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Outdoor Ted Fire Pit Policy

Prerequisites to Fire Pit Sessions

Campfires can play an important part of Outdoor Learning. All children and adults participating in Outdoor Learning sessions with fires should do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

The location of the fire-pit should be thought out carefully and tested for safety beforehand. It should be situated away from flammable materials, buildings and trees. The wind direction should also be taken into account. Materials used to build the fire pit need to be heat resistant. The type of soil built on should also be considered, e.g. not peat soil.

A bucket of water/sand, first aid kit containing burns bandages, and a fire blanket should be present during all fire-pit sessions.

The Outdoor Leader must be fully trained and insured to carry out activities involving the fire-pit and must carry an emergency phone at all times. The Outdoor Leader must supervise the fire at all times in which it is lit.

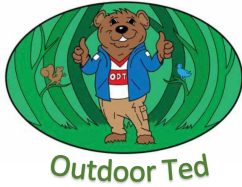
Please also refer to the Outdoor Learning Activity Risk Assessment: Fire Pit, in conjunction with this policy.

Location of Fires

Campfires will only take place in the designated fire pit at The Skylark Education Centre.

There will be one large campfire for circle/reflection time that will be in the middle of the seated area.

Four smaller fire bowls will be placed on fire blankets around the designated area for children along with an adult can try their hand at flint and steel fire lighting.



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Positioning of Children and Adults

The fire pit is portable and will be placed on the designated concrete square. The fire pit will contain enough fuel for a small fire that will burn out quickly. When not in use the fire pit is removed from the area.

The fire pit is surrounded by seating logs at least 2 metres from the fire pit.

When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area without permission.

When allowed to access the campfire, children must walk around the outside of the seating logs in a anti-clockwise direction and enter at the side of a bench. (See diagram) They must sit down, ensuring legs are drawn into the log and not outstretched.

Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.

Children will be taught how to move around the fire by standing, around the outside of the seating area until they reach a space on a bench. They must never cross the inner area.

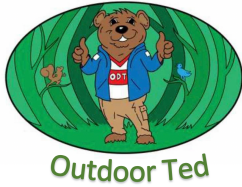
If children are to cook on the fire, they are to await instructions by the adult in charge.

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. If wind direction is variable, the smaller fire pits may not be in use and children will be directed to safely kneel with one leg up in order to cook/toast marshmallows at a safe distance.

For the smaller fire pits there will be one adult supporting up to 8 children who will remain under their direction.



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Lighting and Keeping Fires Burning

Only the appropriately trained and insured Outdoor Leader is permitted to light fires in the fire-pit.

Fires are lit using a fire steel cotton wool/ newspaper and kindling. The fire will be built in either a tipi or waffle formation.

No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.

No plastics are to be burnt.

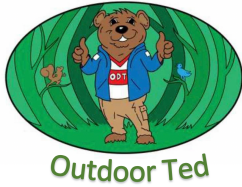
Wood should be dry and free from foliage (not green).

If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision.

Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire. Fire resistant gloves may be worn.

Enough fire wood for the session should be collected and stored by the fire pit beforehand. If more wood is needed, preferably another adult (not the qualified Outdoor Leader) or children should be sent to collect it as the fire should not be left unsupervised.

Bought kindle and kiln dried firewood will be on-site as a back-up for those days where the natural wood in the area is too wet to use.



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Extinguishing Fires

All fires must be fully extinguished at the end of a session.

A bucket of water and a fire blanket should always be to hand during campfire sessions.

Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.

The suitably qualified Outdoor Leader should ensure that any large remains of wood are separated from one another.

At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with sand or a sprinkle of water and patted down with a long stick until all smoke and steam has ceased.

Large build ups of potash, from several fires, need to be dispersed. This must only be done when it has totally cooled, preferably the following day. It should be finely scattered throughout the woodland to enable natural decomposition.

Photo of Fire Pit Area