

Forest School Handbook

Mrs Davies



"Where every child is given: The courage to try, the resilience to keep on trying, the freedom to explore and the compassion to care."

Swallowfield Primary School



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Vision Statement

Where every child is given: The courage to try, the resilience to keep on trying, the freedom to explore and the compassion to care.

What is Forest School?

Forest School means many things to many people. The Forest School Association defines it as "an inspirational process that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees." (Forest School Association 2020). It is a specialised learning approach that has the learner at the centre, whatever their age.

The Forest School helps to develop self-esteem, independence and confidence through outdoor child-led play in nature. Forest School takes a holistic approach to learning and development and offers a mixture of learning the skills of problem solving and creativity as well as some more specific bush craft style skills (e.g. knot tying, tree climbing, fire lighting and tool use). At Forest School we foster a deep connection and love of nature, through play and observations through the seasons. The children are given time and space to explore and discover things for themselves. Our sessions are child-led and designed to meet the needs of individuals to ensure that children grow in self-confidence, as well as developing their physical, emotional, cognitive and social skills.

The Forest School ethos and principles

The Forest School ethos has 6 principles (reviewed in 2011 and published by the Forest School association <https://www.forestschoollassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/>) and these are:

- FS is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visit; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.
- FS takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
- FS uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.
- FS aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

- FS offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
- FS is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice

More details about the Forest School ethos and the 6 Forest School principles can be found here:

<https://www.forestscholassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/>

Our aim is to advance the education, and promote the wellbeing of children in a safe, secure and stimulating outdoors environment.

Sessions that are planned around the individual's and group's needs, and built upon each week.

All Forest School Leaders are qualified through nationally recognised and accredited training, therefore ensuring Forest School is a high quality learning experience. Sessions will initially concentrate on safety; establishing boundaries and routines and allowing time for the children to become comfortable and confident in the setting. As the children develop in confidence and familiarity with the environment the sessions focus on developing and reinforcing skills, promoting nature connection and developing relationships within the group.

Communication with all stakeholders

We believe that communication is key. The more people know the better their understanding and safety for all involved.

School Setting:

- **Class Teachers** - The Forest School leader is responsible for evaluating each session and feeding this information back to the Class Teacher where relevant. Any behavioural issues will be dealt with by the Forest School leader but fed back to the Class Teacher for their information.
- **Site Manager** - The Forest School leader will inform the Site Manager of any hazards or concerns about the Forest School site. The Forest School leader will inform the Site Manager when a fire is to be lit in Forest School. The Forest School leader will confirm Fire Safety arrangements with the Site Manager. The Site Manager will communicate any hazards on the site or around the perimeter before a session commences. The Site Manager is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Forest School site and its perimeter.
- **Head Teacher** - The Forest School leader will regularly update the Head Teacher on the progress of the Forest School sessions and will ensure the safety and well-being of the children at all times.
- **Helpers/Assistants** - The Forest School leader will introduce themselves to any helpers or assistants before the sessions begin. An overview of the ethos of Forest School will follow, and the Handbook will be given to them for their perusal. The helper/assistant will be responsible for acquainting themselves with the procedures and protocol in the Handbook, and will sign to confirm that they understand their roles and responsibilities. The Forest School leader will familiarise the helper/assistant with the planning for the session ahead. The helper/assistant will feed any observations back to the Forest School leader at the end of the session so that planning for the next session can be informed.
- **Parents/Carers** - The Forest School leader will send letters to parents/carers of children who it is felt would benefit from participating in Forest School sessions. This letter will inform them of the benefits of Forest School learning and why the school feels that it is an important aspect of our school curriculum. It will detail the sorts of activities the children will take part in. The letter will also outline the necessity of providing appropriate clothing and footwear for these sessions. Parents who require further information will be invited to contact the Forest School Leader, who will happily provide this. Parents will be asked to sign and return a consent form giving specific consent for their child to take part in the Forest School sessions.
- **Wider school community** - Regular updates and interesting stories and pictures will disseminate using school newsletters.

History of Forest School Area being used

Forest School at Swallowfield Primary School

Forest School is new to Swallowfield Primary School. A site has been decided and a plan for developing the areas has been created.

Site



Forest School Rules

- Look after your Forest School. Forest school is for all, look after the natural environment Flora and Fauna.
- Do not pick anything growing unless it is a prepared activity.
- Do not put your fingers or anything else in your mouth. Wash hands before eating.
- Stay within the boundary, we don't go over it we don't go under it, we stay inside.
- Nettles and brambles- don't go near them.
- Flickety branches- help you friend with these.
- Fire circle- do not walk into the fire circle, only adults touch the fire.
- We must look after each other. Treat others how you want to be treated
- We must look after ourselves.
- We must listen to rules they are for everyone.
- If an adult calls '123, where are you' you must call back so we know where you are answer 'Here I am'
- We will respect the environment around us
- Habitats must be left how you found them

Picking up and playing with sticks

- Children will be allowed to carry sticks but are made aware of how close they are to other children.
- Longer sticks/logs must be dragged or carried with a hand at both ends. Any stick longer than their arm must always have one end touching the ground when moving.
- Sticks must not be thrown, nor should children be allowed to pull them from living trees
- Sticks must not be pointed at any other child's face or body
- Sticks must be held with one thumb (a cap) on one end of the stick

Climbing

- Make sure you check the branch before you stand on it.
- Climb on branches thicker than your arm.
- Only climb as high as you can reach
- If you feel unsure then stop.
- Three points must be on the tree at all times.
- If you get tired come down or rest.

The Countryside Code

There are five sections of The Countryside Code dedicated to helping us learn how to respect, protect and enjoy the countryside.

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

Forest School Routine

Forest School is carried out with an adult to child ratio of at least 1:15, but additional adult support will be provided where appropriate for children who have disability or SEN needs. When using tools, a definitive adult to child ratio is determined. A separate activity risk assessment will be carried out for each activity, when any hazards associated with that activity are at risk of causing harm, ratios for each activity will be determined by the type of activity, the competence of the children and the level of risk involved. All Forest School leaders are first aid trained along with some of the additional Forest School assistants. All staff and adults involved in Forest Schools, are required to sign and date a form to show that they have read this handbook, appropriate risk assessments and understand how to comply with the safety guidelines.

Before each session:

- A thorough sweep of the site to check for any animal faeces, litter, glass etc. Any items should be collected using plastic bags and disposable gloves.
- Trees to be checked for any deadwood, broken branches that could fall and cause injury.
- Weather conditions will be checked. If there is high winds or thunderstorms, then Forest School will have to be cancelled.
- All sweeps will be written down and recorded including how the hazard was dealt with.

Sessions Routine:

- Put on appropriate Forest School clothing in the classroom.
- Walk to Forest School entrance.
- Use 'Sticky Elbows' to count the children in.
- Children to carry out a site sweep to do their own risk assessment and return to base camp to discuss how they will manage the risks.
- Mindfulness activity
- Children to be introduced to a new activity, if appropriate they will be shown where the activity will take place. Range of activities that were previously available still offered.
- Snack- hot chocolate and a biscuit
- End with a game e.g. 1,2,3 where are you? I'm over here!
- Back to base camp to reflect on forest school session.
- Return to classroom

Procedures to be carried out at the end of every session:

- Count equipment back in
- Clear everything away so site looks like it did when you started the session.
- Feedback with staff- observations to be shared with class teacher/ parents. Ideas discussed for next session.

Legislation and Health & Safety Procedures

Children Act 1989

The Act brings together most private and public law about children in one single paper. Some key areas include:

- Ratios for off-site activities
- Equal Opportunities
- Communication with parents
- Police Checks - (DBS) for staff & volunteers Equality Act 2010 Protected characteristics, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religious belief, sex and sexual orientation

Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

- An attempt to provide a comprehensive system of law, covering the health and safety of people at work
- The objectives are to raise the standards of safety and health for all persons at work
- The safety of all equipment used in the workplace
- The protection of the client group whose safety & health may be put at risk by the activities of the persons at work
- It is a criminal offence not to comply with its provisions

The health and safety of all participants is central to everything we do within a Forest School programme. Forest School sessions will consider the responsibilities to maintain the Health and Safety of; all adults working in the area in line with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974; all children working in the area under the Children's Act 1989 and seek to ensure the Every Child Matters values are upheld.

The main considerations relevant to Forest School sessions are detailed below:

- All adults will be asked to read the Forest School Handbook at the beginning of the session. The Risk Assessment section will be highlighted to all.
- A Safety sweep will be carried out by the Forest School Leader at the start of any session. Any changes from the general risk assessments will be recorded and adults informed.
- Children will complete their own safety sweep at the beginning of any session.
- All people attending Forest School sessions must wear appropriate clothing to enable them to carry out the Forest School activities safely- see Forest School Kit list
- Adults will be informed of activities planned for the session and inform them of any specific safety instructions.

- Any accidents and incidents will be recorded and reviewed to determine whether they could have been avoided and appropriate changes made to procedures/ policies if necessary.
- Forest School Leader is a qualified First Aider- A first aid kit will be on site and first-aid will be administered when needed. All incidents recorded and teacher/ parents informed at the end of the session. In the event of more serious incidents see 'Emergency Procedures' section of Handbook.
- All adults supporting sessions are asked to actively manage risks by reporting or removing them when possible or safe to do so.
- Forest School leaders and volunteers should be aware of the relevant policies and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them

Insurance Requirements

The Children Act 2004 and the Health and Safety Work Act 1974 place a number of legal responsibilities on the school. Swallowfield Lower School has insurance cover appropriate to its duties under this legislation, including Employer's and Public Liability Insurance. Responsibility will in most cases rest with the school, but staff will take reasonable care, both for themselves and other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

Insurance

Insurer: Aspen Insurance UK Ltd

Policy Number: IOA4WX223AOY/ 10A4WX223BOY

Policy Period: 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

We are committed to equal opportunities for all and we wish to provide an environment in which people feel equally valued. We promote the individuality of all, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. We will adapt activities to ensure that everyone can participate, where necessary will seek expert advice to allow us to fully support children with additional needs of any nature.

Safeguarding

All staff are trained in Safeguarding and will follow the school policy in reporting any concerns.

Links to School Policies

All of our School Policies can be found via this website link:

<https://swallowfieldprimary.com/policies/>

Our School Policies are:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Bereavement and Loss Policy
- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Child on child abuse Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality Objectives under the Equality Act 2010-Equality Policy 2023
- Educational Visits and Journeys Policy Documents from Central Beds
- GDPR- Data Protection Policy and Regulation
- Heat-Wave Assessment
- Pupil Premium Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy- Safer Recruitment
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2022-23
- Sun Protection Policy 2023-24
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy 2022-23

Essential Equipment

- Register with emergency numbers/ contact details
- Medical forms
- Container for inhalers/ epipens
- Charged mobile phone/ Walkie Talkie
- Newspaper (session depending)
- Matches (session depending)
- Wet wipes
- Protective gloves
- Suncream
- First Aid kit including plasters and bandages
- Scissors
- Water bottle with water for drinking/ washing
- Sleeping bag/survival bag
- Thermal wrap sheet
- Map of woodland/ area
- Pamphlet on hypothermia and first aid
- Carrier bags for dirty/wet clothes

Forest School Kit

- Emergency rucksack with essential equipment
- Trugs x4
- Treasure baskets x 10
- Bug pots x10
- Buckets x10
- Small spades x10
- Soft toys x10
- RSPB birds
- Tarpaulin
- Hay twine

Other resources: Cake cups, double sided sticky tape, dulux paint strips, charcoal, different sized paintbrushes, egg boxes, water, ID charts, Flora/ Fauna resource, magnifiers, binoculars, pourers, pots, pans, parachutes, guttering, spades, forks, pallets, hammock, rope

Tools: bow saw, hammers, loppers, peelers, pen knives, palm drill, log bench, fire pit, gloves

What to Wear

Forest School Clothing guide:

"There is no such thing as bad weather, just unsuitable clothing!"

Parents/carers - We value and recognise the effort it takes to ensure your child comes prepared, so that they can get the most out of Forest School sessions. In particular, this means making sure they are appropriately dressed. It can be hard to predict just how many layers a child will need but it is always colder in the shaded woods. Please see below for our recommendations. Your other crucial role is to embrace the mud! Please do not send your child in their best clothes as they will almost certainly get dirty during the session!

Layers!

- THE best way to keep warm.
- add one more than you think

(We can always remove a layer but once cold, it can be hard to warm up)

Waterproof trousers

- Essential!
- Standard 'thin' pair in summer for protection
- Ski trousers ideal in winter OR extra layer under trousers
- All-in-ones not advised for potty/toilet users

Trousers

- Full length for protection
- Extra pair of leggings/tights/thermals under normal trousers in cold weather

Warm socks

- Wellies get very cold!
 - Extra pair of wool/ fleece/ fluffy socks inside wellies
- (Normal socks in wellies are not warm enough for cooler weather)

Waterproof coat

- Preferably with a hood
- Thick and warm in winter (or use an extra fleece layer)

Warm hat

- Preferably covering ears.

Mittens/Gloves

- Thermal and waterproof

(Knitted gloves get damp and do not keep little hands warm enough during the colder months. Don't worry about mittens limiting finger movement as the cold is much more limiting!)

Tops

- ALWAYS long sleeves (to minimize risk from stinging nettles and biting insects etc)
- At least 3 layers under coat in winter

(eg. top, jumper, fleece and coat, or 'base layer', top, warm jumper and coat)

Waterproof boots

- Wellies are essential!

(Alternatives include snow boots and walking boots)

Please Note! In summer, wellies, waterproof trousers and light long sleeves are still essential, to protect from thorns, nettles, ticks, insect bites etc. Please also send a sunhat in hot weather, particularly for the walk to and from the site.

- An emergency change of clothes will be provided by Forest School and carrier bags for dirty/wet clothing.

Weather Policies

Sun Policy:

Every care is taken to ensure that children are not over exposed to the sun; we work in partnership with parents to facilitate this.

- To protect children from the sun we ask parents/carers to provide a sun hat for use during the Forest School session.
- Notice will be taken of maximum exposure times during weather forecasts
- For unaccompanied sessions we require parents/child to apply high factor sunscreen before the Forest School session.
- Play activities are monitored, and water bottles made accessible, to ensure that children have periods of time in areas of shade to prevent them becoming overheated or dehydrated.

Travel Policy

The children will be informed of where they will be going before leaving the classroom. The children will leave their classrooms and will walk across the playground to our Forest School Site. Children will be reminded of school rules of walking quietly when passing other classes. Children who require 1:1 support will be assisted by their key worker.

Accidents Minor and Major

Within the Health and Safety briefing at the beginning of a FS session the children will be informed of action they should take if they feel ill or have an accident. Only First aid trained staff can administer first aid.

The Forest School Leader will:

- Check medical spreadsheet for children- make adults aware of any child with allergies/ asthma.
- Ensure medical/inhaler box is taken onto Forest School site. Ensure emergency inhaler is taken onto Forest School site
- A fully stocked first aid kit on site at all times.
- A certified first aider is on site at all times.
- A charged walkie talkie and a fully charged mobile phone is taken onto the Forest School site during all sessions. Check that mobile phone has appropriate signal in the Forest School site.
- Ensure insect bites are recorded and information given to teacher passed onto parent/carer.

Any accidents will be recorded in Medical Log Book. Child's full name, time of incident, what happened and treatment given must be recorded. Any head injury child to be stickered with 'I bumped my head' sticker and accident note filled in. Class Teachers to be informed of any accidents so that parents can be informed.

Major Accident:

- Forest School Leader to call 999 and administer appropriate first aid.
- Other adults to get the children to Base Camp and then an organised return back to classroom.
- Adult 1 Walkie Talkie the school office to raise the alarm. Office to contact parents of child).
- Adult 2- go to school gate and open it ready to direct the ambulance.

Any major incident must be recorded on the Major Incident Form (logged on CPOMS) and reported to the county.

Medical and Emergency Contact Details

Name of First Aider:

Location:

Contact Phone Number:

Form to be completed for any adults/ children on site.

Child's Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Contact Name and Relationship to child	
Home Address	
Phone Numbers	Home Work Mobile
Doctor	Address Phone

Has your child had any of the following?

Illness	Comment	Medication Needed Please specify
Asthma/ Bronchitis		
Sight/ hearing difficulties		
Heart condition		
Diabetes		
Epilepsy		
Allergies: e.g. pollen, nuts, materials		
Have you ever been stung by a wasp or bee? If yes, describe the reaction		
Date if last tetanus injection		

Emergency Procedure

A copy to be laminated and attached to Emergency Rucksack

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Setting Phone Number: 01908 582101

Postcode: MK17 8SR

What 3 Words: clouds.strumming.teams

- Forest School Leader to call 999 and administer appropriate first aid.
- Other adults to get the children to Base Camp and then an organised return back to classroom.
- Adult 1 Walkie Talkie the school office to raise the alarm. Office to contact parents of child).
- Adult 2- go to school gate and open it ready to direct the ambulance.

Risk Assessments

Risk is an essential element to a child's development. Every activity with a risk carries a benefit to a child.

The risk assessment will be reviewed termly and signed and dated by the Forest School Leader.

Risk/ Hazard	Risk Benefit	Frequency	Who is at Risk?	High/med / low	Manage the Risk
Travelling to site Walking, slip, trip, fall	Exercise Orientation of area	Every session	All	Low	Children reminded to walk in a line to the site. Children to stay behind the forest school leader
Brambles on site and around the boundary	Being aware and taking care when in nature	Every session	All	Low	Cut back regularly All warned of tripping hazards All warned of risk of catching on clothes
Fungi on Site Various different type of fungi	Learning about plants, understanding no lick, no pick rules, investigating the environment.	Every session	All	Low	Fungi identified and information shared with the children. No picking rule shared at the beginning of every session. Forest School Leader to check in safety sweep at the start of every session.
Uneven surfaces/ logs etc- tripping hazards	Being aware of where they are walking. Gross motor control of negotiating uneven surfaces	Every session	All	Med	Rules of Forest School shared with children- not to run Remind children to look where they are walking. Make them aware on the site where tripping hazards are when doing safety sweep.
Pond- potential drowning	Learning about nature, what lives in a pond. Understanding dangers with water.	Every session	All	High	Pond area fenced off. Children to be made aware of potential hazards. Rules shared of only being near it with designated adult.

Poisonous plants- berries, fungi, lords and ladies, deadly nightshade, Ragwort.- touching them and then touching mouth	Aware of dangers in nature.	Every session	All	High	Start of every sessions children reminded of FS rules- no licking, no picking, not putting hands in mouth. Hazards identified in safety sweep- ch and adults made aware. Wash hands before touching food/ drinks.
Bees and Wasps- bee allergies,	Being aware and taking care	Every Sessions Especially Spring and Summer months	All Person with allergy	H	Check for allergic reactions on medial forms- have any medication on site in medical bag. Make children aware of them and what to do when near- stay still Make children aware of the common time of year when bees and wasps are out.
Base Camp- falling of wooded stumps, head/ limb injury	Gross motor development Awareness of self and surroundings.	Every session	All	Low	Children reminded that the stumps are for sitting on. Children to check stumps to see if they are slippery on safety sweep.
Collecting Materials- trip/fall, head/limb injury	Learning about plants, understanding no lick, no pick rules, investigating the environment.	Every session	All	Low	Make adults and children aware of possible dangers. Rule no licking, no picking.
Climbing Trees- swinging/ climbing on low branches of trees	Gross motor development Awareness of others and surroundings. Learning about dangers.	Every session	All	Med	Rules explained to children that you should not climb higher than a grown up. Adult supervision At the start of session remind children of risk and how they can manage them.
Den Building- erection of	Gross and Fine motor	Planned sessions	all	Med	All loose ropes tied out of children's way and adults

tarpaulin: tripping over guide ropes, adults walking into guide ropes at head height	development. Awareness of others and surroundings Knot skills				made aware of guide ropes at head height. Safety talks to all. Tarpaulin erected dismantled by Forest School Leader- children can join in with guided support.
Den Building-sticks: poking stick in eye, sticks falling on head, scratching hands, poked/scratched by stick.	Gross Motor development. Listening to others/ teamwork Awareness of others and surroundings	Planned sessions	All	Med	FS lead to guide children in which trees are safe to use. Safety talks to all children Supervision from FS leader to monitor the development of the den. FS lead to check den before children go inside.
Mud Digging- small tool use, tripping over tools, poking in eye, water making ground slippery.	Gross motor development Awareness or self and others Awareness of surroundings	Every session	All	Low	Supervision from FS leader or supporting adults. Demonstration of safe tool use when digging.
Mud Painting- flicking of mud into face or eye. Eye injury	Gross and Fine Motor development. Awareness of others and surroundings Exploring mark making	Planned sessions	All	Low	Supervision from FS leader or supporting adults. Reminder of how to use safely before children use.
123 Where are you- lost children, slip, trips and falls	Listening skills Gross Motor development Awareness of others and surroundings	Every session	All	Med	Forest School Rule reminder at beginning of the session. Supervision from all adults.
Stick Weaving- poking sticks in eyes/ other body parts, scratching	Gross and Fine motor control. Awareness of others and surroundings	Planned sessions	All	Med	Adults will cut string using scissors when asked by the child. Awareness talks. Stick safety talks- drag large sticks on the floor behind them and small

hands on sticks, falling over sticks, falling onto sticks	<i>Perseverance</i>				sticks carried pointing to the ground. No running with sticks. Monitor children's ability to weave.
Making bird's nests out of sticks, leaves and moss-poking sticks in face, scratching hands on sticks, falling over onto sticks	<i>Gross and fine motor development. Awareness of habitats. Awareness of others and surroundings.</i>	Planned sessions	all	Med	Supervision from designated staff on activity. Safety Talks. Stick safety talks- drag large sticks on the floor behind them and small sticks carried pointing to the ground. No running with sticks.
Bat and Ball stung between two trees- being hit with a bat, adults walking into the rope	<i>Gross motor development, hand eye co-ordinations. Awareness of others and surroundings.</i>	Planned session	All	M	Zone area so children know the activity is happening. Only children participating in activity allowed in the zone. Start of session share rules with children. Children with bats opposite sides to one another.
Erecting a tent- poking eye with poles, hitting hand/ fingers with a mallet.	<i>Gross and fine motor development. Awareness of others. Safely using a tool.</i>	Planned session	All	M	Forest School Leader to lead the activity. 1:1 when using a mallet. Children not involved in activity told to keep a metre away to reduce risk of being hit in eye with a pole.

Tool Use Risk Assessment

General Rules for Tool Use:

- All tools must have an individual risk assessment-see below.
- Ensure safe storage in a locked cupboard at school with nominated Forest School Leader access and responsibility.
- Ensure safe storage and responsibility by Forest School Leader at the Forest School site.
- Never walk around tools.
- Always make sure they are clean and sharp before using them.
- When using tools with children it should only be with the Forest School Leader.
- When using tools you have a designated tool area where you and the children sit when using the tool.

Risk/ Hazard	Risk Benefit	Frequency	Who is at Risk?	Low/ Med/ High	Manage the Risk
Whittling with Potato peelers-cutting skin	Learning new skills. Fine Motor Development Learning how to be inventive & resourceful Learning how to use tools safely and follow rules.	Planned session	Tool users	Med	Create a designated tools area. Every child with a tool will have a blood circle around them - for younger children create with sticks. Seat in the middle of the blood circle. Demonstrate how to use tools. 1:1 supervision. Tool safety and rules demonstrated and enforced.
Whittling with pen knives-cuts/ stab wounds	Learning new skills. Learning how to be inventive & resourceful Learning how to use tools safely and follow rules.	Planned session	Tool users	High	Create a designated tools area. Every child with a tool will have a blood circle around them - for younger children create with sticks. Seat in the middle of the blood circle. Demonstrate how to use tools. 1:1 supervision.

					Tool safety and rules demonstrated and enforced.
Using a Bill Hook- deep cuts that may require hospital treatment.	Learning new skills. Learning how to be inventive & resourceful Learning how to use tools safely and follow rules.	Planned session	Tools users	H	Create a designated tools area. Every child with a tool will have a blood circle around them - for younger children create with sticks. Seat in the middle of the blood circle. Demonstrate how to use tools. Explaining each step (see tool use powerpoint) 1:1 supervision. Tool safety and rules demonstrated and enforced.
Using a drill-cuts	Learning new skills. Hand eyeco-ordination. Learning how to be inventive & resourceful Learning how to use tools safely and follow rules.	Planned session	Tool users	H	Create a designated tools area. Every child with a tool will have a blood circle around them - for younger children create with sticks. Seat in the middle of the blood circle. Demonstrate how to use tools. Explaining each step (see tool use powerpoint) 1:1 supervision. Tool safety and rules demonstrated and enforced.
Using a saw- deep cuts that may require hospital treatment.	Learning new skills. Gross motor development. Learning how to be inventive &	Planned session	Tool users	H	Create a designated tools area. Every child with a tool will have a blood circle around them - for younger children create with sticks. Seat in the

	resourceful Learning how to use tools safely and follow rules.				middle of the blood circle. Demonstrate how to use tools. Explaining each step (see tool use powerpoint) 1:1 supervision. Tool safety and rules demonstrated and enforced.
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Tool Use and Care

Potato Peeler:

- Always wear a glove on the hand that is not using the tool.
- Make sure there is a 'Blood Bubble' around every person using the tool.
- Only to be used in the designated tool area.
- Only use the tool whilst sitting. Use the peeler away from your body. Legs should be apart and elbows on your knees or use it to the side of your legs and body.

Tool Care:

- Clean in the dishwasher
- Always store in a locked tin.

Penknife:

- Make sure you wear a glove on the hand not using the tool.
- Penknife to be locked open when using and locked closed when not in use.
- Penknife can only be used in the designated tool area.
- Unsure blood bubble is around each person using the penknife.
- Sit down to use the tool with legs apart and elbows resting on your knees. Always use the tool away from your body.

Tool Care:

- Every time you use it you must clean it.
- To clean- sandpaper the back of the blade away from you. Sharpen using sharpener on a flat surface.
- Always lock pen knife open or closed.
- At the beginning and end of the session count how many tools are out and put back away.
- Always store pen knives in a locked tin.
- Penknife can be carried by forest school lead in a zipped pocket when it is locked closed.

Bill Hook

- The bill hook may only be used in the tool area making sure there is space around you.
- Always use on a flat surface.
- The Forest School leader will hold the Bill Hook on the log whilst kneeling. The student will be at a 90-degree angle from the lead with the whacker.
- The Forest School lead will give the instruction of either whack or hit to let the child know how hard they need to hit the Bill Hook.

Tool Care:

- After every use sharpen the Bill Hook using a sharpening stone. Making sure you are facing it away from you.
- Put WD40 onto a cloth a wipe the blade away from you.
- Once cleaned put the cover back on and store in your tool bag in the Tool Area.
- Always count out and back in the tools you are using.

Bowsaw

- Always wear a glove on your non tool hand.
- Always use the Bowsaw in the designated tool area.
- Forest school leader to be the opposite side to side to student using the sawhorse. One foot to be resting on the sawhorse. Gloved hand to be holding the log.
- Student to be holding the handle of the saw whilst leader holds the opposite end. Their gloved hand will be holding their knee.
- Use a push movement with the saw. As you push towards the student they will say their name and as it comes back to you, you will say your name.

Tool Care

- Clean every time you use the saw.
- Spray WD40 onto the cloth and wipe the blade clean by wiping away from you.
- Put pipe lagging over the blade and secure into place with string.
- Store the saw in a locked bag.
- Sign in and out the tools when using them.
- When the saw blade is blunt throw it away and replace with a new one.

Camp Fire Risk Assessment

- A fire circle will be created in Base Camp. Children will sit 1.5 metres away from the fire. Children can only come into the fire circle once invited.
- Around the fire basket a square out of sticks that cannot roll will be constructed.
- All equipment needed (gloves, bucket of water, ladder of wood and a pokey stick) set up.
- Once the fire is lit the Forest School leader will never leave it.
- The flame of the fire as high as your knee. To control the flame use your pokey stick to spread it out and then add a big log on top.

Risk/ Hazard	Risk Benefit	Frequency	Who is at Risk?	Low/med /high	Manage the Risk
Using a Kelly Kettle- fire spreading, burns	Learning survival skills. How to control risk safely. Respect for nature.	Planned sessions	FS lead	H	Fire circle around Kelly Kettle. FS leader to man fire at all times. Drinks to be poured in Fire Circle away from younger children. Awareness and safety talks Monitor surrounds
Creating a fire surround- banging hands/ fingers with mallet	Awareness of tool safety Hand- eye coordination development.	Planned sessions	FS lead Child using tool	M	Children to help design the fire surround. Awareness talks. Monitor surrounds. 1:1 support by FS lead when using a mallet Other children 1 metre away when tools in use.
Fire- burns,	Learn survival skills. How to control risk safely. How to be resourceful. Respect for natural resources	Planned sessions		H	All fire building is carried out by the FS leader unless it is an activity. Only when the FS leader is confident and the adult to child ratio is 1 adult to 2 participants. All leaders will be trained in fire building safety measures and understand the policies and procedures.
Hot food- children	Learn survival skills. How to	Planned sessions	FS lead	M	Ensure children blow hot food and check it carefully before putting it to their mouth (e.g.

burn mouth or hands	control a risk safely		Any person eating		marshmallows, dampner bread they have cooked themselves). Food cooked by the adults (e.g. jacket potatoes, bananas and chocolate) are passed to the children only when cool enough to eat. All staff to check. Leader is responsible
Hot drinks- scald to mouth or hands	Learn survival skills. How to control a risk safely	Planned sessions	Any person drinking	M	Hot drinks, such as hot chocolate or hot juice, are cooled before handing to the children. Children to blow on drink before sipping carefully to check temperature. All staff to check. Leader is responsible.

Foods that can be Cooked on a Camp Fire

Always check for allergies before any session. The Forest School Leader is responsible for all cooking undertaken at Forest School.

Popcorn- choking hazard to under 5's.

- 2 sieves together to hold the corn over the fire. Fire gloves must be always worn. Forest School leader to be responsible.

Marshmallows (smores) - choking hazard to under 5's

- Burn tip of stick to clean it.
- Place marshmallow on the stick and place in the fire until you are happy with the temperature.
- Take it out and blow on it. Then sit down and blow on it for 20 seconds.
- Use two biscuits to pull it off the stick and then enjoy!
- Never put the stick in your mouth.

Brioche Bun

- Burn tip of stick to clean it.
- Place brioche bun on the stick and place in the fire until you are happy with the temperature.
- Take it out and blow on it. Then sit down and blow on it for 20 seconds.
- Never put the stick in your mouth.

Baked Potato

- Wrap a small potato in two layers of tin foil.
- Place the potatoes in fire embers and build a fire up over them.
- Leave them to cook for about 30 minutes.

Dampner Bread

- Wrap dough around a suitable stick,
- Rest on fire basket and slowly turn the bread until cooked thoroughly.
- Leave until cool enough to touch.

Chocolate Bananas

- Under adult supervision children to use a knife to cut open their banana and fill it with chocolate.
- Calling one child up at a time and using a fire glove children can carefully place the bananas onto the grill.
- Watch for the banana to bubble and the chocolate to melt before lifting it off the grill with tongs.
- Allow to cool before eating.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

The weather, activities and the environment all have risks which could impact on the well-being of the participants. Therefore, Leedon Lower School follows the principle that there is no such thing as bad weather, just unsuitable clothing. However, we take safety seriously and will cancel Forest School if necessary. Experimental learning is a Multisensory experience, being in touch with nature, learning to manage different temperatures, learning to associate weather with risk, being in touch with own body and experiences. Therefore, being outside in all weather is a must!

Extreme Cold

- Weather channels and weather warnings will be followed.
- Ensure children wear appropriate cold weather clothing, (thermals, hats, scarves, waterproofs, gloves and layers.)
- Ensure that letters are sent to parents to remind them about suitable clothing and check replies. A supply of spare warm clothing is available for extra layers. Making sure children are warm and comfortable during session.
- The Forest School leader may refuse to allow children's attendance if not dressed appropriately
- Take into account wind chill factor.
- Cancelling Forest School when weather is set to be below - 5 degrees (depending on age of children)
- Offering hot drinks regularly to ensure hydration by using Kelly kettle or prepared hot water in a flask
- Ensuring that there are enough spare clothes on site should children require additional layers
- Ensure that the medical bag contains space blankets

Extreme Heat

- Ensure children are wearing suitable loose clothing: long sleeved tops, trousers and a hat
- The Forest School leader may refuse to allow children who are not dressed appropriately to attend
- Sun cream to be applied by the children themselves 1-2 hourly.
- Ensure the children take regular breaks to hydrate
- Ensuring that children do not spend extended periods in full sunshine and avoid direct sun between 11.00-3.00
- Encourage children to find shady areas for hydration breaks.
- A shelter will be put up to provide shade if there is no natural shade available.

High Temperatures

- Prior to sessions observe weather channels, radio and weather warnings
- Ensuring children wear suitable clothing in hot weather - long sleeved cotton tops, long light trousers and a hat
- Inappropriate dress may cause Forest School Leader to refuse participation.
- Sun cream to be applied by the children themselves prior to session
- All children will take regular breaks to have a drink
- Ensure that children do not spend long periods in the full sunshine or at all between 11.00 and 3.00
- Children will be encouraged to have a rest and drink in a shady area
- Forest School staff will put up more shelters to provide shade

Low Temperatures

- Prior to sessions observe weather channels, radio and weather warnings
- Ensuring children are wearing suitable cold weather clothing, thermals, hats, scarves, waterproofs, gloves and thin layers
- Ensuring that letters are sent to parents to remind them what suitable clothing is required and ensure a reply is received.
- Ensuring that there are enough extra clothes on site should a children not dress appropriately
- Forest School leader will have to refuse children to participate if not dressed appropriately
- Wind chill factor must be taken into account
- Cancelling Forest School if weather is set to be below -5 degrees (depending on age of children)
- Offer hot drinks regularly to ensure hydration. Use of Kelly kettle and flasks

High Winds and Thunder and Lightening

- We do not go out in high winds and thunder and lightening
- Work indoors and have alternative activities plan

Wasp/Bee Swarm

- Forest School Leader to alert all other staff
- Gather all children and guide them away from the swarm and go inside immediately
- A fully stocked first aid kit on site at all times
- A certified first aider on site at all times
- There will be an up to date log book to record any incidents/illnesses on site at all times.

- Children's emergency contact will be with the school office by using a fully charged walkie talkie
- A charged walkie talkie will be kept available on site
- Ensure insect bites are recorded and information given to teacher passed onto parent/carer

Stanger/unauthorised adult on site

- Forest School Leader to alert all other staff
- Blow lockdown whistle
- Gather all children and go inside immediately
- A charged walkie talkie will be kept available on site
- Alert school office via walkie talkie
- Go to lockdown position inside immediately locking the doors

Missing Child

- Children told and asked to repeat boundaries and Forest school rules
- Regular headcount
- No access out of school grounds
 - If anybody suspects a person may be missing, they should immediately alert the Forest School Leader or another member of staff.
- If a fire has been lit it will be extinguished immediately and tools gathered to a safe place by supporting adults.
- If after an initial sweep of the site, the person is not found, the group should assemble and find out where and when the person was last seen. The Forest School Leader will continue to search for the child while the rest of the group is assembled.
- If the person is not found within 5 minutes, the Forest School Leader will seek additional help and begin to organize a search party. Any additional supporting adults will remain with the group and await further instructions. The emergency rucksack will remain with the Forest School Leader during the search.
- If there is a reason to believe that a child has been abducted, the Police will be immediately informed and their advice followed. The remaining children will be immediately returned to school.
- A charged walkie talkie will be kept available on site
- Alert school office via walkie talkie

Lockdown

Signal for lockdown: Designated tone sounds, fire alarm.

Children who are outside (including Forest School) are to be brought inside as quickly as possible, unless this endangers them or others. If children remain outside they will hide behind wherever they can or exit the school site escorted by a Teacher or Teaching

Assistant. All external doors and windows are locked also internal classroom doors may also need to be blocked. Once in lockdown mode staff should notify the office immediately of any pupils not accounted for via mobile phone/ walkie talkie and instigate an immediate search for anyone missing. Staff should encourage pupils to keep calm. As appropriate the school office will establish communication with the emergency services and notify E-Act head office. Parents will be notified as soon as it is practicable to do so via text messaging. Pupils will not be released to parents during a lockdown. If it is necessary to evacuate the building the fire alarm will be sounded and a verbal message to evacuate will be sent to staff via mobile phone or verbally. All situations are different, once all staff and pupils are safely inside, senior staff will conduct an on-going and dynamic risk assessment based on advice from the emergency services. This can then be communicated to all staff and children. Signal for all clear will be verbal from designated person (via mobile/telephone/ walkie talkie).

All staff are to use the citizen aid app.

Unwell Forest School leader procedure

If the Forest School Leader is unwell before the session they will contact school and parents to inform them that the session would not be running.

Should the Forest School leader become ill or injured during a Forest School session, the assistant/parent helper would be available to administer first aid and to end the session. Forest School assistants will walkie talkie the school office to ask for support and the children will be taken back to the classroom. Depending on the circumstances the assistant will contact the emergency services and use the information on the emergency backpack to share the location.

Fire in Forest School

All procedures to manage fire will be taken. However if a fire becomes out of control and spreads the following procedures must take place:

- Blow whistle and shout 'FIRE'. All adults and children stop what they are doing and gather together near Forest School entrance. All resources to be left.
- Children to make a line and children to be counted to check all are there. Other adult to take children back to class and take register.
- Forest School lead to do a sweep of site (if safe to do so) to check that no one is left behind.
- Forest School Lead to radio the school office to raise the alarm and ring 999 quoting what.three.word location.
- Other adult to head to the school entrance to guide fire engine onto site.

Risk Assessment Review

Date	Signed	Reviewed
11.1.24	G Davies	February 2024

Safety Sweep Record

Before each session a thorough safety sweep of the whole site must be carried out by the Forest School Leader or assistant and this information logged dated and left in the Forest School folder before the session starts. This is to ensure that there are not any potential hazards that could cause immediate injury or illness. Any hazards will be noted on the daily risk assessment which also acts as the daily register.

After each session the Forest School Leader must clear everything away, ensure that the fire is completely extinguished, use a checklist to ensure that all tools are returned and then safely store them away and finally check any other resources.

Safety Sweep:

Date:	Time:	Weather:
Name of Forest School Leader:		

Checklist	Yes/No	Comments
Fallen Branches		
Low Branches		
Protruding thorns		
Brambles/ Nettles		
Slippery Areas		
Broken glass/ needles		
Vandalism/ intruders		
Weather effects		
Standing water		
Boundary line/ fence		
Base camp		
Tool area roped off		
Emergency rucksack		
Equipment ready		
Spare clothes		

Other hazards identified:
Action taken:
Signature:

Person's Responsibility

Forest School Leader

- To plan and lead all Forest School activities.
- To ensure that planned activities are within the capabilities of the children taking part amending plans to provide an inclusive curriculum
- Ensure all activities are correctly resourced
 - To take responsibility for behaviour management during Forest School sessions (in line with the school's Behaviour Management policy)
- To have an up to date First Aid Qualification.
- To ensure that all participants follow the Forest School Clothing Policy
- To carry out daily safety sweeps as described in the Forest School Handbook
- Outline boundaries and rules of Forest School
- To check all tools, count, storage, maintenance
- Model activities and tool usage
- To assist with the toileting of children if they request help
- To check the medical spreadsheet of children in the class participating in the session ensuring personal medication for children including asthma inhalers and epi-pens are carried to each Forest School session.
 - Ensure that the emergency rucksack is fully stocked and to hand in each session
 - To have a clear understanding of all emergency procedures
 - To ensure all Forest School policies are regularly reviewed and that review is informed by observations and developing knowledge of the Forest School setting
- Review Forest School lessons

Forest School Assistants

Forest School is an exploration of experiential learning for the children in an environment where they can be in control of their learning and experiences as far as possible. We strongly advise adult helpers to try not to direct children too much or demonstrate how to do things, but to get involved and extend their learning if they are happy for you to do so. Adult helpers are there to encourage positive behaviours, respect for the environment, each other and the tools they use.

Responsibilities of the Forest School Assistants:

- To understand and adhere to the core principles of Forest School
- To take an active role in Forest School activities and assist with behaviour management
- To assist the Forest School leader in ensuring equipment meets safety standards and to report any concerns about the state of equipment immediately
- To assist the Forest School leader in teaching children to maintain their own and others' health and safety
- To report accidents or hazards to the Forest School leader immediately.

- To take responsibility for making themselves aware of safety issues, such as the whereabouts of resources, first aid kit.
- To ensure that they wear suitable outdoor clothing and footwear - Following the Forest School clothing rules
- To sometimes carry out daily safety sweeps as described in this handbook.
- To assist with the toileting of children if they request help
- To check the medical spreadsheet of children in the class participating in the session ensuring personal medication for children including asthma inhalers and epi-pens are carried to each Forest School session.
- Ensure that the emergency rucksack is fully stocked and to hand in each lesson
- To have a clear understanding of all emergency procedures

Job Cards

ADULT 1

Today please could you help by:

- Observing the children, scaffolding their learning and taking photos to document children's learning.
- In case of a MAJOR incident please gather children together by shouting BASE CAMP and radio the school office for help. Escort the children back to the classroom.
- In case of MINOR incident please report to the Forest School Leader.
- In case of an evacuation please leave the Forest School site behind the children.
- If a child needs to go to the toilet let them go to in school like normal- radio Reception team to let them know a child is coming back.

It is important for children to explore and learn independently. Our role in Forest School is to facilitate and observe which will enable them to make their own choices and lead their play.

ADULT 2

Today please can you help by:

- Observing the children if climbing on trees, scaffold their learning linking to being safe. Take photos to document children's learning.
- In case of a MAJOR incident please gather children together by shouting BASE CAMP and radio the school office for help. Escort the children back to the classroom.
- In case of MINOR incident please report to the Forest School Leader.
- In case of an evacuation please leave the Forest School site behind the children.
- If a child needs to go to the toilet let them go to in school like normal- radio Reception team to let them know a child is coming back.

It is important for children to explore and learn independently. Our role in Forest School is to facilitate and observe which will enable them to make their own choices and lead their play.

Responsibilities of the children

- To take personal responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety of others
- To adhere to the safety procedures and rules of Forest School
- To listen to and follow information and instructions given to them
- To bring appropriate clothing into school to enable them to take part in the Forest School sessions.

Toileting

EYFS The children will be toileted before leaving for Forest School. If a child should need to use the toilet during a Forest School lesson or if a child has an accident, then staff will radio the reception team and child will be sent back to the classrooms to be toileted. The children will be toileted after the Forest School lesson has concluded.

KS1 The children will be toileted before leaving for Forest School. If a child should need to use the toilet during a Forest School lesson or if a child has an accident, then staff will radio KS1 team and child sent to the toilet. The children will be toileted after the Forest School lesson has concluded.

Ecological Impact

Environmental Considerations and sustainability Forest School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos. Wherever possible, and appropriate, environmentally friendly products and recycled materials are used. Environmental good practice is modelled by adults, showing children that the world in which we live in should be cared for. Involving children in site checks, recycling of waste and considerations of how we leave our site will help to support this. We bring in materials such as logs and kindling for the fire and remove waste and dispose of fire remains with care and consideration for the environment.

- The fire pit is in the same location to reduce our impact.
- We bring in water to reduce our ecological impact
- We will monitor the site to identify any impact we are having on the environment.
- Any rubbish will be removed after each session.
- The site will be rested over the summer to help with regeneration.
- We will create log pile habits to encourage insect life.

Assessment of impact of Forest School activities

There are many ways that running a Forest School programme can affect the ecology of the site these can be in a negative or positive way. Firstly the biggest positive way is the impact of fostering a love of nature in our next generation, through their knowledge and love of nature, the ecological impact of the next generation can be a gentle one. This is a summary of our ecological assessment, a more detailed assessment of our site is contained within our 3 year woodland management plan.

Activity	Impact	How can this be reduced/ managed?
Walking/ running and playing in the woods	Compacted earth/ creating pathways Reduction in biodiversity/ fauna and flora growth	Ask all attendees to tread carefully, follow the existing path if there is one. Rest areas of woodland/ routes when possible.
Fire	Damage to soil or heat damage	Consider the frequency of fires, Change in pH of the soil (especially if ash is left behind) which can be harmful to plants, and can cause mineral depletion.

		Risk of fire spreading if left or not properly extinguished choose the position of the fire pit carefully, in areas that are not of ecological significance, avoiding overhead tree branches and also distance from large trees to mitigate root damage. Dispose of ash - remain in fire pit Extinguish thoroughly and carefully
Cooking/ eating	Litter dropping from food remains or packaging may attract animals to the site that aren't usually there	Take all litter away with you - leave no trace. Be careful of food waste/ spills and remove from site when you leave.
Collecting natural materials/ deadwood	Damage to plants and or habitats/ loss of food for wildlife if acorns/ seeds collected and removed Damage to plants/ trees if branches/ leaves/ flowers removed Deadwood important habitat for many creatures and bed for fungi	Make agreements about the collecting of natural materials, limits on number of leaves from one tree, only flowers from the ground or seeds etc. Inform about plants and any rare species or protected plants. Limit collecting and picking activities
Climbing trees	Damage to tree branches/trunk or plants on the forest floor	Restrict to suitable trees- identify to attendees
Making shelters/ rope swings	Trampling on flowers and plants on the forest floor. Damage to trees by use of ropes/ risk of breaking branches	Ask attendees to take care when walking especially in the Spring when flowers are emerging on the forest floor - e.g. bluebells, daffodils Take care when placing rope swing to minimise damage to trees and use only suitable trees that can withstand the forces.
Recycling and waste	Litter could be a hazard to wildlife, chemicals from	We separate our rubbish at FS into recycling, compost and landfill waste. Children

	waste could affect the soil and damage plants. Waste materials have a negative ecological impact.	are aware and we explain the benefits of recycling and which type of rubbish goes in which bucket. All types of waste are then removed from site for appropriate disposal
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3 Year Sustainability Plan

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Establish base camp	Create rest areas	Move areas if required
Children familiar with Forest School lesson routines	Check base camp	Review photos/take new photos
Mud Kitchen	Check trees	Review effect on wildlife
Establish digging area	Trim brambles	Create activities to support wildlife
Establish where to make shelters	Check bulbs and wild flowers	Continue to manage re-growth
Take lots of photos	Maintain, refresh and repair	Replenish any logs/sticks as required
Make fire circle	Bring in wood chippings	Review impact of Forest School on children

Covid Protocols

At Swallowfield Primary School we follow the latest government guidelines in relation to COVID-19. Before children attend Forest School lessons they will wash their hands with running water and soap. Once a Forest School Lesson finishes all children will wash their hands with running water and soap.

Declaration of Review

This hand book has been compiled by Gemma Davies (Forest School leader) taking into account The Forest School ethos and Swallowfield Primary School policies and procedures. With this in mind detailed risk assessments including the risk benefits have been very carefully put together. All adults attending the sessions must read and understand the handbook. Any queries please ask Gemma Davies (Forest School Leaders) to clarify. You will need to sign this declaration to say that you understand and will adhere to the content thoroughly as Forest School sessions are a great opportunity for all to take the Natural environment as a wonderful learning tool. I have read and understood:

I have read and understood:

Date if review	Signed by	Comments