



Handbook

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Mission Statement

To promote well being and improve outcomes for all

Recover health, hope and wellbeing with the help of trees

Tree Charter - 2017

Our Vision

Transformation Through Nature Connection - To engage, encourage and empower all learners through inspirational, hands-on learning in woodlands.

Our Aims

To provide rich, playful learning experiences for all learners in challenging natural environments engendering a sense of belonging and responsibility for the planet.

To help disengaged, 'invisible', young people thrive and flourish by providing emotion coaching and neurodiversity aware training through nature, for teachers, coaches and alternative education providers.

To inspire and equip a new generation of outdoor educators by providing inspirational, empowering training and support to local families, Early Years settings, schools, colleges and universities, drawing on Forest School and the rich heritage of Early Years and environmental education from around the world.

To promote and support the work of the Forest School Association

<http://www.forestschoolassociation.org>

Forest School ethos and principles

We value, and work by the ethos, principles and the underpinning criteria of Forest School as agreed by the Forest School community in 2011-2012

<http://www.forestschoolassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/>

How our training meets the Forest School Principles and Criteria for Good Practice

Principle 1: Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

- Our Modular Forest School training takes place regularly, with the same group of learners, over an extended period of time, where practicable encompassing the seasons. One of our courses runs once a month at weekends, over a whole year.
- Our Forest School training programme has a structure which is based on observations and collaborative work between learners and practitioners. Our approach demonstrates progression of learning and we teach educators a range of tools to use when assessing learning outdoors.
- At the beginning of any training course or programme we establish physical and behavioural boundaries together, creating a safe place for learning, as well as making initial observations on which to base future programme development.

Principle 2: Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world

- Whilst recognising woodland is the ideal, and our preferred, environment for Forest School training, we will use other natural sites, some with only a few trees, around Oxfordshire to provide access and support for good Forest School practice in different areas of the county.
- Woodlands are ideally suited to match the curriculum requirements of the accredited training we offer whilst meeting the needs of learners, providing them with peace, space, time and the environment for exploratory, hands on learning.
- WTFI constantly monitors its ecological impact and works within sustainable site management plans agreed between the landowner/ manager, the forest school trainers and the learners themselves.
- Forest School training with us supports learners to develop long-term, environmentally sustainable attitudes and practices.

- We will spend approximately 80% of our time in the outdoors during Forest School training, using natural resources for inspiration, to encourage nature connection and intrinsic motivation.
- We make good use of our collaboration with Sylva Foundation to teach effective woodland management, surveying and planning using their online myForest tool for education.

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners

- Our training aims to link experiences during Forest School training and programmes to practitioners and learners own settings, their personal aspirations and interests.
- The Forest School training, programmes and Outdoor Learning courses we run aim to develop, the physical, social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of the learner.
- We devise a programme of CPD to support practitioners across a broad range of topics with the aims of promoting holistic development and improving the quality of Forest School and Outdoor Learning delivery and assessment they themselves provide to their client groups.

Principle 4: Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

- All of our Forest School and Outdoor Learning experiences follow a Risk–Benefit process managed jointly by the practitioner and learner, tailored to the developmental stage of the learners involved and specific to the sites being used.
- We empower all learners to manage risk for themselves and to be able to share the ‘tool of risk benefit assessment’ with their peers and colleagues
- Our Forest School training and opportunities are designed to build on an individual’s innate motivation, positive attitudes and interests
- Our training teaches that Forest School leaders are only expected to use riskier practical skills such as tools and fire where deemed appropriate to the developmental stage of their learners, and dependent on completion of a baseline risk assessment

Principle 5. Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

- Our Forest School training is devised and led by a FSA Endorsed Trainer, supported by practising Forest School practitioners, themselves experienced trainers, who are required to hold a minimum of an accredited Level 3 Forest School qualification alongside professional teaching qualifications as per the requirements of Open College Network West Midlands.
- There is a high ratio of practitioner/qualified adults to learners with all of our training, programmes and interventions.
- Practitioners and adults regularly helping at Forest School programmes, or running training, are subject to relevant checks into their suitability to have prolonged contact with children, young people and vulnerable people - our trainers will all have current DBS checks for working with WTFI.
- Trainers and FS Practitioners working with us will hold at least an up-to-date 16 hour first aid qualification, which includes paediatric and outdoor elements.
- Our Forest School training and programmes are backed by relevant working documents, which contain all the policies and procedures required for running Forest School and which establish the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers. These are shared with all relevant parties.
- Our Forest School trainers are all reflective practitioners who are active members of the Forest School Association within the local affiliated network and at a national level. They all regularly attend local and national Forest School and Outdoor Education conferences.
- Our lead trainer Sarah has studied at Henley Business School and with the Global Team Coaching Institute to develop her professional coaching and mentoring skills. It is a requirement of the FSA Endorsed Trainer recognition to maintain a professional learning log.

Principle 6. Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

- Our courses are carefully designed to ensure that whilst meeting the requirements of accredited qualifications we employ a learner-centred pedagogical approach that is responsive to the needs and interests of learners.
- From day one of our Forest School training we will model the pedagogy, promoted during our programmes and courses through careful planning, appropriate dialogue and relationship building
- Our training and programmes adopt a playful approach because we recognise the value of play and choice as integral parts of the Forest School learning process for all learners.
- Our Forest School training and programmes provide a stimulus for all learning preferences and dispositions.
- Reflective practice is a feature of each session we run, supporting learners and practitioners to identify their achievements, develop emotional intelligence and set their own goals.
- Our learners value the workplace assessment aspect of our training offer. As trainers we believe that practitioner observation is an important element of Forest School pedagogy. Observations of learners feed into 'scaffolding', enabling us to mentor through informed professional discussions.



Policies and Procedures

It is important that WTFI staff/ freelance Forest School Leaders/ volunteers involved in facilitating programmes or involved in the accredited training, management, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications, are aware of the contents of this Handbook and have signed/dated the compliance sheet at the back.

Where The Fruit Is (WTFI) provides accredited training as an Awarding Centre through 'Open College Network West Midlands' (Open College Network West Midlands), known as the Awarding Body.

Complaints Procedure

This statement explains how WTFI will deal with complaints from learners about the services our centre provides.

Please raise any concerns informally with your trainer/ Forest School Leader in the first instance. We would like to resolve any issues as quickly as possible.

If an informal conversation with your trainer has not helped you, please write as soon as possible after an 'incident' or issue has arisen to Sarah Lawfull - Director WTFI, explaining the complaint and your requirements.

We will endeavour to respond to your complaint within three working days, setting out our steps for helping resolve the problem.

In the event of this not satisfying your needs please contact Open College Network West Midlands directly:

T: 01902 624230

F: 01902 624231

E: wolverhampton@opencollnet.org.uk

W: www.opencollnet.org.uk

The Open College Network West Midlands website details a list of Open College Network West Midlands' policies and procedures:

- Enquiries and Appeals Policy
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedure
- Sanctions Policy

These are available at:

<https://www.opencollnet.org.uk/centres/policies-and-procedures>

Data Protection Policy

All persons data/ photos/videos/ audio recordings will be stored and used in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into force 25.05.18. This updates the rights of individuals in a networked world, taking into account changes in technology since the original Data Protection Act was introduced. No advertising of training will be sent to an individual unless they have requested to receive it. Explicit consent to be included in any marketing, such as newsletters must be given by an individual every 2 years.

To comply with the law, information about individuals collected as part of any booking process must be collected and used fairly, stored safely and securely. It will not be processed without their knowledge, and, wherever possible, is processed with their consent. Personal data must not be disclosed to any third party unlawfully.

Data covered includes: a person's name, identification numbers, location data, online identifier as well as sensitive personal information.

All electronic data will be held by WTFI on a secure server. Hard copies of application forms stored in a locked office.

On application learners are asked to give Specific or General Consent for the use of media gathered by other learners and WTFI during training/ Forest School programmes.

Staff/ Volunteers/ Learners are advised to turn off any location indicators on mobile devices when taking photographs for their portfolios. Photographic consent will need to be given by parents/ carers of anyone under the age of 16 or vulnerable teenagers/ adults.

There will be no need for any photographs to be taken by learners of children or vulnerable teenagers/ adults during the face-to-face training days.

Equality and Diversity Policy

In line with our values and the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010 WTFI commits in this policy to create an inclusive culture, to tackle discrimination, promote equality and diversity and provide equality of opportunity.

We will provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and for everyone learning with us as clients. We do not discriminate on grounds of gender, gender reassignment, marital status (including civil partnerships), race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All employees, whether part-time, full-time, temporary or volunteer, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, acceptance on any of our training courses, provision of further training or other in work benefits will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All clients and employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

WTFI recognises our duty of care, to make reasonable adjustments for any member of the public accessing our services or employees to enable them to take part in courses, events or to carry out the requirements of their job role.

We ask participants, or their educators/ carers/ parents, to supply information about an individual's specific needs and potential barriers to them enjoying and accessing the natural world. We will work closely with the individuals themselves, relevant agencies/ organisations and carers to meet these needs, ensuring that nature connection is accessible for all who choose to participate in our coaching, training and outdoor play experiences.

WTFI promotes access to nature, nature connection and quality Forest School for All, seeking partners whose commitment is to working with vulnerable and under-represented groups.

As stated in our Terms and Conditions we will not tolerate any form of harassment or in/direct discrimination by, or of, anyone in our care.

Behaviour Policy

All members of the WTFI team will receive training in understanding factors that influence behaviour and strategies for de-escalating stress or anxiety in others.

We use non violent communication to challenge any behaviours deemed to be unsafe, this means we will use observation statements specific to time and context rather than value judgements, for example, instead of saying 'You always hurt other people!', we might say 'When I see you hit xxxx you are forgetting our agreement to look after each other'.

We expect everyone to be spoken to kindly and politely. We expect everyone to be given a voice. To be listened to with respect.

Groups will be supported to agree their own 'recipe' for a safe, supportive and effective learning community.

If a learner needs to remove themselves from a situation to manage their own feelings/ reactions in a situation they will be supported to do so.

Attendance at a Forest School session is not a reward, nor will removal from a session be used as a sanction.

Our Terms and Conditions describe unacceptable behaviours that may result in the removal of an individual adult from a training course.

Health and Safety Policy

Written with reference to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) and [Incident reporting in schools](#).

This last publication states :

‘A sensible approach to health and safety in schools means focusing on how the real risks are managed.

This guidance will help those responsible for managing health and safety in schools to strike the right balance, so that the real risks are managed and learning opportunities are experienced to the full. HSE shows how sensible risk management creates exciting learning opportunities, while preventing tragedies’

Safe enough- Risk Benefit approach

Where The Fruit Is uses and advocates the risk benefit approach to risk management, in line with statutory guidance:

[Outdoor Education Advisory Panel](#)

[Institute for Outdoor Learning](#)

[HSE](#)

[Play Safety Forum](#)

Ensuring robust risk assessment follows an identification of the benefits of any experience or course of action.

Once the risk assessments have been carried out by the WTFI team all members of a group will be empowered to assess and manage their own risk with additional support as deemed necessary by the lead member of WTFI staff. Responsibility for ensuring all risk assessments have been carried out and are being put into practice lies with the Directors.

Generic Risk Benefit assessments will be carried out and recorded. These will be formally reviewed annually and informally reviewed at each session where relevant for:

- Learner led exploration of specific woodland sites
- Practical skills including the use of fire, ropes, green woodworking tools and using natural materials
- Risky play, including playing in or near water, den building, tree climbing
- Extreme weather including high winds, heat/cold

Dynamic risk assessment will be carried out by all responsible parties during a learning/ teaching session in the woodland.

Each session will begin with a reminder of each persons responsibility to care for themselves, each other and the woodland.

Any member of the group may be asked by another to 'Stop!Look!Think!' if they appear to be behaving in a way that may cause harm to themselves, to others or to the woodland.

Specific risk assessments will be made for different client groups/ individuals where applicable e.g for groups with physical disabilities or learning needs

Site risk assessments

- Biannual - tree safety inspections will be carried out on sites used for training purposes by qualified arboriculturalists/ tree surgeons and remedial works carried out prior to use where required.
- Annual - detailed process involving mapping of site with natural and man made hazards identified (including four layers) - written record made
- Seasonal/ termly - detailed process involving checking for any changes seasonality may bring e.g weakening of boughs, splits in tree trunks, high water levels - written record made
- Daily - site check made prior to session - checking for changes seasonality and weather may bring e.g. high winds - checklist may be used
- Dynamic - ongoing assessment being made by leader and all members of group throughout session - may not be recorded but could inform review of formal risk assessments

Recording/ Reporting Incidents

Written with reference to [Incident reporting in schools](#) (accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences)

Who should report?

The duty to notify and report rests with the 'responsible person',

Sarah Lawfull - Director WTFI

Accidents must be recorded, but not reported where they result in a worker being incapacitated for more than three consecutive days - WTFI will have an Accident Book available on site at all times.

Non-fatal accidents to non-workers (eg adult members of the public)

Accidents to members of the public or others who are not at work will be reported if they result in an injury and the person is taken directly from the scene of the accident to the hospital for treatment of that injury.

We will not report incidents where people are taken to the hospital purely as a precaution when no injury is apparent.

Accidents which prevent the injured person from continuing their normal work for more than seven days (not counting the day of the accident but including weekends and other rest days) will be reported to the HSE within 15 days of the accident.

Non-fatal accidents to pupils/ vulnerable adults

WTFI will comply with the specific recording and reporting requirements of any school/ nursery/ organisation we are working in/with. Where an injury is directly attributable to an activity being led by WTFI or our representatives, resulting in the individual requiring hospital treatment, not simply a medical examination, reporting under RIDDOR is required.

We will revisit and amend risk-benefit assessments, as necessary, after any incident that needs to be reported to parents. Any near misses and reports made under RIDDOR will prompt an internal investigation.

Incident records will be held for 3 years from the date of the accident.

RIDDOR 2013 reporting

All deaths to workers and non-workers must be reported if they arise from a work-related accident, including an act of physical violence to a worker.

Injuries as specified in RIDDOR regulations 4 are reportable.

Those most likely to happen in an outdoor woodland setting are fractures and head injuries caused by falling from a height when climbing trees, serious burns from firelighting and outdoor cooking.

The **responsible person** should complete the online report form and submit it directly to the RIDDOR database

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm>

Food Hygiene

Any outdoor cooking will require there to be a trained practitioner in close supervision with relevant and current Food Hygiene certificate

The storage, transport, preparation, cooking of all foods will be done in line with current best outdoor food hygiene practice.

Cross contamination will be avoided by providing appropriate hand washing facilities with soap, running water using a Tippy Tap and/ or water carriers with taps, one-use paper towels supplied for hand drying, which will be composted.

All members of a group will be taught about the pathogens in soil, animal and human excrement, and stagnant water alongside the importance of good hand hygiene to prevent passing viruses from one person to another.

Personal Hygiene

Toileting and personal hygiene arrangements will be site and group specific, taking into account the needs of all individuals. Due regard must be given to the privacy and the personal dignity of everyone, regardless of age.

Where young children or individuals with physical disability require support with going to the toilet this will be provided by the individuals own carer/ support staff in the first instance or qualified, fully DBS checked members of WTFI staff who have been delegated by them. Another DBS checked adult will stand nearby, in earshot.

Some Forest School sites may require a tarpaulin and 'wild wee station' set up in a designated area, away from water courses and areas where children play. Water will be poured over any urine to dilute it prior to the group leaving the site.

Toilet paper and any solid materials will be bagged up and removed from the site to be disposed of hygienically.

Where required, a facility for nappy changing will be set up. It will be the responsibility of parents/carers to take any used nappies home and dispose of them.

Hand washing will be set up nearby with running water, antibacterial soap and one use paper towels for hand drying.

All adult training courses are happening in woodlands with access to toilets a short walk away.

First Aid

WTFI follows the guidance of the Institute for Outdoor Learning, the Forest School Association and Open College Network West Midlands, recognising the importance of all staff and volunteers maintaining relevant, up to date [**Band 3 First Aid qualifications.**](#)

Our Level 3 Forest School Leader course includes 16-hour Outdoor First Aid training with a paediatric element.

During training/ Forest School sessions there will be a folder containing hard copies of every group member's medical information and 'In Case Of Emergency' contact details. This will be stored in the Health and Safety bag with the first aid kit. This will be returned to a locked office at the end of each day's training.

At all times there will be at least two qualified Outdoor First Aiders present with a group. These First Aiders will have a visible, fully stocked first aid kit, be trained in intermediate temporary care and evacuation procedures, have fully charged mobile phones with a signal and all members of a group will know the content and whereabouts of the Emergency Action Plan (site and group specific).

Safeguarding Policy

This has been written with reference to the [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board](#), the [Oxfordshire Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board](#), What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Advice for practitioners, the Prevent Strategy linked to the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2015, which states on page 7 section 10:

For children who need additional help, every day matters. Academic research is consistent in underlining the damage to children from delaying intervention. The actions taken by professionals to meet the needs of these children as early as possible can be critical to their future.

WTFI recognises the right of all people to expect that they will be protected from abuse and will be given opportunities to thrive and fulfil their potential. The Safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk is the responsibility of all our staff, volunteers and course attendees.

We believe that every person who works for and with us has a responsibility to ensure that this happens. Alongside our partners, we make sure that our staff, in every aspect of WTFI activities, understand the importance of safeguarding when providing services. Our team will attend Safeguarding training which will be regularly updated, ensuring it is current.

We will regularly review what we do to inform how best to improve the way in which we deliver our safeguarding responsibilities and will continue to strive to improve best practice.

We recognise that all WTFI staff and volunteers have disclosure obligations under both the Prevent Strategy and the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Safeguarding Procedures

All members of staff and regular adult volunteers will hold current Enhanced DBS checks for working with Forest School groups.

WTFI uses Adventure Plus to provide enhanced DBS checks for staff and volunteers. For further details contact: **margaret@adventureplus.org.uk**

All staff and volunteers must make sure that they are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect, that they question the behaviour of children and parents/ carers and don't necessarily take what they are told at face value.

If a child/young person/ vulnerable adult reports, following a conversation you have initiated or otherwise, that they are being abused and neglected, you should :

- listen to them, do not put words into their mouth
- take their allegation seriously
- reassure them that you will take action to keep them safe
- explain to the individual the action that you are taking
- maintain confidentiality, but you should not promise that you won't tell anyone, as you may need to do so in order to protect the individual

All staff and volunteers should make any concerns known to the Designated Safeguarding Officer for WTFI, if they need to ask for help, if they suspect that a child/ vulnerable person is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger because of:

- allegations/concerns that the individual has been sexually/physically abused
- concerns that the individual is suffering from severe neglect or other severe health risks
- concern that an individual is living in or will be returned to a situation that may place him/her at immediate risk
- the individual is frightened to return home
- the individual has been abandoned or parent/ carer is absent
- concerns that the individual or a family member is being drawn into terrorism or enforced labour

Contact Information

Designated Safeguarding Officer for WTFI - Sarah Lawfull

Tel: 07828234952

Email: sarah@wherethefruitis.co.uk

Children and Young people

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team immediately:

Tel: 0345 050 7666

Email: mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk

Vulnerable Adults

Urgent concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a vulnerable adult

Social and Health Care team:

Tel during office hours: 0345 050 7666,

Tel in an emergency, out-of-hours: 0800 833408

Sustainability Policy

We must tread more lightly on our planet, using resources more wisely and radically reducing the waste we generate.'

- Rt Hon Michael Gove Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (p.5 A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment)

Caring for the planet links with one of the key principles of Forest School; understanding our relationship with the natural world and our responsibility to care for it.

We use the [UNSDGs](#) to inform our practice and our teaching.

As stated in our values WTFI will make 'green choices' through reusing, repurposing, reducing and recycling.

In practice this means we have chosen to equip our office with second hand wooden furniture from local charity shops, we will reduce the use of plastic by choosing to use metal, wooden and stoneware, kitchen equipment, much of our equipment is stored and transported in vintage leather, cardboard and metal suitcases rather than ubiquitous plastic boxes.

We will compost all tea bags/ coffee grinds, fruit/ vegetable peelings, paper towels and other suitable 'left overs'.

We will choose Fair Trade Products, wherever possible, including tea, coffee and toilet rolls.

We will make green choices, wherever possible, with cleaning products, clothing and stationery.

We encourage lift sharing amongst our team and use training sites around the county to make courses accessible and reduce travel for our clients.

With all our client groups we will strive to teach by example and improve the biodiversity of the sites we work in through minimising the ecological impact of Forest School, creating habitats, planting, where appropriate removing invasive species, supporting landowners and woodland users with upholding or creating sustainable Woodland Management Plans.

Woodland Management Policy

‘Put simply, the planting of trees and woods, their conservation and management are essential elements of our common life.’

Bishop of Liverpool- Chair Independent Panel on Forestry

Each site we use regularly to run training and Forest School programmes will be carefully surveyed for protected species, according to the Local Biodiversity Action plan, in partnership with the landowners.

We will encourage ‘sustainable management practice and co-operation between owners’ ([Tree Charter](#) - launched 6th November 2017) and users through exemplary training, drawing on the expertise of local partners.

We will map each site, identifying key natural and man made structures. We will note biotic (living e.g. plants, animals, fungi, trees) and abiotic (non living natural e.g. landscape/topography, sunlight) factors in the woodland ecosystem, particularly the presence of water sources, woodland structure and predominant flora and fauna at each level.

We will support the existing management plans of the landowner, update or create simple 3 year management plans where required.

We will carry out termly ecological impact assessments for each of our training sites by keeping a photographic record of key features, including paths, entrances, water courses, fire site, areas used for digging or shelter building, trees used for climbing and other rope work. This EIA will be carried out with our client groups. Ensuring that we model and teach best practice.

All of our site management documentation will be created using the Sylva Foundation’s [myForest for Education](#) online woodland management tool including:

- Site Survey
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- 3 Year Site Management Plan

Our director and lead trainer Sarah Lawfull is a member of the [Royal Forestry Society](#) (RFS) and of the [Forest Education Network England](#) (FENE).

Contingency and Diverse Affects Policy

This policy will ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the course delivery and assessment system affecting significant numbers of learners. The plan will be implemented in the event of major disruption to the system, such as widespread illness, pandemic, travel disruption, terrorism, bad weather or power failures.

Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example, the police, Environment Agency or Health Protection Agency. Implementing the plan will safeguard the interests of learners while maintaining the integrity of the assessment system and safeguarding qualification standards. The contingencies applied will be selected based on the context of the disruption.

The priority when implementing contingencies will be to maintain the following principles:

- Learner and trainer safety
- Delivering course to published dates
- Supporting learners to complete their qualifications
- Complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards

Communication:

- In the event of a local disruption, communication to tutors and learners will take place by phone, email and appropriate social media
- In the event of major disruption, details will be communicated directly to students by phone, to the number supplied

WTFI is committed to:

- Sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan
- Communicating with stakeholders so they are aware of disruption and contingency measures being implemented and any actions required of them as a result
- Ensuring that any messages are clear and accurate

Key Risks and associated preventative measures/actions Bad weather/ high winds/ storms/ flooding/ snow

- Training will continue indoors unless the weather prevents training taking place; if it is deemed by relevant authorities to be too dangerous or difficult for trainers and learners to travel. In this case, a new date will be agreed between trainers and learners.

Trainer illness

- Training will continue - with additional support as necessary (partnership agreements already exist with freelance FS trainers)
- If trainer/s are ill, training will be cancelled, as far in advance as is reasonably possible and a new date arranged with trainees

Late submission of work

- There is an agreed deadline with each cohort. WTFI understands that for some students there will be mitigating circumstances. New and appropriate adjusted deadlines will be agreed with the learner and additional support documented (emails/skype/phone calls)
- There is a finite time for late submission (two years beyond the end of training), after which learners are required to attend a refresher course and may be required to re-run their pilot project - both at an additional cost to the learner

Loss of student work

- Prior to April 2020 students were required to submit a hard copy of their handbook and portfolio which may include digital evidence on an encrypted memory stick; formative assessment of digital evidence via Google Docs/ Dropbox/ encrypted USB storage was used to support the building of portfolios. Data to be stored in accordance with the GDPR policy. All hard copies stored in accordance with Open College Network West Midlands recommendations, in a locked office. Students advised to keep copies of all evidence.
- Since September 2020 new portfolio guidance has been in place. Students are required to submit evidence electronically. Evidence produced as hard copy e.g. mind maps, artwork, handwritten will need to be scanned. Guidance on labelling and storage of evidence is given at the beginning of training. Trainers will provide IT guidance throughout the training, this will include appropriate back up via cloud storage.

Plagiarism

- All learners explicitly taught how to reference any sources of information. Clear guidance is given about the portfolio and handbook being evidence of the individual's learning. Each learner signs a statement of ownership at the front of their portfolio. Where learners work collaboratively on presentations or other evidence (e.g. the handbook) this will be explicitly stated, with the agreement of the tutor. Tutors/ assessors know to look out for changes of style and how to check authenticity using internet searches for sections of text.

Mis-registration of learners

- To be discussed with Open College Network West Midlands compliance officer and appropriate procedure followed.

Satellite centre non-compliance

- Clear agreements are to be in place before any satellite centres are set up.
- Monitoring of delivery and compliance to be carried out by WTFI at each training delivery.
- IQA assessments and observations at satellite centres to follow all relevant procedures.
- Non-compliance to be discussed with satellite centre and measures put in place to bring centre into compliance.
- If this cannot be achieved, satellite centre agreements are to be dissolved.
- Learners are to be transferred directly to WTFI for course completion in accordance with WTFI centre policy and procedures.

End of trading by WTFI

- All learners to be supported to the end of the two-year deadline period as usual.
- If learners wish to continue beyond this period arrangement are to be made with other local trainers to ensure learners can complete their work.
- An arrangement made with local training partners to cover/ complete face-to-face training and assessment - new dates may need to be negotiated.

Covid -19 Policy

WTFI will ensure that current guidance, relevant public health, education and HSE business advice is followed.

Trainees and trainers will have discussed in a pre-training webinar how we will keep ourselves and each other safe. We will carry out a regular, dynamic risk assessment and abide by the risk assessment of any site we use eg Sylva Foundation. Every face-to-face training day will begin with a group discussion of current guidance and an agreement that we will all help each other remember how to stay safe enough, recognising we will all have different levels of anxiety and tolerance. Trainers will remain vigilant for anyone looking especially worried or forgetting physical distancing.

We will:

- Observe recommended social distancing during training, where this is not possible additional measures such as face masks, working side by side rather than face to face etc will be adopted
- Work outside as much as possible - only small groups will use the buildings (eg at Sylva up to 8 + trainer in the Teaching Barn) and masks will be worn, windows kept open
- Use hand sanitiser on entering Forest School site/ building
- Use the one-way system to and from the car park (when in operation, if the site is busy) to ensure everyone can keep a safe distance from other site users
- Use only the areas of the site allocated to our training group, e.g. buildings, seating and toilets
- Wash and dry hands frequently (using a Tippy Tap when out on-site and paper towels) and especially before eating and drinking.
- Where possible individuals will not share resources or other items; if necessary, items will be sanitised with spray/ wipes between users
- Any catering/ refreshments provided by WTFI will follow safe Food Hygiene practice
- Ensure trainees work in small groups, have their own designated areas for practical skills and put in measures to maintain social distancing in busier areas
- Clean buildings, toilets, seating, resources and frequently touched surfaces regularly
- Ensure these are thoroughly cleaned with disinfectant between each group or quarantined for 3 days
- Challenge any site user who is not following these requirements
- Share our full Covid-19 secure risk assessment with trainees on request

This statement is sent to all staff/ trainees/ volunteers:

If you, or anyone in your household, has symptoms of Covid-19 (high fever, cough or loss of taste and smell), then you should not attend training.

Any persons displaying symptoms of Covid-19 during their visit will be asked to leave as soon as practicable.

WTFI will keep the appropriate details for all members of each training group in the event that they need to be contacted later for the purposes of track & trace.

In the event that we need to contact you or another member of the group, we will use the contact details supplied for course registration.

Misconduct & Malpractice Policy

Below are examples of misconduct & malpractice by centre staff & candidates which may affect the validity of qualifications and awards. This list is not exhaustive and is here to offer guidance.

- Evidence submitted by a candidate is not their own
- Candidates have plagiarised
- Centres submitting certification claims in respect of assessments that have not been completed or carried out

These circumstances set out why a certificate may be judged to be invalid; they do not however prescribe the action that automatically has to be taken.

Reporting Cases of Misconduct & Malpractice

WTFI will report such findings in writing with evidence to Open College Network West Midlands immediately.

When conducting Centre visits any evidence of misconduct or malpractice will be recorded by the IQA/ EQA, WTFI informed of the finding, and the subsequent report submitted to Open College Network West Midlands.

Candidates who wish to inform Open College Network West Midlands about misconduct & malpractice should put in writing details of their concerns regarding a centre or member of staff, and forward to the Directors at Open College Network West Midlands. This information will be acted on immediately.

All cases of misconduct and malpractice that lead to the validation of the qualifications being under question, WTFI will report the findings to Open College Network West Midlands and will assist them with their investigations.

WTFI will produce a final report of its investigation in which the following information will be detailed:

- origin of the complainant or mode of discovery of the alleged irregularity(ies)
- investigations carried out
- evidence found
- conclusions drawn
- recommendations for action and resolution of the matter

Action of Misconduct & Malpractice by a Centre

Upon receipt of an alleged incident against the centre, WTFI will:

- acknowledge receipt of the letter within 5 days;
- investigate the allegations and report the findings to the IQA/EQA within 30 days
- suspend certification for the centre for the duration of the investigation

After the investigation, WTFI will meet with the IQA/EQA to agree on sanctions where necessary.

If the investigation deems that misconduct & malpractice has taken place, the centre may have one or more of the following sanctions taken against them:

- approval status removed;
- approval for one or more of its qualifications removed;
- increased level of external moderation or centre visits by Open College Network West Midlands support staff

Action of Misconduct & Malpractice by a Candidate

Upon receipt of an alleged incident against the candidate, WTFI will:

- investigate the claim with external support as appropriate
- suspend any certification for that candidate

After the investigation, WTFI will put forward the sanctions. If the investigation deems that misconduct & malpractice has taken place, the candidate may have one or more of the following sanctions taken against them:

- assessment evidence will be disallowed;
- cancellation of any certification for that candidate;
- refusal of further registrations for additional qualifications and/or awards

Policy for Criminal Records checks

WTFI believes that all students of all ages deserve to learn in peace and safety.

Policy

- All new appointments to WTFI will be required to undergo an enhanced check either prior to appointment or as soon as possible after
- WTFI will continue to have the discretion to seek a check where they have grounds for concern about the suitability of an existing member of staff/ volunteer/ sub-contractor with the person's consent
- This requirement extends to any temporary assessors

Volunteers

- Checks are required on all volunteers who are working with WTFI. A volunteer is a person who is engaged in any activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travelling and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives.

Appeals Procedures

The appeal procedure in this instance relates to assessment issues i.e. to any occasions where a learner feels that feedback or the result awarded to a piece of work does not accurately reflect the quality of work presented.

Reasons for appeal

- The assessment criteria have not been fairly applied
- Mitigating factors which the student feels should be taken into account

Before resorting to the appeal procedure, it is recommended that the learner approach the assessor to discuss the matter.

Appeals Process

- The learner should contact WTFI within 14 days of receiving the results to discuss the grounds of appeal and to attempt an informal resolution.
- If appropriate WTFI will arrange for the assignment to be re-marked by another member of the team.
- If the learner remains dissatisfied with this outcome, then the IQA may be asked to consider the matter after taking into account the view of both parties. The decision of the IQA will be notified to the student as soon as is practicable in the circumstances.
- If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, then s/he may ask that the EQA be brought in to resolve the matter.

Access to Fair Assessment Statement

1. Where the Fruit Is, is committed to providing ongoing support to candidates with particular requirements and aims to eliminate discrimination.
2. On this basis, we ensure accessible services and make appropriate adjustments, where required, to facilitate candidates in completing the course/programme as independently as possible.
3. We are committed to contributing to this practice and the overall aims are to assist candidates in managing their individual situation and create a more accessible learning and assessment environment for all.
4. In order for this to be achieved, we aim to determine candidates' particular requirements and requests for the provision of access arrangements at an early stage.
5. In making sure our access to fair assessment statement is implemented effectively and all candidates are treated fairly, we aim to:
 - ensure the access to fair assessment statement and practice are understood and complied with by any personnel involved in the assessment and also by candidates
 - promote equality in relation to the provision of the learning programme and assessment of the qualification
 - adhere to related procedures and regulations regarding reasonable adjustments to assessment and special consideration
 - ensure buildings and assessment sites used for delivery and assessment are accessible to all candidates, as far as is practicable
 - request permission for the implementation of specific adjustments from the awarding body where required
 - ensure appropriate equipment/personnel (technological equipment or any assistant personnel, ie reader, scribe, practical assistant, etc) is available for selected adjustments to delivery and/or assessment
 - consult with learners throughout training to ensure their particular needs are being met
 - use assistive equipment and personnel, within reason and without disadvantaging others who are not affected by particular requirements

It is ultimately the responsibility of the Centre Manager, Sarah Lawfull, to ensure that this statement and related procedures are published and accessible to all personnel, candidates and any relevant third parties.

Candidates have the right to raise any issues related to the implementation of access arrangements or make a formal complaint.

Procedure for Access Arrangements

Stage 1:

WTFI evaluates and identifies the need for the implementation of access arrangements due to a candidate's particular requirements where a candidate reports the request to the tutor/assessor or where it is identified via other acceptable means. At this stage, the candidate must provide all necessary evidence (medical evidence/certification, diagnostic test results, a statement from the invigilator/tutor/assessor or any other appropriate information) to demonstrate the condition or reason(s) affecting his/her performance.

Stage 2:

The tutor/assessor communicates the request to the Open College Network West Midlands; Open College Network West Midlands collates all evidence required and helps the tutor/assessor to make the application for reasonable adjustments/special consideration.

Stage 3:

If access arrangements as requested by the candidate are not appropriate and the application is rejected, other alternatives will be suggested, where required. If the application for access arrangements is accepted, the decision is communicated to all personnel involved in the delivery and/or assessment and arrangements are made as soon as practicable to assist the candidate.

Stage 4:

Monitoring of the eligibility of decisions made, outcomes of the applications and effectiveness of the procedure will be conducted.

All records relating to the application, relevant evidence and monitoring forms are securely retained for five years.

Plagiarism Policy

WTFI Forest School trainees are expected to be honest in every aspect of their work. All work presented as a student's own must be the product of her or his own efforts. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other submission of another's work as one's own is unacceptable. Students working in the same setting are each individually responsible for the integrity of the entire group project.

All collaborative work engaged in throughout the training will be clearly labelled as such. Tutor statements and student reflection may be required to identify each learner's role/ contribution.

It is the responsibility of the course tutor/ assessor to identify and act upon breaches of academic integrity according to her or his best judgment.

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- Purchasing, copying, downloading, printing, or paraphrasing a book, article, paper, speech, exam, portfolio, creative work, argument, or any other work and presenting it as one's own, either in whole or in part.
- Incorporating portions of another's work without proper acknowledgement and documentation.

Procedure

1. Trainees will work together to create a "tips for avoiding plagiarism" in the workshop on portfolio building. This will highlight the above definition.
2. Throughout training, as work is submitted, the trainer/ tutor assessor will be providing formative and summative assessment. This should prevent the submission of a final portfolio where plagiarism has gone unnoticed or challenged.
3. In cases where the trainer determines that a violation of academic integrity has been committed, she or he will contact the student to find out what has happened and offer support where needed.
4. The trainer/ tutor assessor will request resubmission, of the assignment/ unit following the agreed guidelines.
5. Where plagiarism remains and the trainee is unwilling to accept responsibility they will be deemed to have failed to meet the requirements of the training.
6. If trainees are unhappy with this decision, appeals can be made using the assessment appeals procedure.

Quality Assurance Policy

WTFI believes that all students have a right to a fair and transparent assessment programme and that this is enhanced by a rigorous programme of Verification, both internally and externally. WTFI aims to work to the highest standards of verification and moderation to ensure the best learning experience for our students.

In response to Covid19 restrictions, we have moved to online portfolios to enable a more streamlined assessment process. We are aware that our previous practice, with hard copy portfolios, has left students waiting too long for certification.

1. Role of the Assessors is to:

- Agree on the assessment plan
- Assess all marking objectively against published criteria
- Make assessment decisions and provide timely, recorded feedback to candidates
- Carry out the necessary administration, recording assessment and tracking achievement
- Discuss problems of assessment interpretation with each other and with the IQA
- Ensure security and confidentiality
- Have completed records up to date for IQA
- Submit the results to the IQA
- Provide feedback on the assessment implementation to the IQA
- Where it is a requirement of the awarding body or appropriate, assessors will be expected to meet with and submit all assessment documentation to the EQA
- As an FSA Endorsed Trainer Sarah Lawfull meets regularly with other assessors/ internal verifier[s] in the same vocational area.

2. Role of the IQA to:

- Maintain and submit assessment documentation including a sampling strategy
- Regularly sample assessments to ensure consistency and provide documentary evidence; verification should sample assessments according to awarding body requirements but should cover all relevant courses and allocated assessors in an academic year. The sampling strategy should be clearly delivered

- Provide feedback to assessors on a full range of assessment methods
- Timetable and record an assessment and verification year plan
- Liaise with the EQA as appropriate
- Ensure candidate registration and certification takes place as required
- Ensure work is processed correctly for sampling
- Advise the appropriate person responsible for assessor training needs
- Support the management of disputes relating to assessment in accordance with WTFI /Awarding Body appeals procedure in consultation with relevant staff members

3. Role of WTFI trainer/s is to:

- Be responsible for the assessment and verification process as part of the Quality Assurance procedure
- Oversee the delivery of qualifications within WTFI
- Ensure that assessors are appropriately trained
- Ensure that WTFI facilities and systems are appropriate for the qualifications
- Meet with External Quality Assurer if requested
- Ensure that procedures agreed with the awarding body for centre approval are implemented effectively
- Ensure that recommendations made to WTFI training by the awarding body through its verifiers are fully implemented
- Act as WTFI training formal contact with the awarding body/ ies where a named person is required, or nominate a representative as appropriate
- Ensure consistency of practice across WTFI training and that the requirements of Awarding Bodies are met
- Ensure all trainers (and assessors) are kept up to date on national and internal verification issues
- Keep a log of all Internal/ External Quality Assurance reports and action points and action them as necessary
- Maintain the master file of minuted meeting notes where more than one trainer assessor is involved in training

Internal Quality Assurance Procedures

Guidelines for IQA

The following guidelines are intended to reflect current good practice and ensure that any systems or documentation in use by WTFI training will meet minimum standards by observing the principles below:

- **Transparency**
The systems and documentation will be easily understandable by all involved.
- **Fairness and Consistency**
The system of assessment will be evidently reliable & monitored for consistency.
- **Standardisation**
The process will ensure that the level of work; assessment systems and records meet the demands of the awarding body.
- **Openness to Question and Review**
Delivery will be under continual review and development. Accessible procedures for feedback and complaint ensure any learner wishing to raise a problem or complaint has the means to do so and that such issues will be speedily and fairly resolved.

Roles and Responsibilities

WTFI has overall responsibility for the smooth running of training. In particular, we will ensure that:

- The programme is appropriately staffed by liaising with relevant staff
- All trainers are informed about any relevant issues
- Learners are regularly consulted on the content and delivery
- Regular reviews of the programme are conducted, and action taken
- Appropriate documentation is given to learners about the programme
- Accurate and up to date records are kept
- A moderation plan is agreed with the Internal Quality Assurer
- Any problems or complaints raised by learners are dealt with appropriately
- Liaise with the External Quality Assurer

The Internal Quality Assurer is responsible for:

- Ensuring that assessments are conducted fairly and in line with the requirements of the awarding body.
- Agreeing an appropriate sample to meet the demands of the awarding body
- Conduct moderation of assessment processes and decisions
- Ensuring that records are kept providing evidence that IQA has been conducted
- Advise and support tutor assessors

The Assessor/s

The tutor assessors have direct responsibility for the initial, formative and summative assessment of the candidates' performance. They will ensure that:

- Learners are fully aware of the assessment system & what is required
- Learners understand the standard of work necessary
- Learners understand the process of building a portfolio of evidence and how to present this portfolio for assessment
- Assessment is sufficient, reliable and valid and conducted in a fair and supportive manner
- Learners are given early and informative feedback on their performance
- Learners are given opportunities to demonstrate underpinning knowledge
- Accurate and up to date records on students' progress are maintained

Assessment Plan

Where appropriate the Assessment Plan will indicate the type of assessment and enable staff and learners to plan their activity accordingly. Our training is co-created with our learners who plan the order in which they will explore the different units.

We work with our students to agree on the sequence of delivery, responding to the needs of the group, interests and current Covid situation. We are working flexibly with face-to-face training in the woods and online interactive webinars.

The Assessment Plan will ensure:

Coverage of all assessment requirements taking account of:

- Current Covid restrictions and guidelines

An appropriate range of assessment opportunities by:

- Recognising opportunities for candidates to identify evidence from a range of sources/experience
- Using a variety of appropriate assessment methods

Feasibility of assessment:

- Ensuring that the timetable takes account of other commitments or deadlines for learners or assessors
- Allowing time for candidates to resubmit work through pacing portfolio production and assessment throughout the programme - our course structure enable ongoing formative and summative assessment

The IQA will check the assessment plan to confirm that it is comprehensive and sufficient. Once agreed, the plan will be communicated to all involved.

Verification Plan

Verification plans will include the following minimum requirements. An appropriate allocation of time will be negotiated to enable the IQA to conduct these duties.

WTFI will agree the plan for IQA at a suitable time before the commencement of the programme.

Sampling Procedures may be varied according to circumstance but will include the following:

- Examples from all parts of the programme
- The full range of assessment methods (e.g. observation of practice; peer assessment; formulation of policy and procedure; formulation of risk assessments; questioning; projects and assignments)
- A representative group of learners (considering age, gender, ethnic origin, disability, specific assessment needs)
- Where another tutor assessor is involved at least two assessments from each assessor

Feedback will be given to the assessor and where concerns are identified an action plan will be prepared and acted on. IQA will conduct further sampling to check the matter has been resolved. All information will be filed and available for inspection by the EQA.

Standardisation Procedures

Standardisation procedures should ensure that the same standards are being applied to courses.

Our IQA is working across several Centres and Awarding bodies. Both he and Sarah Lawfull as an FSA Endorsed Trainer are members of the Awarding Organisations Forum, hosted by the Forest School Association. The Endorsed Trainers represent several different AOs.

Endorsed Trainer meetings will include monitoring of standards including:

- Sufficiency of evidence and comprehensive coverage of all areas
- Currency, authenticity and validity of evidence
- Grading decisions
- Quality of feedback to the learners
- Compliance with procedures
- Records keeping (accurate and up to date)

In order to promote standardisation tutor assessors will involve students in marking the same piece of work and then discuss and justify the reasons for their assessment.

The tutor assessor will monitor the flow of work from students and the grades awarded, at regular intervals during the training.

Response to Feedback

Internal monitoring

Course tutor/assessors will ask for evaluative feedback from students throughout the training, reflecting and responding where appropriate to best meet their needs. IQA and EQA reports will also provide information. Meetings will be minuted and action points recorded and monitored.

Action in response to EQA Reports

EQA reports will be shared with the tutor/assessors as soon as available. Any issues requiring immediate attention will be actioned.

Audit Trail: The review system will enable any issues to be tracked through the system to ensure that an action or response does follow.

Handbook Review date

This handbook is reviewed at a meeting of WTFI director Sarah Lawfull and EQA and will be reviewed annually before the start of the next academic year. It is a dynamic document and will be amended whenever necessary to meet statutory requirements or industry guidance.