



Ashby Church of England Primary School



Forest School Handbook 2023 Policies and Procedures

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A Forest School Introduction

Forest Schools are designed to be child-led. This means children are encouraged to direct their own learning. Forest School is a unique, inspirational experience and learning process where trained practitioners facilitate child-led exploration and discovery. Learners access meaningful child-led experiences which are nurtured for positive lifelong impacts - far beyond those that can necessarily be achieved in the classroom. Through a hands-on experience, involving play, exploration and supported risk taking, in a nature-based environment, children are able to develop their overall holistic health. By accessing a regular, long-term programme it allows for the blossoming of character, confidence, resilience, empathy, and much more. We are also allowing for our children to develop their connection to nature and for the shared future of our environment.

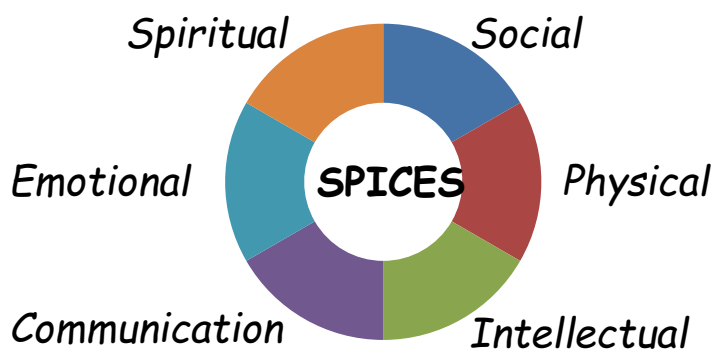
Forest School has a developmental ethos that is supported by thousands of practitioners across the world. To a large extent, Forest School is nothing new. Learning outdoors actually has early influences (from educators, philosophers and psychologists) that date back hundreds of years! But it is largely considered that its roots can be traced back to the Scandinavian 'open-air culture' (friluftsliv) whereby a simple life in nature is a tradition. In Denmark, in the 1990s, it was observed that children who had attended forest school nursery facilities had stronger social and communication skills, the ability to work more effectively in groups, had generally higher self-esteem and had greater confidence in their own abilities. It is believed that these foundations also helped them to raise their academic achievements. Since then, Forest School in the U.K. has gone from strength to strength.

The Forest School Ethos

At our school we aim, through our core values, to provide all our children with an exciting start to their education in a setting which cares, guides, stimulates and supports everyone within our school community. A Forest School ethos naturally lends itself to supporting this exciting start to their education.

The Forest School ethos supports the way at Ashby Church of England Primary School we can holistically develop the 'whole-child'.

A Holistic Approach to Learning at Forest School



By immersing themselves in the Forest School ethos, our children will access many character shaping, first-hand experiences. Opportunities allow for learners to take managed risks which helps to develop resilience, executive functioning skills, self-confidence, and risk-assessment abilities. The extensive, adaptable learning environment allows for children to thrive. They are allowed opportunity to find new (often better suited) ways of learning that offer a great sense of achievement. This provides greater equal opportunities, as it is so accessible for all. Not only this, we promote a culture that embraces challenge with a chance to feel and work through frustration - ultimately developing grit and resilience. Through a sense of community, compassion, and connection to nature children are provided a platform in which they can develop their emotional intelligence and wellbeing.

A key advantage of Forest School is that it allows ample opportunity for self-directed, personal learning which arises from the learners key interests, prior knowledge, discoveries and future desires. The role of the Forest School practitioner is to provide a safe, motivating environment where these child-led 'wow' moments can be facilitated or supported or simply be observed and allowed to flourish. Either way, the children's voice is empowered through their own unstructured, unexpected learning journey.

Within each long-term programme, we give our children access to a wide, rich set of experiences to develop their talents and interests that involves the entire world of the young person - their knowledge, attitudes, skills, relationships and behaviour.

Our Aims and Objectives

At Forest School, we support our children to:

- develop intra-personal skills e.g. self-awareness, self-regulation and self-motivation
- develop inter-personal skills e.g. social skills and empathy
- develop confidence and independence
- solve practical problems and challenges
- regularly experience achievement and success
- experience failures and frustrations, in a happy and supportive learning environment
- learn how to manage failures and frustrations
- explore, investigate and experiment
- build imagination and creativity
- build a sense of community and trust
- develop curiosity, pursue knowledge and foster interests
- build on previous experiences
- embrace interests, families, relationships, religions and cultures
- develop and celebrate individuality
- discover who they are as a learner and how they learn best
- build confidence in decision making and evaluating risk
- develop and take care for personal safety and that of others
- develop practical skills

- build connections between humans, wildlife and the earth
- reflect on learning and experiences
- develop their vocabulary and communication skills
- develop their language skills – to describe, explain, predict and ask questions
- improve physical motor skills and understand the benefits of a balanced and healthy lifestyle
- enjoy outdoor activity in an ever-changing environment (learn to adapt)
- improve their concentration skills and perseverance skills
- explore the world through all the senses
- experience the seasons and behold the changes
- experience and feel the climate and make independent decisions based on this
- appreciate natural beauty and a sense of wonder
- create connection with the environment, a desire to protect it and awareness of our future impact
- improve mental health and wellbeing

Forest School is for all children of all ages and all stages. By completing small achievable tasks attitudes to learning are often improved as they find that learning can be fun and enjoyable. The above transferable skills, combined with a positive outlook, are then transported to the classroom where they are hopefully found to be more motivated and able to concentrate better.

What happens at Forest School?

Typically, small groups of children take part in a programme of weekly sessions lasting for about one to two hours. The sessions involve practical hands-on activities which aim to build up participants' skills, abilities and confidence week by week. The Forest School ethos strongly encourages participant-led learning, so as each week progresses, learners are given more freedom and responsibility to explore their own interests and therefore initiate and direct their own learning.

Although Forest School activities are diverse and numerous, we are aiming to create inspired learners who are self-motivated to try out their own ideas, explore their own interests and to attempt new ideas. As such, these activities may include:

- Shelter building
- Natural art
- Knots and lashings
- Fire lighting
- Nature surveys
- Animal tracking / bug hunting
- Climbing and balancing
- Woodwork using tools
- Creating homes for nature
- Team games
- Collecting, identifying and sorting materials
- Cooking
- Sensory activities
- Stories, drama and singing

The Beauty of Play at Forest School

"You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than a year of conversation."

-Plato (428-348 BC)

Research shows that play is a critical booster for a child's physical, intellectual, and social-emotional development at all ages. It is though that, *real* learning takes place in the 'absorbent mind of a child' (by absorbing themselves in their surroundings). Through play, children can absorb and become part of the world around them and this can be one of the most serious undertakings of a child's life. It is our job to give children both the time and the space that they need for true 'free' play to develop. The benefits of actively pursuing child-led independent play for our children cannot be measured but it is the best gift we can give and is one of the most integral parts of every Forest School session.

Children will:

- Engage in free play (an activity chosen and personally directed by the participant)
- Undertake play for their own sake (they are intrinsically motivated)
- Learn through their play e.g. how to make decisions, solve problems, exercise self-control, follow rules, regulate their emotions, get along with others, communicate, make friends, develop interests and competencies
- Play without any kind of credential for doing it e.g. no reward or end goal
- Independently choose what, how and why they want to play
- Be uninterrupted
- Take control and develop self-control
- Be their own creators and developers
- Navigate real and imaginary worlds
- Draw upon and organise prior knowledge and real-life experience
- Be independent or be collaborative
- Develop fine and gross motor skills
- Be creative with materials that can be applied in endless ways
- Be encouraged to make their own choices, decisions and rules
- Solve problems (both physically, socially and emotionally)
- Explore and express language
- Continuously assess risk

Our Forest School Site

Our Forest School takes place in a small woodland area on the south-east corner of our school site. It is next to the main school playground and the Foundation Stage building. It runs adjacent to Burton Road and Smisby Road. It is accessed through our Outdoor Classroom via a locked gate. Around the periphery there are metal railings and a wooden fence and the site is not accessible to the public. The Forest School area comprises of three main areas: a woodland area, a 'meadow' area and a pond area (which is accessed via a separate locked gate). The woodland area consists of a mixture of broad-leaf deciduous trees and a few evergreen trees. There are a range of other plants such as ivy, sedges, dogwood, brambles and nettles.



At the moment our site is managed thoughtfully and carefully by the Forest School practitioner and the children themselves. We have a three-year woodland management plan in place with an emphasis on protection and biodiversity.

Daily checks and risk assessments are taken on-site and the children are part of the development process to minimise our impact on the site. This includes learning about:

- flora and fauna (plant and animal life)
- natural habitats
- respecting living things
- observation through nature surveys
- protecting designated areas
- minimising impact e.g. not taking natural materials or leaving litter

Forest School Staff

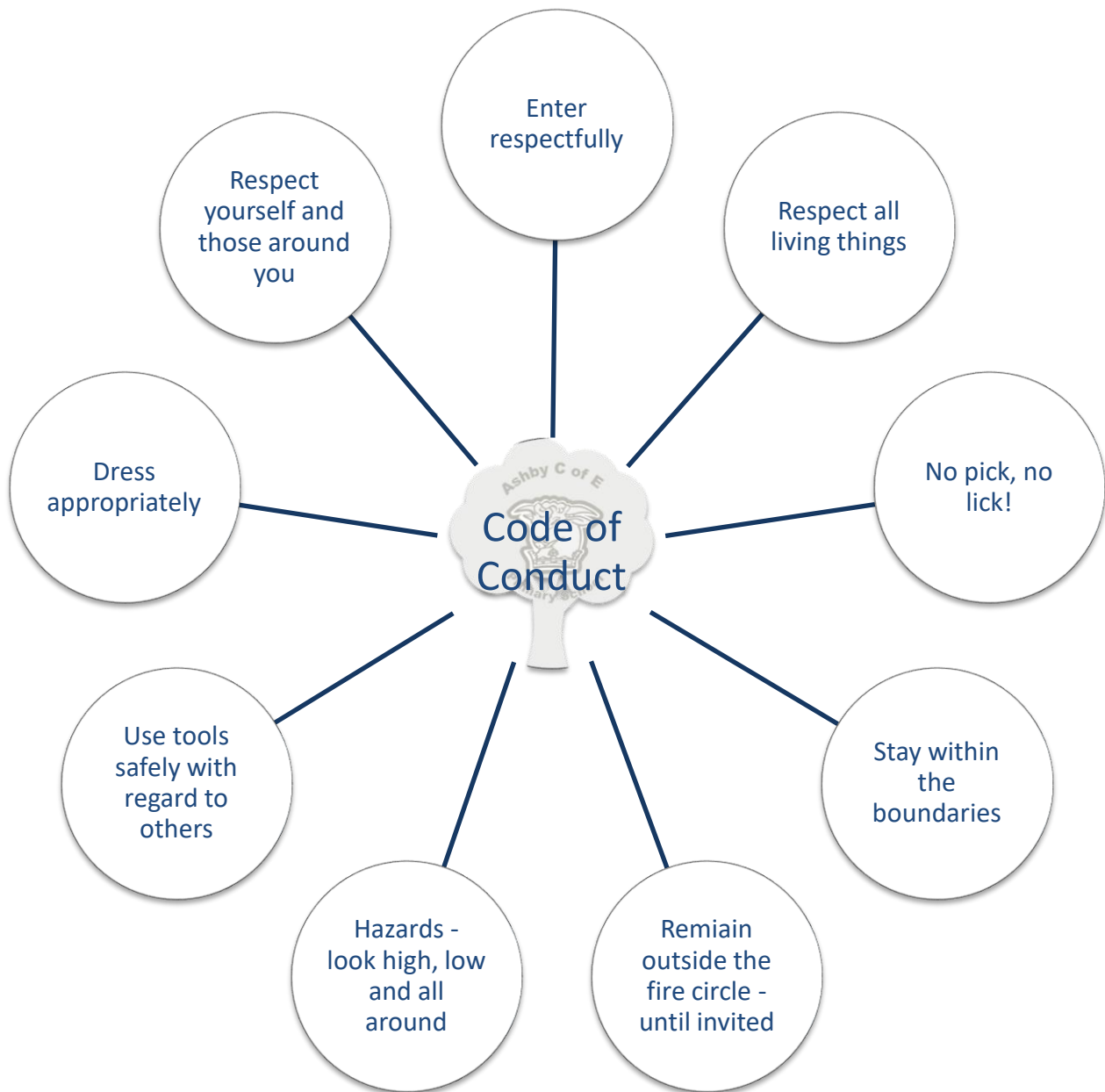
Our Forest School is organised and run by Mrs Murray who is a qualified teacher working towards her Level 3 Qualification for Forest School Practitioners. She is responsible for the planning and delivery of Forest School programmes and sessions from EYFS to Year Six. She has a Level 3 Outdoor First Aid and a Level 3 Paediatric First Aid qualification. Larger group sessions are also attended by another member of our school staff. Additional adults also attend for those learners who require 1:1 support throughout their activities on site.

Site Management

The Forest School site is assessed daily in accordance with the relevant Risk Assessment documents. All school staff have access to these documents via our online shared drive and hard copies are kept in the Business Manager's office. Any risks that are assessed outside of these will be noted on the Daily Site Assessment Sheet (see Appendix 2).

Shelters, benches, seating and the fit pit are all checked for security before or during each session. Trees are inspected regularly and particularly after inclement weather.

Our Forest School Code of Conduct



Prior to a Forest School Session

1. The Forest School Leader will have prepared a Session Plan based on the developing observations from the previous session.
2. The Forest School Leader will have checked that their phone is in working order and is sufficiently charged.
3. The weather forecast is observed online to help provide critical information about the expected weather conditions for a certain period of time ahead.

4. The Ashby CE Primary 'Outdoor Emergency Medical folder' is taken to the site (this contains all relevant allergies, medicines, diagnoses, consent etc. for all pupils at our school).
5. The Ashby CE Primary current GDPR information is taken to the site.
6. School radio no.1 is taken to site and signal strength and readability communications are checked with school radio no.2 (with designated indoor member of staff).
7. The location of the 'Emergency Red Triangle, is checked and accounted for.
8. Activity / Risk Assessment forms are completed for each planned activity (see Appendix 1).
9. The Emergency Medical Box is checked e.g. up to date and sufficiently stocked.
10. A thorough site check / risk assessment will be done before each session, to check for any litter, glass, animal faeces, etc.
 - a. A written record will be kept of each sweep on the Daily Site Assessment Sheet (see Appendix 2). This shall state if any hazards were found and how they were dealt with.
 - b. Trees will be checked for any broken or dead branches, which may fall.
11. The weather conditions will be checked once again, now outside. If it is unduly windy - e.g. trees leaning or a thunderstorm is imminent or has commenced, then it will not be advisable to carry out a session. If there is fallen snow, we will assess if the session goes ahead or not, due to hazards below foot and the cold.
12. The Forest School Leader will outline the session with any assisting staff and go through any Risk Assessments/ medical issues.
13. Any equipment is prepared and collected, from the main school building or the storage shed.

A Typical Forest School Session

"My forest school journey starts from the moment I put my boot on..."

1. Children go to the toilet inside their main school building.
2. They either arrive to school in appropriate outdoor clothing or change inside their main school building (see Clothing Requirements).
3. We have a discussion about appropriate clothing. We look at the weather and give the children the opportunity to independently assess their requirements and suitability and make informed decisions guided by the adults.
4. Depending on the weather, groups change to their outdoor footwear at the Outdoor Classroom, bringing items in a plastic bag. School shoes are then left inside the plastic bags and left under the benches.
5. We respectfully walk into the Forest School area and sit at our fire circle / base camp.
6. If necessary, children are given appropriate outdoor clothing to borrow e.g. wellington boots or warmer coats.

7. Leader counts/ registers the group and checks this against the Emergency Medical Information and the current GDPR list.
8. We discuss and revise any daily safety issues and the children reflect on any risks /potential hazards in the environment.
9. We revise the boundaries and discuss emergency procedures e.g. alert adults, use of 'Emergency Red Triangle' (children and adults), use of school radio (adults).
10. We revise the call signal: "1, 2, 3 - back to me".
11. We explore, discuss or play a warm up game.
12. We provide instructions for the session, identifying resources, opportunities and session focus.
13. Main session.
14. At the end of the session, gather back at the circle and discuss session, allowing young people to feedback if they wish too.
15. We respectfully walk out of the site and change footwear at the Outdoor Classroom. In wet weather conditions, we take a tarpaulin to the main entrance and change footwear and put it into the 'Muddy Trunk!'.
16. The children change out of their outdoor clothing and back into their school uniform inside their main school building.
17. Adult takes all personal information back into the main school building (emergency medical information, class lists and current GDPR list).

Clothing Requirements

No person (adult or child) will be permitted to go to Forest School without appropriate clothing. This will help to protect them from:

- extremes of heat or cold
- wet weather
- the likelihood of cuts and scrapes (clothing must cover their skin)
- slips, trips and falls

It must fit appropriately for comfort, and meet any religious requirements. Inappropriate clothing will increase risk and therefore raises health and safety / risk assessment concerns.

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 mud home with them after a session!

The following clothing should be worn, as dictated by weather conditions:

Cold Weather:

- Outdoor shoes - walking boots, wellingtons or trainers (that may get muddy)
- Warm SPARE socks
- A warm coat - preferably waterproof
- A jumper or fleece

- A long-sleeved top (**skin must be covered**)
- Full-length trousers (**skin must be covered**)
- Waterproof over-trousers (if possible)
- Hat and gloves (weather dependent)
- An extra layer of clothing (weather-dependent)

Warm Weather:

- Outdoor shoes - walking boots, wellingtons or trainers (that may get muddy)
- SPARE socks
- A thin coat - preferably waterproof
- A jumper or fleece
- A thin long-sleeved top (**skin must be covered**)
- Full-length trousers (**skin must be covered**)
- Waterproof over-trousers (if possible)
- A sun hat (weather dependent)

Please note: your child must not wear t-shirt or shorts (their skin must be covered) otherwise they will not be able to attend. The area is very shaded under trees so even in warm, sunny weather they will not be too warm in thin long-sleeved tops and trousers.

The Forest School leader has a limited amount of extra clothing available should the children not have adequate clothing. Children will have their own carrier bags available inside the main school building for dirty/wet clothing. The Forest School Leader will always have an emergency change of clothing as part of their Emergency Medical supplies.

Toileting

The children are asked to use the toilet facilities before leaving their main school building. If children need to use the toilet during a session, they are either escorted by another assisting member of staff or the Forest School leader communicates a message to school radio no. 2 and the child is only permitted to leave the site when the message has been received and verified.

Equipment

A safety box will be available during every Forest School session. It is positioned in the same place and all members of staff are familiar with its location.

The safety box contains the following essential equipment, which will be checked and updated as necessary:

- Emergency Procedures - laminated card.

- Ashby CE Primary Emergency Medical Information (emergency medical information for specific children). All other emergency contact information can be found at the main office.
- Medical Report forms and medical wrist bands
- Red Triangle
- Risk Assessments - if required for a particular session.
- Clean drinking water
- Emergency Life Blanket
- 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)
- Wet wipes and hand gel
- Whistle
- Torch
- Spare clothing
- Chocolate/sugary food
- Plastic bags
- Emergency shelter
- First Aid Kit:
 - Latex Gloves
 - Bandages - small, medium, large, triangular bandage
 - Plasters
 - Burns gel
 - Burn dressing
 - Dressings
 - Scissors
 - Antiseptic cleansing wipes
 - Medication for individual children
 - Sterile water
 - Adhesive tape
 - Instant ice packs
 - Disposal sacks for medical waste

When having a fire:

- Fire lighting kit - cotton wool, fire steel.
- Fire blanket
- Large containers of water
- Emergency fire kit/burns kit - burn gel, burn cream
- Fire retardant gauntlet gloves

Health and Safety Policy

The Forest School Leader and all members of staff assisting a Forest School session will adhere to the 'Ashby C of E Primary School Health & Safety Policy'.

Provided below is a list of additional points and measures which relate directly to our Forest School sessions:

1. There is always a Forest School leader on-site.
2. The Forest School leader has overall 'Duty of Care' for the children in their group, but all members of staff are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure children are safe.
3. All members of staff accessing the site must sign and date a form in agreement of reading this Forest School Handbook and all appropriate Risk Assessments and Policies.
4. The Forest School leader will ensure that any assisting members of staff are fully briefed regarding any planned activities available and relevant risks/hazards. All members of staff **MUST** read and understand the Risk Assessments appropriate to the session in which they are helping
5. All activities are thoroughly risk assessed before the start of each session and leaders continue to monitor the safety of the group as activities evolve.
6. Children are also involved in completing their own dynamic risk assessments throughout the sessions. This gives them ownership of the process and helps them to be aware of, and calculate, the risks involved in each activity. They are asked to state what risks and hazards they should be aware of and what steps they can take to reduce or mitigate them.
7. There is always a trained first aider present at each session and a written emergency plan to follow.
8. The Forest School Emergency Box is always positioned in an agreed location.
9. The Forest School Leader will ensure that the Emergency Box contains all essential equipment.
10. In the event of an emergency, the Forest School Leader will either contact the emergency services themselves or ensure that the school does so.
11. A higher ratio of adults to children will be available when leaders need to give individuals one-to-one attention when needed (e.g. tool use), to lead small group work or during fire-lighting sessions.
12. When tools are used, the staff/student ratio will always be 1:1 to begin with, until confident.
13. The Forest School leader is responsible for the maintenance and checking of all tools and equipment to be used at Forest School, prior to their use.

14. The Forest School leader is responsible in training children and staff in how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately.
15. The Forest School leader will be responsible for the pre-visit check of the Forest School site prior to a Forest School session and complete a 'Daily Site Assessment Sheet' (see Appendix 2).

Risk Management Policy

All staff at Ashby Church of England Primary School receives induction training which includes an explanation of our 'Health and Safety Policy'. This includes making them aware of their statutory duties, emergency procedures, and **relevant risk assessments**. All staff have access to this policy via our online portal. So as to deliver safe, effective Forest School sessions, this list provides additional points and measures which relate directly to our Forest School sessions:

1. The Forest School leader will carry out a **site** check and complete a 'Daily Site Assessment Sheet' (see Appendix 2) as near to the start of the activity as is reasonably practical.
2. In addition, an **activity** risk assessment will be established prior to any activity that may require it.
3. For all Forest School **activities**, we will apply a 5-step approach to risk assessment:
 - i. Look for hazards.
 - ii. Decide who may be harmed and how.
 - iii. Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing controls are adequate or whether more should be done.
 - iv. Record findings to standing Risk Assessments, based on site visits or observations, and make daily amendments if necessary.
 - v. Review Risk Assessments on a half termly basis (or if circumstances change, which may affect the rigour of the Assessment) and revise if necessary.
4. We will ensure that all members of staff have read the relevant Site and Activity Risk Assessments prior to a session.
5. If weather conditions (e.g. high winds or the threat/occurrence of electrical storms), make work outdoors unsafe, we will move activities indoors.
6. At the beginning of each session, the Forest School leader will inform members of staff and children of potential hazards and methods of working in order to minimise their risk further.
7. At the beginning of each session, the Forest School leader will involve members of staff and the children in the Risk Assessment, as appropriate, as part of learning.
8. The Forest School Leader will ensure that all members of staff and young people are aware of the Emergency Procedures for the Forest School site e.g. all children know where the Emergency Red Triangle is, that I have a school radio, and where to meet in an emergency.

9. The Forest School Leader will be responsible for teaching the children adequate skills in order to keep themselves safe, particularly in relation to the use of hand tools and fire.
10. During particularly hot weather, we will ensure members of staff and children have access to their own drinking water. Drinking water is always kept on site, as well as a sealed bottle in the Emergency Box.
11. Specific additional risk assessments will be undertaken for children whose medical condition or whose behaviour requires them.

Tool Management Policy

At Ashby Church of England Primary School, we use the following tools with the children and staff:

- Bow saw
- Loppers
- Billhook
- Hand drills
- Sheath knife
- Small Forest Axe
- Secateurs
- Scissors
- Potato peelers
- Long-handled spade

1. All tools are counted out and back in at the beginning and end of each session in which they are used.
2. When not in use in the woodland they are kept secured away in a locked area.
3. Before each tool is to be used it will be checked for damage and working order.
4. Each tool type is kept in their own suitable containers, many of which are also lockable.
5. In addition sheath knives are kept in a separate lockable box, which is kept locked in accordance with the UK Knife Law.
6. Children must never be allowed to help themselves and will always have adult supervision when collecting and transporting.
7. Tools are only used for a specific purpose.
8. All adults should model correct and safe tool use, storage, transportation and maintenance at all times (only walking is permitted when transporting a tool).
9. When using a tool, they are used with 1:1 Forest School Leader supervision initially, until proved competent and confident in use.
10. Tools are used well away from others in the group, (two arm's length and the tool length) and ensuring that others are aware that a tool is in use. The Forest School Leader uses a sheath knife and axe for woodland tasks.

11. The Forest School leader provides Risk Assessments for **tool** usage and guides any support staff in their usage (ensuring they have read and signed the relevant tool risk assessment prior to the session).

Fire Safety Policy

To enhance the children's learning and development and to experience a degree of managed risk taking, it is sometimes desirable to have an open fire as part of the Forest School experience. Encounters with risk help children to manage their coping strategies and discover and explore the world through real experiences. Forest School is about enjoying and experiencing a process - not an end product. The entire process of building, lighting and cooking on a fire enables the young people in the group to practice their large and fine motor skills and provides them with instant gratification and a sense of achievement as the fire grows before them. Fire lighting allows children to learn and experience:

- a lot of science
- safety procedures
- some basic survival skills
- about managing risks
- the pure enjoyment and excitement of being around a campfire
- organisation and preparation skills
- to respect fire
- how to cook on a fire

This policy sets out the guidelines to follow to ensure safe practice is a thread throughout the activity.

1. Aim

To use fire safely as part of the Forest School experience.

2. Location

- i. The same, previously agreed area will be used for fires (in the meadow area)
- ii. The Forest School leader will assess the forest floor (re. dry/damp material)
- iii. The general weather conditions will be assessed for suitability for having a fire safely.
- iv. The fire bowl and tripod will be set up by the Forest School leader.
- v. The campfire area will be enclosed and defined by logs to contain the fire area and discourage any young person from accessing the fire directly.

3. Positioning of young people and members of staff

- i. The fire circle will be surrounded by seating at least 2 metres from the fire pit - these are to be checked prior to fire lighting.
- ii. When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area without permission.

- iii. When allowed to access the campfire, children must walk around the outside of the seating and wait for permission to step over. Once permission has been given, they must sit ensuring legs are drawn into the stool and not outstretched.
- iv. Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by a member of staff to move.
- v. Children will be taught how to change seats by standing, stepping over the stool and then walking around the outside of the seating area. They must never cross the inner area.
- vi. Long sleeves and trousers must always be worn by all participants.
- vii. Any children or member of staff with long hair should have it tied back (spare bands are in the Forest School kit bag).
- viii. Young people are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire, but may add fuel under the direction of the Forest School leader.
- ix. Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the young people (to turn their head to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes or ask permission to move).
- x. If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.

4. Lighting and keeping fires burning

- i. The fire will be lit under the direct supervision of the Forest School leader.
- ii. Fire retardant gauntlet gloves are to be used when lighting, managing and extinguishing the fire.
- iii. Other members of staff (who have been fully briefed and read the Risk Assessment) may supervise the fire area and attend/feed the fire (wearing fire retardant gauntlet gloves).
- iv. Fires are lit using a strike stick, natural tinder or cotton wool.
- v. No flammable liquids or firelighters are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- vi. If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with 1:1 staff supervision and they are shown how to kneel safely (in the 'respect' position with one knee on the ground), how to sideways feed the fire and they must wear fire retardant gauntlet gloves.
- vii. Hands should never go over the fire.

5. Safety Equipment

The following kit will be brought to the fire circle area when lighting fires:

- Fire blanket
- Bucket
- Fire retardant gauntlet gloves
- Jerry can containing drinkable water
- First aid kit (with burn gel, dressings)

6. Extinguishing fires

- i. All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- ii. An adequate supply of fire water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- iii. Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
- iv. The Forest School leader should ensure that any large remains of wood are separated from one another.
- v. At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.
- vi. Children may be involved in the process of extinguishing fires but this must be done under the supervision of the Forest School leader only.
- vii. Large build-ups of potash, from several fires, need to be dispersed. This must only be done when it has totally cooled, preferably the following day. It should be finely scattered throughout the woodland to enable natural decomposition.

Accident and Emergency Procedures

The trained and named Forest School leader is always the person in charge of Forest school sessions however all members of staff and participants have a duty of care and will be briefed on what to do in case of an emergency.

1. Accident and Emergency

- i. Children to know where the 'Emergency Red Triangle' is and how to use it. They know a school radio is carried on-site for use by the adult. They know that their emergency meeting point is by the 'Red Pencil'.
- ii. An adult will use the call signal "1, 2, 3 - back to me". This is the signal to stop what you are doing, gather with a member of staff at our base camp, be silent and wait for instructions.
- iii. The Forest School Leader will assess the situation, the nature and extent of the injury/accident.
- iv. They will ensure that the rest of the group are safe from danger and are adequately supervised.
- v. If it is felt that the rest of the group needs to leave the site, they will line up at the 'Red Pencil' or go back inside their main school building (depending on the assessed risk).
- vi. The Forest School leader, or the first available first aid trained member of staff, will attend to any casualties, giving First Aid as necessary.
- vii. Basic first aid is available on-site at all times. Adults must follow the Ashby CE medical incident procedure e.g. complete an accident form and give the child the appropriate coloured wrist band.
- viii. If the Forest School Leader is injured or becomes ill, a supporting member of staff will take charge of the situation, or the children will follow the 'Red Triangle' procedure.

2. In the event of Serious Injury:

If anyone sustains an injury or illness which cannot be treated by First Aid on-site and requires medical assistance:

- i. In serious cases, the Emergency Services should be contacted, using the Forest School leader's mobile phone, giving the injury and site details. The office and a member of SLT must be informed immediately. Alternatively, someone in the main school building must contact the Emergency Services. The office and a member of SLT must again be informed immediately. Then the injured party's emergency contact will be contacted, via the Main School Office.
- ii. Call the emergency service/s that you require on **999 from a landline or 112 from a mobile.**
- iii. Location of the nearest working landline if mobile not working / no signal is situated in the main school office or the EYFS building. A member of staff is instantly available on the school radio.
- iv. Give as much information about the patient and their location as possible:
 - Who has been injured
 - What their injuries are
 - If they have any medical conditions
 - Where on the site the patient is
 - The directions to the site and the patient.
- v. Arrange for someone to stand in the main school car park. Don't hang up until you are told to do so by the call taker. Try to stay calm.
- vi. The rest of the group will be supervised away from the incident and if in danger, will be moved to safety – they will line up at the 'Red Pencil' or go back inside their main school building (depending on the assessed risk).
- vii. If the injured party is taken to hospital, a member of staff will go with them and a member of staff at school will update the injured party's emergency contact about the situation.

All emergency procedures are found on the laminated card Emergency Action Plan (EAP) card attached to the Emergency Box.

3. First aid

- i. Check the rest of the group is safe and, where appropriate, delegate responsibility.
- ii. If appropriate, remove the danger or people from the danger.

- iii. Qualified First Aider responds to check A.B.C. (Airway, Breathing and Circulation) and administer First Aid. If necessary, call for further assistance (999 or 112).
- iv. Have Emergency Medical Form details available in Emergency Box and ask a member of staff to inform the patient's emergency contact
- v. Record full details through our School Incident Procedure.

4. Lost or missing student

- i. Carry out the call signal "1, 2, 3 - back to me". This signals that everyone should move to the Forest School fire circle / base camp.
- ii. Conduct a head count to check that all other members of the group are present.
- iii. As soon as the young person is found to be missing, carry out the call signal "1, 2, 3 - back to me" once again.
- iv. Have a member of staff stay with the group at the Forest School fire circle / base camp and await further instructions.
- v. Make an immediate search of the vicinity and use the call signal "1, 2, 3 - back to me" again.
- vi. Contact the emergency contact via the school radio. Send the 'Red Triangle' to an emergency contact in the school building.
- vii. Send any remaining staff to search the immediate area for an agreed length of time (e.g. 5 minutes). Arrange for them to return to the agreed meeting place at an agreed time.
- viii. If the missing person is not found in the agreed length of time, alert more school staff to the fact that there is a missing person, including SLT.
- ix. Organise a second search party. Any staff member who knows the site can be recruited to help this second search. Searchers should work in pairs with at least one carrying a mobile phone with sufficient signal and battery life. Arrange for them to search for a specified length of time (e.g. 10 minutes) and return to reception at an agreed time.
- x. If the missing person is not found by this second search, then with SLT consent, contact the police. The decision may be made to do this while the second search is in progress depending on circumstances.
- xi. In consultation with the SLT, decide where to take the remainder of the group.
- xii. Areas for search:
 - All outside fields and areas
 - The school car park
 - Toilets within school
 - All classrooms and cloakrooms in school
- xiii. After the incident is over, complete a full report using the school's Incident Report Form.

5. Death or serious accident

- i. Follow the above First Aid procedure - D.R.A.B.C.(Danger, Response, Airway, Breathing and Circulation)

- ii. Stay with the casualty, but also ensure rest of group is removed from the situation and is safe.
- iii. A member of staff to is to call the patient's emergency contact as soon as possible.
- iv. After the incident is over, complete a full report using the school's Incident Report Form.

6. Poor weather conditions

- i. If the Forest School leader deems the weather unsuitable, (e.g. the trees are blowing more than 20 degrees, imminent threat of an electrical storm, or if the group leader feels uncomfortable), then the group will take emergency 'safe' route out as soon as possible. They will line up at the 'Red Pencil' or go back inside their main school building (depending on the assessed risk).
- ii. They group may use indoor areas or shelter outdoors (away from trees) areas as alternative, or until the condition passes.

7. Behaviour

The Forest School Leader and all members of staff assisting a Forest School session will adhere to the 'Ashby C of E Primary School Behaviour' Policy and the 'Ashby C of E Primary School Anti-Bullying' Policy. It is expected that at Forest School we follow the same whole-school procedures within these. This includes our whole-school ethos and expectations, strategies, rewards, consequences, positive handling and behaviour tracking.

Provided below is a list of additional points and measures which relate directly to our Forest School sessions. Through practicing these established routines, the children at Forest School will be able to enforce/remind others how to behave. Peers expect responsible behaviour and to a degree will be self-policing.

- i. All members of staff to use de-escalating techniques whenever possible when dealing with behavioural issues.
- ii. If deemed necessary, other children may be removed from area of risk.
- iii. If deemed necessary, positive handling techniques may be used in order to remove the child from the site. The emergency contact will be informed via the School Radio and a 'Red Triangle' will be sent to main school building. A member of SLT will be informed.
- iv. A subsequent meeting to discuss the individual's access to future sessions or how to integrate them back into sessions will be held. This may be with the child's teacher, a member of SLT and/or their parent/carer.
- v. Those children with challenging behaviour will be risk assessed and may need 1:1 supervision, but their entitlement to participate in Forest School remains the same.

Safeguarding Policy

The Forest School leader and all members of staff assisting a Forest School session will adhere to the 'Ashby C of E Primary School Safeguarding / Child Protection' Policy. Everyone at Ashby C of E Primary School has a responsibility in relation to child protection and we all receive induction training on this policy upon working at the school. All staff members have access to this policy on an online portal and via the school's website.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

The Forest School leader and all members of staff assisting a Forest School session will adhere to the 'Ashby C of E Primary School Equality and Diversity' Policy.

Everyone at Ashby C of E Primary School has a responsibility to ensure that we treat everyone fairly, celebrating difference and meeting different needs so that all members of our school community are free to live, learn and achieve their potential. We all receive induction training on this policy upon working at the school. All staff members have access to this policy on an online portal and via the school's website.

Provided below is a list of additional points and measures which relate directly to our Forest School sessions.

1. Forest School does mean Forest School FOR ALL.
2. To ensure access for all, we do have a stock of extra all weather clothing but ask that both parents and children think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities, and to be aware that they are likely to take home muddy and wet clothes after a Forest School session.
3. We encourage a level of risk-taking, always under close adult supervision, therefore if necessary children attend sessions with 1:1 support.
4. The Forest School ethos actively fosters a sense of collaboration and helps friendships to flourish between all children and adults.
5. Forest School activities are driven by success and enjoyment, even when this appears to be of a transitory nature. It is always about the process.
6. We strongly believe that we are all entitled to access the Forest School environment and experiences and hope that these are embedded in their memory for years to come.
7. Children with medical needs or disabilities will be helped with a high adult to child ratio (or 1:1) so that they can take part fully in each Forest School session.
8. Those children with challenging behaviour will be risk assessed and may need 1:1 supervision, but their entitlement to participate in Forest School remains the same. It will never be removed as a sanction.

Appendix 1:



Ashby C of E Primary School: Activity Risk Assessment



Description of activity: Whilst on site children, staff and parents/carers will be involved in outdoor activities which, if led incorrectly, could lead to injury. All activities are to be carried out safely and all equipment is to be physically inspected prior to use and placed to one side if damaged. Team building activities are to be risk assessed on a daily basis as the weather will impact on how these activities are carried out. Woodland assault courses which are purpose built by leaders will be physically checked prior to commencement of activity - all rope related obstacles will have knots checked and ropes conditioned if damaged. Water based activities will require closer supervision than others with respect to ages of learners and abilities. Learners with additional needs will be individually assessed either prior to arriving or on the day - the leader will have the final word in these matters should a problem arise.

<i>Hazard Or Activity</i>	<i>Harm</i>	<i>People at risk</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Severity</i>	<i>Risk Rating</i>	<i>Preventative measures in place or identified</i>	<i>Further measures to be taken</i>	<i>Action - by whom and when</i>
Ground based team building activity	Falls, blows to body from materials	All	2	4	8	All participants provided with kit list outlining minimum clothing requirements. Area used for activity to be cleared as necessary. All staff fully trained in First Aid and leader fully trained in Level 3 outdoor paediatric first aid (Nov 2022)	Leaders to assess suitability of clothing prior to start of activity. Full brief to all participants prior to starting- stop activity if likelihood of injury to self or others.	FS LEADER.
Off ground team building activity. Rope courses,	Falling from ropes, logs - impact injuries, collisions	All	2	3	6	Any equipment that is roped off ground to be checked prior to use. Any additional eqpt that is roped together by users to be checked visually during	Ensure that personnel are placed in such a position to support a fall where possible	FS Leader - all

hammock.						construction.		
People with additional needs	Physical limitations on activity	All	2	2	4	Leader to look at task and adapt where possible. i.e. make the individual the leader on the activity.	Ask individual if able to make decision – allow them to stand out if need be. Ensure adequate supervision levels for session.	FS Leader and individual if able to make informed decision.
All activities	Accident or injury during activity	All	2	4	8	All staff trained in First Aid. Leader trained in outdoor first aid (L3 - Nov 2022), risk management and hazard perception. First Aid kit is kept on-site and will be used by trained and competent staff, emergency action plan to be rehearsed during staff training sessions. Mobile phones, Red Triangle and School Radio carried and signal checked.	Leader will take control of any accident /health situation. Access to emergency contact numbers, via the office, to be available at all time. Leader to keep Red Triangle on-site. Send message through School Radio to emergency contact.	FS LEADER FS LEADER
Uneven ground /dead wood causing slips trips and falls	Potential bruising, potential broken bones, though ground relatively soft	All	3	3	9	Verbal briefing given prior to session start. Reinforce no running within the setting.	Reinforce ground rules.	
Water based activities - looking at water borne	Cold related injury due to getting wet, drowning in deeper areas of	All	2	4	8	Pond dipping is not possible yet as the pond has only just been cleared (Oct 2022) and the decking is unsafe. Care must be taken in and around the area to ensure that no children	Adult supervision required at all times. Pond briefed on safety talks and site safety walks.	All adults in attendance.

life	pond.					fall in - locked gate and fencing around pond to prevent unauthorised entry. Decking due to treated Spring/Summer 2023.		
Shelter building	Injury from lifting, moving heavy wood, cuts and bruises from swinging branches.	All	1	3	3	Briefing on lifting and safe carrying procedure. Ensure shelters are safely constructed throughout activity.	Intervene if shelter building is unsafe. All timber used for shelter building to be assessed and retired to fire wood if no longer strong enough to support weight.	FS LEADER - ensure safe lifting techniques being used. Connect collecting natural resources RA.
Collapse of shelters	Pressure related injuries.	All	2	2	4	Group to have practiced knots and lashings before use on human size constructions. If using natural shelter building techniques then timber is checked prior to session to ensure it is useable.	Leaders to ensure that everyone in the group can effectively knot and lash as instructed. Leaders to check that children have used correct lashing technique	FS LEADER at the time of construction. Connect use of natural materials RA
COVID 19	Risk of infection	All	3	4	12	COVID guidelines in place as standard operating procedures.		All parties involved (including parents / carers of children) have a duty of care to be aware of current UK guidance. Connect RA Site and collecting natural resources.

Prepared by: Jessica Murray - Qualified Teacher / Level 3 Forest School Trainee

Reviewed: October 2022

Next Review: October 2023 - unless incident occurs.

Signed: Jessica Murray

Ashby C of E Primary School: Woodland Site Check

Date/Time	Name	Area Checked	Observations	Signature

Ashby Church of England Primary School: Tool Safety Sheet

All use of tools is strictly under close 1:1 supervision.

General Rules

- Keep tools in good, clean order
- All tools will be kept in a designated tool box
- When not in use in the woodland they are kept secured away in a locked area
- Check tools are safe to use before the start of each session - they must be sharp (a blunt blade is more dangerous than a sharp one)
- Carry out tool maintenance (cleaning and oiling) after each use (or the end of each half term)
- Do not use tools with damaged blades or handles or with loose bolts or fixings
- Tools will be counted in and out during every session
- When using all tools, two arms and a tool length will be observed between participants
- Tools will be used at designated cutting stations / areas
- The session will always begin with a tool talk
- All participants will be familiar with the tool talk for their tool

Sawing Tools	Bowsaw -Used for cutting timber and hard wood with a diameter greater than a 2 pence piece -Wear a glove on the non-sawing (helper) hand, not on the tool -Use the saw to the side of you and not in front -Keep your supporting hand away from the blade when sawing -Keep a safe distance (two arms and a tool length) from other people and be aware of those around you while you work -Saw with easy relaxed strokes using the full length of the blade -Keep the blade covered when not in use and when transporting -Ensure the item to be cut is firmly held -When using with children: Leader and child to kneel on floor with Leader on one side of saw and the child on the other, both in the 'respect position'. The Leader guides the saw and the child follows. -Use cross-hand support if necessary - each child's helper hand should be placed through the center of the saw and on the wood opposite. Once the blade has bitten into the wood and formed a groove they are safe to hold the wood adjacent to the saw.	
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Fixed Blade Tools	Sheath knife	Sheath knives are kept in a separate lockable box, which is kept locked in accordance with the UK Knife Law. -Use to whittle small sticks, peel bark and firewood prep -Never wear a glove on the hand holding the tool (it makes the handle hard to grip safely) -Wear a safety glove on your other helper hand -Keep the blade covered when not in use and when transporting -Keep a safe distance (two arms and a tool length) from other people and be aware of those around you while you work -Stop if anyone comes too close -Never pass a knife to another user -Hold the knife away from your body and cut away from yourself -Never touch the blade	
	Billhook	-Used for brashing and snedding shrubs and bushes Never wear a glove on the hand holding the tool (it makes the handle hard to grip safely) -Keep a safe distance (two arms and a tool length) from other people and be aware of those around you while you work -Stop if anyone comes too close -Hold billhook away from your body and cut away from yourself	
	Axe	-Used for firewood prep and timber shaping -Only to be used at a designated cutting area / station -Keep the blade covered when not in use and when transporting -Only to be used as a splitting tool by instructor -To split wood: one person should hold the axe with two hands firmly on the handle. The blade should be placed at the top of the log to be split. The second person will use a mallet or piece of wood to strike the top of the axe and drive the blade into the wood. This is repeated until the wood splits.	
	Potato peelers	-Used to peel bark -Hold the potato peeler away from your body and peel away from yourself towards the ground -Keep the supporting hand away from sharp end of potato peeler -Keep a safe distance (two arms and a tool length) from other people and be aware of those around you while you work -Children only to use when sitting or kneeling	

Shearing Tools	Loppers	-Used for cutting wood with a diameter smaller than a 2 pence piece -Always carry with blades closed (and locked if applicable) -When not in use leave with blades closed (and locked if applicable) -Do not exceed the cutting capacity of the tool -Use away from your body and keep hands away from blades -Two children can be encouraged to use the loppers together: one holding the stick or branch to be cut and the other operating the loppers. -It is not necessary to wear gloves when using loppers.	
	Secateurs	-Used for cutting wood with a diameter smaller than a 2 pence piece -Open safety catch and use like scissors -Wear gloves on helper hand. Use gloved hand to keep wood/vine/small branch sturdy -When not in use or transporting, close and lock safety catch, hold blades in gloved hand next to leg with handles facing downwards -To pass to another uses, hold blades in gloved hand and offer handles to other person	
Drilling Tools	Hand drill	-Used for drilling through discs, drift wood and other thin pieces of wood -Secure wood -Choose appropriate sized bit -Place bit into wood, apply pressure onto top handle and rotate moving handle of drill clockwise -When not in use or transporting, hold handle next to leg with bit facing backwards	

Tool Talk – Bowsaw

- This is a **bowsaw**.
- This is the **handle**.
- This is the blade **cover**.
- I take the **cover off** like this.
- This is the **blade**.
- This is the **cutting edge**.
- When I am not using it, I put the cover **back on** like this.
- I **stand** with the bowsaw, like this.
- I **walk** with the bowsaw, like this.
- I **pass** the bowsaw, like this.
- When I use the bowsaw I use it **two arms and a tools length** away from anyone except my partner, like this.
- I use the bowsaw to cut wood **bigger than a two pence piece**.
- I wear a **glove** on my helper hand.
- When I am not using it, I put it down with the **handle facing out** and the **blade facing in**.
- When I have finished with the bowsaw, I put it in the **designated place** or in the **toolbox provided**.



Appendix 4:

Ashby Church of England Primary School: Fire Safety Sheet



All fires set by children are done so strictly under close 1:1 supervision

Mandatory Safety equipment	○ Fire Bucket ○ Fire Blanket ○ Water Container and water ○ Emergency Fire First Aid kit/burns kit e.g. burn gel, burn cream etc. ○ Fire retardant gauntlet gloves
General Rules	○ The same, previously agreed area will be used for fires (in the meadow area) ○ All fires will be set under the direct supervision of the Forest School leader ○ No accelerants are to be used ○ The fire must never be larger than necessary ○ All children and staff must wear long sleeves and trousers ○ Children are not permitted inside the fire circle (unless invited) ○ All movement must be around the outside of the fire circle
Fuel and Tinder	-A fire wood (fuel) used for the fire must be collected from approved areas or provided. -Some examples of acceptable tinder include: ○ Cotton Wool ○ Char Cloth ○ Silver birch Bark ○ Clematis - fluffy seed heads ○ Wood shavings ○ Dryer lint
Fire Lighting	-All fire lighting by students must be under strict 1:1 supervision -Jute twine or grass nests (tinder) will be used by the Leader only -Flint and steel use must be from the respect position (kneeling) -Fire retardant gauntlet gloves to be worn if practicing friction fire methods.
Adding fuel to fire	-Fuel may only be added to the fire by children only when invited to do so and under strict 1:1 supervision -Only approved fuel is to be added to the fire -Fuel must be added from the respect position (kneeling) -Fire retardant gauntlet gloves to be worn -Hands must not go over the fire
Smoke	-Children will be placed in the fire circle away from the smoke drift -Children will be briefed on the correct smoke procedure: <i>to turn their head to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes or ask permission to move</i>
Extinguishing the fire	-The fire bowl must be doused to extinguish the fire -Where possible, burn the fuel to ash -There will be no movement from the fire circle until the fire is extinguished -Only the Forest School leader will dispose of all ash -Students may be invited to douse the fire, but only under strict 1:1 supervision

Session Date & Number	
Class & Leader/s	
Overview of Session Delivery Activities undertaken by group Factors effecting delivery	
Learning & Development Outcomes for the group - observations and comments from leaders and learners	
Observations relating to learning, behaviour and development for individuals being followed	
Examples of play occurring in the group that supports holistic learning and development	
Examples of interventions where leaders provided additional support or guidance aimed at encouraging appropriate behaviour and promoting learning and development	

General feedback from group Input & ideas for next session Changes to following sessions	
Safety issues that arose during the session or near misses How were issues dealt with? Recommended changes to policy or procedure to ensure issues are mitigated	
First Aid Kit used Accident Log made What needs re-stocking?	
Date:	Signed:

Appendix 6:



Wednesday 15th February 2023

Dear Parents/ Carers,

During next half term, your child in _____ class will participate in weekly Forest School sessions. During these sessions, children are given unique opportunities to learn about themselves, the world around them and essential life skills such as confidence, self-esteem, independence, social skills (team working), resilience, positive risk management, reasoning strategies and how to risk assess. They will be supported and encouraged to work with others to carry out activities such as den/shelter building, natural crafts, role play, exploration, and other practical and creative skills and tasks.

The sessions will take place on a _____ afternoon **at school**. Session one starts: _____

Please ensure that your child brings the following outdoor clothing to school each _____ to change into:

- Outdoor shoes – walking boots or wellingtons
- Warm SPARE socks
- A warm coat – preferably waterproof
- A jumper or fleece
- A long-sleeved top
- Full-length trousers
- Waterproof over-trousers (if possible)
- Hat and gloves (weather dependent)
- An extra layer of clothing (weather-dependent)

Please write your child's name on their clothing.

Forest School is a place where everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow and develop. Here we can achieve our full potential, enjoy ourselves and develop skills we never knew we had. I am sure your child will make the most of this wonderful opportunity to learn outdoors and apply their new learning in the classroom.

Kinds Regards,

Mrs Murray

Outdoor Learning and Development Lead

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Co -Headteacher: Mrs J Trahearn & Mrs S Geeson



Challenge Award

FOR EXCELLENCE IN PROVISION FOR
ABLE, GIFTED & TALENTED PUPILS

