



Forest School Handbook

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1. The Forest School Ethos

Forest School is a unique educational experience and process that offers children the opportunity to succeed and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland environment.

Children engage in motivating and achievable tasks and activities throughout the year and in almost all weathers, with the appropriate footwear and clothing. Children will work with tools, play, learn and begin to understand the boundaries of behavior, both physical and social. They will grow in confidence, self-esteem and motivation whilst developing an understanding of the natural world.

The Forest School concept originates in Denmark, originally aimed at pre-school children, where it was found that children who had attended forest school then arrived at school with strong social and communication skills, having the ability to work in groups effectively, generally had high self-esteem and a confidence in their own abilities. These foundations help them to raise their academic achievements.

A Forest School encourages children to:

- develop personal and social skills
- work through practical problems and challenges
- use tools to create, build or manage
- discover how they learn best
- pursue knowledge that interests them
- learn how to manage failures
- build confidence in decision making and evaluating risk
- develop practical skills
- understand the benefits of a balanced and healthy lifestyle
- explore connections between humans, wildlife and the earth
- regularly experience achievement and success
- reflect on learning and experiences
- develop their language and communication skills
- improve physical motor skills
- become more motivated
- improve their concentration skills
- improve their communication
- explore the world through all the senses available to them

2. What happens at Forest School

Foundation classes take part in a weekly Forest School session throughout the year lasting for around 2 hours.

Other classes within the school will take part in a programme of weekly sessions lasting for an entire term. The sessions involve practical hands-on activities which aim to build up participants' skills, abilities and confidence week by week.

All sessions will be designed and led by our Level 3 Forest School Trained Teacher. Many will also be supported by a Level 2 Forest School Trained Teaching Assistant and other class teachers/ support staff. However, Forest School strongly encourages participant-led learning, so as the weeks progress, learners are given more freedom and responsibility to explore their interests and therefore initiate and direct their own learning.

Forest School uses natural resources to stimulate imagination, creativity and investigation. Activities may include:

- Shelter building
- Natural art
- Using knots and lashings
- Fire lighting
- Cooking
- Animal tracking
- Bug hunts
- Tree investigations
- Climbing and balancing
- Woodwork using tools, e.g. making musical instruments, jewelry, decorative items
- Creating bug homes and bird feeders
- Collecting, identifying and sorting natural materials
- Team games

Many activities can be linked to curriculum areas and span a number of subjects, including Maths, English, Design & Technology, Science, Music and Art.

3. The benefits of Forest School

Forest School is suited to all ages and abilities. The aim of Forest School is to develop the person as a whole. It is particularly suited to people who have a low sense of self-worth and who struggle for various reasons to learn in a traditional classroom setting. Completing small achievable tasks, coupled with genuine praise from Leaders, helps to boost confidence and self-esteem. For children at school, attitudes to learning are improved as they find that learning can be fun and enjoyable. This new positive outlook is then transferred to the classroom where they are found to be more motivated and able to concentrate better.

Forest School can also:

- Develop physical abilities and help participants to stay active and healthy.
- Heighten self-awareness and improve emotional and social skills.
- Promote co-operative and group working.
- Encourage participants to take care of themselves and others.
- Foster care, appreciation and respect for wildlife and the environment.
- Broaden knowledge and understanding of the natural world.

4. Forest School Staff

Our Forest School is organised and run by Mrs Jarvis who is working towards her Level 3 Award for Forest School Leaders. Miss Jackson is working towards her Level 2 Award for Forest School Assistants and supports sessions. All staff within sessions have undergone an

appropriate selection process to assess their skills and suitability for working with children and have been subject to enhanced DBS checks. All sessions are staffed by a qualified first aider and all staff have access to a first aid kit.

5. The Forest School site

Our school is a fantastic site for Forest School and we are so lucky to have so many areas for different activities.

We have our woodland area which is made up of mixed deciduous trees, including mature Maple, Birch and Sycamore trees. Around the area there are a mixture of climbing plants including ivy, cleavers and shrubs including privet, honeysuckle and Oregon grape. Within our woodland area we have a pond, which was opened by Sir David Attenborough in 1985 and which we use to observe wildlife. We also have a large mud kitchen, den building area and bird hide within this space.

We have our own allotment, which we use to grow fruits, vegetables and flowers. This is supported by the polytunnel, which is used to pot plants and grow further things requiring differing conditions. Our summerhouse is next to this and is used for outdoor learning. Our butterfly walk takes us around the outside of the school and in the summer is full of wild flowers to attract wildlife.

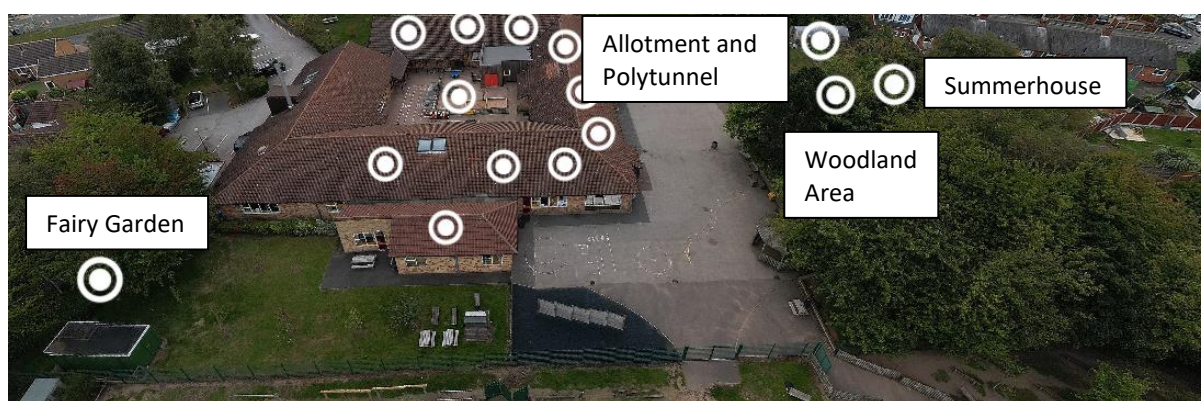
At our school entrance we have a number of pine trees and the children enjoy collecting the pine cones from them. We also have grass banking which is great for hill rolling. At the rear of the school we have a Fairy Garden, which includes a story chair and listening logs. We also have a fire pit so we will be able to enjoy fire lighting and cooking activities.

The woodland is managed carefully to ensure we have some areas for our activities but also areas allowed to stay wilder and places to encourage habitats. The site is within school grounds and is not accessible to the public, with the perimeters carefully monitored.

Children taking part in Forest School will be encouraged to minimise their impact on the site. This will include:

- Finding out about the different animals and plants that live in and amongst the trees
- Learning to respect animals' homes
- Careful observation of live animals
- Leaving lying deadwood in place
- Taking all materials and litter with them when they leave
- Ensuring that the site is left like they found it

6. Location of Woodland Site



Holly Primary School
Holly Drive,
Forest Town,
Mansfield
NG19 0NT

7. Our Forest School Code of Conduct

Entering the Woodland

We will enter the Woodland respectfully and know that when we are at Forest School, specific expectations are in place. We will explore, investigate, learn and play in a manner that will not damage our Woodland environment. We understand that we share our Forest School with plants and animals and that we must protect it for them. Groups must follow our Forest rules at all time: No pick, no lick, no squish.

Boundaries

As we have numerous areas where different activities take place around our school site, children will be made aware of which areas we are exploring before each session begins. They understand that they must not leave that area unless given permission by an adult. If

children move to explore more hidden areas an adult should also move into the cover deep enough to be able to see the children but allowing the children the freedom to explore independently. If you lose sight of a child shout, '1,2,3, come back to me'. The children are taught to respond to this immediately. This enables the leader to trace children who may have strayed or to gather children quickly in an emergency. Children who are known to need 1-1 support are given the support required.

Lighting a fire

When lighting a fire, the Forest School leader will take control of the operation and all accompanying adults will be briefed before beginning. A lit fire will not be left unattended at any point. A fire may not be lit until it has been confirmed that all fire safety equipment is in place. Open fires will be built within a fire square.

At the Fire Circle

An open fire will be lit within a fire square. A fire circle using log sitting stools will be established around the perimeter at least 2m from the fire square with a clear entrance and exit. Everybody should move in a clockwise direction around the fire circle as this will help to reduce the chance of people bumping into each other and those in charge of the fire will know which direction to expect people to approach. Children are taught that you can enter and exit the fire circle at any time, however to get to the fire square you must be in charge or invited. Even when the fire is unlit we will treat it as if it is lit.

Using Tools

All tools have their own clear code of conduct for correct use which will include consideration of specific personal protective equipment, correct use of a specific body posture, and consideration of the appropriate types of activity that each tool may be used for. Each tool will have a specific risk assessment that must be followed.

Picking up and playing with sticks

Children can carry sticks shorter than their arm's length but are encouraged to think about how close they are to other children. Longer sticks may be dragged or carried with the help of another person when each person is at either end. Sticks must not be thrown. Sticks must not be pulled from living trees.

Picking up and playing with stones

Stones may be picked up and transported. Children often like to make patterns and pictures with them. Stones may not be thrown. They may be dropped but thought must be given to whether it is safe to do so, i.e., what is beneath where I am dropping it?

Digging

Children may carefully move soil to look for insects and their habitats using fingers or small sticks found within the forest but deep holes should not be made, unless in a designated area. Children will be made aware of designated digging areas and these will be clearly defined by logs or other markers.

Collecting wood

Wood is collected for fire lighting purposes. It is collected in four thicknesses – matchstick sized, pencil sized, thumb sized and wrist sized. This is a good mathematical activity involving sorting and matching.

Sticks may be collected for creating pictures and patterns but should be collected sparingly so as not to disrupt creature habitats. Sticks should not be removed from the site unless permission is given by the Forest School leader and resources should be made available for activities where natural resources cannot be found on the site.

Eating and Drinking

Nil by mouth policy (No pick, no lick) for anything found in the area, unless this activity has been specifically planned for during the session. Children must be reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses. When having drinks and snacks children will use water and wipes to clean their hands before consumption.

Rope and String Use

We encourage the collection and transportation of materials. We do not allow children to tie up each other. If a child has a good idea and wants to tie up something, for example a tarp or a swing, an adult should help them as needed, modelling appropriate knot tying and modelling how to talk through ideas and decisions.

Carrying and Transporting Materials

Children are encouraged to roll, lift, drag and to pull materials, either by using their hands or by using ropes. We encourage safe lifting by bending our knees and keeping our back straight. Safe lifting should always be modelled by adults. Heavier objects should be rolled, lifted or carried by more people working together.

Toileting

Children are invited to use the toilets before we leave the school building. Children will be allowed to return to the school building with permission from an adult and younger children will be accompanied. The nearest toilets are to be found in the Foundation area for Foundation children or the Key Stage 1 area for the rest of school.

Leaving the Site

We work according to the ethos 'leave no trace' that we were in the wood as much as is reasonably possible. Shelters should be taken down, imported materials need to be removed. All equipment is carefully counted out and back in again, especially when using tools and tent pegs. Very occasionally large items may be left between sessions. All rubbish will always be removed. If artefacts have been found or made these may be taken off the site with the consent of an adult.

Leaving the ground

An adult must be present when children climb trees or use slack lines in Forest School. The ground cover should be checked for 'sharp objects' and the tree checked as suitable for climbing. A visual check must be made for loose and rotten branches. Children are permitted to explore to their own limits or to a maximum height of 2m. Adults should be

near enough to support if a child should fall but far enough away to not be invasive to the children's exploration.

8. A typical Forest School session

Each Forest School session follows a simple routine. The session starts with participants getting ready to go outside by putting on appropriate clothing suitable for the session and weather conditions. At the start of the session, participants and Leaders sit together and talk about what they did and particularly enjoyed doing at the last session, and what they are planning to do during the current one. We go through rules and routines as required. We usually have a 'Take 5' in the Forest at the beginning of a session, which is used throughout the school. We focus on our breathing and noticing the environment we are in.

Early sessions involve participants getting to know the site and learning basic safety rules. They then move on to more complex and detailed tasks and are given more "free time" for personalised learning.

At the end of each session, participants help Leaders to pack away the tools and materials they have been using and help to return the woodland to the state in which they found it. The group are given time to reflect on the session and return to school uniform.

9. Equipment for Forest School

As our site is a permanent site, we leave all Forest School equipment in the Pond shed, where it is easily accessible for all adults. The main school building is just over 1 minute from the site so emergency procedures for the school can be followed.

There will be tools suited to the planned for activities, along with emergency items such as First Aid kit, burns kits, fire blanket, fire buckets, fire gloves, and an emergency whistle. Other necessary items will vary depending on the time of year and weather conditions, and the planned for activities according to the relevant risk assessments and daily risk assessment.

There are of course also essential items that may be used during the session.

Spare clear plastic bags and bin liners

Wet wipes

Insect repellent (summer)

Sun cream (summer)

Antiseptic hand wash gel

Facial tissues and kitchen towel

Spare clothing- in school

Phone with emergency contact numbers – in school.

Children's medical and contact information- in school

Handbook and emergency procedures in water-proof folder + Risk assessments

Activities equipment may include: Tarpaulins, clips and tent pegs, String and rope, Firestriker / cotton wool / kindling , Work gloves in varying sizes, Pond nets, pond tray, Beads, Wool, ribbon, Charcoal, Scissors, Paint brushes, Wood glue, Masking tape, Cotton sheet Pots for mixing natural dyes, Clay, wooden boards & modelling tools, Sieves, Pestle and mortar, Pots and pans, Bug pots, spoons, ID sheets

Tools: Tool box which is lockable and stored in a locked area may include- Sheath Knives, Bow saws, Loppers, Potato peelers, Mallets, Palm drills, Cordless Drills, Claw hammers, Axe.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Trained and Named Forest School Leader- Gemma Jarvis- is always the person in charge of Forest school sessions.
- The Forest School Leader has overall duty of care for the children in their charge. However all adults involved in the Forest School session are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe.
- All adult helpers MUST sign and date a form to show that they have read and understood this handbook and the risk assessments appropriate to the session in which they are helping.
- A first aid kit will always be in the Forest at every session.
- In the event of an emergency, The Forest Leader will ensure that the School contacts the emergency services.
- The Forest School Leader will review the risk assessments before every trip into the School's Forest Site.
- The Forest School Leader is responsible for the maintenance and checking of all tools and equipment to be used at Forest school, prior to their use.
- The Forest Leader is responsible in training the staff and children in how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately.
- The Forest leader will be responsible for the pre visit check of the Forest School site prior to a Forest School session.

Clothing: It is the adult's responsibility to ensure that children are appropriately dressed for Forest School sessions. Different clothing is needed for different weather conditions and times of year.

Children are asked to wear waterproof clothing and wellington boots but some spares are available in school. It is important that pupils wear clothes that are warm and that are OK to get wet and muddy. In the winter, we may need thermals, hat, scarf and gloves. An old coat is preferable as it may be worn on top of the waterproofs.

In the summer, we may only wear wellies, but children need thin clothing to protect legs and arms from scratches and sunburn. Sun cream, insect repellent, sun hat (and sunglasses if preferred) may all be necessary in warmer months.

Children attend in all weathers, learning that getting wet can be fun, and getting too hot or too cold can be managed. The only concession to the elements is high winds, in case of falling branches or thunderstorms.

Discipline: It is the adult's responsibility to discipline and manage participating pupils and this will follow our school behavior management systems. Alongside the Forest School

Leader, it is good practice for the same staff to attend each of the sessions, to maintain continuity for the children.

Safety and First Aid: The Forest School Leader (Gemma Jarvis) is a qualified outdoor first aider, which will be renewed every 3 years and a first aid kit is available on the site at all times. Other school staff are first aid trained. Activities are thoroughly risk assessed and staff continuously monitor the safety of the group as activities progress. All staff and volunteers have undergone an appropriate selection process to assess their skills and suitability for working with children and have been subject to enhanced DBS.

Cancellation:

It is ultimately up to the executive headteacher, Duncan White, to decide if a Forest School session should be cancelled. This decision can be advised by the Forest School Leader. If the executive headteacher is absent it is then the responsibility of the head of school, Sophie McGuinness.

Circumstances where Forest School would have to be cancelled:

- If no Forest School Leader is present. In this case, outdoor learning sessions could still happen in the woodland area, but Forest School related activities must not take place.
- If child: staff ratios cannot be met.
- In extreme weather conditions (such as strong winds/ thunderstorms).

11. Using and Storing Tools

All tools are counted out and back in at the beginning and end of each session in which they are used. When not in use in the Forest they are kept secured away in a locked tool box, in a locked area. Before each tool is to be used it will be checked for damage and working order. Tools should only be used when the Forest School Leader is present.

Children must never be allowed to help themselves and will always have adult supervision when collecting, transporting and using tools. Tools are only used for a specific purpose. All adults should model correct and safe tool use, storage and transportation at all times. When using a tool, they are used well away from others in the group, (two arm's length and the tool length) and ensuring that others are aware that a tool is in use. Only walking is permitted when transporting a tool.

12. Risk assessments

Risk Assessment Guidelines

A termly risk assessment is undertaken and a daily risk assessment and check is made prior to every Forest School session at our Forest site. In addition, an activity risk assessment will be established prior to any activity that may require it. These will include: whittling, cutting wood, fire lighting and cooking on an open fire, using hammers and using loppers. Specific additional risk assessments will be undertaken for children whose medical condition or whose behaviour requires them.

The risk assessment process is detailed below:

- We look for potential hazards.
- We decide who might be at risk of harm.
- We think about how harm may occur and the worst outcome that we could face.
- We evaluate the current level of risk.
- We decide on a course of action or set of precautions that will be put in place to minimise the potential risk.
- We then re-evaluate the level of risk once our course of action and precautions have been put in place.
- We create a risk assessment and collate them in the Forest School file.
- We inform all adults accompanying the group and require them to sign relevant risk assessments to show that they have read and understood the assessments. Adults must also read and sign this Forest School Handbook.
- We regularly monitor and review each risk assessment.

Forest School site risk assessment

We have a detailed risk assessment for Forest School. This is available from the Forest School leader or the school office. It is regularly updated and checked. We also carry out termly checks on the area to ensure sustainability and have a 3 year sustainability plan to ensure Forest School may continue in the long term. Below is the daily risk assessment carried out prior to each session:

Site Risk Assessment – carried out before each session.								
Hazard/Activity	Persons at Risk	Risk	Control measures in use	Probability-Severity-Rating			Further Action Required?	
				P	S	R	YES	NO
Ground/paths	All	Wet and slippery underfoot, trip hazards, risk of slips and falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children reminded to walk around the site. Remove obvious trip hazards. Model how to negotiate the space safely. <p style="text-align: right;">Highlight the risk to the children.</p>	3	2	6		✓
Canopy	All	Deadwood in trees falling on children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site Assessed on the day to check for any immediate danger. Areas cordoned off if appropriate. 	1	3	3		✓
Shrub	All	Children getting hit with branches on face / in eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind children about being careful when close to trees / branches. Sharp or split branches at eye level removed. 	2	2	4		✓
Field	All	Brambles and nettles scratching and stinging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the different plants with the children. Model moving safely around them. Remove long brambles on pathways. Remove any large patches of nettles. 	2	2	4		✓
Fungi	All	Poison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group to follow no pick, no lick, no squish rules Leader to choose areas without high numbers of fungi Group shown a fungus or pictures of them so they can avoid touching them. Staff / Group to inform leader if they spot any fungi. 	2	3	6		✓
Fauna	All	Faeces, animals posing a threat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check for any animal faeces. Remove if necessary with gloves on. Any animals visible? Any posing a threat? I.e. fox/ cat? Warn children and monitor. 	1	1	1		✓
Litter	All	Cutting hand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove any litter and dispose of in playground bins/ main building. Use gloves to remove litter. 	2	2	4		✓
Fence	All	Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the fence secure? Are any parts broken? Inform children and site manager if required. 	1	2	2		✓
Water	All	Falling into pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the pond area secure? Decking intact etc? Report any damage to site manager and close off area if required. 	2	3	6		✓
Benefits- Development of motor skills. Improved balance. Encourages increased awareness of environment and self within it. Supports awareness of plant identification. Supports awareness of biodiversity of the site.								

Termly checks:

Site Risk Assessment- Termly Checks	
Action	Notes
Compare growth and change (photographs of area). Consider any big changes or issues to note?	
Consider children's spare protective waterproof suits and wellies. Still work? Not torn? Need more?	
Look at the floor and paths- do they need attention?	
Look at listening logs- any repairs needed?	
Look at fire pit - is it safe/ any damage to area? Etc.	
Visit the pond - is it healthy and safe? Check decking is safe etc.	
Visit mud kitchen - is it safe? i.e. no broken containers/ is it being used effectively? Does it need resourcing?	
Storage - are items stored in a tidy manner and in good condition.	
Pond shed - visual check of equipment - e.g. tarpaulins not torn, tent clips in working order, bug hunters clean and unbroken, pond nets not damaged.	
First Aid Kit- check first aid kit. Is all equipment there? Everything in date?	
Tools- Are all tools in good working order?	
Date:	Signed:
	PRINT NAME:

Food safety and cooking procedure:

This procedure has been devised using advice in Preventing Food Poisoning - Good Hygiene at Home published by the Food Standards Agency and 10 Ways to Prevent Food Poisoning on the NHS Choices website.

We will provide hand washing facilities at each session where food and/or drink is prepared and will ensure that all staff, volunteers and participants follow the Forest School food hygiene rules:

When involved in the preparation of food/ drink you should:

- Wash hands before and during cooking.
- Not handle food if they are ill with stomach problems, such as diarrhoea or vomiting.
- Cover sores and cuts with a waterproof dressing.
- Avoid handling food when possible, and instead use spoons, tongs or other suitable implements.
- Tie hair back.
- Keep food that is waiting to be cooked separate from food that is ready to be eaten.
- Use separate chopping boards for preparing different foods, especially raw and ready-to-eat food.
- Prepare food on a suitable surface, e.g. chopping board, cup, saucepan and not on the ground.
- Ensure food is cooked thoroughly before serving. Food should be cooked right through and piping hot in the middle.
- Not reheat food more than once.
- Keep utensils clean and regularly wash tea towels and cloths.

- Store food in clean plastic containers with non-leaking lids.
- Take all rubbish and food scraps away with them at the end of the session to avoid attracting vermin to the site.

Food allergies and special dietary requirements: Parents are asked to state any food allergies and special dietary requirements the children may have on their Admissions forms. This information will be used to plan what food and drink to provide during sessions, ensuring that the food and drink provided is suitable for all. We are a nut free school, so no nut products will be used.

Safe use of tools

General rules to be followed when using tools:

- Tools must only be taken by a child under the permission of a Forest School Leader or allocated adult.
- Tools will be monitored and counted in and out by a responsible adult.
- Hand tools are to be maintained and kept in 'good working order' by the Forest School Leader.
- The Forest School Leader will inspect the tools before use to ensure safety and that the tools are in 'good working order'.
- All children and adults will be taught how to handle tools properly and to treat them with respect.
- Whilst using tools, the staff to child ratio is dependent on the tool in use and the child/children using it. The ratios will vary depending on the group/age/ability/needs of the children.
- Tools will be kept in a tool box and only removed by the Forest School Leader, responsible adult or a child under adult supervision. The toolbox is to be stored in a locked place when not in use.
- No running or pointing with tools.
- The blade guards must be on tools when not in use (bow saw/ sheath knife) and the blades must be closed (Loppers).
- Children must never touch the blades.
- Nothing can be dangling when using tools. It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader or responsible adult to ensure that long hair is tied back, and suitable clothing is worn (no scarves dangling). No gloves to be worn when using tools, unless necessary for helper hand.
- A safe working space must be considered when using tools and tools must be used at least 2 arms and a tool length away from anyone else.
- Children understand when they hear 'tools down' they must safely put down their tools.

The Forest School Leader will decide if the age group/ individual child is ready and safe for using each individual tool, and if it is the correct tool for the job at hand. Children may lose permission to use tools if they do not follow the safety rules.

Tool Talks: will be provided to all that are using tools, prior to them commencing.
This is a useful way to keep health and safety at the forefront of everyone's minds. E.g.

<p>Sheath Knife</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is a sheath knife. ▪ This is the handle. ▪ This is the cover. ▪ I take the cover off like this. ▪ This is the blade. ▪ This is the cutting edge. ▪ When I have finished with the knife, I put the cover back on like this. ▪ I stand with the knife like this. ▪ I walk with the knife like this. ▪ I pass the knife like this. ▪ When I use the knife I use it two arms and a tools length away from anyone except my partner like this. ▪ I use the knife to cut cord and to whittle. ▪ I have bare hands on the tool. ▪ I have a glove on my helper hand. ▪ When I am not using the knife I put it down with the handle facing forwards and the blade facing inwards. ▪ When I have finished with the knife I put it in the designated place or in the toolbox provided. 	<p>Loppers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ These are loppers. ▪ This is the handle. ▪ I take the cover off like this. ▪ This is the blade. ▪ This is the cutting edge. ▪ When I have finished with the loppers, I put the cover back on like this. ▪ I stand with the loppers like this. ▪ I walk with the loppers like this. ▪ I pass the loppers like this. ▪ When I use the loppers I use them two arms and a tools length away from anyone else. ▪ I use the loppers to cut wood thinner than a two pence piece. ▪ I have bare hands on the tool. ▪ When I am not using the loppers I put them down with the handle facing forwards and the blade facing behind me. ▪ When I have finished with the loppers I put them in the designated place or in the toolbox provided. 	<p>Bowsaw</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is a bowsaw. ▪ This is the handle. ▪ This is the cover. ▪ I take the cover off like this. ▪ This is the blade. ▪ This is the cutting edge. ▪ When I have finished with the bowsaw, I put the cover back on like this. ▪ I stand with the bowsaw like this. ▪ I walk with the bowsaw like this. ▪ I pass the bowsaw like this. ▪ When I use the bowsaw I use it two arms and a tools length away from anyone except my partner like this. ▪ I use the bowsaw to cut wood bigger than a two pence piece. ▪ I have bare hands on the tool. ▪ I have a glove on my helper hand. ▪ When I am not using the bowsaw I put it down with the handle facing forwards and the blade facing inwards. ▪ When I have finished with the bowsaw I put it in the designated place or in the toolbox provided.
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13. Fire Safety

As part of the Forest school experience, it is desirable to have an open fire at times within the woodland to allow the children to enhance their learning and development with some risky activities. Encounters with risk help children to manage their coping strategies and discover and explore the world through real experiences.

Fires take place at the fire pit. At least 2m of clear ground is ensured between fire site and seating for learners. When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area immediately surrounding the fire (fire square) without permission. Children can access the fire circle only by using the agreed entrance/ exit. Children are taught to move in a clockwise direction around the fire circle. They must never cross the inner area. The fire will

not be lit with a group until all children have demonstrated that they can use the fire circle in this way. Long sleeves and trousers should be worn. Long hair should be tied back, tassels and ties tucked away and scarves removed. Fires should not be lit close to overhanging branches or on a really windy day. Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire. We aim to sit children away from the smoke (i.e. if it is blowing in a certain direction). A Fire Blanket, glove, bucket of water and Burns Kit must be sited close to the camp fire. Only the Leader is permitted to light fires. This is done using a fire steel or matches, cotton wool and natural materials. The Forest School Leader or designated responsible adult must stay with the fire at all times and must use the respect position (one knee down) by the fire. Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session following the correct procedure - slowly and using water. Warn learners to be careful of steam. Adult to remain at the fire site until cool enough to touch. Ash must be dispersed if there is a significant build up.

14. Health and Safety Policies & Procedures

Holly Primary School sets out clear statements of intent regarding the Whole School's approach to the health and safety of its children, staff and visitors to the School and the School Site. Provided below is a list of additional points and measures which relate directly to our Forest School sessions.

There is always a high adult to participant ratio at Forest School and the Forest School leader will always be present. The high number of adults means that participants can safely experience activities like climbing trees, walking across logs blindfolded, lighting (controlled) fires and using knives that are usually considered too risky in other situations. It also means that adults are able to give individuals one-to-one attention when needed, and to lead small group work.

All activities are thoroughly risk assessed before the start of each session and the Forest School Leader and other adults continue to monitor the safety of the group as activities evolve. There is always a trained first aider present at each session.

During more hazardous activities such as tool use, fire lighting, tree climbing etc., participants are also involved in completing their own dynamic risk assessments throughout the sessions. This gives them ownership of the process and helps them to be aware of, and calculate, the risks involved in each activity. They are asked to state what risks and hazards they should be aware of and what steps they can take to reduce or mitigate them.

Daily procedures

To ensure the safety of children and adults attending Forest School sessions, there are certain checks that need to be made before, during and at the end of each session. It is the Forest School Leader's responsibility to ensure that all checks have been completed. This daily health and safety checklist provides a reminder of all daily procedures. This must be used each day.

Pre-session.

- Run through the site risk assessment and amend/update as necessary.
- Ensure risk assessments are completed for all activities and staff have read.

- Check that all vital Forest School safety equipment is available e.g. First aid kit in date and all available, Fire safety equipment all available if having a fire etc.
- Check you have all the materials and resources needed for the activities you have planned.
- Check that all tools you are planning to use are in good working order.

At the start of the session

- Remind children about physical boundaries (use visual cues when needed) and that they must stay within these. In the first sessions, and at the beginning of each session it may be beneficial to play a game to reinforce this.
- Remind children how they should behave and how to stay safe on site (see site risk assessment).
- Explain the need for, and principles of, fire safety.

Throughout the session

- Be vigilant.
- Remind children of how to stay safe by highlighting potential hazards (see individual activity risk assessments), reminding them of the boundaries and asking that they make an adult aware of any possible hazards that they spot.
- Carry out regular head counts at the start of activities and throughout sessions.
- Take photos and make observations of individual children.
- Use de-escalating techniques whenever possible when dealing with behavioural issues.

At the end of the session

- Count and pack up all equipment.
- Count and pack up all resources.
- Clear fire area and make safe. Remove ash and cover over the site of fire.
- Remove any litter.
- Evaluate the session.
- Carry out a final head count and escort the group back to the school.

Ambulance procedure

We will follow the school's ambulance procedure as set out in the Medicines and First Aid Policy.

Missing person procedure

The following procedure should be instigated and followed by the Forest School Leader responsible for a group in the event of any person (adult or child) going missing from the Forest School group.

- Carry out 1, 2, 3 routine. This signals that everyone should return to the adult.
- Conduct a head count to check that all other members of the group are present.
- Contact SLT and the school office via walkie talkies to alert them to the fact that there is a missing person.
- Have two members of staff or volunteers stay with the group at the Forest School circle and await further instructions.

- Check the school gate is secure and therefore the missing person should still be in the school grounds.
- A minimum of 2 members of SLT will then sweep the school in alternate directions to meet in the middle. Any staff member who knows the site can also be recruited to help this search.
- If the missing person is not found, then with SLT consent, contact the police. The decision may be made to do this while the search is in progress depending on circumstances. At this point, a decision will need to be made regarding the rest of the group, in consultation with the SLT. It is likely that once they have changed out of their waterproofs, it will be best for the children to return to normal lessons. Areas for search:
 - All outside fields and areas.
 - The school car park
 - Toilets within school
 - All classrooms and cloakrooms in school
 - The school hall.

Fire procedure

- In the event of a fire that cannot be put out quickly and safely by the Forest School Leader, blow repeated long whistles to alert the group.
- Gather everyone together, conduct a head count and evacuate area to a safe location – Hard Court meeting point in case of fire.
- Alert SLT and then follow school's Fire Procedure.

Engendering responsibility: Through practicing the established routines, the children at Forest School will be able to enforce/remind others how to behave. Peers expect responsible behaviour and to a degree will be self-policing.

Toilet and shelter facilities at Forest School

There are no toilets within the woodland area. Children attending Forest School sessions will be asked to go to the toilet before they leave the school building. Young children who need the toilet will be accompanied back into the school building by an adult to use the toilet facilities. Older children may go to the toilet with permission from an adult as the school building remains in sight of the Forest area. Foundation children will use the Foundation toilets and others will use KS1 toilets.

Our site has the summerhouse which can be used as a shelter and the construction building to shelter from rain and snow. In case of inclement weather, shelters can be provided within the woodland area. This will consist of one or more securely fixed tarpaulins which will provide shade in the summer months and protection from wind, rain and snow in the winter.

Litter and Waste Water Procedure.

Please See Forest School Waste Disposal Policy

15. Safeguarding Children, Confidentiality and Forest School

Everyone at Holly Primary School has a responsibility in relation to child protection. Please see our Child Protection Policy.

In addition, adults working within Forest School need to appreciate that when children feel comfortable and content, when their instinct to trust and risk take is encouraged, they may be moved to disclose information which they might have otherwise kept to themselves. Any volunteer, or member of staff, who finds that a child is telling them something that concerns them should follow the course of action set out below in simple steps:

- Listen to the pupil but ask NO leading questions. Allow the child to lead the discussion but do not press for details.
- Keep calm and offer reassurance. Accept what the child says without challenge.
- Make NO promises. You cannot 'keep a secret'. You should make it understood that there are limits to confidentiality at the start of the disclosure.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead- Duncan White.
- Keep an accurate, written record of the conversation, including the date, the time, the place the conversation occurred in and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. Keep the record secure and hand it to the DSL.

16. Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Forest School

Holly Primary School is committed to giving each child every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual children or groups of children. We aim to provide all our children with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. Please see our Equality Policy.

Forest School does mean Forest School FOR ALL. We do have a stock of some spare all weather clothing but ask that both parents and children think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities, and to be aware that they are likely to take home muddy and wet clothes after a Forest School session. We encourage a level of risk-taking, always under close adult supervision, and actively foster friendships and collaboration between all children and adults. Forest School activities are always designed to produce success and enjoyment, even when this appears to be of a transitory nature. The Forest environment is an environment to which we are all entitled and we strongly believe that the experiences we will have there will linger in the memory for years to come. Children with medical needs or disabilities will be helped so that they can take part fully in each Forest School session. Those children with challenging behaviour will be risk assessed and may need one to one supervision, but their entitlement to participate in Forest School remains the same.

17. Designated Person Responsibilities

Forest School Leader: Gemma Jarvis

Forest School Assistant- Claire Jackson

First Aider 1: Gemma Jarvis First Aider 2: Claire Jackson

Additional First Aiders within school staff.

Designated Safeguarding Lead- Duncan White

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead- Sophie McGuinness

18.Helper Agreement

I have read and understood all that is stated in this handbook and had the opportunity to have any questions answered about its contents or my role. I understand that the Forest Leader is in charge of the activities within the session, and have read the relevant risk assessment for the activities to take place during my session. I have provided my medical and emergency details to the school.

Print:

Signed:

Dated: