



Forest School

Policy and Handbook 2017



Introduction

Forest Schools provides direct experiences in a woodland environment where students can 'learn by doing', it is rich with play opportunities, it has the ability to awaken enthusiasm, create a fascination for the environment, motivate exploration and develop natural curiosity.

Forest School experiences engage, encourage and nurture creativity, it inspires ideas and imagination and allows freedom of expression. Forest Schools enables students to develop their personal social and emotional skills in a safe environment which encourages positive social interactions and self-expression by providing a real context for language.

During real hands on experiences at Forest Schools, students are able to develop, practice and refine their practical skills using natural materials and make decisions in a safe, low risk environment. Forest School aims to set participants up to achieve through small achievable tasks to help them to build and increase their independence, confidence and self-esteem. It incorporates flexibility and adaptability within its ethos where students have the freedom to choose to explore at their own pace, develop their own learning styles and discover an enjoyment for learning. Our Forest School strives to provide individualised learning based on students' interests, abilities and sensory needs providing experiences which are accessible for all to enjoy, have fun, develop self-esteem and become successful.

Environmental Impact

Every activity carried out in the outdoors will have an impact on the immediate environment, we plan to minimise this by carefully planning the use and impact on the site (see woodland management plan – completed and reviewed annually).

During FS sessions participants will gain an understanding of our site through various activities and become knowledgeable of the flora and fauna incorporated within it. They will learn to value and foster respect for the FS environment and gain knowledge and understanding of conservation, maintenance and woodland ecology.

- During activities on-site children will be encouraged to walk on the identified footpaths whenever possible.
- Fire wood and other items will be brought onto the site which have been scavenged from outside the school, so the amount of dead wood onsite and natural resources can be maintained. We will be very sensitive to the surrounding area and give careful consideration when introducing such items to maintain the health and ecology of our site.
- We will rotate and monitor the use of the areas in our FS site on a regular basis to minimise the ecological impact and allow some time in between blocks of sessions or class groups to allow regeneration.
- To minimise compaction we have created a sacrificial area (pathways) around the fire circle with hard standing for wheelchair accessibility. This is a permanent feature within the site and circle times group meetings, discussions and evaluations will take place here. To prevent ground corruption we have a hard surface under the fire area and use a fire pit to prevent fire travelling underground. We give careful consideration regarding the purpose and frequency of building a fire to limit its impact on the environment.
- We prevent pollution by having good hygiene systems in place and following a '**leave no trace**' policy by removing all waste products and disposing of them in the rubbish bins or recycling on site at the end of each session.



Health & Safety at Forest School

All employees have health and safety responsibilities as outlined by the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 as defined in the schools Health and Safety policy.

Our FS sessions will be carried out on our school site, the overall responsibility for health and safety at our FS lies with the FS leaders, but all adults involved in FS sessions will be responsible for maintaining a safe environment and ensuring the health and well-being of participating students and adults. High adult: student ratios will be provided and maintained during FS sessions according to the age of the group and the specific needs of our students in order to keep them safe.

The Governing body, the senior management team and the Healthy and safety officer will also have a good awareness of health and safety issues arising at FS and will be provided with relevant site and activity risk assessments made by the FS leader; these will be located with the master FS handbook and located on the school network. Pre-visit site risk assessments will be carried out, recorded and revised appropriately and the senior management team informed of subsequent amendments.

*The school follows the LA guidance regarding poisonous plants and precautions will be taken to minimise health risks where there might be poisonous and hazardous plants that could be growing within the forest school area.

On-going assessment will be made by the FS leaders to respond to changing situations and activities. These will be well considered and given a balanced judgement on the risk against the benefit to learning in order to introduce appropriate control measures. All risk assessments will be read by all adults attending and reviewed regularly to ensure the safety of all parties participating in the Forest Schools experiences.

A Forest School leader will be at the FG sessions that has Emergency First Response training, which will be updated every 3 years. We have a full-time Nurse on the school site and medical room facilities to be able to respond to minor first aid situations that may arise. The school nurse will be our first point of contact and all accidents or incidents will be reported to the nurse or the head teacher in accordance with our school's health and safety policy. Also, we have designated staff at our school who are first aid trained and this is displayed in the school reception area.

Our Forest School programme is covered by the school's insurance as it is to be carried out on our school site.

During FS sessions a separate and dedicated bag containing an emergency first aid kit will be carried to the site and situated centrally.

The emergency first aid bag will contain:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloves • Anti-bacterial gel • Antiseptic wipes • 1 x Eye pad • 1 x Micro porous tape • Face shield • 10 x Assorted plasters • 1 x Bandage • Wound dressing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 x 10 Absorbent dressing • 27.5 x 5.5 Absorbent dressing • Sterile water • 10 x 10 Gauze swabs • Crepe bandage • Fire blanket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snap seal bags • Thermometer • Scissors • Accident book • Clingfilm • Whistle • Emergency thermal blanket • Tweezers
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- Hand-washing facilities will be available at all times during the Forest school sessions to encourage good hygiene practices and prevent infection. FS leader will take warm soapy water and a towel onto site each session.

The medical bag is to be carried by the FS leader to the site .All Medicines will be stored in a separate bag/box with a lock and the key is to be kept by two designated staff. All information, care plans, medical details will be contained in a plastic wallet in a side pocket of the this bag to ensure confidentiality.



Accident & Emergency procedures

At our FS there will always be trained first aiders on site and high adult: student ratios. All participants will be briefed during introductory sessions of what to do in an accident or emergency.

- Whistle will be blown 3 times as a signal for everyone to stop what they are doing, stand still and indicate an emergency. Adults will then gather students into groups and wait for instructions. The Forest school leader will assess the situation and ensure that the rest of the group are safe and adequately supervised. A first aider will attend to the casualty administering first aid as necessary and an incident report will be completed later and the school nurse will be contacted if necessary.
- Where rescue medicines are required the school nurse or a trained member of staff will administer them and a second person must witness the delivery, both members must sign the appropriate forms later. SLT or the school nurse will be informed via walkie-talkie.
- In the event that anyone sustains an injury or illness which cannot be treated by first aid and requires medical assistance, the FS leader will contact the Nurse/ office via walkie talkie and also phone the emergency services if required. The Nurse will contact parents to inform them as necessary. Other adults who are supervising the remaining group will remove them from the site to the safety of the main school building leaving at least two adults (one being the FS leader) with the casualty.
- A member of staff from the office will wait and meet the emergency services. When requesting assistance from the emergency services a script will be kept with the emergency bag to provide a prompt for specific information required i.e.
 1. **Telephone number (mobile number if call is made on a mobile)**
 2. **Who you are.**
 3. **Details of your location and grid reference.**
 4. **A brief description of what has happened.**
 5. **A description of the casualty and their level of response.**
 6. **To stay on the telephone until the operator clears the line.**
 7. **Wait with the casualty until the emergency services arrive.**

Name of site: Ashgate Croft Special School

Location: Ashgate Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 4BN

Grid Ref: SK363716

- An accident form will be located in the emergency bag to be filled in by the first aider responding to the accident or incident. Accident or incident pro-formas employed by school will be filled in and given to the school nurse or member of the senior management team once the injured person has received the appropriate care required. These should be completed as soon as possible and on the same day of the occurrence.
- Emergency contact numbers are located in the office and the school nurse or office staff will contact parents to inform them of an incident/accident where hospitalisation may be required. All accidents and incidents will be reported to the school nurse or head teacher who will fill out the appropriate reports. If the accident/incident was caused by some defective part of the fabric of the school then the incident must then be reported to the Health and Safety officer who will be able to take action to eliminate the danger.
- When undergoing activities regarding fires the fire service will be informed prior to the activity taking place. Where a dangerous incident or accident takes place during fire activities the whistle will be blown as above, the FS leader will assess the situation and students who are able bodied will be led away to a safe area. Another adult or adults will then assist students who require support from equipment to move to the safe area whilst remaining adults follow the protocol for extinguishing the fire if they feel it is safe to do so. If it is not safe to extinguish the fire, the FS leader will inform the office, who will alert the emergency services and the school community to the danger.



Toileting & Hygiene at FS

We will use the toileting facilities within the school premises and devise a protocol for circumstances where an adult is required to go with the student, as this will impact on staffing levels during FS activities.

To ensure we maintain high levels of hygiene at FS we will make sure we have access to a bucket of warm soapy water and facilities for hand-washing during all aspects of FS. We recognise our students may be particularly vulnerable to infection as many of them have differing health issues, so we will endeavour to teach them good hygiene and provide a model of good hygiene practices.



Staff and Helpers at FS

Adult: staff ratios will be determined according to the age of the group and the specific needs of our students. The ratio of staff to students will be agreed in consultation with the class staff prior to a group coming onto the FS site. All staff who participate in activities during our FS sessions will have a current DBS and will be provided with the FS policy and handbook as a guide for roles, responsibilities and expectations for the FS sessions. Volunteers and visitors will be required to wear a school visitors badge to identify them to the school community and will not be left unsupervised at any time with any of the pupils.

Certain activities such as tool use and fire/cooking activities will need 1:1 ratio due to the needs of the children to ensure health and safety. When planning and under-going these high ratio activities FS leaders will consider offering other activities for the remaining group, which require lower ratios or invite parents or volunteers to promote safe enjoyment.

Other activities will need a ratio of 1:2 (or 1:3 if the students are older), however this will be assessed on a dynamic basis as the session takes place and ratios will change throughout if the leaders believe that this is the safest way to proceed. Adults who will be taking part in FS will be made aware of health and safety initially through an introduction session explaining the

FS ethos and health and safety issues, which will involve:

- A basic understanding of the risk assessment process and how staff will be involved i.e. prior discussion, daily risk assessment, on-going assessment, post session reviews and maintaining a safe, secure environment.
- An explanation and awareness of school policies and procedures for health and safety and safe working practices, including food hygiene, personal hygiene, intimate care, tool use, moving and handling etc.
- A copy of the FS Policy and handbook which explains guidelines and expectations of good practice specifically relating to FS.
- An understanding of first aid and emergency procedures to be carried out at FS i.e. emergency bag and its contents, storing medicines, responsibilities of staff and first aiders including who are the designated outdoor first aiders and protocols for evacuation and emergencies.

- All risk assessments are to be read and signed by all adults participating so that they are aware of all safe practices and procedures.
- FS leaders will provide a model of best practice throughout and show self –regulation in their actions and decision making to ensure that they are able to guide and educate others in safe practices



Safe-guarding our students

Ashgate Croft School has a Child Protection and Safeguarding policy which is underpinned by the government documents Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016, Working Together 2015, Prevent Duty 2015 we also follow the procedures set out by the Derbyshire Safeguarding Children's Board: <http://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

Safeguarding arrangements at Ashgate Croft School are underpinned by three key principles:

1. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all Staff, (Governors and Volunteers) should play their full part in keeping children (Includes vulnerable adults) safe; We will aim to protect children using national, local and school child protection procedures;
2. That all Staff, (Governors and Volunteers) have a clear understanding regarding abuse and neglect in all forms; including how to identify, respond and report. This also includes knowledge in the process for allegations against professionals. (Governors and Volunteers) should feel confident that they can report all matters of Safeguarding in the School where the information will be dealt with swiftly and securely, following the correct procedures with the safety and well-being of the children in mind at all times.
3. That we operate a child-centred approach: a clear understanding of the needs, wishes, views and voices of children.

In the event of a disclosure, adults should listen to students and let them talk openly but make it clear to them that information may be passed on to ensure they get the support they need. Adults should never promise to keep secrets as we have a duty of care to pass on any disclosures made. It is a recognised counselling tool to listen, reflect what the student is saying and ask them open questions gently, it is essential to be sensitive and empathetic to them. The disclosure is to be recorded by the person who the student has talked to and passed immediately on to the safe-guarding officer /team within school who then passes it on to the appropriate authorities.

* Confidentiality

All medical details/information/care plans and behaviour plans will be contained in a plastic wallet and either kept within a locked bag or carried by the FS leader.

When the FS sessions have finished:

- Medical details/care plans will be returned to the Nurses room or respective classes.
- Behaviour plans will be kept in the FS file and returned to classes after the sessions.
- Registers and records will also be placed with the FS file and kept safe.
- Photographs will be kept in the FS file or securely on the school computer system, they may be displayed within school where there is permission from parents/carers in place.



FS Programme information/permission

Written permissions to be sought from parents include:

- Confirmation for the student's participation.
- Permission to use tools and handle natural materials
- Permission to participate in activities involving building fires and cooking on an open fire.
- Medical information and permission to administer medicines is already in place in school and is sought by the school nurse.

Parents/carers will be provided with a FS information leaflet, which will set out the FS ethos, health and safety procedures and provide an outline of the types of activities the students may experience, including contact information of the FS leaders so that parents may discuss any queries or concerns.

Clothing policy

Forest School leaders should ensure that they carry items of spare clothing in the kit bags. As a responsible person, the Forest School leader has the right to exclude any child they think is inappropriately dressed for Forest school activities.

Winter	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vest or T-shirt • Long sleeved top • Hooded top / fleece or thick jumper • Waterproof jacket • Thick socks (thermal or two pairs of thin ones) • Trousers • Waterproof trousers • Wellington boots • Hat, gloves and scarf. • Sunhat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long sleeved T-shirt or top • Light trousers • (Arms and legs must be covered in the woodland) • Socks • Trainers, shoes or Wellington boots (Sandals and flip-flops are not suitable.). • Participants are also responsible for providing their own insect repellent and sunscreen.

Cancellation

Sessions would be cancelled if the weather was considered:

- **Too hot** as it would be dangerous for the students and staff be exposed to, the school follows the LA guidance relating to sun awareness and appropriate control measures would be provided i.e Provision of sheltered/ shaded areas, appropriate clothing and access to sunscreen.
- If the weather was **too windy** (force 5 on the Beaufort scale) and there was a risk of any falling objects from trees within the site
- **Too cold** to avoid over exposure to cold and possible hypothermia.

Wind speed	Beaufort scale
6-11 kmph /4-7 mph	2
12-19 kmph /8-12 mph	3
20-28 kmph /13-17 mph	4
29-38 kmph /18-24 mph	5
45-50 kmph /25-31 mph	6

Staffing will need to be high due to the specific needs of the children and if there are not enough staff available to ensure the safety of the children while at FS then the session would have to be cancelled. All of these considerations would be outlined in both the risk assessments and in the cancellation policy and kept in the FS handbook.

As all sessions will be within the school grounds, staffed by school staff and within the normal working hours of the school day, cancellation would mean the students would stay within school instead of visiting the site and would not require any further contacts to be made. In this case students will engage in activities relating to FS in a classroom environment which would be led by the FS leaders with activities such as fire safety sessions, conservation, tool safety, understanding the weather and how it affects the environment, developing knot tying skills or developing ideas for future sessions.



Lost/Missing Students

Our FS sessions will take place on our school site and so to ensure that students do not get lost or go missing we will, prior to a session check the perimeter and that all gates are secure. We will ensure that there are good adult –student ratios with some staff allocated to small specific groups of students depending on their age, abilities and specific needs. All students will be closely and appropriately supervised during FS according to school policy and through on-going vigilance and awareness staff will be able to ensure their safety at all times. During FS sessions we will incorporate safety awareness by educating the students about boundaries and how to keep themselves safe. Head counts will be taken at regular intervals.

In the event of a lost or missing student we will follow the school protocol, which is to:

- **Note the time the pupil is missing.**
- **Inform the person in the office and a member of SLT.**
- **All available staff to search outside and inside immediately.**
- **Inform the police (999) after 10 minutes.**
- **Telephone parents after 30 minutes.**
- **Inform chair of Governors if the pupil was located outside of the school boundary.**

Equal Opportunities

In accordance with The Equality Act 2010, school policy and Derbyshire County Council guidance at FS all staff and students will foster positive attitudes and relationships with a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We will recognise and respect difference to provide differentiated activities which are appropriate to and have equal value in relation to disability, ethnicity, religion, culture and gender to encourage an atmosphere of mutual respect and value.

To ensure inclusion at all times we will differentiate planning and activities, we will provide support and appropriate equipment to provide practical solutions and reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to learning and enable students to access a wide range of learning and play opportunities. To accommodate different learning styles we will regularly observe the students to inform our planning and provide experiences that ensure we meet the learning and sensory needs of the students. To develop communication at FS we will follow guidance from the class staff and use communication strategies that specific students use to provide a consistent approach i.e. PECS, AAC, TEACCH, talking buttons, objects of reference and Makaton symbols and gestures. Students with sensory deficit disorders or specific sensory requirements will be encouraged to participate by providing other means of accessing activities i.e. The provision of equipment, PPE or objects, which accommodate and facilitate specific sensory difficulties i.e. visual, auditory, tactile, proprioception and vestibular needs.

To ensure the FS is accessible with regards to physical access for students with wheelchairs and mobility difficulties, thorough risk assessment processes will constantly be reviewed of the physical environment to ensure accessibility. Our school has two mobile hoists, which might be required to assist and support students so they can access activities such as moving to the floor safely and back into their seating or experience sensory activities. The students who need assistance to move will have a Personal Handling Risk Assessment which sets out safe systems of assisting them to move to be followed by all staff.

When undergoing FS sessions with different age groups we will consider the seating provision as we understand it needs to be adaptable and accessible for all. We will ensure high levels of adult support to facilitate equality of opportunity by providing high adult: student ratios.

Behaviour

Ashgate Croft School aim to promote and maintain positive behaviour in a safe environment to enable effective learning, school recognises the Local Authority policy and guidance on Positive Behaviour Support (including Physical Intervention) and agree to work within these guidelines through emphasis on sound behavioural support strategies as set out in the Schools Behaviour policy based on our School Values and PROACT-SCIPr-UK training

At Forest School ground rules will be firmly established at the beginning of each programme of sessions so that students visiting the site will be aware of what is expected of them while they are there.

All staff on the site will have read individual students behaviour plan so they can implement it consistently and work within this. Any sanctions for negative behaviour will be made clear and implemented consistently and fairly so the students are aware of what will happen if they do not behave in an appropriate way.

Principles

We are committed to providing:

- A safe and calm learning environment for pupils and staff.
- Support for pupils to monitor and control their own behaviour.
- Clear rules and boundaries of expectations with consistency.
- A positive, proactive and reflective approach to behaviour management.
- Early intervention and prevention to minimise the use of physical intervention.
- Clear communication and consistent routines for pupils.
- An environment that shows respect for the individuality of our pupils and promotes awareness, respect and care for other individuals and for the natural environment.
- Reinforcing and promoting effective relationships in which all are accepted, valued and treated equally especially during collaborative activities.
- Build self-esteem, independence, motivation to learn whilst always maintaining a safe environment
- A positive role model for all participants, staff, children and volunteers.

Actions

- We will ensure and maintain clear pathways of communication between all students and staff.
- Ensure we communicate clear positive assertive instructions.
- Pupils will be given time to comply before adult intervention.

- Pupils will be given the opportunity to request time out and space to allow self-regulation of behaviour.
- A frequent and consistent approach to giving encouragement, praise and rewards.
- We will set out consistent clear boundaries and expectations of behaviour.
- We will develop awareness of acceptable and responsible behaviour in an outdoor environment
- We will help to develop in both children and adults a pride in their achievements by placing the needs of the children, including needs linked to their preferred learning styles, social and behavioural needs at the centre of the Forest School curriculum to maximise individual success and raise self-esteem.
- FS leaders should be able to anticipate where possible difficult situations, changing needs and effects of change both internally and externally to place control measures in place and support students positively.
- We will have appropriate agreed sanctions in accordance with the school Behaviour policy and Individual behaviour management plans will be read by all staff and followed during sessions.
- Incident follow up procedures through recording and reporting will be carried out in line with School policy.

Bullying would not be tolerated at FS and will be dealt with within the ground rules and sanctions mentioned above. All students will be respected and valued and it would be made clear to the student, that it is their behaviour and not them as an individual that is not acceptable.

Any bullying would be dealt with in line with the school Anti- Bullying policy.

An environment of unconditional positive regard will be engendered at FS and activities that promote sharing and turn taking will be planned to support the students to work as a group and learn to value the contribution of all those attending.

Any incidents of bullying will be investigated and appropriate action taken by the Anti-Bullying co-ordinator in school. All incidents will be recorded in line with the school's Anti-bullying policy.



Food Hygiene at FS

There is both a Food policy and risk assessment to cover the issue of food hygiene, which adhere to food hygiene regulations and promote the health and well-being of all FS participants. A protocol of how food is to be prepared and handled is included in this.

Other considerations are:

- Any cuts or scratches should be covered with a plaster, ideally blue – so it can be seen if it drops into foods or the person cooking should wear a glove to protect themselves and others from infection.
- To follow a nil by mouth policy regarding items found in the FS area and only foods provided by school will be consumed.
- Safe storage of foods will need to be considered and cool boxes will need to be available for any perishable items in hot weather. Foods which need to be store will be wrapped separately to avoid cross contamination and avoid attracting vermin or insects.
- No foods will be left uncovered at any time.
- Students who require specific foods due to medical or dietary reasons will bring them to the FS sessions and these will be stored safely in a dry area.
- All water to be consumed provided by Forest School must be fresh and provided in sealed containers.
- All foods used will be checked for use-by dates and ensured that they are suitable for eating.
- Clean warm soapy water in a bucket and washing equipment such as washing-up liquid, cloths etc. will all be available during the sessions and available to clean the children's hands before handling food.
- Safe and easily identifiable areas for the preparation of food and the safe disposal of rubbish will be established to promote safe hygiene practices.
- All unused foods will be disposed of safely.
- Students and staff will be encouraged to tie long hair up, ensure they have no loose clothing and take care of where they place utensils.
- The preparation of food by students will be supervised by a responsible adult to ensure safe practices and promote good food hygiene.

- The provision of designated Utensils and crockery that are age and stage appropriate will only be used for the preparation and consumption of food and they will be washed in a designated washing up bowl then stored in a separate container.
- Hot drinks -All classes must take all reasonable precautions to avoid the risk of young people coming into contact with very hot drinks or boiling water. Hot drinks consumed when children are present should be in suitable lidded insulated cups and staff should ensure lids are properly secured. All Flasks/ Kelly kettles should, if using in areas where children are present and the area where the drinks are made should be supervised at all times.

Campfire cooking at FS: (e.g. food storage, meat/veg, thoroughly cooked)

- Food that might potentially cause food poisoning if not cooked thoroughly, such as raw chicken will be avoided and alternatives such as Quorn that are less likely to cause illness will be offered.
- Meat and vegetables will be prepared separately to minimise the risk of cross contamination.
- No food will be re-heated and to ensure foods are cooked throughout they will be split open to be checked to see if it is cooked.
- Safe storage of foods will need to be considered and cool boxes will be available for any perishable items.
- Cooked foods will be consumed immediately and any unused foods will be disposed of safely.
- When cooking with a stick use green wood and remove bark before cooking using a knife and scraping action.

Fire Safety



Fire Safety at Ashgate Croft School will follow the guidelines set out in the Derbyshire County Council LA Small Campfires Policy, which states that campfires will only be sited at least 15 metres from any buildings or structures and will only be carried out by a Forest School Leader with Level 3 qualification, who will oversee the location, supervision and relevant procedures and risk assessments required. Forest School leaders will embed safe practices throughout to ensure the pupils and staff are familiar with and understand fire safety procedures i.e. Stop, drop, roll etc.

Safe Fire Craft rules:

- Fire needs oxygen, fuel and ignition
- Don't lean over fire
- Always strike the fire steel away from you
- Sit/squat with back to wind when lighting the fire
- Move away from the smoke, do not inhale, if the wind moves, you move
- Make sure there is enough fuel before you light it
- Don't stamp on the fire
- Fleece and plastic clothes cause dreadful burns because they stick to you.
- Wear natural fibres such as wool and cotton.
- Always put out a fire thoroughly with water before leaving a site
- Don't light a fire in very dry conditions.
- Get young people to tuck in long hair and tie, remove, roll up or fasten loose clothing

Adult leaders should discuss with the children where a safe place would be to set up a fire site.

This needs to be sited where:

- There were no overhanging branches
- Not by a tree trunk or lying dead wood
- On reasonably level ground with enough space to move safely around it
- Access to water and a fire blanket or a soaked bath towel in a bucket available to extinguish the fire. Also to have a fire blanket near to the fire.

- Have a bucket full of fresh water for immersing a burn (Fire brigade and First aid Recommendations).
- No risk to adjacent areas and Calm conditions
- Establish a fire area and train young people how to approach and leave before lighting a fire.
- Have at least 1.5m between fire surround and seating logs.
- Seating logs should have emergency escape routes between them.
- Restrict flame height to equivalent of your knee.

Campfire cooking

- Risk assess working area and activity.
- Food will be prepared in a hygienic manner in line with the school's current procedures.
- Carry antiseptic wipes or soap and water for hand washing.
- When cooking with a stick use green wood and remove bark before cooking using a knife and scraping action.
- Avoid foods that need a lot of fat to cook in case of pan fire.



Hand Tool Safety at Forest School

Using small hand tools is an important part of Forest School as it enables children to develop new, practical skills that help them develop self –confidence. Using tools is only a small part of Forest School, students need to become confident in the environment before becoming confident with tools. Hand tools are to be maintained in good order by the Forest School Leader(s) and will be inspected before each session to ensure safety. Students and adults will be taught how to handle tools properly and to treat them with respect. Whilst using hand tools the staff to child ratio will be increased and will be carried out in a designated area away from the main thoroughfares.

- Tools will be kept in the locked Forest School tool bags and only removed by the Forest School staff
- Running with tools is prohibited
- Pointing with tools is prohibited
- Students will lose permission to use tools if the guidelines are not followed.

- Bill hooks should not be swung or used with gloved hands.
- Bow saws must have a blade guard on them when not in use. Blade guards to be removed and put back only by Forest School staff, TAs or volunteers until students have been shown how to do this properly and safely.
- Wood being sawn must be supported on a saw horse or a natural sawing break – hands must be kept away from the blade.
- When using knives/potato peelers to whittle it must be carried out at the side of, and downwards from the body.
- All tools must be counted back into the tool box/bag at the end of the session.
- Volunteer helpers must receive basic training on the use of individual hand tools before being allowed to use them with children.

Before using any tools always:

1. Risk assess tools, working area, activity and individuals capabilities.
2. Check tools before use and sign out to individuals.
3. Tool training and assessment of individuals should always take place.
4. Keep a safe working distance.
5. Establish a clear script for passing tools and establish clear rules for accessing tools.
6. Always use tools 2 arm's length and a tool away from other people by establishing a blood bubble (twice more when using an axe).

***See appendix for individual tool operating procedures.**

APPENDIX:

Tools Operating Procedures



Axe

Tool used for:	Splitting timber, making mallets,
Transporting to FS:	In a zipped, locked, waterproof tool bag.
Safety Checks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to FS session carry out a risk assessment of the area and the activity and check to ensure the axe is fit for the purpose it is to be used. • Establish a safe working area; a designated tool area could be used with a visible boundary and a clear area (no debris or tripping hazards such as rocks or logs). There should also be space to work that has good visibility and an even ground level. • A solid chopping block which is at the appropriate height for the person using the axe. • Sign out axe to an individual and monitor its replacement safely in the bag when it is finished with. • Check the axe before use ensuring you look at the handle for any movement and sharpness of the cutting edge. • A safe working distance from peers - check the 'blood bubble.
PPE needed (and for whom):	Protective footwear if the axe is to be used with a swinging action by adults, if a young person is using it place control measures in place to minimise the risk of injury i.e. use a raised surface A glove may be worn on the non-tool hand.
Additional Safety Equipment:	A chopping block

Ratio Adult/Child	1:1
Safe Body Stance:	Offset balance if working at waist height on a chopping block or 3 point kneeling if working lower to the ground.
Safe Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The axe should be swung directly downwards to improve efficiency of motion and avoid fatigue; this also limits the likelihood of the axe bouncing or slipping when chopping. • The angle of the object being chopped should be altered to encourage the downward action of the axe being employed. • Work out in front of the body away as this provides a good visual pointer to the task. • Place the whole blade in the end grain of a chopping block when not in use or put cover on and put back into the tool bag.
How to Clean:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipe the cutting edge against the chopping block or object you have cut to remove residue i.e. tree sap and plant material. • Make sure the head is thoroughly dry as axe heads are prone to rust from moisture. Use an absorbent cloth to take excess water or moisture off the axe blade. • Apply a light oil on the metal and handle to lubricate it.
Storage:	Cover the head with a piece of cloth and store in a secure cupboard in a cool dry place.



Loppers & Secateurs



Tool used for:	These are used to cut and prune small branches and side shoots no thicker than the thumb from the main body of an upright or fallen tree.
Transporting to FS:	In a zipped, locked, waterproof tool bag.
Safety Checks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to FS session carry out a risk assessment of the

	<p>area and the activity and check to ensure the tools are fit for the purpose it is to be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a safe working area that has good visibility and even ground level. Do not work above head height. • Sign out tools to an individual and monitor its replacement safely in the tool store when it is finished with. • Check the loppers before use ensuring you look at the handles for any movement and sharpness of the cutting edges. • Ensure a safe working distance from peers and check the 'blood bubble.
PPE needed (and for whom):	Safety boots and a hard hat if working above waist height for the adults, if a young person is using it place control measures in place to minimise the risk of injury.
Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	Gloves may be worn but not on the tool hand
Ratio Adult/Child	<p>This is age and ability dependant recommendations are:</p> <p>1:1 for 3-8 years</p> <p>1;2 for 8+ years</p>
Safe Body Stance:	Offset balance if working at waist height or in 3 point kneeling if working lower to the ground.
Safe Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To conduct a tool safety check, examine handles and hinges and make sure there are no signs of replacement, cracking or rusting. To check the blade on a lopper make sure it cannot close on you by using your body as a bar. Draw your thumb at right angles over the blade, it should feel rough. Visually examine the blade for any light shining through, in which case the tool will have to be discarded. Secateurs have an extra closing mechanism, make sure this is working properly. • Open up the secateurs and place over knee to make sure they cannot close as you check the blade. • When using ensure hands and feet are clear from the blades. • When transporting around the site hold in a fixed position under the arm, horizontal to the body with the

	<p>blades closed and pointing downwards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep closed after cutting action has finished and prop up against a tree with the blades pointing down within site of an adult when preparing the area or item to be lopped.
How to Clean:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipe the cutting edge against the object you have cut to remove residue i.e. tree sap and plant material. • Make sure the blades are thoroughly dry as axe heads. Use an absorbent cloth to take excess water or moisture off the blades. • Apply a light oil on the blades and moving joint to lubricate it
Storage:	Store in a secure cupboard in a cool dry place.



Mallet

Tool used for:	Driving wooden stakes or pegs into the ground
Transporting to FS:	In a zipped tool bag.
Safety Checks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for firm attachment of the head to the handle. Also check for splinters, loose wrapping, or other defects in the handle. If the hammer has any defects or is wobbly, do not use it. • Use mallets that are appropriate to the size of the student using it and are of the correct weight for the person using it. • Keep your workspace clear of other objects and check your 'blood bubble' so that nobody is standing behind you or too near. • Sign out tools to an individual and monitor its replacement safely in the bag when it is finished with.
PPE needed (and for whom):	Safety boots for the adult, if a young person is using it place control measures in place to minimise the risk of injury.

Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	Another person to hold or steady the stake so as person using the mallet has better control of the force used and more accurate targeting skills
Ratio Adult/Child	1:1
Safe Body Stance:	Offset balance, feet shoulder width apart one foot slightly in front of the other to offer a stable base.
Safe Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you hit the stake squarely using downward strokes to avoid the stake or mallet slipping. • Use your whole arm and elbow to allow the weight of the mallet to do the work.
How to Clean:	Remove any residue, wipe with a dry cloth and lubricate with a light oil such as linseed.
Storage:	Store in a secure cupboard in a cool dry place.

Storm Kettle Operating Procedure



Storm Kettle

Safety Precaution:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill the storm kettle through the spout and place the spout facing away from you ensuring the protective cork is not in place. • When you have finished using your kettle, it should be emptied of all water and stored in a dry place with the stopper out.
Safe Siting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure good weather conditions for fire lighting. • A safe working area around the site which is not located near a working area, pathway or used as a thoroughfare. • Remove the storm kettles base, place flat side down and on level even ground with a boundary around it to provide a visible marker.
Ratios:	Adult led activity with 1:1 ratios dependant on age and



	ability.
How to add fuel:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill the base with newspaper, dry grass, cotton wool or very small tinder and place the kettle onto the base carefully. • Light a fire through the hole in the side of the kettle's base using matches and place the hole of the kettle into the wind or carefully blow into it to give the fire oxygen. • Add fuel i.e. twigs of pencil width to the top of the kettle ensuring that just enough at a time is used so as to sustain the fire and not overload it. • Important-never leave the storm kettle unattended.
Instructions on how to safely lift kettle once boiled:	When the water boils, hold the handle with both hands placed at either side of the handle and kettle body, ensuring you don't touch the metal surface, then lift the Kettle clear of the base.
Instructions on how to safely pour:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place a receptacle on the ground ready to receive the boiling liquid then use the handle and chain for pouring, pointing the spout away from you. • If additional boiling water is required, simply refill the kettle, place it back on the fire base and refuel the chimney again!
How to extinguish:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty the kettle contents safely and place it in a safe area to cool. • Pour water onto the base from a water storage container or watering can to completely cover where the fire was sited. • Test the area by holding the back of your hand close to the ash, but not in it. Feel around for heat spots, if there is still heat, sprinkle more water and stir with a 30cm stick. • Continue this process until you are happy that it is completely extinguished and that the ground and kettle base are cold to the touch. As an extra precaution douse the surrounding area with water also. • Spread out the ashes to ensure you leave no-trace.



Bow saws

Tool used for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting anything bigger than a 2pence piece – small serrated edge for seasoned wood, spaced serrated (raker tooth) edge for green wood
Transporting to FS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a zipped, waterproof tool bag. Saw covers should always be on while carrying or whilst in a tool bag. • Bow-saws are carried down by the side with the teeth pointing downwards and the guard firmly in place.
Safety Checks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use new bow saw blades yourself to wear them in before use with young children. • Saw covers should always be on while being carried or in a bag. • Never wear a glove on the tool hand, a safety glove should be worn on the non-tool hand if this hand is not protected against saw slip • Never leave a saw flat on the ground, hang them up with the covers on, on a saw horse or leaning against a tree. Do not leave hanging in a tree.
PPE needed (and for whom):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety boots should be worn by adults using tools if available.
Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never cut on flat surfaces, use a bench, saw horse or a natural V in a tree to avoid movement. • Be aware of the effects of compression and tension in timber and make sure the saw cut is opening to avoid blade jamming.
Ratio Adult/Child	<p>1:1 ages 3-8</p> <p>1:2 ages 8+</p>
Safe Body Stance:	<p>Offset balance if working at waist height on a chopping block or 3 point kneeling if working lower to the ground.</p>

Safe Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working space should be clear without any trip hazards, check the canopy, look out for eye hazards and check floor for glass etc. • Initially make 3 cuts on the pull to make a groove, then with a partner, saying 'to me to, to you...' to get a rhythm of forwards and backward motion, then allowing the other to pull. • Can be used individually with someone supporting the log so it stays firm. • Cuts on the push and pull.
How to Clean:	Use a cloth and gun oil to ensure all dirt and moisture is off the blade.
Storage:	This tool should be stored in a dry, safe, controlled place.

  <p style="text-align: center;">Knives (not currently using) + peelers</p>	
Tool used for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whittling small soft sticks, peeling bark or cutting string
Transporting to FS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a zipped, locked, waterproof tool bag/box.
Safety Checks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never wear a glove on working hand and never cut towards yourself. Keep the holding hand as far away from the blade as possible but always maintain control of material to allow cuts to be safe. • Cut away from yourself and down towards the ground with minimum force. • Always assume safe position. • Check that there are no cracks in the sheath. Visually look for any signs of denting, rust etc. Check for sharpness by drawing a thumb sideways at right angles. The blade should feel rough. Use the knife to further test its sharpness. • Check that the handle and attachment are adequate

	<p>and do not wobble.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always use tools 2 arm's length and a tool away from other people
PPE needed (and for whom):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety boots should be worn by adults using tools if available.
Additional Safety Equipment:	Gloves - no glove on tool hand, glove on non-knife hand.
Ratio Adult/Child	1:1
Safe Body Stance:	Three point kneeling to provide a safe stance or on fixed seating.
Safe Action:	Blade facing away from you on the outside of your body. Keeping wood between you and the knife.
How to Clean:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use cloth and gun oil to ensure all dirt and moisture is off the blade. • Use long stick with cloth and WD-40 to wipe out any debris inside the sheath. • Sharpen using sharpening stone and water/oil after each session. Ensure blade is sheathed when not in use.
Storage:	Store in small water proof and air tight container with a protective sheath/ cover



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Forest School Policy - Appendix

Dear Parent/Carer

Starting from XXXX your son/daughter will have the opportunity to take part in the exciting experience of Forest School sessions. These will be taught outside in the school grounds in the new Forest School area. The sessions will give the students an opportunity to take part in a variety of activities that are based in nature and using natural materials to create craft items and solve problems both alone and with their friends. There will be a range of activities on offer. Students will be encouraged to choose for themselves which activity they would like to take part in.

Forest School was developed in Denmark to support children to learn outside in the natural environment giving them the opportunity to develop their independence, curiosity and creativity. Research has shown that learning that takes place outdoors is more memorable and powerful as it involves all the senses; children are able to develop language, social and physical skills and learn to respect and appreciate the natural environment.

For the Forest School sessions your son/daughter will need to bring clothes to keep them warm and dry and that can get dirty as we will be using various natural materials such as clay and mud (it is always OK to get dirty at Forest Schools).

If you have any questions about Forest Schools please feel free to contact us at school, I am hoping that these sessions will offer your son/daughter a different learning experience while at school and most importantly the opportunity to have a lot of fun!

Yours faithfully

Jane Corton/Lesley Burton (Forest School Leaders)

