



Forest School Training Handbook

September 2026

Land and Leaf Collective Forest School Training at Wilder Doddington

What is Forest School?

Forest School focuses on the holistic development of participants, through exploration and play, engaging people of all ages through long term activities in a woodland setting. We explore the natural world through the changing seasons; learning how we impact upon and are affected by the natural world around us. Getting outdoors we build community through games and activities whilst developing practical skills and knowledge. Through managing risk, problem solving and using their own initiative to work with others, participants establish and grow in confidence, self-esteem and motivation. Forest Schools ethos is really about stripping back to more simple ways of working to empower children (and adults) to make positive changes both for themselves and the wider community.

Where are the sessions?

The sessions take place in a beautiful ancient 500 year old woodland at Strunch Hill Wood, Doddington Estate, Lincoln, LN6 4RU. The wood is situated roughly a 10 to 15 minute walk from the car park passing through parkland where you may spot wildlife en route and seasonal wildflowers in Donkey Close. The woodland has a good diversity of trees, shrubs and plants allowing exploration and opportunities to learn about the environment.



How to find us:

Address – Strunch Hill Wood, Doddington Estate, Lincoln, LN6 4RU
WhatThreeWords Location: [bloom.dreamer.calms](https://www.what3words.com/bloom.dreamer.calms)

We encourage participants to walk, cycle and use public transport wherever possible. The Georgie Twigg Track links Doddington Hall with the National Cycle Network Route 64 from the centre of Lincoln which is tarmacked and entirely off road. For those who need to drive, parking is available at the back of the Grain store cafe. From here the pathway is easy to follow to the wood.

There are limited parking spaces in a private area near to Strunch Hill Wood which is prioritised for anyone with accessibility needs. Please contact the Forest School Leader prior to the session if you need to park here. If you use this parking area please park considerately and ensure space for others.

Please take care when entering the woodland and stick to the pathways.

What happens at forest school groups?

Forest school programmes are delivered in line with six guiding principles, which were agreed by the UK Forest School community in 2011.

During forest school sessions we gather together to share stories, songs and explore the natural environment. We enjoy nature craft activities and games. Parent and child groups introduce children and families to nature play and activities based on forest school principles. Forest School Leaders use a cycle of observation, reflection and planning to support the holistic development of participants. Sessions are based around building confidence, developing skills and learning about the natural resources around us. Forest School Leader training will equip you with the skills to lead your own forest school programmes with a diverse range of groups.

WARNING - Your child is likely to get muddy; and enjoy it!

The role of supporting adults at Forest School sessions

Forest School practitioners intentionally share power acting as facilitators not teachers, focussing on the process of learning not the product. Sessions are learner centred and designed to guide children towards independence, resilience, creativity and self confidence. Ways to support participants include:

- Ensure that participants are able to clearly communicate.
- Step back to observe and listen.
- Support appropriate risk taking, following dynamic risk assessment.
- Don't focus on outcomes.
- Support engagement. Be aware that engagement looks different for different children

Principles and Criteria for Good Practice

Principle One:

Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

Principle Two:

Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

Principle Three:

Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

Principle Four:

Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Principle Five:

Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

Principle Six:

Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

Clothing requirements

Please ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the weather. Forest School training will take place in all weathers except high winds (40mph or above) or storms. If you are dressed inappropriately they will not be able to enjoy the session and fully experience the sessions.

- Cold weather - loose thin layers that can trap warmth. Warm boots, hats, gloves and a thick outer layer.
- Wet weather - waterproof boots and outer layer. Hat and gloves.
- Hot weather - thin clothes with arms and legs covered if possible i.e. leggings and t-shirt (to protect from scratches etc. Sunhat).

Communication

It is vital that forest school trainers and trainees communicate effectively and efficiently. Contact details of all course participants are collected at the start of the programme and are available for the forest school trainer to contact with extra information throughout the course. We create WhatsApp groups for all course cohorts to share information, photographs and resources. The forest school trainer will be available to discuss any matters or concerns at the end of any session. If any parties need to contact the forest school trainer please email: Kat@landandleafcollective.org

Alternatively, telephone 07813079083.

Communication will be by email except in urgent situations, such as the closure of the group due to high winds or other event, when parties will be contacted by WhatsApp and/or telephone.

Trainees are asked to complete a brief registration form with medical information and contact information at the start of the programme. Permission for photographs will be sought on this form.

Trainees are asked to give ongoing evaluation and feedback through talking, stories and reflective activities.

If you have any concerns or comments the forest school trainer is happy to discuss any aspects of the course either in person or over the phone.

If you would like to discuss any issues with the forest school trainer you can email Land and Leaf Collective directors: Steffi - admin@landandleafcollective.org or Lisa - lisa@landandleafcollective.org

Complaints Procedure

Land and Leaf Collective aims to provide high quality services which meet your needs. We believe we achieve this most of the time: if we are not getting it right please let us know. In order to ensure our services remain at a high and improving standard, we have a procedure through which you can let us know if for any reason you are not satisfied with your dealings with us.

If you are not happy with Land and Leaf Collective please tell us.

Initial complaint

If you are unhappy about any Land and Leaf Collective service, please speak to the relevant volunteer, staff member, or director. If you are unhappy with an individual in Land and Leaf Collective sometimes it is best to tell them directly. If you feel this is difficult or inappropriate, then speak to the volunteer's supervisor or a director. Often we will be able to give you a response straight away. When the matter is more complicated, we will give you an initial response within five working days. If your concern cannot be resolved informally within five working days, we will escalate it to a formal complaint process.

Accessibility and Support for Complainants

We are committed to ensuring our complaints process is accessible to all individuals, in line with the Equality Act 2010. If you require any adjustments or support to make a complaint, such as alternative formats, language interpretation, or an advocate, please let us know.

Making a written complaint

If you are not satisfied with our response or wish to raise the matter more formally, please write to the director/ board of directors (If your complaint is about a director, please write to the other director(s)). All written complaints will be logged. You will receive a written acknowledgement within five working days. The aim is to investigate your complaint properly and give you a reply within ten working days, setting out how the problem will be dealt with. If this is not possible, an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered. If you are not satisfied with the formal response within ten working days, you may request a review by an independent party or escalate further as outlined below.

All information provided in the complaints process will be handled in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Your data will only be used for the purposes of investigating and responding to your complaint.

Complaints Involving Safeguarding Issues

If your complaint relates to a safeguarding issue involving an adult or child, this will be immediately referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with our safeguarding policies.

Complaints to the regulator of community interest companies

If after we have responded you are not satisfied, the next step is to complain to the regulator of community interest companies. Information on how to complain to the CIC regulator can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-regulator-of-community-interest-companies/about/complaints-procedure#how-to-complain-about-a-cic>

CIC regulator 1st Floor Companies House Crown Way Cardiff CF14 3UZ
Email cicregulator@companieshouse.gov.uk

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

WOODLAND SAFETY

Policy Statement

Forest school happens in the same place throughout the year, however as part of the natural environment the space will change through the seasons with different risks and challenges at different times of the year. Trainees are encouraged to take appropriate risks as part of the forest school training. These risks will vary between individuals and session to session. The forest school trainer is responsible for identifying and managing dangerous hazards within the sessions.

Procedure

NO PICK - NO LICK - CAREFUL HOW YOU CARRY A STICK!

The woodland is home to a wide variety of plants. Some may be protected, others may be harmful to humans. We follow a sustainable approach to foraging for both food and natural resources. We recognise the potential impact of Forest School activities on the sites that we use.

We ensure that the work that we do encourages trainees to develop respect and care for the natural world, maintains the sustainable use of woodlands and enhances their biodiversity and ecological value. We achieve this through educating the trainees who use the woodland and by taking steps to protect, conserve and develop diversity within the flora and fauna of the woodland. We do not collect any species protected under schedule 8 of the act, nor do we use any part of invasive plants listed in schedule 9.

Water is provided to wash hands before food consumption.

TREE CLIMBING

Tree climbing provides an opportunity to allow individuals to learn to manage and assess risk. As with any climbing on playground equipment, climbing trees can entail significant risks, resulting in injury or death. Factors increasing risks associated with tree climbing include:

- Climbing above hard surfaces such as stone paths and fences
- Climbing in areas out of sight of a supervising adult
- Taking ropes or other equipment up a tree
- Lack of education for children about tree-climbing risks
- Fighting or dangerous play at height
- Climbing on weak or dead branches.

To ensure safe tree climbing:

- Climbing areas should not be surface-dressed in any way (e.g. with woodchip). Surface-dressing introduces a significant risk in itself by insulating the root system and thereby infecting the roots, weakening the tree and increasing the likelihood of the tree collapsing.
- Adults maintain supervision – more regular for younger children, especially in their first few Forest School sessions.
- Children must check that the ground is clear of any sharp dangers and test weak branches will support their weight, by stepping on it (or grabbing it) at a point far away from the tree's trunk.
- Children should climb with a partner visible and aware so one child may fetch an adult if another gets into any difficulties, with only one child climbing in the tree at any time.
- Children must climb within their capabilities, being aware that coming down can be much harder than getting up. If it doesn't feel right then stop!

- The rule of 3 points of contact must be adhered to; There are four points on your body that come in contact with the tree's branches: two hands and two feet. At least three of these points should be supported by branches at all times.
- Children must not climb into neighbouring trees, over any pond/stream or other water features, or onto branches thinner than the diameter of their leg.
- Clothing must be appropriate and loose items, such as hoods, tucked in.
- Rope and other materials must not be taken up into trees.
- Yew trees must not be climbed as ingesting their leaves or seeds may prove extremely harmful or even fatal.
- Supervising adults may exercise their judgement to intervene if they deem it appropriate to do so.

TOOL SAFETY

Using tools is an important aspect of forest school as it enables children to learn new skills and develop self confidence. All tools are maintained by the forest school leader and inspected prior to the session to ensure safety. Trainees are taught how to use each tool safely and respectfully. All tools have specific guidelines for use. Trainees are responsible for following these guidelines as instructed by the forest school trainer. Trainees must demonstrate competency with the tool and ability to teach how to use it safely in an observed assessment.

- Tools are kept in the tool box and removed by the forest school trainer.
- All tools must be used two arms and a tool length away from other people.
- Knives and bow saws have blade covers which must be replaced when no longer in use.
- All tools must be returned to the forest school trainer who will return them to the tool box.
- All tools must be counted back into the box at the end of the session.
- A list of tools is kept in the box for reference.

FIRE SAFETY

The use of fire is integral to forest school and will often be a component of sessions. Fires are used for warmth, heating liquids, cooking food and to provide opportunities for participants to learn new skills and develop self confidence.

Trainees are taught how to collect fuel for the fire and are involved in building the fire. An open fire is lit within a fire circle, the boundaries of which are never crossed other than to tend to the fire or reach pots on the fire. The wider fire circle is a place to sit and join communal activities. The outer fire circle is accessed by walking around the perimeter, never within the circle. The lighting and use of fire has specific guidelines as instructed by the forest school trainer. Trainees are responsible for following these guidelines as instructed.

- Fire lighting activities only take place within the fire circle.
- Fuel is to be placed carefully onto the fire. Sticks are not held into and removed from the fire.
- Walk carefully around the perimeter of the wider fire circle.
- Fuel is to be laid ready for use a safe distance from the fire.
- Fire gloves to be worn at all times when cooking over the fire.
- Kelly kettle and rocket stove to be used only under close supervision of the forest school leader.
- Young children must be closely supervised in the fire circle area.
- Plunge bucket of water is kept close to the fire circle in case of minor burns or scalds.
- The fire is to be extinguished carefully under supervision of the forest school leader at the end of the session.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Food preparation may be part of forest school sessions. Participants are encouraged to share food together during the session. Health and hygiene and safe food preparation practices are followed in the woodland.

A table is provided for food preparation. The forest school leader cleans the table prior to every session. Soapy water is provided to wash hands and a washing up bowl for dirty pots and utensils.

- Food is to be cut/prepared on the provided chopping boards.
- Participants are asked to prepare only vegetarian food in the woodland to minimise risks of poisoning from meat products. Cooked meat and pre-prepared dairy is ok.
- Sharp knives are stored in the basket out of reach of children.
- Young children are to be closely supervised when preparing food.
- Hot soapy water is provided to wash up at the end of the session.

RISKS AND BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Assessing and taking appropriate risk is an important aspect of forest school. Participants develop confidence and self esteem when they face challenges which they are able to solve and overcome. Children, and adults, face risks in everyday life. Learning to assess and approach risks safely and appropriately is a vital developmental skill.

Risk/benefit assessments are carried out by the forest school leader to ensure safety during the sessions and specific activities. Copies of these risk assessments are available in the site handbook. The woodland is visually risk assessed by the forest school trainer prior to the session to identify any changes to the area and potential hazards. Trainees are made aware of any hazards and advised how to proceed by the forest school trainer.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Unexpected Closure of Forest School Sessions

Very occasionally it may not be possible to run a session. Forest School training happens all year round and in all weathers except high winds (40mph and above) and storms. In the case that forest school training is cancelled, trainees will be notified on the day by telephone.

Reporting Accidents and Incidents

Accident and incident records, including any follow-up actions, are maintained in the **bump book** located in the main first aid kit. These records are kept confidential and stored securely, in accordance with **GDPR** and our data protection policy. Records include:

- The name of the injured person
- The date and time of the accident/incident
- Where it took place
- What happened?
- What action was taken at the time.
- Any follow up actions

Personal Emergency Plan

An emergency is unexpected and often the result of an accident. In the case of an emergency use the following procedures. The forest school trainer has completed both Paediatric First Aid and Outdoor First Aid training. A complete first aid kit is easily accessible in every storage cupboard.

The meeting point in the case of calling emergency services is the accessible parking area:

What3words : quietest.brochure.flame

In case of a sick or injured person

In the case that a person is injured or becomes seriously ill;

- Remain calm
- Deal with injuries following the 4B's – breathing, bleeding, breaks, burns.
- Check the safety of all the children.
- Telephone the emergency services or doctor.
- Contact the children's parents, leaving a contact number.

We ensure that the person receives the aid that is immediately required. If necessary, family members are informed at the earliest opportunity and ensure that the child is comforted and reassured until the parents arrive.

In the case that a forest school trainer becomes unwell, the second forest school leader will administer first aid. The session is closed down by the trainees who are provided with a checklist of how to safely close down the session. Emergency contact details are kept on site during sessions in the Forest School File. Should the forest school leader be removed to hospital the second forest school leader/forest school assistant will oversee the safe collection of children.

Local Medical Facilities

Accident and Emergency, Lincoln County Hospital	01522 512512
Greenwell Road, Lincoln	
LN2 5QY	01507 60010

Safely closing down a session in case of emergency

In case of emergency it may be necessary for people other than the forest school leader to close down a session.

This checklist offers a guide to safely closing down and packing away equipment in case the forest school leader is required to leave the site for any reason.

It is of the utmost importance to ensure the safety and wellbeing of trainees ahead of equipment.

1. Site sweep: check the site for equipment, clothing, personal items. Remove any ropes or hammocks that have been installed for the session.
2. Tools and equipment: return all tools and equipment to the forest school storage sheds.. Gather everything together, out of the way to be organised at a later time. Tools should be locked away into the storage shed.
3. Fire: if a fire is burning use a long stick to spread out the wood and embers. Pour water slowly around the edge of the fire, working inwards, to douse the flames and embers.
4. Ensure all children are collected / leave the site with their parents or carer.
5. Make a record of the steps taken to close down the site and share with the forest school leader.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Context

It is widely accepted and research has proven that good quality Forest School programmes create long term relationships for children with nature which, in turn, helps them to develop the motivation and understanding of how to protect and restore natural habitats.

Policy

At Land and Leaf Collective we recognise the potential impact of Forest School activities on the sites that we use. We ensure that the work that we do encourages learners to develop respect and care for the natural world, maintains the sustainable use of woodlands and enhances their biodiversity and ecological value. We achieve this through educating the learners who use the woodland and by taking steps to protect, conserve and develop diversity within the flora and fauna of the woodland.

We carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to evaluate the impact of activities in the woodland and we use the outcomes of this to inform our sustainable woodland management plan. We work across different sites to allow periods of time when woodlands are unused. This allows the restoration of areas of high footfall, undisturbed nesting seasons and the natural creation of habitats for birds and mammals.

Management activities are aimed at protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of the woodland and include:

- Coppicing
- Selective thinning
- Establish habitats for insects and small mammals
- Pathway creation

Where appropriate we:

- Replenish tree stock through planting.
- Develop the ground flora through planting bulbs.

During Forest School sessions we teach learners to look after the woodland and we discuss what that means, e.g. using natural resources from the woodland floor, taking care when looking for insects and ensuring that any found are returned to their habitat, not disturbing animal habitats or clearing areas of plants and trees. We involve learners in clearing away at the end of each session and leaving the woodland as they found it.

When resourcing Forest School sessions, we are mindful of reducing waste and of the need to recycle and reuse rather than buying new. We have pledged to the Plastic Free Lincoln campaign and are a plastic free organisation. Through doing this we hope to demonstrate and encourage a wider respect for the environment. We know that the choices we make as buyers and consumers have an impact on the environment. Where possible, we buy items which are -

- Produced as locally as possible
- From sustainable or renewable sources
- Produced ethically with regards to the environment, and to workers' and animal welfare
- Packaged efficiently
- Free of single use plastic

We also recognise our responsibility under the Environment Act 2021 to enhance biodiversity and minimise environmental harm. Where possible, we aim to reduce our carbon footprint and promote climate literacy among learners.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Kat Soutar. The deputy DSL's are Lisa Martin and Steffi McClurg. If you feel that a child is at immediate risk call 999.

Policy Statement

- The safety and welfare of children or young people is the principal concern.
- All children and young people have a right to protection from harm or abuse, regardless of age, gender, disability, racial or ethnic origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- Children and young people need support that reflects their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse.

Procedure

To maintain high standards of child protection and to safeguard children we will:

- Treat children and young people with care, respect and dignity.
- Ensure that communication with children and young people is open and clear.
- Assess the risks and benefits to children within regular activities.
- Be alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse.
- If concerns are raised about a child's welfare, the forest school leader will contact the local authority, the NSPCC, NCMA or other relevant support services for advice,
- confidentially will be assured only when it is clear that there is **no risk** of harm to a child.
- Share information about concerns with agencies that need to know, and involve parents and children appropriately.
- Follow safer recruitment practices, including DBS checks on all staff and volunteers who work regularly and/or unsupervised with children in our setting.
- Review our safeguarding policy and good practice at regular intervals.
- Attend child protection training and keep up to date with child protection issues and relevant legislation.
- Keep copies of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

If a child discloses about abuse s/he has suffered

- Stay calm.
- Do not transmit shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child. Tell her/him you are pleased that s/he is speaking to you.
- Communicate with the appropriate language for the age and developmental stage of the child.
- Never enter into a pact of secrecy with the child. Assure her/him that you will try to help but let the child know that you will have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why.
- Tell her/him that you believe them. Children very rarely lie about abuse; but s/he may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed.
- Tell the child that it is not her/his fault.
- Encourage the child to talk but not ask leading questions or press for information.
- Listen and remember.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you. It may help to repeat back to her/him what s/he has said.
- Praise the child for telling you. Communicate that s/he has a right to be safe and protected.
- Do not tell the child that what s/he experienced is dirty, naughty or bad.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
- Be aware that the child may retract what s/he has told you.

- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again whom you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
- As soon as possible afterwards (if you have not done so during the disclosure), make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language.
- Disclosures must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Useful telephone numbers

Social Services duty desk	01522 782333
Local police	101
NSPCC child protection helpline	0808 800 5000
(24-hour helpline for people worried about a child)	
Local early years team	01522 552752

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Policy Statement

As an inclusive group we strive to meet the needs of all children and families and promote and celebrate diversity in our groups. We recognise that children and their families come from diverse backgrounds. All families have needs and values that arise from their social and economic, ethnic and cultural or religious backgrounds. Family structures are diverse, including two parent and one parent families; some children have two parents of the same sex. Some children have close links with extended families of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins while others may be more removed from close kin or may live with other relatives or foster carers. Some children have needs that arise from disability or impairment or may have parents that are affected by disability or impairment.

Some children come from families who experience social exclusion or severe hardship; some have to face discrimination and prejudice because of their ethnicity, the languages they speak, their religious or belief background, their gender or their impairment.

We understand that these factors affect the well-being of children and can impact on their learning and development. It is the responsibility of all adults attending forest school sessions to be aware of these factors and follow the practices set out in this policy.

We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity for all children and families. We aim to:

- provide a secure and accessible environment in which all children can flourish and in which all contributions are considered and valued;
- include and value the contribution of families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- provide positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles and diverse family structures, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people;
- improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity;
- challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions;
- make inclusion a thread that runs through regular activities; and
- foster good relations between children and families.

Procedure

Land and Leaf Collective is open to all members of the community. We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form.

We ensure that all parents are made aware of our equal opportunities policy and do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our setting, on the basis of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- disability;
- race;
- gender reassignment;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- age;
- pregnancy and maternity; and
- marriage and civil partnership.

We do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child's participation for reasons relating to disability. However, we will assess the child's needs to decide how we can best care for, support the child and meet those needs. We develop action plans to ensure that children with impairments can participate successfully in activities.

Displays of openly discriminatory and offensive behaviour, name calling, or threatening behaviour are unacceptable in this setting and will be dealt with in line with our behaviour policy.

Our commitment to equality and diversity extends to all employees, volunteers, contractors and directors who work with Land and Leaf Collective. We value diversity and encourage fairness and justice.

To achieve this:

- We will treat all employees, job applicants and volunteers fairly and equally regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, disability or union membership.
- We will not make any requirement or condition without justification which could disadvantage individuals purely on any of the above grounds. The policy applies to recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment including pay, promotion, training, transfer and every other aspect of employment.
- We will offer services fairly to all people, ensuring that anyone in contact with the organisation is treated with respect.
- We will make reasonable adjustments to enable people with disabilities to use our services.
- We will comply with the Equality Act 2010
- We will ensure mechanisms are in place for responding to complaints of discrimination and harassment from staff, volunteers and the public.
- We will ensure mechanisms are in place for responding to complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation from staff, volunteers and the public.
- We will make this policy known to all staff, job applicants, volunteers and service users.

BEHAVIOUR

Policy Statement

Children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour. Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. This is a developmental task that requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting a good example. The child's dignity should be maintained at all times.

We are committed to promoting equality, inclusion, and respect for diversity, ensuring that all children, regardless of race, gender, ability, or background, are treated equally and fairly within our programs. In accordance with the Children Act 1989 and 2004, we aim to promote the well-being and safety of all children, ensuring their needs are met through positive strategies and a supportive environment.

All parents are provided with a copy of this policy and given the opportunity to discuss our approaches to behaviour management. Parents are expected to encourage and reinforce nurturing behaviour, to be positive role models and follow this procedure with their own and other children attending Land and Leaf Collective programmes.

Procedure

Land and Leaf Collective uses positive strategies for managing inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children to find solutions in ways that are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Such solutions might include the acknowledgement of feelings, an explanation about what was not acceptable about their behaviour and supporting children to understand and gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response.

We have very few rules in our setting but we do expect all adults and children to accept them. The ground rules are:

- We will all care for ourselves - we will not do anything that puts ourselves at risk.
- We will all care for each other - we will not do anything that puts anyone else at risk nor will we behave in a way that hurts others emotionally.
- We will all care for the environment - we will not do anything that damages the trees, plants, woodland inhabitants or forest school resources. We will be responsible for the continued improvement to our environment.

Children in forest school sessions are supported to establish appropriate ground rules for play within their group and to discuss what they feel are appropriate ground rules.

Strategies that we use for maintaining ground rules and managing challenging or inconsiderate behaviour include:

- Explaining, discussing and maintaining the boundaries of behaviour for children in the woodland.
- Acknowledging considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- Supporting each child to develop self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- Supporting each child to develop a sense of belonging in the group, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their actions and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- Children are never sent away from the group by themselves or use a 'naughty' chair.
- We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- Physical restraint will only be used in the event of an immediate risk of harm to the child or others and only by trained staff. All instances of physical restraint will be documented and reviewed to ensure the safety and well-being of all children.
- In any cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we immediately make clear the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame and will be dealt with in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy, ensuring a prompt and appropriate response.
- We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to a child's inconsiderate behaviour.
- We recognise that very young children are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require gentle support to help them do this.
- Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviours of young children include tantrums, biting or fighting. We remain calm, patient and offer comfort to intense emotions. We help children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.

- If tantrums, biting or fighting are frequent, we will try to find out the underlying cause – such as a change or upheaval at home.
- We do not engage in punitive responses to a young child's rage.
- We support social skills through modelling behaviour, activities, and stories. We aim to build self-esteem and confidence in all children, recognising their emotional needs through a close and committed relationship with them.
- We support children to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child; We do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this when it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and wish to show this to the person they have hurt.
- If hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we will work with parents/carers to identify the cause and find a solution together.
- We recognize the importance of mental health and well-being for all children. We aim to support children in developing emotional resilience and coping strategies, providing appropriate interventions where necessary, and working closely with parents and relevant professionals.
- Bullying, including physical, emotional, or verbal abuse, will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Incidents of bullying will be addressed promptly, and steps will be taken to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all children.

ANTI BULLYING

Statement

Land and Leaf Collective is committed to providing a supportive, caring and safe environment in which all children are free from the fear of being bullied. As an organisation we take bullying and its impact seriously. Bullying of any form is not tolerated in our organisation, whether carried out by a child or an adult.

Staff, children and parents or carers will be made aware of our position on bullying. Bullying behaviour is unacceptable in any form. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a forest school leader or other responsible adult.

Any child who is a victim of bullying will be dealt with in a sympathetic manner. If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff informed, and then discussed with the directors. A clear account of the incident will be recorded. All facilitators will be informed and all parties will be closely monitored. Parents of all parties will be informed.

What is bullying?

We recognise that many children and young people will experience conflict in their relationships with other children and young people. We are committed to developing empathy and the skills to manage relationships in a peaceful way that does not harm others.

Bullying is:

“The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online” (DfE, 2023)



Why is it important to respond to bullying?

There is considerable evidence to show that bullying has both short term and longer term impact on children. Bullying impacts on children's wellbeing, can impact on self esteem and become a significant barrier to learning. Bullying is associated with lower levels of engagement and can lead to mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression. At Land and Leaf Collective we understand that

people who bully also need help and support to understand the cause of their behaviour and to make positive changes.

In our community:

- Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- Everybody has the right to feel happy and safe.
- No-one deserves to be a target of bullying.
- People who bully need support to learn different ways of behaving.

National evidence has shown that some groups of pupils are particularly vulnerable to bullying; these include pupils with SEND, looked after children, pupils from minority ethnic groups or faiths, young carers, LGBT pupils and those perceived to be LGBT. At Land and Leaf Collective we are committed to inclusive, anti-discriminatory practice, and we challenge prejudice in all forms.

Types of bullying behaviour

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening behaviour
- **Verbal** - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, use of derogatory language
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Extortion** - demanding money/goods with threats
- **Online** – use of social media, messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology e.g. photos and videos.
- **Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic** or biphobic - bullying because of sexuality or perceived sexuality
- **Transphobic** – because of gender identity or perceived gender identity

Preventing Bullying

We foster a clear understanding that bullying, in any form, is unacceptable. We believe that preventing bullying is the responsibility of our whole community and when there are incidents of bullying we will work together to deal with the situation and to learn from what has happened.

We do this by:

- Involving the wider community in developing our policy including a child friendly version of our policy.
- Using circle time to ensure that participants understand the differences between relational conflict and bullying.
- Building a positive ethos based on respecting and celebrating all types of difference in our community.
- Creating a safe and happy environment, with consequent positive relationships.
- Having a positive ethos that all leaders, staff, parents and participants understand.
- Considering any safeguarding implications and reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate.
- Adopting a social model approach to bullying. Diversity is valued and everyone is included in our community.
- Offering training to all staff around bullying, including specific guidance on those groups who are most likely to be bullied.

Reporting bullying

In our community participants are encouraged to talk to staff when they are unhappy or have concerns. Participants in our forest school programmes understand that they have a right to feel and be safe and a responsibility to support others to feel and be safe.

Pupils are encouraged to report bullying to:

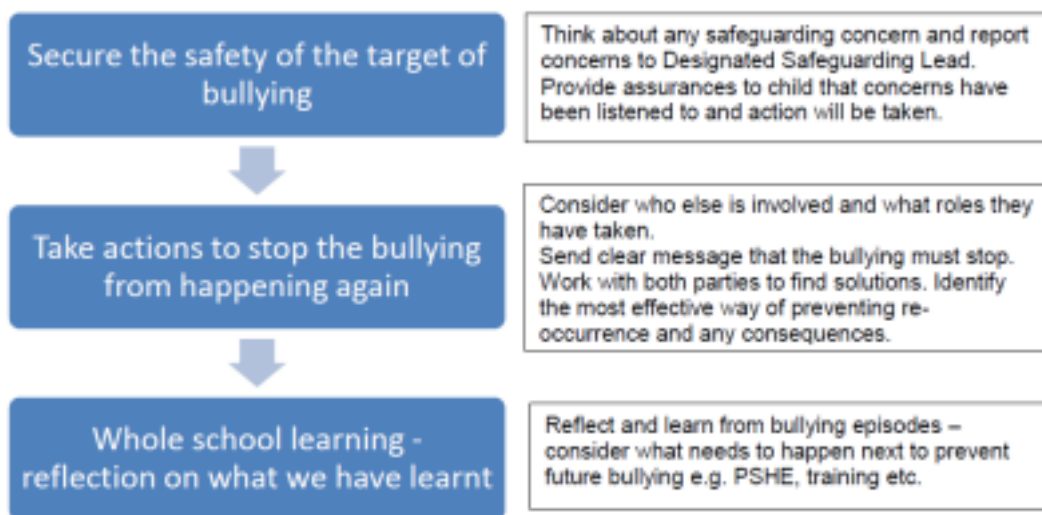
- A trusted adult
- Their forest school leader

Children are also taught that it is important to talk to a trusted adult if bullying is taking place outside of Land and Leaf Collective.

Parents are also encouraged to report concerns and bullying to named individuals. This is normally the forest school leader.

When participants report concerns, our staff are trained to listen actively, believe disclosures, and take appropriate action. Children are involved in finding positive solutions wherever possible.

Responding to Bullying



We monitor and review all bullying incidents to determine any patterns or trends that may require further action.

On a regular basis we give pupils the opportunity to feedback on how safe and happy they feel at forest school, we do this through circle time.

All staff are required to complete a bullying and prejudice-based incident reporting and monitoring form when dealing with incidents of bullying. This should be completed as soon as possible and given to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Procedures for parents

- If a parent has any concerns about their child they should speak to the forest school leader immediately. If a parent thinks bullying is the issue, the matter will be referred to the directors. The directors are always informed of any bullying concerns at Land and Leaf Collective and monitor the situation carefully.
- If a parent feels unable to talk to the forest school leader, they can make an appointment to speak directly with one of the directors.
- Land and Leaf Collective will work with both the child and the parents to ensure that any bullying is stopped and that support is given where needed.
- Parents should not confront other children or parents directly, as this can complicate the situation and distress the child.
- Land and Leaf Collective will deal directly with all children involved and their parents directly. Parents will be kept informed of any actions the school is taking.
- If parents feel that their concern has not been dealt with appropriately they should follow the complaints procedure.

All members of the Land and Leaf Collective community, including participants, staff, parents and

directors, are expected to treat everyone with dignity and respect at all times. This includes both face-to-face contact and online interactions.

ILLNESS POLICY

Purpose

At Land and Leaf Collective CIC, the health and well-being of our children, staff, and parents is our top priority. We are committed to creating a safe and healthy environment where everyone can enjoy outdoor learning and activities. In order to maintain a clean and healthy environment, we ask that children and adults refrain from attending sessions if they are sick or displaying signs of illness.

We aim to:

- Identify and manage sick children and adults as quickly as possible.
- Ensure everyone understands the procedures for illness and illness-related absences.
- Protect everyone from the spread of preventable infections.

This policy is based on guidance from the NHS and UK Government to ensure the continued health and safety of everyone involved in our Forest School sessions.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and participants at the Forest School. It covers the procedures for handling, storing, and replacing water used for drinking and handwashing.

Procedure

At Land and Leaf Collective CIC, the health and well-being of all children, adults, and staff are of utmost importance. We ask parents and guardians to assess whether their child is fit to attend a session if they are unwell, as it is their responsibility to ensure their child's health and comfort.

If a child or adult is unwell with a contagious illness, they should not attend the session. Upon arrival at the Forest School, if the Forest School leader suspects that a child may be unwell, they will assess the child's condition in a kind and caring manner. We understand the childcare needs of parents and guardians and will not send children home unnecessarily. However, the decision to send a child home due to illness or infection lies with the Forest School leader and will be based on the child's needs and the safety of others in the group.

Any child with an infectious or contagious illness will be asked not to attend the session for a certain period of time. If staff suspect a child has a contagious condition, they will advise parents to consult a doctor before returning.

If a child becomes unwell during a session, the parent or emergency contact will be called, and the child should be collected within one hour if possible. The child will be cared for in a safe, dry, and warm space until collection.

Staff will immediately inform parents or carers if they have concerns about a child's health or well-being. Parents and carers are responsible for keeping Land and Leaf Collective informed about their child's health.

Land and Leaf Collective is committed to providing the highest standards of care and ensuring that the health and wellbeing of all participants are maintained at all times.

For more guidance on if your child is well enough to attend a Forest School session please follow this NHS information: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Head Injuries

If a child sustains a head injury during a Forest School session, the following steps will be taken:

1. **Immediate Action:** The child will be assessed for any signs of serious injury (e.g., loss of consciousness, dizziness, confusion). A cold compress will be applied for minor bumps or bruises.
2. **Monitoring:** The child will be closely observed for 20–30 minutes for symptoms like nausea, vomiting, dizziness, or confusion. If any serious symptoms appear, emergency services will be contacted.
3. **Parent Notification:** Parents will be informed immediately of the injury and given details on how it occurred and the actions taken.
4. **Emergency Care:** If symptoms are severe, emergency services will be called, and the child will be kept still and calm until help arrives.
5. **Post-Injury Care:** The child should rest and avoid physical activities. Parents will be advised to monitor for any delayed symptoms.
6. **Documentation:** All head injuries will be logged in an accident form which will be signed by the first aider on site and parents. Parents will receive a copy of this.

Administering Medication

Statutory guidance for childcare settings states that medicines must not usually be administered unless they have been prescribed for a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist and that medicines containing aspirin should only be given if prescribed by a doctor. Ideally all medicines should be given by the child's parents. Land and Leaf Collective staff will only administer, or in the case of older children who can self administer, medicines if absolutely necessary. Before requesting Land and Leaf Collective staff administer/oversee medicine to your child, please consider if there is an alternative. If Land and Leaf Collective are to administer/oversee medicine, an Administration of Medicine Consent Form must be completed before the session and medicine given to the Forest School Leader to supervise until it is administered and only returned to parents at the end of the session during pick-up. Children should not have access to their own medication at any time.

LOCKDOWN AND EVACUATION POLICY

Policy Statement

Land and Leaf Collective Community Interest Company (CIC) is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants, staff, and volunteers during sessions held in our woodland setting. This policy outlines procedures for lockdown and evacuation in case of an emergency, whether it be a threat within the woodland, an external danger, or natural hazards.

This policy applies to all participants, including children, families, staff, and volunteers.

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals participating in activities organised by Land and Leaf Collective CIC, including children, families, staff, and volunteers, in the woodland setting. This policy outlines clear procedures for responding to emergency situations that may require lockdown or evacuation, such as threats within the woodland, external dangers, or natural hazards. By establishing these procedures, the policy aims to provide a structured and effective response to emergencies, ensuring that all individuals can be swiftly and safely guided through the appropriate actions

during times of crisis. The overall goal is to create a safe and secure environment for all involved, while also fostering confidence that, in the event of an emergency, proper measures will be in place to protect everyone's health and safety.

Definition of Terms

- Lockdown: A protective action taken in response to an immediate threat where it is safer to remain in place rather than evacuate.
- Evacuation: The process of moving participants out of the woodland to a designated safe area due to an emergency that cannot be managed on-site.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Forest School Leader(s): Responsible for leading any evacuation or lockdown procedure, ensuring headcounts, managing communication with emergency services, and ensuring the safety of all participants.
- Support Staff/Volunteers: Assist the Forest School Leader in managing the groups, ensuring participants are safe and calm, and supporting any evacuation or lockdown as directed.
- Participants (Children/Families): Must follow instructions from staff promptly and calmly during any emergency procedure.

Risk Assessment

Before every session, the Forest School Leader conducts a risk assessment of the woodland area, identifying any potential hazards, including weather conditions, wildlife, or human activity that may require evacuation or lockdown.

Lockdown Procedures

Triggers for Lockdown:

- An external threat such as intruders, aggressive animals, or individuals acting dangerously.
- Severe weather or other natural hazards that make evacuation unsafe.
- A nearby emergency that poses an indirect threat to the woodland area (e.g., fire or criminal activity in proximity).

Lockdown Procedure:

1. Alert: The Forest School Leader will use a predetermined signal:
 - Signal for family groups: 3 sharp whistle blows signalling to immediately gather in the fire circle area. Once gathered at the fire circle, the Forest School Leader will complete a register for all participants (adults and children) using an electronic register (stored on a company mobile phone). Once all children have been accounted for, staff attendance will also be verbally taken.
 - Signal for Saplings Alternative Provision: Radio code 'BRAVO BRAVO BRAVO' alerts all staff of the lockdown and signals that they must gather all participants immediately at the fire circle. En route to the fire circle area, the Forest School Leader will take attendance via radio. The Forest School Leader will state one child's name at a time and the corresponding adult with that child will respond 'Check'. Once gathered at the fire circle, the Forest School Leader will complete an electronic register (stored on a company mobile phone) register for all participants. Once all children have been accounted for, attendance for visitors and staff will also be verbally taken.
2. Gathering and Shelter:

Participants will be instructed to gather in the designated shelter area(s) [fire circle area]. If there is no pre-existing shelter, participants should be moved to the most secure and hidden area in the woodland (e.g., dense tree coverage or dips in the landscape).

3. Stay Low and Quiet:
Participants will be instructed to stay low, keep calm, and remain quiet. Staff will maintain communication with participants and ensure children and vulnerable individuals are calm.
4. Maintain Contact:
The Forest School Leader will maintain contact with emergency services through mobile phone or radio if necessary. The leader will always carry a fully charged mobile phone during sessions.
5. Duration:
The lockdown will remain in place until the threat is neutralised or emergency services advise that it is safe to return to regular activities.
6. Communication with Families (During Family Sessions):
If families are present, parents will be kept informed by the Forest School Leader throughout the lockdown. In family sessions, parents will be encouraged to help keep their children calm.
7. For children who receive 1:1 adult support: A personalised evacuation and lockdown plan can be found in their individual risk assessments. The 1:1 adult supporting the child will be fully aware of the personalised evacuation and lockdown plan and will take primary responsibility for implementing it, overseen by the Forest School Leader. If, for any reason, it is not possible or suitable to bring the child to the designated meeting point, the 1:1 adult will follow the plan to ensure the child's safety, managing the situation and providing the necessary care and support throughout.

Evacuation Procedures

Triggers for Evacuation:

- Fire or smoke within the woodland.
- A medical emergency requiring immediate professional assistance.
- Dangerous weather conditions (e.g., high winds, lightning, flooding).
- Wildlife threat or other natural hazards.
- External threats that cannot be mitigated by lockdown (e.g., nearby fire, chemical spill).

Evacuation Procedure:

1. Alert:
The Forest School Leader will use a loud, clear signal (e.g., three short whistle blasts) to indicate the need for immediate evacuation.
2. Headcount:
Support staff and volunteers will gather their assigned group, perform an immediate headcount, and report to the Forest School Leader to ensure no one is missing. Headcounts should be done frequently, especially when moving between areas. The Forest School Leader will take attendance via radio using the electronic register (stored on a company mobile phone) register. The Forest School Leader will state one child's name at a time and the corresponding adult with that child will respond 'Check'.
3. Evacuation Route:
The designated evacuation route will be communicated to all participants at the start of each session. Participants will be led calmly and swiftly by the Forest School Leader to the designated safe meeting point outside the woodland (The Grain Store Car Park) via whichever is the safest route.
4. Communication with Emergency Services:
The Forest School Leader will notify emergency services of the evacuation and meet them at the designated safe area if necessary.
5. Emergency Kit:
Emergency kit will be carried by the Forest School Leader, containing:
 - A fully charged mobile phone.
 - First aid kit (stored in the kitchen shelter area).
 - Emergency contact information for participants (electronic register (stored on a company mobile phone)).

6. Reuniting with Families (For Children's Sessions):
Once evacuated, the Forest School Leader will follow the pre-established emergency contact protocol to ensure all children are safely reunited with their parents or guardians.

Post-Incident Procedure

After any lockdown or evacuation, the Forest School Leader will:

1. Conduct a debrief with staff and participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the procedure and to provide reassurance.
2. Contact parents or guardians (if applicable) to provide a full report of the incident.
3. Review and update the risk assessment and procedures as necessary.
4. Report the incident to relevant authorities if required.

Training and Drills

- All Forest School staff and volunteers will receive annual training on lockdown and evacuation procedures.
- Drills will be conducted once per term with participants to ensure they are familiar with signals and actions required.
- Staff will practice lockdown and evacuation procedures specific to both children's and family sessions.

PRIVACY POLICY

Data Collection and Sharing

Land and Leaf Collective is committed to protecting your privacy. This statement explains how we use any information you give to us and the ways in which we protect your privacy. We ask you to read it carefully. We may be required to change it from time to time so we also ask you to check it occasionally to make sure you are aware of the latest version.

How we comply with The Data Protection Act (1998/2018) and GDPR (2016)

We treat any personal information (which means data from which you can be identified, including your name, address, e-mail address, etc.) that you provide us, or that we obtain from you, in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act. Under this Act, we have a legal duty to protect any information we collect from you. Any amendments to this policy will continue to be in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

How we collect information

When you attend Forest School sessions with Land and Leaf Collective we receive information about you and any children who attend in a number of different ways.

You may give us the information when you:

- Attend, or enquire about, regular sessions at Land and Leaf Collective
- Attend, or enquire about, a holiday club with us
- When you sign up to our mailing list or waiting lists
- When you let us know about a change in your personal circumstances (for example, if you change your name when you get married or move house).
- We may receive it from another organisation, for example, should we be required to work with the local council or other local organisation.

How we use personal data

We use information that we have about you for the running of Land and Leaf Collective. These generally fall into the following areas.

1. Administration – This applies to past, current and potential future trainees.

The types of personal information we collect and use include:

- The personal details of you;
- The payment of fees due;
- Emergency contact details (so we can contact in case of an emergency)
- Medical information (so we can cater for any special needs)
- Accident records in case of minor injuries.

2. Keeping you informed – This applies to current, past and potential future trainees.

We use this information to keep you updated about events at Land and Leaf Collective, for example, to let you know about news, upcoming events and changes to courses.

The types of information we collect and use include:

- Email address. So we can email you updates and newsletters.

Note: The mailing list is an 'opt-in' subscription and you can opt out of receiving email updates at any time.

How long we store your information

We store information on participants for the duration of attendance. This may be one day for holiday clubs or longer for ongoing programmes. The information held on site during sessions includes emergency contacts and medical information. This is held so that it is easily accessible in case of emergency. Paper records are held in locked storage and destroyed at the end of each session or term, depending on the duration of the programme. Accident records are stored securely for three years. We have to do this to meet the legal requirements of accident recording.

When we share your information

Generally, we only use your information within Land and Leaf Collective. We will never share your contact details for marketing purposes. We ask for your permissions to share data in these circumstances.

There are rare occasions when we need to share personal information about you/your child with third parties. These are:

- We may receive requests for information from schools, government departments, the police and other enforcement agencies. If there is a proper legal basis for sharing your personal information, we will provide it to the organisation that is asking for it.
- In case of an emergency, we may need to share with the emergency services details of your child including details of any medical conditions as provided to us by you.
- In partnership work with other organisations we may need to share copies of accident reports to comply with legal requirements.

Where we store personal data

We use third party data processors, these are secure online systems and any personal information shared with us is stored securely for necessary use by Land and Leaf Collective.

The following systems are in use and their privacy statements and policies can be found below.

- **Dropbox:** An online cloud-based storage system, is used for necessary data storage including personal information when relevant. Dropbox [terms of service](#) statement: "When you use our Services, you provide us with things like your files, content, messages, contacts and so on ("Your Stuff"). Your Stuff is yours. These Terms don't give us any rights to Your Stuff except for the limited rights that enable us to offer the Services." Dropbox privacy policy can be found [here](#).

- **Google drive:** Google drive, an online cloud-based storage system, is used for necessary data storage including personal information when relevant. Google Drive [terms of service](#) state, "You retain ownership of any intellectual property rights that you hold in that content. In short, what belongs to you stays yours." Google privacy policy can be found [here](#).
- **Mailing lists:** When we contact you via a mailing list we use an external platform called [Mailchimp](#) and their privacy policy can be found [here](#). You can opt out of receiving mailing list emails at any time.
- We use a booking system called **Pembee** to take and manage bookings. Bookwhen's privacy policy can be found [here](#).

Where we process your data

As we use third party storage systems (detailed above), personal information may be stored in servers outside of the United Kingdom. We will only use your personal information in the United Kingdom.

Our Commitment to data protection

We will process your personal information in line with the Data Protection Act. This means that we will:

- Only collect and hold information about you which we need for some reason;
- Keep your personal information up to date and accurate (to help us do this, please let us know if any of your details change);
- Take appropriate steps to protect your personal information from being used without permission, or illegally, and to safeguard your rights; and
- Destroy your personal information in a secure way once we no longer need it.

Your rights over your personal information

You have certain rights over your personal information under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016. Most importantly, you have a right to ask for a copy of all the personal information we hold about you but there are some legal exceptions to this, such as information which is confidential to Land and Leaf Collective. If you would like a copy of your personal information, you can contact us on landandleafco@gmail.com