

Stamford Park Primary School

Forest School Handbook

Contents

Section 1	4
An Introduction to Forest School at Stamford Park Primary School	4
Our Aims for Forest School.....	4
What is Forest School?	4
Environment Impact.....	4
A Typical Forest School Session	5
Section 2	6
Health and Safety at Forest School	6
Emergency Procedures at Forest School	6
Behaviour Management at Forest School	7
Rewards.....	8
Sanctions	8
Safeguarding Children at Forest School	8
Equal Opportunities at Forest School.....	8
Volunteers at Forest School	9
Use of Hand Tools at Forest School.....	9
Fire Safety at Forest School	10
Use Clothing at Forest School.....	11
Eating at Forest School	11
Disposal of waste, food and litter	12
Toileting Procedures at Forest School.....	12
Communication Strategy	12
Participants.....	12
Volunteers	13
Section 3: Risk Assessments	14
Site Assessment.....	16
Activity Assessments	22
Weekly Risk Assessment.....	29
Tool Risk Assessments.....	31
Bill Hook	31
Bow Saw	32
Mallet	32
Sheath Knife	33
Loppers.....	33

Peelers	34
Section 4: Appendices	35
Tool and Equipment Safe Procedures	35
Bill Hook - Tool Talk.....	35
Bow Saw - Tool Talk.....	35
Mallet - Tool Talk.....	36
Sheath Knife - Tool Talk.....	36
Loppers - Tool Talk	37
Peeler - Tool Talk.....	38
Volunteer Forms to Sign.....	39
Incident Log Sheet	40

Section 1

An Introduction to Forest School at Stamford Park Primary School

Forest School was first introduced at Stamford Park Primary School in 2017 and has become firmly established as an important part of the school's learning provision for our children. The forest school ethos is embedded within all sessions we do. The introduction of Forest School seemed a natural progression in further developing our children's well-being and independence, and giving them opportunities outdoors to become more resourceful, resilient, reflective learners.

The aim of Forest School is to work with a range of individuals in the outdoors over a period of time, introducing responsible risk-taking and fostering achievement in all participants. Children are supported in their learning through a holistic approach which encourages the exploration of the outdoor environment and an appreciation for nature. Forest School Leaders use learning and teaching strategies which develop confidence, emotional resilience, independence, language and communication skills and increase levels of physical activity and mental well-being.

Our Aims for Forest School

- All children take part in regular, sustained forest school sessions throughout the year
- To enhance children's social, emotional, spiritual, physical and creative development through their outdoor experiences
- To harness a love and appreciation of the outdoors, encouraging children to be inquisitive and explore
- To accelerate children's progress in school through delivery of an exciting and innovative curriculum which incorporates Forest School

What is Forest School?

Outdoor learning has been around for hundreds of years, however it was established as part of educational pedagogy in Scandinavia in the 1950s. In 1993 Forest school was introduced in the UK and the number of outdoor learning opportunities has increased over the years. It focuses and actively promotes child-initiated learning with adults providing unique opportunities to accelerate a child's learning and development. It explicitly supports social, emotional and physical development of the whole group attending (children and adults) and aims to encourage each individual to take risks, develop resilience and develop confidence and independence.

Environment Impact

Each Forest School activity carried out will have an impact on the environment used and we aim to adhere to the Forest School ethos of respect all, which includes the Forest school community and environment. A group of 15 will participate in Forest School every week and all participating must rigorously manage the environmental impact.

All rubbish and food debris will be removed at the end of each session and the area used will be returned to its natural state. Any natural materials used during sessions are gathered from the forest floor and we aim to use alternate areas around the Forest school site to minimize environmental impact on its natural state.

A Typical Forest School Session

Each Forest school session will be unique. Most sessions will be regularly carried out. There may at times be weather deemed dangerous and therefore sessions will not go ahead on that day.

A programme of Forest School activities will typically include:

- games, such 1,2,3 Where Are You?, Bat and Moth etc.
- building small, temporary shelters using tarpaulins or fallen materials
- woodland art
- fires
- tying knots
- nature activities
- tool use - child to adult ratio 1:1 (except if specified otherwise in risk assessment)
- snack
- reflection opportunities

Section 2

The following policies are for the safe running of Forest School. They are in addition to the main school policies and do not replace them. For main school policies please see the Stamford Park Primary School website. All members of staff and volunteers who come to assist with sessions have a duty to follow these policies and should be familiar with their contents. All parent helpers and volunteers must sign to say that they have read the relevant policies.

Health and Safety at Forest School

Stamford Park Primary School Health and Safety Policy outlines a clear statement of intent regarding the School's approach to the health and safety of its children, staff and visitors to the School. The following is a seven point list of additional measures relating directly to Forest School sessions:

1. However many adults accompany the children to Forest School sessions, the person in charge is always the forest school leader
2. The forest school leader has overall duty of care for the children in his/her charge but all adults are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that the children are safe
3. All adult helpers, staff or volunteers, must sign and date a form to show that they have read this handbook and appropriate risk assessments and that they understand and agree to comply with the general operating procedures for Forest School
4. All members of school staff will always carry a mobile phone, fully charged
5. The forest school leader or supporting staff members will carry a first aid kit
6. In the event of an emergency, the forest school leader will ensure that the emergency services are contacted immediately. School will also be informed and call parents/partners as appropriate
7. The forest school leader is responsible for carrying out all Risk Assessments. Head teacher to check and approve prior to activities.

Emergency Procedures at Forest School

All participants will be briefed in what to do in case of an emergency. A whistle will be blown as a signal to stop activities, walk sensibly to a member of staff, be silent and await instructions. The forest school leader will assess the situation and nature/extent of the injury/accident. They will ensure that the rest of the group are safe from danger and are adequately supervised. They will attend to the casualty, giving first aid where necessary and requesting that support staff/volunteers call school (0161 928 3608) as required. In the unlikely event that the emergency services are required, a forest school leader will make the call. An incident report will be completed upon return to school (see appendices).

In case of injury:

- If anyone (adult or child) sustains an injury or illness which cannot be treated by first aid on-site and who therefore requires medical assistance:
 - In serious cases, 999 should be called using a mobile phone carried by forest school leader and then school will be notified. The school will be responsible for notifying the parents
 - The rest of the group must be supervised away from the incident and if in danger will be moved to safety
 - One member of staff will meet the ambulance at the site entrance and direct the crew to the incident site
 - If the injured child is taken to hospital, one member of the school staff (not a volunteer) will accompany them and the child's parent will be updated about the situation by the staff returning to school

- In minor cases, the school will arrange to contact the parent of the injured child so that they can be collected and taken home, to the doctor/hospital
- If an adult is injured, the above is followed but school must contact next of kin

Missing child

Children will be taught 123 where are you?

1. Search vicinity
2. Assemble rest of children
3. Call into school to alert and school calls police(parent/guardian)
4. Follow school incident procedure.

Behaviour Management at Forest School

In line with our school Behaviour Policy, at Stamford Park Primary School we aim to:

- Give positive encouragement and praise for good behaviour
- Create a positive, stimulating and challenging environment
- Stimulate our children through well thought out sessions
- Create an environment where every individual feels valued and respected

In addition, we also aim to do the following:

- Build self-esteem, independence and motivation to learn whilst maintaining a safe environment
- Promote awareness, respect and care for other individuals and for the natural environment
- Reinforce team work and collaborative behaviour
- Develop continuity of behaviour expectations and of approach to behaviour management outside of school
- Develop awareness of acceptable behaviour and responsible behaviour in an outdoor environment

The role of the forest school leader with respect to behaviour is as follows:

- To create a positive environment which encourages and reinforces caring, nurturing and acceptable behaviour towards one another, the environment in which they are working and equipment that they are using
- To promote effective relationships between all parties in which all are accepted, valued and treated fairly and equally
- To be mindful of the need to maintain safety at all times
- To establish clearly defined standards of behaviour
- To provide a positive role model for all children and volunteers
- To be mindful and plan activities relevant to the individual needs of all children participating (behaviour or otherwise)

The role of the children with respect to behaviour is as follows:

- To listen carefully and respond to instructions and requests, in particular, anything relating to their safety
- To develop and maintain positive attitudes towards one another, the environment in which they are working and equipment that they are using
- To display a Growth Mindset during Forest School sessions

Rewards

Rewards given at Forest School will form part of the school's 'Well done' assembly.

Sanctions

Where sanctions need to be given, the forest school leader will ensure that the following steps are followed:

- Try to re-engage the child
- Issue a verbal warning by taking the child to one side and reminding them of behaviour expectations/ what is acceptable
- Give the child time-out from an activity by moving them away to a designated area. Forest school leader/member of school staff to ensure safety at all times
- If the child continues to disrupt the session, forest school leader will arrange to meet with parent (with class teacher) to discuss and decide future action. All attempts should be made to avoid the child missing a session.

If a child's actions are placing the group or an individual at risk, the child will be dealt with in the following manner:

- Forest school leader to remove the child from the situation to a designated area. School staff member to remain with the child and allow them time to calm down
- Forest school leader and class teacher to arrange to meet with parents/carers to discuss the issue and work together to resolve and decide future action. This may include (in extreme cases i.e. safety of others) exclusion from sessions.
- In all cases, the forest school leader should inform the Headteacher.

Safeguarding Children at Forest School

All adults working within Forest School need to understand and appreciate that when children are in an environment where they feel comfortable and content, they may feel comfortable to disclose information that they might otherwise keep to themselves. Any member of staff or volunteer who finds themselves in a situation where a child is telling them something which concerns them should follow these steps:

- Listen but ask no leading questions
- Do not promise to 'keep a secret' – adults should make it clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the start of the conversation
- Comfort the child if appropriate
- Inform the Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Safeguarding Lead immediately upon return to school and detail on Edukey.

Equal Opportunities at Forest School

At Stamford Park Primary School we actively promote respect and equality for all and this is within every aspect of school life. Each member of the school community is to be treated equally and with respect regardless of gender, colour, race, religion, nationality, home circumstances or ability.

We aim to ensure that all our children:

- Feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- Recognise and appreciate differences between themselves and others
- Are able to participate in all sessions
- Use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds

- Share a common curriculum experience
- Participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs.

Volunteers at Forest School

As a school we embrace the whole community and sometimes rely on support from volunteers and parents in order to effectively run our sessions. We ask that all our volunteers (and staff members) consult this document to provide them with an overview of expectations.

If a member of the school community expresses interest in supporting our Forest School activities they will be invited to meet with the forest school leader who will brief them on the expectations. Their role will usually involve the following:

- Familiarising themselves with the Forest School handbook and procedures within it
- Taking part in pre-session briefings with forest school leader and other volunteers
- Promoting the ethos of Forest School at all times in order to raise self-esteem
- Assist and monitor children walking to and from Forest School site
- Assisting children with their kit
- Supporting the forest school leader with planned activities

Use of Hand Tools at Forest School

Using small hand tools is an important part of Forest School, as it enables the children to take risks and develop new, practical skills which in turn enhance their confidence.

Hand tools are to be maintained in good working order by the forest school leader and will be inspected before each session to ensure safety is paramount. Children and adults will be taught how to handle tools properly and to treat them with respect. A clear tool talk will be given at the beginning of every session.

Whilst using hand tools, the staff to child ratio is increased and is as follows:

1:1 staff to children for all hand tool work (except if specified otherwise in risk assessment)

All tools will be kept in the Forest School tool box and will only be removed by staff or volunteers.

Further advice for working with hand tools is as follows:

- Running with tool is prohibited
- Pointing with tools is prohibited
- Children will lose permission to use tools if guidelines are not followed
- Designate a specific zone for those using tools
- Always carry knife with sheath firmly on
- Always pass knife with sheath firmly on and in demonstrated manner
- Always keep knife in sheath when not in use
- When using knives to whittle, this must be done at the side of, and downwards of the body
- All tools must be counted back in at the end of every session
- No volunteer is to use a hand tool with children until they have received basic training on the use of individual hand tools.

The use of Tool Talks:

See Appendices for individual 'Tool Talks'.

Fire Safety at Forest School

We aim to ensure that all children and adults participating in Forest School sessions with fires do so safely and with minimised risk.

Location: Stamford Park Primary School site

- Only previously agreed areas will be used for campfires
- Campfire areas must be enclosed by logs (or large stones) to prevent the spread of fire

Positioning of adults and children:

- All children and additional adults to be seated at least 1 metre from the fire pit. A circle is always drawn marking the safe distance so that no child is at risk of being too close to the fire
- When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area without permission
- When allowed to access the campfire, children must walk around the outside of the circle area and wait for permission to step over. Once permission has been given, the children must sit with their legs crossed (not outstretched) around the circle
- Once seated around the fire, the children must not move unless asked by an adult to do so
- Children will be taught how to change seating positions by standing, stepping backwards and walking around the outside of the seated area. The only time that they will be invited into the inner circle is when toasting marshmallows or cooking (see separate point)
- Long sleeves and trousers should be worn
- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire

Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the children as follows:

- Advise them to turn their head to one side, placing their hand across their face, close their eyes and count to 30 (or ask an adult/peer to count for them)
- If there is clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided. Seating arrangements to be altered as far as possible
- If wind direction is variable, the forest school leader should rearrange the seating if at all possible.

NB. Children may be invited into the circle to toast marshmallows. All children are taught the respect position and this is only done when the fire is warm embers. No child is invited into the circle when the fire is burning fully.

Fire Safety and Responsibility:

- Only adults are permitted to light fires
- Fires are lit using cotton wool and a flint and steel
- No flammable liquids are to be used to accelerate fires
- No plastics are to be burnt
- If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision
- Sticks and wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire and a glove should be worn.

Fire Extinguishing:

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session
- Water should always be to hand during sessions where a fire is lit
- Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash
- Forest school leader should ensure that any large remains of wood are separated from each other
- At the end of a session, the fire must be doused with water and stirred up until all smoke and steam has ceased

- Large build ups of ash should be dispersed. This must only be done when cooled, preferably the following day. It should be placed in the designated tin fire bin.

Use Clothing at Forest School

To ensure that children are fully able to participate in Forest School sessions regardless of the weather, it is crucial that they have suitable clothing and footwear. The Forest School environment is naturally muddy – clothing will get dirty and snagged. We ask that children wear long sleeves in both summer and winter. The reason for this in summer is to protect against insect bites, sunburn, stinging nettles and thorns. The general rule is to wear lots of layers which keep the heat in but which can be removed if needed. Children require the following:

Winter Clothing:

- Sturdy trainers, boots or wellies
- Warm socks
- Jogging trousers (and thermal under layer if needed)
- Long sleeved top and sweatshirt/jumper (and thermal under layer if needed)
- Warm hat
- Warm gloves (not mittens)
- Waterproof jacket, waterproof over trousers
- A small rucksack with a spare pair of socks and gloves in

Summer Clothing:

- Sun hat
- Sun cream (to be applied by child before session)
- Lightweight long sleeved top
- Lightweight jogging trousers
- Sturdy trainers, boots or wellies
- Socks
- A small rucksack with a spare pair of socks and gloves in

School staff will ensure that all children are appropriately dressed before leaving for the forest school site. Any child without the correct kit will be unable to participate and the forest school leader will speak to their parents to ensure their participation in the following session.

Eating at Forest School

Being outdoors means an increased understanding of the woodland environment and one of the things that children naturally want to know more about is edible berries, fruit and fungus in the woodland.

As there is no safe way of ensuring that children will always eat the correct berries and fruit, or that they will be clean, we operate a ‘not in the mouth’ policy, where children understand that they are not to touch, pick or eat any berry, fruit or fungus that they find in the woodland area. They are encouraged to point them out to the Forest School Leader or other adults and discuss them but no adult is to pick anything either.

With these considerations in mind, Stamford Park Primary School adopts the following Policy on eating and drinking during sessions:

- Hot drinks will be commercially available products such as hot chocolate

- Drinks and foods which link to topic e.g. elderflower cordial, will only be sourced from commercially available products. In such cases, the forest school leader will be responsible for checking allergies listed on the product and using their discretion to substitute for an alternative product
- Food should be sourced from a reputable provider
- Antiseptic wipes and hand gel should be carried for hand washing. Have a plant sprayer / jerry can filled with water to clean hands – this qualifies as running water

The forest school leader will be responsible for checking, prior to leaving school, that no member of the group has any allergies. If they have, all care will be taken to avoid them coming into contact with the item and a decision will be made by forest school leader as to whether a substitute should be provided.

Children will be taught reasons why berries, fruit and fungus from the woodland should not be ingested (or even touched). They will be reassured that fruit from the woodland can be safe to eat but that equally, it can be dangerous, even life threatening. Therefore, adult (i.e. parent) supervision is crucial in ensuring that correct things are eaten.

Disposal of waste, food and litter

Forest School takes place in a natural woodland environment which should be left in the same condition that it was found. Children are taught to respect the environment and as such, all rubbish is removed in bags and returned to school by accompanying adults.

In case of litter on-site, children are told to call an adult to remove anything that they find e.g. glass, cans. Under no circumstances are they to remove it themselves.

Toileting Procedures at Forest School

- Encourage everyone to use the toilet before leaving school to go to the Forest School site.
- A specified toilet tent will be erected with a toileting bucket and kit placed inside. This will be erected in a suitable location away from the main work area and positioned as discreetly as possible.
- Only teachers/teaching assistants of Stamford Park Primary School are to take children to use the toilet.
- Hand washing facilities should be available but if this is not possible wet wipes and cleaning gel can be used. All wet wipes should be placed in bags and disposed of off-site.
- The same space will not be over-used so as to reduce any effects it may have on the environment and to follow the 'leave no trace' approach.

Communication Strategy

The communication strategy explains how participants, parents, those involved with delivering the forest school programme and other stakeholders are kept informed with the delivery and outcomes.

Participants

Participants will be asked to evaluate Forest School through verbal feedback, writings and drawings. These will be opportunities for them to express how they feel Forest School is going and to engage with the process of developing the future sessions.

Stamford Park Primary School will request that all those leading or supporting sessions read our Handbook before their group's sessions begin.

Parents will receive information about the outcomes of the sessions through photos, verbal feedback or displays.

Volunteers

All adults present at the Forest School must sign a form to confirm that they have read, understood and agree to comply with Stamford Park forest school Handbook before the start of the session/s they will take part in.

Assistants and volunteers will be informed of the plan for each session in advance by email. They will be asked to provide feedback on how each session went verbally or written, as preferred.

Section 3: Risk Assessments

Site Assessment

Location:		Stamford Park Primary Forest School Site		Name:		Forest School Leader		Date:		1/9/2023
								Review:		1/9/2023
								Yearly review:		1/9/2024
	Hazard	Harm	People at Risk	Existing Preventative Measures	Probability (p) 1-5	Severity (s) 1-5	Rating (pxs) 1-25	New Preventative Measures	Who? When?	
1	Trees- branches falling, low hanging branches, exposed tree roots, tree trunks.	Tripping Head injury Eye injury	Children, staff and volunteers	Verbal warning of risk. Daily risk assessment to assess the hazards. Suitable footwear. First aid kit on site in designated area at all times ; All children and adults are aware of its location.	4	2	8			
2	Nettles.	Nettle stings, fear.	Children, staff and volunteers	Verbal warning of risk. Regular risk assessment to identify nettle patches and shared with all. First aid kit to be in designated area at all times. Appropriate clothing to worn in areas where there could be nettles to cover skin.	2	1	2			
3	Uneven ground surface. Ground logs, stumps, brambles and large branches on woodland floor.	Trips, falls, harm to body parts if stumps/ logs are being moved.	Children, staff and volunteers	Verbal warning of risk. All to be made aware of uneven surfaces. Taught sessions as to how to safely move logs, stumps and large branches.	4	2	8			
4	Bites, stings, medical needs, minor and major injuries from area.	Stings, bites, asthma, eczema, cuts, bruises.	Children, staff and volunteers	Verbal warning of risk. First aid kit to be carried by designated forest school leader, clearly identifiable and easily accessed. Qualified outdoor first aider on site at all times. Prescribed	2	2	4			

				medication to be carried by designated staff member. Emergency services contacted if needed.					
5	Weather conditions-wet, cold.	Hypothermia, slips and trips due to wet ground conditions.	Children, staff and volunteers	Verbal warning of risk. Move work area to a different part of the woodland area if ground is too wet. Ensure parents have had pre-visit information and children have appropriate clothing. Modify/ shorten sessions in extreme bad weather. Provide extra clothing as necessary. Be aware of level of comfort in the group- avoid long periods of inactivity.	2	4	8		
6	Falls onto sharps, animal faeces, broken glass	Cuts, infection.	Children, staff and volunteers	Daily risk assessment to take place approximately an hour before the forest school session. Children instructed what to do if they find anything untoward. Staff to comb ground as they move along and continue to be vigilant. Staff to have bags and rubber gloves in case of need to remove an item. First aid kit and mobile phone to be on site at all times.	2	3	6		
7	Handling of/exposure to natural materials that may cause harm to health	Fear, infection.	Children, staff and volunteers	Support children appropriately in approaching activity. All staff and volunteers to have awareness of allergies. One qualified first aider and first aid kit to be in designated area on site at all times. Site specific risk assessment to be completed on commencement of Forest School activities.	4	3	12		

8	Infection through consumption	Infection, illness.	Children, staff and volunteers	Regular reminders of hygiene. Verbal warnings and behavioural expectations to state group must not consume anything found in the forest school site. Ensure children who may regular have fingers in mouths to avoid this. All must not eat or drink while engaged in activities. Hands must be washed before consuming any food or drink. Provide clean water and soap for all to wash hands. One qualified outdoor first aider on site at all times. First aid kit to be on site in designated area at all times.	3	3	9		
9	Building shelters/dens/ making knots- ropes, tarpaulin, fallen logs.	Cuts, rope burns, bruises.	Children, staff and volunteers	Verbal warning of risk. Ropes to be made clear where they are using items to make them visible. Ensure group is made aware where ropes are pegged or tied up to avoid trips or being caught in rope. Adults to ensure when children are building dens using logs that these are secure and will not fall directly onto children. Adults to ensure children are safely transporting and using items to create dens/ shelters. Ensure tarpaulin is erected at an appropriate height. Adults to support children in learning knots properly to ensure shelters are erected safely. Majority of shelters made using light weight tarpaulin. If high winds occur and shelters look unstable, they will be taken down or session will be terminated	2	3	6		

10	Group/ individuals-behaviour.	Minor/ major injury to selves and others.	Children	Verbal reminders of behaviour. Behaviour system shared with group and reinforced by all staff members. Clearly share behaviour expectations at beginning of each session. Activity to be stopped if child(ren) make it unsafe to continue.	2	2	4		
11	Play – risk of: slips, trips and falls collisions with trees/each other collision during blindfold games	Slips, trips and falls. Bruises and cuts. Fear of participating in blindfold games.		Daily risk assessments to take place to assess the area for the session. All are reminded to take care during periods of play. All are reminded to wear practical clothing and footwear at all times during Forest School sessions If participants are playing games with blindfolds, they are paired up with a sighted partner to avoid slips, trips and collisions. Adults to support children as necessary.	4	3	12		
12	Welfare and safeguarding - toilet tent.	Distress when using the toilet. Health and safety of adults when transporting and cleaning the toilet.	Children, staff and volunteers.	Adults to ensure tent is erected correctly and in designated area of woodland. Only staff members to take children to use the toilet in the tent. Staff to support children as necessary. Staff members aware of how to fill, empty and maintain the toilet bucket.	3	1	3		
13	Welfare – sickness	Sickness. Distress of children, adult or volunteers being unwell	Children, staff and volunteers	Ensure that all participants feel confident to talk to a practitioner or helper should they feel unwell Appropriate ratios to be maintained at all times to ensure adequate	3	2	6		

		during session.		<p>observation throughout session. Return back to school if necessary. First aid kit to be in designated area on site at all times. Mobile phones to be on staff members at all times. Exact location of session is Stamford Park Primary School Forest Site so should the Emergency Services be required, they can be directed easily onto site.</p>					
14	Manual Handling	<p>Muscular skeletal disorders. Back pain, muscle pain. Injured fingers, toes, limbs and heads.</p>	Children, staff and volunteers	<p>Verbal warning of risk. Staff members to demonstrate appropriate ways of transporting equipment or any other objects. Where possible, remove the need to lift and carry heavy objects for long distances or use equipment which aids carrying e.g. trolleys and wheelbarrows Encourage all who are carrying heavy objects to carry in pairs where practical.</p>	3	3	9		

Benefits of using this site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enclosed area to promote independence in activities in a safe environment. • Hosts a large number of trees, shrubs and plants providing opportunity for children to develop knowledge through tree and leaf identification. • Opportunities for children to develop spatial awareness and health and safety knowledge. • Fallen branches and felled trees cut into logs provide opportunities for children to build, develop safety of transporting. • Opportunities to develop fine and gross motor skills in activities planned; for example uneven flooring, large area to work in and using ropes. • Learning opportunities about the forest. • Problem solving opportunities if problems arise for example; if a large branch has fallen overnight, where to set up work area if there has been bad weather. • Develop social skills- working in a group as well as developing self- control, confidence and to learn more about themselves. • Team work opportunities to build dens, approach challenges and collect resources.
------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Recommendations

Update risk assessment when weather conditions change for spring/ summer.

Name and Job Title of Assessor(s): Forest School Leader	Signature(s):	Date of Assessment: 01/09/23
Name of Manager: Headteacher	Signature:	Date of Review: 01/09/24

Activity Assessments

Activities Risk Assessment		Reviews			
Task/Operation:	Forest Schools Activities Risk Assessment covering blindfold games, collecting natural materials, construction activities, group activities, nature trails, team games, leaving the ground, strings and ropes,	Next review needed	Date actually reviewed	Changes needed? (Yes/No)	Assessor initials
Group(s) affected:	School staff, adult helpers, pupils	1/9/2024	1/9/23		
Person(s) undertaking assessment:	Forest School Leader	L = Likelihood; S = Severity; RR = Risk Rating on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 being the lowest) L X S = RR			
Date of assessment:					
PLEASE NOTE – THIS RISK ASSESSMENT WORKS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SITE AND GROUP RISK ASSESSMENT AND ALL OTHER PROCEDURES, SITE, FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES WILL BE FOLLOWED.					

		Before control			FSL (Forest Schools Leader) SA (Supervising Adults) P (Participants)	After control		
Hazard	Resultant effect(s)	L	S	R	State control measures to be put in place and by whom	L	S	RR
Blindfold games								
Blindfold games	Bumps, slips, trips, falls, panic, disorientation, cuts, grazes, head injuries, abduction, lost child	3	2	6	Safety instructions given prior to activity, given option to just close eyes not wear blindfold or peep, practice and confidence and use other group members for support to avoid disorientation or panic (FSL, SA, P) All other issues dealt with in site and group risk assessment and lost child, first aid or emergency procedures	1	2	2

		Before control			FSL (Forest Schools Leader) SA (Supervising Adults) P (Participants)	After control		
Hazard	Resultant effect(s)	L	S	R	State control measures to be put in place and by whom	L	S	RR
Collecting natural materials and construction activities								
Collecting natural materials and construction activities	Lifting injuries, strains, impact injury, crush injury, slips, trips, falls, poisoning, collector gets lost, cuts, grazes, thorns, splinters, poisoning	2	3	6	Explanation and guidance given on how to lift or move objects and what is appropriate, alternative methods for moving or bundling materials or fixing and checking structures (FSL, SA) Participants supervised throughout and rest periods built in (FSL, SA) Lashings or knots in shelters checked by leader for strength and ability to support the wood chosen (FSL) All other aspects covered in first aid, emergency, site risk assessment	1	3	3
Nature trails/activities on site team games and group activities								
Storytelling, sitting together, following a route, team games, group games and tasks	Slips, trips, falls, bumps, bruises, strains, breakages, bites, stings, dog faeces, strangers on site, lost child, poisoning, challenging behaviour causing safety issue, cold, heat, hypothermia, rubbish, loose dogs	2	3	6	All aspects covered in site/group risk assessment or on site first aid, lost child, emergency, weather and behaviour policies and procedures.	1	3	3

		Before control			FSL (Forest Schools Leader) SA (Supervising Adults) P (Participants)	After control		
Hazard	Resultant effect(s)	L	S	R	State control measures to be put in place and by whom	L	S	RR
Leaving the ground								
Climbing trees or climbing on structures in the site	Slips, trips, bumps, impact, crush injuries, head injuries, strain, panic, cuts, lacerations, entanglement, disturbance of animal homes (wasp nests, bees, birds)	2	3	6	<p>Weather check in line with procedure to check not too slippery or risky or prevent - take into consideration (FSL)</p> <p>Safety checks and surfaces monitored, participants helped to judge whether a surface is safe to climb on or leader selects suitable trees depending on the participant – can be pre-checked by the leader for safety and strength (FSL, SA, P)</p> <p>Supervised at all times in a low ratio (FSL, SA)</p> <p>Children not to climb above the leader's shoulder and to be supervised at all times (FSL, SA)</p> <p>Demonstrate or guide on climbing skills and enable confidence to build gradually through experimentation and experience under supervision (FSL, SA, P)</p> <p>Regular rest periods and activity stopped if safety compromised (FSL, SA, P)</p> <p>Visual assessment will be made to check for any animal life (unlikely due to height being climbed to) FSL, SA</p> <p>Trees with vines will not be used, participants will not climb wearing neck chains, loose clothing and long hair secured (FSL, SA, P)</p> <p>All other aspects covered by first aid, emergency, behaviour policy and procedures.</p>	1	3	3

		Before control			FSL (Forest Schools Leader) SA (Supervising Adults) P (Participants)	After control		
Hazard	Resultant effect(s)	L	S	R	State control measures to be put in place and by whom	L	S	RR
String and rope activities								
Using string or rope for activities, creative, construction or shelter work	Rope burns, tripping up, snagging, rope burns, strangulation, entrapment,	2	3	6	<p>Safety instructions given and good practice demonstrated prior to activities, appropriate skills taught depending on the task, how to carry and move correctly with string and rope and how to gather it up demonstrated (FSL)</p> <p>Any existing hazards on structures or tarpaulins brought to attention of participants (FSL)</p> <p>Adults to monitor during activities – any string/rope unnecessary to activity removed, all other discussed with participants and move site, attachments or technique as necessary (FSL, SA, P)</p> <p>Participants take care when tightening, pulling, tying knots to avoid burns, snagging etc (FSL, SA, P)</p> <p>All other aspects covered in the site and group risk assessment, first aid and emergency procedures.</p>	1	3	3
Name and Job Title of Assessor(s): Forest School Leader		Signature(s):			Date of Assessment: 1/9/2023			
Name of Manager: Headteacher		Signature:			Date of Review: 1/9/2024			

Open Fire Risk Assessment (School site only)		Reviews			
Task/Operation:	Forest Schools Activities Risk Assessment - Fire	Next review needed	Date actually Reviewed	Changes needed? (Yes/No)	Assessor initials
Group(s) affected:	School staff, adult helpers, pupils	1/9/2024	1/9/2023		
Person(s) undertaking assessment:	Forest School Leader				
Date of assessment:	1/9/2023				
PLEASE NOTE – THIS RISK ASSESSMENT WORKS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SITE AND GROUP RISK ASSESSMENT AND ALL OTHER PROCEDURES, SITE, FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES WILL BE FOLLOWED.					

The Hazard	What might happen?	Potential level of risk	Controls	Level of risk after controls	Responsibility
Fire & heat	Burning to skin & clothes	High	<p>Supervision of the fire, one person to be sat beside fire at all times while alight or hot embers remain, to ensure children do not have unsupervised access.</p> <p>Children will be given rules and safety advice and dangers of fire prior to visiting the fire.</p> <p>Outdoor First Aider and first aid box will be available.</p> <p>Fire proof gloves within easy reach.</p>	Low	FSL to organise staff

Fire out of control	As above and damage to area.	Medium	<p>As above.</p> <p>Fire will be in a fire pit in a designated area.</p> <p>The fire will not be under overhanging trees which may catch alight.</p> <p>A good supply of water will be available to put out flames and dampen heat.</p> <p>A fire blanket will be available to wrap around person who may be alight.</p>	Low	FSL to check site, all staff responsible for fire control
Falls into fire	Burning to skin & clothes	High	<p>As above.</p> <p>Children have a safety brief before entering the fire pit area.</p> <p>No walking between the seats and fire allowed.</p> <p>When cooking etc. everyone at fire should be on one knee to remain stable.</p> <p>Maximum of 4 people at fire (incl. adults).</p>	Low	FSL - to give safety brief, all staff check rules are followed.
Smoke	Inhalation, irritation	Medium	<p>The position of the fire will be away from buildings.</p> <p>The wind direction will be constantly assessed and children advised to move safely out of smoke direction.</p> <p>Dry suitable wood used to prevent excess smoke.</p> <p>Use clear goggles if needed.</p>	Low	FSL - wood supply & site - all staff advise children

Heat from hot embers	Burning to skin & clothes	High	When the fire activity is finished the embers will be dampened and cooled with water and spread out with a spade.	Low	FSL
Name and Job Title of Assessor(s) Forest School Leader		Signature(s):		Date of Assessment: 1/9/2023	
Name of Manager: Headteacher		Signature:		Date of Review: 1/9/2024	

Weekly Risk Assessment

Activity:		Week		Name:		Forest School Leader			Date:		1/9/2023
Location:		Stamford Park Primary Forest Site							Review:		1/9/2023
									Yearly review:		1/9/2024
	Hazard	Harm	People at Risk	Existing Preventative Measures	Probability (p) 1-5	Severity (s) 1-5	Rating (pxs) 1-25	New Preventative Measures	Who? When?		
1	Group/ individuals-behaviour.	Minor/ major injury to selves and others.	Children	Verbal reminders of behaviour. Behaviour system shared with group and reinforced by all staff members. Clearly share behaviour expectations at beginning of each session. Activity to be stopped if child(ren) make it unsafe to continue.	2	2	4				
2	Play – risk of: slips, trips and falls collisions with trees/each other collision during blindfold games	Slips, trips and falls. Bruises and cuts. Fear of participating in blindfold games.		Daily risk assessments to take place to assess the area for the session. All are reminded to take care during periods of play. All are reminded to wear practical clothing and footwear at all times during Forest School sessions If participants are playing games with blindfolds, they are paired up with a sighted partner to avoid slips, trips and collisions. Adults to support children as necessary.	4	3	12				
3	Handling of/exposure to natural materials that may cause harm to health	Fear, infection.	Children, staff and volunteers	Support children appropriately in approaching activity. All staff and volunteers to have awareness of allergies. One qualified outdoor first aider and first aid kit to be in designated area on site at all	4	3	12				

				times. Site specific risk assessment to be completed on commencement of Forest School activities					
4	Infection through consumption	Infection, illness.	Children, staff and volunteers	Regular reminders of hygiene. Verbal warnings and behavioural expectations to state group must not consume anything found in the woodland. Ensure children who may regular have fingers in mouths to avoid this. All must not eat or drink while engaged in activities. Hands must be washed before consuming any food or drink. Provide clean water and soap for all to wash hands. At least one qualified outdoor first aider on site at all times. First aid kit to be on site in designated area at all times.	3	3	9		

Tool Risk Assessments

Tool and Equipment specific Risk Assessments for Forest School

PLEASE NOTE – THESE RISK ASSESSMENTS WORK IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SITE RISK ASSESSMENT AND ALL OTHER PROCEDURES, SITE, FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES WILL BE FOLLOWED.

Bill Hook

The Hazard	What might happen?	Potential level of risk	Controls	Level of risk after controls	Responsibility
Improper use of bill hook	Wounds	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Inform person using bill hook of tool talk (see handbook). * No glove needed on hand using tool, glove on other hand. * First aiders and first aid kit close by. * Tools counted in and out each session. * One to one supervision for all children. * Use in designated area for tools. * Remind others in area to stay clear of tools. * Keep in cover when not in use and store in tool bag. 	Low-Medium	All adults in Forest School session

Bow Saw

The Hazard	What might happen?	Potential level of risk	Controls	Level of risk after controls	Responsibility
Improper use of bow saw Falling branches	Wounds	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Inform person using bow saw of tool talk (see hand book). * No glove needed on hand using tool, glove on non-sawing hand. * First aiders and first aid kit close by. * Tools counted in and out each session. * One to one supervision for all children. * Ensure safety of site if using outside of designated tool use area. * If sawing branches from a tree ensure no one or property will be hurt or damaged when it falls. * Remind others in area to stay clear of tools. * Keep blade cover on when not in use and store in tool bag. 	Low-Medium	All adults in Forest School session

Mallet

The Hazard	What might happen?	Potential level of risk	Controls	Level of risk after controls	Responsibility
Improper use of mallet	Bumps and grazes	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Inform person using mallet of tool talk (see hand book). * No glove needed. * First aiders and first aid kit close by. * Tools counted in and out each session. * One to one supervision for all children. * Keep in cover when not in use and store in tool bag. * Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools. 	Low-Medium	All adults in Forest School session

Sheath Knife

The Hazard	What might happen?	Potential level of risk	Controls	Level of risk after controls	Responsibility
Improper use of knives	Wounds	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Inform person using knives of tool talk (see hand book). * No glove needed on hand using tool, glove on non knife hand. * First aiders and first aid kit close by. * Tools counted in and out each session. * One to one supervision for all children. * Use in designated area for tools. * Keep in cover when not in use and store in tool bag. * Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools. 	Low-Medium	All adults in Forest School session

Loppers

The Hazard	What might happen?	Potential level of risk	Controls	Level of risk after controls	Responsibility
Improper use of Loppers	Wounds	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Inform person using loppers of tool talk (see hand book). * No gloves needed on hands. * First aiders and first aid kit close by. * Tools counted in and out each session. * One to one supervision for all children. * Use in designated area for tools. * When not in use store in tool bag. * Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools. 	Low-Medium	All adults in Forest School session

Peelers

The Hazard	What might happen?	Potential level of risk	Controls	Level of risk after controls	Responsibility
Improper use of Peelers	Wounds	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Inform person using peelers of tool talk (see hand book). * No glove needed on hand using tool, glove on non-peeling hand. * First aiders and first aid kit close by. * Tools counted in and out each session. * One to one supervision for all children under Year 2. * Use in designated area for tools. * When not in use store in tool bag. * Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools. * Adult to child Year 2+ ratio 1:2. 	Low-Medium	All adults in Forest School session

Section 4: Appendices

Tool and Equipment Safe Procedures

Bill Hook - Tool Talk

This is a bill hook

This is the bill hook cover

This is the handle

This is the blade

This is the cutting edge

I hold the bill hook like this

I walk with the bill hook like this

I pass the bill hook like this

When I am not using the bill hook I put it on top of the cover with the blade facing inwards and the handle facing forwards.

I use the bill hook to cleave (split) wood.

When I use the bill hook I use it 2 arms and a tool away from anyone like this.

When I have finished using the bill hook I put it back in its cover and place it in the designated place.

No gloves on tool

Bow Saw - Tool Talk

This is a bow saw

This is the handle

This is the blade

This is the blade cover

I take the cover off like this

This is the cutting edge

When I have finished sawing I put the blade cover back on like this.

I hold the bow saw like this

I walk with the bow saw like this

I pass the bow saw like this

When I am not using the bow saw I put it down with the blade facing in and the handle facing out like this.

I use the bow saw to cut anything bigger than a 2 pence piece.

When I use the bow saw I use it two arms and a tool away from anyone like this.

When I have finished using the bow saw I put it in the designated place.

No gloves on tool -glove on non-sawing hand

Mallet - Tool Talk

This is a mallet.

This is the handle.

This is the hitting edge.

I hold the mallet like this.

I walk with the mallet like this.

I pass the mallet like this.

When I am not using the mallet I put it on the ground beside me.

I use the mallet 2 arms and a tools length away from anyone else.

I use the mallet to knock in fence posts and pegs.

I use a mallet to the side of my body away from my head.

No glove on tool - glove on non-tool hand.

Sheath Knife - Tool Talk

This is a sheath knife.

This is the handle.

This is the sheath.

I open by pressing here.

This is the blade.

This is the cutting edge.

I always use on the outside of my body with the blade facing away from me.

When not using it I put it back in the sheath like this.

I hold it like this.

I carry it like this.

I pass it like this.

When using the sheath knife for cutting string/whittling I always cut down onto a hard surface

I always use it 2 arms and a tool away from anyone else.

When I have finished using it I put it away in the designated place.

No gloves on tool - glove on non-knife hand.

Loppers - Tool Talk

This is a pair of loppers.

This is the handle.

This is the blade.

This is the cutting edge.

I stand with the loppers like this.

I walk with the loppers like this.

I pass the loppers like this.

I use the loppers two arms and tool away from anyone else except my partner like this.

I use the loppers to cut anything smaller than a two pence piece.

I have bare hands on the tool.

When I am not using the loppers I put them on the ground with the handles facing forwards and the blade facing behind me.

When I have finished with the loppers I put them back in the designated place or in the toolbox provided.

No gloves on tool.

Peeler - Tool Talk

This is a Peeler

This is the handle

This is the blade

I hold the peeler like this

I walk with the peeler like this

I pass the peeler like this

When I am not using the peeler I put it down with the blade facing in and the handle facing out like this.

I use the peeler to whittle the end of small sticks found in forest school.

When I use the peeler I use it two arms and a tool away from anyone like this.

When I have finished using the peeler I put it in the designated place.

Even if you have similar tools at home ask an adult before you touch them.

No gloves on tool -glove on non-peeling hand

Stamford Park Primary School

Forest School

I confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with Stamford Park Primary School Forest Handbook and its risk assessments.

Name (Please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Incident Log Sheet

Complete the form for every accident leading to injury, violent or aggressive incident, ill health, disease or near miss.

Date and time of incident: _____

Location: _____

Person injured or subject of aggression: _____

Relationship to Stamford Park Primary School: _____

Was the incident:

a near miss

ill health/disease

an accident leading to injury

a violent or aggressive incident

What happened (describe below including the nature of any injury/illness):

Was anyone else involved (note names if so)? Was anything damaged (e.g. vehicle)?

What action has been taken to prevent a recurrence?

Name of person completing form & relationship to Stamford Park Primary School:
