

Teaching & Learning Policy

Last updated May 2026 · Review due May 2027

Teaching and learning at Base Camp is underpinned by the 6 Core Principles of Forest School (forestschoollassociation.org).

Role of the practitioner

At Base Camp we see leaders of sessions as facilitators rather than teachers, allowing children to learn and develop through play and child-led activities. We do this through:

- **Observation** — by observing their play we learn about their interests and their current stage of development.
- **Scaffolding** — to support learning so they can develop and progress in their play. For example, using a new tool, or new information about an animal or plant.
- **Minimal intervention** — giving participants time and space to figure things out. We may ask questions to help them find their way, but we don't automatically 'fix' problems unless it's a safety concern.

Planning and reviewing

There's no curriculum — everything is open-ended. Our planning is reflective and responsive to what we observe.

- **Initial planning** — sessions begin with a broad theme, e.g. seasonal change, a plant, or a piece of equipment.
- **Emergent planning** — the plan for the next session is based on the observations from the current one, developing the interests of the group.
- **Reviewing** — at the end of the session there is a brief reflection on what they've learnt and felt about things, to help shape future sessions.

Risk

We believe that managing risk is an essential life skill.

- **Benefit–risk assessment** — we weigh up the developmental benefit of an activity (e.g. using a saw) against the risk, and mitigate as much risk as possible.
- **Tool use and fire** — these are taught when the leader is confident the participant is ready (developmentally) to use them safely and understand the risk. They are initially taught 1:1 or 1:2, ensuring every aspect of using the tool has been overseen by the leader.

The environment

Nature and our environment at Base Camp provide a rich curriculum all year round.

- **Seasons** — learning will always be tied to seasonal activity, embedding a deeper connection and understanding of nature and its processes.
- **Sustainability** — we follow Forest School's 'Leave No Trace' ethos to ensure we promote a respect-and-protect philosophy that's passed on to our visitors.

Inclusion

We pride ourselves on providing an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive. Nature is often a place where those who struggle in physical classrooms excel and thrive, through physical space and sensory learning.