**Risk Assessments and Policies**



**Forest School**

**Handbook**

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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**

You will have had time to talk with the group leader about the activities which are planned and how you will be supporting.

**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. You should be familiarized with these by the group leader prior to the session. The Group Leader is a Qualified Forest Schools Level 3 Practitioner 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. 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 camp area alongside the Burns First Aid Kit, if necessary. Any specific children’s medication will be held by the leader or school staff 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, but will be encouraged to visit the toilet before each session to limit the need to return to school.

**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 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, but will be encouraged to visit the toilet before each session to limit the need to return to school.

**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.

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| **Our Forest School Rules**   * We use our eyes and ears * 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! |

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|  | http://www.lincolnshireforestschools.co.uk/App_Themes/blue/images/txtheader_bullet.gif |

**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**

Site: Greenhaugh Primary School Owner: Northumberland County Council

Contacts: Greenhaugh Primary School-[01434 240208](https://www.google.com/search?q=who+owns+greenhaugh+primary+school+&ei=EKp4YqmIFY-6gQbB7YrABA&ved=0ahUKEwip0N-H29H3AhUPXcAKHcG2AkgQ4dUDCA4&uact=5&oq=who+owns+greenhaugh+primary+school+&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAM6BwgAEEcQsAM6BQghEKABOgQIIRAVOgcIIRAKEKABOgYIABAWEB46BAgAEB46BggAEA0QHjoECCEQCkoECEEYAEoECEYYAFCBCFiZPGCeQWgBcAF4AIABfogBngmSAQQxMS4zmAEAoAEByAEHwAEB&sclient=gws-wiz) Grid ref: 379420 , 587429

Assessor: Karen Ewen Review Due: September 2025

Description: Northeastern part of the school field. An area with a few trees and hedgerow.

|  | Hazard | Harm | Measures required to reduce the risk |
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| **1** | **School field**  **Minor road**  **All year round** | Missing child/road traffic accident | **The forest school area will be the top end of the school field with a fence around the boundary (Northeast and southeast boundary). There is a slight slope up to the area. Beyond the fence is a minor road. At times we may explore the rest of the school field but will do it as a group.**  Once we are in the forest school area the children know that they have to stay in this area. As part of the Forest school rules the children are given the parameters in which they are allowed to travel.  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 area so long as they can see the camp (fire circle) and that they are within the boundaries {fence and gates). Children understand the Forest School rule: we must be able to see camp at all times and stay in the Forest School area. |
| **2** | **Water leakage from drain** | Slips/falls | **Near the hedge in the Forest School area there is a storm drain. At times there is an over flow onto the field making in quite boggy in areas.**  How to walk safely in muddy conditions is discussed with the children. Wellies or strong boots are worn at Forest School. Children understand the Forest School rule: We always think about the risks before choosing whether to do something. |
| **3** | **Den building** | Splinters/ protruding branches/eye and facial injuries | **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.**  Children are shown how to move, carry and position sticks safely each session. Sticks that are shorter than their arm must be carried vertically (up and down) and longer sticks must be dragged behind them or carried between 2 or more children. Children understand the Forest School rule: We always think about the risks before choosing whether to do something. |
| **4** | **Tree climbing** | Falls/bumps/ bruises/cuts/ grazes/splinters  Children and adults | **There are not really any good climbable trees in the area but they may be able to climb some of the hedgerow and shrubs. The ground below is woodland so soft and lumpy but uneven and covered in debris (dead sticks, twigs etc.).**  If the children show an interest in climbing they will be 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 must always have 3 body parts in contact with the tree at all times and cannot climb higher than their own head height. The children are spoken to about the safety of climbing with other children around and are advised that one at a time is safe. A member of staff is always stationed in this area to monitor and offer support. Children understand the Forest School rule: We always think about the risks before choosing whether to do something. |
| **5** | **General rubbish and litter** | Cuts from glass, metal etc  Infection | **There are times when litter will be found on site. This will have been blown in.**  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. Children will be reminded of the dangers of picking up litter, especially sharp or rusty objects. They will be asked to point out any rubbish found to an adult. |
| **6** | **Dog dirt and animal droppings** | Infection | **This land has private access. Dog dirt should not be found on site but will always be checked. Other animal droppings include pheasant, rabbit and fox etc.**  The leader will check before and after each session for dog dirt. 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. |
| **7** | **Plants/Hawthorn/bramble/Rosehip/Wild Roses/nettles/fungi** | Poisoning/ infection  Children and adults | **There are various shrubs, trees, plants and fungi all over the site that could cause harm to the children.**  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 or fungi they could get ill. Children understand our Forest school rule ‘We keep our hands away from our mouths’ |
| **8** | **Side fences** | Splinters/Cuts/puncture wound  Children and adults | **Along the north eastern and south-eastern side of the site there is a fence between the field, the road and the neighbouring house.**  Children will be shown this and reminded of the dangers. They are reminded to stand away from the fence. |

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| **9** | **Uneven ground, animal burrows and holes** | Tripping/ stumbling/Cut/ Grazes/ Bruises  Children and adults | **The ground is uneven and there is some foliage such as ground ivy and brambles under the trees that can trip or camouflage holes or burrows.**  When holes are found they are pointed out to children and adults and avoided where possible. Children will be shown and reminded how to negotiate difficult terrain. Children understand our ‘We walk in a woodland environment’ Forest School rule and why it is necessary. |
| **10** | **Dead trees, loose branches and low branches** | Bumps/cuts/grazes/facial or eye injuries from protruding branches  Children and adults | **The site will be checked 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.**  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 where necessary but in most cases the children will be just made aware of them. Children understand our ‘We walk in a woodland environment’ Forest School rule and why it is necessary. |
| **11** | **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 in the woods will be cancelled if the wind is too high. The site will be checked after high wind for loose branches, trees, twigs etc.  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 (according to school policy).  Cold – Appropriate clothing worn at all times – layers of clothing, hats, gloves, extra socks. Parents provide a bag with “Forest School clothes” so children have extra clothing available and wellies. The setting provides water proofs for the children. |

| Emergency Arrangements | |
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| **Serious Accident:** Seek additional adult help, provide first aid, call ambulance 999, inform parents (next of kin). First Aider to stay with child/children. Adult helper to return all other children into the classroom, keep them calm, read stories, sing songs etc. Write up accident report form, inform HSE, assess risk assessment and make new adjustments for future.  **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 (if necessary) to be taken for each visit.  **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 | Role | Date |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Forest School Leader |  |

**Additional Information**

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

**Flora:** birch, sycamore, hawthorn, elder, and beech are on site. There are some other small wild flowers, a hedgerow and many different types of fungi.

**Dogs:** This land has private access. 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 5m of the whole site via the school entrance.

**Toilet:** Children are encouraged to go to the toilet before the session. They will need to return to school if they need to go during the session.

**Emergency Contact information:**

Mrs Clare Crow,

**Greenhaugh Primary School**,  
Greenhaugh  
Hexham  
Northumberland  
NE48 1LX

**Tel:** 01434 240208

**Mobile Signal:** none

**Nearest Hospitals:**

Hexham Hospital 21 miles

RVI 39 miles

Cramlington Hospital 40 miles

Signed: Date:

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|  | **Hazard** | **Harm** | **Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Staff and student illness | Spread of virus during the session and into the wider community | * 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’. |

**Coronavirus Risk Assessment**

**April 2022**

**There is now no requirement to socially distance or to avoid sharing tools and equipment. The children will wash their hands before and after each session and will be reminded of the Forest School rule: We keep our hands away from our face and mouth.**

**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 container. 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 inside the wooden camp structure whilst the fire is lit, 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 3 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, or a tripod for them to hang from.
* 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

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**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**

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|  | **Hazards** | **Harm** | **Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Igniting the fire | Burns | \* 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 | \* 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 | \* 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 | \* 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 | \* 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**

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|  | **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.  \* Leader will carry and keep a record of consent forms. |
| 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.

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|  | **Hazard** | **Harm** | **Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Transportation | Cuts and damage to people and tools | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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.

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|  | **Hazard** | **Harm** | **Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Injury during Bow Saw Transportation | Cuts and damage to people and tools | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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.

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|  | **Hazard** | **Harm** | **Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Transportation | Cuts and damage to people and tools | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 |  | * 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.

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|  | **Hazard** | **Harm** | **Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Transportation | Cuts and damage to people and tools | * 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 | * 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 |  | * 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 |  | * 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.

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|  | **Hazard** | **Harm** | **Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Transportation | Cuts and damage to people and tools | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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.

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|  | **Hazard** | **Harm** | **Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Transportation | Cuts and damage to people and tools | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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.

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|  | **Hazard** | **Harm** | **Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Transportation | Cuts and damage to people and tools | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * When not in use they should be returned to the correct storage box. |

**Hammers/Mallets**

The hammers and mallets are used to hammer in nails as part of construction and craft work and using to hammer on to material during hapa zome. A tool talk is given each time the tool is used.

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|  | **Hazard** | **Harm** | **Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Hitting body parts or others | Bruising, breaking bones | * Children are reminded that the hammer should not be lifted up high when hammering. This ensures that they are more able to hit the target and don’t hit their head, shoulder or others. |
| 2 | Transportation | Bruising and damage to people and tools | * All hammer/mallets are kept in their designated tool box when not being used. * Leader to ensure group have a full understanding on how to carry the tool correctly. * Hammers should always be carried by their handles in a hand hanging down by their leg. * Children are reminded that hammers/mallets should only be used around the main camp and should not be taken into the woods. They can hammer at camp and then transport the object that they have made into the woods. |
| 3 | Tool slipping when being used | Bruising and damage to people and tools | * 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. Children should keep a good distance from each other when hammering. |
| 4 | Storage during a session | Bruising and damage to people and tools | * 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**

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|  | **Hazard** | **Harm** | **Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | lifting materials | Injury to back | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 Plants | Related illnesses | * Access to areas containing toxic plants will be restricted. * The group will be told not to eat anything that they find and will clean their hands before eating food. |

**Building shelters**

**This activity risk assessment must be used in conjunction with:**

**Risk Assessments: General Welfare & Weather**

**Procedures: Lifting**

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|  | **Hazard** | **Harm** | **Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Knots slipping | Structures falling | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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**

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|  | **Hazard** | **Harm** | **Control Measures – how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Poor visibility of potential obstruction | Trip, choke, rope burn | * 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 | * 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, | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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**

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|  | **Hazards** | **Harm** | **Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Tying the blind fold too tight | Cause pain, uncomfortable, Cut skin | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 | * 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 |

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|  | **Hazards** | **Harm** | **Control Measures - how to manage the risks safely** |
| 1 | Stream (Water courses less than 4 meters wide) or shallow ponds. | Drowning | * Where water is present on a project site the group are to be given safety brief. * Leader will confirm beforehand that there are no underwater hazards (such as rocks or roots which can trap feet, rusty cans or wire which can cut, or strong currents). * Leader to obtain weather forecast before visit and ascertain likelihood of water levels rapidly rising. * 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 knee 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 | Rivers (water courses greater than 4 meters wide) or deep ponds | Drowning | * A comprehensive site specific risk assessment will be carried out in the event that activities must be undertaken near a river or deep water. |
| 3 | Getting wet | Hypothermia | * 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. |
| 4 | standing water | Related illness & disease | * Standing water on a site will be assesses 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. |

**Water**

**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)**

Wellington Boots or walking boots

Hat, scarf and gloves

Fashion Boots are not suitable for the woods.

**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

Sunhat

Sunglasses

Sunscreen and insect repellent with names on bottles.

**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.

\*   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 (Alison Clarricoats or the deputy officer Kath Reed).

 \* 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.