



## **Get Out More Forest Schools and Covid-19: Frequently asked questions**

Get Out More has not been able to run most of its activities since lockdown began. However, with recent easing of restrictions and the safety measures we have put in place, we believe the time is right to resume and give children a chance to enjoy the many benefits of forest school once again.

This document outlines the areas within which we have made changes to reduce the risk to participants and staff whilst also adhering to current Covid-19 restrictions to allow us to provide holiday forest school sessions. It should hopefully answer any questions you may have prior to booking onto our sessions, but if you have any more questions, please do get in touch.

### **1. How are we keeping to social distancing rule between individuals?**

There's plenty of space outside so it's easier to maintain social distancing in the woods than indoors and in the open, air disperses easily. The government's SAGE group has stated the risk of infection is significantly lower outside, so the outdoors is the best place for us to be.

To avoid being too close together, we're spacing our seating further apart and limiting the amount of time we sit or stand together in a session. We'll be encouraging games and activities that support this.

At some points, i.e. if a child needs first aid, a practitioner will need to interact more closely with a child. To minimise risk here, we will wear gloves and wear a mask, ensure we are sat next to, and not facing each other whilst also limiting the amount of time we're close together.

We know it's harder for very young children to understand or follow social distancing rules so for the time being we have increased our lower age limit to 6 years old. We are sorry that this means some of our younger forest schoolers will miss out. We hope to include 5-year olds again soon.

### **2. How can you ensure groups of more than 6 people are not gathering in a public place?**

To avoid gathering in groups of more than 6, there will be some changes from our usual forest school format. We will have smaller numbers on each programme than normal i.e. between 10-15. Each child will be in a 'bubble' of 5 plus an adult. At points in the day when we would need to gather such as at drop off time and for the welcome and ground rules circle, children will be with their bubble. We will arrange different drop off points and staggered times to accommodate this.

During the session children do not have to stick with children from their bubble, but at no time will groups of children be allowed to gather in groups of more than 6. At all times children will be encouraged to social distance and we will facilitate games and activities that support this. In fact, if you were to visit one of our pre-lockdown forest schools, you would observe that it is normal for children to play like this in the woods as there is so much space available and children are free to choose the things that interest them rather than directed to structured activities, they naturally play in spaced apart in smaller groups.



### **3. How will we ensure our sites remain free from members of the public using the same woods?**

Having clearly marked Forest School spaces away from busy areas like playgrounds and footpaths will make sure that we're keeping our distance from others who might be using the woods at the same time.

We always have a boundary talk at the beginning of each session, so this will carry on as normal ensuring they have a sound understanding of the limits of the area they can play in. We are not increasing the size of the boundaries for these adapted sessions. They are already large, and staff are familiar with the space and where the children will be.

### **4. How will we maintain hygiene during an outdoor session?**

Handwashing is more important than ever, so we've invested in portable 'Spa taps' and we'll be making sure that everyone washes their hands-on arrival, before leaving and at regular intervals throughout the session.

We're reducing the amount of kit we bring so children are using natural woodland resources rather than sharing equipment. Equipment we do need will be wiped between each participant & washed between sessions.

Parents can help us by making sure children have their own lunch, water bottle & hand towel and we'll be recommending that children's clothes are washed at the end of every day. Our staff will wear fresh clothes each day too.

We will not be cooking meals on campfire as we sometimes do at sessions. All participants will bring their own lunch and can eat near their friends but sitting spaced apart in groups of no more than 6.

As usual, there are no toilets in the woods that we use for forest schools. Children are advised to have a 'wild wee behind a tree'. We will ensure that children are not going to the toilet at the same time and in the same places. Children will need to tell us if they need a poo, so our staff can put on PPE to bag it up and dispose of it. As always, we are insistent that they wash hands after toileting.

### **5. How will we respond to symptoms?**

Whether they are children, staff, or volunteers, no one should be mixing with others if they're showing any signs of illness or if they've been close to someone who has. We'll be asking at the start of every session and we'll be alert to any symptoms. We'll ask anyone who is showing symptoms to stay at home.

Should a child start to display any symptoms during the session, we will ring the named contacts provided at point of booking and ask that the child is picked up straight away.

Forest School is inclusive, but if children are in higher risk groups due to underlying health conditions, it is safer for them not to mix at the moment. We always require parents and



carers to declare a child's medical needs on the booking form. This does help us plan sessions and ensure our programme can meet your child's needs, so please do tell us about health requirements.

We hope this document helps give an idea of how our sessions can provide a fun and enriching environment for children whilst still keeping everyone as safe as can be at this time.

Of course, we'd love to speak to you if you have any other questions, so please contact us on either [info@getoutmorecic.co.uk](mailto:info@getoutmorecic.co.uk) or 01535 668588 if you'd like to discuss anything in more depth.