

A Touch of the Wild

Poor Weather Policy

Date Created: September 2024

Forest School sessions will go ahead in all weather conditions with a few exceptions:

- **Strong Wind:**
Gale force 9 is considered hazardous in a woodland environment, this is due to the increased likelihood of falling debris. Gale force 9 is when strong winds are forecast as gusting at 47mph and over based on the Beaufort Scale (MET office, 2024), the Windfinder website (Windfinder.com, 2024) with guidance from Wind and Woods ([Kindling Play and Training](#), 2024).
- **Dangerous Travel conditions:**
When it is dangerous to get to Grammarcombe Woods by foot or car due to snow, flooding or ice etc.
- **Extreme weather:**
Very wet and cold conditions where hypothermia is a real possibility. If the temperature is below 10 degrees centigrade and heavy snow or rain is forecast for the duration of the forthcoming Forest School session. For extreme heat waves sessions may also be cancelled due to risk of heat stroke or forest fire. We consider temperatures over 30C a hazard for the woodland, but will review this regularly due to the changing nature of current British Summer weather.

The table below details the procedure and risk assessment undertaken by the Forest School Leader in the event of poor weather conditions:

Weather Condition	Reason to Continue	Reason to Cancel
Snow	Snow has settled and children have arrived prepared for session in snow.	Snow still falling, freezing and slippery conditions. Parents to be called if snow fall increases. Snow falls unexpectedly.
Rain	Children and Leaders are prepared for the weather.	Prolonged heavy rain, with temperatures below 10C.
Wind	Wind is gusting at 46mph or less. No branches are falling.	High wind forecast gusting at 47mph or over (Beaufort scale 9). Danger of falling branches and trees.
Thunder Storm and Lightening	Low rumbles of thunder heard in the distance.	Rumbles of thunder grow louder. Repeated bolts of lightening visible in the distance.

	Clear skies.	Evacuate learners from the forest. Wait in the shed till storm passes or evacuation is possible.
Heat	Hot summers day as anticipated. Children dressed appropriately and plenty of shade and water on site.	Temperatures exceeding 30C. Risk of sun stroke, febrile convulsions for younger learners and heat exhaustion.

Exposure to the elements is part of the magic of nature and therefore an integral part of forest school.

It is the responsibility of the school/group staff to ensure all children come suitably dressed in appropriate clothing for the weather conditions, i.e. warm layers, full waterproofs, thick socks, hat, gloves & scarf in temperatures below 10 degrees centigrade.

There may be times when Forest School sessions have to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances or bad weather as mentioned in the Poor weather Procedure.

In the event of this situation arising cancellation decisions will be made as early as possible on the morning of the session, with the school and Forest School staff contacted via telephone.

A Touch of the Wild will endeavour to run Forest School sessions whenever possible, however, reserve the right to cancel on the day, but will aim to inform client group as soon as possible.

It is the responsibility of A Touch of the Wild staff to watch the weather forecast very closely in the run up to the session. Staff will be watching, reading and listening to forecasts at:

- www.metoffice.gov.uk
- www.bbc.co.uk/weather
- <https://www.windfinder.com/#10/58.4921/-4.3975> (Search Telegraph Hill for our location)

The one to look at for wind forecast

- Listen to the weather forecast on Radio Devon in the morning, on the half hour from 7-9am.

If the school/group decide to cancel a session they must do so at the earliest opportunity, taking into account any costs incurred (see cancellation policy).

Cancellation Policy



A re-schedule date will be offered within the half term if A Touch of the Wild cancel the session.

If the school/group cancel a session;

- 4 weeks prior to the date of the session, 30% of the total cost will be charged and the rest will be refunded.
- 2 weeks prior to the date of the activity, 50% of the total cost will be charged and the rest will be refunded.
- 1 week prior to the date of the activity, no refund will be issued.

References:

Met Office (2024). *Beaufort Wind Force Scale*. [online] Met Office. Available at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/guides/coast-and-sea/beaufort-scale>.

Windfinder.com (2024). *Windfinder*. [online] Windfinder.com. Available at: <https://www.windfinder.com/#10/50.5937/-3.5464/spot> [Accessed 17 Oct. 2024].

Kindling Play and Training (2024). *Wind and Woods*. [online] Kindling Play and Training. Available at: <https://www.kindlingplayandtraining.co.uk/wind-and-woods> [Accessed 17 Oct. 2024].