



## **Environmental Policy**

Our Forest School Motto is to;

- Take care of yourself,
- take care of each other and
- look after the environment

Every aspect of nature is fascinating, from the woodpecker who has a shock absorbing tongue that wraps around his head and the orange eyes of the crepuscular hunting fox to the pine cone that closes up to hang on to its seeds in wet weather. The more you learn about nature the more you come to respect it. Through educating our learners about nature's fascinations we aim to instil a deep-rooted love and respect for the natural surroundings which in turn will lead to thoughtful conservation behaviour.

We will lead by example and aim to ensure that, where possible, ATNE purchase products that have been assessed for having a lower impact on the environment. By operating in a way that minimises waste, optimises recycling and promotes the re-use of materials we hope to demonstrate and encourage a wider respect for the environment, as well as an understanding that all produce and waste is linked to the health of our planet as a whole. We will avoid using foil when cooking on the fire and when it is used attempt to clean it and recycle or re-use it. We will clear the site of any litter which could be harmful to wildlife and remove all food waste to avoid an imbalance in the eco system.

ATNE operate so as to minimise the impact to flora and fauna of visitors to the woodland and seek to replenish natural resources and encourage biodiversity of the woodland in the long term. We will abide by the country code at all times including not making any unnecessary noise. We will work with the landowner to plant trees and wildflowers. We will encourage fauna by starting at the bottom of the food chain with minibeasts, we will replace our bug hotels when they become weather damaged. Resources are available to make bird feeders, bird and bat boxes and mammal stacks should the learners choose to make them. We will monitor the wildlife in our Forest School area by undertaking a bioblitz every season to check the number and diversity of species found in a typical square metre. If we find a depletion in wildlife we will rest the recently used area and re-locate our sessions and use the above methods to replenish the wildlife.

We will never take from a growing tree unless agreed with the landowner, in which case it will be done within a sustainable rotation eg the coppiced Hazel plantation. We will take the amount that we need and use all that we take, leaving no wastage. ATNE will monitor the impact of footfall on the ground and field layers including footpaths and will use areas on a rotation basis, allowing used areas to recover which may take a period of a few months in Winter. We will avoid bluebell areas in April.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Collecting Wood	Dead wood is important to any woodland ecology as it has a multitude of uses, from homes for mini beasts to beds for fungi, so a lack of it is bad for any woodland habitat.	Limit the frequency of fires and evaluate the amount of dry, dead wood before having a fire. Collect only the minimum amount required for any given fire. Reserve specific areas for dead wood conservation.
Fires	Changes in soil chemistry can lead to increases in PH levels, carbon, phosphorous, etc. which can be harmful to some plants, whilst providing essential nutrients if fires are lit sparingly Fire can travel underground to roots even after appearing to be extinguished.	Designate fixed locations for fires on parts of the site that aren't particularly ecologically interesting or unique. Fire areas rotated so complete depletion of nutrients is avoided If possible, dispose of ash into patches of nettles.
Cooking	Food waste may attract animals to the site or increase numbers of certain species, potentially leading to adverse changes in biodiversity.	Inform participants of these impacts and provide a container (to be taken away) or an ecologically sound place for food disposal. We will use biodegradable soap.
Tree Climbing, Shelters & Swings	Damage to trees.	Restrict these activities to suitable trees that will tolerate them. Rotate the areas used regularly
Collecting Natural Materials	Damage to plants	Inform groups as to which types of Plants are best to pick, if any. Ensure leaves or flowers are taken from fallen parts where possible. Limit the frequency of this type of activity. Leave plants unpicked whenever picking is not necessary.
Toilet Use	Wet wipes contain plastic and are never used Human waste entering waterways	Burying faeces ensures it biodegrades. Designated toileting area will be at least 20 metres from a waterway.
Entering and leaving the environment	Ultimately by coming to and from the area we will have an impact on the area.	Ensure that all rubbish is removed from the area. Minimise outside products brought in to the area and if anything is left ensure it is biodegradable, eg clay, natural bird feeders made from pine cones or oranges

