

Important Information for Bushcraft Sessions

Bushcraft at the Hillier Gardens

Children in our Bushcraft session are given the freedom to socialise and play outdoors to develop an awareness of the environment and an appreciation of nature in order to achieve personal goals such as using tools to make natural crafts, to light a fire safely or to cook on an open fire.

While the activities are fun, remember that it is the *ethos rather than the activities that makes our sessions special*. Children learn in small steps in a supportive atmosphere of exploration increasing self-confidence and self-esteem while learning to help others and look after the environment.

All sessions are designed with the school and class teacher(s) to meet learning objectives set by them and linked to the national curriculum.

Safeguarding children policy, emergencies and risk

The Education Service takes safeguarding of children and young people very seriously. All Leaders are first aid trained, qualified to lead and will carry a first aid kit and a radio to contact Reception if further help is required. All of our Education team follow Hampshire County Council guidance and the Leader completes a daily risk assessment. The schools do one in advance.

- We stay within the boundaries set by the leader and come back when called.
- Fire circle and tool rules must be followed.
- We care for all living things and take particular care of our special site. We do not pick flowers or plants.
- We are careful when clambering on logs and taking part in wild play.

Bushcraft sessions will continue in most types of weather with the exception of high winds, thunder or severe cold.

Tool use policies

The Leader will demonstrate and remind users of how to use tools safely. Children need time to learn to use tools independently, and accompanying adults are asked to help supervise tool use. Only the Leader's tools may be used during Bushcraft sessions. The Leader will decide if the group/individual child is ready for using tools.

- Potato peelers (to learn to work sharp tools away from the body)
- Fixed blade knives (for whittling sticks).
- Bow saw (for cutting larger pieces of wood)
- Hand drill (for drilling holes into wood for craft purposes)
- Fire strikers for starting small fires.

Fire Safety

A careful regard and respect of fire is reinforced with the children through a step by step process. Strict fire circle rules will be enforced at all times. Fire may be introduced using Storm or Kelly kettles (a small contained fire for boiling water) and when trust has been developed between the leaders and children, children may be taught to strike their own fire. A fire in the fire pit may be constructed for campfire cooking.

Hygiene

Bushcraft sessions take place away from kitchen or toilet facilities. Nevertheless, we do our best to ensure that hands and utensils are relatively clean. We use antibacterial wipes or hand gel before touching food or eating. No litter should be left as we always aim to leave the site as we find it. Sessions are not long, and we encourage children to use the toilets before a session starts.

Parental consent

Parents/guardians are required to fill out a consent form before the start of Bushcraft sessions covering the use of tools and fire, administration of first aid/medications, emergency contact details and the use of photographs taken during a Bushcraft session. Simple food may be prepared at the bushcraft site; please advise us of any food allergies or restrictions.

Confidentiality and data protection

Information given is kept securely and will be kept confidential, unless the information conflicts with safeguarding procedures. Your personal data will not be used by any third parties.

Equal Opportunities

Bushcraft Leaders, as part of Education Department policy, strive to maintain equal opportunities for all children and young people. The Leader will aim to make the sessions as inclusive as possible *if given at least 1 weeks notice* of any disabilities or difficulties prior to the start of the session.

What is the site like?

The Education Centre is a modern single story building with toilets as well as an accessible toilet. Our Bushcraft site is about a 10 minute walk away, over variable terrain, past the pond and into the woods.

What to send with your child



Your class teacher will confirm what you need to bring.

Please send a healthy, filling lunch, plus fruit and water. We usually provide a drink (like hot squash or hot chocolate). Sometime we have marshmallows, popcorn or something else we have cooked on the fire.

Children should be dressed for outdoor woodland play and for sitting at our fire circle.



Clothes need to be appropriate for the weather, including long trousers, sun cream, hat, wellies or walking boots, warm socks, waterproofs, layers of clothing in cold weather.



Long hair must be tied back and loose clothing secured.