

# EDMON ON

Forest School



**Curious, Confident, Nature  
Loving Children**

**Parent Handbook  
2021-2022**

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**We would like to acknowledge the land on which we learn is Treaty 6 territory, a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Metis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others.**

**We acknowledge the many Indigenous peoples whose footsteps have marked these lands for generations.**

**We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us.**

**We recognize the land as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on or are visiting. The histories, languages, and cultures of the peoples of this territory continue to influence our vibrant community.**

## **ABOUT US**

Edmonton Forest School Society (EFSS) is a not-for-profit society with a volunteer board of directors. Our aim is to create opportunities for children in Edmonton to connect with our River Valley, the largest urban park system in North America with 18,000 acres of natural environment. EFSS provides children and youth with the opportunity to learn and develop with their head, heart and hands in an outdoor environment. An outdoor learning environment empowers students to take risks while building resiliency, and becoming stewards of the land.

EFSS facilitates opportunities for students to connect with the culture, traditions and language of the Cree people upon whose ancestral land the school takes place. This will naturally emerge through place-based education. We invite Elders and Knowledge Keepers to participate in the knowledge sharing thus creating intergenerational learning opportunities.

EFSS approaches learning through experience and play, guided by student's questions and observations. A low student to teacher ratio (1:8) is imperative for this learning approach and community building.

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The EFSS is a learning community that offers immersive site school opportunities for elementary classes and their teachers through the Inquiring Minds Network. Each school will spend a total of 5 consecutive days immersed in the forest school practices in the river valley park closest to their school. This will allow the teacher and students to embed the teachings and ideas into their daily practice. Beginning in 2020 we will be piloting the site school at 3 different schools.

## What is Forest School?

Forest School Canada defines a Forest School as an education practice that puts the forest and the child at play, at the centre of learning. Learners and educators build a relationship with the land through regular and repeated access to the same forest over an extended period of time. Educators support learning through a pedagogical framework that is rooted in the place and play, directed and inspired by the child, and driven by a process of inquiry.<sup>1</sup>

The Forest and Nature School (FNS) movement is gaining momentum all over the world, from Scandinavia, and the UK, where it is well-established, to Korea, Australia, and beyond. Many often trace the roots of FNS back to Denmark in the 1950s, and our work in Canada has certainly been informed by the Danish and also British approaches. But no discussion of FNS in Canada is complete without acknowledging that Indigenous people here have been teaching and learning on, with, and from this land for millennia. We have learned and still have much to learn from building reciprocal relationships built on mutual trust with the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities around us.

At Edmonton Forest School Society we adhere to the 10 Forest school principles created by Child and Nature Alliance Canada:

1. Takes place in a variety of natural spaces, including local forests, creeks, meadows, prairie grasses, mountains, shorelines, tundra, natural playgrounds, and outdoor classrooms.



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<sup>1</sup> Child and Nature Alliance of Canada (CNAC), ND, Forest School Practitioner's Handbook

2. Is a sustained process of regular and repeated sessions in the same natural space, supporting children to develop a sense of place, an ethic of care towards nature, and an understanding of themselves as a part of the natural world.
3. Views children and youth as innately competent, curious, and capable learners, and aims to promote their holistic development.
4. Is led by a qualified FNS educator who is rooted in and committed to the FNS pedagogical framework, its theoretical underpinnings, and practical applications. FNS educators use place and play-based, emergent, and inquiry-driven teaching and learning methods. Their role is that of a facilitator, guide, supporter, and co-learner, rather than expert, and they are constantly balancing those roles.
5. Value play in and of itself, as a vehicle for learning and skill development, and as a way for children and youth to exercise agency in their lives. FNS therefore carves out and protects the time and space for children and youth to dive deeply into their play.
6. Views the opportunity to experience risk as an integral part of children's learning and healthy development. FNS educators are knowledgeable about and qualified to support children and youth to assess and co-manage risk.
7. Relies on loose, natural materials to support open-ended, creative play and learning.
8. Values the process as much as the outcome.
9. Seeks to honour the past and current realities of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples by building reciprocal relationship with members of those communities in order to learn how Indigenous ways of being, knowing, teaching, and learning intersect with FNS theories, practice, and how one can support the other.
10. Is grounded in and prioritizes building engagement, healthy, vibrant, and diverse communities by always considering issues of access and equity.<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>2</sup>Child and Nature Alliance of Canada (CNAC), ND, Forest School Practitioner's Handbook

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## **Programs**

### **Coyotes**

Tuesday & Thursday 9:30am- 3:00pm (full day)

Ages: 4-6 Fees: \$50 per class

Start day : Thursday September 9th, 2021

### **Beavers**

Monday & Wednesday 9:30-11:30am

Ages: 3-5 Fees: \$27 per class

Start day : Wednesday September 8th, 2021

### **Porcupines**

Monday & Wednesday 1:00-4:00pm

Ages: 4-6 Fees: \$27 per class

Start day : Wednesday September 8th, 2021

### **Bears**

Friday's 9:30-3:00pm

Ages: 5-9 Fees: \$50 per class

Start day: Friday September 10th, 2021

### **Ravens**

Saturday's 9:30-12:00pm

Ages: 5-10 Fees: \$27 per class

Start day: Saturday September 11th, 2021

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## Holidays

We do not run programs on holidays. Please observe the following dates that we will not be running due to a holiday.

**Thursday September 30th (National Day of Truth and Reconciliation)**

**Monday October 11th (Thanksgiving Day)**

**Thursday November 11th (Remembrance Day)**

**Monday February 21st (Family Day)**

**Friday April 15th (Good Friday)**

**Monday April 18th (Easter Monday)**

**Monday May 23rd (Victoria Day)**

## Where We Learn

We are very fortunate to live in Edmonton, Treaty 6 Territory, as we have a huge public park system that is available and accessible to all. As such, we have chosen Gold Bar Park to be our main forest school location. Gold Bar Park offers many varying landscapes all within a few kilometres as well as access to the North Saskatchewan River. Gold Bar has a lovely creek that flows throughout the park. There are also two small ponds that are full of native plants and species. Gold Bar Park offers a vast forested area full of wildlife such as porcupines, beavers, skunks, coyotes, deer, and many species of birds. It is important to note that one section of the park allows off leash dogs. Our Forest School Leaders will use caution and only access this area if deemed necessary in terms of learning opportunities. Gold Bar Park also connects to Rundle Park via the walking bridge. This allows us to explore another park and get a different perspective of the natural areas in the city.

Gold Bar Park is equipped with a public washroom facility and shelter as well as many picnic tables, fire pits and garbage cans.

In the winter months, the park is a hub for skiers as there are many groomed trails created by The Edmonton Nordic Ski Club. Our Winter programming will take into consideration the impact of the trails and users in the area.

### Winter Indoor Location

Our Alberta winters can be extreme. Our programs are 100% outdoor in all weather. However, there are times when being outdoors all day may be unsafe for our students. During our coldest months, December, January and February, when temperatures reach  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  or colder we will move to **Capilano Community League Park and facilities**. This move will be communicated with parents in a timely manner and will continue for the full week or duration of the cold snap. When at the Capilano Community Park, we will have access to their building, skating rink, playground and natural area. We will still spend the majority of our day outside but will use the indoor facility to eat snacks, lunch, read stories and **warm up**. We are very thankful to the Capilano Community League for allowing us to use their space and provide a winter learning environment for our kiddos.



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## **Educators**

The staff at Edmonton Forest School Society have experience working with youth and children in outdoor settings and are competent in managing outdoor risks. Their job is to share their love of nature and foster connections to the land.

Our educators are certified Forest School Practitioners through the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada. Our other outdoor educators are certified in a number of related professions including Bachelor of Environmental Science, Education and Early Childhood Education. All of our educators are certified in CPR & First Aid.

All staff and volunteers have submitted an up-to-date Criminal Record Check with a Vulnerable Sector Screen.

### **Tara Beck is a co-founder of EFSS, Board Treasurer, and Site School Educator.**

Inspired by a childhood spent traipsing through Alberta's rich trail systems, Tara studied environmental and conservation science before pursuing a career in education. With nearly 20 years of experience, Tara has taught across a diversity of learning environments; from formal classrooms, to museums, to provincial parks.

In her spare time, she can still be found on the trails and loves exploring new corners of Edmonton's River Valley with her 2 young daughters. She believes strongly in nurturing lasting relationships with the natural world and aspires to make forest and nature learning accessible to all.

### **Miriam Mahaffy Lead Educator (Coyotes & Bears)**

Miriam grew up picking dandelions on Edmonton soccer fields as a pee-wee soccer player, and she still enjoys picking dandelion greens to add to her salads today (although her cheering squad is much smaller now...)! She thinks her spirit animal might be an American Coot, due to their voracious appetite for duckweed salad, difficulty achieving lift-off, rebellious punk-rock adolescent phase, and general endearing awkwardness. Miriam has degrees in Environmental Studies and Education and has enjoyed sharing her passion for helping humans build connections with ecological communities in all sorts of creative ways ranging from natural history interpretation, canoe tripping, river valley recreation programming, and phenological engagement. She

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loves helping others discover the wonder, creativity, and empowerment of feeling a sense of belonging in their place!

### **Ulrika Solowan Lead Educator (Beavers & Porcupines)**

Ulrika is an early childhood educator with over 15 years experience working with children. She has a love for outdoor play and believes that all children are mighty learners. She is originally from Sweden but has called Edmonton home for 19 years and lives here with her husband and their two teenage daughters. Growing up she spent endless hours outside climbing trees, exploring the forest and lakes around her and just finding joy in the small things. Her passion as an educator is to learn and wonder alongside children as they play, take risks, and explore the world around them while also fostering an appreciation and love for the land.



*Learning and teaching should not stand in opposite banks and just watch the river flow by, instead they should embark together on a journey down the water.*

*-Loris Malaguzzi*

### **Communication/ Photos**

During forest school programming, you can reach our lead teacher at **587-594-9460**. This is for emergency purposes. All other daily communication can be done face to face at drop-off and pick up or send an email to [edmontonforestschool@gmail.com](mailto:edmontonforestschool@gmail.com)

We will post pictures in our private Instagram account, which you will be invited to access once programming has begun. We will also be posting educational discoveries to our website blog.

### **Washroom/ Toileting**

If a child needs to use the washroom, we will try to use the public washroom facility located near the parking lot of the park. If we are not near the washroom, students will

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be taught how to properly and respectfully do ‘forest 1’s and 2’s’. If a child does a ‘forest 2’ the waste will be disposed of in an environmentally safe manner. Hand sanitizer will be accessible and used by each student who uses the washroom outside of the facility.

**\*All children must be toilet trained upon starting forest school \***

### Supply List

All children require the following supplies:

- **Backpack with chest strap**
- **Snacks**
- **Lunch (full day program)**
- **Full water bottle**
- **One complete extra change of clothes including underwear and socks**
- **1 small coiled blank notepad**
- **Mask**

### Snacks

Please send garbage free snacks and lunches that are healthy and filling. Your child will be busy playing and exploring so they will need lots of energy to refuel themselves for the day. Your child will also need a reusable water bottle that is filled with water everyday. We will often cook a snack over the fire such as bannock and make tea. We will let you know in advance when this will happen in the week.

### Clothing

Children will need to be dressed appropriately for the weather each day, with extra clothes according to the seasons. Due to the changes in weather conditions over the day, it is important to send extra clothes with your child. For **cold weather**, please consider the following factors when dressing:

- 1) **Insulation:** natural fabrics such as wool or silk work well as a base layer; alternatively, use fleece. The key for this layer is to wick moisture away from the

skin and insulate the skin with a breathable layer to keep warm. Cotton next to the skin, is not ideal for cold weather situations.

- 2) **Middle layer:** this provides another layer of insulation that creates “deep-air space” between your skin and the elements. This is essential to keeping warm. Wool sweaters and fleece work great.
- 3) **Outer Shell:** waterproof and wind-proff, as well as breathable.

Fall outerwear	Winter outerwear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rain gear (waterproof boots, pants, jacket) with extra insulation on colder days</li> <li>- Running shoes for running on dry days (no open toe shoes/crocs)</li> <li>- Hat</li> <li>- Warm sweater/jacket for colder days</li> <li>- Sunscreen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Winter hat (must cover ears and stay on the head)</li> <li>- Balaclava and neck warmer</li> <li>- Two pairs of warm waterproof mittens</li> <li>- Warm waterproof snowsuit</li> <li>- Warm waterproof boots with liners that can be removed (Baffin, Sorel, Kamik, <b>no Bogs</b>)</li> </ul>
Spring Outerwear	Summer outerwear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rain gear (waterproof boots, pants, jacket)</li> <li>- Running shoes for running on dry days (no open toe shoes/crocs)</li> <li>- Hat</li> <li>- Warm sweater/jacket for colder days</li> <li>- Sunscreen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rain gear (waterproof boots, pants, jacket)</li> <li>- Running shoes for running on dry days (no open toe shoes/crocs)</li> <li>- Hat</li> <li>- Lightweight clothing</li> <li>- Sunscreen</li> </ul>

\*Please note that we have a small gear lending library for items that children forget and or may have trouble accessing. Once the child is finished using the item it must be returned for other students to use. Thrift stores are wonderful resources for finding gently used children's gear at a fraction of the cost.



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### Orientation Day

In August, each family will be contacted to come and play with our educators in our special forest at GoldBar Park. This will be a great starting point for relationship building with the children and educators and the children with the land. Each program will have their own day to explore and learn about the wonders of forest school.

### Health & Wellness/COVID-19

We are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for every child. A child with a communicable disease must be kept at home. This includes fever, cold, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, chronic cough, pink eye, etc. The following points are to be observed:

- A child must be fever-free and have stopped vomiting for a 24hour period before returning to the program.
- Please inform the lead educator that the child will be absent
- If the child does not appear well while participating in the program a parent or emergency contact will be notified immediately.

Please see our **Memorandum of Agreement for COVID 19** for a full explanation of our organization's procedures.

**\*\*Every family will need to complete the COVID questionnaire before starting the program every week.**

## POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### Registration

The following items are required as part of the registration process:

1. **A registration fee of \$100 per family (non-refundable)**

We accept email money transfers to [edmontonforestschool@gmail.com](mailto:edmontonforestschool@gmail.com)

2. **A completed Registration Form:** our registration form is online to help cut down paper as well as create a user friendly form.
3. **Signed Informed Consent Form**
4. **Signed Video and Photo Release Form**
5. **Signed Parent Handbook Agreement Form**

Once payment and all documents have been received you will receive an email confirmation of your child's participation in the program.

### Payment/Withdrawal

Beginning September 2021 we will be starting a semester fee structure.

**Fall Semester:            September 8th - December 11th 2021**

**Winter Semester:        January 4th - April 2nd 2022**

**Spring Semester:        April 5th 2022 - June 25th 2022**

<b>Beavers: \$27/class</b>	<b>Fall \$700</b>	<b>Winter \$ 700</b>	<b>Spring \$700</b>
<b>Porcupines: \$27/class</b>	<b>Fall \$700</b>	<b>Winter \$ 700</b>	<b>Spring \$700</b>
<b>Coyotes: \$50/class</b>	<b>Fall \$1300</b>	<b>Winter \$1300</b>	<b>Spring \$1300</b>
<b>Bears: \$50/class</b>	<b>Fall \$700</b>	<b>Winter \$ 700</b>	<b>Spring \$700</b>
<b>Ravens: \$27/class</b>	<b>Fall \$350</b>	<b>Winter \$ 350</b>	<b>Spring \$350</b>

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\*\*\*\*\*As one of our priorities we aim to Strengthen Diversity/ Inclusion- All people deserve the opportunity to develop their emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual selves in the natural world. We honour all people and are committed to ensuring accessible programming for all.

Please let us know if you require a different payment model and we will be happy to accommodate.

**All semester fees are due on the 1st day of the semester, regardless of sickness, statutory holidays, weather, emergency closures, or family vacations.**

**Semester fee's can be accepted via email money transfers to [edmontonforestschool@gmail.com](mailto:edmontonforestschool@gmail.com)**

Consistent non payment/late payment may result in removal from the program.

There is a NSF fee of \$50.00.

### **Refunds Policy**

Refunds will be determined on a case by case basis and are not given unless there are extreme circumstances that prevent a child from participating in the program.

1. Refunds will not be given if a day's program is canceled due to inclement weather.
2. A child who is absent or leaves for a portion of the day due to illness, injury or any other reason will not be refunded any portion of that day's program fees.

### **Inclement Weather Policy/Closure Policy**

We will be outside rain, shine or snow. During the winter months, we will be practicing our shelter building using many loose parts including tarps. We will also practice our fire starting skills to keep warm. When children are dressed properly for the weather they are very happy to play outdoors no matter the weather.

Educators at EFSS consult the weather forecast daily, and weather-related safety is considered in all decision making. However, on occasion, the weather may



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become hazardous for children to play outside. If the park is deemed too risky due to high winds or weather such as a thunderstorm or tornado, we will make adjustments to our class location by using the public park facility or Capilano Community League.

In the case of predicted thunder and lightning, educators will ensure students are close to shelter so that they can take cover quickly. In case of extreme cold ( $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  or below), educators will limit students' length of exposure, and will constantly assess students' comfort and safety, watching for signs of frostbite.

Parents will be notified by email/phone if there will be a different drop-off or pick-up location or if there is an emergency.

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## LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

### A Typical Day

While every day at forest school unfolds differently based on the community present, their interests, the season, the weather, and the various loose parts found or introduced at the site, students can be sure that they will be welcomed by all.



Free play, hang up backpack on the tree. Play as other friends arrive in the space (basecamp)

Clean hands get snacks.

Morning meeting on tarp- share a story, discuss changes/observations, using a talking stick share what experiences each child would like to enjoy.

Students will be afforded the large chunks of time necessary to really settle into the kind of play from which rich, deep learning can emerge, and teachers and accompanying volunteers will be encouraged to both play with and closely observe students during this time, as opposed to only supervising or managing behaviour.

Sit spots will be enjoyed to connect with the natural environment as well as practice self-regulation, calming techniques and reflection.

Throughout the day, stories will be read and told and students will be encouraged to spin their own stories, perhaps based on their experiences at Forest School, perhaps based solely on imagination, or perhaps a mix of both!

As the day comes to a close, we will share our highlights of the day, and share one final "hoot and howl" before gathering gear, heading down the path to the parking lot, and saying goodbye to the land and each other.

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## **Emergent Learning**

Learning at Forest School can and often does look different than it does in a conventional school setting. At EFSS, we are committed to student-led or emergent, and inquiry and play-based learning. This means that we believe that all students, including very young children, are capable of constructing important knowledge through pursuing their own interests, asking questions, and expressing themselves in multiple, complex, and interrelated ways.

## **Play**

At EFSS we believe that unstructured, free play is fundamental to healthy development and learning. Play is the primary way through which children make meaning of the world around them, and this form of play is something that children get less of in our current society. Play at EFSS can take many forms. For example, symbolic play involves the use of an object (or a sign or symbol) to “stand in for” or represent something else, an acorn might become a person. Social play requires participants to effectively negotiate rules and procedures. Regardless of the type, all play provides the building blocks for greater cognitive functioning and learning for children and adults alike.

## **Risky Play**

Forest play can have some risk involved. We believe in the importance of risky play being part of a child’s healthy learning and development. Before children arrive at the program, educators perform site assessments for the park and risk assessments and dynamic risk assessments for activities being offered or explored. A discussion with students will occur as risk assessment is best done together.

## **Role of the Educator**

EFSS educators seek to be co-learners with participants. They aim to prompt questions, and extend and deepen participants’ thinking about and compassion for the world around them by themselves posing questions, or by



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using or introducing tools, loose parts, and supplies that change the learning environment and therefore elicit a change in the learner.

### **Parents/Guardians as Partners**

We value the contribution of students' parents at EFSS. We would like you as parents to feel actively involved in your child's education, as such we welcome your participation. Let us know if you would like to volunteer on a particular day or if you have an interesting outdoor skill set that you are willing to share with the class.

### **Behaviour Management**

At EFSS we manage behaviour proactively by engaging in developmentally appropriate activities, and by nurturing a positive physical and social/emotional space. In general, our behaviour management will:

- Consider the child's developmental level and needs
- Make expectations clear and provide scaffolding to help students participate positively
- Focus on the behaviour rather than the child
- Be implemented in a positive and consistent manner
- Be designed to help the child to learn appropriate behaviour and techniques
- Involve consulting with parents/guardians/teachers to include their input of successful approaches with a child, as well as to keep them informed of issues/concerns as they arise
- Help children to develop self-control, self-confidence, decision making skills, the ability to communicate effectively and sensitively in their interactions with others

At EFSS inappropriate behaviour is defined as using actions or words that make other students or staff members feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Unsafe behaviour is defined as any behaviour that puts a child or educator at risk. This includes not responding when called, running, hiding, taking risk without consulting educators, and not following

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guidelines so that behaviour becomes potentially dangerous to the child or others. In the case of inappropriate/unsafe behaviour the following steps will be taken:

1. Educators will remove the child from proximity to the group and the two will work together to define the inappropriate/unsafe behaviour and create a plan to modify it.
2. Parents/guardians will be informed (by phone or at the end of the day face-to-face) of the behaviour and consulted to discover the cause.
3. Educators and parents/guardians will, together, develop strategies to adjust and eliminate the inappropriate behaviour. These strategies will be implemented with the child at home and at Forest School to offer a consistent approach. Educators and guardians will stay in contact to keep each other informed of the child's progress with regard to the behaviour in question.
4. Educators will follow up with the child to be consistent with expectations and approach as well as to offer feedback and positive reinforcement.

### **Prohibited practices/Abuse Policy**

1. Corporal punishment of the child ( which may include but is not limited to, hitting, spanking, slapping, pinching)
2. Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other devices for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.
3. Locking the exits of the premises for the purpose of confining the child or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the agency's emergency management policies and procedures.

For more information please see the following:

Alberta Human Rights Act, RSA 2000, c-A-25.5

Criminal Code of Canada, RSC 1985, c C-46

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## **EQUALITY AT FOREST SCHOOL**

One of the primary goals of EFSS is to make our programs accessible to a wide range of participants regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, physical ability or socioeconomic status. We seek to dismantle the barriers to participation in forest school by using accessible paths in the park and creating a welcoming community.

In the future, we plan to seek funding to ensure that every child who wants to access our programming can participate without costs limiting them.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

One of the many special features of our program is that they are held in the same area of park over a period of time, allowing participants to become very comfortable in and knowledgeable about the area. Indeed, we believe that it is only through a deep connection to land that children grow up to be stewards of the land. Although this is very positive for learning, it can have an adverse environmental effect due to overuse of an area. We therefore strive to meet a delicate balance whereby we promote children's connection to nature through exposure and meaningful experience, while at the same time fostering an ethic of care and sustainable use of the land we are connecting to. We minimize our ecological impact by rotating our sites for play, and staying on trails as much as possible. We will remember that we are on public park land and therefore will follow the guidance and advice of City of Edmonton park staff in order to ensure the park is properly maintained for all users.

## **Emergency Procedures and First Aid**

### **Risk Management**

To ensure the safety of the children we practise two drills every season. The first drill is to practise the procedure if one of the educators is hurt. The second drill is to practise the procedure if one of the children is hurt. Also, at one of the drills, we practise what to do if one of the children becomes lost. Please see Emergency Procedures for a more detailed explanation.

We also perform a site risk assessment at the beginning of every class to evaluate the safety of a specific site. We highlight any concerns we have about the area, and how we can minimize the risk. If we cannot, we leave the site.

Educators also perform a thorough Assessment for every site each season. For every activity, there is also an experience assessment completed which details how we minimize risk and educate the children about safety in the experience. If you would like to see these, let us know and we will email them to you.

### **Emergency Procedures**

#### **Missing Child**

- Educators and children search the area as a group.
- If the child is not found within 5 minutes, call Police (911). Notify the parent of the missing child.
- One teacher will manage the remaining children while the other teacher continues the search until the police arrive. If that teacher is unable to rejoin the class, the rest of the parents will be notified and the children will be sent home.

#### **Bee Sting/Insect Bite**

- Clean the area and treat with Benadryl Insect Bite liquid.
- Monitor for signs of allergic reaction, such as: difficulty breathing, swelling in face, rash.
- Call EMS (911) if these signs are noticed. Proceed to nearest cross section/road to wait for ambulance.
- Alert parent immediately.

#### **Injury**

##### **Child**

- Treat injury according to First Aid training.
- If the educators attention will be needed for a while, have children proceed to circle to wait with other educator.
- If serious, contact parent and have them come pick up the child. Proceed with all children to closest road access. If not serious (band aid only) inform parent after class. Fill out incident report and have parent sign by next class.

##### **Teacher**

- If the educator needs first aid they can't administer it to themselves, the children will be called to a meeting spot. The other teacher will provide the care, while the children are engaged in a storytelling activity.
- If the educator needs to be sent for emergency care, the children will be taken to the Gold Bar Park pavillon and parents will be asked to pick them up.

### Suspicious Person in Area

- Move the children to a safer spot in a public area. Have phone out and visible.
- Discuss with the children why we moved, and what to look for in a potential not-safe person.
- Inform parents after class of incident, as well of steps taken.

### Environmental Emergency

Move students to a safe location and call parents/help.

## Tools at Forest School

Tool use and tools skills are an important part of the forest school model. Here are the benefits as well as our steps to ensure safety and encourage tool use; risky play.

Using dangerous tools gives children that thrill of excitement, and strongly develops their concentration and engagement. It also gives them lasting skills for the future, as well as a sense of purpose and achievement when they have created something amazing, or made something they have imagined.

### Steps to using tools at Forest School

1. Tool talk- all together during morning or afternoon meeting.  
Set up of safety circle/ blood bubble, tools still safely put away
2. Discuss tool, with child in safety circle and talk about their prior knowledge and skills. (1 on 1 supervision and exploration depending on tool)
3. Hand over Hand guidance with student and tool
4. Independent tool use with educator standing outside of safety circle
5. Properly returns tool to educator/tool bin when finished



6. Educator add's child's name to the checklist on 1 on 1 tool use delivery and notes any issues or thoughts around the child's skill.

## Tools and Safety Procedures

	Knife	Saw	Hand Drill	Pruning Shears	Hammer and nails
<b>How is the Tool:</b>					
<b>Walked with</b>	Knife is in sheath, hand on blade section.	F: fold blade, carry by side with arm down. B: carry with cover on, arm by the side.	At side, holding handle.	At side, safety lock on.	At side, pointed down.
<b>Passed</b>	In sheath, handle towards receiver.	Handle out, blade in cover.	Handle toward receiver.	Handle towards receiver, safety lock on.	Handle toward receiver. Nails in a container.
<b>Placed</b>	In sheath, on the ground in a safety circle or placed in the plastic tool bin.	On the ground in a safety circle or placed in the plastic tool bin and latched closed.	Leaning against a tree, on the ground in a safety circle or placed in the plastic tool bin and latched closed.	On the ground in a safety circle or placed in the plastic tool bin and latched closed.	On the ground in a safety circle or placed in the plastic tool bin and latched closed.
<b>Used</b>	Carving, whittling, using with mallet to cut wood pieces, cutting rope.	Cutting of branches or pieces off logs.	To make holes in wood.	Taking small branches off trees and logs.	For pounding nails into wood.
<b>Used with a PPE</b>	No glove on tool hand, glove on helping hand.	No glove on tool hand, glove on helping hand, no cutting above eye level.	Glove on helping hand.	Glove on helping hand.	Safety goggles
<b>Maintained</b>	Sharpen when needed. Run thumb over blade to catch grooves, check for sun	Check for the V in the blade, replace blade when not cutting well.	Make sure drill opening is clear of debris and parts are oiled and functioning.	Sharpen when necessary by filing, or replace.	Both ends clear of debris and check wood handle for cracks or splinters

	reflection on dull blade.		Remove broken bits,		
<b>Cleaned</b>	Wipe clean after use with cloth.	Remove rust when necessary using blade scraper and sand paper.	Wipe clean and keep openings free of debris.	Wipe after use with cloth.	Wipe after use.
<b>Stored</b>	In a dry place; in the tool plastic bin. At our storage location.	In a dry place; in the tool plastic bin. At our storage location.	In a dry place; in the tool plastic bin. At our storage location.	In a dry place; in the tool plastic bin. At our storage location.	In a dry place; in the tool plastic bin. At our storage location.

Please note: We have two pairs of gloves and three pairs of safety glasses that are kept in the tool bin.

**\*\*\*Updated August 2021. This handbook is always under review and subject to changes\*\*\*\***