



Elements Outdoor Learning Health and Safety Policy

Policy statement

We believe that the health and safety of children is of paramount importance. We make our setting a safe and healthy place for children, parents, staff and volunteers.

Essential training and certifications

- ❖ All members of staff that work at Elements Outdoor Learning (Elements) have a current enhanced DBS check prior to starting work. The Elements Leader has completed a 16hr outdoor first aid course and a safeguarding course through the NSPCC. Other members of staff are up to date with current safeguarding practise and are working in line with Elements' safeguarding policies and procedures.
- ❖ All equipment, learning activities and the outdoor site have been thoroughly risk assessed and parents/guardians/carers are welcome to view these risk assessments by contacting the Elements director.
- ❖ Elements has Public Liability insurance and Employer's Liability insurance and certificates are available for parents/guardians/carers to view if they so wish.

Dynamic Risk Assessments

- ❖ In addition to written risk assessments for the site, activities and equipment, the lead practitioner and facilitators carry out dynamic risk assessments on site throughout the day.
- ❖ Conditions considered include weather, ground conditions, group dynamics, age and ability of children and fatigue.
- ❖ Activities are modified, paused or stopped if risks become unacceptable.

Tree Climbing

- ❖ Tree climbing is a valued activity that supports physical development and risk-awareness.

- ❖ Our normal limit for climbing is 1.5–2 m above ground level, under close adult supervision.
- ❖ Children are never lifted or pressured to climb higher than they feel safe.
- ❖ All climbing areas are checked before use; ground beneath is cleared of sticks, stones or other hazards.
- ❖ An adult is always positioned near the tree when children climb; a second adult is close by when a child is above 1.5 m.
- ❖ **Three points of contact** (two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand) are reinforced at the start of each session and monitored during climbing.
- ❖ **Post-incident note:** Following the incident on 01/10/2025, Elements has returned to a strict 2 m maximum height for all sessions.

First Aid

- ❖ A qualified outdoor first aider will always be onsite with a fully stocked and in date first aid kit. Staff will administer prescribed medications only with written consent from parents/guardians/carers. Medicines need to be in their original container with precise information on dosage and timings written and signed by the child's GP.
- ❖ The Administering Medicine Policy to be adhered to if necessary.

Rope Swings and Similar Equipment

In line with insurer requirements:

- ❖ Rope and attachment are checked for strength before each session by pulling firmly.
- ❖ Rope is checked for fraying or damage and replaced if needed.
- ❖ The supporting tree is inspected for suitability.
- ❖ The highest likely swing point will not exceed 2 m above ground level.
- ❖ The potential fall zone is cleared of sharp objects or hazards.
- ❖ Supervision is one child at a time.

Pond Activities

- ❖ Children in ponds or streams are under continuous adult supervision at a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 10 children.
- ❖ Group size and ratios are adjusted for the needs of participants and conditions on the day.

Weather

- ❖ Weather conditions are important for outdoor learning sessions. Local weather forecasts will be checked prior to the session using the met office website. Sessions where there is a possibility of extreme wind and/or lightning will be cancelled, and parents/guardians/carers will be notified.
- ❖ If windy or wet, planned activities at learning stations will be set up under cover or swapped for more appropriate activities.
- ❖ Climbing on logs, trees, rocks, will be limited if deemed too slippery due to rain or ice.
- ❖ Children and staff to wear appropriate clothing for each season and weather condition.
- ❖ Children to bring in spare clothes, waterproofs and wellington boots. some spare clothes and wellington boots to be available on site if required.

Within the setting

- ❖ Extensive daily checks, including tree safety checks, tools/equipment and tents, are carried out prior to children arriving and any potential dangers or hazards, including rubbish, animal droppings and sharp objects, are cleared away or cordoned off.
- ❖ Children are made aware of safety risks at the start of each session and clear setting boundaries are visible. Children understand they are to stay within the boundaries at all times, unless with a member of staff.
- ❖ Adults and children are alerted to the dangers of poisonous plants and any overgrown plants that pose potential risks will be pruned back and children will be reminded of the safety rules, e.g. no picking or putting woodland flora into mouths. Any areas with nettles will be shown to the children and staff will remind children not to touch them unless they have been taught how to do this safely and show competence. Suitable clothing, i.e. long trousers and sleeves, is advised in the woodland to minimise risks.
- ❖ Staff check that suitable outdoor clothing is worn and that spare clothes are brought in. Parents/guardians/carers will be asked to send children in with suncream and bug spray applied and sunhats. Children are to bring their own suncream and bug spray to apply throughout the day if required. Winter hats and gloves are necessary in the colder months to keep the children warm.

- ❖ Children are supervised at all times and headcounts/risk assessments will be ongoing throughout the day.

Hygiene

- ❖ We seek information from the Public Health England to ensure that we keep up to date with the latest recommendations.
- ❖ Our daily routines encourage children to learn about personal hygiene. Children and staff are required to wash their hands with soap, at our handwashing station, before snack and lunch times and after toileting.
- ❖ There is a schedule for cleaning equipment, dressing-up clothes and fabrics.

Toileting

- ❖ There are 2 separate public toilets available to use at the nature reserve as well as a portable toilet enclosed within a tent on site.
- ❖ Toilets will be cleaned and checked regularly throughout the day.
- ❖ Tissues, soap and water will be available.

Ticks, Bites and Stings

- ❖ Children and staff are required to wear appropriate clothing for the woodland. Ticks are often found on the floor of the woodland and the woodland flora, so covering up with trousers and long sleeves will reduce the likelihood of acquiring a tick bite. Parents/guardians/carers encouraged to check for ticks at the end of each day.
- ❖ Staff to be aware of any known allergies to insect bites or stings and refer to the Administering of Medicine Policy if required.

Water

- ❖ Safe drinking water will be brought into the setting in water containers for the use of hand washing and extra drinking water if required.

- ❖ Ground within the setting that has pools of still water will be forked, if safe to do so, to improve drainage or cordoned off if drainage is not adequate.
- ❖ Any used water in Elements' containers at the end of the day will be tipped out around the woodland in different areas, targeting water run off areas to reduce potential soil erosion or water collecting in pools.

Activities, resources and repairs

- ❖ Before purchase or loan, we check equipment and resources to ensure that they are safe for the ages and stages of the children currently attending the setting.
- ❖ We keep a full inventory of all tools in the setting for audit and insurance purposes.
- ❖ The layout of our equipment allows adults and children to move safely and freely between activities.
- ❖ All our equipment is regularly checked for cleanliness and safety, and any dangerous items are repaired or discarded.
- ❖ Physical play is constantly supervised.
- ❖ We teach children to handle and store tools safely.
- ❖ Children learn about health, safety and personal hygiene through the activities we provide and the routines we follow.
- ❖ Any faulty equipment is removed from use and is repaired. If it cannot be repaired it is discarded.

First Aid

- A qualified outdoor first aider is always on site with a fully stocked and in-date first aid kit.
- A second first aid kit will be kept near climbing or higher-risk activity areas.
- Staff will administer prescribed medicines only with written parental consent, in the original container, and following the Administering Medicine Policy.

Emergency Response

- ❖ Emergency services will be called immediately if a child shows any of the following:
 - Loss of consciousness
 - Suspected head or spinal injury
 - Visible deformity
 - Severe or uncontrolled pain or bleeding
 - Is unwilling (not consenting) or unable to move after a fall
- ❖ Children will not be moved unless necessary for immediate safety.

Incident, Accident and Near-Miss Reporting

- ❖ All incidents and near-misses are recorded in writing on the day.
- ❖ Parents/guardians are informed as soon as possible after any incident affecting their child.
- ❖ Serious incidents (e.g. those requiring hospital treatment) are reported to Ofsted within 14 days and to the HSE under RIDDOR without delay.
- ❖ The insurer is notified promptly of any incident that might lead to a claim.

Safety of adults

- ❖ We ensure that adults are provided with guidance about the safe storage, movement, lifting and erection of large pieces of equipment.
- ❖ We record the sickness of staff and their involvement in accidents. The records are reviewed termly to identify any issues that need to be addressed.
- ❖ Other children will be moved to a safe, supervised area by another adult.

This policy was adopted by

Elements Outdoor Learning

On

07/10/2025

Date to be reviewed

10/26

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory

Saira Court