



Forest school Handbook

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Welcome to Forest School

Forest school is an educational experience that allows learners to learn outside of the classroom. It gives them the opportunity to develop new skills and find new interests through hands on experiences in an outdoor environment. Forest School has the ability to develop a learner's confidence and self-esteem, give them a chance to understand and manage their own risks and allow them to take ownership and responsibility for their own play and activities.

The aim is for each activity to be achievable and engaging for every learner. These activities will run throughout the year with learners working with tools, learning through play, and engaging with new skills such as shelter and fire building.



Forest School Principles

Principle 1

Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

We have a site on school that we can use and we also have the local woods which is a 20minute walk away from school where there is a den building area. Reception will take part in weekly sessions throughout the year and year groups 1-6 will have a half-term each and during this half term they will have a session each week- all sessions take place in the morning.

Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
Each session will take place on one of our sites unless unsafe to do so. It will allow learners to connect with the natural environment and experience changes that the environment goes through. Learners will be inspired and create a link with nature by being in it continuously.

Principle 2

Principle 3

Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

Sessions will be linked to home, work and school where possible to allow learners to develop in many ways- Social, Physical, Intellectual, Communication, Emotional and Spiritual (SPICES). Learners are encouraged to choose their own learning and learn through play.

Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Forest school is all about allowing learners to be able to assess risks and know what risks to take. It is known that risk taking is an important part of children's development. Within sessions learners will be encouraged to assess risks to build up resilience and gain skills of risk assessment that are needed throughout their life.

Principle 4

Principle 5

Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

The sessions will be led by a qualified leader who also holds an up-to-date first aid qualification. The aim will be for the sessions to have a ratio of 1:5 plus any additional adults that are needed to support the group. CPD will help to continuously develop skills and ensure that best practice is in place throughout every session.

Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning

Sessions will be linked to what the learners are interested in and learners will be able to choose what they do during the session, so they will have responsibility for their own learning. A community where everyone learns and feels safe will be created through shared experiences, expectations and routines.

Principle 6

Benefits of Forest School

All ages and abilities are welcome at Forest School with the aim being that everyone gains new skills and knowledge. It gives all learners the chance to learn outside of a classroom and gain new experiences, this also helps those learners who struggle with classroom learning.

Every learner has a chance to achieve and experience praise from the leaders and volunteers. This allows learners to increase their confidence and self-esteem. By achieving and receiving praise, learners can change their attitude to learning and find that learning is to be enjoyed and that curiosity is a big part of learning. The hope is that this is then transferred into classroom learning and any other area that learning can take place.

Forest School also:

- ✿ Develops physical abilities including fine and gross motor skills.
- ✿ Improves problem solving and communication skills.
- ✿ Promotes both independent and co-operative learning.
- ✿ Increases knowledge and understanding of the natural world.
- ✿ Helps learners to take a responsibility for our natural environment.
- ✿ Encourages learners to take care of themselves and assess their own risks.
- ✿ Meets sections of the national curriculum

Forest School also looks at each child as a whole and supports them as they develop Socially, Physically, Intellectually, Creatively, Emotionally and Spiritually (SPICES).

Socially- co-operating with both peers and adults and developing communication skills e.g. sharing ideas, building shelters together and making decisions together.

Physically- develop both fine and gross motor skills e.g. tree climbing, knot tying, using tools and nature crafting.

Intellectually- learning something new or developing skills, language development and reasoning e.g. learning new vocabulary and letting them solve their own problems.

Creatively- using imagination, problem solving and critical thinking e.g. developing their own ideas, approaching a task in their own way and allowing them to try and use a range of resources.

Emotionally- recognising how they feel, knowing they are valued and developing resilience e.g. understanding our emotions and others' emotions and allowing them to find another way when something doesn't work.

Spiritually- knowing right from wrong, developing empathy and having respect for others and the natural world e.g. allowing them to create rules to a game and learning how to teach those rules during a game and learning about the natural environment and how we can help it.

Forest School at St Bartholomew's

Reception will have forest school for the full year with 6 sessions each half term where possible and then the other year groups will have half a term each of forest school usually following this order:

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 1	Year 6

Sessions will take place every week unless it is unsafe e.g., strong winds or thunderstorms and will take place on a Monday morning for Reception and a Tuesday morning for the other year groups. The morning sessions will be around 2 hours long and will take place either at school or within the local woods. Each session will involve practical hands-on activities and free play. The activities will develop over the weeks and through the year groups allowing the learners to gain more skills and to become confident with using the knowledge and skills they gather.

The sessions are planned and led by the forest school leader with the support of parents and/or teaching staff to meet the required adult to child ratio. The learners are encouraged to be responsible for their own learning journey and to seek guidance when necessary. This allows the

learners to be able to choose what they learn about, become more confident with managing their own risks and develop problem solving skills.

Activities can include:

- ⊗ Shelter building
- ⊗ Fire building and lighting
- ⊗ Bug hunting and bug hotel making
- ⊗ Tree climbing
- ⊗ Using knots
- ⊗ Tool work
- ⊗ Natural arts and crafts
- ⊗ Games

Sessions that take place in the local woods may include scavenger hunt walks, nature walks where they learn about the local area or walks to specific areas in the woods e.g. den building area. For upper key stage 2 this may also include using trail markers to follow a route and map reading.

Activities will be linked to the class topic and national curriculum where possible including links to maths, English, art, history, and geography but they will also be linked to the children's interest and what they want to learn about.

Planning

Sessions will be planned by the forest school leader to suit the needs and abilities of the group. There may also be times where activities are planned to make links with the topics, they have in school e.g., geography or a science topic- this will be discussed with the class teacher. Planning will also be influenced by the group of participants as it is a learner-led environment. For example, if they find something interesting in a session, we may look further into it in the following session or just by listening to their conversations may influence the next session.

For each session, there needs to be a 1:5 adult to child ratio where possible plus any extra adults needed to support the group at forest school. The planning and running of the session will be shared with the other adults so that everyone is clear with their role during the session and where other adults may be. This discussion will also include any decision on what is to happen if an adult who is working 1:1 with a specific child needs support e.g., which adult is to support and whether the adult led task will be continued or paused.



Assessment for Learning at Forest School

For Forest School to provide a successful learning environment and ensure good practice is maintained, it is important to make observations and continually evaluate the many different activities the children undertake.

During all sessions, evidence will be gathered looking at the following criteria:

- ☼ Self-esteem/ confidence
- ☼ Overall behaviour
- ☼ Relationships
- ☼ Independence
- ☼ Risk awareness
- ☼ Communication skills and language
- ☼ Curiosity
- ☼ Creativity and imagination
- ☼ Physical ability
- ☼ Practical skills
- ☼ Participation and co-operation
- ☼ Other general observations

Observations can be recorded using pictures taken during the session that show different learning that has taken place whether that is something they have built e.g. a den or a knot they have learnt to tie or co-operation that is taking place.

A verbal discussion may also take place between the adults at forest school about something they have seen that can be shared with the class teacher.

These observations can influence future sessions and may lead to an activity being added to the next session to help them develop a skill. This enables us to provide the learner with good opportunities in different areas for progression. During each session having a teacher/ TA from the current year group allows us an insight into how a child's behaviour changes while at Forest School compared to the classroom and how Forest School is affecting a child's overall learning and development at school.

Daily Operating Procedure

Prior to the start of the session

The Forest school leader is responsible for ensuring certain checks have been made and that relevant items needed for a session are available and safe to use. It is their responsibility to ensure they have:

- ☼ Checked the weather report and checked this against risk assessments.
- ☼ Visited the site and carried out a daily risk assessment.
- ☼ Informed the school office which site will be used for the session.
- ☼ Checked the first aid kit is fully stocked.
- ☼ Checked with the office that all consent forms are completed.
- ☼ Checked any prescribed inhalers, EpiPen's and other medication.
- ☼ Ensure a charged mobile phone/walkie talkie is with the FS leader.
- ☼ Gathered any tools or other items needed for the session.
- ☼ Ensured all tools are safe to use.
- ☼ Checked everyone is wearing appropriate clothing and footwear for the weather.
- ☼ Ensured appropriate snacks are packed if needed.

During a session

It's important that during a session a Forest School leader:

- ✿ Does regular head counts.
- ✿ Keeps an eye on the weather.
- ✿ Regularly assesses what children are doing to ensure they are safe.
- ✿ Encourages positive behaviour, before, during and after a session.
- ✿ Ensures there is adequate coverage of adults and correct ratios when using tools.
- ✿ Logs any incidents such as first aid, behavioural or disclosures.

At the end of a session

Once a session is completed the Forest School leader must make sure:

- ✿ All tools are checked for damage and put away safely.
- ✿ All rubbish is disposed of properly.
- ✿ Any logged incidents are added to the first aid folder and the class teacher informed and report it to the school office if necessary.
- ✿ All participants know to wash their hands once returning to school.

Forest School Staff

Forest School is organised and run by the Forest School Leader, Charlotte Waterhouse. I hold a Level 3 Award for Forest School Practitioners.

Before the session, it is the job of the forest school leader to check the site before using it for a session to check that it is safe for the session to take place. The equipment needs to be checked before and after sessions to check for any damages or if the equipment needs to be dried. The session plan will be shared with the relevant people before the session, so that everyone knows what the planned activity is and what other activities the participants will have access to.

All staff and volunteers will learn about the Forest School Ethos from this handbook and from myself as the leader.

During the session, staff and volunteers need to:

- ✿ Allow children to make mistakes and learn from them.
- ✿ Allow children to investigate.
- ✿ Make sure children are staying within the boundaries.
- ✿ Make sure children are being safe and using equipment correctly.
- ✿ Encourage their curiosity and independent learning.

Rules at Forest School

Forest School aims to enable children to create the rules that they will work within during a session, we call these group agreements and they may change or have new rules added over a period of time. That being said, some rules are needed in order to ensure safety so we do have some rules that will always apply. These basic rules as well as any group agreements will be discussed with the children during their first session, with a recap at the beginning of every session (if needed) to ensure their safety at Forest School.

- ✿ Stay within the set boundaries.

- ⊗ When 'Sticky Feet' is called all children to stop what they are doing and go to the adult who has called it to be counted where they will be given instructions if needed.
- ⊗ No pick, no lick – nothing goes in your mouth.
- ⊗ Do not walk through the centre of the fire circle.
- ⊗ An adult must be present and a child given permission to climb a tree.
- ⊗ Permission is needed from an adult before any tools may be used.
- ⊗ Rules for tool use and specific activities must be followed, see Practical skills section
- ⊗ Do not intentionally damage trees, plants, habitats, animals or insects.
- ⊗ Always wash hands prior to eating our snack and at the end of the session.
- ⊗ Have FUN!

The rules above are set to ensure safety for all participants at Forest school. It is important that all attending adults help and support the children to understand and follow the rules. Not doing so can make Forest School a dangerous place, possibly meaning a session will need to be stopped or ended.

Play at Forest School

Play is recognised as vitally important for a child's learning and development and is included in article 31 of the 'UN convention on the rights of the child'.

Play is a big part of forest school, allowing participants to explore their capability and to have fun in nature. A main part of forest school is free play which allows participants to decide for themselves which activities they will take part in at forest school. It is important for participants to be able to make decisions for themselves and choose what they will do at forest school as this encourages them to develop their independent skills including their own thinking skills.

Forest school is a child centred learning environment where it is the participant's choice on what activities and learning they want to take part in. This child centred approach allows adults to be reactive to the needs and interests of the participants which in turn will help to speed up learning and allow participants to make connections with their environment. Play and choice are a key part of the learning process, and this should be encouraged by anyone supporting at forest school.

Risky Play

Risky play can be defined as a thrilling and exciting activity that involves a risk of physical injury, and play that provides opportunities for challenge, testing limits, exploring boundaries and learning about injury risk (Sandseter (2007; Little & Wyver, 2008)

Risky play is a part of outdoor learning, which includes forest school, where participants are encouraged to assess the risk of their chosen activity and to make the changes to an activity if it is too risky. Many of the activities that happen at Forest School will involve some sort of risk however every activity has benefits that should be promoted. Helping the participants to assess the risk of an activity is a key skill and along with this skill participants can develop their self-esteem and self-confidence, build relationships through teamwork and communication, and improve interpersonal skills. A risk benefit assessment will be used to make sure the benefits of an activity outweigh the risks. This assessment will also help the forest school leader to make activities safer through their planning, communicating with supporting adults and the participants and health and safety practices.

Adult Responsibilities

Supporting adults are required to facilitate and approach risky play with the confidence that children are able to manage risks for themselves. (Wildcat Forest School)

It is our duty of care to keep the participants safe and to stop them from doing something where they are not managing their risks correctly. However, this should be done by starting a conversation with the participants by asking questions like 'How could we make that safer for us to use or to play?'. We want participants to think about how they can be safe rather than being told 'that's not safe, don't do it'. If we as the leaders constantly tell participants not to do things because it's not safe, then they won't develop the skills needed to risk assess their decisions later in life.

Supporting adults need to model safe practice during the sessions so that participants understand how to risk assess their activities and games. This allows us as the adults to promote reflective and thoughtful attitudes to working and playing safely and helps the participants to think about the impact of their actions on themselves and others.

Practical Skills

Practical skills are an important part of Forest School where participants gain skills in tool use, fire, cooking and foraging, ropes, and shelters.

Tools- learn about tools, what they are used for and how to use them.

Fire- learn about the fire triangle (what fires need), how to build and light them and how to safely put them out and check they are out.

Cooking and foraging- what and how to cook and using different equipment, how to forage and the danger of foraging.

Ropes- learning different knots and their uses, how to use ropes safely and how to tie them up at the end.

Shelters- equipment that can be used, shape of the shelter and how to build a shelter.

It is important for participants to learn new skills and these practical skills don't just teach them the practical skills they also teach them to risk assess and be responsible- which in turn is teaching them skills for being independent. These practical skills will be taught and used for specific purposes that are linked to the participant's learning.

Participants will start to learn these skills when they have shown that they can be trusted to follow the safety rules especially when using tools, fire, and cooking. They will build up their skills through the weeks and years for example for learning whittling skills reception would start with a peeler and a vegetable to learn the action and then through the years they would progress to using a knife and a piece of wood. By building up the skills it will allow the learners to gain confidence and achieve success with practical skills this in turn will help each learner's self-esteem.

Tool Use Procedure

Tools will only be used once the Forest School Leader decides the participants are safe to do so. Tools will also only be used within the designated tool area/fire circle and the activity will always be supervised by an appropriate adult of a maximum ratio of 1:4 depending on the activity.

Tools will be stored in a suitable container that is kept locked. The participants will never be allowed to access the container and help themselves to any tool and supervision will happen when participants are collecting, transporting, and using their tool. Tools will be cleaned and maintained by the Forest School Leader and will be checked before and after each session when used.

Tools will be used for specific purposes and activities and adults will model how to use, transport, and store each tool at all times correctly and safely. Before each learner is given the tool, instructions will be given on how to perform the task and safety and protective equipment where necessary e.g., safety gloves will be handed out. Safety issues will also be spoken about with the learners to make sure they understand how to keep themselves and others safe.

Fire Safety Procedure

Fires are a part of forest school and allow the participants to take part in learning how to build, light and cook over a fire. All participants including the leaders and adult helpers will be made aware of fire safety and fire emergency procedures at the start of any session where fire is one of the activities.

These procedures will be continuously reviewed to make sure that the procedures reflect the best practice, and that learning is done from any other accidents that have occurred.

Fire is a risky activity and is a threat to life through smoke, burns and equipment damage. Through this procedure the aim is that risks and fire related accidents will be minimised by these precautions.

Fires will only be made once risks have been assessed and will only be held within the fire circle. A trained adult will always be within the fire circle when a fire is lit, or hot embers remain- it will never be left unattended.

Before lighting the fire, the ground needs to be checked for any risk e.g., dry leaves and sticks and flammable surfaces. Any seats around the fire pit need to be checked to make sure they are at least a meter away and are safe to sit on, which will protect any participant if they lose their balance near the fire. Once the fire circle is checked, the fire pit either ground fire pit or standing fire pit can be set up. Fires should not be lit with overhanging branches or if the weather is unsuitable e.g., too windy.

Equipment must be checked before being used, this includes the fire pit stand and any cooking utensils. Adequate fire water must be placed close to the fire circle for putting the fire out if it gets out of control including water for dealing with any burns that may occur and a burns kit. A fire blanket must also be near to the fire circle for wrapping around someone if their clothes catch alight. Fire gloves must also be accessible if needed by the adults or children when working/cooking over an open fire.

Fires will be lit by an adult using matches or a striker with appropriate fuel. If children are lighting the fire or practising fire lighting, then they must be supervised by an adult. Once the fire is lit and in use, participants are to follow the rule of not entering the fire circle unless invited to do so by an adult. Participants will be taught this rule and the rule of stepping outside the seating to move around the fire circle instead of crossing the circle before any fires are lit and a song can be used to teach this. Learners must be taught how to correctly work/cook near a fire including kneeling on one knee so that they can move if necessary.

At the end of the session, all fires must be extinguished by dousing the fire with water and then moving the fuel around until all smoke and steam has stopped. By moving the fuel around you can

check for any embers that may still be there and then you can pour some more water onto these parts. The leader can then move their hand over the fire pit (not touching anything) checking for any signs of heat, if there are still patches of heat then you cannot leave the site until the fire pit is cool and showing no signs of re-igniting.

Cooking and Foraging Procedure

Before any session takes place, information will be sought from either the parents or the school on the children's dietary needs, including any allergies. Participants will only be given food and drink that meet their dietary requirements. Participants will also be encouraged to wash or use sanitiser before cooking, eating, or drinking.

During the morning sessions, we will stop for a mid-morning break where snacks will be offered to the participants including a drink of water or squash and fruit/biscuit. When on the school site, the children will be asked to bring their own water bottle and a snack if in key stage 2.

Cooking will be part of forest school sessions, where suitable, allowing participants to cook over an open fire. During these sessions, participants will learn about healthy eating and what they can cook on an open fire. The aim will be for participants to cook both sweet and savoury items throughout their school years.

Before the session, the equipment will be checked to make sure it is clean and safe to use. The food needed for the session will be stored correctly before the session and then moved into suitable and clean containers/bags to be transported to site. The participants will wash their hands before preparing and cooking the food. The adults must make sure everything is cooked properly before giving to the participants to eat. For washing, there will then be a separate bowl to the hand washing bowl for washing cooking utensils.

Foraging can be a great skill for participants to learn however it can be dangerous if the wrong thing is picked. Learners will be taught the rule 'no pick, no lick', where they are encouraged not to pick anything and put it near their mouth unless told so by the adults. Adults can allow the children to try something from the site if they know exactly what they are allowing the children to try. If there is any doubt in what the item is then it shouldn't be eaten for health and safety reasons.

Ropes Procedure

Ropes are a key part of forest school allowing the children to learn different knots and build different structures.

It is the job of the forest school leader to check the ropes before and after sessions for any damages and to also dry the ropes (need to be dried flat) before tying them up ready for the next session.

Participants will be taught about rope safety. This will include talking to them about not tying the ropes round themselves or others as this can lead to someone getting hurt. They will also be taught that when they are building something if it is meant to support their weight then the knots must be checked by an adult before being used.

Shelter Procedure

A shelter can be put up if the weather takes a turn to give the participants somewhere to sit if needed. This will only be put up when it is needed and will be sorted by the forest school leader and assisted by the children if useful and possible.

Participants will be taught how to build shelters correctly this could be using tarpaulins and ropes or logs depending on what they are building. If using tarpaulins and ropes, participants will be reminded about the correct use of ropes and adults can support them with the tying of knots and how they could attach the tarpaulin. Adults to remind participants of the height of ropes. If using logs, participants should be taught to check the position of logs before letting them go and to always carry logs in the correct way. See tool use procedure and tool risk assessment for further information if using tools to build your shelter.

Tree Climbing

Children must first seek an adult's permission before climbing any tree.

The children are told they:

- ⊗ Can't climb in high winds or if it's wet
- ⊗ Must be supervised by an adult
- ⊗ Only one child can climb at a time
- ⊗ Must have 3 points of contact at all time- only move one foot/hand at a time

Clothing and Personal Equipment

It is important that all participants are dressed correctly especially in terms of dressing for the weather. If participants aren't dressed for the weather, it means that they may get wet, cold, or hot and not want to fully engage in the session and may start to feel unwell.

It is also important that participants are **not wearing their school clothes** underneath their forest school clothes. There are two reasons for this:

- 1) Their school clothes may become wet, so they won't have anything dry to put on when we get back.
- 2) If they are cold, they need to put on a whole new set of clothes to warm up so if they are wearing their school uniform, they can't do this so it will take them longer to warm up.

There are spare clothes, including mainly waterproof trousers, in the forest school cabinet at school that can be borrowed if needed.

Wet and cold weather clothing-

- ❁ Thermal or long sleeve top
- ❁ Jumper
- ❁ Warm trousers or joggers
- ❁ Body warmer- if your child does feel the cold
- ❁ Warm, waterproof jacket
- ❁ Hat, scarf, and gloves- waterproof gloves are very good and will protect your child's hands when it is raining or snowing
- ❁ Waterproof trousers or all in one waterproof suit- insulated ones are really good
- ❁ Warm socks- either walking, thermal or think about possibly a couple of pairs of socks
- ❁ Wellies or outdoor boots- remember wellies are quite cold shoes so think about what socks they are wearing



Dry and warm weather clothing-

- ❁ Long sleeve top
- ❁ Jumper
- ❁ Long trousers or joggers
- ❁ Socks
- ❁ Waterproof jacket- just in case the weather changes
- ❁ Sun hat
- ❁ Wellies or Trainers- they may get muddy
- ❁ Remember sun cream as well



Top Tip- you can always take layers off, but you can't put layers on if you don't have them. Better to be too hot and be able to take something off than too cold!

Every child will be checked to make sure they are wearing suitable clothes and suitable clothing will be provided if needed and if we have it.

If your child is not dressed appropriately for forest school, we will try our best to sort some suitable clothing or call the parents if time, but if we don't have anything to give them then they won't be able to come as it is unsafe.

It is the responsibility of any adult helping at forest school to be dressed appropriately for being outside for a few hours- this will be communicated to anybody deciding to help.

All PPE equipment will be provided this includes goggles, gardening gloves and safety gloves for tool and fire work.

Donation of old equipment

We are building a reserve of waterproof footwear, trousers, coats, jumpers, hats and gloves. If your child should outgrow any of the above items and you have no need for it. It would be greatly appreciated if you could donate these items to the school, so that if someone should forget something they will not miss out on a session.

Please hand any old unwanted items in to the school office, thank you.

Forest School Policies and Procedures

The below policies are in addition to the schools and do not replace them. For full documents regarding the school's policies, please see <http://www.stbarts.herts.sch.uk/policies/>

Behaviour and Relationship Policy

In addition to our school behaviour policy, at forest school we want to create an environment where the participants feel safe and trust the adults helping at the sessions and where they can have fun and explore different interests. In every session, we aim to meet the needs of all participants and create a learning community where the participants feel supported. This is done in the following ways:

- ⊗ We aim to build relationships and trust with the child, this is vital to ensure Forest School is a positive experience and that the children feel they can talk openly and freely with adults.
- ⊗ At Forest School children are allowed to give input, make their own decisions and realise they have control over their own learning and activities.
- ⊗ Adults lead by example, showing good behaviour and creating an atmosphere where everyone is treated as an equal.
- ⊗ Praise is given to children based on effort, a process or skills used, instead of the end result.
- ⊗ Reflection and self-appraisal of the learner's own activities are used often, allowing them to recognise their own achievements, boosting confidence and self-esteem.
- ⊗ Creating opportunities for the children to learn and work together, developing social skills, learning to share and try new things.
- ⊗ Being outside the classroom and in nature tends to have a calming effect on the participants.
- ⊗ The children will take part in the creation of the rules required to keep everyone safe at Forest School (group agreements), empowering them and helping them to understand that their opinions matter.

Should a situation arise where a child's behaviour needs addressing we will follow the below steps:

Remember there will be times where participants may need some time to calm down before you can talk to them and that's okay- it is part of them learning to self-regulate. Adults can remind them that they can sit at the fire circle or by a tree and take some breaths to calm themselves down and then have a conversation with an adult about what was happening.

- We will first find out the cause by talking to them and see if we can re-engage them with current activities in a positive way.
- We will take them to one side, a verbal warning will be given and a reminder of the importance of acceptable behaviour and any group agreements.
- They will be given time out away from the rest of the group if needed (5-10 minutes depending on age).
- Behaviour will be reported to the class teacher or head teacher if necessary.

Should a child's behaviour put either themselves or others at risk of harm, the following steps will be taken:

- The forest school leader will make contact with the school through phone or walkie talkie where a decision will be made.
- If the decision is to escort them back to school then we will either wait for a member of staff to meet us or the attending TA will walk the child to meet another member of staff.
- Should a child's behaviour be exceptionally unsafe, they may be excluded from the next session.

- If needed an incident report form will be completed.

Safeguarding

Protecting children is of primary importance to St Bartholomew's and any issues raised will be taken extremely seriously. A DBS check will be completed, if an adult is assisting with forest school on a regular basis (this will be decided by the head teachers if it is needed).

Any volunteers are required to read the safeguarding information, online safety and use of personal devices, transporting children in cars and also give an emergency contact. Volunteers will be sent a link to a form for them to complete online- <https://forms.office.com/e/n7jwVU5eUb>

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff/ volunteer should:

Listen

- Be patient – a child may be finding it hard to find the words to express themselves. Let them tell their story in their own words
- Do not interrogate – you may 'taint' evidence by asking leading questions or suggesting what may have happened. Maintain your professional curiosity, ask open-ended prompts.

Reassure

- Reassure the child they are not in trouble and that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Do not tell the child they should have told you sooner
- Reassure the child that it is not their fault – victims can often be blamed by their abusers.
- Do not promise confidentiality – if the child asks you to keep it a secret, explain who you need to tell to keep them safe, if appropriate
- Explain to the child that you will have to share the information and explain what may happen next.

Stay Calm

- Try not to panic, be aware of your own reactions and feelings, avoid showing shock, anger, or disgust
- Do not insult the alleged abuser, however frustrated you may privately feel, children can be very protective of people they care about, even if that person is abusing them.

Report

- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it. Use the school record of concern sheet (pro-forma available on the school shared area for staff- printed forms will be kept in the forest school handbook folder that is taken to site)
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL or if typed then save onto the staff shared area and inform the DSL or DDSL that you have added a record of concern
- Do not disclose any information to anyone aside from those within your DSL team, unless you are told to do so by a relevant agency involved in the safeguarding process.

Volunteers- if a child discloses something to a volunteer, then they need to inform the forest school leader who can then talk to the child and find out what has happened. The forest school leader will then fill in the record of concern.

All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing. If in doubt about recording requirements staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead.

Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and safeguarding issues can be stressful. The member of staff/volunteer should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the Designated Senior Leader.

Allegations involving school staff/volunteers

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff/volunteer may have:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child; (Harm Threshold)
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against / related to a child; (Criminal Threshold)
- Behaved toward a child in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm; (Suitability Threshold)
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. (Transferable Risk Threshold)

This applies to any child the member of staff/volunteer has contact with in their personal, professional or community life.

In all cases information should be handed without delay to:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: **Kelly Wall**

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: **Victoria Mowbray, Liana Nakar or Lucy Jarrold**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Forest School is about the inclusion of everybody and treating each individual with respect, regardless of ethnicity, belief, age, gender, disability or background. It is our aim to foster positive attitudes and interaction between those of differing views and mutual respect between boys, girls and those without a fixed gender.

Before sessions begin, the Forest School leader will talk with the class teacher and TA about the class in terms of anything the FS leader will need to know about the participants. This is so the FS leader can help the participants to feel welcome and safe and get the most out of their forest school sessions. Some of the main things that will need to be known are any disabilities, SEN, medical needs, and anything the class particularly enjoy.

Parents and Carers will be told about forest school through a letter that will be sent home with the dates and times that their child will have forest school. They will also be invited to help at forest school and will be welcome to come and experience forest school with the participants to see what forest school is all about. When helping at forest school, parents and carers will be informed by the forest school leader or school staff helping at the session about anything they need to know about the class to help them in supporting the participants to get the most out of the session.

It is important that anybody visiting from an outside agency understands the needs of the participants so that they know why a session may run in a certain way. It is the role of the forest school leader to share the relevant information. By knowing the information, it means that if they are helping at the session, they can help the participants in the best way to get the most out of the session.

Confidentiality

At St Bartholomew's, confidentiality is taken very seriously, all staff, parents and governors are made aware of the school's policies, procedures and their responsibilities in relation to them. All confidential information regarding medical and consent for both adults and children are kept by the School office with restricted access and is only shared with relevant parties as stated in the school's privacy policies.

A necessary overview of allergies and permissions linked directly to Forest School will be kept within the forest school leader or TA's rucksack during sessions. Only qualified Forest School staff and relevant school staff will have access to this information, **not volunteers or parent helpers**.

All that needs to be remembered is that anything shared with you as an adult is confidential and should only be shared with the appropriate school adults e.g., DSL, DDSL, class teacher or class TA. For any safeguarding concerns see the safeguarding procedure or the child protection policy on the school website.

Data Protection

All information will be collected by and through school and stored securely by school following data protection laws. I will then talk to the office and class teachers to find out any information that I need including medical and media permissions. I will not ask for any information that I do not need to know, and this information won't be shared with myself. Information will only be stored at school on a secure system and as part of staff training, there will training on cyber security and GDPR (where needed).

Data potentially going to site:

- ⊗ Registers to be kept in a folder in the FS leaders bag (if needed)
- ⊗ Medical information to be kept in a folder or bag near the medicine (if needed)- not on show to anybody including participants.

Media Permissions

- ⊗ This information is collected by the school and will be shared with myself in terms of any participant that cannot be photographed.
- ⊗ Photos and videos will only be taken on the school camera.
- ⊗ Photos and videos that are uploaded to the school website will not include any participant that can't be photographed, and names will not be included.
- ⊗ Used in line with the school's e-safety policy.

Medical Information and Permissions

- ⊗ This information is collected by and through the school and shared with the relevant adults including the forest school leader.
- ⊗ Forest school leader to double check with class staff about any medical information they need to know about the class.
- ⊗ Training for relevant adults is provided for inhaler, epi-pen use and any other significant medication- these should be the people who administer this medication (if possible).
- ⊗ A participant that has any specific medication to take will have an emergency plan or a form filled in by their parent/carers- this information should be taken to forest school but kept

within the forest school leader's bag and shared with those who need to know e.g., school staff helping or long-term volunteers.

- ☼ Check with any volunteers or parent helpers if they have any medical condition, you should know about.
- ☼ Acting in loco parentis in terms of administering first aid.
- ☼ Any specific permissions.
- ☼ Following school policy on sunscreen and the removing of splinters.

Visitors

Due to one of our Forest School sites being in the woods owned by the Woodland Trust, we potentially have two types of visitors.

Expected/authorized

The school may decide to send someone to the Forest School site as a visitor/ inspection at any time, if this happens it will either:

- ☼ Be previously announced as something which may happen, e.g. an Ofsted inspection, proof of ID will be requested,
- ☼ Be a visitor that is accompanied by a known member of staff such as the headteacher.

In both of the above cases, Forest School activities will continue as normal, unless questions are being asked. This will effectively reduce the safe ratios needed for many activities. Should this happen all tool use and other riskier activities such as climbing trees will be stopped until it is safe to continue.

Unexpected/public

The public have access to the site, so it is imperative that all staff and volunteers are constantly vigilant and aware of the children's location at all times. The majority of people tend to pass by without incident but there are still some situations that must be considered carefully.

Dogs- We ask the children to cross their arms (x factor) when a dog is present and ignore it, so that it will simply follow its owner. Should we think a dog presents a threat or it does not simply leave, we will call 'sticky feet' and ask the children to walk to the adult and allow the owner to deal with their dog.

Lingering members of the public- Should anyone decide to linger for any length of time:

- ☼ 'Sticky Feet' will be called and the children kept at the fire circle or near the adults and a headcount taken, we will stay together until it is safe to resume activities.
- ☼ A description and photo will be taken if possible and needed, including details of what this person was doing. This information will be passed onto the school/ police.

Should the person continue to linger, the Forest School Leader will politely point out they are interrupting a session, that sadly strangers being present is against safeguarding protocol, and request they move on.

Photos and videos being taken by someone not helping at forest school and not on the school camera will be asked to stop taking photos and videos and to delete them as they do not have permission to take the photos or videos. They do not have to delete the photos and cannot be forced to- if this is the case the participants will be called back to the fire circle and if needed the adults will tidy away the equipment and then we will go back to school. The school will be

informed, and the incident reported to the police (if it was clear the person was taking photos of the participants). If possible take photo or video of the person doing it.

Any parents that are walking by will be allowed to say hello to their child from the path but will be reminded that this is their child's learning time.

Cancellation Policy

Forest School takes place at all times of the year in all weathers, be it rain, sun or snow. That said there are some situations where it is simply too dangerous to take a trip into the woods.

When considering safety due to the weather we will use weather reports as the indicator of safe weather.

- ⊗ Strong winds can bring down trees and branches, any wind speeds or gusts over 35mph make the woodland simply unsafe- we will instead look to do activities on the school grounds, away from trees.
- ⊗ Lightning is extremely dangerous when around trees- the session will be carried out indoors if there is lightning.
- ⊗ Temperatures of 0°C or less- we will make sure children are appropriately dressed and keep them active. We will monitor the situation and if it's thought necessary, shorten the session or do a session indoors, especially if the extreme cold is also combined with rain.
- ⊗ Heavy Fogs- should visibility be reduced to an unsafe level, we will instead look to do activities on the school field or inside if needed.
- ⊗ Staff ratios are extremely important for every child's safety, so if we don't have enough adults, activities will be changed or the session cancelled.

Cancelling Forest School is always a last option, agreed by both the Forest School Leader and the head teachers. Sadly, the decision to cancel may be on the morning of a session.

If possible when a session is cancelled, we will try to do some kind of indoor activity such as knots or other activities and games related to the woodland environment.

Communication Strategy

It is important that there is open communication between everyone involved in forest school.

Headteachers and Governors

- ⊗ Contact with Mrs Wall and Mrs Mowbray on a regular basis.
- ⊗ Discussions had around any plans for forest school including going off site.
- ⊗ At the end of the year, discussion on what has been achieved, pupil voice if carried out and any future changes that should be implemented.
- ⊗ Governors to be informed of forest school plans if needed.

Colleagues

- ⊗ Discuss any topics the year group has and any potential links.
- ⊗ Any colleagues helping should read the handbook and sign the declaration.
- ⊗ Share outcomes that were met at forest school.

Volunteers

- ⊗ Any long-term volunteers asked to read the handbook and sign the declaration.

- ⊗ Any helpers there just for the session to be told what is happening during the session and what their role is. Also share what happens in an emergency.

Parents

- ⊗ Letter sent home before sessions begin to let them know the dates and times, include clothing information sheet and what forest school is. Letter to also ask for helpers and that if they want to help to contact school office or class teacher.
- ⊗ At the end of each half-term, parents can be asked for feedback if needed.
- ⊗ If time talk to parent helpers while at forest school about their thoughts on it.

Children

- ⊗ Before sessions, class teachers to remind them of clothing needed and when they need to bring it in or if they wear it to school.
- ⊗ Talk to them about anything they would like to do.
- ⊗ At the end of each session, ask them what they have done and what they like to do.
- ⊗ At the end of the block of sessions ask them what their favourite thing to do was.

Volunteer Expectations

These are the expectations for any volunteer helping at forest school:

- Read and sign the forms that are sent to you regarding our safeguarding information, online safety and use of personal devices, transporting children in cars and also give an emergency contact- <https://forms.office.com/e/n7jwVU5eUb>
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear- you are setting an example to the children and we also want you to be safe while at forest school.
- Remember you are there to support the whole group including your own child.
- No mobile phones to be out at forest school and if you are awaiting a call then you need to let the forest school leader know.
- Remember that the children lead the learning and that learning to risk assess an activity is all part of forest school so help them to decide how to make it safer rather than just telling them.
- If you notice children doing something they shouldn't then ask them to stop and explain why. Then inform the forest school leader or class TA so that they are aware.
- If you notice a child being unkind to someone else, then you can ask them to stop but you must tell the FS leader or class TA so that they can deal with the situation following our school behaviour policy. Also remember that this is something that the school staff will pass onto the child's parent where needed and that it shouldn't be passed on by you.
- Let the forest school leader know of any allergies or medical information that they may need to know or feel free to write it down and put it in a sealed envelope that you can hand over to the FS leader to open if needed and get back at the end.
- It is down to the forest school leader who helps out at the sessions and when.

Landowner's Agreement

One of the sites is on school site, so any forest school site decisions will go through the head teachers. The other site is on woodland trust land. To use the woodland site, contact will be made with the site manager of the woodland trust in terms of continued access to the forest school site. This access will most likely be subject to discussing an acceptable management plan for the site.

Complaints Procedure

We try to make forest school a fun and engaging learning environment for all attending it. However, if you feel forest school does not meet your expectations or have a concern. Please contact the forest school leader, Charlotte Waterhouse, by talking to myself or emailing the school office, who will then forward the email on.

If you feel it is not dealt with sufficiently then please contact the head teachers, Mrs Wall and Mrs Mowbray, either by emailing the school office or calling.

School email: admin@stbarts.herts.sch.uk

School number: 01442 822364

Health and Safety and Insurance

This section will look at the different health and safety areas surrounding forest school. It is the duty of the adults at forest school to keep the participants safe but still allowing them to test their limits. Responsibilities of the adults will include (not limited to):

Making sure they travel safely to and from the forest school sites

Helping the participants to risk assess their activities

Risk assessing any activities the participants will take part in and think about any risks and the control measures

Communicating with the DSLs and other staff members from school when needed

Making sure personal hygiene is thought about at the sessions e.g., hand washing and toileting.

These forest school sessions will be covered by the school insurance.

Travelling to woodland site

As a school, we have one site that is offsite in the local woodlands. This site is around a 20minute walk away depending on the age of the children. When walking participants over to the woodland site there must always be a minimum of 2 adults with them.

Before leaving school, the teacher or forest school leader will get the participants to form a line in pairs and recap how to safely cross the road using the green cross code. Once we have left the school, adults will space themselves out between the participants including one adult at the front leading and one adult at the back making sure everyone keeps up and is between the adults.

As a group we will need to cross at least two roads maybe three depending on where cars are parked. We will cross the main road outside school, making sure we are far enough away from the blind bend and then cross one or two side roads.

To cross the main road, participants will line up along the kerb making sure their feet are behind the kerb. One or two adults will stand in the road at either end of the line to ensure the safety of the participants. The participants will be talked through the green cross code and asked if it is safe to cross before being reminded to cross between the adults and continue to check the road as they walk across it.

To cross the side roads, participants will need to stay in their line and check 3 directions of traffic which they will be talked through if needed. Again, an adult will need to stand in the road making

sure they can see up and down the main road. Participants need to check to see if it is safe and need to double check with the adult standing in the road before crossing. When crossing the road, participants may need to be reminded to continue checking the road to make sure it is safe.

The road leading to the woods is a private road which will need to be checked for vehicles before walking on it. Participants to be reminded to move to the side if other members of the public are walking our way. Once we get to the woods, we will be walking on woodland paths that participants need to be reminded of being careful of where they step and that we will walk and not run.

Illnesses

School procedure on illnesses will be followed at forest school. This means if a child was sent home for being sick then they must be off for 48 hours from the last time they were sick. Any medication handed to school for the participant to take will be accompanied by a form and the school staff will administer it when needed to.

If a participant becomes sick at forest school, they will be given a drink and asked to sit down. The adults at forest school will decide if they need to go back to school. The school will be called and informed of the situation and the decision on bringing the participant back to school will be made. One of the school adults helping at forest school will walk them back to school and the school will ring the parents if the participant is being sent home.

If an adult becomes sick at forest school, they will be asked to sit down, and a decision made on whether they should stay at forest school. If being sent back to school, the FS leader needs to decide on whether it is safe to stay at the site with the adults that are left and if the planned activity can continue. The school will be rung and informed of the situation and whether the session can continue and if another adult needs to be sent to the site.

Toileting

Participants will be encouraged to use the toilet before getting ready for forest school no matter which site we are using. If on school site, participants can use the school toilets but must let an adult know before going. If in class 1 or 2 (depending on the participant), they will need an adult to accompany them.

If at the woodland site (off school premise), participants will only be able to go for a wee in the woods and will be shown by an adult where to go and the adult will keep watch of the surrounding area and stay within sight of another adult. If the participants need to go to the toilet for anything other than a wee, they will be taken back to school.

Hand washing facilities will be available.

Hand Washing

Hand washing facilities will be available at both sites. There will be a bowl under a water container with a tap containing warm water with soap next to it for handwashing. There will also be a bag for throwing away paper towels. Participants will need to wash their hands before eating and cooking.

A separate bowl will be used for washing cooking and eating utensils.

Snack Time

During the morning session, participants will be offered a snack and a drink. Snacks will consist of fruit or a biscuit unless the session includes cooking and a drink of squash or water. Depending on the weather the squash may be warmed up. If on the school site children will be asked to bring their water bottles and own snack if in key stage 2. All participants will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before having a drink or snack.

Food Hygiene and safety

All food taken to Forest School will be kept stored in sealed containers once the manufacturers packaging is opened. We will try to keep food clean with anything contaminated in some way or passed its expiration date being disposed of.

Any food debris or other rubbish will be collected in a rubbish bag and disposed of properly by the Forest School Leader at the end of the session.

Wild Foods

Participants will be reminded of the 'no pick, no lick' rule at the start of sessions, where they are told not to put anything near their mouth without the permission of an adult. There may be times where participants are allowed to try plants or berries, but this will only be allowed when the adults are 100% positive that the plant or berry is safe.

See cooking and foraging procedure above for more information.

Lost Children

The protection and safeguarding of children are of prime importance at St Bartholomew's, this continues at Forest School.

Boundaries are clearly set out during the first session with a recap at the beginning of each session thereafter (if needed). Adults will always be monitoring the site to check that all children are within the boundaries.

During the introduction session we teach 'Sticky Feet' where the children stop what they are doing and walk over and stand by the adult who has called it. The children are taught that this is so the adults can count them and give instructions if we need to.

If a child is still missing, the school will be called immediately, additional staff will be sent, and the emergency services called on 999 or 112.

First Aid

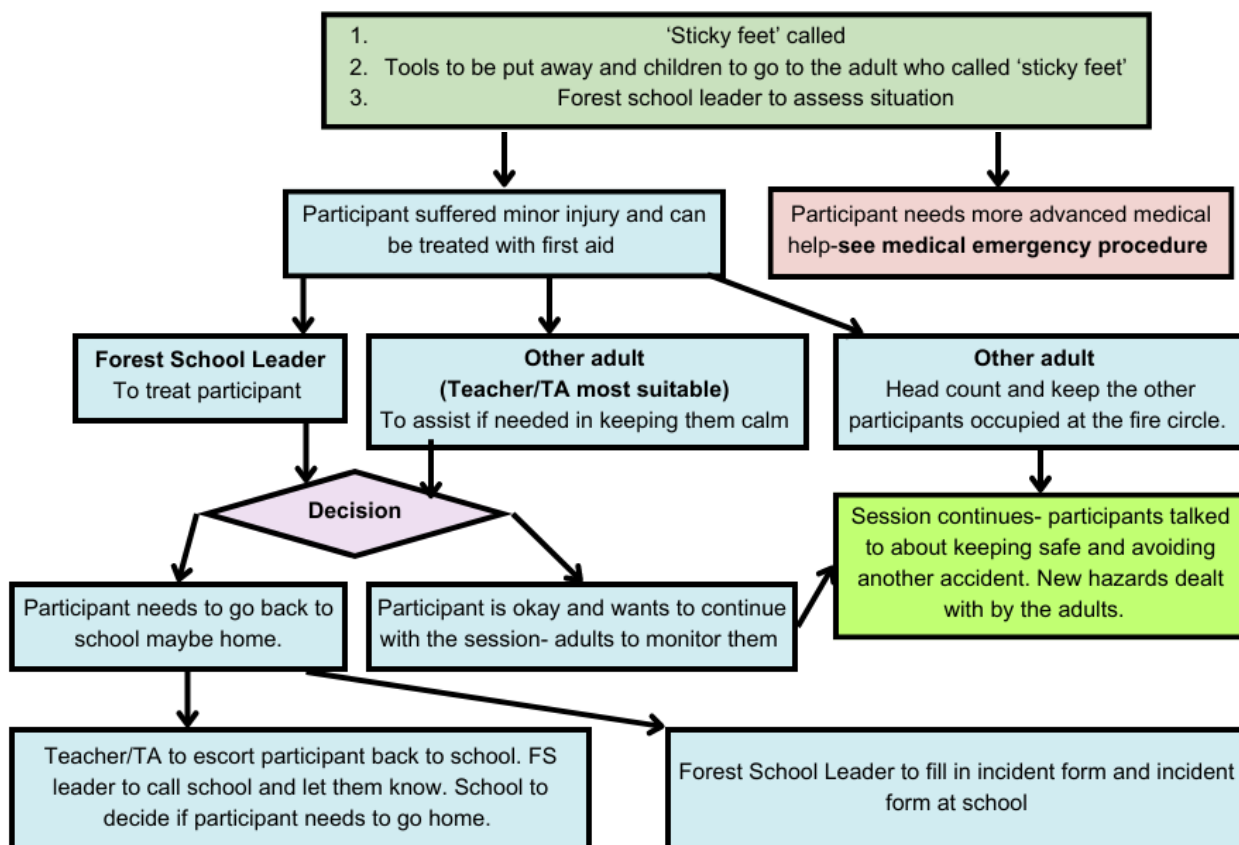
The Forest School leader must have an up to date first aid qualification that includes outdoor first aid. Any adult that deals with a first aid incident at forest school must be first aid trained (e.g., the FS leader or a school staff member not volunteers/parent helpers) however the forest school leader must be informed. A first aid kit must be available at each session.

If an injury occurs at forest school, it must be recorded on an incident form and be recorded on an incident form at school as well. If a letter needs to be sent home, the school forms must be used and given to the class teacher.

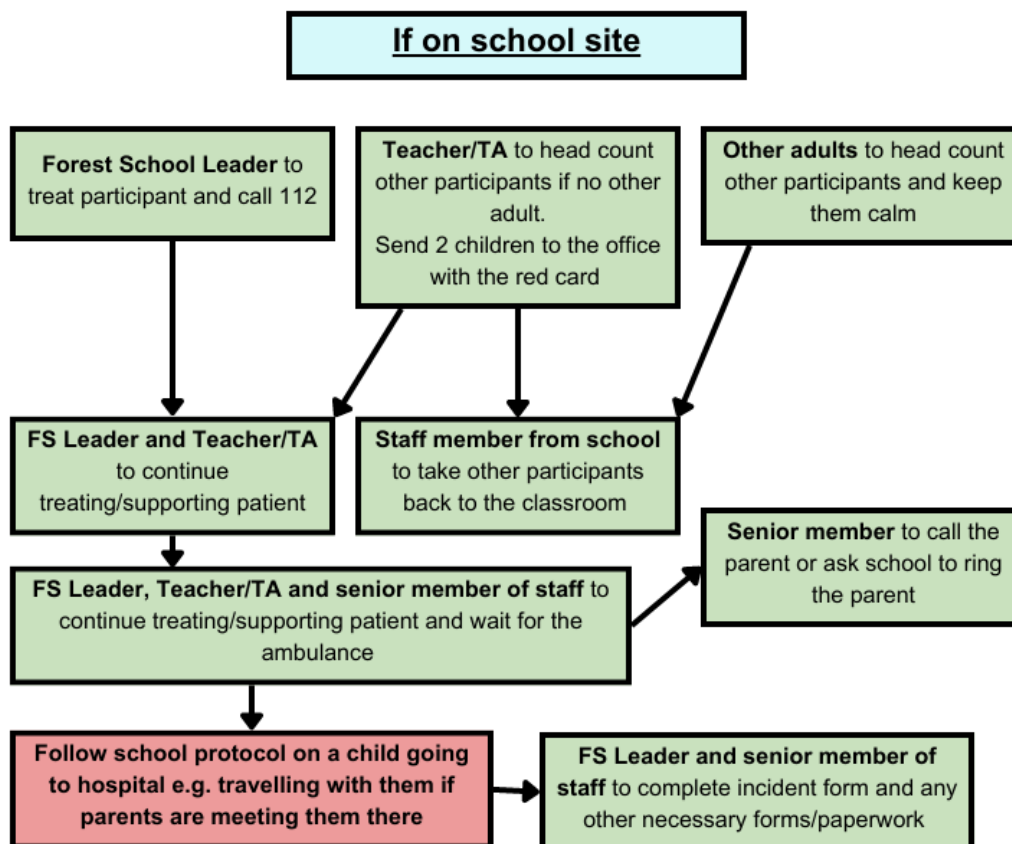
Below is the list for the emergency kit and first aid kit. Some of these items may not be needed depending on the activities that are being carried out and the site being used. These kits must be fully checked each half term and replacements added throughout the year when needed.

Emergency Kit	First Aid Kit
Roll mat/Small tarp	Disposable gloves
Torch	Adhesive plasters (+ hypoallergenic plasters if needed)
Blanket (foil or survival bag)	Medium sterile dressing
Fire Blanket (to be kept near active fire)	Large sterile dressing
Emergency action plans	Finger sterile dressing
Emergency first aid procedure	Triangular bandages
Incident report forms	Sterile eye pad
Pen	Wound cleansing wipes
Medical penlight	Adhesive tape
	Resuscitation face shield
	Safety pins
	Tuff cut scissors
	Eye wash pods
	Tweezers
	Tick remover
	Conforming bandages
	Water
	Cling film
	Splint roll
	Ice pack (breakable)
	Celox dressing/granules
	Israel haemostatic bandage

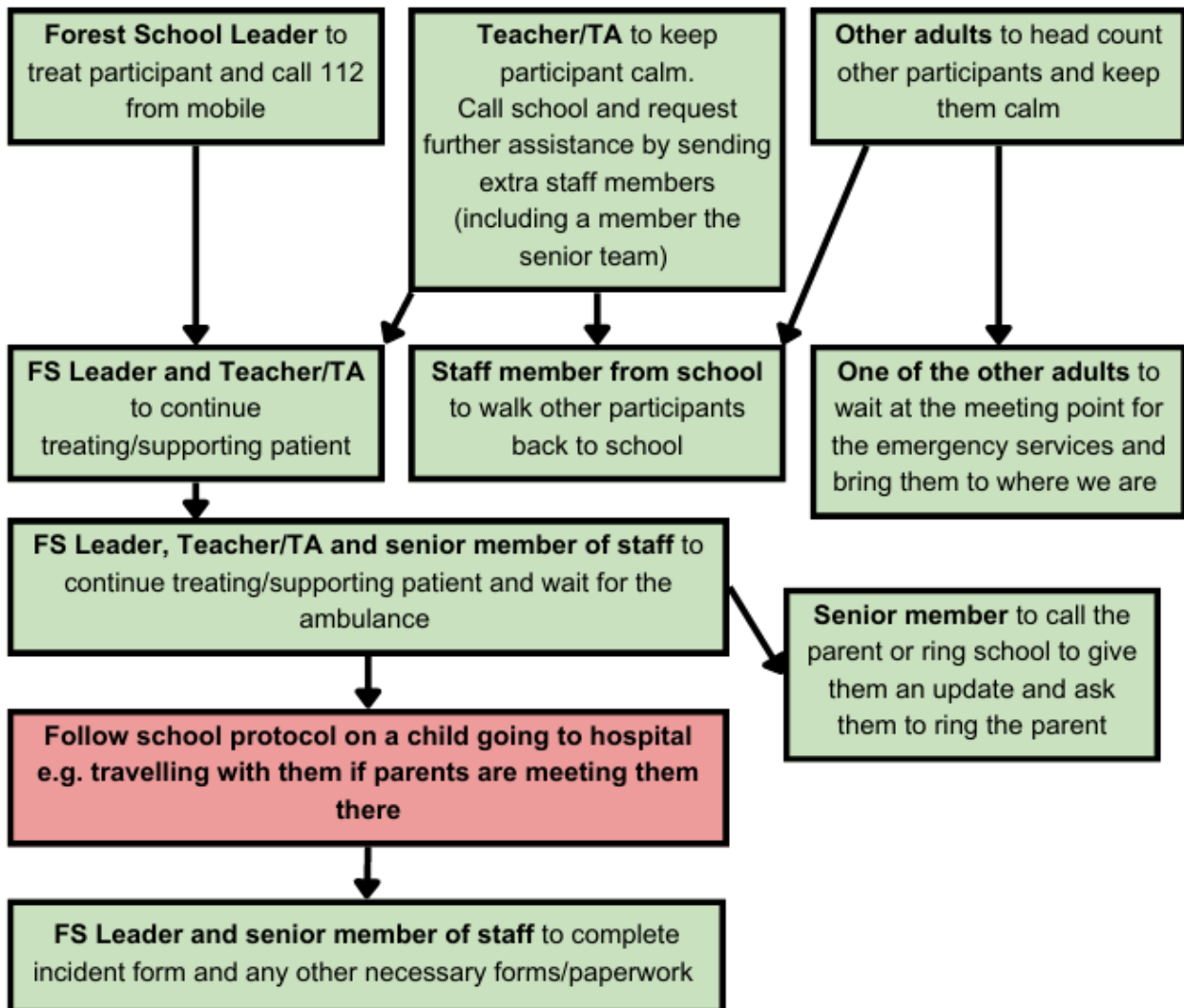
Emergency First Aid Procedure



Medical Emergency Procedure



If offsite in the woods



Local information: See emergency action plans

Contact number for school: 01442 822364

When calling 112 give information on:
Patient's age, gender and any known medical info
Breathing
Conscious/awake
Any serious bleeding
Any chest pains
What happened

Emergency Action Plan: School Site

It will always be ensured that forest school is always as safe as possible, however if an incident occurs this is the procedure that needs to be followed.

Follow the first aid procedures if it is a medical emergency.

1. Call 'Sticky Feet' and everyone will be taken to the assembly point on the playground (netball court) (if needed)
2. Headcount done to ensure everyone is there
3. Emergency services called using 112/999 from a mobile
4. Either send an adult or 2 children to the office with red card to alert the school to the emergency or use walkie talkie and say 'red card + location' - extra staff will be sent when red card shown.
5. Senior staff to make decision on whether the school needs to be evacuated.
6. Teacher/TA to take control of the forest school group.
7. Forest school leader and senior staff to wait at the meeting point to communicate with the emergency services.

Circle 1- Primary Air Ambulance Landing Point **Circle 2-** Secondary Air Ambulance Landing Point



Location information: St Bartholomew's, Common Field, Wigginton, Tring, HP23 6ED

Contact Number for School: 01442 822364

What3Words: surfaces.thing.syndicate

Air Ambulance landing locations:

(Circle 1) Primary- informal.respect.practical

(Circle 2) Secondary- growl.profiled.these

Emergency Action Plan: Woodland site

It will always be ensured that forest school is always as safe as possible, however if an incident occurs this is the procedure that needs to be followed.

Follow the first aid procedures if it is a medical emergency.

Forest school may take place at the forest school site in the woods or may involve going on a walk in the woods, so the FS leader and school staff helping the group will need to decide on which meeting point to go to.

1. Call 'sticky feet' and tell everyone to go to the fire circle or a specific adult.
2. Headcount done to ensure everyone is there
3. FS Leader and Teacher/TA to decide on meeting point.
4. Emergency services called using 112/999 from a mobile and location and meeting point shared.
5. School called (use walkie talkie if possible- 'red card + location') and extra staff sent if needed.
6. Teacher/TA (+ 1 volunteer if possible) to walk participants back to school.
7. Forest school leader and senior staff/volunteer to wait at the meeting point to communicate with the emergency services.

Circle 1- Primary Air Ambulance Landing Point **Circle 2-** Secondary Air Ambulance Landing Point



School information: St Bartholomew's, Common Field, Wigginton, Tring, HP23 6ED

Contact Number for School: 01442 822364

What3Words: surfaces.thing.syndicate

Emergency Vehicle access/meeting point 1-annotated.squeaking.doormat

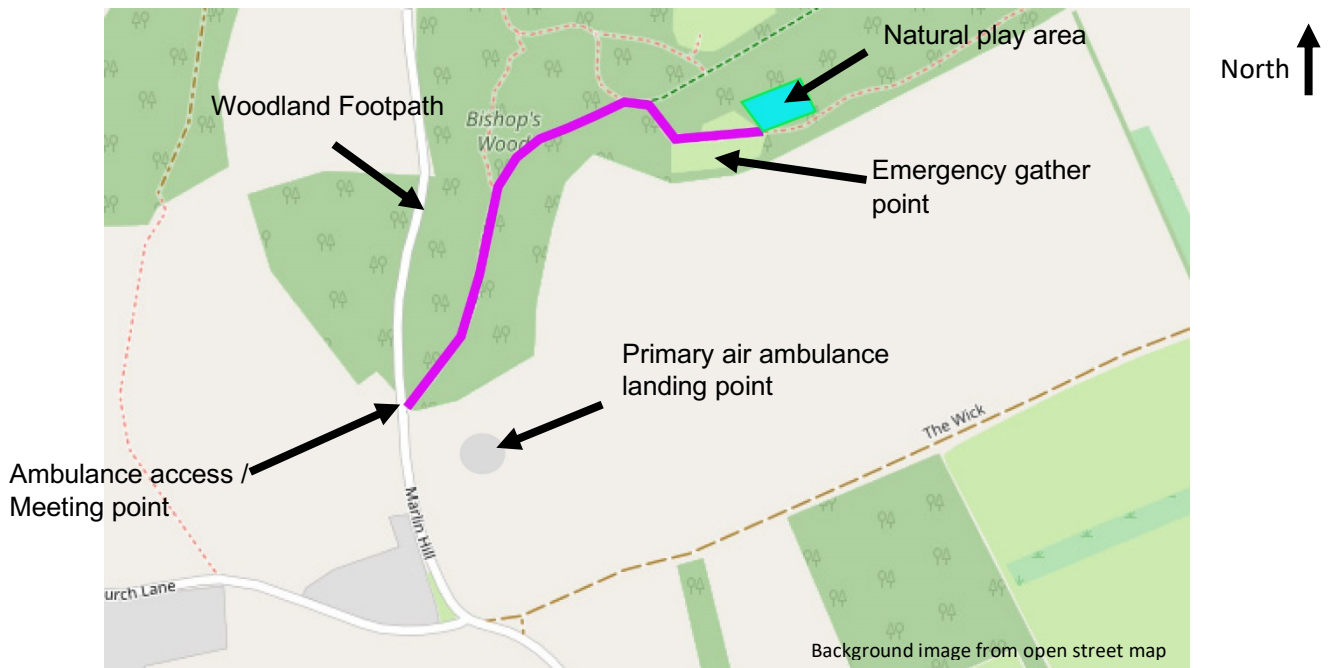
Emergency Vehicle access/meeting point 2- bulky.multiple.brick

Air Ambulance landing locations:

(Circle 1) Primary- informal.respect.practical (Circle 2) Secondary- growl.profiled.these

If at den building site, follow same procedure as above with these meeting points:

Use mobile phone to alert school.



Emergency Vehicle access/meeting point- depending.stable.repelled

Air Ambulance landing location: bunny.shook.bronzer

Lockdown Emergency Plan

Within a lockdown emergency leave all equipment apart from first aid kit and any medication e.g. inhaler or epi-pen.

'Sticky feet' to be called to get everyone back together and adults to head count and then space themselves out between the group with the FS leader/School staff at front and back of line.

School Site-

If there is something like a gas leak- call 'sticky feet' and lead all children back into the school building.

If there is an intruder on site or near the school- call 'sticky feet' and lead all children back into the school building.

If there is an intruder in school- call 'sticky feet' and lead all children through school gate and walk to the church.

Woodland Site-

If there is something like a gas leak- call 'sticky feet' and lead all children back to the closest building either school or church.

If there is an intruder on site- call 'sticky feet' and lead all children back to the closest building either school or church.

If there is an intruder at or near school- call 'sticky feet' and lead all children to the church.

Risk Assessments

School Site Risk Assessment				
Site Name	St.Bartholomew's C of E School	Assessment carried out by:	Charlotte Waterhouse	
Address	Common Field Wigginton Tring HP23 6EP	Signed by FS Leader and date:	C Waterhouse 01.09.24	
		Signed by Head Teacher and date:		
		Review Date:	September 2025	
Site Checked for	Hazards	Level of risk	Action proposed	New level of risk
Access to the site and boundaries ☼ School site ☼ Fences ☼ Gates	☼ Gates left open. ☼ People still being on site	Medium	☼ School ground checked before gates being locked after dropping off. ☼ People can only enter the school through the school office once gates are locked. ☼ Fences around the whole school site ☼ Fences to be checked	Low
Other people using the site ☼ Other children ☼ Workers	☼ PE lessons ☼ School visitors ☼ People working at the school site e.g. tree workers, gardeners	Medium	☼ DBS check if they are working within school and with the group. ☼ Any visitors without a DBS won't be left alone with participants. ☼ If PE happening outside coordinate with PE teacher where PE will be taking place	Low
Ground Layer ☼ Tree roots ☼ Animal poo ☼ Mushrooms	☼ Tripping ☼ Touching or eating mushrooms ☼ Stepping in animal poo	Medium	☼ First Aid Kit and trained first aider. ☼ Safety talk including no pick no lick rule.	Low

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Remind participants to look at where they are stepping. ☼ Mushrooms can be cleaned up using gloves 	
Field Layer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Poisonous plants ☼ Brambles ☼ Stinging nettles ☼ Berries ☼ Plants with thorns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Touching or eating of plants and berries ☼ Participants touching or falling in stinging nettles or brambles. ☼ Running into or getting a splinter from a plant with thorns 	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ First Aid Kit and trained first aider. ☼ Safety talk including no pick no lick rule. ☼ Remind participants to look at where they are stepping. ☼ Chop down some nettles and brambles if a problem but remember that these plants form a habitat. ☼ Must ask an adult if you can eat the berries. ☼ Site check before each session ☼ If poisonous plants- show participants so they know not to touch and inform senior team who may decide to get rid of it 	Low
Shrub Layer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Sticking out branches at eye level ☼ Branches at head height 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Hitting head on a branch ☼ Getting poked by a branch 	High/Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ First Aid Kit and trained first aider. ☼ Reminding participants to look where they are going. ☼ Potentially cut branches that are in danger of causing serious harm 	Medium/Low
Canopy level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Deadwood in overhead trees ☼ Leaning, dead trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Branches falling on the group. ☼ Participants using trees that aren't safe for structure building. ☼ Trees falling 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Site check before session ☼ Any loose branches in reach to be pulled down. ☼ Head teachers to be informed and tree surgeons to be informed of 	Medium/Low

			<p>any unsafe trees for them to deal with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ If the area isn't safe enough move to different area of school or can go on a walk around the woods ☼ Tree inspection completed by outside company 	
<p>Structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Fire pit ☼ Outdoor classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Fire ☼ Logs to close to fire pit. ☼ Structural damage 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Adult supervision when using the fire circle for a fire or tool work. ☼ Logs to be checked to make sure they are the right distance away. ☼ Check structure is safe for use and if not inform senior team 	Medium/Low
<p>Animals on site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Dogs ☼ Burrows ☼ Animal poo ☼ Deer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other woodland animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Stepping in or touching animal poo ☼ Tripping on burrows ☼ Stinging or biting animals 	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Dogs aren't allowed on school site (apart from school dogs which are trained)- school rules. ☼ Remind participants to look where they are going. ☼ Animal poo to be cleaned up from the site. ☼ Site check before session ☼ Appropriate clothing worn 	Low

Woodland Site Risk Assessment

Site Name	Tring Park Woodland	Assessment carried out by:		Charlotte Waterhouse
		Signed by FS Leader and date:		C Waterhouse 01.09.24
Address (Closest address)	Upper Tring Park Wigginton Tring HP23 6EH	Signed by Head Teacher and date:		
		Review Date:		September 2025
Site Checked for	Hazards	Level of risk	Action proposed	New level of risk
Access to the site ☼ Public right of way ☼ Roads ☼ parking	☼ People walking onto the site. ☼ Roads with blind corners ☼ Parked cars	Medium	☼ Teach the green cross code. ☼ Boundaries to be taught to the participants. ☼ Adults to be observant. ☼ Members of the public to be asked to leave the area where forest school is taking place- if they don't leave, we can head back to school	Low
Boundaries around the site	☼ No fences round most of boundary ☼ Wire fence on left hand side by property	Medium	☼ Teach participants the boundaries. ☼ Wire fence is outside the boundary lines. ☼ Adults to make sure the participants stay within the boundary	Low
Other people using the site. ☼ Members of the public ☼ Woodland trust workers	☼ Public site so everyone has access. ☼ Danger of injury if tree work happening	Medium	☼ DBS check if they are working with the group. ☼ Parent helpers won't be DBS checked but won't be left alone with participants. ☼ If work happening at the woodland site either head back to school or go for a walk around the woods	Low

<p>Ground Layer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hidden logs Tree roots Animal poo Fungi/Mushrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tripping Touching or eating mushrooms Stepping in animal poo 	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Kit and trained first aider. Safety talk including no pick no lick rule. Remind participants when we get to the woods to look at where they are stepping 	Low
<p>Field Layer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poisonous plants Brambles Stinging nettles Berries Plants with thorns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Touching or eating of plants and berries Participants touching or falling in stinging nettles or brambles. Running into or getting a splinter from a plant with thorns 	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Kit and trained first aider. Safety talk including no pick no lick rule. Remind participants when we get to the woods to look at where they are stepping. Must ask an adult if you can eat the berries. Site check before each session If poisonous plants- show participants so they know not to touch 	Low
<p>Shrub Layer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sticking out branches at eye level Branches at head height 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hitting head on a branch Getting poked by a branch 	High/Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Kit and trained first aider. Reminding participants to look where they are going. Potentially cut branches that are in danger of causing serious harm 	Medium/Low

<p>Canopy level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deadwood in overhead trees Leaning, dead trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Branches falling on the group. Participants using trees that aren't safe for structure building. Trees falling 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site check before session Any loose branches in reach to be pulled down. Woodland trust to be informed of any unsafe trees for them to deal with If the area isn't safe enough move to school site or can go on a walk around the woods Woodland trust to complete tree inspection 	Medium/Low
<p>Structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire pit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Logs to close to fire pit 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult supervision when using the fire circle for a fire or tool work. Logs to be checked to make sure they are the right distance away 	Medium/Low
<p>Animals on site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dogs Burrows Animal poo Deer Other woodland animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stepping in or touching animal poo Dogs coming on to the site. Tripping on burrows Stinging or biting insects 	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants taught x factor when a dog enters the site- participants stand up, cross their arms over their body and look up. Remind participants to look where they are going. Animal poo to be cleaned up from the site Appropriate clothing worn 	Low

Risk Benefit Assessment

Forest School Leader/Assessor:	Charlotte Waterhouse	Group:	St Bartholomew's Primary School
School Site Address:	Common Field Wigginton Tring HP23 6EP	Who is covered by the assessment:	Everyone
Woodland Site Address: (Nearest Address)	Upper Tring Park Wigginton Tring HP23 6EH	Location:	School and Woodland Site
Signed by FS lead: C Waterhouse		Signed by Headteacher:	

Experience/ Activity	Benefits	Hazards	Risks to whom	Control Measures	Level Achieved- Colour code
Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ New skill ☼ Social skills ☼ Learn about the needs of a fire. ☼ Emotional ☼ Physical- fine and gross motor skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Burns ☼ Cuts ☼ Scalds ☼ Smoke inhalation 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Water container for extinguishing ☼ Water for plunging ☼ Health and safety talk with participants ☼ Seating at a suitable distance ☼ Emergency action plan ☼ Fire fit for purpose e.g., size of fire. ☼ Suitable weather ☼ Adult roles discussed. ☼ Ratio A:C- 3:15 	Medium
Fire lighting- using strikers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ New skill ☼ Physical- fine motor skills of using a striker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Burns ☼ Smoke inhalation ☼ Scalds 	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Hair tied up ☼ No gloves to be worn and sleeves pulled up slightly if needed ☼ Water nearby for plunging ☼ Ratio A:C- 1:2 ☼ Adult to lead fire lighting practice-making sure it is away from other 	Medium
Cooking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ New skill ☼ Social skills ☼ Intellectual skills ☼ Learn food prep and cooking skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Burns ☼ Cuts ☼ Scalds ☼ Smoke inhalation ☼ Food allergies ☼ Special diet 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Fire control measures ☼ FS leader to find out about any food allergies or special diets. ☼ Following food hygiene standards ☼ Hand washing station ☼ Organised and clean equipment 	Medium

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical- fine and gross motor skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choking 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delaying participants from putting hot food in their mouth using singing/counting PPE 	
Foraging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find out what nature has to offer. Learn about plant species. Social and intellectual development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poisoning Stings Rashes Allergic reactions 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site knowledge Adult knowledge Only allow the consumption if 100% confident on what it is. Site check before session Information talks about certain plants Fencing/designated areas of where not to go- boundaries. First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider No Pick, No lick Hand washing station PPE Correct ratio A:C- 3:15 Participants must check with an adult first- safety talk with participants. Talk about how much we pick 	Medium
Digging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical- using spades. Sharing ideas Creating stories Imagination Expressing emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falling Eating mud Inappropriate use of digging tools 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated area to protect the environment. Talk about safety. Participants reminded not to put anything in their mouth. Discuss correct use of the digging tools 	Low
Rope use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social- working as a team, talking to others. Intellectual- learning new knots and skills. Character building- perseverance Physical- motor skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate use of ropes Rope burn Damaged ropes Knots not tied correctly. Falling Tripping 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk on appropriate use of ropes. Safety talks on looking for ropes and being careful where you are running. First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider Adults to check the tying of knots if being used to support weight. PPE available if they want it. FS leader to check the ropes before/after each session 	Low
Mud painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagination Social- playing and talking with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eating and drinking of wet mud Throwing it at others 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety talk Adults to pour water. Reminded not to eat or drink it. 	Low

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical- mixing and painting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting it in eyes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about what we can paint First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider 	
Use of tarpaulins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teamwork Physical- motor skills Imagination Character building- perseverance Learning new skills including building skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate use of tarpaulins Damaged tarpaulins Tripping 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about how to use tarpaulins. Remind participants to be careful where they are running. Activities on building structures with tarpaulins Adults to check anything if it will be supporting the weight of a participant. First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider 	Low
Bug hunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about different bugs. Teamwork Character building- perseverance Exploration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stings Bites Broken bug catchers Incorrect moving of logs 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider Teach participants how to correctly move logs. Talk about how to catch bugs and about returning them to where they found them Equipment checked before/after sessions 	Low
Swing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn how to put it up. Emotional and spiritual connections Calming time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falling out Tripping Inappropriate use 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider Safety talk around the swing Swing- max 1 participant Adult near by 	Low
Swing (if built)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New skill learnt. Teamwork and social skills Character building- perseverance Physical- motor skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falling Incorrect knot tying Tripping Being hit by the swing or the person swinging 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider Safety talk around the swing Adults to check knots before using. Adult near by 	Low
Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social skills Physical Teamwork Character building Emotional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tripping Running into things and others Uneven ground Falling Any other injuries 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider Suitable adult to participant ratio and adults keeping watch. Choose a suitable area for the game. Talk about being safe during the game 	Low
Collecting natural materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning about different species that they find Imagination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stings Bites Poisonous plants 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FS leader to inspect the site before session and to fence off areas if need be. 	Medium/Low

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploration Social- communicating with others. Making connections with the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Injuries when moving around e.g., tripping 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety talk on collecting materials and where they can't pick from Adults to be close by Participants to check with adults before picking something that they don't recognise. First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider Talk on how much we collect 	
Tool Use- Knives Hand drill Saw Axe Loppers Peelers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New skills learnt. Character building Teamwork Physical development Imagination Sharing ideas Being creative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cuts Major injuries Harm to others 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider PPE Safety talk and instructions- repeated when needed. Adult present always Tools in their safety cases and locked up when not being used. Ratio depends on tool being used but no more than 1:4 	Medium
Natural Crafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teamwork Imagination Communication Teamwork Using a range of materials Physical- motor skills Exploration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Splinters Cuts Eating any of the materials 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety talk Reminded of the no pick, no lick rule Adult leading or nearby activity First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider Check materials that have been collected before using 	Low
Den Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagination Exploration of different materials Learn new skills. Learn about different dens. Teamwork Physical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Splinters Cuts Falling Materials falling on people. Rope burns 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider Safety talk Participants to ask adults to check structures before using them. Check materials before use. Adults to keep eyes on building Teach children how to check if they can remove a log from another den and if it is secure on their den. 	Low
Tree Climbing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn new skill. Physical development Perseverance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falling Splinters Cuts Major injuries 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider Safety talk Check tree before use. Teach- 3 points of contact always. 	Medium

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult to be at climbing tree when children are climbing 	
Adult Led Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploration Imagination Teamwork SPICES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cuts Splinters Eating of materials Any other injuries 	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each activity to be thought about by the FS leader and any risks identified. First Aid Kit and Trained First Aider Adult leading the activity. Safety talk given if needed 	Low

Weather Risk Assessment

Forest School Leader/Assessor:	Charlotte Waterhouse	Group:	St Bartholomew's Primary School
School Site Address:	Common Field Wigginton Tring HP23 6EP	Who is covered by the assessment:	Everyone
Woodland Site Address: (Nearest Address)	Upper Tring Park Wigginton Tring HP23 6EH	Location:	School and Woodland Site
Signed by FS lead:		Signed by Headteacher:	

Weather type	Hazards	Risk to whom	Level of risk	Control Measures	Level Achieved- Colour code
Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falling trees and branches Risk if fire lit Smoke being blown around Deadfall from trees 	Everyone	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FS session moved inside if needed or moved to school field not below trees Check site for hanging deadfall Fires not lit Adults to monitor weather and the trees 	Medium
Rain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants and adults getting wet and then cold 	Everyone	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clothing checked to make sure it is suitable Complete some of the session inside if needed Shelter put up to offer somewhere dry 	Low
Temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants and adults getting too cold (extreme measures- frostbite, hypothermia, chilblains) Participants and adults getting too hot (extreme measure- dehydration, overheating, heat exhaustion, heatstroke) 	Everyone	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water available for drinks Shelter put up for shade if needed Clothing checked- hats, gloves, scarves, sun hat, sun cream Session shortened if need be and can be completed indoors 	Medium
Lightning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrocutation Trees or shelters being stuck 	Everyone	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor forest school session 	Low
Sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sun burn 	Everyone	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sun cream applied at home Clothing checked 	Medium/low

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Shelter provided for shade if needed ☼ If it gets too much, shorten session outside ☼ Water for drinking 	
Other- weather warning	☼ Depends on the weather warning	Everyone	High/Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☼ Session changed to an indoor session 	Medium/Low

