is consistent with site management plans.
- Staff, volunteers, and participants will be inducted into sustainable use of each site.
- Children and young people of all backgrounds and abilities will be supported to participate in environmental care tasks, fostering responsibility and inclusion.

Our aims

12. Promote ecological awareness and sustainable living through hands-on practice.
13. Foster respect for woodlands and biodiversity, enabling children to develop lifelong environmental values.
14. Enhance biodiversity where possible, through conservation activities and careful stewardship.
15. Ensure that learning takes place within a rigorous framework of health, safety, and environmental sustainability.

19. Food and Eating Policy

CLR is committed to ensuring that all food provided, prepared, or consumed during Forest School sessions is safe, hygienic, inclusive, and enjoyable. This policy outlines our responsibilities under UK food safety law, our approach to outdoor food handling, and how we keep children and vulnerable participants safe from harm.

Allergy and Medical Needs

- Medical information must be checked before sessions by the lead facilitator.
- Staff must be aware of all allergies, intolerances, and dietary needs. Substitutions will be provided where suitable.
- Shared food must be clearly labelled, and nut-free practice will be adopted where appropriate.
- Allergen cross-contamination will be actively prevented through separate utensils, careful supervision, and clear staff training.

Wild Food and Cooking

- CLR's **Wild Food Policy** sets out the rules for foraging and cooking.
- Children may only eat wild foods if specifically prepared under adult supervision, in line with risk-benefit and HACCP-based assessments.
- Staff will teach children, at age-appropriate stages, why most berries, fungi, and plants must not be eaten without clear adult guidance.

Snacks and Lunches

- Children may eat packed lunches and snacks during breaks.
- Staff will supervise all eating to prevent unauthorised foraging or food sharing.
- Lunch bags will be stored in a dry, safe, and supervised area.

Food Hygiene Procedures

CLR follows the **Food Safety Act 1990**, the **Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013**, the **General Food Regulations 2004**, and **Regulation (EC) 852/2004**.

Storage

- Perishable foods must be stored in a cool box/bag with ice packs.
- Raw meats must be stored separately from cooked foods.
- All food must be within its “use by” date.

Hygiene

- Hands must be cleaned before eating or handling food (warm water/soap or sanitiser).
- All cuts/grazes must be covered with a waterproof plaster.
- Food must never be left uncovered (unless serving).
- Utensils and cooking equipment must be washed, dried, and stored hygienically after use.

Infection Control

- Staff and volunteers must not handle food if they have experienced diarrhoea or vomiting within the past 48 hours, or if they are suffering from an infectious illness.
- Staff must confirm they are symptom-free before resuming food handling duties.

Drinking Water

- Only fresh, potable water in sealed containers will be provided.

Waste Management

- All unused food, packaging, and waste will be disposed of safely and, where possible, recycled or composted.

Food Business Registration

- If CLR's Forest School sessions involve regular cooking, handling, or distributing food, CLR will consult with the Local Authority Environmental Health Department to determine if food business registration is required.
- CLR will comply fully with registration, inspection, and record-keeping requirements where applicable.

Training

- Staff who prepare or cook food for groups must hold at least **Level 2 Food Hygiene certification (online training)**.
- CLR recommends the **Level 2 Outdoor Food Safety course**, which is tailored to outdoor environments.

Food Safety Risk Assessment

- All food preparation and cooking will be covered by a **food-specific risk assessment** using HACCP principles (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points).
- Assessments will cover:
 - Hand hygiene
 - Allergen management
 - Food storage and temperature checks
 - Separation of raw and cooked foods
 - High-risk foods (meat, dairy)
 - Safe preparation, cooking, and serving
 - Cleaning and sanitising procedures
- Risk assessments will be reviewed annually and updated whenever practices change.

Record Keeping

- Expiry dates of all food will be checked and logged.
- Perishable food storage temperatures (cool boxes/bags) will be monitored and recorded.
- Records of hygiene checks and risk assessments will be maintained as part of session documentation.

Compliance

CLR recognises that unsafe food handling can cause harm and may result in legal enforcement action, including fines or prosecution. All staff, volunteers, and session leaders share responsibility for ensuring food safety at every stage.

20. Water and Handwashing Policy

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC (CLR) is committed to maintaining high standards of hygiene and infection control in all outdoor settings, in line with the Food Safety Act 1990, the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013, and public health guidance.

Water supply

- Where sites have no mains water, fresh potable water will be transported in clean, food-grade containers.
- Containers will be cleaned, sanitised, and checked regularly for mould and damage.
- Only water labelled and stored for drinking/handwashing use will be used.

Handwashing provision

- Warm running water, liquid soap, and disposable paper towels (or individual cloths) will be provided.
- Water can be heated on a fire or brought in thermos flasks for filling tap containers.
- Communal bowls must not be used for handwashing.
- Alcohol-based hand rub (minimum 60% alcohol) may be used as a supplement when soap and water are not immediately available, but soap and water remain the preferred option.
- All visible cuts and abrasions must be covered with a waterproof plaster before sessions.

Infection control: when to wash hands

All staff, volunteers, and children are expected to wash hands:

- Before preparing, handling, or eating food.
- After using the toilet.
- After outdoor play or tool use.
- After contact with animals, soil, or natural materials.
- After sneezing, coughing, or blowing noses.

Wipes and alternatives

- Where water is temporarily unavailable, biodegradable, environmentally responsible wipes may be used, with proper waste disposal.
- Participants must still wash with soap and water as soon as possible after returning indoors.

Supervision and accessibility

- Staff will encourage and supervise younger children to ensure effective handwashing.
- Handwashing facilities will be adapted where possible to meet the needs of children with disabilities or sensory sensitivities.

Monitoring

- The Forest School Leader will check water, soap, and towel supplies throughout the session and replenish as needed.

21. Wild Food Policy

Forest School recognises that developing awareness and relationships with nature necessitates the children's confident ability to recognise and interact appropriately with trees and plants. Huge benefits result from the on-going development of these relationships. With safe and professional guidance the children are shown some uses of the plants for food, medicine and other practical uses. This greatly enhances their appreciation of their environment and leads to motivation to protect it. Other benefits include gathering the plants and processing them together, which, as an activity, promotes team work, community and can be developed to increase understanding of indigenous people and their values, as well as an appreciation for our own heritage uses of native plants. The children also gain self-confidence in being able to correctly identify plants and trees (especially when, in doing so, they may then go on to use it) appropriately.

Main benefits:

- Self reliance
- Ecological awareness of inter-connectedness (e.g. weather & seasons, natural navigation, how they affect the plants, which insect, animal and bird species are directly reliant to certain species etc., and how our use of these plants affects the eco-system.)
- Team work
- Confidence building
- Direct inter-active relationship with the environment
- Understanding risk
- Enhance knowledge (naturalist)
- Empathy
- Development of sense (safe, successful gathering requires all physical senses)
- Education about sustainability – practical skills used in foraging, including pruning and coppicing
- Important and valuable supplement to modern diet as wild foods are rich in minerals, vitamins and nutrients quality largely absent from the modern diet. Many of these plant also help the body to de-toxify which is particularly valuable in modern times when we are bombarded by population.

Development of practical skills and tool use:

- Pruning, use of loppers, secateurs and pruning saw
- Coppicing
- Digging sticks, trowels etc. for roots
- Use of fire and cooking techniques
- Preparation of wild foods can involve many different processing techniques

Development of understanding source of foods and the energy required in processing. This develops appreciation and relationships with nature.

Risks:

We recognise the risks presented by the use of wild plants, and place great importance on the recognition and avoidance of these risks:

- The most obvious risk is the ingestion of poisonous plant matter, however this offers one of the greatest benefits of foraging. The very presence of poisonous species naturally enhances the sensory and observational skills, necessary to make accurate identification. The presence of these species means that we must be constantly vigilant and respectful in this activity.
- Another risk is over harvesting of wild plants and the damage to the ecosystem thereby. Once again, the risk presented by the activity offers very valuable learning opportunities

Risk	Steps taken to minimise
Misidentification of plants leading to ingestion of poisonous species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expert guidance giving clear tools for accurate identification ● Children must always take any plant to a knowledge (identified) forest school leader before putting into mouth ● Plants are only ever picked as a specific activity and then under adult supervision
Poisonous look-a-likes are gathered with edible species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If more than one plant species are gathered as wild food, they are gathered separately ● When plants are being sorted at camp, the Forest Leader in charge of foraging checks all samples to the best of their ability ● Participants will be clearly and precisely shown poisonous look-a-like species. There will be a variety of teaching techniques for assuring the differences are understood
Disruption and possible destruction of ecosystems by over harvesting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education and awareness of ecological impact is an important value of forest schooling ● Participants are taught how to harvest sustainability with care and respect
Protected and less common species of plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Basic ecological surveys of the area where activities will be carried out will be made before the sessions ● The main leader in charge of leading the sessions on gathering wild plants will

	<p>have good knowledge of protected species and which species are abundant in the environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gathering will be minimal, and will take into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Animals, birds and insects which may be reliant on particular species - Never harvesting more than a small percentage of a species in one area - Protected and less common species will not be used - Whether opportunity is presented to care take species harvested e.g. to plant their seeds and increase their habitat - See green light plants list
<p>Poisoning via environmental pollution e.g. water plants contaminated by agricultural run off, hedgerow plants affected by chemical pesticides/herbicides. Pollution from heavy metals from cars on roadsides</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The will be access for possible pollution in area for foraging when there is doubt, no harvesting will be carried out. Usually the land owners will have knowledge of the chemicals use on or near their land. Always avoid harvesting from roadsides. ● Educate participants on this matter
<p>Poisoning from plants contaminated from animal defecation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Avoid harvesting from areas of heavy dog walking or only harvest from higher branches ● Educate and bring awareness to this possibility ● Wash foraged food thoroughly
<p>Allergic reactions to new foods (wild foods are more potent than most modern foods. Sometimes people can have a reaction due to intestive de-toxifcation from ingestion of wild food)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medical forms are always required and particular attention given to those with food sensitivities and allergies. These people are more prone to reactions. ● Only a small amount of the wild foods will be ingested
<p>Participants could wrongly identify plants subsequent to session, and be poisoned</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participants will be clearly educated in how to identify plants and be repeatedly tested on their accuracy during on going sessions. ● Children are clearly told not to eat wild food without first checking with a knowledgeable adult

Social media is a powerful tool for sharing information, building relationships, and promoting the work of Circle of Life Rediscovery (CLR). When used responsibly, it helps us connect with communities, partners, and supporters. However, misuse carries risks for safeguarding, confidentiality, and reputation.

Principles

- The safety, privacy, and anonymity of children and young people are our **highest priority**.
 - All use of social media must comply with CLR's **Safeguarding Policy**, the **GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018**, and professional standards.
 - Staff, volunteers, and contractors must remember that even when posting from personal accounts, you may be seen as representing CLR.
-

Do

- Post positively, reflecting CLR's ethos and values.
 - Think before posting — consider how your tone might be interpreted.
 - Use only approved photos and content, ensuring **signed photo consent forms** are in place.
 - Use CLR's official accounts for programme-related updates.
 - Report any online safeguarding concerns (e.g. worrying posts from young people) immediately to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.
 - Seek advice from colleagues if unsure how to handle an online comment or situation.
 - Use two-factor authentication and secure passwords on all CLR accounts.
-

Don't

- Post or respond to anything offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, racist, sexist, or hateful.
- Share confidential or identifying information about participants (e.g. full names, addresses, contact details).
- Post images of children/young people without consent.

- Friend, follow, or privately message young people or participants on personal social media accounts.
 - Post opinions or materials that could damage the reputation of CLR or appear to represent CLR without authorisation.
 - Rush to respond to inappropriate comments — instead, report them to the DSL or Communications Lead.
 - Exchange social media details with young people (e.g. do not add them on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.).
-

Escalation and reporting

All online safeguarding concerns must be reported to the **DSL or Deputy DSL**.

Where serious risk is identified (e.g. self-harm posts), concerns must also be raised with the school/organisation and, if necessary, Children’s Social Care.

The DSL will decide on appropriate further action and record the concern.

23. Volunteer Policy

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC (CLR) greatly values volunteers. They enhance our capacity, bring fresh perspectives, and help us extend opportunities to more people. Volunteers support our ethos of respect for people and the natural world and contribute to our mission of creating inclusive, safe, and inspiring outdoor learning.

Safeguarding and Compliance

- CLR is committed to safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk.
- Volunteers working directly with these groups will require an enhanced DBS check and two references before starting.
- All volunteers receive a safeguarding induction and are expected to follow CLR’s Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Volunteers are covered by CLR’s insurance while undertaking agreed activities.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- CLR welcomes volunteers from all backgrounds and is committed to equality of opportunity in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- We actively seek to create an inclusive environment where volunteers feel respected, supported, and valued.

Training and Support

- Volunteers will receive an induction to CLR's ethos, policies, and procedures.
- Role-specific training and supervision will be provided where appropriate.
- Volunteers can raise concerns, seek support, and access the CLR grievance procedure if needed.

Responsibilities of Volunteers

Volunteers are expected to:

- Be punctual and reliable.
- Respect confidentiality and data protection rules.
- Follow CLR's safeguarding, health & safety, and environmental policies.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- Communicate openly with staff about any issues or concerns.
- Declare any conflicts of interest.

CLR reserves the right to ask a volunteer to leave if their behaviour is inconsistent with CLR's aims and values. Volunteers have a right of appeal under CLR's grievance procedure.

Volunteer Expenses

- Volunteers are entitled to claim out-of-pocket expenses (e.g. travel, subsistence) in line with CLR's staff expenses policy.
- CLR encourages volunteers to claim expenses to ensure fairness and accurate records.
- Volunteers may choose to donate expenses back to CLR (with Gift Aid where possible).

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if legislation or best practice changes.

24. Terms and Conditions (including Cancellation Policy)

These terms and conditions apply to all programmes, training, and events delivered by Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC (CLR). Please read them carefully before booking.

1. Agreement

- Agreement on the basis these terms and conditions arise upon the fulfilment of all of the following: receipt by Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC of a properly completed booking form accompanied by the payment or deposit specified; clearance of the payment or deposit into the bank account.
- Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC reserves the right to refuse a booking, without the need to give reason. In such a circumstance, any payment accompanying the booking will be returned.
- The agreement is between Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC and the client(s) and is the sole

agreement between these two parties.

2. Fees and Payments

Upon receiving your deposit, or full payment your booking is firm.

Deposits for paying participants are non-refundable, unless otherwise stated in writing by Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC.

3. Amendment or Cancellations by CLR

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC will endeavour to accommodate amendments to bookings, however we cannot guarantee that it will be possible. If it is not possible to make an amendment then the original booking remains a firm contract.

Cancellation of a booking or an individual place at our courses are only accepted as written notifications (email or letter). Cancellation takes effect from the date we receive your notification. If the booking is cancelled for any reason, the following cancellation charges will apply:

1. Deposits for paying participants are non-refundable
2. Between 1-2 months prior to start date – a charge of 30% of the total booking fee will be charged.
3. Between 1 month and 1 week's notice – a charge of 50% of the total booking fee will be charged.
4. Less than 1 week's notice – full charge will be made.

CLR may cancel sessions due to:

- Staff illness affecting safe ratios,
- Severe or unsafe weather conditions,
- Force majeure (events outside our reasonable control, such as pandemic restrictions, natural disasters, terrorism, industrial action).

If CLR cancels:

- We will notify clients as early as possible,
- Offer to reschedule where possible,
- Provide a **full refund of fees paid** (excluding non-refundable deposits) if rescheduling is not possible.

CLR is not responsible for travel, accommodation, or other costs incurred due to cancellation.

6. Minimum Numbers

Amendments to bookings which take the number of participants below the minimum course number will not be accepted. Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC reserve the right to cancel a programme if insufficient places have been booked and confirmed.

7. Force Majeure

We will not be liable to pay any compensation if we are forced to cancel or make changes to any aspect of the training due to circumstances beyond our control which we or our partners could not have reasonably foreseen. Such circumstances include, but are not restricted to, war or threat of war, terrorist activity, riots or civil strife, industrial disputes, natural or nuclear disasters, fire, bad weather, closure of airports, ports or stations, cancellation or changes in schedules by air, land or sea carriers.

8. Insurance

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC has full 5 million public liability insurance.

9. Complaints

In the event that a participant(s) has a complaint, Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC would appreciate that it is brought to their attention during the training(s) in order that corrective action can be taken. However, should a problem not be resolved, a complaint should be made in writing within 28 days of the Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC training(s) completion date. To the extent permitted by law, Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC will not be liable in respect of claims first intimated later than 28 days from the close of the relevant course.

10. Photo Consent Form

By signing the photo consent form, that person allows Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC the right to use photos, videos, voice clips and quotes for publishing, funding bids, or any other need we deem necessary. Completion of the photo consent form is optional.

11. Medical Consent via booking form

By signing our booking form, you are agreeing to be responsible for your own well-being. Please advise us of medical issues or health issues prior to booking. This allows us to be sensitive to your needs. These events are attended at your own risk; by signing this agreement you are agreeing that you are responsible for your own well-being.

12. Health

Course participants must expect to be involved in adventurous and sometimes strenuous activities. No previous training or experience is required but you must be of good general health. We can take no responsibility in the event of any ailment or aggravation of ailment suffered either during or after the course which arises from an undeclared injury or illness. Circle of Life Rediscovery states that woodlands & other habitats are potentially dangerous places & may cause harm. Whilst we alert participant(s) to these possible dangers it is impossible to list all such hazards & dangers.

The following requires the most specific attention:

- Participant(s) agree they are fully aware that there may be risks involved during a Circle of Life Rediscovery programme/training even under the safest conditions. Whilst we will take every effort possible to minimise risk and ensure a safe environment the participant(s) hereby agree to accept full responsibility & assume all risk(s), including those

caused by acts of God, of injury, death &/or loss to his/her person &/or property, knowingly & voluntarily.

- Participants must disclose relevant medical or accessibility needs at the time of booking. CLR will take reasonable steps to support these needs but cannot guarantee participation in all activities.
- Outdoor activities involve managed risk. CLR takes all reasonable steps to minimise risks through qualified staff, risk assessments, and safety briefings.

12 . Behaviour

We reserve the right to exclude any participant before or after the course start, if we have not been fully advised regarding personal details/issues, and if in the opinion of the course director if his/her behaviour is incompatible with other participants. If this happens, the booker will be liable for all additional incurred or claims from third parties, and we will not be liable for compensation. So please inform us properly so that we can fully present for all the attendees.

12. Changes to These Terms

CLR reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions where necessary. Updated terms will be published on our website

Compiled by Marina Robb, Director

Tel: 01273- 814226/ 07966514469

Email: info@circleofliferediscovery.com

25. Whistleblowing Policy

1. Purpose

CLR is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, and accountability. We expect all staff, volunteers, contractors, and trustees to conduct themselves in line with CLR's values and safeguarding responsibilities.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage staff and volunteers to raise concerns about malpractice, wrongdoing, or risk at an early stage.
- Provide clear channels for reporting concerns.
- Protect whistleblowers from victimisation or retaliation.

- Ensure CLR responds to concerns fairly, promptly, and in the best interests of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

2. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing, risk, or malpractice within an organisation.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Safeguarding concerns (e.g. a colleague's behaviour towards children).
- Unsafe working practices or serious health and safety risks.
- Criminal activity or suspected fraud.
- Failure to comply with legal obligations.
- Covering up wrongdoing or malpractice.
- Discrimination, harassment, or abuse.

This policy applies whether the concern is about staff, volunteers, contractors, or trustees.

3. Safeguarding First

If a child or vulnerable adult is at **immediate risk of harm**, staff must follow CLR's Safeguarding Policy and contact:

- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** or Deputy DSL.
- If unavailable, the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** or Children's Social Care.
- If a crime has been committed or someone is in immediate danger, dial **999**.

4. How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should normally be raised with:

- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.
- If the concern relates to the DSL or senior management, it should be raised with the **Chair of the Board of Directors**.
- If you feel unable to raise the concern internally, you can contact:

- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**
- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line** – 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk.
- **Ofsted (if relevant)** – 0300 123 4666.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. You should provide as much detail as possible, including:

- What the concern is.
- Dates, times, and people involved.
- Why do you believe it to be a concern?

5. Protection for Whistleblowers

- CLR will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of anyone raising concerns in good faith.
- You will not suffer any disadvantage, even if the concern is not proven, provided it was raised honestly and reasonably.
- Your identity will be kept confidential wherever possible, though it may need to be shared if required by law.

6. How CLR Will Respond

- All concerns will be taken seriously and acknowledged within **5 working days**.
- An initial assessment will be made to decide next steps (investigation, referral, or other action).
- The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome, as far as confidentiality allows.
- If the concern involves safeguarding, CLR will follow statutory child protection procedures.

7. Malicious Allegations

This policy must not be used to make knowingly false or malicious allegations. Any such behaviour may be treated as misconduct and dealt with under disciplinary procedures.

8. Other Policies with reference to CLR internal policies, ITC Awarding body, Staffing and Recruitment - Please get in contact if you would like to receive these policies.

- CLR's Complaints Policy
- CLR Conflict of Interest
- CLR Customer Charter
- CLR Learning-Appeals Procedures

- Malpractice and Maladministration
- Registration and Certification of Learners
- Internal Quality Assurance Policy
- CLR Associate Agreement
- Public liability
- Professional Indemnity
- Employers Liability

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes.

Reviewed by Marina Robb, Director (October 2025) Next review date: October 2027

Appendix 1 - Communication with Schools

What the children do.

Some of the activities will always be available. Forest School is child led, so allows them to participate in what they are most interested in.

Activities can include:

- * Make tangible crafts from natural resources to take home.
- * Whittling sticks & making fire, using matches & fire steels.
- * Nature awareness games, which develop movement skills.
- * Using imagination, playing pretend with things they find.
- * Looking at flora & fauna in their natural environment.
- * Using blindfolds to discover other senses, enhancing perception.
- * Learn how to safely use hand tools such as peelers & palm drills.
- * Sawing wood with bow saws & fixed blade saws & knives.
- * Forage, cook & eat as a group.
- * Climbing trees & jumping off logs.
- * Tying knots to make things work.
- * Making dens & tracking animals.
- * Jumping in puddles & mud.

“Forest school has not only developed their self-awareness, communication & physical skills, but also provided a stimulus for imaginative writing, speaking & listening.” –Class Teacher



What will your school need to provide?

- * The Forest School ethos.
- * Available members of staff to work alongside the Forest School Leader & volunteers, providing high ratio of adults to children
- * Medical information particular to children's conditions.
- * Clothing: the children will need waterproofs, wellies, sunhats/ woolly hats, gloves & scarves, coats/jumpers.

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Forest Schools A Guide for your School



“The children are always so excited to be going to Forest School. I have seen timid children become brave & children who struggle to communicate become eager to speak & full of things to say.

I have seen children start to notice their world around them & make links to their experiences that they have not been able to do before. We have all loved it & seen amazing results in writing & creativity.”

Head of Early Years & Literacy Coordinator

"A 2008 Ofsted report that looked at a sample of schools providing opportunities to learn outside the classroom found that, when implemented well, those opportunities contributed significantly to raising the standards & improving pupils' personal, social & emotional development."

—The Guardian Dec 2012

What is Forest School?

- * Forest Schools are based on outdoor nature schools in Denmark. In Forest Schools, children learn & play outdoors in a natural space. They visit the outdoor setting regularly over weeks or months. It aims to promote a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences.
- * When children learn outdoors, they develop in lots of ways all at once. The learning is very secure, & they get the opportunity to exercise mind bodies & hearts!

How the children are kept safe.

- Circle of Life Rediscovery's Forest School leaders are all very experienced Teachers. Risk assessments are always undertaken before entering the area.
- * There is a high practitioner/adult to learner ratio. The Forest School Leader is first aid trained.
- * Children are taught how to keep themselves safe & practice some of the procedures as games at the start of each session. They are encouraged to look out for their classmates as part of learning together.
- * Risky activities are carefully observed by the staff & are part of the children learning to take responsibility.
- * The children are asked to wash their hands before any cooking or eating.



"I watched those red ants move their eggs to a new home."
-Participant

What are the benefits?

- * *Health & Fitness*— Taking part in regular physical activity such as running, climbing, pulling branches & digging, makes children stronger, fitter & develops stamina.
- * *Social Development*— Through an increased awareness of the consequences of actions on other people, they acquire the ability to undertake activities with others, either by sharing tools & tasks or by taking part in co-operative play.
- * *Language & Communication*— Working on challenges with adults & other children helps children's communication skills by helping them to learn new words & sort out how to explain things clearly.
- * *Skills development*— Forest School enhances co-ordination & helps to develop fine and gross motor skills through the use of tools, structure building & free movement.
- * *Risk Taking*— Enables children to take risks, & helps them manage these risks in a safe & secure environment. This is shown to enhance creativity & help build relationships.
- * *Increased Self Esteem*— The child has the ability to choose the activities they want to do, independence is encouraged.
- * *Building Confidence*— Children know that they CAN do new things & that they CAN ask for help from each other & the adults around them. They have time, space & freedom.
- * *Motivation & Concentration* — Children become keen to participate in exploratory, learning & play activities. They focus on specific tasks, concentrating for extended periods of time.
- * *Curriculum Links*— Forest School supports many areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, National Curriculum & the Every Child Matters agenda. Children are encouraged to lead their own learning.



"My favourite thing was all of it! I've enjoyed every single thing we've done, but I want to do it forever." -Participant

What your child needs:

Your child needs to feel 'just right' in all weathers.

- * Wellies – it can be really muddy summer or winter.
- * Sunhat in summer or woolly hat in winter.
- * Gloves in the winter.
- * Thick trousers/coat/jumpers according to the weather.
- * Waterproofs.
- * Clothes they don't mind getting dirty!

"I love Forest School because we splashed in muddy puddles!" – Participant

How can you help?

- * Put the dates for Forest Schools on your fridge, calendar, or notice board.
- * Make sure your child is wearing the right clothes for the weather.
- * Listen to what your child is learning.
- * Take your child to play outside at the weekend.
- * Support Forest School by fundraising or supplying wood!



If you want any further information, please contact us:
 Email us: info@circleofliferediscovery.com
 Call us: 07966 514469
 Visit our website: www.circleofliferediscovery.com



Forest Schools
 A Guide for Parents



"The children are always so excited to be going to Forest School. I have seen timid children become brave & children who struggle to communicate become eager to speak & full of things to say. I have seen children start to notice their world around them & make links to their experiences that they have not been able to do before. We have all loved it & seen amazing results in writing & creativity."

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What is Forest School?

- * Forest Schools are based on outdoor nature schools in Denmark. In Forest Schools, children learn & play outdoors in a natural space. They visit the outdoor setting regularly over weeks or months. It aims to promote a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences.
- * When children learn outdoors, they develop in lots of ways all at once. The learning they do is very secure, & they get the opportunity to exercise mind, bodies & hearts!

What are the benefits?

- * **Health & Fitness**– Taking part in regular physical activity such as running, climbing, pulling branches & digging, makes children stronger, fitter & develops stamina.
- * **Social Development**– Through an increase in consequences of actions on other people, children undertake activities with others, either taking part in co-operative play.
- * **Language & Communication**– Working on challenges with adults & other children helps children's communication skills. They learn new words & sort out how to explain things clearly.
- * **Increased Self Esteem**– The child has the ability to choose the activities they want to do, independence is encouraged.
- * **Skills development**– Forest School enhances co-ordination & helps to develop fine and gross motor skills through the use of tools, structure building & free movement.
- * **Building Confidence**– Children know that they CAN do new things & that they CAN ask for help from each other & the adults around them. They have time, space & freedom.
- * **Risk Taking**– Enables children to take risks, & helps them manage these risks in a safe & secure environment. This is shown to enhance creativity & help build relationships.
- * **Motivation & Concentration** – Children become keen to participate in exploratory, learning & play activities. They focus on specific tasks, concentrating for extended periods of time.



What your child will be doing.

Some of the activities will always be available, but Forest School is child led, & allows them to participate in what they are most interested in. Activities can include:

- * Make tangible crafts from natural resources to take home.
- * Whittling sticks & making fire, using matches & fire steels.
- * Nature awareness games, which develop movement skills.
- * Using imagination, playing pretend with things they find.
- * Looking at flora & fauna in their natural environment.
- * Using blindfolds to discover other senses, enhancing perception.
- * Learn how to safely use hand tools such as peelers & palm drills.
- * Sawing wood with bow saws & fixed blade saws & knives.
- * Forage, cook & eat as a group.
- * Climbing trees & jumping off logs.
- * Tying knots to make things work.
- * Making dens & tracking animals.
- * Jumping in puddles & mud.

How your child is kept safe.

Circle of Life Rediscovery's Forest School leaders are all very experienced Teachers. Risk assessments are always undertaken before entering an area.

- * There is a high practitioner/adult to learner ratio. The Forest School Leader is trained in first aid.
- * Children are taught how to keep themselves safe & practice some of the procedures as games at the start of each session. They are encouraged to look out for their classmates as part of learning together.
- * Risky activities are carefully observed by the staff & are part of the children learning to take responsibility.



"Forest school has not only developed their self-awareness, communication & physical skills, but also provided a stimulus for imaginative writing, speaking & listening." Class Teacher

What sort of activities will they do?

Some of the activities will always be available, but Forest School is child led, & allows them to participate in what they are most interested in.

Activities can include:

- * Make tangible crafts from natural resources to take home.
- * Whittling sticks & making fire, using matches & fire steels.
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- * Tying knots to make things work.
- * Making dens & tracking animals.
- * Jumping in puddles & mud.

**"I watched those red ants move their eggs to a new home."
-Participant**

What will you need?

- * Lunch! During the session you may do some cooking but you should always bring your own lunch.
- * Warm clothes, jumpers, hats, gloves & scarves as you will be outside all day.
- * Sunhats during the summer.
- * Waterproof trousers & coat.



"A 2008 Ofsted report that looked at a sample of schools providing opportunities to learn outside the classroom found that, when implemented well, those opportunities contributed significantly to raising the standards and improving pupils' personal, social and emotion development."

-The Guardian December 2012

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**Forest Schools
A Guide for Volunteers**



"The children are always so excited to be going to Forest School. I have seen timid children become brave & children who struggle to communicate become eager to speak & full of things to say. I have seen children start to notice their world around them & make links to their experiences that they have not been able to do before. We have all loved it & seen amazing results in writing & creativity."

-Head of Early Years & Literacy Coordinator

What is Forest School?

- * Forest Schools are based on outdoor nature schools in Denmark. In Forest Schools, children learn & play outdoors in a natural space. They visit the outdoor setting regularly over weeks or months. It aims to promote a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences.
- * When children learn outdoors, they develop in lots of ways all at once. The learning is very secure, & they get the opportunity to exercise mind bodies & hearts all at once!

What will your role be?

- * Join in! You will help by modelling good behaviour & by listening to the children.
- * Help the children to remember the rules by praising them for doing the right thing.
- * Watch the children & ensure that the boundaries & guidelines are understood.
- * Assisted the Forest School Leader in activities.
- * You will be one of two assistants.

What is the outline of a normal session?

All sessions vary, but at the beginning of each you will be told by the Forest School Leader the outline of that day's session. Here is a general outline of one session:

- * Children arrive, & before entering the area will be told about certain health & safety procedures, you will speak about what they need to be careful of in the area e.g. brambles.
- * Play an introduction game, which generally involves learning each other's names & helping the children to feel comfortable.
- * Gather around the fire circle, & introduce the main activity of the session that will normally involve tools.
- * Allow the children plenty of time to go off to play & explore.

"Forest school has not only developed their self-awareness, communication & physical skills, but also provided a stimulus for imaginative writing, speaking & listening."—Class Teacher



What are the benefits of Forest School for the children?

- * *Health & Fitness*—allow the children to run around freely.
- * *Language & Communication*—encourage positive conversations about their experiences.
- * *Building Confidence*—allow the children to practice skills like climbing & balancing. Encourage them to do things for themselves such as showing safe routes or handholding.
- * *Risk Taking*—Forest School supports risk taking in a secure & safe environment.
- * *Skills development*
- * *Increased Self Esteem*
- * *Motivation & Concentration*
- * *Curriculum Links*
- * *Social Development*



"My favourite thing was all of it! I've enjoyed every single thing we've done, but I want to do it forever."—Participant

How we keep the children safe.

The Forest School Leader from Circle of Life Rediscovery will be extremely experienced, & if you ever have any problems, talk to the leader as they are trained to deal with most situations.

- * The leader will have a first aid kit, & is first aid trained
- * The leader will carry a copy of the emergency plan, which sets out clear instructions in the case of an accident.
- * You will be made aware of where the first aid kit & emergency plan is kept.
- * Risk assessments are always undertaken before entering the area.
- * There is a high practitioner/adult to learner ratio.
- * We aim to teach the children how to keep themselves safe & practice some of the procedures as games at the start of each session. We encourage them to look out for classmates.
- * Whenever there are risky activities, you will always be there to observe.

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Appendix 4 – HELP+T Scripts and Strategies

When responding to behaviour:

- Avoid blame or judgement. Use the child's name and calm, neutral statements.
- Use supportive scripts such as:
 - "Jon, I can see this is hard right now. I'm here to help."
 - "You're safe. Let's slow down together."
 - "We can work this out when you're ready."

During escalation:

- Ensure the environment is safe and remove immediate risks.
- Use calm body language: open posture, gentle tone, non-threatening proximity.
- Avoid "why" questions — instead use "what" or "how" questions later when calm.
- Give choices that support autonomy and dignity: "You can sit with me here, or walk over to the log circle."
- Allow processing time and silence.

If physical intervention is required

- Only staff trained in safe handling techniques may intervene, and only as a last resort to prevent imminent harm.
- Use supportive language: "I need to keep you safe right now."
- Debrief with staff afterwards.

After escalation (regulation and reassurance):

- Reassure: stay nearby, calm presence, no judgement.
- Monitor for signs of readiness to talk; don't force engagement.
- Offer sensory or movement breaks.

Follow-up (reflect and restore):

- Timing: wait until learner and staff are regulated.
- Environment: neutral, calm, ideally outdoors.
- Process:
 - Listen with openness.
 - Validate feelings and experiences.
 - Explore together what can help in future.
 - Agree simple strategies to support regulation next time.