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THE CHILDREN FIRST LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Tree Management Policy

*To be reviewed:*

*Agreed and ratified by the Directors Board on:*

*CEO – Mrs A Rourke*

*Responsible Officer:*

*Mrs N Chell*

*Chair of Board:*

The Tree Management Policy in respect of the Children First Learning Partnership has been discussed and adopted by the Directors in Jan 2025 following consultation with all Local Advisory Boards

*10.02.2025*

 *February 2026*

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 **Aims**

The Children First Learning Partnership has adopted the following policy to support the stated strategic aims and objectives included in the Staffordshire County Council Tree Management Strategy. Each academy is accountable for the implementation. Each academy may also have service specific arrangements to assist them further in the effective implementation of these policy standards.

**1.** **Perception of Risk**

Unlike man-made structures, it is entirely normal and natural for parts to break and fall from trees. Leaves and twigs are regularly shed. Branches die and live branches may become wind damaged or overextended, occasionally falling to the ground. On rare occasions, roots can snap under wind load causing the entire tree to collapse. These types of structural tree failures are natural and, in rare instances, can cause damage to property, injury or death.

While the actual likelihood of these rare instance’s occurring is very low, people’s perception of risk is often seen as more common than they really are. However, the individual risk of death attributable to trees is 10 times less than the threshold of one death in one million per year that the Health and Safety Executive says people regard as insignificant or trivial in their daily lives.

The Health and Safety Executive refers to the role of perception in its guidance as follows: ‘The risk, per tree, of causing fatality is of the order of one in 150 million for all trees in Britain or one in 10 million for those trees in, or adjacent to areas of public use. However, the low level of overall risk may not be perceived in this way by the public, particularly following an incident.’

Through carefully considering how trees fit into a particular local context, the Children First Learning Partnership can better identify those areas and situations requiring action. It will also help ensure that any management is proportionate and strikes an appropriate balance between the real risks and the benefits trees provide.

**2. Tree inspection**

**2.1 Zoning**

This methodology prioritises the most used areas, and by doing so contributes to a cost-effective approach to tree inspection, focusing resources where most effective. It is about appreciating tree stock in relation to proximity of people or property. Zoning contributes to sensible risk management. The HSE in their guidance on management of the risk from falling trees advises that there are several approaches to managing the risks from trees that involve ‘zoning’ trees according to the risk of them falling and causing injury or death.

The zoning approach, as applied to each school function, is set out below as part of the inspection regime.

**2.2** **Training and competency for inspections**

All employees or contractors carrying out basic and detailed inspections must have received training and hold suitable nationally recognised certificates.

**LANTRA - Basic Tree Survey & Inspection Certificate – Basic Inspections**

This is a one-day course designed to give staff the knowledge to be able to recognise and identify potential hazards. It is the minimum required for anyone engaged on formal tree inspection work.

**LANTRA - Professional Tree Inspection Course – Detailed Inspections**

This is a 3-day course for experienced and qualified inspectors with an in-depth knowledge of tree safety inspection. It is recommended that those completing detailed inspections hold this level of qualification when assessing veteran trees and individual specimens of high value which are potentially hazardous.

Highways employees/ contractors may hold alternative qualification and be QTRA accredited

**Visual Inspection (informal inspection)**

Will be unqualified staff monitoring a few trees at the setting for which they work against a checklist and having seen the visual inspection guide/video which should be reviewed before completing the activity.

**Basic Inspection**

Officers /individuals completing these basic inspections will have a Level 1 basic inspection qualification (such as the Lantra Basic tree Inspection qualification) and complete refresher training at least once every 3 years.

**Detailed Inspection**

Individuals carrying out detailed tree inspections for the Children First Learning Partnership will hold as a minimum **level three or equivalent arboricultural qualification (such as Lantra Professional Tree Inspector qualification and if on the highway also hold the Lantra Highway Tree Inspector qualification)**, plus five years’ experience in carrying out tree survey and inspection is expected. Frequency of refresher training will greatly depend upon how often the learner is involved in undertaking inspections, but no longer than every 5 years.

The Children First Learning Partnership will target the following tree inspection frequencies:

**2.3 Tree Inspection Regimes**

Areas requiring infrequent or no formal inspection must have a fault recording system in place to deal with tree safety issues identified through normal estate management.

1. **Trees in the school premises (excluding Rights of Way)**

**Zone 1** – School Premises

Annual informal visual inspections by School as part of their Premises Inspection checklist/estate management arrangements.

It is recommended that a detailed Inspection by a specialist expert every five years to be directly commissioned by the school.

Grounds Maintenance Contractors will provide observations when completing their commissioned activities.

The detailed inspection assessments may recommend an increased reinspection period for certain trees. This recommendation must be considered by the setting.

The Children First Learning Partnership will consider if additional inspections are needed after severe weather. These should be undertaken as soon as practicable and when it is safe to do so, setting priorities according to the location. This will normally be for areas where significant hazards during the storm have been identified.

When there is change of use in an area the level of risk and frequency of inspection need to be reassessed.

Inspection schedules should be reviewed every 12 months to ensure that it is still fit for purpose. If there are new trails, play equipment, building or change of use has taken place adjacent to our premises then there needs to be a reassessment.

**3**. **Tree maintenance**

Tree maintenance will be prioritised and managed in line with any concerns on the school sites

**3.1** **Management of ancient/veteran/important trees**

The Children First Learning Partnership will, where public safety is not compromised, undertake all work which will:

a) conserve trees with high ecological value

b) preserve trees with significant local historical and/or aesthetic value

c) use avoidance measures such as fencing a tree off or re-routing a path to prioritise retention.

**3.2** **Young tree maintenance**

The Children First Learning Partnership will undertake all work which:

1. assists the establishment of young trees with significant life expectancy
2. enables new tree planting to reach its full potential

**3.3** **Nuisance management**

The Children First Learning Partnership will undertake remedial work where it is considered that its trees are causing an actionable nuisance to a neighbouring property.

For example: Root/branch encroachment over property boundaries where damage has occurred or is likely to do so imminently.

When a tree is thought to be causing a nuisance which does not require immediate remedial action, the Children First Learning Partnership will consider appropriate remedial works during the next programmed detailed inspection of that tree.

The Children First Learning Partnership will not undertake one-off, reactive inspections to deal with minor inconveniences such as:

• shade onto a garden or property

• deposits of seed/leaf/fruit/blossom

• tree is considered ‘too large’

• summer honeydew deposits

• droppings from roosting birds

• TV reception interference

• shading of solar panels

• contact with telephone wires

• pollinating insects

**3.4** **Standards of work**

The Children First Learning Partnership has adopted the following policy relating to standards of work to ensure that it achieves high standards of tree maintenance.

1) Whenever practicable Ivy on trees will not be removed or severed as it is known to weaken tress and also supports wildlife. However, where an identified safety concern has been identified the ivy may need to be removed to assist a detailed inspection.

**Storms**

When Staffordshire / Cheshire is adversely impacted by adverse weather such as storms and gales that impact naturally on trees, we will continue to prioritise management on a risk basis.

The Children First Learning Partnership will use their local data following storms and the impact it has had on tree assets to determine if any additional inspections are required.

**5.** **Sustainability**

**Recycling of wood waste and utilisation of timber.**

The Children First Learning Partnership shall continue to explore various options relating to the utilisation of timber and the recycling of wood waste. Possible partnerships with other producers will be investigated to identify future viable markets for timber and other by-products of tree maintenance operations.

Document Change Log

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| Date | Details of change / section number  | Approved |
| 03.12.2024 | New policy  | Ops Mgr  |
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