



Knightsfield Forest School Handbook

Created for September 2024

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Section 1:

Statement of Understanding:

This is a handbook that is frequently updated with relevant policies and procedures which ensure our Forest School programme is following good practice.

Below are staff members and volunteers who have read, understood and agreed to the current version:

Name	Role
Linda Farenden	Acting Head teacher
Danny Bidwell	Deputy Head
Lucy Pope	School Business Manager
Alex Nottage	Forest School Leader
Sam Ramsay	TA
Vikki MacDonald	Teacher
Ben Berry	TA

Location:

Forest school will take place in a fully secure site in the grounds of Knightsfield School, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 7LW. What 3 Words location for the gate entrance from the playground into the Forest School site – remind.pushed.fade ([what3words /// The simplest way to talk about location](#))

What is Forest School?

Forest School is a child-centred inspirational learning process, that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term program that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting. Forest School has a developmental ethos shared by thousands of trained practitioners around the world, who are constantly developing their learning styles and skills to support new and imaginative learners. Its roots reach back to the open-air culture, friluftsliv, or free air life, seen as a way of life in Scandinavia where Forest School began. It arrived in the UK in 1993 and has grown from strength to strength since then. (Forest School Association)

Principles:

- Forest School (FS) is a **long-term process of frequent regular sessions**, in a woodland or natural environment. The cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review are integral elements.
- FS takes place in a **woodland or natural environment** to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
- FS uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.
- FS aims to promote the **holistic** development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
- FS offers learners the opportunity to take **supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves**.
- FS is run by **qualified Forest School practitioners** who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

Benefits:

At Knightsfield School we pride ourselves on giving our pupils as many opportunities as we can to ensure that they achieve their learning potential. This includes Forest School. There are so many benefits to spending time outside as well as covering many areas of development which encourages our pupils to become confident and independent members of society.

- Improved physical development – the pupils are able to gain physical stamina by lifting, carrying, and digging. Fine and gross motor skills are developed further with activities such as fire lighting, using tools, and tying knots.
- Increased confidence and self-esteem – the pupils are given the flexibility to make choices in the activities that they choose, they are given the freedom and time and space to learn at their own pace, giving them the ability to gain confidence, self-esteem and encourage the perseverance that creates resilience.
- Improved language and communication – being outside gives the pupils more opportunities to talk and communicate about what they are seeing, asking questions, negotiating, learning new words and what they mean.
- Improved social skills – many of the activities at Forest school involve working together and sharing experiences, which gives the student opportunities to make friends, give each other encouragement and praise.
- Improved emotional well being – reflection is an important part of each forest school session, this gives the group a chance to learn new vocabulary and understand how they feel.
- Understanding the World – Learning about and developing respect for the natural environment. Having space and time to explore the outside area.
- Increased Knowledge and understanding – being outside gives opportunity to develop and interest in natural surrounding and respect for the environment, and also time to increase knowledge and understanding of self outside on the classroom.

Weather and Clothing:

"There's no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing." — Alfred Wainwright

During our forest school sessions, we try to ensure everyone is suitably dressed, so that they can be comfortable in whatever the weather. **We have alternative suitable shelter for the day (this may be in the form of tarpaulins, the hut or classroom)**

We go to forest school in all weathers. On occasions where the weather is extreme we may find an area away from the forest school site to have our session. This may be in the playground, the hall or in a classroom:

Weather		
Cold	Warm	Wet
Jumper	Long sleeved T-shirt	Waterproof jacket
Coat	Long trousers/Jeans or	Waterproof trousers
Trousers	Leggings/Joggers	Wellington boots/sturdy
Thick socks	Socks	Waterproof walking boots
Walking boots or wellington boots	Trainers/walking boots	Spare socks
Woolly hat	Sun hat/cap	
Scarf	Sun cream	
Gloves	Insect repellent	
Thermals		

Extreme weather can include unexpected hot or cold weather, very wet or windy or thunderstorms. The weather forecast and site is checked before each session so we can plan and risk assess accordingly.

Guidelines for Wind Speeds:

Beaufort Scale	Description and Wind Speeds	Land Signs	Comments
0-3	<i>Calm to gentle breeze</i> <1 - 10 knots 0 - 19 kph 0 - 12 mph	Light flags extended Leaves in constant gentle motion	Ideal conditions
4	<i>Moderate breeze</i> 11 – 16 knots 20-28 kph 12.1 – 17.9 mph	Most flags extend fully Small branches move Dust and loose paper may be raised	Generally fine for FS to continue
5	<i>Fresh Breeze</i> 17 – 21 knots 29 – 38 kph 18 – 23.6 mph	Small trees in leaf sway Tops of trees sway in noticeable motion	OK to continue provided site has been thoroughly checked for dislodged branches and dead trees/branches but dead trees/branches but be prepared to move off site if wind increases
6	<i>Strong Breeze</i> 22 – 27 knots 38 – 49 kph 23.6 – 30.9 mph	Large Branches in motion Umbrellas used with difficulty	Alternative area away from forest school site for session such as playground, hall or classroom
7	<i>Near gale</i> 28 – 33 knots 50 – 61 kph 31 – 38 mph	Whole trees in motion Inconvenience walking against the wind	Alternative area away from forest school site for session such as playground, hall or classroom

Section 2: Procedures and Protocols

Forest School Behaviour:

This behaviour policy has been created to reflect the Forest School ethos in conjunction with the Knightsfield School Behaviour Policy and Procedures.

At Forest School we encourage positive behaviour by:

- FS Creating 'ground rules' with the pupils' input
- FS Phrase positively e.g. 'put tools in bag after use' (not 'don't leave tools on the ground')
- FS Modelling positive behaviour – e.g. kindness, listening, enthusiasm
- FS Re-enforcing positive behaviour with specific praise e.g. 'it was kind of you to help him'
- FS Being consistent and fair with limits/expectations
- FS Remaining approachable so pupils feel comfortable to share concerns

We manage negative behaviour by:

- FS Making it clear that it is the behaviour that is unwelcome, never the student
- FS Considering whether the student has an unmet need that we can easily remedy e.g. is hungry, cold, or needs to go to the toilet
- FS Reminding the student of our agreed ground rules and give them a chance to take a minute to reflect
- FS If a negative behaviour is continued after these initial measures, removing the student from activities and a member of staff staying with the student for a 'time in' to reflect on the behaviour and work together to develop different coping strategies for next time (dependent on whether the student needs time to calm down).
- FS Recurring problems will be addressed in accordance with the Knightsfield behaviour policy. If a student persistently behaves in a dangerous manner and is at risk or harming themselves or another student, alternative provision will have to be found for them during forest school sessions

Risk Management:

Forest School actively develops pupils' awareness of risk as well as their confidence in managing risk. One of the first activities adults do at Forest School is to take pupils around the boundary of the site discussing together the things we need to be careful of, allowing all parties to share their perceptions of risk. As much of Forest School is student-led this method of risk management is continually developed. Initially as pupils explore and staff able to sensitively encourage consideration of the hazards, to facilitate opportunities for pupils to engage with and experience appropriate risk safely. As the pupils' confidence and ability to manage risk grows, they are able to explore more independently and put into practice their own judgments.

Knightsfield Forest School sessions will be informed by various risk assessments depending on the sessions and they include:

- FS General Risk Assessment including site, tools, fire & activities.
- FS Dynamic Risk Assessment
- FS Individual Pupils' Risk Assessment (see FS folder – also printed separately)

Missing Students:

Please see Knightsfield Missing Student Policy. Forest school will be considered an outdoor lesson for this policy.

Forest school takes place on school grounds in a secure area. There are 3 access points; the gate to the car park from the playground which is kept locked at all times, the gate to the school field and the gate from the playground where pupils access the site. This gate is kept locked when the area is not in use. During sessions the gate will be closed but not locked. Pupils will inform a member of staff if they need to leave the site. If a student is not where they are expected to be a member of staff will radio the school office for assistance and follow the Knightsfield Missing Student policy.

Accident & Emergency:

The Forest School site has been checked and has direct access for emergency services from the car park via a locked gate to the playground. A pre-check of the site will be made daily before each session starts.

Accidents occurring at Forest School must be reported to the office where information will be recorded using their existing systems. The Forest School leader has received QNUK Level 3 Award in Forest School First aid and in addition QNUK Level 3 Award in Paediatric First Aid training as of July 2024.

Following an accident, the Forest School leader will review any relevant policies and procedures to check if the accident or incident highlights any current or potential issues with the current protocols.

In the case of an accident:

- Ⓜ The Forest School leader will assess the situation and the extent of any injuries; they will also inform another member of staff so that there is both support staff and witnesses.
- Ⓜ First aid can be administered by the Forest School leader and the medical records will be logged accordingly, this should include the time and details of the incident.
- Ⓜ If the Forest School leader requires additional assistance, they will follow the school First Aid procedures and radio the office to let them know that they will be sending a student to them. Alternatively, they will radio the office for additional assistance. - didn't see a First Aid policy in the folder
- Ⓜ If a child has burned themselves, in line with First Aid protocol, they will submerge the burned area in tepid water (fire bucket) for an extended period of time (at least 20 minutes) and first aid procedures will be followed.

Emergency Services:

- Ⓜ If emergency services are required, then the Forest School leader will ensure the immediate safety of the casualty and call 999 directly. The school office will be notified and if needed assistance requested.
- Ⓜ A member of staff will be sent to meet the ambulance and bring the paramedics to the casualty.
- Ⓜ The other pupils will be called back to the site and accounted for.
- Ⓜ Another member of staff will take the other pupils away from the casualty or danger and keep them occupied and safe.
- Ⓜ The Forest School leader will perform any necessary first aid on the casualty until the paramedics arrive.
- Ⓜ If the casualty is taken to hospital, a member of school staff will accompany them. The casualty's parents will be informed of the incident and details will be recorded (name, date, time, reason for





the visit, treatment/advice given). This is then signed by the staff member in attendance and a member of SLT.

Fire Management:

Forest School is an ideal way to introduce fires in a safe, controlled, managed and rewarding way. It should only be introduced when the Forest Leader is confident that the pupils can follow the fire safety procedures/rules. Learning where a fire can, or cannot, be lit, ensuring proper supervision, learning how to manage a small fire, how to extinguish it thoroughly and leave no trace are all important elements of the outdoor fire process.






Fires should only be considered an activity if there is a genuine purpose for it and this might include heating water, cooking and keeping warm!

Activities may include:

-  Using a fire steel
-  Boiling water
-  Small campfire
-  Cooking food




Any fire activity should be risk assessed - this can be found in the Forest School Risk Assessments

Appropriateness of fire pit site

-  The fire pit has been built away from low canopy branches and is 3 metres from trees and bushes.
-  The site of the fire pit is on level ground
-  A raised fire pit has been created in order to minimise the spread of fire
-  Mud has been used in the raised fire pit to minimise the spread of fire and if need be a metal fire bowl can be used within the fire pit
-  If winds are high a fire will not be lit






Fire Safety Equipment

Before any fire activity can be undertaken it is essential that the following equipment is easily available and next to the fire site (not in the fire circle). The equipment consists of:

-  Fire blanket
-  Bucket of water
-  Heat resistant gloves

Introducing Fire Activities

Good practice is to introduce the pupils to the 3 or 5 “Ps” and the fire triangle. The Ps consists of :

-  Permission
-  Purpose
-  Put it Out
-  Patience
-  Persistence

Fire Circle

For a campfire, a fire circle should be established with the aim of preventing pupils' close access to the fire whilst having the ability to enjoy it. The fire pit in our forest school is surrounded by seating logs at least 1.5 metres from the fire pit.

Pupils will be taught how to change seats by standing, stepping backwards over the seating and then walking around the outside of the seating area. They must never cross into the inner area unless invited to do so. Several sessions might be needed before the Forest School Leader is confident all pupils will do this. Pupils will be encouraged to use the phrase "Red Dragon" to remind each other of the rule to not enter the fire circle.

Fire Preparation

Pupils will learn about the different types of fire wood and a wood store will be created on the site. The pupils can take responsibility for foraging and sourcing the wood, putting it into the wood store and choosing the most appropriate wood for burning on the fire.

Fire Safety Rules

- 🔥 Fire should always be supervised by an adult at all times.
- 🔥 When the fire is in use pupils are not permitted within the fire circle unless they are invited by the adult.
- 🔥 Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the pupils: they are advised to turn their bodies/heads to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes and count to 30 (or ask an adult/peer to count for them), or move to a different part of the fire circle.

Fire Lighting

- 🔥 Only adults are permitted to light fires, unless pupils are under the direct supervision of the Forest School Leader or suitable adult and are invited to do so.
- 🔥 Fires are lit using cotton wool or other suitable natural material, Vaseline if needed and a fire steel.
- 🔥 No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- 🔥 If sessions involve pupils adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one-to-one adult supervision.
- 🔥 Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire.

Using the Fire

- 🔥 Long hair, scarves or any items of clothing dangling should be secured away.
- 🔥 When an adult or a child is using the fire they should adopt the "Respect" position with one knee down and the other up to allow rapid exit from the fire.
- 🔥 The number of pupils accessing the fire should be limited to prevent pushing or tripping.
- 🔥 Once the fire activity is over (i.e. cooking marshmallows) the pupils should leave the fire circle.

Extinguishing

- 🔥 All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- 🔥 Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- 🔥 Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
- 🔥 At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.

- 🔥 “Feeling” for the heat should be used to ensure no heat is present if so, douse with more water.
- 🔥 All traces of the fire should be removed and leaves etc used to cover fire site.

Using a Fire Steel

Pupils can practice using fire steels and most of the above applies with the additional consideration given:

- 🔥 Practice striking a fire steel down away from themselves and others
- 🔥 Practice it onto fluffed up bud of cotton wool
- 🔥 When lit pupils are responsible for that mini fire until it has burnt out – this will only be done in the main fire pit

Camping Kettles

- 🔥 Only adults are to light the fire unless pupils are under the direct supervision of the Forest School Leader or suitable adult
- 🔥 The kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground or grill.
- 🔥 Pupils must be seated at least 1.5 metres away from the kettle.
- 🔥 Pupils can feed the fire with one-to-one supervision but they must have been shown how to do so safely. (stick held at the end and dropped in from the side; hand should never be placed over the top of the kettle)
- 🔥 Fuel should burn itself out, but if it doesn't it must be extinguished
- 🔥 Kettles should only be removed from fire by an adult wearing fire safety gloves (hold each side of handle and lift off. Take care not to put hand above chimney of kettle or over spout)]
- 🔥 Pupils must not be holding cups when water is poured – this must only be done on a flat surface

Cooking & Food Hygiene:

Snack time and cooking on a fire is a regular feature of our Forest School sessions everything from having bread sticks, marshmallows to a cooked meal.

The member of staff accompanying the Forest School Leader has completed an Annual Award in Food Hygiene & Safety for Schools and Workplaces online course in July 2022. This is valid for 3 years.

Staff will apply food hygiene controls in line with Food Standards Agency guidance and good practice. This will include:

- 🔥 Food/ingredients will be stored at correct temperatures prior to the session and checked to ensure they are in-date and not subject to contamination by pests, mould etc. A cool box will be used to transport and store any ingredients requiring refrigeration prior to use at the Forest School site. Raw meat and fish should be stored cold separately from cooked meats, cereals, dairy products etc. All cooking utensils, crockery etc. will be checked to ensure they are clean before use.
- 🔥 Preparation area set up to prevent physical contamination.
- 🔥 Use separate chopping boards & utensils in preparing vegetables, fish and meat.
- 🔥 All hair will be tied back and loose clothing secured prior to cooking on a campfire.
- 🔥 Food must be cooked to a temperature at or above 70° C.
- 🔥 Prior to any eating of snacks or meals all participants required to wash their hands using the washing facilities set up or hand gel.
- 🔥 All medical records must be checked to ensure that no food item or ingredient is given to a child or adult with an allergy to it

- 🍷 Knightsfield is a nut free school
- 🍷 Cooked food will not be re-heated.
- 🍷 Waste food will be disposed of promptly.

COSHH: Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

We have a duty under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 to prevent staff and pupils at Forest School sessions from coming into contact with substances hazardous to health. Below is only the policy relating to Forest School.

Material and Substances

It is policy to, wherever possible; avoid the use of substances that have the risk of being hazardous to health. Staff who use these chemicals and materials have the duty of care to make themselves aware of the potential hazard, contradictions and treatments.

Control Measures

We have conducted a risk assessment in relation to all substances used on our FS sessions and concluded that no substance presents a high risk.

1. The majority of substances used within the sessions are of domestic standard for household use and therefore do not present any threat to health and are safe to use
2. Staff have put general hygiene measures in place, together with the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) to further ensure the safety of employees
3. All substances are correctly stored in clearly labelled containers
4. When used on sites cleaning substances are safely stored away from the pupils
5. Adequate washing facilities and hand gel are available at the FS sessions
6. All waste products, including medical waste is disposed of safely in accordance with statutory regulations and done in a way to minimise the ecological impact.

Manual Handling:

The purpose of this guidance is to introduce procedures and provide training designed to ensure that staff apply an ergonomic approach whilst carrying out tasks and operations that involve manual handling, in order to prevent injury.

Responsibilities of Staff:

- 🍷 Read risk assessments prior to attending sessions
- 🍷 Follow safe tool usage guidance to ensure proper use of equipment provided
- 🍷 Co-operate with Senior Management Team and Maintenance team on health and safety matters
- 🍷 Inform Senior Management Team if they identify hazardous handling activities
- 🍷 Take care to ensure that their activities do not put others at risk.

Common Tasks and Operations involving Manual Handling Operations include:

- 🍷 Helping a student up or down from somewhere
- 🍷 Lifting and moving equipment or natural items, e.g. tree trunk.
- 🍷 Maintenance and setting up of the site

When lifting an object off the ground, employees should assume a squatting position, keeping the back straight. The load should be lifted by straightening the knees, not the back. Staff should not attempt to lift or move a load which is too heavy to manage comfortably. They should ask for assistance if there is any danger of strain. Lifting and moving of heavy objects should be done by mechanical devices rather than manual handling wherever reasonably practicable. The equipment used should be appropriate for the task at hand. The load to be lifted or moved must be inspected for sharp edges and wet patches. The route over which the load is to be lifted should be inspected to ensure it is free of obstructions.

Environmental Procedures and Ecological Assessment:

- Our aim that all our pupils and staff respect our forest school area and are all encouraged to help think about ways we can help sustain it.
- We aim to use products that are less harmful to the environment for example natural paints instead of manmade paint. We aim to reduce our waste and recycle and compost where possible. We hope that this demonstrates a respect for the wider environment.
- Activities such as having fires will follow practices that minimise the impact on the environment, being mindful of the local wildlife and what is being burnt.

	Impact on				
Education activity	Ground layer (above and below soil)	field/herb layer (plants to knee height)	Understorey (shrubs / small trees)	Canopy layer (tree tops)	Actions to reduce impacts
Path clearing / creation	Flora may be cleared and removed. Regular use will limit growth	Flora may be cleared or removed. Regular use will limit growth	Branches may be cut / lopped if they are over the path		Only clear necessary areas. Only lop / cut branches that hinder participants safe access. Wild areas will be left alone for plants to grow. After cutting they may regrow and recover around the paths
Minibeast hunting	Trampling of habitats and minibeasts	Disturbing / trampling of habitats and minibeasts	Disturbing habitats		Educate participants on how to respect habitats and look after mini beasts. Return minibeasts to their habitats. Rotate dead wood / areas that are used for minibeast hunting to allow recovery
Nature walk	Trampling of flora and fauna. Erosion of grass areas / pathways. Trampling / disturbance to habitats.	Disturbing habitats. Trampling flora. Picking of flora.	Disturbing habitats / birds	Disturbing birds	Stay to paths where they exist. Stay off waterlogged grass. Rotate areas used to minimise erosion and ground damage and allow recovery. Educate participants on how to respect nature.
Digging	Destroying / disturbing flora and habitats.	Destroying / disturbing flora and habitats.			Educate participants on leaving the area as it was. Dig in a clear area to minimise impact on ground layers. Rotate areas to allow recovery.

	Erosion and damage to the ground. Leaving mess within the area	Leaving mess within the area.			
Log circle	Destroying / removal of flora and fauna to create a clear area plus maintenance. Disturbance to habitats (eg placement of logs) Ground trampling / erosion due to regular use.	Destroying / removal of flora and fauna to create a clear area plus maintenance. Disturbance to habitats.	Overhanging branches may be removed to create a clear area. Disturbance to habitats.	Overhanging branches may be removed to create a clear area. Disturbance to habitats.	Once the clearing has taken place, other areas will remain wild to compensate. Plant within the site where possible to create new wildflower areas. Give the area a rest during holidays.
Tree climbing	Destroying / trampling flora. Destroying habitats. Trampling / eroding the ground.	Trampling of flora. Disturbing habitats.	Disturbing habitats. Damaging branches	Disturbing habitats. Damaging branches / trees	Rotate the trees used for climbing. Educate participants on how to respect trees and wildlife.
Running games	Trampling of flora / fauna. Habitats destroyed. Erosion of the ground through overuse.	Trampling of flora / fauna. Disturbing habitats.	Disturbing habitats.		Rotate the areas used to prevent overuse and allow recovery. Educate participants on where they can run / play

Crafting with wood	Trampling of flora / fauna. Erosion of ground in collection of wood.	Trampling of flora / fauna. Disturbance of habitats in wood collection.	Overuse of wood taken from shrubs.	Overuse of wood taken from trees.	Use resources from the ground where possible to minimise amount taken from the area. Educate participants when lopping which areas / branches can be cut. Coppicing can allow regrowth so rotate trees / shrubs used.
Shelter building	Trampling of flora / fauna. Habitats destroyed / disturbed.	Trampling of flora / fauna. Habitats destroyed / disturbed eg deadwood may be used for building	Picking leaves/ damaging flora.	Damage tree when building the shelter. Picking branches.	Educate participants to only use wood / resources from the floor that have already fallen. Replace logs used.
Fire pit	Burning soil destroys the ground / habitats	Flora at risk of burning	Flora at risk of burning. Smoke damage	Smoke damage	Must be in an open space to reduce risk of branches catching fire Choose the soil / site very carefully ensuring it's clear (clay base is fine for ground level fire pit) Have fires on a rotational basis rather than frequently to allow the area to recover (eg end of a 6 week activity cycle)
Rope swing	Flora / fauna trampled or damaged	Flora / fauna damaged	Risk of damage to flora	Risk of damage to trees – they could snap from the pressure / rope damage	Clear the area being used to minimise damage to flora / fauna. Rotate area used to allow it to recover. Always remove ropes so trees are not damaged.

What benefits could there be to the site?

- Participants can be educated on how to look after the site and become stewards for the site and surrounding area.
- Participants can take a responsible role in the conservation, protection, maintenance and upkeep of the site.
- Participants will have an improved awareness and understanding of the site and take care of the flora / fauna.
- Even though parts of the area will be cleared for access and safety, planting and protection of wild areas will allow the site to increase its biodiversity.
- Participants can ensure all litter is removed and learn the importance of this for the site and surrounding area.

Woodland Management Plan for Knightsfield Site:

Feature	Location	Current Situation	Target Situation	How to achieve?	How monitored?	Who?	Time Scale
Approach to forest school site	Area from the playground / canopy area to the forest school site	Grass – approach to forest school site not especially accessible at present for participants with physical disabilities. The grass also gets waterlogged or frozen	To create an accessible pathway to the forest school site that all participants can use. Monitor and maintain the pathway.	Create a path – needs to be minimal cost and flat for participants to use safely	Monitor the condition of the path that has been created and ensure it is safe and useable. Weekly site check	School, Site Manager and Forest School Leader	Summer term prior to forest school starting in September Ongoing maintenance all years
Create pathways within forest school site	Within wooded area allocated on grounds for Forest school site	Overgrown area with brambles and other ground / herb level shrubs	To create pathways and clear areas within the site being used so participants can move around safely	Clear brambles and create pathways and clearings for participants to move around without fear of falling	Review weekly with site check prior to each session. Liaise with Site manager if needed	School, Site Manager and Forest School Leader	Summer term Ongoing maintenance all years
Fencing on the boundary of forest school site area	On the boundary of the school behind the forest school site	Check all fencing is secure	To ensure fences are maintained and intact to make sure participants are safe within the school grounds	Weekly site check. If action needed liaise with Site Manager	Check weekly prior to sessions	For identifying potential problems- Forest School Leader, plus Site Manager if needed	To be reviewed half termly. Ongoing all years.
Trees/canopy	Throughout wooded area used for Forest School on site.	Assess trees to ensure the site is safe for participants	All trees to be assessed and then maintained in a natural state with minimal intervention. Lop lower branches that may be a hazard to participants with poorer vision.	Advice and review from Tree Surgeon. Intervention kept to a minimum.	Initial tree survey. Half yearly reviews with annual tree survey in the spring unless adverse weather conditions. Weekly site check.	School and Forest School Leader Plus Tree Surgeon / Site Manager	Initial check in the summer term by a tree surgeon. Ongoing monitoring all years. Annual review and check from tree surgeon

Feature	Location	Current Situation	Target Situation	How to achieve?	How monitored?	Who?	Time Scale
Nettles	Throughout the wooded area of the forest school site	Assess the location of nettles and whether management is required	Ensure the area is clear and safe for participants	Review termly and 'cut back' in the spring if management of nettles is required	Review termly	Forest school Leader and school / Site Manager if action is needed	Initial review in the summer term. Ongoing in all years
Dead wood (ground level and canopy)	Throughout the wooded area of the forest school site on the ground	Assess the amount (if any) of fallen trees and branches on the ground	If there is fallen wood, maintain as a natural habitat for animals and invertebrates throughout the wooded area. Ensure any dead wood in the canopy is safe.	Dead wood not to be removed in order to preserve habitats and barrier. Regular monitoring and risk assessments of the canopy layer and site.	Reviewed weekly with site check and half termly with Site Manager. If there has been a strong winds prior to use the site must be checked to ensure safe use.	Forest School Leader and Site Manager	Initial check over the summer term. Ongoing all years
Shrub/field layer	Throughout the wooded area site used for forest school	Assess the species and density of the area	To be maintained in its natural condition with some intervention if it impacts the participants use of the woods e.g. overgrows on to path areas.	Forest School leader to monitor. Older participants to assist with clearance and maintenance.	Weekly site check Overview termly	Forest School Leader and if needed School / Site Manager and	Initial check and survey over the summer term. Ongoing all years
Ground level including grass area	All areas of the woodland site used for Forest school	Assess the species and density of the area. Assess the safety of using the grass area for participants.	To maintain ground layer in its natural state by rotating areas used for activities. Educate participants on how to respect and help preserve the ground layer when in the woods.	Rotating the areas used for the planned activities and area to be 'rested' during school holidays. Avoid using the grass areas if waterlogged.	Weekly site check Overview termly	Forest School Leader and if needed School / Site Manager	Initial check and survey over the summer term. Ongoing all years
Brambles	Area within and surrounding the forest school site	Assess which areas of brambles might interfere with activities	To keep area clear in order that forest school site can be used to its maximum potential	Cut back the brambles if required	Weekly with site check. Overview termly.	Forest schools Leader plus School / Site Manager if needed	Initial check in the summer term. Ongoing all years.

Outdoor seating circle	Area within the wooded forest school site	Assess the most suitable area within the site	To create and maintain a small clearing and place seating for participants to meet and sit safely	Maintain the surrounding area to ensure safe and clear access. Check and monitor condition of seating	Weekly site check Check seating half termly	Forest schools Leader Site Manager to assist with maintenance of the seating	Initial planning and placing in the summer term Ongoing all years
Feature	Location	Current Situation	Target Situation	How to achieve?	How monitored?	Who?	Time Scale
Wildlife and nesting birds	Forest school site and surrounding area	Assess where there are nesting birds and habitats within the forest school site and surrounding area	To maintain a balanced environment to ensure that all wildlife is protected and flourishes in the wooded area and surroundings without too much disturbance	Habitats to be maintained e.g. Dead wood and replaced if required. Participants encouraged and educated not to disturb habitats without cause. If removed to be placed carefully back. During the nesting season, encourage participants to be quiet near the nests and minimise disturbance during sessions as not to frighten parent birds away permanently.	Weekly site check Overview termly	Forest schools Leader	Initial check in the summer term. Ongoing all years Check Seasonally
Fire Circle	Within seating circle in forest school site	Assess suitability of location for potential fire pit	To create and maintain an area to have open fires safely	Monitor and maintain the area to ensure safety of participants and the forest school site. Cut back canopy branches if needed.	Weekly site check Review half termly	Forest school Leader plus school / Site Manager	Ongoing maintenance

Curriculum Plan Summary per Year Group:

There will be a degree of flexibility with any annual curriculum plan due to weather implications and pupil interests:

Year 5/6

- 🔗 Build a raised bed from pallet wood
- 🔗 Plant wildflowers and vegetables to create biodiversity
- 🔗 Create and maintain a mini beast area with logs
- 🔗 Create habitats and feeding areas for birds
- 🔗 Maintain the low-level shrubs
- 🔗 Learn about nature through arts and craft activities
- 🔗 Minibeast identification

Year 7

- 🔗 Build a raised bed from pallet wood
- 🔗 Plant wildflowers and vegetables to create biodiversity
- 🔗 Create and maintain a mini beast area with pallets
- 🔗 Tree identification activities and crafts
- 🔗 Minibeast identification
- 🔗 Team building activities

Year 8

- 🔗 Build a raised bed from pallet wood
- 🔗 Plant wildflowers and herbs to create biodiversity
- 🔗 Maintain the area (shrubs and trees)
- 🔗 Use tools safely
- 🔗 Build shelters / dens
- 🔗 Mindfulness activities
- 🔗 Fire lighting

Year 9

- 🔗 Build a raised bed from pallet wood
- 🔗 Plant wildflowers to create biodiversity
- 🔗 Maintain the area (shrubs and trees)
- 🔗 Use tools safely
- 🔗 Build shelters / dens
- 🔗 Cooking on the fire
- 🔗 Fire light

Section 3: Tool Use

Tool Safety:

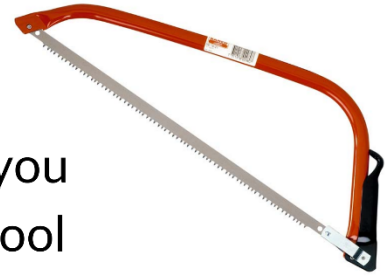
More details rules specific to individual tools can be found in the Tool Resources sheets.

General rules:



- Ⓢ Tools used after briefing and modelling under supervision of Forest School leader.
- Ⓢ Safe working distances to be used at all times. Pupils to be made aware of personal space and not entering other's space when using tools.
- Ⓢ Long hair to be tied back.
- Ⓢ The use of tools will be at a ratio of 1 child to 1 adult
- Ⓢ Only adults that feel comfortable with using tools will supervise students.
- Ⓢ Tools stored safely and well maintained. Sharp tools will be kept locked in a padlocked tool box and only removed by the Forest School leader or an assisting member of staff.
- Ⓢ Tools to be counted in and out at the beginning and end of sessions.
- Ⓢ Gloves to be thick enough to protect hands sufficiently.
- Ⓢ Have First aid kit to hand.
- Ⓢ Ensure first aid trained staff onsite.

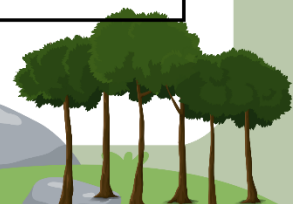
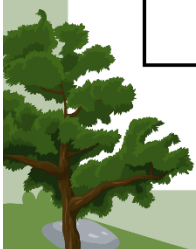


The Bow Saw



Use the information below to help you stay 'on the safe side' in Forest School

Glove	Yes. On sawing hand only
Walk	Guard on. Held by top of the saw. Saw holding downwards in line with leg
Pass	Guard on. Pass with blade faced downwards
Placed	Guard on. In designated storage
What for?	Cutting wood with a diameter bigger than a coin
Blades	Green wood blade  Dry/Dead wood blade 
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kneel in the respect position with legs away from the saw blade and the wood off the ground.• Or Use a saw horse to support wood.• Stand so the saw is drawn freely to the side of the body.• Saw in writing hand.• 3 starter cuts before beginning to saw.• Pupils to receive 1:1 adult support
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean after each session• Ensure blade is guarded when not in use• Replace blade as and when needed




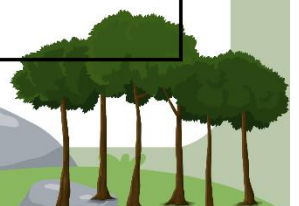
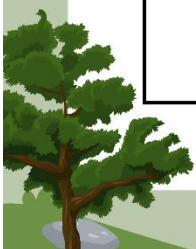


Loppers



Use the information below to help you stay 'on the safe side' in Forest School

Glove	NO. Both hands needed for grip.
Walk	Carry loppers closed, tucked under arm, holding lower handle, end pointing down.
Pass	Pass handles towards friend, blades towards the floor.
Placed	When not cutting, blades closed in designated area.
What for?	Cutting wood with a diameter up to about 4cm.
Blades	Bypass Loppers (green wood) Anvil Loppers (dry/dead wood) 
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modelled by adult.• Hold the handles at the ends when cutting.• Keep parts of the body, especially fingers away from cutting zone.• Bracing hand to be away from cutting zone.• To be supervised by suitable adult.
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean and dry blades after each session.• Check for rust and sharpness on a regular basis.• Sharpen/replace as necessary.
Storage	Store in a locked tool box



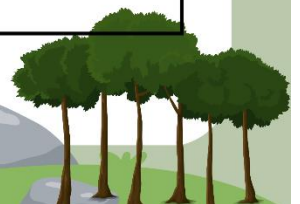
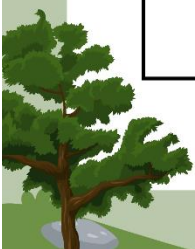


Secateurs

Use the information below to help you stay 'on the safe side' in Forest School



Glove	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Glove on hand holding wood steady.• Tool hand no glove.
Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep blades closed.• Carry at your side with hand on shaft
Pass	Pass with handles towards friend
Placed	Blades locked when not in use
What for?	To cut small twigs no thicker than 2cm
Storage	Store in locked tool box
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modelled by adult.• Hold the handles at the ends when cutting.• Keep parts of the body, especially fingers away from cutting zone.• To be supervised by suitable adult.
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean and dry blades after each session.• Check for rust and sharpness on a regular basis.• Sharpen/replace as necessary.



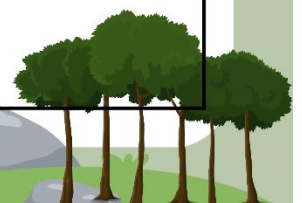
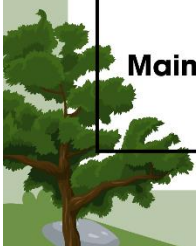


Knives



Use the information below to help you stay 'on the safe side' in Forest School

Glove	Yes. On non tool hand
Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk, don't run. • If using a knife, it should be clipped into sheath, and carried alike a bag on string over head and shoulder. (to be modelled by an adult/FSL). • Peelers should be held by the handle. Blade pointing downwards.
Pass	Pass with handle facing friend
Placed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When not in use, peelers should be place in locked box. • Knives should be placed in sheaths, string wrapped around, placed inlocked box.
What for?	To whittle wood
Storage	Store in a locked tool box
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware blades are sharp • Whittle sitting down. • Ensure area is safe before beginning. • Elbows on knees, hold stick pointing down, between/beside legs. • Whittle downwards away from body.
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and dry before putting away. • Check blades for rust regularly. • Replace/sharpen when necessary.





Palm & Hand Drill



Use the information below to help you stay 'on the safe side' in Forest School

Glove	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Glove on hand holding wood steady.• Tool hand no glove.
Walk	Walk. Don't run
Pass	Pass with the handle facing a friend
Placed	In designated storage
What for?	To make holes in wood
Storage	Store in a locked tool box
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware drill bit is sharp.• Place wood for drilling on a hard surface.• Hold wood steady and press down firmly with drill and twist.• Reverse twist to remove drill.• Check progress to avoid drilling into surface underneath.
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean and dry before putting away.• Check blades for rust regularly.• Replace when necessary.

