

Risk Assessments and Policies



Forest School Handbook

Acomb First School

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Information for Support Staff and Accompanying Adults

Aim

To inform staff and adults supporting Forest School sessions.

Content of the Day

The group leader will give you an outline of the day and ways in which you can support the children

Risk Assessments/Staff experience

All activities on the site are thoroughly risk assessed and copies of these can be found in the Forest School Handbook. The Group Leader is a Qualified Forest Schools Level 3 Practitioners with a paediatric outdoor first aid certificate.

Safety Guidelines

There are certain procedures we use at Forest School with the children, such as safe conduct around the fire area or safe use of tools. The leader will model these procedures to show best practice. All adults must follow these actions and demonstrate good practice to the children throughout the session. Children will copy what they see rather than what they hear.

First Aid and General Health

First Aid kits are carried with the group at all times. We have a large one held at the Fire Pit Area alongside the Burns First Aid Kit. Any specific children's medication will be held by the leader at all times. You must make the Group Leader aware of any medical issues you may have.

Staff Clothing

We will be out in all weathers so it is important that you are dressed appropriately. Layers of clothing and waterproof outer wear, suitable walking boots or wellies with thick socks to keep feet warm. We need to be warm and comfortable as we are there to support the children. We also need to act as role models for the children. Feeling cold and damp isn't fun and can be dangerous. Hats and gloves are needed in the winter and sunhats, sun cream and glasses for the summer. Jeans should not be worn as they become very cold and dangerous when wet.

Toilets

Children can return to school with an adult, if necessary. We have hand washing and antibacterial gel on site.

Poor Weather

Our intention is to go out in all weather. If the weather is severely windy we will cancel the session as severe wind makes the forest site very dangerous.

Forest School Information for Parents

What is Forest School?

Forest School is a form of education that takes place in the outdoor environment where children are encouraged to work individually and as a team, to solve problems, assess risks, communicate with others and respect and appreciate the countryside. It enhances learning by giving them memorable and real life experiences. There is much evidence to show that, when working and playing outside, children grow in confidence, self-esteem, resilience, independence, self-belief, knowledge of the natural environment, trust, strength and creativity. In taking part in these activities they learn about nature, themselves, taking risks, how to solve problems, practical skills, working with others and many areas of the National Curriculum, including English, maths, science, technology, music and art.

Risk Assessments/Staff experience

All activities on site are thoroughly risk assessed and copies of these can be found in the Forest School Handbook. If you wish to see these please speak to the group leader.

Safety Guidelines

Children develop a strong understanding of the Forest School rules and a great respect for the environment we work in. Leaders lead by example from the clothes they wear to how they behave round the fire and with tools. Generally children will copy what they see rather than what they hear.

First Aid and General Health

First Aid kits are carried with the group at all times. Staff must be notified of any individual medication and responsibility for this will be with the group leader.

Clothing

We will be out in all weathers, so it is important that children are dressed appropriately. Layers of clothing and waterproof outer wear and suitable walking boots or wellies with warm socks are essential. They must be warm and comfortable as feeling cold and damp isn't fun and can be dangerous. Hats and gloves for winter and sunhats and sun cream for the summer are also required.

Toilets

Children can return to school with an adult, if necessary. We have hand washing and antibacterial gel on site.

Poor Weather

Our intention is to go out in all weather. However, if the weather is severe then we will cancel the session on safety grounds.

Our Forest School Rules

- We use our eyes and ears
- We only enter camp when we are invited
- We leave sticks etc. out of the camp area
- We walk in a woodland environment
- We always think about the risks before choosing whether to do something
- We keep our hands away from our mouths
- We can always see camp unless we're with an adult.
- We treat others and what they have made with respect
- We are kind to all - our friends, adults, animals and plants
- We have fun!

Policy Statement

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment is an essential part of the Health and Safety management for Forest School. The Forest School Leader is responsible for ensuring that all policies and procedures follow best practice and are current with any legal changes and requirements. Before every visit risk assessments will be checked and amended if and where necessary.

All adults who support Forest School are required to have a full understanding of the Risk Assessment Process.

The Risk Assessment Process

The Forest School Leader will consider all activities, sites and influencing factors that need to be covered to produce comprehensive Risk Assessments.

We will follow the five steps to risk assessment to ensure all risks are minimized.

1. Look for the hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done.
4. Record our findings
5. Review our assessment and revise it if necessary.

The assessments are written for general welfare, weather, activities, sites or tools and are acted upon in conjunction with one another e.g. the site assessment will constantly be affected by the weather conditions.

All Risk Assessments are reviewed and updated every 6 months or earlier if deemed necessary. Responsibility for this lies with the Forest School Leader. All staff involved will be made aware of any amendments to Risk assessments.

Specific Site Risk Assessments

The Commonn

Site: Acomb School Common	Owner: Common Land no specific owner.
Contacts: Acomb First School	Grid ref: 393600, 566700
Assessor: Anna Gray	Review Due: January 2021
Description: Common land	

	<u>Hazard</u>	<u>Harm</u>	<u>Measures required to reduce the risk</u>
1	Autumn/winter perimeter's All year round	Missing child/road traffic accident	<p>The side to the west of the top camp is made up of trees and shrubs which separate the woods from a road. This road is a quiet B-road. A fence has been made for the western border of the middle camp to mark the boundary and protect the children from the road.</p> <p>Shrubs and brambles line the boundary of the top camp, making it difficult to access or get through. Children are shown and reminded each session the boundary and told not to cross it. We have at least 1 adult to every 8 children ratio.</p> <p>It is important that, during Forest School sessions, children are given the freedom to move around and develop the responsibility of ensuring that they are safe. It is made clear to the children that they can move freely in the woods so long as they can see the fire and that they are within the boundaries.</p>
2	Log benches	Splinters/falls/ grazes	<p>Log benches have been constructed by staff and children.</p> <p>The bindings will be checked regularly to ensure they are in place and not rotting.</p>
3	Den building	Splinters/ protruding branches/eye and facial injuries	<p>Children and adults The children regularly build dens for themselves and their friends. They carry sticks around the site before placing them where they want them.</p> <p>Children are shown how to move, carry and position sticks safely each session.</p>

4	Toilet area	<p>Infection Children and adults</p>	<p>The toilet area is not used every session. On most occasions the children will use the toilet before visiting the woods and will be brought back to school by an adult if necessary.</p> <p>The toilet area is set up at the north eastern edge of the common. We have created a barrier behind the fence from old branches and twigs at the top side and have hung a camouflage sheet at the other side. There is a porta loo inside. Children are shown where the toilet is and they use it independently.</p> <p>The porta loo is brought back to the setting and emptied and cleaned correctly and stored until the next visit.</p>
5	Tree climbing	<p>Falls/bumps/ bruises/cuts/ grazes/splinters Children and adults</p>	<p>There are a few trees which the children can climb to a low level. The ground below is woodland so soft and lumpy.</p> <p>The children are shown how to use the trees safely. They are reminded to take manageable risks, to go as high as they feel safe and they are reminded that they have to be able to climb down what they have climbed up. They are advised to climb no higher than their head height and to ensure that they have 3 body parts touching the tree at all times. The children are spoken to about the safety of climbing with other children around and are advised that usually one, sometimes two (depending on the size of the tree) at a time is safe. A member of staff is always stationed in this area to monitor and offer support.</p>
6	Fire circle	<p>Tripping/ stumbling/Cut/ Grazes/ Bruises/Burns/ Scalds Children and adults</p>	<p>A fire circle in the top camp has been constructed using a willow fence in a circle shape surrounding log benches and a fire pit. There is a small gradual slope at the northern edge of the site. There are overhanging branches above the circle.</p> <p>Children are not allowed entry to the northern edge of the site, this is where the tools and fire equipment are stored. The leader will check for safe entry to the circle, tripping hazards, debris removed, loose weaving and leaves cleared from fire pit (see fire policy and procedures).</p> <p>Overhanging branches are lopped and cleared. A fire blanket, burns first aid kit, cling film and water are readily available. Gloves are used when handling hot items. Children are not allowed near the fire or the Kelly Kettle unless invited to cook by an adult according to the fire safety policy.</p> <p>An adult is in the fire circle at all times when a fire is lit.</p>

7	General rubbish and litter	Cuts from glass, metal etc Infection	As the common area is used by local people there is some litter left on site occasionally. The leader will check the site before and after each session for litter and remove it safely. During each session staff will clear away litter as they find it.
8	Dog dirt and animal droppings	Infection	This land has public access and dogs are permitted. Some dog faeces has been found on site. Other animal droppings include the hens, rabbit and fox. The leader will check before and after each session for dog faeces. This will be removed safely. Children and adults will be reminded to keep an eye out and asked to advise the group leader if any is found. Other animal droppings will be pointed out to children and avoided wherever possible.
9	Plants/Hawthorn/Blackthorn/Rosehip/Wild Roses	Poisoning/ infection Children and adults Cross-contamination Plants and trees	There are various shrubs and trees which have thorns and berries all over the site. Children will be shown and reminded of the dangers of touching these plants and reminded not to pick or touch the berries and thorns. They are reminded that if they eat the berries they could get ill.
10	Small steep slopes	Tripping/stumbling/slipping/Cut/Grazes/ Bruises Children and adults	At the north western part of the site there are small steep slopes. The children will be reminded how to negotiate them safely with care.
11	Side fences and barbed wire	Cuts/puncture wound Children and adults	Along the eastern side of the site there is a fence between the common land and farm land. At the north eastern side there is a small amount of barbed wire about 4.5 feet above the ground, this is behind a tree which the children are unable to access. Children will be shown and reminded to avoid this area.
12	Ground ivy/brambles and ground creepers	Tripping/stumbling/Cut/Grazes/ Bruises Children and adults	Throughout the site there are thick ground covering plants which spill over onto pathways. Children will be shown and reminded how to negotiate difficult terrain.

13	Uneven ground, animal burrows and holes	Tripping/stumbling/Cut/Grazes/ Bruises Children and adults	<p>The ground is uneven and there is some foliage such as ground ivy and brambles that can trip or camouflage holes or burrows.</p> <p>When holes are found they are pointed out to children and adults and avoided where possible.</p>
14	Dead trees, loose branches and low branches	Bumps/cuts/grazes/facial or eye injuries from protruding branches Children and adults	<p>There are some dead trees on site. This area is inaccessible to the children. The site will be checked daily for loose branches. There is some standing dead wood and children will be reminded of how to move around, pick up and carry wood on each visit. There are some low branches.</p> <p>Children will be reminded how to negotiate the area safely (Look up, look down, look all around for dangers). Protruding branches are lopped and removed.</p>
15	Exposed roots, dead wood debris	Tripping/stumbling/Cut/Grazes/ Bruises Children and adults.	<p>These features are found extensively all over the site.</p> <p>The children will be reminded each visit of how to negotiate the hazards and how to move around the site safely (Look up, look down, look all around for dangers).</p>
16	Paths and tracks	Tripping/stumbling/Cuts/Grazes/ Bruises Children and adults. Erosion to Pathways	<p>There are natural paths on the site, either formed by human or animal use. Some of the paths are uneven and covered with ground ivy and brambles.</p> <p>The children will be shown how to move along the paths safely.</p> <p>To avoid erosion different pathways are used.</p>
17	Path to the common	Tripping/stumbling/road traffic accident/Cuts/Grazes/ Bruises Children and adults	<p>The path to the common is beside the main road for 8 metres. This road is a quiet B- road. The path then turns into an access road which has parked cars belonging to staff. The children have to walk along the path and past the parked cars onto the common site. The entire journey is no more than 40 metres.</p> <p>The children will walk in a line with an adult at the front and back. They will be reminded of the dangers of parked and moving cars.</p>

18	Weather.	Wind – falling debris from the trees Rain – children getting cold from being wet and becoming hypothermic Sun – sunburn and sunstroke Cold – children getting too cold and becoming hypothermic	Weather can change quickly therefore dynamic risk assessments will be carried out before and during the session. The weather forecast is checked before setting out. Wind – Closely monitored to make sure the children are safe. Sessions will be cancelled if wind is severe. Rain – Appropriate clothing worn at all times – waterproofs provided by the setting, gloves, wellies and hats. Sun – Appropriate clothing worn at all times – long sleeved tops, hats and sun cream applied. Cold – Appropriate clothing worn at all times – layers of clothing, hats, gloves, extra socks. Parents leave a bag with “common clothes” so children have extra clothing available and the setting provides waterproofs and wellies for each child.
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Emergency Arrangements

Serious Incident: We will follow the serious incident procedure in accordance with Evolve. A copy will be printed and kept with the leader in the event that it is needed. In the event of a serious incident the following procedures will be followed: 1. Assess the situation. 2. Protect the group from further injury or danger. 3. Render First Aid as appropriate. 4. Call the rescue services and/or police on 999, as appropriate. State the nature of the emergency and provide the following information: • your name • the address/location of the incident and telephone number if possible, followed by: • the nature of the incident • the names of the individuals involved • the actions taken so far • the conditions of those involved and where they are located 5. Make sure the remainder of your group: • Are safe and accounted for • Are adequately supervised and have been briefed to ensure that they understand how to remain safe 6. Phone your Home-based Emergency Contact (as soon as possible). Before making contact, it is advisable that a copy of the ‘Emergency Incident Report Form’ is completed, to ensure all relevant information is reported. Please note that it is vital to keep an accurate, real-time record of all actions taken. 7. Prevent the indiscriminate use of mobile phones by the rest of the group. (Students should only phone home when they are authorised to do so. This measure will ensure that relatives are contacted formally either by representatives of the County Council or the appropriate authorities). 8. As it is foreseeable that the young people will be in state of shock the Visit Leader should make every effort to offer support and comfort and where necessary arrange for them to be evacuated. 9. Retain all equipment involved in its original condition. 10. Ensure that the press/media do not have access to any individuals or take statements from anyone. If necessary, ask the police to assist in this matter.

Minor Accident: Provide first aid, complete accident report form, inform parents (carer), assess risk assessment and make adjustments for future.

Weather change: Make dynamic risk assessment, seek shelter or return to classroom.

Safety Advice

Clothing: long trousers and long sleeves, warm clothing in cold weather, waterproof clothing in wet weather. Safety gauntlets at fire, work wear gloves for using tools and collecting rubbish. Spare clothing available in the classroom for emergencies.

Communications: Mobile phone

First Aid: woodland first aid kit and burns kit to be taken for each visit.

Food and Drink: wash hands before eating, sit for eating and drinking, take snack and drink for full sessions, take cups, wet wipes and kitchen roll.

Children's safety advice: remind children of the Forest School rules.

Staff safety advice: Staff to discuss any worries before entering the site before each session and decide if it is safe to enter as a team. Consider weather, environment, state of site etc.

Further Comments

The overall hazard rating for the site is low as long as health and safety guidelines are followed.

*Forest School Handbook contains the operational plan for Forest School sessions.

*Review site assessment form and update annually or before should incidents or changes occur.

Signature	<u>Role</u>	<u>Date</u>
	Forest School Leader	

Additional Information

Fire pit area: The fire pits are in place within the fire circles. The fire will be set up after the children arrive on site.

Fauna: Foxes and badgers pass through the site regularly but are not living on the site. Rabbits, voles, mice and grey squirrels have been seen on site.

Flora: Oak, ash, sycamore, hawthorn, willow, elder, rose and beech are on site. Wood sorrel, bracken, nettles, thistles, brambles, ground ivy, fox-gloves, buttercups and grasses are most common plants on site. There are some other small flowers in the foliage.

Dogs: This land has public access and dogs are permitted. Children and adults will be reminded to keep an eye out and asked to advise the group leader if any is found. The site will be checked before the session.

Emergency Access: Access is clear and fairly easy throughout the whole site. Access for a vehicle to within 20m of the whole site.

Water: Only one boggy area in the middle of the site where there can be very shallow standing water only after extreme wet weather.

Toilet: A port-a-loo may be set up in the designated area at the common. For the majority of sessions the children will go to the toilet before and after Forest school and can ask to return to school with an adult, if necessary. We have hand washing and antibacterial gel on site.

Emergency Contact information:

Mrs Beth Clarke,

Acomb County First School,

Main Street,

Acomb, Hexham, NE46 4PL.

Tel: 01434 608730

Mobile Signal: Good on Orange/EE, Vodafone, O2.

Nearest Hospitals:

Hexham General Hospital 4 miles

Newcastle General 22 miles

Cramlington Hospital 29 miles

Signed:

Date:

Coronavirus Risk Assessment - September 2020

	Hazard	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Maintaining Social distancing	Spread of virus during the session and into the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions will only take place in class bubbles with their staff. • Where volunteer helpers are needed they will be parents from the class bubble. They will be reminded of the need to socially distance from the children. They will meet us at the woods & not enter school. Face coverings should not be required as we are in an outside space. • The importance and reason for social distancing, where possible, will be reiterated to the children each session. • Children will be given a position where they sit on the logs. Where possible they will be asked to keep the same place every time they come back to the log circle. • Games and activities will be limited/amended so that social distancing is possible. I.E. for 1,2,3 where are you the children will be required to hide on their own, not with a friend.
2	Cross-contamination	Spread of virus during the session and into the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will be given their own positions to sit on in the log circle. • If using tools, children will be given their own numbered tool which will be washed/sprayed before and after the session. • Children will wear their own outdoor clothing and wellies. If they don't have waterproofs or wellies, these will be provided by school and labelled so that only they will use them • Children will be required to wash their hands before and after attending the session. • Children understand our Forest school rule 'We keep our hands away from our mouths' • If we cook food on the fire, we will only cook food that can be done independently by each child to avoid cross contamination. E.g. marshmallows, bananas,
	Ability to maintain suitable hand and respiratory hygiene		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and young people have been briefed as a part of usual practice/procedures regarding good hand and respiratory hygiene. Staff continue to encourage good practice. • A tippy tap (hand free washing facility) will be constructed near the fire circle to ensure that children can wash their hands with running water. • Hand gel will be made available • Attention is given to washing/sanitising hands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ when going outside. ■ before and after touching shared objects such as activity equipment, gates. ■ before eating and drinking. ■ after using the toilet. ■ when returning inside. • Avoiding touching objects shared by the public - for example, a member of staff could hold gate open to avoid everyone touching it. • Avoiding activities which involve touching each other (e.g. holding hands).

3	Medical/emergency care	Cross contamination Spread of virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In cases of minor injuries (e.g. small scratch, graze), children will be encouraged to deliver their own first aid. e.g. provided sterile wipes to clean their own scratches etc. • If children are unable to deliver their own first aid then it will be administered by the named First Aider. PPE will be required; a fluid resistant face mask, gloves and if appropriate a disposable plastic apron. • Where possible waste items are bagged and where contamination is suspected held outside in a secure location for 72 hours before disposal.
4	Staff and student illness	Spread of virus during the session and into the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone displaying symptoms of Covid-19 will be asked not to attend the sessions and to self-isolate, according to government guidelines. • If anyone starts to display symptoms of Covid-19 during a sessions, we will return to school and the child will be isolated according to the school 'Coronavirus procedures'.

Using and storing tools

All tools are counted out and back in at the beginning and end of each session in which they are used. When not in use they are kept secured away in a locked shed. Before each tool is used it will be checked for damage and that it is in working order.

Each set of tools are kept in their own tool bag/box. Children are never allowed to help themselves and will always have adult supervision when collecting, transporting and using tools.

Tools are only used for a specific purpose. Only Forest School leaders will work with children and tools. All leaders will model correct and safe tool use, storage and transportation.

Tools will be checked and cleaned before they are put away.

Fire Policy

Aim

Using fire is an integral part of the Forest School experience and ethos. Children need to experience safe fire to reduce the risk of putting themselves in danger in the future. Lighting fires under strict guidelines and safety instructions helps children to understand at first hand the risks and how they can be safely controlled and managed.

Showing and explaining how fire works will enable children to gain a better understanding of fire and increase their safe behaviour around fire. Our aim is for children to learn how and when to use fire appropriately. This will make it less likely for children to experiment with fire in an uncontrolled and potentially dangerous situation.

Safe Fire Procedures

- Always have a water container, burns first aid kit and fire proof gloves close by
- The group always stay on the outside of the log circle or sitting on the logs, unless invited into the fire circle to cook.
- The fire will be lit by a Qualified forest Leader
- If approaching the fire there will be a maximum of 4 at any one time.
- Kneel on one knee to ensure stability and for ease of moving backwards.
- Bags, sticks etc. are to be kept outside of the log circle area.
- For cooking purposes the fire will be allowed to die down to a suitable size.
- A metal grill will be used for pots to stand on.
- When moving pots or serving, the supervising adult will maintain a clear area, inside which no-one else is allowed.
- Specific fire gloves will be used when adults handle the fire and equipment around the fire area e.g. pots.
- Green sticks will be used as a cooking tool (e.g. for marshmallows) as they do not ignite.

At the end of each session the fire will be extinguished using water whilst the children sit around the camp. This will form part of the routine of the day to highlight the importance of ensuring that a fire is fully extinguished.

Use of a Kelly or Storm Kettle

A Kelly kettle is used to boil water. A small fire is built in the pan at the base of the kettle, the water filled chimney is placed on top and the fire heats the jacketed water. This is not an open fire.

If used, the Kelly kettle will be placed within the fire circle and treated in the same manner as the camp fire. The biggest potential hazard from it is a burn from touching the outside or the steam coming from the spout. It could also be knocked over. These risks are minimized by adopting the same procedures around it as a fire.

- Place kettle on a firm, flat surface - it has a high centre of gravity
- Have air hole on opposite side to spout
- Remove cork when putting on fire
- Keep spout on opposite side to you
- Have fire gloves available
- When boiling remove from base with gloves
- Allow fire to go out naturally

Forest School Waste Policy

Aim

The ethos of Forest School is very much related to taking care of the environment. Children need to make the links between what they see and do and the impact this can have. Ensuring there is no waste left when we leave the woods or site is essential.

'Take nothing but memories. Leave nothing but footprints' *NOTHING*

Explaining why we need to leave no waste is an essential element of caring for ourselves and the environment we live in. We aim to support The Countryside Code.

The main type of waste on a Forest School day relate to food, litter, water and the fire pit.

Food - All members of the group will be informed that any food that is not eaten must be taken back with the individuals. Food left in the woods can cause harm to the fauna in the wood. Waste food will not be burned in the fire. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure all their rubbish and waste food is removed with them. The group leader will always check the site before leaving.

Litter - All members of the group will be made aware of issues surrounding left litter such as spoiling the landscape, endangering wildlife, polluting soil and water. Again, all members of the group will be informed that any wrappers etc must be taken back with the individual.

Water - Water is a very valuable resource and needs to be seen as such. Water is needed for drinking (this will be held in a specified water container), hand washing and the fire pit. Water used for hand washing will be recycled by being used to put out the fire.

Fire Pit - At the end of each session the fire will be allowed to die down and then will be extinguished using the water from hand washing as well as the water container. The cold Ash and burned wood will be scattered or buried to ensure that the look of the site isn't affected.

Forest School Risk Assessments

Fire

	Hazards	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Igniting the fire	Burns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The group will be briefed on Forest Schools Fire Safety Policy. * Any group lighting fire will do so at arm's length using fire strikers/steels. * Matches and firelighters only to be used by the Forest Leader when required.
2	Cooking, kettles, pans, burning wood, hot water or fire pit rocks.	Burns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Group will be briefed on the Forest Schools fire safety policy and procedures in the fire area * The leader will remove all items from the fire area. * All children will be seated when passed any hot item. * All group to move round in the fire zone in a safe and controlled manner. * Fire First Aid kit to be readily available and water bucket * When cooking, it is ensured that children kneel on one knee in accordance to the Fire Safety Policy.
3	Eating food cooked on the fire	Burned mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All participants will be told about the dangers of eating food directly from the fire. * Children will be shown suitable time scales for eating food once removed from the fire (we generally count to 10 e.g. 1 fire, 2 fire, 3 fire etc.)
4	Setting surrounding ground and vegetation areas alight.	Damage to site and burns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Fire pit will be strategically placed with minimum risk of setting surrounding foliage alight. It will be cleared, dug out and surrounded by stones/rocks. * When a portable fire pit is used the area will be cleared of dry material that will burn. * Burning sticks not to be removed from the fire. * Ensure that all feeding of the fire is carried out using suitable sized sticks that do not cross the barrier. * Suitable amounts of water are available to extinguish prior to leaving the site
5	Slipping, tripping, and falling on to the fire once alight.	Burns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ensure there is a safe working distance from fire to prevent slipping. Seating around the fire will be at a distance of min. 2 meters and will be raised off the ground to aid easy exit and reduce risk of falling. * Group needs to understand safety zone procedure. * All shown route into area around fire and the way to approach the fire. * Children to kneel with 1 knee up, 1 down to maintain balance position and ease of movement when necessary. * Children shown how to push off backwards from that position, to stand before they leave the fire area.

General Welfare and Weather

	Hazard	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Weather	Falling trees and branches Children becoming too cold/hot and ill	* Leaders aware of daily weather report before beginning activities and will choose to curtail the visit if deemed unsafe. * Explain to the group the impact bad weather may have. * Leaders to monitor the group closely to identify any discomfort at an early stage and take appropriate action (particularly in cold and wet weather and extreme heat)
2	High winds	Falling trees and branches	* Groups will not enter the woodlands when the wind is high. * Leader will make decisions on the weather before the group enters the woods.
3	Inappropriate foot wear and / or clothing	Becoming cold and wet Burns from sun Scratches and insect bites	* A list of appropriate clothing is given to parents in advance of the sessions. * Leaders to arrange loan of extra clothing if appropriate. * Curtail the visit if a group is inadequately equipped.
4	General health and Welfare	General comfort & wellbeing	* Leaders to provide appropriate advice and monitor individuals throughout activities. * Ensure regular food and drink breaks. * Ensure medical info regarding food and or drink allergies is correctly identified.
5	Hot sun	Sunburn and heatstroke	* Parents and Guardians will be advised to send sun cream, hats and glasses with their children. Leaders to carry sun cream. Permission for children to use named sun cream in exceptional circumstances is held on the permission slip. * Group are advised to wear appropriate clothing, hats and sun protection. (see parents info)
6	Medical problem	Illness/allergies	* Leader will have an up to date medical info sheet which will ensure they are aware of any medical considerations. * Leader to ensure all consent forms are completed prior to any session and that they are aware of any allergies, medical considerations.
7	Accident or health problem occurring	Quick deterioration	* Leader is first aid trained in group leadership, hazard perception and has First Aid Kits and emergency shelter. * Leaders to carry mobile phones. * Leaders to note any medical information on children and support staff and helpers. * Leader will take control of any accident or health situations assisted by other adults present.

Bill Hook

A bill hook is used to split wood. A tool talk is given each time the tool is used and close adult supervision at all times.

	Hazard	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Transportation	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Bill Hooks are kept in sheaths when not being used.• Leader to ensure group have a full understanding on how to carry the tool correctly.
2	Slipping when being used	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tool maintenance kept sharp and useable.• No gloves worn.• Leader to ensure the group have a full understanding on how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with them or any member of the group.
3	Bouncing off	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular and effective maintenance of tools. Kept sharp and useable.• Group to be informed on how to position the tool correctly when using to reduce the likely hood of a slip occurring and ensuring no contact with any member of the group.• No glove tool.
4	Blade snapping	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular and effective maintenance of tools.• The group should know that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported to the leader.• The leader will decommission the tool.

Bow Saw

The bow saws are used to cut wood anything bigger than a two pence piece. A tool talk is given each time the tool is used and close adult supervision at all times.

	Hazard	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Injury during Bow Saw Transportation	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All bow saws kept in sheaths when not being used.• Leader to ensure group have a full understanding on how to carry the tool correctly in its designated holder.
2	Tool slipping when being used	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tool maintenance keeps bow saw sharp and useable.• Glove worn on the non-sawing hand.• Leader to ensure the group have a full understanding on how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with them or any member of the group.
3	Bow Saw blade snapping	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular and effective maintenance of tools.• Glove worn on non-sawing hand.• Group to be informed of how a blade should look and that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported immediately to the leader.• The leader will decommission the tool.
4	Trapping Hand	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hand guards on tools.• Glove worn on non sawing hand.• Leader to ensure group are aware of correct positioning of saw when in use.

Loppers

The loppers are used to prune trees and shrubs. It is used on branches etc. no bigger than a two pence piece. A tool talk is given each time the tool is used and close adult supervision at all times.

	Hazard	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Transportation	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All loppers are kept in tool bag when not being used.• Leader to ensure group have a full understanding on how to carry the tool correctly.
2	Slipping when being used	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tool maintenance kept sharp and useable.• Gloves worn to prevent slipping.• Leader to ensure the group have a full understanding on how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with them or any member of the group.• Group needs to know the tools capacity to prevent the tool failing to cut and bouncing off.
3	Bouncing off	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular and effective maintenance of tools. Kept sharp and useable.• Group to be informed on how to position the tool correctly when using to reduce the likely hood of a slip occurring and ensuring no contact with any member of the group.• Gloved tool.
4	Snapping		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular and effective maintenance of tools.• The group should know that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported to the leader.• The leader will decommission the tool.

Pruning Saw

A pruning saw is used to cut small living branches. A tool talk is given each time the tool is used and close adult supervision at all times.

	Hazard	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Transportation	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Pruning saws are kept in sheaths when not being used.• Leader to ensure group have a full understanding on how to carry the tool correctly.
2	Slipping when being used	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tool maintenance kept sharp and useable.• Gloves worn on non sawing hand.• Leader to ensure the group have a full understanding on how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with them or any member of the group.
3	Blade Snapping		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular and effective maintenance of tools. Kept sharp and useable.• Group to be informed on how to position the tool correctly when using to reduce the likely hood of a slip occurring and ensuring no contact with any member of the group.• Glove worn on non tool hand.• The group should know that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported to the leader.• The leader will decommission the tool.
4	Trapping Hand		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leader to ensure group knows the correct positioning of saw when in use.

Secateurs

Secateurs are used to cut twigs and thin branches. A tool talk is given each time the tool is used and close adult supervision at all times.

	Hazard	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Transportation	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Secateurs are kept in protective carriers when not being used.• Leader to ensure group have a full understanding on how to carry the tool correctly.
2	Slipping when being used	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tool maintenance kept sharp and useable.• No gloves worn to prevent slipping.• Leader to ensure the group have a full understanding on how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with them or any member of the group.
3	Bouncing off	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular and effective maintenance of tools. Kept sharp and useable.• Group to be informed on how to position the tool correctly when using to reduce the likely hood of a slip occurring and ensuring no contact with any member of the group.• No glove tool.• Group needs to know the tools capacity to prevent the tool failing to cut and bouncing off.
4	Breaking	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular and effective maintenance of tools.• The group should know that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported immediately to the leader.• The leader will decommission the tool.

Sheath Knife

The sheath knife is used to cut string or whittle. A tool talk is given each time the tool is used.

	Hazard	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Transportation	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Sheath knives kept in sheaths when not being used. • Leader to ensure group have a full understanding on how to carry the tool correctly in its designated holder.
2	Tool slipping when being used	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool maintenance keeps bow saw sharp and useable. • No gloves worn to prevent slipping. • Leader to ensure the group have a full understanding on how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with them or any member of the group.
3	Blade snapping	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular and effective maintenance of tools. • Group to be informed of how a blade should look and that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported immediately to the leader. • The leader will decommission the tool.
4	Storage during a session	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knives need to be in their sheath hanging from their tether. • When not in use they should be returned to the correct storage box.

Vegetable Peeler

The potato peelers are used to whittle wood. A tool talk is given each time the tool is used and close adult supervision at all times.

	Hazard	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Transportation	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All vegetable peelers are kept in their designated tool bag when not being used.• Leader to ensure group have a full understanding on how to carry the tool correctly in its designated holder.
2	Tool slipping when being used	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tool maintenance ensures safe use of the tool.• No gloves worn to prevent slipping.• Leader to ensure the group have a full understanding on how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with them or any member of the group. Vegetable peelers are always used by cutting away from the body.
3	Blade snapping	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular and effective maintenance of tools.• Group to be informed of how a blade should look and that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported immediately to the leader.• The leader will decommission the tool.
4	Storage during a session	Cuts and damage to people and tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When not in use they should be returned to the correct storage box.

Collecting Natural Materials

This activity risk assessment must be used in conjunction with:

Risk Assessments: General Welfare & Weather Procedures: Lifting

	Hazard	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	lifting materials	Injury to back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders to ensure a group understands and practices correct lifting procedures. Lifting Procedures implemented. Lifting larger logs/sticks between 2 or more people.
2	Insects & stinging plants	Stings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider avoiding areas that contain stinging plants and insects. Demonstrate and explain which plants may sting. Ensure that children wear long sleeves and trousers to keep arms and legs protected.
3	Litter and Debris	Cuts contamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area to be risk assessed regarding the occurrence of litter. Ensure the group is aware of potential hazards and investigate areas carefully. If litter is observed leader to be informed and the group told not to touch it.
4	Roots , plants, sticks, guys etc	Trip/slip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the group is told to watch out for trip/slip hazards before activity commences. Explain to the group how to move around safely not running or pushing. Activity area has its own risk assessment which considers trip and slip hazards.
5	Low Branches	Damage to eyes & scratches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure groups are aware of any dangers these hazards may pose. Make sure the group move carefully around the wood without moving too quickly.
6	Dog faeces	Related illnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas with a high number of dog walkers are avoided. Ensure groups are aware of this potential problem. Leaders to carry antibacterial wipes in case of contact with animal faeces.
7	Lifting and swinging sticks	Damage to eyes & scratches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group are shown how to lift and carry sticks carefully. The leader will step in to control a situation where branches are not being carried correctly.
8	Fungus	Related illnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas with high numbers of fungi will not be used. The group are shown a fungus or pictures of them so that they can avoid touching them. The group are made aware of the rule of not touching fungus and keeping their hands out of their mouths.
9	Toxic	Related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to areas containing toxic plants will be restricted. The group will be told not to eat anything that they find and

	Plants	illnesses	will clean their hands before eating food.
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Building shelters

This activity risk assessment must be used in conjunction with:

Risk Assessments: General Welfare & Weather

Procedures: Lifting

	Hazard	Harm	Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely
1	Knots slipping	Structures falling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific knots and lashing systems are used for larger shelter construction. The group need to have practiced and understand lashing before being involved in more major construction.
2	Shelter collapsing	Scratches and poking eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group are advised on how and where to construct their shelters. The sites chosen and materials being used must be appropriate to avoid sharp points.
3	Using sticks to make shelters	Poking eye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group are advised to avoid using materials with potential dangerous spikes on them. The materials used should be monitored to avoid sharp points.
4	Moving round shelters.	Hurting themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group are advised not to run or move quickly inside or in and out of shelters. Group to move sensibly around the shelter making area.
5	Trip Hazards	Hurting themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures are followed for to ensure equipment being used for shelter making is stored appropriately. The group are to be made aware of procedures for equipment and building materials to avoid trip hazards
6	Use of tools	Related Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures are followed for tool use before activity commences. The group need to follow Safe Tool use procedures to ensure the area is kept safe and ensure proper tool handling occurs.
7	Lifting Heavy Items	Back & knee injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lifting procedures are to be followed Medical forms highlighted that identify potential problems such as back/knee injuries. Group needs to practice lifting techniques and to be encouraged to work a team to carry heavier items.

Using Rope or string

	Hazard	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Poor visibility of potential obstruction	Trip, choke, rope burn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High visibility rope used to span areas for trails in areas which may be considered hazardous to others. • Alternative other markers used to increase visual impact such as hanging bags or objects off the rope or string.
2	Rope Burn	Burn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloves will be worn if an activity involves pulling a heavy rope. • Activities involving rope pulling will be controlled tightly by qualified staff.
3	Trip	Trip, graze,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ropes will be made out of brightly coloured material. • Groups will be practiced at using ropes to avoid putting them where people can trip over them.
4	Entanglement	Choking, rope burn, eye/face injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups briefed to leave rope /string at central point and cut required lengths. • Groups not left unsupervised with ropes, string or straps.
5	Catching neck	Choking, rope burn, eye/face injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ropes left in place to be made out of bright materials or marked accordingly. • Groups using rope will avoid putting them at a height where people could walk into them.
6	Pulleys failing	Ropes flicking back, face/eye injury, equipment on pulley dropping and causing injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All equipment is checked regularly, prior to and post activity. • Leaders will check any pulleys being used and will decommission if a defect is detected.

Blindfold Activities

	Hazards	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Tying the blind fold too tight	Cause pain, uncomfortable, Cut skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible airline style blindfolds to be used • Blindfolds made from soft materials • The leader will explain how to put the blind folds on carefully
2	Walking into a branch or tree	Cut, graze, poke eye/face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity area risk assessed by leader prior to commencing and hazards noted or removed. • Group must be made aware of the dangers and considerations of leading someone who is blind folded.
3	Trip/ slip	Graze, bang head, eye/face injuru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity area risk assessed by leader prior to commencing and hazards noted or removed. • Ensure the group is told to watch out for trip/slip hazards before activity commences. Explain to the group how to communicate effectively, move around safely.
4	Cutting hand on a sharp item	Cut/Bleeding wound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to group to investigate items gently. Tell them there may be rough or sharp parts so to move slowly.
5	Bending over and banging head	Graze, damage to head, cut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity area risk assessed by leader prior to commencing and hazards noted or removed. • Group must be made aware of dangers of leading someone who is blind folded and need for support and to work together

Water

	Hazards	Harm	Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely
1	Stream (Water courses less than 4 meters wide) or shallow ponds.	Drowning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where water is present on a site the group are to be given safety brief. At the common this will only happen if there has been excessive rain and a large puddle has formed. If planning to enter the water, children will clearly be told the depth to which they can go. This will normally be no more than wellie level. The access point will be clearly marked and will be a shallow sloping piece of ground where the bank is not slippery, and there is no deep mud or vegetation. Briefing the group that pushing or dragging others is unsafe and unacceptable Allow children into the water in supervised small groups, 1 group at a time.
2	Getting wet	Hypothermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader to check weather and take appropriate clothing and equipment (see General Weather risk Assessment) Spare clothing to be available if appropriate to weather conditions and/or group Ensure all activities that involve water consider the weather conditions.
3	Standing water	Related illness & disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standing water on a site will be assessed by a competent person and advice taken accordingly. Groups informed of the dangers of Disease from stagnant and standing water. Hands to be washed before eating or drinking Encourage parents/guardians to protect open wounds with waterproof plasters prior to visit.

We use the Group Safety at Water Margins produced by the DfES

Clothing For Forest School Days

Winter

Vest or T-shirt

Long sleeved top

Hooded top / fleece or thick jumper

Waterproof jacket

Thick socks (thermal or two pairs of thin ones)

Warm trousers (NOT JEANS)

Waterproof trousers

Boots (walking or snow boots are better for warmth than wellies)

Summer

Long sleeved top

Hooded top / fleece

Waterproof jacket

Thick socks (thermal or two pairs of thin ones)

Light trousers (NOT JEANS)

Waterproof trousers

Wellington Boots or walking boots

Layers are more effective as some can be removed or added as the body

warms and cools during different activities.

Safeguarding and Confidentiality

We regard our duty of care when working with young people as extremely important. To make sure that all individuals (children, workers, volunteers) are safe and protected we ensure the following:-

- * Everyone involved in Forest School sessions are fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of sites and activities. Staff and volunteers should be made aware of the relevant policies.
- * We regard safety and good practice as extremely important and it is the responsibility of staff and volunteers to follow correct policies to ensure the safety of all.
- * All staff and volunteers will only work individually with children if they also have a DBS certificate.
- * The group leader will have a list of contact details and medical needs with them at all times.
- * Photographs will only ever be used with prior parental permission.
- * Any concerns about a child's physical or mental well-being should be shared with the designated school Safeguarding officer (Beth Clarke or the deputy officer Becky Barker).
- * Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Any concerns should only be shared with those who need to know, who can then ensure the correct channels are followed.

Equal opportunities and Inclusion

We believe that all persons should be treated equally irrespective of age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief or sexual orientation. We strive to ensure that all who work with us are able to do so in an environment free of unlawful discrimination and harassment. We will not tolerate such behaviour under any circumstances.

Our aim is to:

- * provide a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.
- * make every effort to ensure that all activities are fully inclusive, so far as is reasonably practicable, thus catering for all ability levels.
- * ensure, where possible, that alternative arrangements are made if a disability makes accessibility difficult.
- * make inclusion a thread which runs through all of the activities.

Acomb First School