



Willow Bank Primary School  
Outdoor Learning Handbook  
2022 2023





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# Forest School Rules

There are 3 rules for Forest School.

1. Stay within the boundary.
2. Do not pick anything growing
3. Do not put your fingers or anything you find in your mouth.

no pick, no lick, no eat!



## The Countryside Code

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
  - Guard against all risk of fire
  - Leave all gates as you found them
  - Keep your pets under close control
  - Keep to public paths across farmland
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
  - Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
    - Take your litter home
    - Help to keep all water clean
    - Protect wildlife, plants and trees
    - Take special care on country roads
      - Make no unnecessary noise

By following these we show we know how to respect, protect and enjoy the countryside.



## Session procedures

1. A check on weather conditions will be made by the Forest School Leader to ensure suitable conditions.
2. Forest School Leader to carry out a thorough safety sweep of the site, including trees (for dead wood) prior to the session commencing and keep a written record, stating if there were any hazards and if so, how they were dealt with.
3. All children to go to the toilet prior to putting on all-weather clothing.
4. Children to put on all-weather clothing
5. Count children
6. Walk to area
7. Before entering the site discuss safety issues of the day.
8. Walk to base camp
9. Count children
10. Discuss rules
11. Listening activity
12. Introduce new resource or activity/remind previous resources
13. Children choose what they want to do (this will need to be more directed in early sessions for younger children)
14. Chn can self-select snack/drink clean. Ensure hands are cleaned with wet wipes first and checked by an adult.
15. Discuss session – children to feedback on their activities during the session.
16. Exit Forest School boundary and count children
17. Return to setting, count children and hang up wet/dirty outdoor clothing.



# Health and Safety Policy and Legislation

1. **Health & safety at Work Act 1974**  
**Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.** Often referred to as HASAW or HSW, this **Act** of Parliament is the main piece of UK **health and safety** legislation. It places a duty on all employers "to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the **health, safety** and welfare at **work**" of all their employees.
2. **Children's act 1989**  
Ensures that **children** are safeguarded, and their welfare is promoted.
3. **Liability insurance**
4. **Normal laws - Disability Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act, 'DBS' checks, Every Child Matters**
5. **Willow Bank Health and Safety Policy 2022**

## Safety in the outdoors

- Clear marked boundary
- No open water
- Dead wood and low branches removed
- Slopes and ditches monitored for hazards
- Poisonous plants removed
- Weather conditions monitored
- Children aware no pick, no lick, no eat
- Location of holes, nettles and berries identified
- Animal excretion removed
- Stranger danger awareness
- All adults aware of evacuation procedure
- Personal knowledge of the site
- Emergency procedures in place

- Children will walk and not run
- Know what plants are growing
- Eco piles will be maintained for fauna to remain



# Essential Equipment

Essential equipment list – to be kept in Rucksack and taken to Base camp at each session:

Medical forms and consent forms will be kept in the school office

School walkie-talkies (one in Forest School other with School office)

Post code for school

Appropriate clothing

First aid kit with plasters, bandages

Bottle of water (unopened)

Protective gloves

Wet wipes

Sun cream

Scissors

Torch

Water bottle with water for drinking/washing

Food

Space blanket

Container for inhalers, EpiPen and other essential medical requirements.

Spare clothes

Carry bag for dirty/wet clothing

Newspaper and matches if required





# Essential Clothing List

(for all in attendance)

Fleece/sweatshirt

Jacket

Long trousers (preferably waterproof)

Waterproof coat/waterproof suit

Socks – 2 pairs in winter, 1 in summer

In winter a woolly hat and gloves

In summer a sun hat

Wellington Boots

An emergency change of clothes including spare socks.

A carrier bag for wet or very dirty clothes.





# Environmental Considerations

- Check weather conditions. If it is too windy or a thunderstorm is imminent or has started the Forest school session will not take place.
- A thorough safety sweep of the site must be done before the start of the session to check for any litter, glass, animal faeces etc. Any such items should be collected using plastic bags and disposable gloves
- A written risk assessment form must be kept of each sweep. This must state if any hazards are found and how they were dealt with. See Safety Sweep form
- Boundary fences, hedges and gates should be checked to ensure they are safe and secure
- During safety check trees will be checked for any branches which may fall, and a check will be made to ensure no dead twigs etc. are protruding at eye level from bushes.





# Risk Assessment and Risk Management

- A full risk assessment of the site will be carried out termly by the Forest school leader to take into account the seasonal changes in the woods. This will take into account any major issues within the site e.g. dangerous trees, broken fences etc. that need to be addressed. Photographs will be taken of the site during this sweep to enable us to monitor our impact on the setting and also to observe changes in the environment, See current Risk Assessment **Appendix 1**
- A safety sweep will take place on the morning before every Forest school session. Hazards will be identified, and action taken immediately to rectify them. If this is not possible the hazard may be roped off as out of bounds. A safety sweep form will be filled each time by the Forest school leader with the hazards identified and the action taken. See Safety sweep form **Appendix 2**
- Some activities undertaken within Forest school may require their own risk assessment because they pose a higher risk e.g., using tools, building fires. This assessment will include how the risk is to be managed and what adult ratio is required. See tools risk assessment below.



# TOOLS Risk Assessment

## General rules for tool use:

- All tools must have individual risk assessment.
- Ensure safe storage of tools at school. Access to tools limited to Forest School Leaders or those nominated by Forest School Leader.
- Ensure safe storage of tools at Forest School site. This is responsibility of Forest School Leader.
- Tools to be used in designated tool area. Never walk around with tools. Ensure children understand rules within designated tool area.
- Ensure tools are clean and sharp before using them.
- Forest School Leader to be responsible of tool use with children.

## Penknife:

Hazard	Harm	At risk	Risk	Existing measures / new measures	Residual risk	Who will do it? When?
Improper use of the knives	Wounding/bleeding	Person using the knife and anyone close by	L	Inform person using knives of tool use. No glove needed on hand using tool but glove on non-knife hand. First aiders and first aid kit to be close by. Tools counted in and out during each session. One to one supervision for Early Years children Use tools in designated area for tools. Keep in cover when not in use and store in toolbox. Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools.	L	Forest School Leader during session.

## Bow Saw

Hazard	Harm	At risk	Risk	Existing measures / new measures	Residual risk	Who will do it? When?
Improper use of the bow saw	Wounding/bleeding	Person using the knife and	L	Inform person using saw of tool use. No glove needed on hand using tool but glove on alternate hand. First aiders and first aid kit to be close by. Tools counted in and out during each session.	L	Forest School Leader during session.

		anyone close by		One to one supervision for Early Years children Use tools in designated area for tools. Keep in toolbox with guard on when not in use and store in toolbox. Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools.		
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## Potato Peeler

Hazard	Harm	At risk	Risk	Existing measures / new measures	Residual risk	Who will do it? When?
Improper use of the potato peeler	Wounding/ bleeding	Person using the potato peeler and anyone close by	L	Inform person using potato peeler of tool use. No glove needed on hand using tool but glove on non-knife hand. First aiders and first aid kit to be close by. Tools counted in and out during each session. 3:1 ratio supervision for Early Years children Use tools in designated area for tools. Keep in cover when not in use and store in toolbox. Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools.	L	Forest School Leaser during session.

## Mallet

Hazard	Harm	At risk	Risk	Existing measures / new measures	Residual risk	Who will do it? When?
Improper use of the mallet	Bumps bruises and grazes	Person using the mallet and anyone close by	L	Inform person using mallet of tool use. No glove needed on hand using tool but glove on non-knife hand. First aiders and first aid kit to be close by. Tools counted in and out during each session. One to one supervision for Early Years children Keep in cover when not in use and store in toolbox. Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools.	L	Forest School Leaser during session.

## Loppers

Hazard	Harm	At risk	Risk	Existing measures / new measures	Residual risk	Who will do it? When?
Improper use of the loppers	Wounding bumps	Person using the loppers and anyone close by	L	Inform person using loppers of tool use. No glove needed both hands to hold loppers. First aiders and first aid kit to be close by. Tools counted in and out during each session. One to one supervision for Early Years children Use tools in designated area for tools.	L	Forest School Leaser during session.

			<p>Keep in cover when not in use and store in toolbox.</p> <p>Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools.</p> <p>If lopping branches from a tree ensure no one or any property will be hurt or damaged when it falls.</p>		
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# Emergency Procedures

## In the unlikely event of a:

### **Major accident:**

- The Forest school leader will administer First Aid
- The class TA will use Walkie Talkie to inform Office to call an ambulance if necessary and request additional staffing, then assist with First Aid. The school office will inform the parents as necessary.
- A member of staff from the school office will come to the Forest School site to continue First Aid and the class teacher will take the rest of the children back to the classroom if necessary.
- The accident will be logged in the schools accident book by the Forest school leader/school office administrator.

### **Minor accident:**

- The Forest school leader will administer First Aid and incident will be recorded in class First Aid book. Parents will be informed at the end of the day.

### **Lost child:**

- The Forest Leader will contact school office and ask for another member of Senior staff to attend immediately. All children will be seated in base camp. Additional adults deployed to find lost child. Forest School Leader to remain with class.

### **Evacuation:**

- If site needs to be evacuated Forest School Leader will call children back to Base Camp. Support staff and any helpers will sweep site for children that have not heard.
- Children will line up and Forest School Leader will lead children to designated evacuation site.
- Forest School Leader will take register and await further instructions.

### **Behaviour issue:**

- If behaviour of child requires removal from site TA or Forest School Leader will contact school office and request an additional member of staff who will support TA in removing child from Forest School.

## Changing weather conditions



In the event of a thunderstorm or high winds the group will return to the classroom immediately. Office to be informed of return to classroom.



# Designated Persons Responsibilities

All staff involved in Willow Bank Primary Forest School are DBS checked.

**Forest school leader:** Tania Stupples

**First Aid:** Tania Stupples

## Forest School Leaders

Forest School Leader will ensure safety sweep takes place before each session alongside termly risk assessment of Forest School site and equipment. The safety sweep is recorded, and any potential risks identified. It is the Forest School Leaders responsibility to lead each session and to ensure planning is completed before each session.

## Parent Volunteers

All persons in attendance will be briefed beforehand of their responsibilities and expectations of the sessions. Their personal belongings to be kept in the school office.

## Toileting

Children wishing to go to the toilet must ask a member of teaching staff who will send them to use the school toilet in pairs and monitor their return. A band system will operate to monitor the number of pupils of site at one time.

## Insurance Requirements

Insurance details can be found in school office with K Cooke (SBM).



# Forest School advice for Adult/Parent helpers:

In Forest School, adults play a supporting and observing role. Please do not intervene in the children's play and learning unless invited to do so by a child (this can be difficult as it is against natural instinct). That said, please intervene immediately to stop a potentially harmful incident occurring e.g. carrying something that is too heavy for them and may be dropped.

Please support children to follow Forest School rules i.e.

1. Do not cross or leave the boundaries
2. Do not pick anything (No pick)
3. Do not to put anything in your mouth (No lick, No pick)
4. Walking at all times

Children may have a drink and fruit sitting at base camp when they wish. Please ensure wipes are used to clean their hands thoroughly before they eat or drink.

Thank you for your support.

*T Stupples*

**Forest School Leader**



risk take as well as learning how to light and maintain a fire safely, gaining new experiences that empower them to use their initiative and enjoy the natural environment. Supports mathematical development, sizes and sorting.

## **Appendix 1**



# Seasonal/Termly Risk Assessment of Willow Bank Primary School Forest School Site

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022

**Completed by** Stupples  
**Review Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022

**No. of Pupils:** 30

**No of Adults:** 2

**Person in Charge:** T Stupples

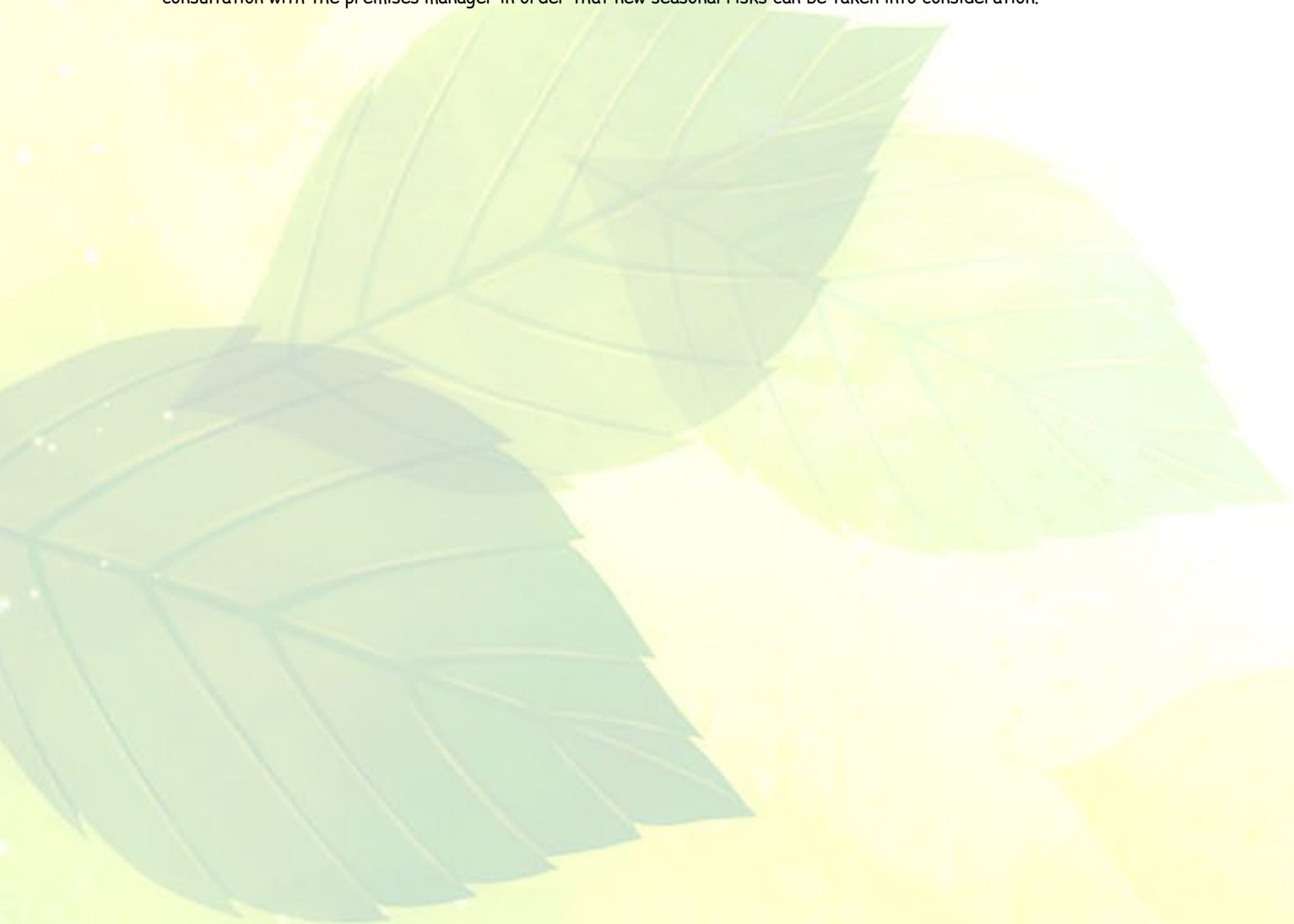
<b>Hazard</b> List significant hazards which may result in serious harm or affect several people	<b>Who may be affected</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b> L/M/H	<b>Control Measures</b> List existing controls or note where the information may be found	<b>Any Further Action</b> List the risks which are not adequately controlled and proposed action where it is reasonably practicable to do more
Burn from hot chocolate.	Children/Adults	L	Hot chocolate using large thermos of hot water kept behind blue rope out of children's reach. Add cold water to make chocolate cool enough to drink. Children to sit at Base Camp to drink chocolate.	
Children wandering off	Children	M	Rope around boundary being used. Remind children at every session. Allocate adults to watch boundary line. Walk round boundary line after every holiday or when new children are involved.	
Children using small forks and trowels for digging.	Children	L	Tools kept in a box in middle of base camp. Children supervised at all times during Forest school to use tools correctly. Walking when carrying tools. Putting tools back in the box when finished digging.	
Tools for site maintenance.	Children/Adults	M	Kept in a locked toolbox on a high shelf in the Administration storeroom which is locked by key designated staff. Tools only used when there are no children are on site. Adults will ensure safe use.	
Foxes	Children/Adults	M	Check site prior to entry by children for foxes, bones, food scraps	
Animal Excrement	Children/Adults	H	Excrement will be removed and put in a plastic bag and placed in a bin. If a child gets excrement on their hands they should tell an adult and they will use wet wipes to clean their skin. If any child gets excrement on their clothes they will change into spare clothes	
Red ants	Children/Adults	M	Identify ant area and inform children to not play in this area.	
Stinging nettles/Brambles	Children	M	Brief the group so they know what to expect and what they look like.	



			Any injury to be dealt with by First Aider	
Unidentified berry bearing trees	Children	H	Brief children as to what they look like. Reinforce rules - No picking, no licking. If a child touches berry, they should tell an adult and use wet wipes to clean hands	Identify trees/bushes. Identify if berries are poisonous.
Fungi	Children	M	Brief children as to what they look like. Reinforce rules-No picking, no licking. If a child touches fungi, they should tell an adult and use wet wipes to clean hands	
Dangerous trees/Falling dead wood	Children /Adults	M	Forest school leader will do a safety sweep and check for any hanging dead wood. If there is any wind, the Forest school leader will decide if safe to proceed with session. Contact Premises Manager if wood needs removing	
Falling wood due to high winds	Children/Adults	M	Weather forecast will be checked the day before by the Forest school leader and on the day of the session to assess wind levels	
Branches at eye level	Children/Adults	L	Make the group aware of the danger. Clear area around base camp of potential risky branches	
No defined paths	Children/Adults	M	Ensure children are aware of 1,2,3 where are you response before entering site.	To create basic pathways with tree stumps to assist with site orientation
Tussock Ground 'trip' hazard	Children/Adults	M	Talk to children about uneven ground and importance of walking not running.	
Weather conditions	Children/Adults	L	Weather forecast will be checked by Forest school leader the day before and on the day. A safety sweep is carried out on the day to assess any new risks. If weather deteriorates during session, return to classroom.	
Hot/sunny weather	Children/Adults	L	All children to wear sunhats and use sun cream. Ensure sufficient drinking water available	
Cold wet weather	Children /Adults	M	All children to wear all weather suits and wellies. Have spare clothes. Have alternative indoor session. Ensure adults know the signs of Hypothermia. Have space blanket in Rucksack to wrap round patient.	
Access to car park from field	Children	L	Children supervised walking to and from site. Gates will be closed and locked.	
Bees/wasps and insects	Children/Adults	M	If bees or wasps nest found, use a different part of the wood until it can be removed. Carry medical forms and any necessary medication including EpiPens. First Aiders will be present at all times.	

Allergic reaction	Children/Adults	L	Carry medical forms and any necessary medication including EpiPen's. First Aider present. Establish No picking rule and not putting anything in mouth. Use wet wipes before consumption of food and drink	
Litter- including glass or needles	Children/Adults	L	Safety sweep carried out before each session to remove rubbish and put it in a bin. Thick gloves to be worn. Any needles or sharp objects will be wrapped before being disposed of. If a child notice litter they should inform an adult - this could be used as a teaching point	
Stinging nettles	Children/Adults	L	Make children aware of danger. Discuss side effects of coming into contact with plant and what to expect. Remove from ground if becomes excessive.	

**Review procedure:** A review of the risk assessment will be carried out termly by the Forest school leader, in consultation with the premises manager in order that new seasonal risks can be taken into consideration.



## Appendix 2

### Willow Bank Primary Forest School site

#### Safety Sweep Checklist

Date:

Time:

Session:

Weather:

Name of F.S. leader: Tania Stupples

Checklist	Tick When checked	Comments
Weather effects		
Fallen branches		
Low branches		
Boundary fence		
Brambles/Nettles		
Needles/Litter		
Animal faeces		
Base camp		
Equipment ready		
Safety bag		
Spare clothes		
Hot drinks		

Hazards Identified:

Action Taken:

Signed: