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## Outdoor Ted Eco-Policy

### Eco Policy Overview

This Policy is written to educate and inform participants in Outdoor Learning how to preserve and look after the environment they are using. It is relevant for both adults and children to follow this eco policy as guidelines for best practise.

### Respecting wildlife

All children and adults should be made aware that by travelling quietly you will be more aware of your environment, and wildlife will be less disturbed. All should be taught to respect birds' and animals' needs for an undisturbed territory. After all, the outdoor environment is their home. When tracking wildlife for a photograph or a closer look, where possible stay downwind, avoid sudden movement and never chase or charge any animal. Give the wildlife plenty of space, for their safety and yours. Try to just take a closer look rather than prod, poke and pick anything up.

### Using designated areas and paths

This can largely help to minimise impacts on wildlife, soil and vegetation. Designated main areas for common, week-in-week-out activities, (such as seating, cooking, digging and trails) have been built specifically and have wood-chip or mown paths to help to maintain and minimise erosion. These will be areas that are used each week and cannot be given sufficient time for recovery.

### Allowing time for recovery

In order to minimise erosion, activities and areas to be used should be rotated where possible so that lightly used areas and trails are not too heavily damaged or eroded. Therefore, over the course of time and non-use, these play areas and trails will re-vegetate and revert back to their natural appearance. By spreading out while playing and alternating areas used each week, the ground will be able to recover.



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### Reduce litter at the source

When preparing for your outdoor session, repackage food into reusable containers or remove any excess unnecessary packaging. This simple practice lessens the likelihood that you will inadvertently leave litter behind.

### Put it in the bin or pack it out!

Pick up and put all of your litter in the bin. Burying or leaving litter in your outside environment is unacceptable. Unfortunately, other people's litter may often be found. Please help by picking it up carefully and putting into a rubbish bag or bin. If there is no rubbish bin on site, it should be packed up and taken away with you.

### Use Fire Responsibly

Fires at the Skylark will only take place in the designated Fire Pit by a suitably qualified and insured leader. The use of the Fire Pit must follow the 'Fire Pit Policy and Procedure' at all times. This states the layout and movement around the fire pit of both staff and children. It also states the safety equipment needed. Factors such as wind direction should also be taken into consideration.

### Avoid damaging live trees and plants

Picking a few flowers does not seem like it would have any great impact. If only a few flowers were picked it wouldn't, but if every visitor thought, "I'll just take a few," a much more significant impact might result. Take a picture or sketch the flower instead of picking it. Be careful not to deplete the surrounding vegetation or to disturb plants that are either rare or do not reproduce in abundance. Leave only footprints, take only memories.

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### Leave What You Find

Allow others visiting your outdoor environment a sense of discovery by leaving rocks, plants, archaeological artefacts and other objects of interest as you find them.



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### Firewood selection and gathering

This should involve the children where necessary. Do not break branches off live standing trees; this leaves a very discernible and long lasting impact. This is not an acceptable source of firewood. The size of firewood is critical to building a Leave No Trace fire. Firewood should be no larger in diameter than an adult's wrist. The burning of this smaller firewood has a very small effect on the ecology of the forest, because it is not large enough to significantly contribute nutrients to the forest. Large rotting trunks, on the other hand, are significant and should be left alone. These downed trunks provide crucial habitat to a variety of insects and other creatures and return nutrients to the soil. It is also too large to be fully burnt within an outdoor learning session and so would leave debris behind. Firewood should be gathered from a wide area, not just in the immediate vicinity of camp. Pick up the wood as you are walking so that no single place becomes devoid of wood. In all campfire situations, the use of saws, axes and hatchets is unnecessary. Sawing and chopping leave more impact and further detract from the naturalness of the area. Small firewood can easily be gathered by hand.

### Care and feeding of your fire

Break the wood into burnable lengths as needed. If there is any unburned wood left when breaking camp it can be scattered around the forest and will blend in naturally or it can be stored in the appropriate place for future use. All firewood should be burned down to white ash or very small coals. Doing this may require some extra time, but is a significant step in minimising the impact of the fire. Therefore, the amount and size of fuel added to the fire should take this into consideration. All fires should be fully extinguished with water and the ash spread before leaving the outdoor learning area. The ground under the fire may become a little blackened, but that is of little concern if every visitor builds his or her fire in the same spot.

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