

NANAIMO

Innovation Academy



FOREST PROGRAMS HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS

What is Forest School?

Forests Schools are outdoor schools that provide children with the opportunity to spend time immersed in nature, playing and learning in local wild spaces. Although forest schools can be found in many parts of the world, this approach is most popular in Europe, where forest schools have existed since the 1950's.

Forest schools are typically child-centered, interest-led and place-based. Children study local ecosystems, plants and animals by means of direct, hands-on experiences. Educators present mini-lessons when children show interest in learning more about a topic. Using inquiry-based teaching styles, teachers prompt children to ask why and foster the development of the child's own critical thinking skills. Children spend a large portion of program time engaged in valuable unstructured play.

Nanaimo Innovation Academy has a Forest Pre-K Program for kids age 4-5 and a Forest Explorers Program for kids in kindergarten to grade 3. These programs will have the children exploring the local forests and a variety of other ecosystems by bus. They will also walk to local parks and nearby forest areas.

Both programs take place in forest, lake, marsh, estuary, and beach settings around Nanaimo. The safety procedures in this handbook are designed to keep the children safe while allowing them the freedom to explore and interact with nature.

PROGRAM BASICS

How does playing outside help my child learn?

Nature play teaches kids to: climb higher, think creatively, explore, imagine, rely on their senses, assess risk, test their boundaries, observe, nurture life, resolve conflict, cultivate a sense of place and self, improvise solutions, feel free, recognize beauty, collaborate, be resilient, regulate stress, learn through play, wonder why, get messy, develop their strength, build immunity, gain perspective, FEEL CONNECTED TO THE WILD.

What do you do when it is cold and wet?

Play! We have large tarps that we rig up to provide wind-breaks and extra protection when we don't want to let a sudden downpour disrupt our games. We find that as long as children are warm and dry, they are happy to play outdoors regardless of the weather. We will need your help to properly equip your child each day for the weather.

Will my child get dirty?

Yes!

What types of activities will my child participate in?

The forest provides endless opportunities for imaginative, open-ended play but some examples of activities that educators provide are:

- Shelter building
- Nature crafts and painting

- Tool use, tracking games
- Knots & rope skills
- Identifying animal tracks, studying wildlife
- Creating fairy houses
- Playing at the water's edge
- Leaf & flower pressings, sensory activities
- Scavenger hunts, team, group and other games
- Constructing: pulley systems, log bridges, stick towers, dens, anything their hearts desire
- Running, jumping, splashing, climbing, rolling...

Each session provides natural opportunities for literacy and mathematics through storytelling, song, rhyme, reading, drama, counting, sorting, classifying and predicting.

Why Risky Play?

Risky play can be defined as a thrilling and exciting activity that involves a risk of physical injury, and play that provides opportunities for challenge, testing limits, exploring boundaries and learning about injury risk (Sandseter (2007; Little & Wyver, 2008).Feb 25, 2015)

At NIA we implement learning opportunities such as, but not exclusive to:

- Educator supervised use of real tools and accessories such as hammers, nails and saws
- Loose parts play – providing children with items such as plastic pipes, milk crates, large reels, ropes, pulleys, wooden boxes, sticks, logs etc.
- Fire pits where children cook under the supervision of our educators and learn about the value of fire and the respect of its power must always be remembered
- Allowing children opportunity to climb, jump and challenge their unique individual physical skills
- Forest and beach exploration where children and educators explore the wonderful resources nature provides
- Supporting children to problem solve and make decisions

Note: All of these activities are undertaken with the supervision of our educators. For more dangerous activities, like fire pits, we will have a special risk assessment of how to maintain safety at all times. Clear guidelines will be submitted to VIHA for approval before engaging in high-risk activities.

Everyday life is full of risks and challenges and children need opportunities to develop the skills associated with managing risk and making informed judgements about risks from a very young age.

Risky play helps to develop important life skills such as;

- Building resilience and persistence
- Balance and coordination
- Awareness of the capabilities and limits of their own bodies
- The ability to assess and make judgement about risk
- Handling tools safely and with purpose
- Understanding consequence to action
- Confidence and independence
- Resourcefulness
- Creativity and inventiveness
- Curiosity and wonder
- Problem solving

Each child is unique and so the level of risk and challenge they seek will also vary, yet most children will actively seek risk and challenge in play as they explore the world around them and their own physical abilities. Risk, and learning how to manage it, is an inherent part of Forest School and child development. Staff conduct regular on-site risk assessments as well as daily risk assessments with the children. This allows us to keep up with the ever-changing aspect of the forest setting and to teach the children about risk management.

Safe Supervision. ...What is the ratio of adults to children?

Our maximum educator to child ratio for our Forest Pre-K is 1:5 and our Forest Explorers Program is 1-8. Typically, in the forest, we will have at least two educators on at all times. When the class at full capacity, we will often have three teachers. Sometimes we may have guest speakers, parents, or community volunteers join us but they will not be considered part of the ratio.

When we have additional adults in the program such as parent volunteers, practicum students, and guest presenters, they will not replace the Forest Program educators.

If a child doesn't want to go the forest

If a child is refusing to go to the forest, we will do our best to convince them...but we will not force them against their wishes. Unfortunately, they will not be able to stay back from the excursion. In cases such as this, we will call parents to pick up their child.

- In the Forest Pre-K (only), the child may return to the class at noon, once the group has returned from the forest. In some circumstances, we can try alternative drop off arrangements (in the forest) to try to mitigate the resistance to going to the forest until a resiliency has been built up. Typically, we do not allow Forest Pre-K drop offs and pick-ups from the forest unless in emergency situations.
- For Forest Explorers we do allow for drop offs and pick-ups from the forest. These must be arranged by contacting the Forest Program cell phone.

If a child becomes ill or injured while in the forest

If a child exhibits possible symptoms of an illness, we will move the child away from others and have them lie down quietly to rest. If a child continues to feel ill, we will call the parents. If parents cannot be reached, a relative or emergency contact will be called to pick the child up.

If a child were to vomit or have diarrhea, we do not have the facilities to clean them up in the forest. Therefore, we will change them into clean clothes and call the parents or other emergency contacts immediately.

If your child gets a bump, scratch, or a bruise that requires first aid we will let you know at the end of the day, unless it is serious (we will call right away).

All our staff is trained to provide first aid for minor injuries and emergency care while an ambulance is being called if a more serious incident should occur.

In the case of minor head or eye injury, the child's parents will be notified by phone. In the case of an emergency involving serious illness or injury, parents and 911 will be called. If we cannot contact the parents, we will contact someone on your emergency contact list.

Please ensure that you have signed the medical release form so that we have permission to perform the required first aid or transfer your child to a hospital if necessary.

What if my child needs to use the washroom?

We encourage parents to have their children use the washroom at home before the program begins. Once in the woods, if a child needs to use the washroom an educator will help the child find a public washroom or suitable location to go outside. Water, soap, and hand sanitizer will be made available for children to clean their hands afterwards. ALL CHILDREN MUST BE INDEPENDENT IN THE BATHROOM TO JOIN US IN THE FOREST.

Hand Washing

Educators carry water and biodegradable soap for hand washing before snack time at our forest school sites. If we are on a hike, we have hand sanitizer before snacks.

Additional Expenses

Parents should anticipate occasional small expenses throughout the year, including but not limited to a waterproof clothing, large field trips, and special projects.

How to Get Involved

We always appreciate family members who would like to help with projects, field trips, join us for a walk, read a story, or share something special about themselves or their culture with the class. Please discuss these, and other, possibilities with your child's teacher.

Environmental Sustainability

At NIA we try very hard to minimize the impact we will inevitably have on the environment without limiting the children in their play and learning. We do this by conducting regular site impact surveys, documenting our use, communicating with City of Nanaimo Park staff, using biodegradable and organic materials and removing any garbage we create. We ask that parents help us in our endeavours to keep the parks clean by sending snacks in reusable containers.

HOW TO DRESS FOR THE FOREST SCHOOL PROGRAM

We work on the principle that "there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing".

No child will be permitted to go to the forest without appropriate clothing that will protect them from extremes of heat or cold and keep them covered to reduce the likelihood of cuts, scrapes, bug bites, and ticks. In the case that your child is not dressed appropriately there are a couple of options:

1. The child will have to go home for the day (they may return once we have come back from the forest).
2. The parent will have to go home and bring the correct clothing.

Children and parents are encouraged to think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities, and to be aware they are likely to take some of our mud home with them after a session.

In the forest, it can often be cooler than expected under the shade of the trees. Also please pick bright coloured clothing so the teachers can see the children in the forest ---pink, orange, purple, bright blue, yellow and lime are very visible.

Please remember that we adhere to the overarching NIA policies, and so we ask that items do not have any commercialized graphics.

Please label all of your children's belongings.

Winter with Recommended Brands

- 1) Insulated rain boots or waterproof winter boots:
Stonz, Bogs, Oakiwear, Kamik, Merrel, and MyMayu are good options
 - Boots are very personal.

- If your child loves puddle jumping and wading and doesn't mind the cold much, taller insulated rain boots will be better.
 - If your child is prone to getting cold hands and feet and is happy to stay out of the water, waterproof winter boots will be a better choice.
- 2) Wool Socks (two pairs):
any good ski socks, taller is better
Merino wool keeps feet warm and dry
 - 3) Base layer:
a lightweight wool shirt and tight or legging is best. Think long underwear.
 - 4) Mid layer:
a fleece or mid weight sweater or pullover. Wool is best. Fleece pajama bottoms work well for pants.
 - 5) Waterproof outer layer (two piece is MUCH better than a full suit):
Abeko, Oakiwear and Helly Hansen are good options.
 - Two pieces allow for more independence with toileting
 - **We do not recommend** Tuffo, Puddlegear or MEC rain gear as, with repeated washing, they quickly lose their waterproofing. When looking for waterproofing look for 'washable' with a rating of at least 8000mm... even higher is better.
 - 6) Toque:
wool stays warm when wet
 - 7) Waterproof mittens (two pairs):
Fleece lined Abeko Rain Mittens (8000mm), Stonz Waterproof Mittens (5000mm)
 - the backup pair does not have to be of the same quality
 - For children that struggle with cold hands or do not like mittens, single use hand warmers can be sent in their backpack. We will activate them and put them in the child's coat pockets when they are needed.
 - 8) Small water bottle
 - 9) Camp mug- metal works best
 - 10) Large Ziploc bag with a change of clothes
 - 11) Small backpack with a chest strap:
Dueter and MEC have good options, both are not fully waterproof... please pack items inside in Ziploc bags.

Summer Gear Requirements

- 1) Close-toed shoes or gum boots
- 2) Water shoes (can be carried in their backpack)
- 3) Rain pants that go over light pants, leggings or short
- 4) Long sleeved lightweight shirts
- 5) Sunhat
- 6) Sunscreen
- 7) Small water bottle
- 8) Camp mug

- 9) Large Ziploc bag with a change of clothes

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT FOR EDUCATORS IN THE FOREST

In addition to tools suited to the planned for activities, the educators will always take an emergency bag with them. The contents of the emergency bag will vary depending on the time of year and weather conditions, the site being used, and the planned for activities according to the relevant risk assessments. There are of course also essential items that should be carried out for every session.

Essential Emergency Equipment

- First Aid Kit
- Emergency Procedures
- Medical information for each individual and Emergency contact details for every member of the group (adults & children)
- Risk Assessments
- Communication Devices (mobile phone and/or walkie talkie – checked for working order and signal strength)
- Clean Water
- Emergency whistle
- Emergency Blankets
- Accident forms
- Medication for individuals (if not appropriate for the individual to carry the medication for themselves it should be clearly labelled – staff must have been trained to administer it and parental consent must have been received)

Other Possible Equipment

- Spare clothing
- Thermos of hot water
- Chocolate/sugary food
- Plastic bag
- Roll Mat and Blanket
- Wet wipes, hand gel
- Bathroom things
- Sun screen (parental permission required)
- Flashlight
- Bucket and shovel
- Emergency fire kit
- Knife
- Emergency shelter
- Burns kit

CODE OF CONDUCT

The educators at NIA work to ensure that the safety measures are in place and followed daily. We work to create an environment that is as safe as necessary by being proactive and following these safety principles:

- constantly assess risk as conditions change, regular head counts are performed
- set up a safe space with clear boundaries and guidelines that the children understand
- observe the children's interactions with each other and nature
- spot the children during more challenging physical activity
- gently guide the children to safer activities if required
- model safe and responsible behaviour

Entering the Forest

We will enter the forest respectfully and know that when in a Forest Program, specific expectations are in place. We will explore, investigate, learn and play in a manner that will not damage our forest environment. Children learn to respect for the various ecosystems that we visit. We understand that we share the forest with the plants and animals.

SAFETY IN THE FOREST

Forest sessions are typically held in the following local locations—Westwood Lake, Bowen Park, Departure Bay Beach, Buttertubs Marsh, and Colliery Dam. Parks may vary depending on various circumstances.

Safety Procedures

Safety procedures are designed to keep the children safe while allowing them the freedom to explore and interact with nature.

Risk assessment of an area are done, recorded, and updated on a regular basis by the Forest Coordinator. Additionally, weather reports are checked for warning every morning. See *Forest Coordinator Policy* for more details.

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- set up a safe space with clear boundaries and guidelines that the children understand
- observe the children's interactions with each other and nature
- spot the children during more challenging physical activity
- gently guide the children to safer activities if required
- model safe and responsible behaviour

Environmental Sustainability

At NIA we try very hard to minimize the impact we will inevitably have on the environment without limiting the children in their play and learning. We do this by conducting regular site risk assessments, impact surveys, documenting our use, communicating with City of Nanaimo Park staff, using biodegradable and organic materials and removing any garbage we see or create. All of our snacks are prepared in reusable containers.

We teach children to enter the forest respectfully. We explore, investigate, learn and play in a manner that will not damage our forest environment. Children learn to respect for the various ecosystems that we visit. We understand that we share the forest with the plants and animals.

Boundaries

Before each session begins children are made aware of how far that they can explore and of any fixed boundary markers. If children move to explore hidden areas an adult will also move into the cover deep enough to be able to see the children but allowing the children the freedom to explore independently. If we lose sight of a child, we will call for the child. The children have been taught to respond through games that are practiced regularly. If a child becomes separated from the group, they are taught through group games to remain still and repeatedly call out. The group will come to find them.

On hikes or when in the habitat of other wild animals, children must always be in view of at least one of the adults.

Using and Storing Tools

All tools have their own clear code of conduct for correct use which may include protective equipment, body posture and appropriate activities. All tools are counted out and back in at the beginning and end of each session in which they are used. Before each tool is used it is checked for damage and working order.

Children always have adult supervision when collecting, transporting and using tools. All adults will model correct and safe tool use, storage and transportation at all times. A ratio of 1 adult to 2 children will be observed. A 'safety bubble' space must be determined ensuring a safe distance from others.

Playing with Sticks and Stones

Children can carry sticks but are encouraged to think about how close they are to other children. Longer sticks may be dragged or carried with the help of another person. Sticks must be thrown with awareness of the position of other people. Sticks must not be pulled from living trees. Stones may be picked up and transported. Stones may be thrown in a direction away from other

friends and dropped into the creek when we visit but, thought must be given to whether this is safe. The children are taught to consider the space around them when playing with sticks and stones.

Collecting Natural Materials

Collecting is a natural part of childhood but many things that live in the forest also must stay there. This means that, while some things will be able to come home with the children, many of their forest creations will have to stay behind. We encourage the children to be happy with having photographs and ask them to collect sparingly so as not to disrupt creature habitats.

Collecting Flowers and Leaves

We encourage children not to pick flowers and leaves from living plants. There is usually an abundance of interesting material on the forest floor and in the meadows that is no longer attached to a live plant. There may be rare exceptions to this for a specific project or teaching. If a child is very set on picking a leaf or flower, we help them to do as little harm as possible or direct them to invasive species such as Buttercups or Daisies.

Edible/ Non-Edible Plants and Mushrooms

While on our forest adventures the children are not permitted to taste any wild plants without permission from an educator with specific plant knowledge. The children are also taught about common poisonous or dangerous plants. We will help them to learn to identify and avoid such plants.

Two common plants that cause skin irritation are Daphne and Stinging Nettle, in both these cases the irritation is not life threatening and the children who choose to engage with the plant (some still do, knowing the consequences) will be taught the natural remedy (plantain, also found in the forest) to alleviate the sting. The children are never permitted to taste mushrooms found in the forest. Many of our park locations will contain poisonous mushrooms at certain times of the year. We teach the children to use a stick when exploring a mushroom, rather than touching it, unless it has been identified as safe by an educator.

Using Ropes

Children are not permitted to tie each other up. When using ropes an educator will model safe use and tie all safety knots. As educators we will teach children knot tying if they are interested but safety comes first and we always make sure that the ropes are correctly tied and securely fastened when the activity calls for it.

Carrying and Transporting Materials

Carrying and transporting heavy objects is a great opportunity for children to problem solve, work together and build strength. Children are encouraged to roll, lift, drag, and pull materials with their hands or by using ropes. We always model and encourage safe lifting practices.

Tree Climbing

An adult must be present to 'spot' a child wanting to climb a tree at Forest School. The ground cover must be checked for 'sharp' objects and the tree must be marked as suitable for climbing. A visual check must be made for loose or rotten branches and the child and educator must agree how high is safe to climb based on the size of the tree branches, the type of tree, adult: child ratio, ground cover and child's ability and confidence.

Water Safety

Swimming is not allowed at forest school but we value the learning that playing at the water's edge allows. To minimize the risk that comes with playing near bodies of water we will always complete a thorough risk assessment and closely supervise children when they are playing near a body of water.

Toileting

We encourage parents to have their children use the washroom at home before the program begins or have children use the washroom before heading out to the forest. Once in the woods, if a child needs to use the washroom an educator will help the child find a public washroom or suitable location to go outside. In remote locations, we carry a sealed potty with a privacy tent that can be used. Water, soap, and hand sanitizer will be made available for children to clean their hands afterwards. ALL STUDENTS MUST BE INDEPENDENT IN THE BATHROOM.

Hand Washing

Educators carry water and biodegradable soap for hand washing before snack time at our forest sites or when the student's hands are very dirty. Teachers also carry hand sanitizer.

Safety at the Fire Pit

Fires are an important part of community building and reflection practices at Forest School. The Fire is considered a sacred space for discussion and connection, not a 'play' area. Learning to build a fire is a Forest School rite of passage for all the children when they are old enough to do so safely. Children will be taught safety procedures for the fire pit area and staff will have on hand a fire extinguisher, a first aid kit (with a burn kit) and a water hose.

Overall Safety

The educator's first priority is to ensure the safety of the children in their care. If there are any safety concerns with your child, you will be informed immediately so that we may formulate a strategy to correct the concerns. If your child continuously runs away from the group or does not adhere to the safety instructions from the teacher, they may not be able to be a part of the outdoor forest learning component and may be assessed for their overall suitability to the elementary school program.

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

Dogs

It is possible that we will encounter dogs (leashed or unleashed) while in the forest. Some dogs are more excitable or aggressive than others. Games and discussions to stay safe around dogs will be practiced. To help prevent children from injury the following safety tips will be reviewed regularly:

- Do not approach an unfamiliar dog.
- Do not run from a dog or scream.
- Remain motionless (e.g., "be still like a tree" or "freeze and squeeze") when approached by an unfamiliar dog.
- If knocked over by a dog, roll into a ball and lie still (e.g., "be still like a log").
- Do not play with a dog unless supervised by an adult.
- Immediately report stray dogs or dogs displaying unusual behavior to an adult.
- Avoid direct eye contact with a dog.
- Do not disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
- Do not pet a dog without allowing it to see and sniff you first (and without getting permission from the dog's owner).
- If bitten, immediately report the bite to an adult.
- Wash or sanitize your hands after petting a dog.

Bears, Cougars and Wolves

While we are in the forest it is very unlikely that we will encounter a bear, cougar or wolf. However, to be prepared for such an encounter we will practice the following safety protocols with the children. All our educators carry a small blow horn.

Bear

In the event that we see a bear, here are the procedures we will follow: If the bear has **seen us**, we will:

- STOP
- Make ourselves big
- Back away slowly
- Speak in low tone and normal volume and say, "Hello bear, we won't run away. You can stay and play; we'll come back another day."
- If the bear has **not seen us**, we will leave the area quietly and go to a more public place.

Cougar

In the event that we see a cougar, here are the procedures we will follow:

- STOP
- Make ourselves big
- Back away (never turn your back on a cougar)
- If the cougar does not go away, keep eye contact with the cougar, show your teeth and make loud noises, blow whistles.
- Educators will arm ourselves with sticks and rocks and use our blow horn.

Wolf or Coyote

If a wolf appears and acts unafraid or aggressive, we will take the following action as soon as we notice the animal:

- Do not allow the wolf to approach any closer than 100 meters.
- Raise your arms and wave them in the air to make yourself appear larger.

- Blow a whistle.
- When in a group, act in unison to send a clear message to the wolves they are not welcome.
- Back away slowly, do not turn your back on the wolf.
- Make noise, throw sticks, rocks and sand at the wolf.

We will also teach children of the importance of staying with the group to help avoid these encounters.

***2 *Safety procedures based on:* BC Parks. 2002. Bears and Cougars. Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. Available online: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/conserve/>

Wasp

If a wasp lands on a child, we will wait for it to fly off or brush it gently off with something (do not brush it with your hand). If necessary, we will leave the area until the wasp has gone. We will not run or thrash or swat. We will keep still and, when safe, move to shade or away from what is attracting the wasp. If stinging occurs, we will administer first aid and report it to the child's parents.

Ticks

Staff will carry a tick removal device in the first aid box. It is important that it is removed properly so that the head does not come off inside the child's body. We always recommend getting the tick tested to see if it is a carrier of Lyme Disease. There are more than 20 species of ticks in British Columbia, but only three species normally bite humans. Although the bites are sometimes painful and slow healing, there is little danger of disease as long as they are removed promptly.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Nanaimo Innovation Academy sets out clear statements of intent regarding the our approach to the health and safety of its children, staff and visitors to the daycare and the daycare site. Provided below is a list of additional points and measures which relate directly to our Forest sessions.

- 1) The educators will decide a Forest Program leader each day. The leader is always the person in charge of sessions.
- 2) The Forest Program educators have an overall duty of care for the children in their charge. However, all adults involved in the session are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe.
- 3) All adult helpers MUST have a criminal record check done prior to helping. They must also sign and date a form to show that they have read and understood this handbook and the risk assessments appropriate to the session in which they are helping. They must sign and date the form stating that they comply with the general operating procedures for NIA (as well as understand this handbook).
- 4) The Forest Program leader or assistant will always carry an emergency bag into the forest for every session. The Emergency Bag contains: essential survival and first aid equipment, a contact list for each child undertaking the activities, the school's phone, contact # and location details for the emergency services
- 5) The Forest Program leader will always carry a mobile phone
- 6) In the event of an emergency, the Forest Program leader will contact emergency services.
- 7) When tools are used the adult child ratio will be 1:1 (knives/ saws) or 1:2 (peelers/ hammers) depending on the risk level of the activity.
- 8) The educators are responsible for the maintenance and checking of all tools and equipment to be used in the forest, prior to their use.

9) The educators are responsible for training the children in how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately.

10) The Forest Program leader is responsible for the pre-visit check and risk assessments of the forest site prior to a session.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES IN THE FOREST

Lost Child

Facilitators will practice with the children what to do when they are lost or separated from the group:

- Stop. Hug a tree. Yell. Step back from any bodies of water or cliff edges.
- Sit by a tree in the open if possible.
- Call out for help.
- Respond to any noise with a noise.

If a child is not present when we do a headcount, we will:

- Stay on the site.
- Ask others to do a head count.
- Call the group together.
- Determine who saw the child last, where and when.
- Call for the child who is lost.
- Have one adult search around the boundaries of the site to find the child who is lost.
- Call police if child is not found within 10 min

Medical Emergencies

NIA will ensure that parents have signed the medical release form so that we have permission to perform the required first aid or transfer a child to a hospital if necessary.

Minor emergency requiring first aid

If a child is ill, an educator will do first aid as required. The other facilitator or volunteer will care for the group. The lead facilitator will call the parent or other emergency contacts. The group will arrange to meet the parent in a nearby location. After pick-up, the group will continue with the day's program.

Emergencies involving the public

In the event of an emergency involving erratic behaviour by a member of the public we will move the group away from the person in question and call 911. If it is safe to do so, we will move to our bus and drive back to the school. If it is unsafe to return to the bus, we will keep moving in a direction away from the subject until we have reached a safe place to wait.

Emergency requiring external medical care

In a serious emergency, the lead facilitator will do first aid while the other facilitator or volunteer calls 911. The assistant facilitator/volunteer then cares for the group. The facilitators will arrange with emergency staff what procedures work best for the transfer to medical care.

Where can I find more information about Forest Schools?

We highly recommend "Forest and Nature Schools Canada: A Head, Heart and Hands Approach to Outdoor Learning" published by Forest School Canada.

If ever you have any questions or concerns about anything, please email forest@nanaimoinnovation.org