



The Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools

# Forest School Handbook



Written by J. Wones, FS Level 3 Trained  
March 2016, (reviewed and updated March 2016) Signed: J. Wones

April 2020 - Reviewed and updated by Lucy Amis.

Signed:

(FS Level 3 Trained) linking directly to Catfield Primary School. (Review date April 2021)

Sept 2022 reviewed and updated linking directly to Hickling Infant School. Signed: S. Cushion

Next review date: Sept 2023

## **Contents**

Introduction and ethos -	page 3
Role of the adult –	page 4
Code of conduct –	page 4
Health and Safety –	page 5 - 6
Cancellation –	page 6
Food and Hygiene –	page 6
Toileting –	page 6
Equipment (including for emergencies) –	page 6 - 7
Policies and Procedures –	page 7 - 8
Personal Protective Equipment -	page 8 - 9
Emergency Procedure –	page 9 - 10
Equal opportunities –	page 10
Safeguarding –	page 10 - 11
Confidentiality –	page 11
Behaviour expectations –	page 11 - 12
Use of photographs –	page 12
Communication –	page 12
Daily procedure –	page 12 - 13
Signature page –	page 14

## **Appendices**

Parental consent form –	page 15 - 16
Site risk assessments-	page 17 - 25
Fire risk assessment –	page 26
Tool use risk assessment –	page 27
Foraging risk assessment –	page 28
Pond dipping –	page 29
Green text only applies to Catfield	
Blue text only applies to Hickling	

# Introduction and Ethos

*Forest School is based more on the process of learning than it is on the content – more on the ‘how’ than the ‘what.’*

*Forest School Training Company*

## Key Features of Forest Schools



*Image taken from mumsnet website*

The idea originates from Scandinavia where it was found that children who had been to a Forest School during their pre-school years, were confident, had strong communication skills and well developed social skills. These then set the platform for academic success.

By introducing Forest School at Swallowtail we hope to enhance learning, increase self-esteem, independence and risk taking in our children.

## Role of the Adult

The staff at Forest School, by observing and working with the children when appropriate, will allow them to explore their own preferred learning styles while developing a lifelong love and understanding of the natural environment. Through carefully planned activities, children from all year groups can take part, enabling them to excel in all areas of their personal, academic and spiritual development.

All adults at Forest School sessions will:

- listen and show empathy
- observe learning
- join in with pupil's activities/play when invited to
- model appropriate skills and behaviour
- ensure the health and safety of pupils and follow safeguarding procedures
- use non-judgemental language

## Code of Conduct

Entering and exploring the site	Children are taught to explore and play with thought and care for the environment. Children are asked to give thanks to the site when leaving.
Boundaries	Children are told and/or shown the boundaries of the site. Children are familiar with games and calls such as '1, 2, 3 where are you' and '1, 2, 3 come to me.'
Picking up and playing with sticks	Children can carry sticks shorter than their arm's length but make sure they think about how close they are to other children. Longer sticks can be dragged or carried with a child at both ends. Sticks must not be thrown, nor should children be allowed to pull them from living trees.
Picking up and playing with stones	Children may pick up stones to transport them, but they must never be thrown.
Digging	Children may carefully move soil to look for insects and their habitats using lolly pop sticks, fingers or small sticks found within the forest, but deep holes should not be made <b>other than where specifically directed in the mud kitchen area.</b>
Using ropes and string	Children may use rope and string to tie or make things, such as mobiles or to put up a shelter. Adult will model appropriate knots and support the children as necessary. <b>Children will be supervised when using ropes and must always ask an adults permission before taking one from the storage shed.</b>
Fire	Wood maybe collected from the site for fire lighting, but only what is needed. Fires will be created in a fire square and never left unattended. See fire risk assessment for more details.
Using tools	Tools are used for a purpose and all trained adults should model their correct use, storage and transportation at all times. Tools are used well away from other active children and only walking is permitted when carrying them. Gloves are never worn when using tools. See tool use policy and risk assessment for more details.

Eating and drinking	Nil by mouth policy for anything found in the Forest. Children must be reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses. When having drinks and snacks children will use soap & water to clean their hands or antibacterial hand gel before consumption.
---------------------	---

## Health and Safety

**Health and safety during Forest School is important in ensuring children are kept safe but still allowed to take part in exciting activities, including tool use and tree climbing. Within Forest School, we complete risk assessments to ensure all possible risks are thought about and managed, but we also teach children how to manage their own risks too. Exposing children to risks allows them to learn and develop strategies for overcoming these in the future.**

*“They won’t understand about risk if they’re wrapped in cotton wool. Risk itself won’t damage children, but ill-managed and overprotective actions could!” (Forest School Association, 2020)*

**The following points are additional to our Health and Safety policy and procedures (available on our website) that directly relate to Forest School sessions:**

1. However many adults accompany Forest School sessions the person in charge is always the trained Forest School Leader.
2. The Forest School Leader has overall duty of care for the children in his/her charge, but all adults are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure children are safe.
3. All adult helpers **must** sign and date a form to show they have read this handbook and appropriate risk assessments and understand and agree to comply with the general operating procedures for Forest School.
4. The Forest School Leader or Assistant will always carry a First Aid kit and emergency bag. The Forest School Leader is responsible for adding to this bag as well as checking dates. The first Forest School aid folder must also be kept up to date after each session by the Leader.
5. When tools are used the adult: child ratio will always be 1:1, until the Forest School Leader is comfortable that they are confident using tools and the ratio can be 1:2.

Forest Schools aims to encourage risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others. Through appropriate risk and challenge, children can build their confidence and solve problems and it is the Forest School leader who is responsible for ensuring that there are no unacceptable levels of risk. To do this we:

- Look for potential hazards and decide who might be at harm.
- Think about how harm may occur and the worst outcome that we could face.
- Evaluate the current level of risk and decide on a course of action that will be put in place to minimise the potential risk.
- Re-evaluate the level of risk once our course of action has been put in place.
- Create a risk assessment and collate them in the Forest School file.
- Inform all adults that accompany the group and require them to sign each relevant risk assessment to show that they have read and understood them
- Regularly monitor and review each risk assessment.

Through effective risk assessment and management the Forest School leader is responsible for ensuring that pupils are not exposed to unacceptable levels of risk. Risk assessments in place are:

- site risk assessment



- activity risk assessments (e.g. for tool use, fire)
- any pupil specific risk assessment (e.g. behaviour, medical)
- a daily site check before each session

As well as risk assessments, there will be appropriate staff to pupil ratios for each session, taking into account activities planned for, children's age and the needs of individuals. Minimum adult to pupil ratios will be as follows: Pre-school & Reception 1:6, Years 1 & 2 1:8, Years 3 & 4 1:10 and Years 5 & 6 1:12.

Please also see the federation health and safety policy available on our website and via the school office.

## Cancellation

Forest School sessions will not take place in high winds (maximum of 7 on the Beaufort Scale) or electrical storms or if after having done the daily site check there is something that prohibits the pupils from accessing the site. The session will be cancelled and children will remain in lessons in school. The session will also be cancelled if the Forest School Leader is unable to take the session and Senior Management will be notified.

The next section takes into account the welfare elements at forest school, recognising our moral and statutory responsibility to ensure the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment and have considered clothing, toileting, hygiene procedures and food/drink.

## Food and Drink

Pupils will have access to drinking water. *If children need to refill bottles, they will be directed inside. If children have their own water bottle they will bring it out to the site with them but there will also be a jerry can full of drinking water and cups provided if they need them.* If meals or snacks are offered, pupils will wash and sanitise hands before eating and all food waste/rubbish will be taken back to school after the session.

Children may be involved in a session where the Forest School Leader has planned to cook on the fire. Where this is the case, the Forest School Leader will ensure hygiene and cleanliness standards are met (e.g. utensils, cups etc are sterilised) and the fire policy is followed. They will also be aware of any food allergies of both children and staff. All staff working with food will hold a level 1 food hygiene certificate. If a full meal is prepared then staff will hold a level 2 food hygiene certificate.

## Toileting

As the sessions are taking place on a school site, the children will walk back to use the school toilets if needed. Children in years 1 – 6 are able to go to the toilet without the need for supervision. Children in pre-school and reception who require support toileting and removing waterproofs will be accompanied by an adult. Higher adult to child ratios are implemented where this is the case to ensure that even when an adult is required to leave the outdoor site for toileting the session has the correct ratio of adults to children.

## Equipment (including for emergencies)

Equipment for Forest School sessions will depend on the activities being undertaken, but may include:

- shelter building materials – tarps, ropes, guy lines
- bug hunting pots, spoons, ID guides, camera/ipad (photograph finds)
- mirrors, magnifying glasses, binoculars
- art and sculpture materials - clay, mortar and pestle, wool, scissors
- puppets to develop and tell stories, nature related stories, non-fiction texts
- fire lighting kit
- tools

In addition to tools suited to the planned for activities, the Forest School leader will always take an emergency bag with them. The contents of the emergency bag will vary depending on the time of year and weather conditions, the site being used, and the planned for activities according to the relevant risk assessments and daily risk assessment.

Essential equipment	Possible additional equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Aid Kit (appropriate for no. people out during sessions and remoteness of site, kit needs to be regularly checked and restocked as necessary)</li> <li>• Emergency procedures (signed)</li> <li>• Medical information and emergency contact details of all in group (updated termly)</li> <li>• Appropriate risk assessments (updated annually or after related incident/near miss. A daily site risk assessment is carried out and signed by all adults working on the forest school site at the start of each session)</li> <li>• Means of communication (red card)</li> <li>• Clean water</li> <li>• Whistle/Bell</li> <li>• Medication for individuals (in a secure box or grab bag)</li> <li>• Recording forms for safeguarding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire kit and burns kit</li> <li>• Eye wash</li> <li>• Bivi bag or survival blanket</li> <li>• Thermos of hot water</li> <li>• Chocolate/sugary food</li> <li>• Torch</li> <li>• Welfare Kit (containing items such as: wet wipes, hand gel, nappy sacks and toileting things, trowel, sun cream, Antihistamine cream (parental permissions required for creams)</li> </ul>

The Forest School leader, Sarah has undertaken a 16 hour First Aid training Course for Forest School (June 2022, to be refreshed every 3 years.)

The Forest School leader, Miss Amis has undertaken a 16 hour First Aid Course for Forest School (Oct 2022, to be refreshed every 3 years.)

The Forest School leader, Louise has undertaken a 16 hour First Aid training Course for Forest School (Oct 2022, to be refreshed every 3 years.)

The Forest School Leader, Miss Moore has undertaken a 16 hour First Aid training Course for Forest School (Oct 2022, to be refreshed every 3 years.)

## Policy and Procedures

### Tools

Tools may be used at Forest Schools if learners wish to develop new skills, but will always be done safely. There is an assessment undertaken by the Forest School leader detailing the benefits and risks of using tools at the end of this handbook. We believe that by giving children the chance to use risky equipment during Forest School it will help to build their confidence, self-esteem, creativity, strength, listening and instruction following skills.

*“Tool play is so important for children, and develops many key skills and abilities. Using tools in forest school allows children to experience danger in the form of risky equipment but in a safe environment. It helps them to manage risk, and become completely involved in the activity that they are doing”  
(Early Impact Learning, 2020)*

The Forest School leader will ensure that:

- tools are safe to use (cleaned, maintained, replaced when necessary)
- gloves are never worn when using them, long hair is tied back and loose clothing (e.g. scarves) removed
- participants will never help themselves to any tool and when a tool is in use it will always be on a 1:1 or 1:2 basis with the Forest School leader or other trained adults in a designated area, away from other learners/activities (minimum of an arm’s length away)
- all tools are stored in a locked box or cupboard and transported safely

### Fire

A fire can act as a focal point for a group at Forest School, but also can provide heat and warmth. In addition, having a fire during Forest School can be beneficial to children’s wellbeing. Through having these experiences children may develop increased self-esteem and confidence when taking part in activities connected to the fire. There is an assessment undertaken by the Forest School leader detailing the benefits and risks of fire lighting at the end of this handbook. Prior to having a fire all learners are included in creating guidelines for behaviour around the fire and demonstrate that they understand these guidelines. All adults and children are then responsible for ensuring these guidelines are followed.

The Forest School leader will ensure that:

- a fire circle is established away from overhanging trees and is attended at all times
- participants understand not to walk through it or run near it



- hair is tied back and nobody around the fire has any loose clothing (e.g. scarf)
- a fire blanket, plunge bucket, fire glove and full watering can is placed nearby
- only dead wood is used and only enough wood is used as needed
- any fire is fully extinguished at the end of a session

## Foraging

Forest school sessions may include foraging, for example of blackberries or nettles. The Forest School leader will again take a 'risk benefit' approach and ensure that:

- participants are offered gloves to avoid stings
- allergy information for the group has been checked prior to the session
- participants understand that hands should not be put in or near or mouth during Forest School sessions
- participants understand that nothing is to be eaten until the 'find' has been identified with an adult using identification books and the Forest School leader is confident it is edible.

# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Forest School leader will assess each activity and decide on whether any PPE is required. If it is, appropriate PPE will be offered in the correct sizes and in good working order.

PPE includes the appropriate clothing for the weather conditions, for example woolly hat/sun hat, thick socks, extra jumper. All participants including adults are encouraged to keep their skin covered with long trousers and sleeves to avoid sting and possibility of ticks (all adults and parents are provided with a leaflet informing them about ticks). All participants must have sensible footwear, either wellington boots, walking boots or sturdy trainers. Waterproof trousers and coats are provided by the school, but the children are welcome to bring their own waterproof coat as an extra layer in cold weather.

# Emergency Procedures

At present, all Forest School sessions will be held on the school site and some of these procedures will only be needed if a group was taken off-site.

## **First aid**

1. Ensure the rest of the group is safe – where appropriate delegate responsibility.
  2. If appropriate, remove the danger or people from the danger.
  3. Qualified First Aider called to check A-B-C, administer First Aid and if necessary use 'red card' carried with first aid bag/[displayed in forest school shed](#) to get further assistance from school secretary. School secretary to respond to card by bringing a phone to the Forest School Leader to call for further assistance (999) if required.
  4. Have medical form details available in emergency bag and call parent/guardian as appropriate.
  5. Record full details through school incident procedure and within Forest School First Aid folder.
  6. Follow up to parents as usual.
- If the first aid is for 'walking wounded' then the parents would be called in the first instance to take the child to hospital, if unavailable or not within a short distance, then

	<p>two members of first aid trained staff will take the child. The rest of the group will be head counted and taken back into school by a Forest School assistant. When the children hear 3 blasts on the whistle they line up ready for a head count.</p> <p>If an adult is injured, the FS leader would administer the first aid needed and assess whether further medical help was needed. In the event the leader was injured, another first aid trained forest school assistant would administer first aid.</p>
<b>Lost or missing child</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As soon as child is found to be missing, make an immediate search of vicinity and use 1, 2, 3 procedure. Continue immediate search for 15 minutes.</li> <li>2. Assemble rest of children and ensure they are safe.</li> <li>3. If child is not found during immediate search and as we are on site, adult is to send 'red card' into School to alert and then School calls police (and parent/guardian).</li> <li>4. Follow School critical incident procedure.</li> </ol>
<b>Serious accident</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Follow First Aid procedure.</li> <li>2. Stay with casualty, but ensure rest of group is removed from the situation and is safe.</li> <li>3. School to call parent/guardian/next of kin ASAP.</li> <li>4. Follow School critical incident procedure – see RED BOOK kept in school office.</li> <li>5. Gain advice on follow up from police.</li> </ol>
<b>Irregular occurrence, uninvited person/stranger</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The intruder will be challenged and asked to leave politely.</li> <li>2. If a child is involved then the police should be called and the child/children involved should be removed from the situation and made to feel safe. In an emergency an adult will organise a calm group activity such as story time or yoga.</li> <li>3. Follow School's critical incident procedure</li> <li>4. Parents/guardian should be briefed by FS leader asap.</li> <li>5. Inform Safeguarding Officer and gain advice.</li> </ol>
<b>Poor weather conditions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Based on the Beaufort Scale, Forest School sessions will not take place if winds exceed a force of 6 (22-27 knots/25-31mph) to 7 (28-33knots/32-38mph) on the scale indicating large tree branches or whole trees moving, wind whistling past wires and feeling resistance when walking against the wind. If group leader feels uncomfortable take emergency 'safe' route out ASAP.</li> <li>2. Use indoor areas or shelter outdoors (away from trees) as alternative.</li> </ol>
<b>Behaviour problems (please also see p.11)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trained members of staff to use de-escalation strategies.</li> <li>2. Remove other children from area of risk (if deemed necessary).</li> <li>3. If thought necessary, trained members of school staff to use appropriate restraint technique. As school policy on restraint.</li> <li>4. Debrief child after calm down period.</li> <li>5. Log incident and inform parents/guardian.</li> </ol>

Following an incident or accident, an incident report form should be filled in, even if no-one was harmed and it was a 'near miss.' Reports should be written clearly and in chronological order and a parent/guardian must sign them on the same day as the incident. After an incident, accident or 'near miss' all relevant risk assessments must be reviewed and amended if deemed necessary, to ensure the same scenario has a reduced chance of occurring again.

If an accident leads to hospitalisation it must be registered with RIDDOR within 24 hours. Reports can be made online at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

## Equal opportunities

Swallowtail is committed to the idea that there should be equal opportunity for all. Our policies help to ensure that we promote the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. At Forest School, we all learn alongside each other and from one another.

Children with medical needs or disabilities will be helped so they can take as full a part as everyone else in Forest School sessions. Those with challenging behaviour are risk-assessed and may need one-to-one supervision, but their entitlement remains the same.

Staff are familiar with the use of visual aids and modelling of activities to support children as well as adapting tasks and games so that all can be involved.

Although we encourage children to take responsibility for their own clothing and appropriate footwear for sessions, we do have a stock of spare wellies and waterproof trousers for children to borrow.

## Safeguarding

Our full safeguarding policy can be found on our website or via the school office.

*'The child's welfare is of paramount importance. Our school will establish and maintain an ethos where pupils feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe.'*

All staff complete safeguarding training at the beginning of each school year and any staff beginning mid-way through the year complete it as part of their induction. All staff are required to have a DBS check and any volunteers helping regularly at Forest School sessions will also be required to undertake a full check. Any volunteer or member of staff who finds that a child is telling them something which concerns them should follow these simple steps:

- Listen, but ask NO leading questions. Remember that you must not promise to 'keep a secret'. The general rule is that adults should make it clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the beginning of the conversation.
- If the child is very upset and seeking comfort adults may provide this comfort in an appropriate way following our Federation policies. For example, a side hug using one arm can be used.
- If a disclosure is made, the adult must fill in a recording form (carried in the emergency bag.) If additional adult help is required to cover whilst the form is filled in, the 'red spot card' can be sent into school. The form must be passed to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (Head teacher/Head of School) or Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Lucy Amis) as soon as possible. This procedure is still the case if the disclosure is about a member of staff.

## Confidentiality

Adults working within Forest School sessions must appreciate that conversations had within the setting are confidential. If an adult finds a child is telling them something that concerns them, the safeguarding procedure outlined above must be followed.

In addition to this:

- All parental consent forms and medical information are kept with the Forest School Leader during sessions and are otherwise kept securely in school.
- All adults supporting Forest School sessions will be made aware that discussions with participants at Forest School are confidential

## Behaviour

At Swallowtail we aim to promote an environment where everyone feels happy, safe and secure. The expectations during Forest School sessions of behaviour remain the same:

- Show care and consideration for others and the environment
- Keep yourself and others safe
- Listen when other people are talking/giving instructions
- Be kind and co-operate with others

Forest School may present children with situations and feelings and emotions that they haven't experienced before, or feelings and emotions that they are unsure of how to manage. This may mean that children could present some challenging behaviours during Forest School sessions. Adults during Forest School sessions will act as facilitators and respect children's wishes and feelings. They will recognise that behaviour communicates a problem and will work with children to solve it. Rosenberg recommends that we respond with non-violent communication. This includes 4 steps: Observations, Feelings, Needs and Requests.

**Observations:** Make neutral statements of what you actually/objectively see or hear. For example: 'I can see Tom is using the hammer you need...'

**Feelings:** Express how you feel in relation to what you have observed. 'I can see it is making you feel frustrated..'

**Needs:** Express what the child needs/what you need in relation to your feelings. '...because you are not able to finish your picture..'

**Requests:** Make a request of the actions you'd like. For example, 'Would you like to help me get some wood for the fire and finish your picture when the hammer is free?'

Children will also be encouraged to communicate in this way, allowing us to completely understand their feelings and needs at that time in a calm and understanding way.

Forest School sessions provide an environment where children are not judged or compared and therefore not overtly praised, as this can create competition and comparison between children resulting in negative feelings. In Forest School we aim to build children's self-esteem and confidence and therefore instead of using phrases such as 'good girl' or 'I like your leaf printing' we will comment on the process the child took and choose to express our observations 'it is interesting that the small green leaves printed better than the bigger ones'.

If the above strategies for non-violent communication and calming techniques are not successful, staff are trained in de-escalation strategies to deal with challenging behaviour and the school's behaviour policy will be followed if the unwanted behaviour continues. Individual children may have a behaviour plan that is individual to them and their needs. All staff need to be aware and have read and understood these before Forest School sessions begin. It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to check this has happened. If the Forest School Leader deems it necessary, an individual risk assessment may be created for individual children for Forest School sessions.

In our federation, children know that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable behaviour. Staff and adults will deal with incidents of bullying according to our policy (on our website.)

## Use of photographs

Parents/carers complete consent forms for use of photographs and digital media prior to sessions. This includes use of photographs on our school blogs and twitter pages. Adults accompanying the group are made aware of any pupil who may not be photographed.

## Communication

The Forest School leader is responsible for communicating with stakeholder groups regarding Forest School on the site. This will include gaining permission from parents and informing them of what Forest School is and the type of activities their children will be taking part in. This information will be shared via this handbook, our school website, letters/emails sent home as well as weekly blog updates. Informing Forest School support staff of risk assessments, daily operating and expectations during sessions. This will be completed via reading of this handbook, planning and face to face meetings prior to each Forest School session. It will also include keeping governors, maintenance staff and other school staff informed about the operating, risk assessments and expectations during sessions, completed via emails and school staff meetings.

## Daily Operating Procedure

### Before the session

- Forest School leader to check all relevant risk assessments are in place, including daily site check and have been read by all adults supporting the sessions.
- Forest School leader will prepare and share session plan with all adults supporting the session.
- The Forest School Leader will check that enough adults are present for the session to go ahead and that the weather conditions allow it to take place.
- The equipment required for the session will be assembled, checked and prepared.
- All children will be registered by their class teacher. They will then get changed for Forest School, go to the toilet and apply sun cream when necessary.
- The children and staff walk to the Forest School site. This normally happens as an activity, such as a rope bus, forming mini beasts or a sensory walk.

### During the session

- Head counts
- Ongoing risk assessments to take account of weather, safety and behaviour.

### After the session

- A headcount will be undertaken at the end of the session.
- All equipment returned to storage shed **and storage shed locked**. Tool check – count **and store in a locked cupboard** (Forest School leader to clean/carry out maintenance later if necessary.)
- Waterproof clothing will be removed and children will change into school clothes. Adults will be asked to look out for ticks and older children (years 1-6) will be educated in what they look like

and to alert an adult if they think they see/have one on them. If a child is found with a tick, parents will be called to collect the child and to remove it.

- A session evaluation will be completed by the Forest School Leader.

## Signature Page

Name of staff/volunteer	Handbook read (please sign)	Date



## Forest Schools Consent Form

Name of Child.....

### Medical Information

Medical information will be obtained from the medical information you provided at the start of the school year. However, if there is further information that you would like to make us aware of that might affect your child's involvement in Forest Schools (e.g. phobias, complaints) or any other allergies (e.g. material, food, medicine, pollen, dust, etc.)

Please write below:

Please give the date of your child's last Tetanus Jab if known \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

### Consent

As a parent/guardian of the child named above, I agree to my child participating in the Forest School activities taking place. I understand that activities may include, walking, craftwork, pond dipping, tool use, fire lighting skills, den building, campfire cooking and other related activities. I give my consent for the equipment and tools necessary for the activity to be used by the young person mentioned above. I understand that a strict code of practice for working with children will be followed and all activities will be risk assessed and I will be informed of any extra details of activities that are out of the ordinary pattern. **I have read the information leaflet about ticks and agree to check my child after each forest school session.**

### Photos

I give permission for my child to be photographed/videoed whilst at Forest School and for these images to be used on the school website and in school publications.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Signed: ..... Date:.....

Name (in print): .....

Relationship to child: .....

I give permission for my child to have school sun cream applied during Forest School sessions when deemed necessary.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Signed: ..... Date:.....

Name (in print): .....

Relationship to child: .....

I give permission for insect repellent /antihistamine cream to be applied when deemed necessary by a trained first aider.


Yes ☐ No ☐

Signed: ..... Date:.....

Name (in print): .....

Relationship to child: .....

## Appendix 2 – site risk assessments

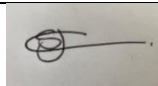
<b>Site Name: Sutton Wildlife Area</b>	<b>Assessment carried out by: Julie Wones</b>
<b>Postcode: NR12 9QP</b>	<b>Signature:</b>  <b>Date: 30/03/16</b>
<b>Location Grid Reference: TG38255 23980</b>	<b>Reviewed Sept 2022 by B. Moore</b> <b>Review date: Sept 2023</b>

<u>Areas to Consider</u>	<u>What are the Hazards?</u>	<u>Who might be harmed &amp; how?</u>	<u>Risk Level</u>	<u>Control Actions (What needs to be done, Who does it &amp; by When?)</u>	<u>In Place?</u>	<u>New Level</u>
<b>Access route to the site</b> e.g roads, tracks etc	Partially gravelled path across the field that can become slippery when wet/muddy.	Children and adult helpers could fall or slip	M	FS leader walks the path as part of pre-session checks. If path is deemed slippery, then children will be taken across the grass to the site.	✓	L
<b>Boundaries around the site:</b> e.g, fence lines, ditches	Possible damage to the boundary fences, one of which backs onto a main road. Possible 'rubbish' dumped on grounds over fence (bottles, cans...)	Children and adults could be cut/injured by foreign objects to the site.	M	Make a site sweep before every session as part of pre-session checks, concentrating on perimeter fence area.  Tell children not to pick up 'unexpected' items, but to inform an adult.  Alert adult helpers to be vigilant.	✓	L
<b>Canopy layer</b> e.g. hanging deadwood	Hanging deadwood	Children and adults could be struck by falling deadwood, potential head injury.	H	Make visual check before every outdoor session.  Wooded area not to be used in high winds.  Report any dangerous trees or branches to site manager to be dealt with.	✓	L

<b>Shrub layer</b> e.g thorny or poisonous species	Prickles and sharp snags where pruning has happened.	Children and adults may be cut, scratched or get splinters.	M	Warn children that they need to be alert and 'feel' the area.  Play games away from bushes.  Place tape on any large, protruding points, or zone off area using tape or rope to tell people it is out of bounds.	✓	L
	Holly berries and prickles, brambles.	Berries are poisonous if eaten.	H	Remind children to keep hands away from mouths at the start of each session. Insist on hand washing immediately after each session. Carry water for hands at snack times.	✓	L
<b>Field layer</b> e.g hazardous plant species, trip hazards	Stings from nettles.	Children and adults could be stung/poisoned and have an allergic reaction.	M	Remind children to look before they touch; teach them how to identify nettles and how the stings can be treated.  Give safety talk to participants on poisonous plants/fungi.  First aid kit on site.	✓	L
	Logs and large branches hidden by long grass.  Poisonous fungi					
<b>Ground layer</b> e.g. uneven ground, slopes & surfaces, hidden obstacles	Grass bank and mound behind seating area can become slippery and muddy when wet.  Hidden/unseen logs	Children and adult helpers could fall or trip causing cuts, grazes, injury to bone or muscles.	M	FS leader to check as part of daily site check  Clear pathway to the seating area/fire circle  Walking on the bank or the mound will not be allowed when it is excessively wet or muddy.  Grass is cut regularly.  Poles and long branches for den building are stored in the 'stick store' when not in use.	✓	L

<b>Structures</b>  e.g. Shelters, camp area, rope structures, seating	Large poles and branches handled and moved to build shelters, collapse of shelter	Children and adults suffering trips falls or breakages	M	<p>At start of programme no structures are present on site</p> <p>Any structures created during the programme to be checked by FSL as part of daily site risk assessment procedure for security, stability and safety. Any unstable or unsafe structures to be dismantled or made safe.</p> <p>Children must ask if they need to use rope and it is then used under adult supervision.</p>	✓	L
<b>Animals/insects</b>  e.g livestock, dogs, deer, ticks, wasps etc	Insect bites and stings	Children and adults could be stung and/or have an allergic reaction.	H	<p>Safety talk to all at start of session, including any areas that maybe 'hot spots' for wasps/bees (FS leader to identify during daily site check)</p> <p>Consent forms to have details of any known allergies</p> <p>Medication specific to pupils available for any specific reactions and conditions – and school medication policy followed</p>	✓	L
<b>Seasonal Weather conditions</b>  e.g prevailing winds, extreme temperatures	Hypothermia, hyperthermia, sun burn	Children and adults start to feel unwell.	M	<p>Weather forecast checked prior to session – FS leader will cancel session if weather is deemed severe (e.g. high winds)</p> <p>Group able to leave site by returning to school at any time should weather change.</p> <p>Participants are made aware of suitable clothing/kit before session starts</p>	✓	L

# Woodland Site Risk Assessment Template


<b>Site Name: Hickling Wildlife Area</b>		<b>Assessment carried out by: Sarah Cushion</b>	
<b>Postcode: NR12 0XX</b>		<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date: 27/08/22</b>
<b>Location Grid Reference: G 41165 23792</b>  <b>What 3 words: Blown.nervy.boring</b>			
<b>Review Date: September 2023 (after summer holidays)</b>			

<u>Areas to Consider</u>	<u>What are the Hazards?</u>	<u>Who might be harmed &amp; how?</u>	<u>Risk Level</u>	<u>Control Actions (What needs to be done, Who does it &amp; by When?)</u>	<u>In Place?</u>	<u>New Level</u>
<b>Access route to the site</b> e.g roads, tracks etc	Across the playground and then across the field that can become slippery when wet/muddy.	Children and adult helpers could fall or slip	M	FS leader walks the route as part of pre-session checks. Alternative route is taken if deemed slippery. Bark chippings can also be used on very muddy patches.	✓	L
<b>Boundaries around the site:</b> e.g, fencelines, ditches	Possible damage to the boundary fences, one of which backs onto a quiet road. Possible 'rubbish' dumped on grounds over fence (bottles, cans...)	Children and adults could be cut/injured by foreign objects to the site.	M	Make a site sweep before every session as part of pre-session checks, concentrating on perimeter fence area.  Tell children not to pick up 'unexpected' items, but to inform an adult.  Alert adult helpers to be vigilant.	✓	L
<b>Canopy layer</b>	Hanging deadwood	Children and adults could be struck by	H	Make visual check before every outdoor session.	✓	L



e.g. hanging deadwood		falling deadwood, potential head injury.		Wooded area not to be used in high winds. Report any dangerous trees or branches to site manager to be dealt with.		
<b>Shrub layer</b> e.g thorny or poisonous species	Prickles and sharp snags where pruning has happened.	Children and adults may be cut, scratched or get splinters.	M	Warn children that they need to be alert and 'feel' the area. Play games away from bushes. Place tape on any large, protruding points, or zone off area using tape or rope to tell people it is out of bounds.	✓	L
	Holly berries and prickles, brambles.	Berries are poisonous if eaten.	H	Remind children to keep hands away from mouths at the start of each session. Insist on hand washing immediately after each session. Carry water for hands at snack times.	✓	L
<b>Field layer</b> e.g hazardous plant species, trip hazards	Stings from nettles. Logs and large branches hidden by long grass. Poisonous fungi Grass/tree pollen	Children and adults could be stung/poisoned and have an allergic reaction.	M	Remind children to look before they touch; teach them how to identify nettles and how the stings can be treated. Give safety talk to participants on poisonous plants/fungi. First aid kit on site. All adults to be aware of any allergies and Forest School Leader to carry medication required for children who suffer with allergies to tree/grass pollen.	✓	L
<b>Ground layer</b> e.g. uneven ground, slopes & surfaces,	Grass mound can become slippery and muddy when wet.	Children and adult helpers could fall or trip causing cuts,	M	FS leader to check as part of daily site check Ensure clear pathway to the seating area/fire circle	✓	L

hidden obstacles	Hidden/unseen logs	grazes, injury to bone or muscles.		Walking on the bank or the mound will not be allowed when it is excessively wet or muddy.  Grass is cut regularly.  Poles and long branches for den building can be stored in the 'stick store' when not in use.		
<b>Structures</b>  e.g. Shelters, camp area, rope structures, seating	Large poles and branches handled and moved to build shelters, collapse of shelter	Children and adults suffering trips falls or breakages	M	At start of programme no structures are present on site  Any structures created during the programme to be checked by FSL as part of daily site risk assessment procedure for security, stability and safety. Any unstable or unsafe structures to be dismantled or made safe.  Children must ask if they need to use rope and it is then used under adult supervision.	✓	L
<b>Animals/insects</b>  e.g livestock, dogs, deer, ticks, wasps etc.	Insect bites and stings	Children and adults could be stung and/or have an allergic reaction.  Children and adults may find ticks on their clothing/bodies.	H	Safety talk to all at start of session, including any areas that maybe 'hot spots' for wasps/bees (FS leader to identify during daily site check)  Consent forms to have details of any known allergies  Medication specific to pupils available for any specific reactions and conditions – and school medication policy followed  Adults and children are aware of ticks, what they are and what to look out for. Adults are aware of procedures if a tick is found.	✓	L
<b>Seasonal Weather conditions</b>  e.g prevailing winds, extreme temperatures	Hypothermia, sun burn	Children and adults start to feel unwell.	M	Weather forecast checked prior to session – FS leader will cancel session if weather is deemed severe (e.g. high winds)  Group able to leave site by returning to school at any time should weather change.  Participants are made aware of suitable clothing/kit before session starts	✓	L

Site Name: Catfield playing field	Assessment carried out by: Julie Wones
Postcode: NR29 5DA	 Signature: <span style="float: right;">Date: 30/03/16</span>
Location Grid Reference: TG 38390 21155	Review <span style="float: right;">Date: Sept 2016 (after summer holidays) and at the start of each term thereafter</span> Reviewed & Updated for Catfield by Lucy Amis April 2020 Review date: Sept 2023

<u>Areas to Consider</u>	<u>What are the Hazards?</u>	<u>Who might be harmed &amp; how?</u>	<u>Risk Level</u>	<u>Control Actions (What needs to be done, Who does it &amp; by When?)</u>	<u>In Place?</u>	<u>New Level</u>
<b>Access route to the sites</b> e.g roads, tracks etc	Catfield: walkway onto field from playground can become very muddy and slippery when wet and during winter months.	Children and adult helpers could fall or slip	M	FS leader walks the route children will take as part of pre-session checks. If route is deemed slippery, then children will be onto field/site via route through equipment area and the muddy/slippery area will be coned off for the session.	✓	L
<b>Boundaries around the site:</b> e.g, fencelines, ditches	Possible damage to the boundary fences. Almost all fences are made of metal which could have sharp broken bits. Wooden fences could become broken.  Possible 'rubbish' dumped on grounds	Children and adults could be cut/injured by broken fences or foreign objects on the site.	M	Make a site sweep before every session as part of pre-session checks, concentrating on perimeter fence area.  Tell children not to pick up 'unexpected' items, but to inform an adult.  Alert adult helpers to be vigilant.	✓	L

	over fence (bottles, cans...)					
<b>Canopy layer</b> e.g. hanging deadwood	Hanging deadwood	Children and adults could be struck by falling deadwood, potential head injury.	H	<p>Make visual check before every outdoor session.</p> <p>Peaceful area, where there are very large, old trees are not to be used in high winds, even as a route onto the field. Stay clear of two large trees on the field at Catfield during windy weather.</p> <p>Report any dangerous trees or branches to site manager to be dealt with. Tree surveys carried out regularly.</p>	✓	L
<b>Shrub layer</b> e.g thorny or poisonous species	<p>Prickles and sharp snags where pruning has happened.</p> <p>Holly berries and prickles, brambles.</p>	<p>Children and adults may be cut, scratched or get splinters.</p> <p>Berries are poisonous if eaten.</p>	<p>M</p> <p>H</p>	<p>Warn children that they need to be alert and 'feel' the area.</p> <p>Play games away from bushes.</p> <p>Place tape on any large, protruding points, or zone off area using tape or rope to tell people it is out of bounds.</p> <p>Remind children to keep hands away from mouths at the start of each session and importance of not putting anything that we find in our mouths. Insist on hand washing immediately after each session. Carry water/hand gel for hands at snack times.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p>
<b>Field layer</b> e.g hazardous plant species, trip hazards	<p>Stings from nettles.</p> <p>Logs and large branches hidden by long grass.</p> <p>Poisonous fungi</p> <p>Grass/tree pollen</p>	Children and adults could be stung/poisoned and have an allergic reaction.	M	<p>Remind children to look before they touch; teach them how to identify nettles and how the stings can be treated.</p> <p>Give safety talk to participants on poisonous plants/fungi.</p> <p>First aid kit on site.</p> <p>All adults to be aware of any allergies and Forest School Leader to carry medication required for children who suffer with allergies to tree/grass pollen.</p>	✓	L
<b>Ground layer</b>	Grass bank and mounds can become	Children and adult helpers could fall or	M	FS leader to check as part of daily site check	✓	L

e.g. uneven ground, slopes & surfaces, hidden obstacles	slippery and muddy when wet. Hidden/unseen logs	trip causing cuts, grazes, injury to bone or muscles.		Ensure clear pathway to the seating area/fire circle  Walking on the bank or the mound will not be allowed when it is excessively wet or muddy.  Grass is cut regularly.  Poles and long branches for den building can be stored in the 'stick store' when not in use.		
<b>Structures</b>  e.g. Shelters, camp area, rope structures, seating	Large poles and branches handled and moved to build shelters, collapse of shelter	Children and adults suffering trips falls or breakages	M	At start of programme no structures are present on site  Any structures created during the programme to be checked by FSL as part of daily site risk assessment procedure for security, stability and safety. Any unstable or unsafe structures to be dismantled or made safe.  Children must ask if they need to use rope and it is then used under adult supervision.	✓	L
<b>Animals/insects</b>  e.g livestock, dogs, deer, ticks, wasps etc.	Insect bites and stings	Children and adults could be stung and/or have an allergic reaction.  Children and adults may find ticks on their clothing/bodies.	H	Safety talk to all at start of session, including any areas that maybe 'hot spots' for wasps/bees (FS leader to identify during daily site check)  Consent forms to have details of any known allergies  Medication specific to pupils available for any specific reactions and conditions – and school medication policy followed  Adults and children are aware of ticks, what they are and what to look out for. Adults are aware of procedures if a tick is found.	✓	L
<b>Seasonal Weather conditions</b>  e.g prevailing winds, extreme temperatures	Hypothermia, sun burn	Children and adults start to feel unwell.	M	Weather forecast checked prior to session – FS leader will cancel session if weather is deemed severe (e.g. high winds)  Group able to leave site by returning to school at any time should weather change.  Participants are made aware of suitable clothing/kit before session starts	✓	L

Appendix 3 - Activity Risk Assessment: FIRE  
 April 2020, Reviewed by Sarah Cushion August 2022

Written and signed by J. Wones,



March 2016

Reviewed by Lucy Amis

Review date: Sept 2023

Benefits of using fire:		- can boost morale, particularly when mood is low due to weather, promotes group ethos and a central point, can be used to prepare hot drinks by the Forest School leader		
Hazards	Risks	Level of risk	Action	New level of risk
Fire siting and set-up of circle	over-enthusiasm and eagerness to help; running and poor behaviour	high	Circle games are played routinely at forest school so that the rules of how to move about the fire circle are understood before having a fire. The whole process is rehearsed over and over again through games such as 'animal name swap.' At each session children are asked to leave the fire circle as if there were a fire, going around the outside and never through the circle. Children will be reminded of rules of conduct before we set out, told what to expect and be limited to watching and helping collect wood; as soon as location is known area to be coned off for preparation - limits of circle clearly defined; adult constantly in this area; adults will be alerted to rules, and will be made aware of who exactly is allowed near the fire; First Aid box, water and Fire Blanket to be kept available at all times.	low
Wood collecting	Tripping and falling while collecting wood; trying to collect wood at high level; inappropriate behaviour	moderate	Children will have been told not to reach or jump for anything without first alerting an adult; rules (stick carrying and dragging) will be well established and policed by all including children.	low
laying fire	Splinters when handling sticks	low	Remind children constantly where they should be; 2 or 3 only at a time to help with setting the fire. Spatial awareness of others, lay one stick at a time.	low
lighting fire	smoke inhalation, poor attention	moderate	An adult is at the fire at all times – children understand rules of fire circle and are monitored; children know about moving around the fire circle away from smoke depending on wind direction.	low



attending to fire	smouldering wood; smoke, sparks, burns, poor behaviour	moderate	Children will have been told to remain seated around the fire, how to move around the outside of the fire circle and to walk when leaving the area. First Aid kit for minor injuries; water on standby.	low
Extinguishing fire and clearing area	smouldering wood; steam; poor behaviour	high	Demonstrate heat of black wood by pouring water on while children are seated at a safe distance; adults only will deal with the fire and put it out.	low

Appendix 4 - Activity Risk Assessment: TOOL USE  
 Amis April 2020, Reviewed by Sarah Cushion August 2022

Written and signed by J.



Wones, March 2016, Reviewed by Lucy


Review date: Sept 2023

Benefits of using tools:			- develops new practical skills, strengthens muscles, good physical activity, can support building confidence	
Hazards	Risks	Level of risk	Action	New level of risk
Storing any tool	Tools left out could injure children/adults		Tools are all counted in and out and are kept in a suitable locked container in one designated spot. FS Leader keeps the key and is in charge of what tools and how many are out at a time. Children must never be allowed to help themselves. Tools are given out for a purpose and all adults should model their correct use, storage and transportation at all times.	Low
Using any tool		High	Ratio of adult to child is 1:1 or 1:2. Adult decides whether child has skills ready to use tool. Pupils are aware of the zoned area for tool use and 'blood bubbles', ensuring they do not enter another person's. 'Tools down' procedure taught (1 sound of the whistle.) Walking only ever permitted with a tool. FS leader to check tools are maintained and in good working order regularly.	Low
Using a potato peeler or knife	Cuts, injuries to	High	3 point safety stance, knife held in dominant hand and cutting action is always away from the body. Potato peelers should only be used as a food prep tool and not for whittling wood.	low

	all participants			
Using a bow saw	Trips, slips whilst carrying tools can cause injury	High	Safe standing stance taught. One hand to be kept on the handle, the other hand to be holding the wood securely on the A frame. If working in a pair two hands can be on the saw while another child or adult can support the wood at the opposite end. Children are shown how to communicate effectively as a pair using both eye contact and vocal communication. Covers to be put on blades when not in use.	low
Using loppers		High	Safe standing stance. When carrying hold under fixed arm horizontal to ground, ensure blade points toward the floor.	low
Making holes with a palm drill, hand drill or gimlets		High	Safe standing/3 point stance. Use G clamp to secure wood where necessary or use a flat stable surface. Keep the tool vertical. Do not put hands under the wood that you are drilling into.	low

#### Appendix 5 - Activity Risk Assessment: FORAGING

Written and signed by L Amis (July 2020)



[Reviewed by Sarah Cushion August 2022.](#)

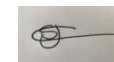
Review date: Sept 2023

Benefits of Foraging:		- Foraging allows children to explore in a safe environment under the supervision of adults, meaning they can become more aware and learn about their surroundings, plants and fungi. They will have opportunities to identify new plants, berries and fungi and learn how to know if they are safe to consume.		
Hazards	Risks	Level of risk	Action	New level of risk

Poisonous plants, berries and fungi	Children may get stung or develop rashes from certain plants.	high	Children are made aware of any poisonous plants within the Forest School site. They are educated about how to recognise them and the possible reactions they may get if they are touched. When foraging children are provided with gloves and encouraged to wear long trousers and long sleeved tops to avoid stings and are taught not to put their hands in their mouth at any stage during a Forest School session, or until they have been thoroughly washed with soap and running water.	low
	If eaten, children may suffer reactions to berries or other plants.	moderate	Adults check allergy information before each session and the Forest School Leader asks for allergy updates from parents at the beginning of a school year and mid-way through (April). Forest School leader is aware of plants, berries and fungi on site. Children will be taught not to eat anything unless it has been identified with the Forest School leader and they are confident it can be eaten. Foods will only be eaten after the session in line with our nil by mouth policy.	low

#### Appendix 6: Activity Risk Assessment: POND DIPPING

Written and signed by S. Cushion



September 2022.

Review date: Sept 2023

Benefits of pond dipping:		- allows children to work safely near water, provides opportunities for species ID and work on life cycles.		
Hazards	Risks	Level of risk	Action	New level of risk

Setting up the equipment	Putting the trays in the way of walkways, being unaware of space needed for each person to dip, therefore slips and trips could occur, including into the water.	High	All adults and children have appropriate footwear. Pond dipping will always be an adult supervised activity. Adult unlocks gate and has two children at a time pond dipping, one either side, kneeling on the decked area.	low
Filling/ emptying the trays with pond water	Over reaching and falling into the pond.	High	Trays to only be filled by adults. Depending on level of water throughout the year, adults to fill trays from the deck.	low
Dipping with the net	Over enthusiasm or over reaching could lead to children falling into the pond.	High	Children must kneel when dipping and are told not to over-reach. Children can place blue kneelers down if necessary. Only two children at a time are dipping.	low
Identifying species	Touching pond water – being exposed to water borne diseases.	High	Children taught to use their eyes and if appropriate a spoon to carefully collect a creature for identification. After children have finished dipping they will wash their hands before moving onto other activities.	low