



St Catherine's R.C. Primary School

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Forest School inherently involves risk and risk taking. We support the FSA (Forest School Association) principles that consider the benefits to undertaking these risks are significant, namely:

Principle 4: Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

- Forest School opportunities are designed to build on an individual's innate motivation, positive attitudes and/or interests.
- Forest School uses tools and fires only where deemed appropriate to the learners, and dependent on completion of a baseline risk assessment.
- Any Forest School experience follows a Risk–Benefit process managed jointly by the practitioner and learner that are tailored to the developmental stage of the learner.

Our risk assessments, therefore, reflect this principle. This risk assessment is annually reviewed and updated accordingly. Where a risk is present, appropriate actions to reduce that risk and by whom they are to be undertaken will be advised. The nature of Forest School sessions also dictates that dynamic and continual risk assessment must be undertaken by staff and students involved in each project on a regular basis (i.e. before commencing each session).

The Forest School Leader, Mr Rodriguez will carry out a site survey at the start of every new academic year to make the site safe before sessions begin.

The designated School Leader is: Jessica Quilligotti, Deputy Headteacher.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular drinks of water for participants • School staff will be responsible for following their school policy with regard to sun cream and sun hats. <p>In extremely hot temperatures (30oC or above) the government heat wave advice should be followed and Forest School leaders should know what the alert level is and what steps to take.</p> <p>All Forest School Leaders are ITC Outdoor First Aid trained and qualified, which covers heat stroke and hyperthermia. This qualification is updated every 3 years. First aid kits, contained within FS Leader kit at all times, will include foil blankets.</p>	temperatures as well as carry limited additional layers.
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HEALTH

Hazard	Harm	Existing preventative measures	Proposed Action
Medical Problems	Injury and Illness to participants	<p>Our Forest School Leader is ITC Outdoor First Aid trained and qualified. This qualification is updated every 3 years. First aid kits are contained within FS Leader kit at all times.</p> <p>School Site based projects: Schools hold medical information for all pupils. FS Leaders are to establish any medical needs for pupils on their projects at the pre-project planning meeting. It is down to the individual schools whether this medical information is carried during</p>	<p>FS Leaders to termly (every 3 months) review and re-stock their first aid kits.</p> <p>Participants on FS sessions to carry their own medical devices/equipment, such as inhalers with them at all times. If the participant(s) wish to store their device in a designated place, this can be agreed with the FS Leader.</p>

		<p>the project. It is however a minimum requirement that the FS leader is made aware of any precautions taken to support the medical well being of participants (such as carrying an inhaler).</p> <p>The FS leader will have the over-arching responsibility for First Aid on each project, unless the school staff member is a qualified first-aider and is designated that responsibility at the pre-project planning meeting.</p> <p>Off-site projects: All participants for Off-site projects complete medical information forms. A summary of this information should be present on the site during the sessions and kept in a designated place</p> <p>The FS leader will have the over-arching responsibility for First Aid on each project.</p> <p>The FS sessions cannot commence off site without the approval from the local authority.</p> <p>Staff are covered by School's Insurance Policy. Contact the School Business Manager for further details.</p>	<p>When an injury occurs the school policy regarding the next steps to be taken must be followed. This will include recording the incident in the accident book, seeking further medical advice if necessary, informing parents and guardians where necessary.</p> <p>The FS Leader must always carry their First Aid kit at all times. This must be well stocked and checked on a termly (3 month) basis.</p> <p>Participants must submit a completed medical form for any off site project, prior to commencing the FS sessions. Without a completed and submitted form, the participant must not be involved in the sessions.</p>
Covid-19	Risk of infection from another person, leading to Covid-19	<p>Any children with any of the main three Covid-19 symptoms will be sent home and will be asked to take a PCR test. They will not be able to return to school until the test results show a negative test.</p> <p>Detailed guidance regarding symptoms and NHS advice is listed on our website to support parents and carers.</p> <p>Guidance shows that infection levels are greatly</p>	<p>Children displaying symptoms will not be able to attend Forest School and remain in school, in isolation until they are collected.</p> <p>If a child starts to develop symptoms of Covid-19 whilst at Forest School, the FS leader will contact the school office to inform parents to collect the child. The child will then be isolated from the rest of the group for this period of time until they are collected.</p>

		decreased when outdoors and therefore the nature of outdoor Forest School activities ensures this is in place already.	
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ACTIVITIES

Hazard	Harm	Existing preventative measures	Proposed Action
Rope and Sisal	Strangulation Entanglement Friction burns	<p>Rope and sisal are predominantly used at Forest School to put up shelters. This are sometimes placed in the way of paths and at a height where they may be in the way for participants.</p> <p>Participants on FS projects are encouraged to carry out their own risk assessments in order to keep themselves safe. They can also work with their fellow participants to discuss and raise issues around incorrect siting of ropes. This is part of their learning process.</p> <p>Sisal is purchased regularly so that old and rotting sisal can be replaced on tarps.</p> <p>Where rope is used to make swings the FS Leader should check the ropes condition for fraying and signs of deterioration, prior to its use as a rope</p>	<p>Participants are taught how to erect shelters and the appropriate knots that can be used. They are encouraged to think about the siting of shelters and considering how other participants move around the site.</p> <p>FS Leader is responsible for keeping the site in a usable state and encouraging the discussion when and if issues arise.</p> <p>On an annual basis during tool check, old sisal to be removed from tarps.</p> <p>FS leader to encourage the testing of swings and consideration of siting of the swing in relation to size of drop.</p> <p>All rope and sisal is removed from the site at the</p>

		swing.	end of each FS session.
Den building	Injury	<p>Consideration of siting of natural dens is encouraged prior to a den building session. Discussion of types of wood is used so that participants avoid dead wood.</p> <p>Participants should test the integrity of the den as they build it. They should check for stability and made necessary adjustments to avoid the den collapsing whilst they are in it.</p>	<p>Where dens are left in place these should be checked by participants every session to make any necessary adjustments.</p> <p>At the end of a Forest School project all dens should be dismantled and cleared away.</p>
Fire	Burns and scalds	<p>FS Leaders have been trained in the case of fire and should follow procedures from their FS training. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of a raised, contained fire in a fire pit. • Rules around safely moving and kneeling close to the fire • Heat resistant gloves • Water buckets • Fire Blankets • First Aid Kit including Burn Gels. <p>As part of the FS session participants are encouraged to take part in fire lighting and maintenance. It is about safe practice and habits being in place. On occasions a minor burn or scald may occur at FS. All adults must ensure that they follow these procedures and model how to behaviour safely with fire.</p> <p>When using Kelly Kettles the above measures are in place as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearing leaf litter and debris • Marked square of sticks 	<p>As part of the FS Fire policy we have an agreement with LA Greenspace management team around permission to use fire. On school grounds this permission is at the discretion of the head teacher.</p> <p>When prevailing weather conditions and the site are deemed unsuitable the Forest School Leader may decide not to have a fire. This includes extremely dry periods where ground conditions may be susceptible to the spread of fire. This may also include exposed sites where the wind causes the fire to not be contained within the fire pit.</p> <p>At the end of the session the FS Leader must fully extinguish the fire and the ground (this may be done with the participants as part of the educational experience). In line with our 'no trace' policy all evidence of the fire must be hidden.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water spout away from participants • Training in how to hold and transport the Kelly kettle 	
Leaving the Ground	Falls Breaks Head injury	<p>Forest School sessions may involve activities where participants leave the ground, including tree climbing and use of slack lines or tightropes.</p> <p>Tree climbing: Participants and FS leaders will discuss safely climbing a tree and encouraged to consider having three points in contact with the tree at any one time. They must also make decisions about the height that they climb the tree, which is age/ability specific.</p> <p>The FS leader will train participants in carrying out dynamic risk assessments of specific trees, considered along with recent weather conditions. The presence of decaying branches on a tree should make this unsuitable as a climbing tree. Some trees will be more suitable for climbing than others.</p> <p>When climbing a tree, participants should also be aware of others around them and avoid several people climbing the same tree. Participants are encouraged to leave the tree safely and avoid rushing.</p> <p>Slack lines: FS Leader to erect the slack line and test its integrity prior to the session beginning. Use of hand guiding rope to make the slack lines easier to complete. The slack line to be checked during the session</p>	<p>Where incidents occur around injuries associated with falls from tree we will follow accident procedures above.</p> <p>As part of reflection activities, participants will be encouraged to think about their feelings associated with tree climbing. Questions like: how high do you think the tree can support your weight? At what height do you have a sense of fear or satisfaction?</p> <p>Participants to be actively involved in decision making around the use of the slack line (eg. how many people on it at any one time, where it is positioned, how hard it is made as a challenge)</p>

		<p>and adjustments made to its tension as necessary.</p> <p>The following measures should be in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking the underfoot terrain and clearing any hazards • Positioning the slack line at a height and position appropriate for your group • Considering how weather conditions may affect the activity • Condition of the slack line – any frays or signs of deterioration. <p>The slack line must be checked prior to each session and formally every term (3 monthly)</p>	
Cooking	<p>Scalds and Burns</p> <p>Food poisoning</p>	<p>Some Forest School projects may involve basic cooking with fire including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boiling water for drinks • Toasting marshmallows • Popcorn • Baking bread and cakes • Occasional cooking and preparing of basic meals (eg. bacon butty, casseroles, soups) <p>FS Leaders to encourage hand hygiene with soap and water available prior to cooking. Tools and utensils to be cleaned by FS Leader at school . Food preparation to be used with clean utensils and boards.</p> <p>FS leaders to supervise any food based activities or delegate this to another responsible adult.</p> <p>Participants to learn about their safety in connection with food and drinks being hot and how they potentially could burn or scald themselves</p>	All necessary precautions in place.

		(eg. letting marshmallows cool down before putting them in your mouth.) FS Leaders to ensure all food is properly cooked before allowing participants to eat them.	
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TOOLS

Hazard	Harm	Existing preventative measures	Proposed Action
Bow Saw	Injury Cuts	<p>Tool talks are given to participants prior to using the Bow Saw. The tool talk incorporates:</p> <p><i>Handling:</i> Holding, transporting and passing the tool</p> <p><i>Purpose/Use:</i> safe working zone/area, use of glove on non-tool hand, appropriate use of tool (cutting branches greater in diameter than a 2p piece)</p> <p><i>Storage:</i> blade cover on, in designated place</p> <p>This is repeated until the group is experienced at using this tool. Bow Saws are not freely available but stored in a designated space.</p> <p>Forest School Leaders are responsible for the maintenance of their kit. Bow Saws should be put away cleaned and dried, with the blade cover on.</p>	<p>Forest School leaders will make a judgement as to whether the group or individual participants are ready to use the tool safely and follow the procedures outlined in the tool talk.</p> <p>When a participant is not using the tool in a safe way and is posing a risk to themselves and others, the tool will be taken away and support given to allow the participant to use it safely.</p> <p>Bow Saws cannot be used without a blade cover</p>

		<p>Blades should be sharp and where they are not, the FS leader should replace these.</p> <p>On a termly basis (every 3 months) the FS Leader must check the condition of the Bow Saws to ensure that they are safe.</p>	<p>present and where missing they must be replaced by the FS Leader.</p>
Knives	Injury Cuts	<p>Tool talks are given to participants prior to using the Knife. The tool talk incorporates:</p> <p><i>Handling:</i> Holding, transporting and passing the tool.</p> <p><i>Purpose/Use:</i> safe working zone/area – away from the body, use of glove on non-tool hand, appropriate use of tool (cutting string, whittling small slithers off cut branches)</p> <p><i>Storage:</i> blade cover/sheath on, in designated place</p> <p>This is repeated until the group is experienced at using this tool. Knives are not freely available but stored in a designated space.</p> <p>Forest School Leaders are responsible for the maintenance of their kit. Knives should be put away cleaned and dried, with the blade cover/sheath on.</p> <p>Blades should be sharp and where they are not, the FS leader should sharpen these.</p> <p>On a termly basis (every 3 months) the FS Leader must check the condition of the Knives to ensure that they are safe.</p>	<p>Forest School leaders will make a judgement as to whether the group or individual participants are ready to use the tool safely and follow the procedures outlined in the tool talk.</p> <p>When a participant is not using the tool in a safe way and is posing a risk to themselves and others, the tool will be taken away and support given to allow the participant to use it safely.</p> <p>The FS Leader must assess each group when determining how many knives may be in use at any one time during a FS session.</p> <p>When a participant is confident and using a knife in a practice deemed safe by the FS Leader, they may choose not to wear a glove on their non-tool hand if they find it more comfortable doing so. The FS Leader and individual must review this situation each session. This is based on a judgement that an ill-fitting glove may be more hazardous than no glove, once an individual is competent at using a knife.</p> <p>Knives cannot be used without a blade cover/sheath present and where missing they must be replaced by the FS Leader. Only Mora Sheath knives should be used.</p>
Loppers	Injury Cuts	<p>Tool talks are given to participants prior to using the Loppers. The tool talk incorporates:</p> <p><i>Handling:</i> Holding, transporting and passing the tool</p> <p><i>Purpose/Use:</i> safe working zone/area, no gloves</p>	<p>Forest School leaders will make a judgement as to whether the group or individual participants are ready to use the tool safely and follow the procedures outlined in the tool talk.</p> <p>When a participant is not using the tool in a safe</p>

		<p>to be worn, appropriate use of tool (cutting branches of a diameter less than a 2p piece) <i>Storage:</i> in designated place, tool closed</p> <p>This is repeated until the group is experienced at using this tool. Loppers are not freely available but stored in a designated space.</p> <p>Forest School Leaders are responsible for the maintenance of their kit. Loppers should be put away cleaned and dried.</p> <p>Blades should be sharp and where they are not, the FS leader should replace the loppers. The mechanism should also be lubricated. On a termly basis (every 3 months) the FS Leader must check the condition of the loppers to ensure that they are safe.</p>	<p>way and is posing a risk to themselves and others, the tool will be taken away and support given to allow the participant to use it safely.</p>
Bill Hook	Injury Cuts	<p>Tool talks are given to participants prior to using the Bill Hook. The tool talk incorporates: <i>Handling:</i> Holding, transporting and passing the tool <i>Purpose/Use:</i> safe working zone/area, use of glove on non-tool hand, appropriate use of tool (splitting wood) <i>Storage:</i> blade cover on, in designated place</p> <p>This is repeated until the group is experienced at using this tool. Bill Hooks are not freely available but stored in a designated space.</p> <p>Forest School Leaders are responsible for the maintenance of their kit. Bill Hooks should be put away cleaned and dried, with the blade cover on.</p> <p>Blades should be sharp and where they are not,</p>	<p>Forest School leaders will make a judgement as to whether the group or individual participants are ready to use the tool safely and follow the procedures outlined in the tool talk. When a participant is not using the tool in a safe way and is posing a risk to themselves and others, the tool will be taken away and support given to allow the participant to use it safely.</p>

		<p>the FS leader should sharpen these. The condition of the blade cover and handle should also be inspected</p> <p>On a termly basis (every 3 months) the FS Leader must check the condition of the Bill Hook to ensure that they are safe.</p>	<p>Bill Hooks cannot be used without a blade cover present and where missing they must be replaced by the FS Leader.</p>
Small Hand tools	Injury Cuts	<p>Other small hand tools may be used as part of the projects, and these do not require the same level of procedure than the above tools. These may include hand drills, augers, secateurs, scissors and hammers/mallets.</p> <p>These tools should be maintained to a high working standard and will be assessed on a termly basis (every 3 months).</p>	<p>The FS leader about the safe use will give talks and practice of these tools and supervision will be adequate when first introducing the tool. This will include ensuring that the tool is used for its intended purpose.</p>

Behaviour

Hazard	Harm	Existing preventative measures	Proposed Action
Disruptive Behaviour	Child is unsafe if not following instructions	<p>J Rodriguez is trained in managing different behaviours and using a range of strategies and is Team Teach trained.</p> <p>If a child displays disruptive behaviour, JR will remind the child of Forest School expectations. If behaviour continues and it is decided that behaviour is not safe enough to remain (walking away from group, not following instructions, etc) then JR will call school office who will send members of staff (in car for speed) to either come down and support further or to bring the child back to school.</p>	<p>Any children with an Education Health and Care Plan who have 1:1 support staff will have an adult present with them to ensure their safety and engagement.</p>

Reviewed By: Jessica Quiligotti

Deputy Headteacher

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