Learning in Nature CIC & Beccles Forest Schools



Student and Apprenticeship Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement:
3.56 Providers must not include anyone aged under 17 in ratios, except apprentices who may be included in ratios from the age of 16. Providers must not allow anyone aged under 17 to care for children unsupervised at any time.

This policy was adopted by:	Learning in Nature CIC & Beccles Forest Schools
Date of adoption:	27th April 2026
Date to be reviewed:	27th April 2027
Signed, on behalf of the provider:	
Name of signatory:	Rach Whitwood
Role of signatory:	Co-Director

Policy Statement

Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest Schools recognise the immense benefits that students and apprentices bring to the setting.

In return, we recognise the quality and variety of our provision at Learning in Nature and Beccles Forest Schools make it an ideal place for work experience and giving back to the local community.

We hope to provide a wide array of learning opportunities, including:

- hands-on experience of Forest School and/or outdoor early years provision
- experience working with children, young-people or vulnerable adults
- an understanding of the academic theory behind progressive education, including outdoor learning and Forest School
- supervision by line managers, induction and training opportunities
- insight into the functioning of our community interest company

As a community interest company, we strive to make outdoor learning and Forest School provision accessible to as much of the community as possible. Student volunteers and apprentices are able to join us in this pursuit, bringing huge value to our local community

Please see Appendices for the legal framework and definitions upon which this policy is written.

Student Work Experience

At Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest Schools, we are committed to sharing good practice with students or pupils from local secondary schools or colleges on work experience and students who wish to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in order to further their academic career and employment opportunities.

Students who work with Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest Schools short term are not considered staff members and will not have a contract of employment or freelance worker agreement with us. However, we require that students follow all our policies and procedures in the same manner as a paid member of staff, ensuring consistency, safety and quality of care and learning for children, young people and vulnerable adults. Students will be supervised at all times and will not be alone with attendees of sessions.

In general, we will accept four students at a time, with no more than two per group. More students than this can place undue pressure on staff. We do, however, occasionally make exceptions, accepting small groups or occasional placements when research or studies are being carried out that will be of benefit to the children, young people or adults attending our setting.

All students will have suitability checks conducted. Where age-appropriate, this will include an enhanced DBS check being conducted and ID documents being verified. In all cases, there will be communication with the educational establishment at which they study; contact details must be provided by the student. These checks will be conducted before the student starts their time within the setting.

A Forest School Leader will manage the student's introduction to the setting. Students will be offered training and support as appropriate, including safeguarding and health and safety training. The purpose of this is to enable the student to be supported and enhance their development in their voluntary role within our team. Students are expected to comply with all the setting's policies and procedures. The induction process will include an explanation of this.

Students should not disclose information about the setting, staff, children, families or vulnerable adults, as stated in the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy and should follow the setting's confidentiality procedure at all times.

Our policy for those on work experience placements is as follows:

- The safety of the children, young people and adults is paramount
- Students must never pick up a child, carry out intimate care tasks or be alone with attendees
- Students must adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct Policy (July 2025).docx
- If the student has any queries, they must ask the Forest School Leader with whom they are working

- Students will receive feedback in respect of their performance, considering their individual needs and abilities
- Records of attendance will be kept by Learning in Nature CIC and Beccles Forest Schools

Apprenticeships

At Learning in Nature and Beccles Forest Schools, we are committed to sharing good practice with those wishing to pursue a career in childcare and we value the unique role that apprentices play and the knowledge and skills they bring to the organisation.

Where sessions allow, we welcome students to join our staff team as apprentices and gain work experience within our setting. We offer placements to students who are associated with a recognised child-related course, where it is demonstrated that the benefit of the placement is mutual. In general, we accept one apprentice at a time, though situations are assessed subjectively.

We offer placements only after discussions with the appropriate tutors and the establishment of close links with the college, training provider or school, and only after our rigorous Safer Recruitment Policy has been followed. We expect all prospective apprentices to visit the setting for an interview, followed by their initial induction and tour. At this time, apprentices will have the opportunity to read and discuss relevant policies, and read and receive a copy of the induction procedure in readiness for their first day.

A Forest School Leader will be assigned as mentor to the apprentice. This person will communicate with the educational establishment, under the supervision of Directors where appropriate, and guide the apprentice in their role.

Apprentices are treated as employees of the organisation. They will be given a contract, access to Basecamp and messenger groups and will be expected to assume the roles and responsibilities of all staff, such as safeguarding duties. Apprentices will experience the same continued professional development and supervision as other staff members.

When roles are well established, apprentices may be included in our staff:child ratios and as a key person. This will be at the discretion of the Directors and will only occur when they are satisfied the apprentice is competent and responsible.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Legal Frameworks and Guidance

Department for Education (2025) *Early years foundation stage statutory framework*, Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68c024cb8c6d992f23edd79c/Early_years_foundation_stage_statutory_framework_-_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf.pdf (Accessed 27th April 2026)

Ofsted (2025) *Education inspection framework: for use from November 2025*, Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-eif/education-inspection-framework-for-use-from-november-2025 (Accessed 27th April 2026)

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) Available at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents (Accessed 27th April 2026)

Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) (n.d.) *Safer Recruitment*, Available at https://www.suffolksp.org.uk/safer-recruitment (Accessed 27th April 2026)