



# FOREST SCHOOL

Nurturing the well-being of families through sessions incorporating crafts, bushcraft, yoga & mindfulness

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## Contingency and Cancellation Policy

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Contingency and Cancellation Policy	<b>Date Written:</b>	Written 17/02/2023
<b>Date last Reviewed:</b>	17/02/2026	<b>Updated by at Review:</b>	C. Berrow
<b>Written By (Name &amp; Role):</b>	S O'Sullivan, Former Director & C Berrow, Director	<b>Next Review Date:</b>	17/02/2027
<b>Version:</b>	CCP003	<b>Reasons for update:</b>	Full policy audit & update across organisation

## Revision History

Revision No	Effective Date	Notes
REV0001	08/05/2023	Update company name
REV0002	14/11/2023	Added points 4.1 to 4.3 to add more detail about weather conditions
REV0003	17/02/2026	Updates to wording. Section 9 added.

## Associated Policies & Documents

Policy Name	Association Type
Health and Safety Policy	5
Emergency Operating Procedure	1
Accident, Emergency & Illness Policy	1
Forest School Kit List	1
Forest School Handbook	5
Risk Management and Assessment Policy	1
Booking and Fees Policy	4
Site Risk Assessments	4

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Forest of Dean

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**Notes**

An associated policy is defined as meeting one or more of the following criteria:

1. It is referred to by this policy
2. It refers to this policy
3. It covers a specific topic referred to by this policy
4. It covers a topic/procedural area that may be relevant to aspects of this policy
5. It has aspects that overlap and/or should be considered in conjunction with a topic/procedural area covered by this policy

Each criterion that this policy satisfies is shown in the table above.

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**1 - Introduction**

HARE is a nature-centric community co-operative of nature-loving practitioners, who collaborate to bring their services to our local community. Based in Hazel Woods, near Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire, our purpose is to nurture the well-being of people in the Forest of Dean, through mindful connection with the natural world and creativity.

Our ethics align with Permaculture Principles - Earth Care, People Care, Fair Share. We

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believe that disconnection from nature, our creativity, community and our spirituality are huge driving factors in the mental health issues suffered throughout modern society. So all our offerings include these restorative elements and are structured around the seasons and sabbats of the wheel of the year. Our workshops and events run throughout the year, and are fully outdoors in all weathers, except those considered to pose an adverse risk, such as high winds or thunderstorms.

The safety of our members and participants is our primary concern. HARE will take measures to ensure that sessions run in environments where we are able to monitor and manage risks to an acceptable level, as outlined in our **Risk Management & Assessment Policy**. Our aim is that all members and participants are safe and comfortable.

## **2 - Preparation for Fully Outdoor Sessions**

Running fully outdoor workshops requires preparation, planning and having the right kit and clothing to ensure safe and successful sessions all year round. HARE Members watch the weather forecast, arrive early at site to complete a visual risk assessment, and set up.

Following the ethos of 'There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing!' HARE will advise participants (or their parents) of appropriate clothing and kit to bring to sessions in an automated email after booking. We also provide a **Forest School Kit List**. Participants are advised to dress warmly and wear waterproofs if necessary. However, there are some occasions where it may not be safe or practical to go ahead with a planned session due to extreme weather conditions.

## **3 - Cancellation**

HARE retains the right to cancel or postpone a session if HARE Members deem the risk of running the session, or continuing to run the session to be too high a risk.

## **4 - Cancellation in Advance**

HARE has facilitated workshops in many weathers, including rain and hail! We are in the UK, so if we cancelled for rain we would rarely run. However, we will not run in conditions we consider to pose an adverse risk. This includes conditions where it may not be safe to travel to the site. Examples of adverse conditions are high winds, thunderstorms, ice or snow.

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If HARE decides to cancel a session, we will endeavour to inform participants as soon as possible. We will aim for this to be by 8pm on the day before the workshop. In such an event the session will be rearranged, where possible.

HARE will cancel sessions if it is not safe for enough members and participants to travel to site. Conditions can sometimes be very localised. If a member cannot travel safely to site, but another member who can is available to cover, we will run the session. In the event that HARE decides to run a session during localised potentially adverse conditions, participants should consider their own safety (and that of their children, if relevant) when deciding whether to attend the session. For example, in snowy or icy conditions, which do not prevent our members from safely travelling to site, participants travelling from further afield, may experience worse conditions in their area and should not travel to our site if this may pose a risk to their safety.

#### **4.1 Wind Speeds**

HARE members monitor wind speeds prior to our workshops and events. If wind speeds / gusts are forecast to be 35 mph or over, HARE will consider the conditions at our site, and conditions for travel. Our Parkend site is low lying and less affected by high winds than higher ground. Wind direction makes an enormous difference to conditions at Hazel Woods. This is due to the site being open to the valley, which acts as a wind tunnel. Hence northerly winds can cause disruption on site. Whereas the site is protected by winds approaching from the west or south, by the surrounding hills. At wind speeds 39 mph and over, tree branches can break and fall, which poses a risk to anyone in the woodland. We use the Beaufort scale to assess wind speeds.

In making an assessment of risk, and the decision to cancel, HARE will consider:

- Wind direction.
- The size of trees on site (larger trees pose a higher risk as falling branches will be larger and fall from a greater height).
- The condition and age of the trees on site.
- Travel to the site for members and participants.
- Whether there are power cables overhead or close to the site.

The lead for the workshop will seek advice from a director, and make a decision about whether to cancel.

## **4.2 Thunderstorms**

Thunderstorms are likely accompanied by high winds and lightning, which both pose a high risk, including risk of fatality. HARE will monitor the weather forecast prior to sessions. We will also consider the wind speeds, as above.

Lightning is usually short lived and it is unlikely we will cancel a whole session on this basis. If lightning strikes within 30km of our site, we follow the ROSPA 30/30 rule, which provides a good way of ensuring safety during the most risky parts of the storm. It proposes that if the flash to bang is 30 seconds in length or less, you should seek shelter. Staying inside the shelter is advised until 30 minutes past the last clap of thunder. This ensures that any distant strikes at the beginning of the storm (lightning can travel up to 10 miles), or trailing storm clouds at the back of the storm do not take anyone by surprise.

At Parkend, we will shelter inside the Beaver Lodge during lightning, following the 30/30 rule. At Hazel Woods, we will shelter in the Field Centre building, if available. If there is no building available, we may shelter in cars.

## **4.3 Temperatures, Ice, Snow and Flooding**

HARE monitors weather forecasts, but recognises that snowfall can often be unexpected, and depth of snow can vary enormously across areas, and in higher and lower ground. It can be extremely dangerous to travel when there is snow, ice or flooding on the roads, particularly in rural areas, where most roads are not gritted. We will cancel any session where our members are not able to safely travel to our site.

During cold weather we will endeavour to keep participants warm using physical movement, walking or having a fire. We advise participants of appropriate Winter clothing in our suggested Kit List. If temperatures will consistently be below 0 degrees centigrade for the duration of the session, we may move the session indoors where possible. At Parkend we will use the Beaver Lodge. If there is not an indoor option, and we are unable to keep participants reasonably warm, we may end the session early.

It is very unlikely that we would cancel due to extremely high temperatures, as the woodland provides shade and can be up to 10 degrees centigrade cooler than in the sun.

HARE reserves the right to cancel a session at any time, if members feel it is unsafe to continue the session.

## 5 - Cancellation During a Session

We understand that cancellations are inconvenient and that for drop off children's sessions, parents may need to find alternative childcare. Any decisions to cancel are based on the safety and welfare of our staff and participants.

HARE will continue facilitating sessions in all weathers, except those considered to pose too high a risk, as outlined above. In the case of extreme weather conditions occurring during a workshop, it may be necessary to evacuate the woodland and cancel or shorten the session. If possible, the workshop will be moved to an alternative safe venue (as outlined above). If this is not possible, the session will end. If possible, workshops will be rearranged for an alternative date.

A session may also be shortened if temperatures will consistently be below 0 degrees centigrade for the duration of the session or in the event of an incident or emergency. For information on emergency procedures please see **Accident, Emergency & Illness Policy** and **Emergency Operating Procedure**.

## 6 - Cancellation due to Staffing

In the event that a member is unable to work, HARE will endeavour to arrange appropriate cover, and continue to run the workshop. In the event that HARE is unable to arrange appropriate staffing, the workshop will be cancelled and HARE will rearrange, where possible. HARE will give participants as much notice as possible if a session has to be cancelled due to staffing.

## 7 - Cancelled Sessions

In the event that a single session of a course or ongoing workshop is cancelled due to weather, a 50% refund for the cost of the session will be given. This will be in the form of a discount code for the following half term. Workshops that are cut short due to weather or factors beyond our control cannot be refunded. One off workshops, training or special events will be rescheduled where possible.

## 8 - Cancellation by a Participant

If a participant does not attend a workshop on the day, for any reason, a refund will not be issued for the missed session, except in extenuating circumstances, as HARE will be unable to fill the space at short notice.

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If participants wish to cancel a place on a one-off workshop or event, HARE will issue a full refund up to two weeks prior to the workshop date. And will refund 50% up to 1 week prior.

If participants wish to cancel a place on a course or ongoing workshop after the course has started, HARE may be able to issue a part-refund if the place can be filled with a participant on the waiting list.

## 9 - Sustainability & Viability

All HARE workshops and events need to be booked to a minimum 75% capacity to be viable for us to run. HARE reserves the right to cancel any workshop or event in the week prior to the start date, if bookings are below 75%. In the event that a workshop or event needs to be cancelled due to inviability, participants will receive a full refund. HARE does not make this decision lightly, as cancelling incurs costs. We ask that all participants share workshops with friends and family to assist us in filling places.

This policy was adopted by HARE Forest School CIC board of directors on date:	17/02/2026
To be reviewed:	17/02/2027
Signed - Board Members:	C. Berrow, Director G. Chadwick, Director H. Mitchell, Director