



**Sophie Kyle**  
Life & Business Coach

## **Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools Information Handbook**

### **Introduction**

This document outlines all of Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest School's policies and procedures for Forest School sessions. All play leaders in forest school sessions organized by Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools have read this document and it is supplied by request to organisations, clients and other people we work with to answer any questions about our practice. Please contact Sophie Kyle directly if you still have questions after reading this document.

### **Our Mission**

To promote sustainable and healthy urban lives by increasing participation in quality natural outdoor play experiences for children and adults.

### **Our Values**

- We value nature and green spaces in urban environments as beneficial to all aspects of human health and society.
- We value outdoor play as a primary way to connect with nature for adults and children.
- We value learning outdoors as a primary route to discovering sustainable urban living practices.

### **What is Forest School?**

Forest School is a holistic approach to a long-term and hands-on learning opportunity where participants regularly visit and connect with a natural outdoor space. Activities, learning and play opportunities are diverse and, as a practice, Forest School aims to foster a relationship of stewardship and sustainable awareness between the participant and the natural environment.

Principles and criteria for good practice can be found on the Forest School Association's website.

### **Our Insurance**

Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools are insured to deliver their programmes and are covered with Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance.

Our Safeguarding Policy is available in a separate document, and at the end of this document.

### What is the weather cancellation procedure?

Forest School takes place in almost all kinds of weathers, and part of being outdoors is getting the experience of being exposed to the elements to some degree. Being outdoors in the rain is part of the programme and living in this climate, it is very likely. However there are a few exceptional circumstances when we may need to cancel a session due to extreme adverse weather conditions to protect the safety of participants.

It is important to see the positives to a variety of weather conditions and we plan sessions to our advantage. There are some activities that are made better or are only possible in certain weather conditions.

Our weather procedures are:

- The weather forecast is checked by the leader the day before sessions are held to avoid any disruption and to prepare everyone for the likely weather. In the event where the weather is deemed unsafe to continue with the proposed programme, participants/parents will be made aware the day before the session.
- In the event programmes are delivered over the weekend or on a Monday and the participant/parent is not typically available during that time, the call will then be made on the Friday before the session.
- In the event of high winds where the risk of falling debris from trees is likely the programme will be suspended if no other alternative space is available. If the group is already on site they will be moved to an open space/field to avoid risk. If the wind speed does not decrease we do not re-enter the woods with the group.
- High wind is regarded as 30+mph (including gusts) which indicates scale 7 on the beaufort scale and we will not operate in high winds.
- In the event of thunder and lightning, the programme will be stopped immediately and the group moved to a safe location preferably indoors. If the lightning persists for longer than 10 minutes the programme will be canceled or moved indoors completely.
- In the event of heavy snow where participant/staff travel is hampered and safe site evacuation is not possible, the programme will be cancelled.
- All participants should be wearing appropriate clothes for the weather and all participants must have access to a rain jacket. See recommended clothing in our participants clothing policy for a detailed list.
- Shelters will be available and put up in the event of regular rain or wind and when leaders deem fit. This will allow all participants a break from the elements and also to keep equipment and personal items dry.
- It is the leaders decision, outwith the stated weather occurrences above, what they deem to be dangerous weather during a session. Leaders know that constant cold wet conditions could encourage the onset of hypothermia in participants, and this is to be avoided as priority.

- In the event where weather suspends or cancels outdoor programmes we will do what we can to find an appropriate indoor space however we recognize this will limit the activities we can deliver.

### What should participants be wearing?

The list below details clothes that participants must be wearing or are advised to wear to take part in our outdoor programmes.

- All participants must bring or have access to a rain jacket. If participants have waterproof trousers it is recommended they bring them also but this is not essential.
- Participants must wear strong waterproof shoes and have a change if possible.
- Participants are advised to wear long trousers with a long sleeve shirt or jumper to reduce the risk of ticks.
- Participants must wear at least 3 layers under their jacket. Warm layers are wool, cotton and fleece.
- On warm days participants are permitted to wear shorts but should have trousers in their spare kit if needed. We require long trousers for tool use and fire lighting activities.
- All participants should have access to a hat for the appropriate weather, sun hat if sunny, wooly hat if cold. Access to gloves and spare socks are recommended.

### How do we do hygiene and hand washing in the woods?

We have two kinds of hand washing systems at our programmes: Wet Wipes, and Liquid Soap. Leaders will take waste off site at the end of each day from both of these systems. Before and after snack times, food preparation activities, and after messy activities participants will be asked to clean their hands with whatever system is used on that programme. Leaders are asked to carry spare tissues and give them to the children when they need them.

### How do we manage toilets in the woods?

We use different toileting systems for different programs. In our kit we have a toilet tent, and portable toilet for day-long forest school sessions that run in site's where there is no other toilet within 10minute walk. We do not use the portable toilet for activity sessions that are shorter than three hours.

### What do we do for boundaries in Forest School?

An important factor of being in the forest and knowing how far the children can go is to set boundaries. On arrival for a forest school session, leaders will talk to the children and together mark the boundaries of the play area where they can safely explore. We usually set boundaries by where children are playing and can be seen by all staff with special markers – bright orange fabric strips. We also often use boundary games during a session to help define the play areas.



**Sophie Kyle**  
Life & Business Coach

## **Safeguarding Policy**

Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools are committed to upholding the rights of all children and acknowledge that children, individuals with learning disabilities, vulnerable young people and vulnerable adults have equal right to be treated with respect, care and dignity and to be protected from harm. We are committed to take all reasonable measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of each person in our care. We practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults and protect every person from harm, whether from an adult or a peer.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools's Designated Safeguarding Lead has a responsibility to ensure the children and young people attending activities delivered by Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools are protected from neglect and abuse. Any concerns or allegations of neglect or abuse of a child/young person should be immediately referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead is:**

- Sophie Kyle

In the absence of the above named person the following should be contacted:

1. Social Care Direct

Tel. 0141 287 0555

(Social Work Services GCC)

Social Work Services – Other local authorities

Glasgow City Council Social Work Services

City Chambers East

40 John Street

Glasgow

G1 1JL

Non Emergency Contact = Email AP1 forms to: [socialcaredirect@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:socialcaredirect@glasgow.gov.uk)

See individual young person's personal details

2. Out of Office Hours

Glasgow & Partners Emergency Social Work Service

Tel no. 0300 343 1505

Glasgow City Council City Chambers

GLASGOW

G2 1DU

3. Police Scotland Non-emergency Tel.: 101 Emergency Tel.: 999

**The aim of Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools's Safeguarding Policy is to:**

1. Ensure that practice across the organisation reflects and upholds the right of all children and young people to feel safe and protected from harm
2. Define harm
3. Identify risk factors associated with harm to enable staff to identify concerns more accurately
4. Clarify the procedure to be followed by Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools staff who suspect that a child is suffering harm or at risk of harm

- 
- **Ensure that practice across the organisation reflects and upholds the right of all children and young people to feel safe and protected from harm.**

· In accordance with the GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) approach, Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools is committed to ensuring positive outcomes for all children and young people in order to provide them with the foundations required to become confident, achieving, and included adults. Our staff recognise that in order to achieve their full potential, children must feel safe, secure and valued.

· Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools is committed to the protection of all children and young people and regards the safeguarding and promoting of the interests and wellbeing of children and young people of paramount concern. We are also committed to the protection of vulnerable persons from exploitative relationships.

· While Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools respects the right to confidentiality for children and young people we also recognise that the duty to safeguard children comes first and so we place the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults above all other operating principles.

· Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools recognises that procedures, policies and guidance cannot in themselves protect children and young people. Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools, therefore, aims to support staff to be a competent, skilled and vigilant workforce which, in keeping with the GIRFEC approach, internalises the view that safeguarding children and young people is "everyone's job".

· Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools considers it the duty of all those employed or involved with the organisation, to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of all children and young people with whom they come into contact. Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools staff, therefore, have a duty of care to all children and young people and have a responsibility to ensure that any concerns about suspected abuse are reported according to the procedure laid out

within this policy and that all appropriate action is taken immediately, and full support provided.

- **Definition of harm and Risk Factors associated with harm**  
(See also Appendix 1 – Categories & Indicators of Abuse)

### What Is Child Protection?

'Child protection' means protecting a child from child abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for a risk assessment to have identified a likelihood or risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect. Equally, in instances where a child may have been abused or neglected but the risk of future abuse has not been identified, the child and their family may require support and recovery services but not a Child Protection Plan. In such cases, an investigation may still be necessary to determine whether a criminal investigation is needed and to inform an assessment that a Child Protection Plan is not required.' (Taken from Scottish Government document 'The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland' 2014; Page 12: Para 38)

### What Is Child Abuse?

The general definition of child abuse adopted in the most recent Scottish Government Guidance is: ".....Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Assessments will need to consider whether abuse has occurred or is likely to occur. (Taken from Scottish Government document 'The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland' 2014; Page 11: Para 32)

Within the above guidance, abuse is further categorised as:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Harm may come to children/young people from: -

- Staff, volunteers or other adults who have contact with the children/young people
- Other children/young people at East Park or outside; and
- Deliberate self-harm.

### Other Specific Circumstances/Sources of Harm

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Online & Mobile Phone Child Safety
- Radicalisation
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- Historical Abuse
- **Procedure to be followed by Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools staff who suspect that a child is suffering harm or at risk of harm**

How concerns may arise?

- A member of staff suspects abuse, or a child tells of abuse.

The suspicions of a staff member may be aroused by the presence of indicators of abuse by a feeling, based on knowledge of the child, that all is not well, or by a mixture of factors (see Appendix 1 – Categories & Indicators of Abuse).

Although the responsibility to investigate suspected abuse lies with Social Work Services and the Police, it is quite appropriate, when a concern is first raised for a member of staff to ask a child about how an obvious injury was sustained or why the child appears upset.

Staff, however, should not enter into detailed investigation of the symptoms or causes of the child's distress or injury. Such an approach could prejudice later formal investigations.

Staff should respond in the following way when a child tells of abuse:

- Listen with care;
- Reassure the child that he/she is not to blame;
- Do not express or show disbelief;
- Do not give a guarantee of confidentiality;
- Take the allegation seriously;
- Affirm the child's feelings as expressed (don't tell the child how he/she should feel);
- Avoid being judgemental about the information given by the child;
- Avoid an investigative approach (a casual enquiry about who did it is appropriate, but do not pursue the matter; remember, it can be distressing for anyone to be faced with persistent questioning);
- Only ask 'open-ended' questions rather than 'leading' questions which suggest possible answers;
- Record as accurately as possible anything said by the child; try to note exact words used by the child and avoid summarising; try to note details such as time, place and context;
- Keep notes and make a formal record of them on the same working day. Sign and date all your written records.
- Follow the procedure detailed on Section 4.1; page 14 and refer the matter immediately to a line manager and to the Safeguarding Officer or the deputising person.

Staff should observe, record and report.

- OBSERVE carefully the child's behaviour and demeanour.
- RECORD in detail what you have seen and heard. Note the time, place and the context. Signs of physical injury should be described in detail or sketched. Any comment by the child concerned, or by an adult who might be the abuser, about how the injury occurred should be recorded, preferably quoting words actually used, as soon as possible after the comment has been made. Sign and date this record.
- REPORT concerns immediately to their line manager and the Safeguarding Officer or the deputising person.

It may be that a child will seek a promise of confidentiality either before or after telling of abuse. **No guarantee of confidentiality can be given.** It should be explained to the child that whilst the staff member understands their concerns, he or she will have to pass on information and seek advice in order to protect the child.

- A third party expresses concern

A member of staff to whom a third party expresses concern should: -

- OBSERVE the behaviour or demeanour of the person expressing the concerns, where this is done in person.
- RECORD in detail what they have seen and heard and when they did so. Actual words used should be quoted where possible.
- REPORT concerns immediately to their line manager and the Safeguarding Officer or the deputising person.

- An anonymous allegation is received

Staff in receipt of anonymous allegations about abuse should:

- RECORD in writing the words used, so far as possible, where the allegation is by telephone, or retain the document if it is a written note. Sign and date your written record.
- REPORT concerns immediately to their line manager and the Safeguarding Officer or the deputising person.

- Action By The Safeguarding Lead

All cases of alleged or suspected abuse must be treated seriously. All require an immediate response. It is not the role of the Safeguarding Lead to investigate the allegations or suspicions, but to gather together what information there is about an alleged incident.

For a referral to be made PROOF IS NOT REQUIRED.

In the event of a child protection concern being raised, the Safeguarding Lead:

- Will refer all such concerns to Social Work Services immediately or within 24 hours and the Police if appropriate using the contact details in Appendix 7.
- Will state the concerns clearly and the basis for them.
- Will request statements from all parties involved and carry out interviews as necessary.
- Will collate all relevant information
- Will advise staff and others providing information that this will be subsequently passed to the relevant authorities.
- Will follow any verbal report with a written report to Social Work Services within 48 hours.
- Will cooperate fully with Social Work Services and the Police by providing all necessary information, ensuring Sophie Kyle and Glasgow Forest Schools's representation at any meetings convened by Social Work Services.

### **Allegations Against The Safeguarding Lead**

If at any time you have concerns about the actions of the Safeguarding Lead (Sophie Kyle) please contact Social Work Services or the Police immediately.

### **Related policies and procedures**

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Safer recruitment policy and procedures
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Photography and image sharing guidance
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Risk Management Policy

Legal framework: This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in Scotland. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from [nspcc.org.uk/childprotection](http://nspcc.org.uk/childprotection).

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **CATEGORIES & INDICATORS OF ABUSE**

#### **1. SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE**

It is important to remember that lists, such as the one below, are neither completely definitive nor exhaustive. The information in such lists has to be used in the context of the child/young person's whole situation and circumstances. Different types of abuse may overlap or co-exist.

##### **1.1 PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

Signs of possible physical abuse:

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent;
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries;
- Refusal to discuss injuries;
- Untreated injuries, or delay in reporting them;
- Excessive physical punishment;
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather;
- Fear of returning home;
- Aggression towards others;
- Running away
- Administration of toxic substances

### 1.2 EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age- or developmentally-inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

Signs of possible emotional abuse:

- Low self-esteem;
- Continual self-deprecation;
- Sudden speech disorder;
- Significant decline in concentration;
- Socio-emotional immaturity;
- Self-harm
- Fear of carers
- Extremes of passivity or aggression;

### 1.3 SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Signs of possible sexual abuse:

Behavioural indicators:

- Lack of trust in adults or over familiarity with adults;
- Fear of a particular individual;
- Social isolation – withdrawal or introversion;

- Sleep disturbance (nightmares, irrational fears, bed wetting, fear of sleeping alone, needing a nightlight);
- Running away from home;
- Low self-esteem;
- Display of sexual knowledge beyond child's years;
- Unusual interest in the genitals of adults, children or animals;
- Expressing affection in inappropriate ways, e.g. "French kissing";
- Fear of bathrooms, showers, closed doors;
- Abnormal, sexualised drawing;
- Fear of medical examinations;
- Developmental regression;
- Poor peer relations;
- Over sexualised behaviour;
- Psychosomatic factors, e.g. recurrent abdominal pain or headache;
- Sexual promiscuity.

Physical indicators:

- Sleeplessness, nightmares, fear of the dark;
- Bruises, scratches, bite marks to the thighs or genital areas;
- Itch, soreness, discharge, unexplained bleeding from the rectum, vagina or penis;
- Pain on passing urine or recurrent urinary infection;
- Stained underwear;
- Unusual genital odour;
- Anxiety/depression;
- Eating disorder, e.g. anorexia nervosa or bulimia;
- Discomfort/difficulty in walking or sitting;
- Unexplained pregnancy;
- Venereal disease, sexually transmitted disease;
- Soiling or wetting in children who have been trained;
- Self-harm

In addition, there are a number of indicators that a child is being groomed for sexual exploitation. These include:

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late.
- Disengagement from education; skipping school or being disruptive.
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- Association with other young people involved in exploitation and with older boyfriends/girlfriends.
- Involvement in exploitative relationships or association with risky adults.
- Sexual health issues e.g. sexually transmitted infections.
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviours.
- Changes in temperament/depression.
- Drug and alcohol misuse.

#### 1.4 NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food,

shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from "non-organic failure to thrive", where they have significantly failed to reach normal weight and growth or developmental milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated. In its extreme form, children can be at serious risk from the effects of malnutrition, lack of nurturing and stimulation. This can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. With young children in particular, the consequences may be life-threatening within a relatively short period of time.

Signs of possible neglect:

- Constant hunger/erratic eating patterns;
- Poor personal hygiene;
- Lack of adequate clothing;
- Failure to seek appropriate/necessary medical attention;
- Constant tiredness;
- Unhygienic home conditions;