



Whitnash Primary School



'Learning, growing and succeeding together'

Forest School Handbook

This handbook contains information, policies and procedures relating to the running of Forest school sessions at Whitnash Primary School. This is to be made available to all staff, parents, and visitors to read at any time. It is expected that all volunteers and staff who participate in a Forest School activity or sessions will have read this document and associated risk assessments. They will sign to confirm they have done so and this will be kept on file by the Forest School Leader (Appendix B).

The policies within the handbook are closely linked to the policies that Whitnash Primary School adhere to. Further details of all policies can be found on the school website
<https://www.whitnashprimaryschool.com/policies>

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Contents

Introduction and background

- What is forest school?
- Key principles of forest school
- Forest school at whitnash
- Activities
- Session overview

Health and safety

- Behavior and rules
- Forest school agreement and ground rules
- Behaviour expectations for leaders, assistants, and visitors
- Emergency procedures
- Other emergencies.
- Safe tools use
- Safe fire use
- Cooking and food preparation
- clothing
- PPE
- toileting
- Environmental impact

Letter to parents

Policies

Appendices

Introduction and Background

What is Forest School?

The Forest school concept originates from Scandinavia, where it was found that children who had attended forest school developed; strong social and communication skills, the ability to work effectively in groups, high self-esteem and a confidence in their own abilities. Forest school is holistic learning through play and exploration, children learn about the environment, how to handle risks, how to solve problems, communication and cooperation skills as well as being physically active.

The Key principles of Forest School

1. Forest school is a long term process of regular sessions within a woodland or natural environment. Sessions should be weekly or every other week for a minimum of 6 weeks at a time.
2. Forest School must take place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a connection to the natural world. It aims to foster a relationship with nature through regular experiences in nature and is supported by ecological impact monitoring and sustainable management agreed with landowner, practitioner and learners.
3. Forest School promotes holistic, individualised learning and development, it gives children the opportunity to think for themselves building creativity, resilience, self-esteem, confidence and independence.
4. Forest School encourages children to take supported risks, to become more aware of risks they are exposed to and self-management of these risks. Forest school follows a risk benefit process. Tools and fire are only used where deemed appropriate to the learners and after the completion of a detailed risk assessment.
5. Forest School is run by a qualified Level 3 Forest school Practitioner who holds an up to date first aid qualification. It is run in small groups max. 15 children and has a high adult to child ratio.
6. Forest School empowers children and young people to take responsibility for their own learning and development. Play and choice are integral to forest school and reflective practice is a feature of every session. Practitioners scaffold children's skills and the process should be an evolution over time as the program is developed and adapted to support individuals.

Forest school at Whitnash

At Whitnash Primary School we are committed to the ethos of Forest school and believe in the benefit that regular visits to natural environments can have. We are passionate that children have the opportunity to enjoy learning outside in a safe enjoyable way. During forest school sessions we aim to provide opportunities for children to develop their independence, confidence, self-esteem, creativity, empathy, communication skills and knowledge of the natural environment, through carefully planned activities. We reward children using our schools 'Positive Learning Behaviours'. Perseverance, Collaboration, Reflection and Imagination. Activities are tailored to the developmental stage of each learner. Activities will maintain a degree of challenge and excitement, whilst remaining safe and controlled. It is important for children to take controlled risks at forest school for them to learn how to manage them.

At Whitnash Primary School we operate our Forest School on site. On the small woodland area at the side of the School, this will be our base camp. Some sessions will be held at alternative locations such as areas of the field and the perimeter around camp. The site will be regularly risk assessed

Activities

Activities for Forest School are planned to try and create independent learners who are inspired to try out their own ideas, explore their own interests and to attempt new ideas in a safe way. Activities will be led by children interests and needs. The Activities will depend on ability and experience of participants.

Activities might include:

- Shelter building
- Tool use, such as knives, saws, and drills
- Playing team and group games
- Sensory activities
- Using Kelly kettles for making warm drinks
- Fire cooking
- Rope and string work
- Artwork
- Woodland and traditional crafts
- Physical movement activities
- Scavenger hunts

Session overview

Session Equipment

- First aid kit
- Accident book
- Mobile phone
- Fresh water
- Tools and fire lighting kit
- Personal protective equipment
- Hand gel and wipes

Setting up

1. Forest school leader will conduct a session risk assessment of activities and the site and advise/act accordingly
2. Collect necessary equipment and restock first aid where necessary
3. Meet and register group
4. Make group aware of new hazards or medical considerations
5. Put on/Check they are all wearing suitable clothing and footwear
6. Take the group to the location
7. Sit in a circle
8. Describe the boundaries and engage the children in the development/recap of the rules and guidelines for the day
9. Describe and model the day's activities
10. Children explore the activities available, scaffolded by adults

Closing the session

1. Extinguish any fires properly
2. Count any tools used into their bag
3. Remove structures
4. Check for litter etc
5. Collect equipment
6. Form a closing circle
7. Reflect on the session. Give out learning behaviour rewards. Collect suggestions for future activities and reflect on children interests to inform future sessions
8. Walk the group back to class
9. Thoroughly check equipment

Health and Safety

Behaviour and rules

Everyone including staff, volunteers, and participants, have the responsibility to protect their own and other group members' health, safety, and well-being.

At Whitnash Primary school we aim for children to:

- Show respect, courtesy and consideration towards all members of the school community and the environment
- To be honest and co-operative with others
- Display 'unconditional positive regard' for one another.
- Follow the rules and procedures of the school and forest school

Please see Whitnash Primary School Behaviour Policy on the school website for further information

Specific additional risk assessments will be undertaken for children with medical conditions or whose behaviour requires them.

Forest school agreement and ground rules

- In the course of the first session, an agreement will be sought between staff and all participants on the rules of the group. The group will be encouraged to voice their own thoughts and opinions of the rules before it is sealed.

Rules will follow 3 main messages:

Keep yourself safe

Keep each other

Keep nature safe

This includes:

- Listening carefully to instructions and each other
- Staying where they can see and hear the Forest school staff
- Retuning on a call of 1,2,3 come back to me.
- Carry sticks downwards or dragging behind them so not to injure anyone
- No pick, no lick
- Kind hands, Kind feet, Kind words.
- Look after animals and plants

Behaviour expectations for leaders, assistants, and visitors

- Please see school staff behaviour policy in appendix B

Emergency procedures

Mrs Henshaw and Mr Collins holds a Level 3 Paediatric First Aid Certificate and QNUK Level 3 award in Outdoor First aid (RQF) this will be renewed accordingly. First aid qualified staff can deal with less serious issues on site with the first aid kit. A mobile phone, class first aid bag and first aid kit should be taken with staff during sessions. Incidents will be recorded in the first aid book and parents/guardians will be notified using a first aid slip. The parents of any child who incurs a bumped head must be notified in person or via a phone call. Forest school leaders and assistants must also report near misses and use the information within the context of future risk assessments.

In cases of a more serious incident the following procedures should take place.

- The area will be made safe
- Assistance will be sort if needed via mobile phone
- First aid will be administered by a qualified first aider who will stay with the casualty
- An assistant / office staff should ring 999 if required and arrange for parents to be contacted whilst first aid is given. Additional information should be given to phone operator regarding injury.
- An assistant will gather the children for a head count and keep them calm
- If only two staff are leading session the school office will arrange a member of staff to collect the rest of the class and bring them back into school.
- Head Teacher to be informed of the incident and an accident form will be completed.

In the event of an injury to the Forest School Leader or assistant, first aid will be administered by another qualified first aider using the same procedure described above.

Other emergencies

Lost Child Procedure

Children are shown the boundaries in which they can explore at the beginning of each session and the site is not open to the public, however if a child is found to be lost the following procedure should be followed.

First 5 minutes When a child is found to be missing, one member of staff remains with the rest of the group whilst another member of staff searches the woodland, playing field and checks toilets and classroom. After 5 minutes if the child has not been found after the above has been carried out, alert the school office and head teacher who will send reinforcements to help look for child. If after 20 minutes the child has not been found the police and the child's parents should be called. The rest of the children should remain at base camp until other adults arrive.

Lock Down

If the school goes into lock down staff will remain outside and wait for instructions via mobile phone.

Extreme Weather

Forest school will take place in most weather conditions. The experience of different weather conditions is valuable and offers learning opportunities but safety is always paramount. Children will be dressed appropriately for weather and asked to provide appropriate clothing. Weather forecasts will be used to make judgements and weather conditions will be assessed prior to beginning sessions. Where possible and appropriate shelter will be constructed to protect children from the worst of the weather. Sessions may be shortened and activities adapted to prevent children getting too cold, wet, hot or uncomfortable. Sessions will be aborted in the case of thunderstorms or high winds, very heavy rain or extreme cold or heat. Children will return to school.

Fire

If the fire is in the woodland children will be evacuated through the nearest exit. Forest School Leader or assistant will notify the school office immediately and the emergency services will be called by dialling 999 giving exact location and details. Children will be gathered away from the fire and a head count carried out.

In the case of a fire elsewhere or a fire drill the children will assemble in the field as usual.

Loose Dog

Children should be guarded by one member of staff and should wait together at base camp whilst the other member of staff deals with the dog.

Risk Assessment

As detailed in Forest school principle 4 and within our Forest school vision at Whitnash it is important for children to take controlled risks at forest school for them to learn how to manage them and to increase children's sense of independence and achievement. It prepares children for risks in their everyday lives and how to manage them.

Detailed risk assessments have been carried out of the site and for activities to ensure risks have been reduced to an acceptable level. A site risk assessment will also be carried out before each session to ensure the safety of the site and area being used for activities and any risks reduced to an acceptable level. Risk benefit analysis of activities is also undertaken to ensure risks are appropriate and beneficial to the children

Please see separate document Forest school risk assessments on the school website.

Safe tools use

As part of their Forest School the use of a range of tools is to be encouraged.

All tools will be introduced to the children through a 'Tools Talk'.

This will include:

- Showing children the tool and labelling the parts of the tool
- Explaining what the uses of the tool are
- Demonstrating the safe use of the tool
- Explaining what PPE needs to be worn and what the safe working distance of the tool is.
- Explaining and modelling how to carry the tool.
- Explaining and modelling how to stow the tool safely when not in use. (Blades and sharp parts tucked safely away, use of guards when storing away in tool box or bag)
- Explaining and modelling how to pass the tool to another person.

Tools will be regularly cleaned and maintained. Tools will be checked by the forest school leader and a record of maintenance kept.

The ratios guidelines outlined in the safe tools use and maintenance document (Appendix A) will be followed to ensure safety. All tools will be used under close supervision of the forest school leader and forest school trained members of staff.

Safe Fire use

Campfires are an important part of Forest school. The Forest School leader will aim to ensure that all children and adults participating in Forest School sessions with fires will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

Location

- Only agreed areas will be used for fires and Kelly Kettles.
- The fire area will be marked clearly by large sticks or stones laid out to create the fire pit.
- The children will be made aware of the area and taught never to walk through it.
- Fires will be made in a fire bowl to reduce damage. Kelly Kettles are to be used in a fire bowl.

Positioning of adults and children

- Children will be seated at least 1.5m away from the fire pit. Their seating position will be marked by seating logs.
- When the campfire is in use, participants are not permitted to access the area without invitation from the forest school leader.
- All children will be taught how to change seat safely by standing slowly, stepping over the log and then walking around the outside of the fire circle seating logs. They must NEVER walk inside the fire circle.
- Where there is an obvious wind direction seating in the line of smoke should be avoided. Wherever possible, asthma sufferers will be seated in positions well away from the line of smoke.

Safety

- Only Forest school trained staff are to light fires and use Kelly Kettles.
- Fires will be lit using cotton wool and petroleum Jelly and a strike stick.
- A fire bucket containing water will be always be available on site when using fire and its position indicated at the start of the session.
- Weather conditions will be considered before lighting a fire - High winds or very dry conditions would mean that fire lighting does not continue.
- Kelly kettles should be places on a flat surface.
- Participants working with the fire will ensure that long hair is tied back and loose clothing is fastened or secured.
- When children are invited to add fuel to the fire this will only be undertaken with adult supervision.
- No flammable liquids are used and no plastics are to be burnt. Children they will be taught to place sticks and wood on the fire and not throw it on.
- Fires will not be left unattended.
- Only Forest school trained staff to pour boiling liquid from the Kelly Kettle.
- There will be a trained first aider present and a first aid kit available.

Extinguishing Fires

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of the session.
- Whenever possible, the fire will be allowed to burn out all fuel to ash.
- The fire must be doused down with water. Ashes will be stirred once doused and ashes cleared away and disposed of once fully cooled.

Cooking and food preparation

Careful consideration will be given to any food which is cooked in the Forest School setting. No food will be cooked which has a risk of being inadequately cooked – no raw meat or fish. Allergies and dietary requirements will be taken into account. Children will follow hygiene guidelines if they are involved in food preparation, they will wash hands before handling any food and preparation will be done inside.

All food will be cooked using the guidelines outlined above for use of the campfire.

It will be ensured that food and drink is cooled sufficiently before consumption.

Any food waste and cooking equipment will be removed from the site at the end of the session.

Children will be permitted to take their water bottle outside to forest school sessions. During hotter weather they will be encouraged to have regular drinks. No other food or drink other than that which may be cooked on the fire or provided by the Forest School leader will be consumed during sessions.

Clothing

During Forest school activities all members of the group must abide by the following clothing policy.

- Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times. Ideally these will be Wellington boots or walking boots. These will be the property of the wearer or provided by the school for those without.

- Long trousers or leggings will always be advised at forest school to protect the person from scratches from brambles, thorns, nettle stings, insect bites, insect stings and from burning from the sun.
- Long sleeves will be advised at forest school. This is to protect the person from scratches from brambles, thorns, and holly, stinging nettles, insect bites, insect stings and burning from the sun.
- Appropriate waterproofs are to be worn when weather permits this will be the property of the wearer or provided by the school.
- In wintry weather children and parents are to be responsible for wearing warm clothing underneath their waterproofs and providing hats and gloves. School is permitted to offer spares where appropriate.

Support will be offered for families who are unable to provide these items. If a child is not dressed correctly a decision will be taken by the Forest School leader as to whether they are able to still participate – this will depend on the weather conditions and the planned activity.

PPE

Necessary PPE e.g gardening gloves will be provided by the school for use when children use tools and at other times deemed necessary. Children will be instructed in the correct use of PPE specific to the tool as part of their 'Tools Talk'. It is recognised that a better grip of a tool can be obtained by a bare hand than a gloved one.

Toileting

Children will be toileted before attending forest school sessions. There is an indoor toilet located in the school building which can be used during forest school sessions.

Photographs

Photographs may be taken of children participating in forest school activities. These photos will only be taken by Forest School leaders and assistants. The photos will be stored and used in line with the school photograph policy and photo permission consent forms filled out by parents. (please see school website for Child protection and safeguarding policy Photography and images section)

Environmental impact

Every activity conducted will have an impact on the environment. We plan to keep this impact to a minimum by carefully considering the impact of activities taking places. An ecological impact assessment is carried out for each activity and mitigations put in place to reduce the impact of our activities on the environment. Considerations include:

- Educating the children on their environment and how to look after it
- Leaving no trace, children are encourage to leave the area as they found it leaving no materials or litter and recovering ground and returning items used in activities.
- Use of natural resources where possible
- Vary the route to and from the forest school site to allow for ground to recover and avoiding badly damaged areas.
- Creating animal habitats to increase bio-diversity
- Limiting use of fire and gathering of fire wood on site.

-Collecting natural materials only pick fallen parts or where in abundance and limit frequency of activity.

For more detail please see Environmental impact and sustainable management plan Appendix C

Letter to parents

All parents and carers of children taking part will be notified. Parents/Carers will understand that their child will be attending Forest school sessions delivered by a forest school leader. They will understand children need to be wearing suitable clothing and footwear as outlined. The forest school leader will obtain any medical information from the class teacher and any medical forms will be copied and put into the forest school file for easy access. When not out in the session the information will be locked away in the office.

Policies

Forest school sessions run following the policies of Whitnash Primary school

Please refer to school website for these policies

<https://www.whitnashprimaryschool.com/policies>

Anti-bullying Policy

Behaviour Policy

Complaints Policy

Data Protection

Equality Statement

Health and Safety Policy

Intimate Care Policy

Mobile Phone Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Whitnash Primary follows the WCC policy for the 'Manual handling & people handling'.

Appendices

Appendix A

Safe tool use and maintenance.

Tool	Bow Saw
Purpose	To cut green and dead wood with around 2 inch diameter
Safety Equipment	Handguard, handle, blade cover

Personal Protective Equipment	Gloves to be worn on the hand holding the wood. No gloves to be worn on the tool.
Adult:child ratio recommendations, age/ability recommendations?	1 adult 1 child - young children 1 adult 2 children- older children Older children may be supervised using the bow saw alone.
Transportation	Transport with the blade cover on. Hold the top of the bow with a straight arm with the blade facing down. When passing to a person pass them the handle with the blade facing down. When not using the tool ensure you tuck the blade under your work area e.g tree stump or length of wood.
Working Space	Length of your arm plus the tool. (You can invite people into your working space (blood bubble) when working in a pair.)
Method of Use	Ensure you maintain a safe working distance from others at all times when using the tool. Individually or in pairs. Identify if the wood is green or dead and choose the most appropriate blade. Rest the length of wood on a slightly raised surface such as another length of wood or stump. Kneel down with one knee up and the other down out of the way of the saw blades. Hold the wood with gloved hand. Hold the tool handle with an un-gloved hand. Place saw in desired position on the length of the wood. If working in a pair they face you holding the wood also with a gloved hand. They hold the metal side bar of the bow with their un-gloved hand. Do 3 back cuts then saw backwards and forwards until you have cut through the width of the wood. Once used ensure you tuck the bladed side into/under the wood or stump being used. When finished replace the blade cover.
Inspection	Check for any sap and rust on the blade ensure it is clean. Check that the blade is tight and properly installed. Check for any missing or bent teeth on the blade. Check that the handle is not damaged.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Use a wire brush to brush off any sap and sawdust. Ensure the blade is dry when stored. Use vegetable oil on the blade with a rag to prevent rusting. Change the blade if there is damage to the blade e.g any missing or bent teeth. Change blade when blunt.
Storage	Store with the blade cover on, in a dry tool bag or box

Tool	Bit and Brace
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Purpose	To drill holes through rounds of wood (around 2inches)
Safety Equipment	Handle
Personal Protective Equipment	Gloves to be worn on the hand holding the wood. No gloves to be worn on the tool.
Adult:child ratio recommendations, age/ability recommendations?	1 adult 1 child- young children 1 adult supervising 2 children- older children
Transportation	Hold the handle with the drill bit facing downwards. When passing offer the handle to the other person.
Working Space	Length of your arm plus the tool. (You can invite people into your working space (blood bubble) when working in a pair)
Method of Use	Ensure you maintain a safe working distance from others at all times when using the tool. Place wood on a flat surface such as a work bench or tree stump. One person kneels behind the stump, the other person kneels to the side or opposite. Place drill bit in desired position on wood round. One person holds the wood stable with a gloved hand. The other hold the handle of the tool with one hand and the top of the brace with the other. Push down on the top and turn the handle. Keep turning until the hole is all the way through. Then reverse to free the drill bit from the wood.
Inspection	Check for sap and rust on the drill bit. Check the bit is installed properly. Check that the brace is not damaged. Check that the handle is attached.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Ensure it is dry before putting away. Use a paint brush to brush off any saw dust. Oil the bit with vegetable oil and a rag to prevent rusting.
Storage	Store drill bits in a sealed dry container. Store brace in a dry tool bag or box.

Tool	Gimlet/palm drill
Purpose	Drilling hole in wood (less than 2inch)
Safety Equipment	Handle
Personal Protective Equipment	Gloves to be worn on the hand holding the wood. No gloves to be worn on the tool.
Adult:child ratio recommendations, age/ability recommendations?	1 adult 1 child : younger children 1 adult supervising a small group 3/4 children: older children

Transportation	Hold the drill bit in a gloved hand.
Working Space	Length of your arm plus the tool
Method of Use	Ensure you maintain a safe working distance from others at all times when using the tool. Place wood on a flat surface e.g a tree stump. Kneel behind the stump. Hold wood still in a gloved hand. Hold the tool in an un-gloved hand. Place the end of the bit in desired position. Push down and twist the handle. Reverse to remove bit from the wood.
Inspection	Check for saw dust and rust. Check that the handle is not damaged.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Use a paint brush to remove sawdust. Ensure it is dry before putting away. Oil bit to prevent rusting.
Storage	Store in a dry tool bag or box.

Tool	Loppers
Purpose	For cutting smaller braches. Smaller than the width of your thumb.
Safety Equipment	Handle
Personal Protective Equipment	Gloves on the person holding the branch being cut. No gloves to be worn on the tool.
Adult:child ratio recommendations, age/ability recommendations?	1 adult 1 child – younger children 1 adult supervising 2 children – older children
Transportation	Hold the bottom handle with the blades forwards but in line with your leg and close to the body. Keep closed until ready to use. When passing the lopper pass the handle facing forwards. Close loppers when finished using and tuck under work area e.g a tree stump.
Working Space	Length of your arm plus the tool. (You can invite people into your working space (blood bubble) when working in a pair)
Method of Use	Ensure you maintain a safe working distance from others at all times when using the tool. Identify the branch you want to cut. Check for the nodes on the branch. Have another person hold the branch steady with gloved hands. Open the Loppers and close them to cut. Cut just above the node to prevent more damage to the tree. Close the loppers and tuck the blade under a stump when not using.
Inspection	Make sure all the moving parts move. Check the blades for rust or damage. Check the handles are not loose. Test the sharpness of the blades using

	your thumb gently pressing down on the blade. Sharpen if blunt.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Use a wire brush to brush off any sap. If the blades are blunt sharpen the blade with a flat file. Follow the bevelled edge when sharpening. Sharpen in a downwards motion.
Storage	Store in a dry tool bag or box. Ensure the blades are dry when storing.

Tool	Penknife
Purpose	For whittling and carving wood.
Safety Equipment	Handle and sheath
Personal Protective Equipment	Glove on the hand holding the wood.
Adult:child ratio recommendations, age/ability recommendations?	1 adult 1 child – younger children 1 adult supervising 2 children- older children
Transportation	Transport with the sheath on. When handing to a person offer the handle to the person. Replace in the sheath when not using.
Working Space	Length of your arm plus the tool
Method of Use	Ensure you maintain a safe working distance from others at all times when using the tool. Kneel behind a stump or surface. Hold the wood in a gloved hand. Remove the knife from the sheath and carve outwards over the stump. Or sit with your elbows on your knees. Hold the wood with a gloves hand in-between your legs and carve outwards making sure your legs are out of the way. Return the knife to its sheath when not using.
Inspection	Check the handle is well attached. Check for any rust or damage to the blade or handle. Test the sharpness of the blades using your thumb gently pressing down on the blade. Sharpen if blunt.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Use a paint brush to brush off any saw dust. Use a wire brush to brush off any sap. Oil the blade with vegetable oil on a rag to prevent rusting. Test to see if the blade is sharp and sharpen if needed. Sharpen with a sharpening stone. Soak the stone for 3 mins. Follow the edge of the knife with the stone sharpen down the blade.
Storage	Ensure the blade is dry before storing. Store the knife with the sheath on in a dry tool box or bag.

Tool	Billhook
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Purpose	Splitting wood
Safety Equipment	Handle, cover (tea towel or material)
Personal Protective Equipment	Gloves to be worn on the person holding edge of the bill hook. No gloves on the handle.
Adult:child ratio recommendations, age/ability recommendations?	1 adult 1 child – younger children 1 adult supervising 2 children- older children
Transportation	Walk holding the handle of the tool with the tool next to your leg with the hook facing backwards. Tuck the hook blade under the stump or surface when not using.
Working Space	Length of your arm plus the tool. You can invite people into your working space (blood bubble) when working in a pair)
Method of Use	Ensure you maintain a safe working distance from others at all times when using the tool. Place the wood that you want to split on a flat surface such as a tree stump. 1 person has the bill hook the other person has the mallet. The person with the bill hook kneels behind the stump and places the blade in desired position holding the handle with one hand (un-gloved) and the side of the hook with the other hand with a glove on. The person with the mallet kneels opposite. They use the mallet to hit the bill hook downwards onto the wood hitting it in the middle between the other person's hands. Keep hitting until the wood splits. If the wood get stuck on the bill hook use the stump or surface to hit it off.
Inspection	Make sure the handle is well attached. Check the blade for any dirt or damage. Test the sharpness of the blades using your thumb gently pressing down on the blade. Sharpen if blunt.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Use a wire brush to brush of any dirt or sap. If the blade is blunt, use a cigar stone to sharpen it. Follow the edge of the blade and use circular motions along the blade with the stone to sharpen it. Oil the blade with vegetable oil and a rag to prevent rusting.
Storage	Ensure the blade is dry before storing. Wrap the blade in a dry tea towel or piece of material. Store in in a dry tool box or bag.

Tool	Mallet
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Purpose	To provide force to tools that split wood e.g bill hook.
Safety Equipment	Handle
Personal Protective Equipment	N/A
Adult:child ratio recommendations, age/ability recommendations?	1 adult 1 child- younger children 1 adult supervising 2 children- older children
Transportation	When walking hold the handle of the tool with the head facing downwards. When passing hold the top of the tool and offer the handle to the person.
Working Space	Length of your arm plus the tool. You can invite people into your working space (blood bubble) when working in a pair)
Method of Use	Ensure you maintain a safe working distance from others at all times when using the tool. Hold the handle in an un-gloved hand. Hit the tool eg bill hook on the top in the middle of the persons hands. Hit with reasonable force. Increase force if needed continue to hit the tool until it has split through the wood.
Inspection	Check the handle is well attached. Check for any splits in the handle or on the head where pieces of wood may fall off.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Keep dry. Remove any bits of wood from the head that may fall off when using.
Storage	Store in a dry tool box or bag.

Tool	Trowel/spade
Purpose	For digging the ground
Safety Equipment	Handle
Personal Protective Equipment	Sensible shoes if using spade
Adult:child ratio recommendations, age/ability recommendations?	1 adult supervising a small group of children 3/4- younger children 1 adult supervising a group of children 4/5- older children
Transportation	Hold in the middle of the shaft with the head facing downwards (spade) Hold the handle with the head facing down (Trowel). Tuck the head under your working area when not using.
Working Space	Length of your arm plus the tool.

Method of Use	Place the head into the ground and pull downwards on the handle (trowel) Place the head into the ground, stand on the top edge of the spade with your foot and press the head down into the earth, pull back on the handle. Tuck the head under your working area when not using.
Inspection	Check the handle is well attached. Check for rust or damage to the head.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Brush off dirt with a strong brush. Keep the head dry.
Storage	Store in in a dry tool box or bag.

Appendix B
Reading Declaration of the Forest School Handbook

Print Name	Signature	Date

Appendix c
Ecological impact assessment

Identify the impacts	What is the nature of the impact? How is the environment impacted/damaged? Does it affect specific parts of the woodland structure? Does it affect specific habitats? Is it seasonal? Is it effected by the frequency of your use? Is it affected by the group size? Etc.	What can you do to minimise / avoid the impact? Can you mitigate circumstances with a positive solution?	How will this information inform your management plan? How does this affect your long-term planning? How will it affect your short-term planning? Will this change how you use the site?

<p>Walking to and from forest school site. Walking/playing/running on the site</p>	<p>Trampling of the ground and flora.</p> <p>Disturbing leaf litter. Disturbing insect habitats and small animals.</p> <p>Larger impact with more frequent groups and larger group size. Larger impact if ground is muddy and saturated e.g autumn and winter months.</p> <p>Damage to grass</p>	<p>Highlight flora to children to reduce damage.</p> <p>Vary the route to and from the forest school site to allow for ground to recover.</p> <p>Use different areas of the field to reduce repetitive damage.</p> <p>Avoid using badly damaged areas to allow for regrowth.</p> <p>Limiting the use of the site 1 day per week.</p>	<p>Helps to plan and manage the Forest school ecological footprint</p> <p>Be aware of considerations during winter months and the groups running in winter seasons where impact could be greater</p> <p>Consider planning of activities to avoid badly affected areas.</p> <p>Educate children about the flora so they avoid trampling shoots e.g during the spring.</p>
<p>Removal of dead wood and natural materials e.g scavenger hunts and art projects.</p>	<p>Trampling of the ground.</p> <p>Disturbing leaf coverage- exposing insects and ground.</p> <p>Taking materials such as twigs, leaves and berries.</p> <p>Damage to trees from picking leaves and berries.</p> <p>Taking food e.g. pinecones, berries, seeds</p> <p>Disturbing and removal of habitats on dead wood and natural materials.</p> <p>Animal population reduces.</p>	<p>Encourage the children to only pick things up from the ground and not pick them of the trees and plants.</p> <p>Space out activities to allow materials to replenish and recover.</p> <p>Use different areas of the school site to collect items to allow for the resources to recover to replenish.</p> <p>Encourage the children to pick carefully only taking what they need and only if it is in abundance and sustainable.</p>	<p>Consider planning of activities to give material time to replenish and recover. Limit activities.</p> <p>Monitor the effect of the activities on the area each week to inform decisions and activities.</p> <p>Consider using different areas of the school site for scavenging.</p> <p>Include teaching the children about the impact of their activities on habitats encourage creation of habitats. E.g dead wood piles.</p>

		<p>Put ground material like sticks and leaves back once they have been used if appropriate. Encourage children to recover the ground and leave the area as they found it, where possible, to reduce the uncovering of the ground and uncovering of insects.</p> <p>Teach children about invertebrate habitats and the impact uncovering and scavenging can have.</p> <p>Encourage for an area to be left alone to allow for habitats.</p> <p>Make habitats with the children. Make a bird table to provide food for wildlife.</p> <p>Bring materials to site if there is not a sustainable source on site</p>	
Fire	<p>Burning of ground. Grass can't grow.</p> <p>Smoke pollution to wildlife.</p> <p>Heat damage to surroundings.</p> <p>Change to PH of the soil.</p>	<p>Use a fire bowl if possible to prevent scorching of the ground.</p> <p>Make sure the wood source is sustainable. Only take wood if it is in abundance and there is sufficient</p>	<p>Monitor the impact of fire on the area. Use this to inform rotating the area.</p> <p>Monitor the levels of natural fire wood plan when it is appropriate to collect and when to bring in fire wood</p>

	<p>Gathering of fire wood- disturbing habitats, taking materials such as twigs and sticks.</p> <p>Disturbing leaf matter. Litter left from fire making materials.</p> <p>Damage caused if fire spreads and is not properly extinguished.</p>	<p>wood to replenish it. Bring wood to burn if there isn't sufficient and sustainable wood onsite.</p> <p>Place fire away from surrounding vegetation to reduce the risk of heat and smoke damage to surroundings.</p> <p>Use a fire barrier so it is contained to 1 area. Always extinguish the fire and make sure it has gone out.</p> <p>Make sure all fire making materials are taken away after the session. Safe removal of ashes.</p> <p>Rotate the fire location to allow the ground and area to recover.</p>	<p>to ensure sustainability.</p>
<p>Eating food on site</p>	<p>Litter, food waste being left behind could affect biodiversity and could be a risk to animals</p>	<p>Have litter pickers and bags with us during the session and encourage children to pick up any litter they see.</p> <p>Make sure that any cooking materials or food are taken away</p>	<p>Include a litter check into the routine of a session.</p> <p>Include teaching children about the impacts of litter on the environment to encourage them to pick it up.</p>

		<p>from the site after the session.</p> <p>Teach children about the impacts of litter on the environment to encourage them to pick it pick it up.</p>	
<p>Bringing organic materials onto site e.g dead wood and live wood for making things.</p>	<p>Bringing in new species to the site on the wood e.g invertebrates or lichen and moss. This could affect the biodiversity on site.</p> <p>Could bring in organisms that kill/ affect flora and fauna.</p>	<p>Try to source wood/ resources from the school site.</p> <p>Try to use the same source of wood if off site.</p> <p>Bring in clean wood to reduce the impact of introducing new species to the site.</p> <p>Monitor the impact of bringing in wood on the site and flora and fauna.</p>	<p>Consider collecting resources with the children from around the school site before the activity.</p> <p>Monitor the impact within a site survey.</p>
<p>Bringing of non-organic materials on to site e.g for art projects, treasure hunts,</p>	<p>Materials being left behind are a risk to wildlife and biodiversity.</p>	<p>Remove all materials from site after the session.</p> <p>Have a box for storage and encourage the children to put them back after they have used them.</p>	<p>Include a check at the end of each sessions to make sure everything has been removed from the site.</p>
<p>Using trees and shrubs for support e.g swings/dens/tarps</p>	<p>Damage to trees and shrubs used as support</p>	<p>Only use trees which can take the forces. Teach</p>	<p>Monitor the impact on the trees and shrubs.</p>

	<p>Increased impact for swings if use is regular and by many children.</p> <p>Disturbance to wildlife habitats.</p>	<p>children how to identify these.</p> <p>Teach children safe knots to tie them up to reduce damage to the trees.</p> <p>Move dens and swings around to reduce the severity of damage to one tree/area.</p> <p>Take them down after the block of sessions has finished.</p>	<p>Include teaching children about selecting safe trees and safe knots to use and to notice damage.</p>
Cutting live wood	<p>Removal of wood can affect regrowth and biodiversity and flora coverage.</p> <p>Longer term removal of the canopy would affect the light reaching the ground level and</p>	<p>Only cut live wood if it is sustainable and will regrow.</p> <p>Educate children on appropriate wood to use and where/where not to cut from.</p> <p>Limit activity using live wood from the site.</p>	<p>Monitor the impact of removing live wood.</p> <p>Consider bringing wood on to site.</p>
Mini-beast hunting	<p>Disturbing and removal of habitats. Disturbing leaf litter and ground cover. Churning up soil when digging. Uncovering invertebrates. Invertebrate population decreases.</p>	<p>Space out invertebrate hunts to allow habitats and population to recover.</p> <p>Encourage children to leave habitats how they found them placing rocks and</p>	<p>Monitor the impact of mini beast hunts. Consider doing a survey to monitor the impact and diversity of invertebrates within the area.</p> <p>Include teaching the children about invertebrates and</p>

		<p>stumps back after they are unturned. Re-covering the ground.</p> <p>Leave areas alone to allow for bug population grow.</p> <p>Create habitats with the children and educate them on invertebrate habitats and how we can encourage them in to the area.</p>	<p>their habitats and how to protect them.</p>
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Sustainable management Plan

Management Objectives (what do you want to do)	Proposals & action plan (include timescale) (How are you going to get it done)	Person responsible for action and date action will be completed	Monitoring / review / comments
<p>Increase the biodiversity of the site.</p>	<p>2026- Create animal habitats using dead wood and leaf piles and creation of a bug hotel. Add bird tables and bird boxes to encourage bird presence.</p> <p>2027- Plant new trees to increase the size of the wooded area. Plant bulbs and prune canopy/shrub layer to encourage growth and diversity in the ground layer.</p> <p>2028- Monitor the growth of new trees ensure they are protected by educating</p>	<p>AH (Forest school leader)</p> <p>GC (Forest school leader)</p> <p>Share objectives with the children and monitor with the children.</p>	

	children how to look after them.		
Decrease the level of litter and non-organic material on site.	<p>2026: Carry bags, gloves and litter pickers to remove litter. Encourage litter picking across the school through regular litter picks with the eco council. Regular site sweep remove litter.</p> <p>2027- Continue to involve children in removal of non-organic material on site</p> <p>2028-Same as year 2</p>	<p>AH (Forest school leader)</p> <p>GC (Forest school leader)</p> <p>Share objectives with the children and monitor with the children.</p>	
Maintenance of Forest School area	<p>2026- Encourage children to help clear leaves and prune shrub layer.</p> <p>2027- Children to help prune shrub, canopy and ground layers using tools</p> <p>2028- continue to involve children in general maintenance of forest school site</p>	<p>AH (Forest school leader)</p> <p>GC (Forest school Leader)</p> <p>Monitor with the children.</p>	
Prevent the damage to bulbs and flora. Eg crocuses, bluebells, snow drops.	<p>2026: Cordon off areas during growing season</p> <p>Educate children on not picking flowers, looking out for shoots.</p> <p>Removal of ivy at shrub layer to prevent over crowding.</p> <p>2027: replant damaged bulbs and to create a more sustainable flower habitat.</p> <p>2028: remove/prune shrubs to allow light to penetrate.</p>	<p>AH (Forest school leader)</p> <p>GC (Forest school assistant)</p> <p>Share objectives with the children and monitor with the children.</p>	
Creation of wild flower area	2026- Assess the most suitable site for a wild	AH (Forest school leader)	

	<p>flower area. Investigate possible wildlife.</p> <p>2027- Plant wild flowers. Cordon off area. Regularly water and maintain the area to encourage growth and prevent damage. Monitor and document wildlife.</p> <p>2028- Maintain wild flower area. Continue to monitor and document wildlife.</p>	<p>GC (Forest school Leader)</p> <p>NC (caretaker)</p> <p>Share objectives with the children and monitor with the children.</p>	
Erect a permanent open sided store for drying wood	<p>2026- Arrange for shed doors to be take off.</p> <p>Educate children on drying wood and adding it to the shed.</p> <p>2027- Begin using shed for forest school wood storage. Children respecting its uses.</p> <p>2028- wood being successfully dried and used within sessions. Children using the shed effectively.</p>	<p>DE (Head Teacher)</p> <p>Neil (Caretaker)</p> <p>GC (Forest school leader)</p> <p>Share objectives with the children and monitor with the children.</p>	
Addition of a all year round shelter which can be used in poor weather and for fire cooking	<p>2026- Research options for an all year round shelter, costs and possible locations for structure.</p> <p>Discuss with head teacher</p> <p>Plan in possible fundraising sessions.</p> <p>2027- take part in fundraising for new shelter.</p> <p>Collect funds.</p> <p>2028- new shelter build and in use for forest school sessions.</p>		
Creation of weather proof signs showing Flora and Fauna	<p>2026- surveys of Flora and Fauna</p>		

present on the school site	2027- pictures and posters created by children 2028- signs created and in use.		
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