

'SMALL SCHOOL, BIG HEART LEARNING AND GROWING TOGETHER'

FOREST SCHOOL HANDBOOK





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FOREST SCHOOL HANDBOOK CONTENTS (3.1)

Introduction to Forest School Programme:

	Page number
Vision statement for your own Forest School reflecting the Forest School Ethos and Principles (to include the pedagogy of Forest School and the role of play and choice)	3
Role of the Forest School Leader	4
Role of Assistants	5-6
School Site, Ecological Impact Assessment, Woodland Management Plan	7-21
Health, Safety and Welfare Procedures including use of Personal Protective Equipment, personal clothing, toileting, food and drink, hygiene	22 - 33
First Aid Procedures	34
Tools Procedures	35 - 41
Campfire and Campfire Cooking Procedures	41 -43
Emergency and Serious Incident Procedures	45-47
Daily Operating Procedures	22-24
Cancellation Procedures	48
Insurance	48
New Parents Welcome	



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	Page number or link to document
Forest School Policy	64
Health and Safety Policy	See school policies
Accident and Emergency Procedures	
Incidents and Near Misses	
Policy on checking criminal records	
Safeguarding Children Policy	
Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy	
Disability Discrimination Policy	
Teaching and Learning Policy	
Special Educational Needs Policy/ report	
Behaviour Policy	
Data Protection Policy	
Sustainability/Environmental Policy	
Offsite Visits and Activities Policy and Guidelines	

	Page number
Forest School site risk assessment	49-52
Activity risk-benefit assessments	53- 57
Communication strategy	58-59



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Forest School at St Mary’s

Our Vision Statement:

At St Mary’s we are a community, a family and a team. We aim to provide our children with the exciting opportunity to love, appreciate and value the importance of protecting our beautiful, natural environment. At St Mary’s we want children to become independent, confident, resilient thinkers and learners who possess a love of playing and exploring as well as a lifelong learning and development of the whole self.

At Forest School all children are viewed as:

- equal, unique and valuable
- competent to explore & discover
- entitled to experience appropriate risk and challenge
- entitled to choose, and to initiate and drive their own learning and development
- entitled to experience regular success
- entitled to develop positive relationships with themselves and other people
- entitled to develop a strong, positive relationship with their natural world

Forest School learning at St Mary’s is achieved through the following:

- a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.
- using a natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world (the wildlife area at the bottom of the field).
- using a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.
- promoting the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
- offering learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.



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Role of a Forest School leader:

- Promote and provide Forest School experiences which follow and use the [6 principles of the Forest School ethos](#).
 - Follow St Mary’s values, policies and procedure as outlined in our Forest School handbook.
 - Undertake risk–benefit assessments and implement risk management systems.
 - Ensure appropriate welfare requirements are in place for the group (clothing/shelter, hand washing, drink & food, toilets).
 - Communicate effectively with all stakeholders, including, parents, management, participants, local community, landowners, other staff etc.
 - Ensure appropriate ratios are maintained at their Forest School
 - Share planning and evaluations of sessions recorded with relevant staff.
 - Record observations of individual learners' learning processes and share with other relevant staff.
 - Reflect on their own practice, undertake continued professional development and network with other local Forest School practitioners.
 - Working alongside the head teacher, undertake a baseline ecological survey of the Forest School site, establish environmental impact monitoring systems and create a simple management plan for the site for the duration of the programme.
 - Working with the Headteacher supports the management and maintenance of the Forest School area.
 - Ensure that equipment, tools and outdoor clothing are fit for purpose and appropriately stored and implement maintenance schedules.
- To provide first aid in the event that it is needed



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Forest School at St Mary’s

Role of Assistants – Teaching Assistants

- Under the guidance of the Forest School Leader promote and assist with providing Forest School experiences which follow and use the [6 principles of the Forest School ethos](#)
- Follow St Mary’s values, policies and procedure as outlined in their Forest School handbook.
- To act as a role model for the participants and demonstrate appropriate conduct.
- Implement risk management systems with guidance from Forest Schools Lead.
- Support with ensuring appropriate welfare requirements are in place for the group (clothing/shelter, hand washing, drink & food, toilets).
- Communicate effectively with participants, parents and other staff
- Ensure appropriate ratios are maintained at their Forest School
- Follow session plans and assist with records and feeding back to the forest schools lead evaluations of sessions.
- Record observations of individual learners learning processes and share with other Forest Schools Leader to support individual growth
- .Reflect on their own practice, undertake continued professional development
- Assist with ensuring that equipment, tools and outdoor clothing are fit for purpose and appropriately stored and implement maintenance schedules.



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- Assist the forest school leader with management of the site
- To assist with first aid as appropriate

Forest School at St Mary’s

Parent Helper/Volunteer Responsibilities:

- To comply with the contents of the Forest School Handbook
- To wear appropriate clothing – positive role modelling
- To assist the Forest School Leader and other staff in keeping the children safe
- To be responsible for hand washing
- To assist in observing the children and recording those observations in an appropriate way
- To assist the Forest School Leader in any Forest School activities as directed, according to the activity, season and weather
- Additional adult volunteers are always welcome.



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St Mary’s Forest School site

Our Forest School takes place in a small woodland area at end of our school field. It is made up of mixed deciduous trees, mainly mature Oak, Hawthorne and Ash. Around the fence area there is willow that creates our natural border.

The site is within school grounds and is not accessible to the public and the perimeters are clearly defined.

Children taking part in Forest School will also 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

Location of Woodland Site





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Ecological Impact Assessment (2.1)

Name of the site: St Mary’s Primary School Woodland
Grid Reference and access: 53.926259 , -1.1885861 (SE 53380 48097)
Size and layout of the site: The enclosed woodland area is just 650 m ² , however the participants also have access to the school field area and surrounding trees, allotment and pond areas with a total area of 4,554 m ² . The enclosed mature woodland area comprising of two Oak trees, two Alder trees, two Ash trees, an Apple tree, small Oriental cherry, Willow, Blackthorn, Hawthorn to mention a few. At the end of the field is an enclosed pond and the field with other trees (Alder, Field maple, silver birch, Ash, Hawthorn and several apple trees) .
Archaeological concern: No known previous settlements.
Ecological survey indicating abundance and rarity of : <u>flora: trees; plants; mosses; fungi;</u> Within our well established woodland area - There are hawthorn, two English oak trees, alder, several Ash trees, apple tree, black thorn bush, willow small oriental cherry. Around the school field again well-established trees such as two silver birch trees, ash and hawthorn, field maple, Wildflowers such as bluebells grow freely in the woodland.



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On the school field more recently planted have been three more apple trees.

There are also mosses –

Fungi – Earthstar, Honey Fungus (oak),

fauna: birds; animals; insects

Birds have been monitored as part of being involved in RSPB initiatives the most common include – Goldfinch, Blue tit, Robin, Blackbird, Wood pigeon, Pheasant, Red kites, Carrion Crow, Buzzard, Chaffinch.

Signs of animals have been observed – moles, rabbits, foxes, field mice

Insects are in abundance from observations of the site. Insects such as woodlice, spiders, beetles, centipedes etc

water

There is a clay lined pond on the far side of the site as well as an area in the woodland that can get water logged in heavy rain.

Soil -Neutral to slightly acidic

Existing management systems

The site is managed by a garden contractor that visits the school regularly – they carry out regular tasks such as mowing and coppicing. There are also parent volunteers that have helped attend the site to help develop it further.

Description of proposed ‘Introduction to Forest School programme’ (frequency of use, number of children, activities)

Sessions will be run on a Thursday afternoon in term time only.

A maximum of 15 children with two adults, one of which will be the Forest School Leader. Activities will include mud kitchen play, campfire discovery, exploring the woodlands, getting to know plants and creatures in our environment. As well as different natural crafts using leaves from the natural environment, willow for weaving and stories/ songs linked to themes.

Class 2 to begin Forest School Sessions from September 2023 on Friday afternoons.

Ecological impact:

This should be fairly minimal as we will encourage children to stay on paths and well walked areas, which will compact soil through increased footfall, but keeps to a specific area - such as the fire pit area.

Activities and crafts will use natural materials where possible and will remove any items we have brought into the woodland to leave no trace. We want to keep the environment as natural as possible.

Mitigations

Materials for crafts will be made from natural materials where possible and anything brought onto site will be taken away at the end of the session. Deadwood will only be taken from the mature woodland area. Firewood will be externally sourced unless it is in abundance in the environment.



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Monitoring systems

Effective communication with other staff/ head teacher/ business manager to gain and give feedback on the site and ensure everyone is happy with how it is being used.

Checking the high use areas on the site – if an area is becoming particularly compacted we could encourage children to use a different pathway to allow for recovery. As part of the general risk assessment the site is checked regularly for any litter or other materials left on the site. As part of tools risk assessments these are also counted back in to ensure they are not left on the site.

Recommendations

Help children to understand the ecological impact and help them understand how they can impact the natural environment.

Reporting any wear and tear or habitats under threat to Headteacher.

	Area								
Activity	Ground layer	Field layer	Shrub layer	Understorey	Canopy layer	Deadwood	Nesting birds	Pathways	Other habitats
Exploring	Rotate usage of site Small group	Rotate usage of site Small group	Rotate usage of site Small group	Rotate usage of site Small group	Assess impact of tree climbing	Leave for minibeasts	Noise levels and exploring could disturb – monitor site	Over use could cause compaction	Avoid disturbance – aware of habitats
Campfire lighting	Only in the fire pit area/ raised from ground. Use your own wood.	Only in the fire raised pit. Use your own wood.	Only in the fire raised pit. Use your own wood.	Only in the fire pit area away from these	Be aware of any low branches when lighting fires	Only in the fire pit area away from these	Fire pit area is away from any low branches when lighting fires/ bird nesting in trees	Only in the fire pit area away from these	Only in the fire pit area away from these
Den building	Select the same spots for Dens where there will be the least impact	Select the same spots for Dens where there will be the least impact	Select the same spots for Dens where there will be the least impact	Select the same spots for Dens where there will be the least impact	No impact	Use dead wood and sourced timber	Forest Leader to check for nests	Could cause compaction	Be aware and avoid disturbance
Woodcraft	Use agreed trees on rotation and wood from coppicing	Use agreed trees on rotation and wood from coppicing	Use agreed trees on rotation and wood from coppicing	Use agreed trees on rotation and wood from coppicing	Not to be used from this layer	Leave on site	Forest Leader to check for nests	Could cause compaction	Be aware and avoid disturbance
Environmental art	Choose site which causes least	Choose flowers only if in abundance	Collect from mature woodland	Collect from mature woodland	Collect from mature woodland	Leave on site	Forest Leader to check for nests	Could cause compaction	Be aware and avoid disturbance



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	disturbance								
Habitat creation	Bug hotels Bird boxes – collection of fallen items	Collect from mature woodland	Collect from mature woodland	Collect from mature woodland	Consider location of bird boxes	Collect from mature woodland	Ensure plenty of natural material for wildlife	Could cause compaction	Could improve species populations and biodiversity
Measures to maintain or improve ecology	Use fire pit for fires Assess site for compaction Check for litter	Collect mature woodland where possible Only pick flowers if in abundance Use fallen leaves	Use mature woodland where possible Coppicing for sustainable wood supply	Use mature woodland where possible Coppicing for sustainable wood supply	Tree climbing only to be allowed on mature wood on selected trees	Only to be collected from mature wood and should be left on site	Avoid disturbing nesting birds/ – relocate activities to minimise impact	Monitor for wear and tear Add bark chippings if required	Avoid disturbance of habitats Look for ways to create a positive impact on habitat e.g. Bird Boxes



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Three year management plan for the sustainable use of own Forest School site and to enhance biodiversity, based on the ecological impact assessment. (2.2)

Site: St Mary's CE Primary School					
Aim: sustainable use and enhanced biodiversity					
Vision: To maintain a special natural environment that children can enjoy for years to come and one that they all respect and appreciate.					
	Maintenance and development tasks	Mitigating impact	Involvement of Forest School participants	Monitoring	Anticipated use of the site (frequency of use, number of children, activity)



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<p>Year 1</p>	<p>Begin clearing overgrown brambles in agreed locations in the mature woodland area so that children can access pathways more easily</p>	<p>Due to clearing of areas - Offsetting some of the disruption of Forest School Activity in the mature woodland allowing invertebrates to thrive here.</p>	<p>Pupils being involved in coppicing to help keep this under control Involve parent volunteers in the coppicing/ clearing areas (weekend invitation to support)</p>	<p>Forest Leader to inform Maintenance Manager Review each term with members of the FS/ SLT</p>	<p>Frequency – 15 children per Thursday pm session Weekly session (EYFS) 24 Year 1 /2 pupils per Friday PM session (Y1/2) from Sept 23</p>
<p>Agree a mown areas with the Headteacher/ Garden contractors and those that must remain natural</p>	<p>Only clear pathways to allow other areas to thrive especially during spring (bluebells). Identify any vulnerable areas and avoid them.</p>	<p>Plant wildflowers in other areas</p>	<p>Monitor for signs of over use by Forest School lead</p>		
<p>Mud kitchen area and pathways around the woodland will have increased footfall.</p>	<p>Ensure other areas of the site are not over used so can develop natural habitats /enhance biodiversity. Keeping mud kitchen in a certain area etc</p>	<p>Discussion with pupils about why it’s important to keep mud kitchen in a certain area etc.</p>	<p>Monitor for signs of over use – add bark as required.</p>		
<p>Source more tree stumps to be used as seating in base area in mature woodland.</p>	<p>Stumps kept to the firepit area</p>	<p>Encourage participants to return stumps back to original place/ upright to encourage minibeasts living underneath to thrive</p>			



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	<p>Funding towards replacing the Forest School Hut – apply for Tesco community – opportunity for tools to be left securely on site / classroom observations and activities inside</p> <p>Begin ordering needed tools to be used to enhance natural tasks provided / develop skills</p> <p>Utilize deadwood for habitat piles</p> <p>Use of natural materials for activities</p>	<p>New Forest school hut to be placed on the same site as the previous one. Minimise effects to current woodland area</p> <p>Tools to be stored in the Forest School hut. Any craft activities using tools ensure that area is returned to its</p> <p>Encouraging wildlife to the area</p> <p>Only what is required will be taken where there is abundance of that resource</p> <p>Protect habitats established where</p>	<p>Assembly to promote/ discuss the reasons why Forest School hut needs replacing. Children and families support this by collecting counters when visiting supermarket.</p> <p>Participants will be involved in using tools safely/ counting and collecting tools at end of the session</p> <p>Pupils collect deadwood to create habitat piles</p>	<p>Monitor condition of tools and replace as required</p> <p>monitor and add to habitat piles annually</p> <p>Monitor use of natural materials and effects on natural environment</p>	
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	<p>Improve boundary fence – begin to look into prices to improve working with Business manager / Head teacher</p>	<p>possible so minimum disruption</p>	<p>Encourage pupils to select natural materials that are surplace</p>		
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Aim: sustainable use and enhanced biodiversity					
Vision: To maintain a special natural environment that children can enjoy for years to come and one that they all respect and appreciate.					
	Maintenance and development tasks	Mitigating impact	Involvement of Forest School participants	Monitoring	Anticipated use of the site (frequency of use, number of children, activity)
Year 2	Continued removal of undergrowth / coppicing as required Discuss adding bird boxes so that adults and children can further monitor birds visiting site. Gain permission to erect a bug hotel in the mature woodland near the mud kitchen area to allow children to carry out more observations of invertebrate species and	Increase biodiversity by other species of plants that will grow underneath Offsetting some of the disruption of Forest School Activity in the mature woodland allowing invertebrates to thrive here. Encouraging more wildlife to the woodland / increase biodiversity Encouraging more minibeasts to the area – increase biodiversity	Pupils being involved in coppicing to help keep this under control Involve parent volunteers in the coppicing/ clearing areas (weekend invitation to support) Pupils create bird boxes and add these to site. Involved in RPB Pupils involved creating the bug hotels and observing minibeasts	Forest Leader to inform Maintenance Manager Review each term with members of the FS/ SLT Monitoring condition of bird boxes and replace when required. Monitor effects/ increase number of birds RPB	Frequency – 15 children per Thursday pm session Weekly session (EYFS) 24 Year 1 /2 pupils per Friday PM session (Y1/2) from Sept 23 Introduce Forest Schools Club started with 8 KS2 pupils (depending on staffing ratios/ tools available) - rotate each half term – use of tools and developing other skills



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	<p>develop identification skills.</p> <p>Replacement of the Forest School Hut – opportunities for bird watching/ storing equipment securely</p> <p>Survey report assessing risk of significant trees – trees will need to be removed</p>	<p>New Forest hut to be placed on the same site as other one so as not to impact another part of the woodland</p> <p>Only trees deemed to be a risk for Health and Safety reasons to be removed.</p>	<p>Pupils and families involved in an ‘opening ceremony’ to celebrate this new resource in our natural woodland</p> <p>Plant new trees to replace those lost Involve pupils in planting process and caring for trees as they grow</p>	<p>Continue to monitor the health of other trees / encouraging healthy growth</p>	
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Aim: sustainable use and enhanced biodiversity					
Vision: To maintain a special natural environment that children can enjoy for years to come and one that they all respect and appreciate.					
	Maintenance and development tasks	Mitigating impact	Involvement of Forest School participants	Monitoring	Anticipated use of the site (frequency of use, number of children, activity)
Year 3	<p>Continued removal of undergrowth</p> <p>Continued removal of deadwood branches for Health and Safety</p> <p>Introducing wood chip/ bark pathways to avoid slippery pathways and reduce compaction</p> <p>Further establishing habitats: Create a small pond with a ramp for hedgehogs</p> <p>Planting brambles, shrubs and berry hedges for birds</p>	<p>Allow for other plants to thrive. Improve the health of trees/ encourage growth. Rotate areas</p> <p>Use deadwood for other crafts</p> <p>Reduced compaction on the soil</p> <p>Increased biodiversity in the area</p> <p>Increase biodiversity and food source/ safe place for nesting spots</p>	<p>Parents and families involved in coppicing/ weekend invite</p> <p>Pupils use deadwood as a resource for their own projects</p> <p>Children involved in spreading wood chipping to muddy areas.</p> <p>Foraging for blackberries</p>	<p>Assess footpaths for wear and tear.</p> <p>Continue to monitor / health and safety risk assessments</p>	<p>Frequency – 15 children per Thursday pm session Weekly session (EYFS)</p> <p>24 Year 1 /2 pupils per Friday PM session (Y1/2) from Sept 23</p> <p>Forest Schools Club started with 8 pupils (depending on staffing ratios/ tools available) (rotate each half term) – use of tools and developing other skills</p>



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	<p>Planting of saplings</p> <p>Consider adding bat boxes</p> <p>Wildlife meadow areas near forest school entrance / corner of the field</p> <p>Create a site for a permanent tippy tap to be in place near mud kitchen</p>	<p>Replacement of any trees removed / adding more diversity</p> <p>Protection of an endangered species</p> <p>Biodiversity increased</p> <p>Natural rain water collected rather</p>	<p>Pupils involved in planting/ monitoring growth</p> <p>Educating pupils about bats/ importance of caring for them</p> <p>Pupils actively involved in using tippy tap</p>	<p>Pupils monitoring as well as other leaders</p>	
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Health and Safety Policies & Procedures

St Mary’s 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 Leader to participant ratio at Forest School. The high number of adults (leader, Teaching Assistant and parental volunteers) 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 Leaders 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 Leaders continue to monitor the safety of the group as activities evolve. There is always a trained first aider present at each session.

Participants are also involved in completing their own risk assessments throughout the sessions. This gives them ownership of the process and to help 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. For example children highlight to an adult where brambles are hanging down on the path.

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.

The health and safety checklist provides a reminder of all procedures.

Pre-visit checks

- Run through the site risk assessment and amend/update as necessary. Remove all visible litter and faeces.
- Remove obvious trip hazards and mark off areas as out-of-bounds where appropriate.
- Cut any overhanging vegetation from paths and boardwalk.
- Ensure risk assessments are completed for all activities.
- Erect shelter(s).
- Set up Forest School circle / Fire Pit area.
- Check all necessary items (see section on *Forest School equipment*), including a stocked and in date first aid kit, fire blanket and bucket of fresh water.
- 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.
- Check that walkie talkies are in working order



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At the start of the session

- Take register and headcount.
- Remind children about physical boundaries (don't leave our enclosed area without asking adults) and that they must stay within these. In the first sessions, and at the beginning of each session 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.
- 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

- Final h
- F
- Final head count and escort the group back to the school
- Count and pack up all equipment.
- Count and pack up all resources.
- Clear the fire area and make it safe. Remove ash and cover over the site of fire.
- Evaluate the session.

Adult Roles & Responsibilities

- The Trained and Named Forest School Leader 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. They must sign and date the form stating that they comply with the general operating procedures for Forest School (code of conduct).
- The Forest School Leader or Assistant will always carry and take a first aid kit into the forest at every session.



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- The Forest School Leader will always carry a mobile phone and will ensure that there is easy access to a landline if the group is out of range.
- In the event of an emergency, The Forest Leader will ensure that the School contacts the emergency services. If contact with the school is lost the Leader will contact the emergency services.
- The Forest School Leader will review the risk assessments before every trip into the School’s Forest Site.
- When tools are used the adult child ratio will be 1:1
- There is one exception to this – when using peelers for whittling the ratio can be 1:2.
- 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 for training the 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.



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Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Clothing (2.1)

Explain how to facilitate correct use of PPE with client group.

Procedures in our setting:

In order to safely access Forest Schools provision safely, it is important to effectively communicate suitable clothing and any additional PPE that is needed. For example, at St Mary’s Parents are contacted via Planners, Tapestry and Newsletters detailing the clothing needing to be in school so the children are protected from weather. Forest School clothing is also listed in our handbook that children receive prior to starting school. Spare set of clothes in a child’s locker is also encouraged.

Spare clothing (waterproofs and normal) are available for children who do not have the correct clothing. Forest Leader and Assistants to be a role model for wearing the correct clothing and modelling how to use equipment or protective equipment safely.

First Aid Kit with a First Aid Burns Kit, Fire Blanket and water is also brought to the woodland and put in a place that all adults are aware of (see Handbook for more details).

Forest School situation	Personal Protective Equipment	Clothing
Winter	Forest School Leader will wear protective safety boots	Ensure that all participants are wearing suitable clothing for weather such as being exposed to the cold, icy conditions, rain or snow. All pupils will wear wellies, waterproof trousers and coats/ dungarees. Also encouraged to wear hats/ gloves/ school jumpers/ cardigans as base layers to keep children warm. Layers are encouraged. A change of clothing is also important should any of the above get wet.
Spring	Forest School Leader will wear protective safety boots	Ensure that participants are prepared for changing weather conditions. Layers that can be removed will be encouraged so that they can regulate their body temperature as required. All pupils will still wear wellies, waterproof trousers and coats/ dungarees. They may still need warm hats and gloves or be prepared for warmer conditions and have sun hats/ sunscreen.
Summer	Forest School Leader will wear protective safety boots	Ensure that participants are prepared for likely weather such as being exposed to heat. In warm weather, children (and adults) are to wear long sleeved tops and trousers/ leggings to protect their skin from ticks, scratches and insect bites. Continue to wear



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		wellies or sturdy closed shoes. Wear sunhat and applied sun cream etc.
Autumn	Forest School Leader will wear protective safety boots	Ensure that participants are prepared for changing weather conditions. Layers are useful so participants can regulate their body temperature/ gloves or warm hats may be required. All pupils will wear wellies, waterproof trousers and coats/ dungarees.
Campfire cooking	Heat resistant gloves	Clothing as above. (Children will be encouraged to stay a safe distance away from the fire.) Long sleeves and trousers avoiding loose clothing/ hair tied back. Sturdy boots.
Using tools	Safety gloves (on hand not holding the tools) will be used	As PPE requirements. Long sleeves and trousers avoiding loose clothing/ hair tied back so not to get caught when using tools. Sturdy boots
Collecting natural materials		Gardening gloves are often used to provide protection if needed. Long sleeves for protection from thorns/ trousers/ wellies or sturdy boots.



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Our Forest School Code of Conduct

Entering the Woodland

We will enter the Woodland respectfully and know that when 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 when we are in our Forest School we are sharing the environment with them.

Boundaries

The Forest Schools areas have clear natural boundaries and fences all around so the children know exactly where they can go during these sessions. The children enjoy playing ‘1, 2, 3, where are you?’ and have been taught to respond ‘1, 2, 3, I am here’, or signal in other ways if non-verbal. When the leader says ‘Forest Badgers’ and the children know to immediately come to the leader.

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 we start. A lit fire will not be left unattended at any point. A fire may not be lit until it has been confirmed to all that our fire safety equipment is in place. Open fires will be built within a fire square.



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At the Fire Circle

An open fire will be lit within a fire square or stone circle. A fire circle using log sitting stools may be established around the perimeter, 2.0m from the fire square. No one may enter the fire circle perimeter unless invited to do so by an adult. There is no running past the fire circle. No items must be carried and placed within the fire circle unless by an adult. If you wish to move around the fire to a new stool you must step out of the circle and walk around the outside of the log circle. 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.

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.



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Digging

Digging large holes is not encouraged. 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.

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 and there are resources available within school in the Forest School area for activities where natural resources cannot be found on the site.

Eating and Drinking

Nil by mouth policy (No lick, no pick) 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 wipes & water 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.



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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. (Safe lifting risk assessment)

Toileting

Children are invited to use the toilets before we leave the school buildings. Children will be allowed to return to the school building with an accompanying adult. The nearest toilets are to be found in the Key Stage 1 area.

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.

Tree Climbing

An adult must be present when children climb trees in the Forest School. The ground cover should be checked for ‘sharp objects’ and the tree marked 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 1.5m. Adults should be near enough to catch if a child should fall but far enough away to not be invasive to the children’s exploration



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Food safety and cooking procedure

Food and drink preparation and sitting together whilst eating and drinking are important parts of Forest School.

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.

Forest School food hygiene rules

Everyone involved in Forest School should be involved in food safety and follow the food hygiene rules below. If you spot a problem, please point it out to the Forest School Leader.

When involved in food and drink preparation 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.



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Food allergies and special dietary requirements:

Participants are asked to state any food allergies and special dietary requirements they may have on their Parental Consent and Medical form. 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. This information is stored in the Class 1 information folder in the Classroom.

Toilets Forest School

Toilet facilities

There are no toilets at the Forest School site. Children attending Forest School sessions will be informed in advance of the situation, and all children will be asked to go to the toilet before they leave school.

Children who need the toilet. An assisting adult will accompany all children with a walkie talkie so they can make contact if needed.

Wetting or Soiling: If a child has a wetting or soiling incident they will be changed in accordance with the schools intimate care policy by an appropriate adult.

Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Forest School

The mission statement of St Mary’s

emphasises the value placed on the individuality of all our children. We are 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.

We will:

- Ensure equality of access for all children
- Employ a range of styles, including collaborative learning, so that children can value working together
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child’s education
- Take account of the performance of all children when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- Make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of children.

Our teachers ensure that our children:

- feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- appreciate and value the differences in others
- take responsibility for their own actions
- participate safely, in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs
- are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success
- use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, learning styles and linguistic



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needs, without stereotyping

- have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- have challenging targets that enable them to succeed

All children are encouraged to participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs Forest School does mean Forest School FOR ALL. We do have a stock of extra 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.

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 – waterproof coats, trousers and wellington boots. We go through rules and routines whilst still in class and children help gather any resources we need to take out with us in our trolley.

The group then walks to the Forest School site and enters through a gate. The children then sit on a circle of logs. The circle is central to everything that happens at Forest School. It is a focal point where the group assembles and socialises. 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.

Many activities take place in or around the circle, such as natural art and woodwork. Half way through or at the end of each session participants gather together to have a drink and a snack. This often includes helping to light a fire at the base of a Kelly Kettle to heat water for warm drinks.

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.



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First Aid Procedure

The Forest School Leader (Jayne Boast) is a qualified first aider and carries a recommended first aid kit. The first aid kit is placed in a place where all adults can see and have access to. There is also a separate burns kit and fire blanket that are placed near the fire pit area again in a place easily accessible to all adults. Activities are thoroughly risk assessed and staff continuously monitor the safety of the group as activities progress.

First aid kit

First aid guidance booklet	Disposable gloves (latex free)
Walkie Talkie	Safety pins
Sterile non-medicated dressings	Eye bandage
Triangular bandages	Eye wash
Cleansing wipes	Instant ice pack
Space blankets x 2	Burn cool x 4
Cling film	Plasters

Each Class has their own Accident forms that can be completed – this is simply an example:

ACCIDENT REPORT FORM – ST MARY’S

This form should be completed if anyone is harmed as the result of an accident during a Forest School session.

This document will form the basis of a report should a claim be made, so try to be accurate and complete the whole form. If you would like to add any further information to clarify the incident, please use the reverse of the sheet.

Name/s of Forest School Leader/s _____

Name of injured person/s _____

Where did the accident take place? _____

Date and time of accident _____

What happened? _____

What action was taken _____

Whom did you notify and when _____

Follow up/further action required _____

Please delete as appropriate: Further information is/is not supplied overleaf

Signed _____ **Date** _____



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Tool and Rope Maintenance (2.2)

How to facilitate the safe checking, cleaning and storage of tools, ropes and cords.

Tool maintenance and storage

Checking Tools:

Before the tools are used it is important that they are firstly checked for any signs of damage or wear. Check for rust, sharpness and any loose handles – you can use a sharpening block/ stone to keep blades sharp.

Cleaning

After using the tools they must be cleaned of dirt and moisture using a brush and cloth. Ensure that the blade covers are used for the protective cases and securely put on. Also sanitise between use/ participants (Clinell wipes)

Storage

It is important that the tools are stored in a water tight container to stop them from being damaged by rust. Bow saws should be ideally stored flat but when this is not possible store them with the blade up, allowing you to see if the blade cover has fallen off. You could lightly oil blades before storage to deter rusting. Store in a secure place that the client group cannot access independently. Always replace the sheath to cover the blade before transporting/ when storing. Have a checklist to count tools in and out at each session.

Provide a clear demonstration on safe tool use, the above maintenance and storage to the group.

Rope/cord maintenance and storage

Checking Ropes:

Check the ropes for any signs of damage (based on the type of activity and usage). Ensure they are replaced when frayed or damaged. Also ensure safe usage of ropes when working with children and do not leave them unattended. To prevent fraying of the ends of ropes you could melt the end fibres with a candle or wrapping in tape etc.

Cleaning:

Clean dirty ropes by washing with cold water and soap and then ensure they are rinsed well.

Storing:

Important that they are dry before storing. Once dry, store away in an airtight container in a place that young children cannot access independently. Coil ropes to store and secure with a simple knot. Organise ropes of a similar length together to help in sessions for ease. Have a checklist to count tools in and out at each session.

Provide a clear demonstration on safe rope use, the above maintenance and storage to the group



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Hand Tools (2.3)

How to facilitate safe use of a range of hand tools.

The Forest School leader will give the children a safety talk each session and when appropriate will explain and demonstrate clearly how a tool should be used, expected behaviour and when it can be used safely.

Clear demonstrations will be given, often working 1-1 until a child has mastered the skill. Explain to the group that they must demonstrate safe transporting of the tool.


If a child is not using a tool in a safe manner the activity is stopped and safety instructions will again be given.

Also explain to the client group that they need to clear the area that they are working in removing any rocks or sharp items.

Gloves are kept on site and can be worn if the child wants to or if the Forest School leader feels that the child needs to. Gloves can protect the hand if worn on the bracing (supporting) hand but when working the child needs to feel the object and have a good grip at all times.

All activities using tools are fully risk assessed. At the end of the session the item will be counted in to ensure that all have been returned and can then be stored safely.


Tools should practise skills suitable to their ability and should be given tools that match this.

Tool 1	Bill Hook	
Purpose	Primarily to split wood	
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Safety cover to protect the blade	
PPE	Not necessary to use a safety glove	
Adult: Child ratio	Adult to demonstrate how to use this working 1-1 with a child at all times Generally used with two people one being the Forest Schools Lead Older children may then use this independently once mastered skill.	




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Transporting	<p>Cover the bill hook with the protective cover. Put the bill hook by your side. Walk with the blade pointing down.</p>
Working Space	<p>Always use tools at a distance at arms’ length and one tool’s length away from other people (approx. 2m), work on a secure stump</p>
Method of Use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To split wood one person should hold the billhook with one hand firmly on the handle and pinching the hook with the other. 2. The blade should be placed at the top of the log to be split. 3. The second person will use a mallet or piece of wood to strike the top of the billhook and drive the blade into the wood. 4. This is repeated until the wood splits. <p>Ensure clean blade, replace sheath and store appropriately.</p>

Tool 2	<p>Bow Saw</p> 
Purpose	<p>Used for cutting branches greater than around 1 ½ inches in diameter.</p>
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	<p>Safety cover to protect the blade</p>
PPE	<p>Safety glove on non-tool hand</p>
Adult: Child ratio	<p>Depending on age of pupils and experience Begin 1-1, no more than 1-6 (in line with school policy)</p>
Transporting	<p>Holding in the centre of the shaft, with the blade parallel to the floor, walk slowly to a point and then back demonstrating how to carry the saw safely. By keeping the blade parallel to the floor it reduces the risk of entanglement and tripping especially for children.</p>
Working Space	<p>Always use tools at a distance at arms’ length and one tool’s length away from other people</p>
Method of Use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No gloves on tool hand; well-fitting glove on non-tool hand 2. Make a small nick in the wood first. 3. Use the full length of the saw, drawing backwards. Try to keep it straight. 4. Keep the blade facing away from you on the outside of your wood, on the outside leg peeling away from the body <p>(You can also use this tool with a partner who will help by holding the shaft from the other side of the tool)</p>



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Tool 3	Secateurs	
Purpose	To cut twigs smaller than a penny piece.	
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Safety catch	
PPE	Always use tools at a distance at arms’ length and one tool’s length away from other people	
Adult: Child ratio	Depending on age of pupils and experience Begin 1-1, no more than 1-6 (in line with policy)	
Transporting	Close and lock safety catch, hold blades in gloved hand next to leg with handles facing downwards.	
Working Space	Always use tools at a distance at arms’ length and one tool’s length away from other people	
Method of Use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Always hold the secateurs with the black blade in the upper position. 2. For the most effective cut, place the branch or stem in the jaws at a 45 degree angle. Ensure the branch is as deep as possible in the jaw as this gives you more leverage. 3. Squeeze the handle until you feel a definite stop. Clean blades, replace safety catch and store away.	

Tool 4	Gimlet	
Purpose	Primarily to making holes in wood	
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	-	
PPE	May use safety glove on hand not using tool	
Adult: Child ratio	Depending on age of pupils and experience Begin 1-1, no more than 1-6 (in line with policy)	




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Transporting	Point downwards near thigh holding the handle
Working Space	Always use tools at a distance at arms’ length and one tool’s length away from other people
Method of Use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose a flat place to work on. 2. Hold the drill perpendicular to the wood and keep this position whilst turning the drill clockwise. 3. Apply a little pressure until the drill bites into the wood 4. Check regularly to ensure that the drill does not go into the work surface. Store safely.

Tool 5	Fixed Knife
Purpose	Primarily used for whittling or cutting cord
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Safety cover
PPE	May use safety glove on hand not using tool
Adult: Child ratio	Depending on age of pupils and experience Begin 1-1, no more than 1-6 (in line with policy)
Transporting	Point downwards near thigh holding the handle
Working Space	Always use tools at a distance at arms’ length and one tool’s length away from other people
Method of Use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold the stick in your non-dominant hand. Keep fingers away from the knife blade. 2. Turn stick away from your body to your less dominant side 3. Always cut away from yourself 4. Place blade on stick and press with a firm pressure pushing down with your thumb 5. Keep the angle of the blade shallow to avoid catching the blade on knots. Only take off a small layer at a time.



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Tool 6	Folding saw	
Purpose	Used for cutting small branches	
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Release button and folds away to protect knife	
PPE	Safety glove on non-tool hand	
Adult: Child ratio	Depending on age of pupils and experience Begin 1-1, no more than 1-6 (in line with school policy)	
Transporting	Fold the knife away when transporting and hold at your side.	
Working Space	Always use tools at a distance at arms' length and one tool's length away from other people	
Method of Use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No gloves on tool hand; well-fitting glove on non-tool hand 2. Make a small nick in the wood first. 3. Use the full length of the saw, drawing backwards. Try to keep it straight. 4. Keep the blade facing away from you on the outside of your wood, on the outside leg peeling away from the body 	

Tool 7	Potato Peelers	
Purpose	Primarily to whittling wood	
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	-	
PPE	May use safety glove on hand not using tool	



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Adult: Child ratio	Depending on age of pupils and experience Begin 1-1, no more than 1-6 (in line with policy)
Transporting	Point downwards near thigh holding the handle
Working Space	Always use tools at a distance at arms' length and one tool's length away from other people
Method of Use	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Hold the stick in your non-dominant hand.2. Turn stick away from your body to your less dominant side3. Always peel away from yourself4. Place the peeler on a stick and press with a firm pressure pushing down with your thumb.5. Keep the angle of the peeler shallow to avoid catching. Only take off a small layer at a time.



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Campfire (2.4, 2.5 ,2.6)

How to facilitate safe use of a campfire with client group(s).

Preparation

First select a place to create your campfire – in a clearing away from trees and bushes. Especially ensure there are not overhanging, creating a border around the fire as shown below. Avoid areas of peat as heat can travel underground and also stony areas with large rocks that may heat up.

Clear an area around the fire site removing any leaves or debris by moving them to the sides, to reveal soil underneath.

Mark a boundary, of suitable size, around the fire pit area with logs or sticks. See picture below. Explain to the client group that no-one must stand inside this boundary.

Ensure there is water nearby, so it can be accessed easily and if sitting in a circle with logs that client group knows where the entrance and exit is. Water may also be in a bucket so that if anyone got a burn they can put their hand in this immediately

Safe Sitting

Ensure that the clients group is sitting at least 2 meters away from the first safety boundary when lighting the fire or when demonstrating.

Prior to building your fire, you need to first collect sticks and branches of different thicknesses. These may need to be broken or cut down so they are grouped into similar sizes (Matchstick size, pencil size, thumb thickness and wrist size) and placed on a tarpaulin to keep them dry. It is important to ensure that all wood selected is dry and brittle so ensure that the client group looks for standing dead wood (hung up in trees). Birch, Holly and Pine are good woods to select for the initial stages of a fire.

Building

First create two small logs or branches parallel on the ground. Place a solid layer of small logs across the parallel logs – making a ‘waffle like’ structure. This is to allow lots of air to flow between the logs. Make a starter fire using cotton wool and the add sticks in groups gradually building in size – starting with the smallest sticks/ bark first and adding more layers.

Lighting

Prior to lighting, consider the wind direction so that the smoke will not be blowing into the clients group face.

There are many different ways to light the fire but fire steels (or ‘dragon sneezer’!) are reasonably easy for children to learn to use. By striking the steel in a downward motion against the fire stick creates hot sparks. Use cotton wool, which ignites with the smallest spark, as tinder to give children a chance to master the technique. They could practise this technique first. They can then add natural tinder such as birch bark. When lighting fires it is important to increase the levels of oxygen available to the fire. Position yourself unwind and blow gently and constantly into the base of the fire. If a client group is doing this, consider safety issues such as loose clothing and hair.

Management of a campfire

As stated about to start with, twigs the thickness of a matchstick are used to enable the flame from the tinder (cotton wool/various appropriate barks/seedheads to grow and establish itself). The next twigs added



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are of pencil thickness, followed by thumb thickness and finally up to wrist thickness depending on the purpose and size of fire required.

To keep the client group safe a heat proof glove may be used to make managing the fire easier.

Once you have established a fire let it start to die down. Show the client group how to safely keep on adding fuel to keep the fire burning, as embers develop, push them into the middle to the ember bed.

safe siting, building, lighting and management of a campfire

How to facilitate safe campfire cooking with a client group.

Once the fire is established as described above and is giving out a lot of heat, the embers have burnt through and the wood on top is caught alight it is time to start cooking.

Prior to starting cooking you would discuss with the client group how to keep safe when cooking on a campfire.

Food preparation and Hygiene Safety

Establish a place where client groups can wash their hands / access to anti-bacterial wash.

Hands will be washed thoroughly before handling and preparing food. Any food needing preparation will be prepared prior e.g. bread dough.

Food will be stored in clean containers and transported in a cool bag to and from the site, with any clean utensils and cooking pans required. The box will remain closed in between use with food covered in bags or boxes; to avoid attracting flies and other insects. Raw meats will be stored separately to any other foods. All 'use by' dates will be checked on foods before eating. Water for cooking will be provided in cleaned sealed storage container. Handling, cooking and eating Food;

A fresh, clean, bucket of warm soapy water will be available for children to wash their hands before handling food or utensils.

The client group would have been taught how to cook food safely following the activity risk assessment and fire procedure. All food will be checked by an adult to ensure it is fully cooked before eating/ fire is right temperature to cook on.

Children will be asked to sit still around the fire circle or to move to a designated eating area from the fire to keep numbers to a minimum near the fire circle/ reduce risks of choking.

Clearing away and cleaning up;

ALL food not eaten or cooked will be placed in bin bags and disposed of at the end of the session by one of the adults. The area is checked to ensure there is no food traces to avoid vermin being attracted to the area.

ALL utensils and pans will be washed at the station in hot soapy water and stored away correctly.

All hair will be tied back and loose clothing secured prior to cooking on a campfire.

Allergies/ Vegetarian/ Vegan will be considered prior to cooking and appropriate menu will be selected.



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How to keep safe when cooking

Establish with the client group rules on what they can do when cooking over a fire.

Cooking using three methods

1. Using sticks/ skewers – you can simply hold your skewers over the fire or create a structure as pictured below. Select a live stick that will not easily catch light. Ensure sticks are long enough so participants can hold them without risk of catching fire or a wire rack may be used. The end of the stick should be peeled using a peeler/ knife in the interest of hygiene. This method is good for cooking vegetable kebabs, bread sticks and marshmallows for smores.
2. Cooking food inside tinfoil and placed directly on the fire. Tongs or sticks can be used to move or rotate the food to ensure even cooking. Cooking fruit such as apples or pears and peppers/ potatoes work and bread balls particularly using this method.
3. In a pan and placed on the grill: The pan can be placed directly on the fire or on a frame over the fire. It is important for safety that it is not likely to tip over and spill. Food will need to be checked regularly and stirred to ensure that items don't stick to the pan. This method works well when cooking soups, vegetable chilli, stews etc.

How to facilitate the safe extinguishing of fire with a client group.

Try to let the fire burn down completely so only ash remains – with a stick encourage this to happen by tapping on the sticks to help them break up.

Pour water over the fire. It is important that water should be poured over the entire fire pit including any boundary logs or rocks. Continue to check for any signs that the fire is still building and add more water as needed. Even if it is not glowing it is possible it could be hot enough to reignite.

To stir the ashes in the fire around, use a stick and take sure that all of the fire has been covered. If the fire was started on the soil, use the stick to poke holes in the ground and allow the water to soak into and cool the soil beneath the fire.

Check the area around the fire pit to ensure no embers or sparks have escaped.

Remove ashes from the fire and dispose of it appropriately in the area. You can dig a hole and tip the ashes and then cover again so the site remains as natural as possible.

Cover the area again with leaves previously removed so that the site looks natural again.

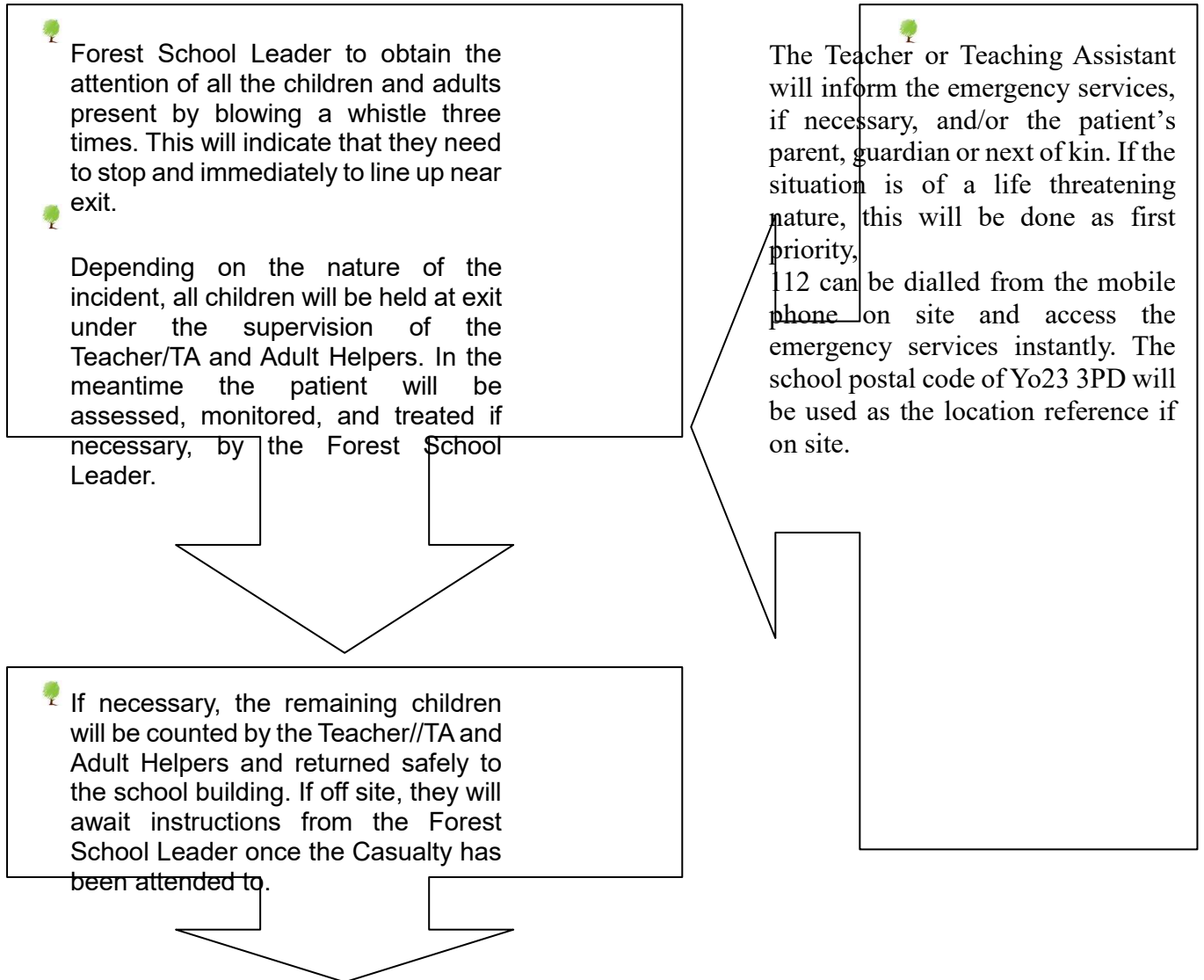


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Forest School Emergency Procedures:

Medical Emergency (serious injury, poisoning or illness)

The Forest School Leader is the qualified first aider in the outdoors and responsible for the patient until professional assistance takes over. Should an emergency incident occur then the following routine/procedure should be adhered to:








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Forest School Emergency Procedures:


Missing Child.


 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 outside agencies are involved with the search their advice will be followed

 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.



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Forest School Emergency Procedures : Fire.

On Site:

Standard school Fire procedures will be followed. Off Site:



If a fire spreads or becomes out of control and attempts to extinguish it have failed, the Forest School Leader or assisting adult will blow the whistle and shout "Fire". Upon hearing this, all adults and children should immediately stop what they are doing, leave any tools, resources or belongings, and follow instructions given by the Forest School Leader (i.e., "walk to 'name'/ place" or "walk to me") guided by supporting adults.



Staff will account for the presence of all children and adults, and assemble the group ready to evacuate.



A final head count will be made, and upon all children and adults being present, evacuation will begin immediately, taking the safest (not necessarily the quickest) route. Adults will lead the group swiftly, with the Forest School Leader leading and the session assistant following behind the last child. The Fire brigade will be called en route. Arrangements will be made for children to be returned to school.



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Cancellation

Forest School sessions usually take place outdoors whatever the weather. However, sessions may need to be moved to a more sheltered site within the school grounds if there are high winds. A possibility for this is our planned indoor session using the sensory garden.

Insurance

Email sent and calls made to confirm insurance of adding lighting fires and using tools by a **Forest Leader**

insurance.claims@york.gov.uk

QLA-03U002-0033 Zurich Municipal Insurance

Risk Assessment Guidelines

A **SITE** risk assessment is undertaken and a risk assessment and check is made prior to every Forest



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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, shelter building, fire lighting and cooking on an open fire, and palm drilling.

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 with accompanying the group and require them to sign each relevant risk assessment to show that they have read and understood the assessments
- We regularly monitor and review each risk assessment, half termly and as an action is needed.

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.

Forest School follows the same high staff to pupil ratio as all areas of the curriculum and activities at St Mary’s.



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SITE RISK ASSESSMENT (3.1)

Site: St Marys CE Primary Woodland Area (including pond and surrounding school field)

Completed by: Jayne Boast

Date completed: 7.9.23

Hazards	Risk	Who might be harmed	Action
Exploring the site, Uneven ground, branches and tree roots on the ground. Branches and shrubs at eye level	Med	Anyone	Children well supervised, awareness talk and reminders. There will always be at least 2 members of staff, both first Aid trained with a First Aid kit Walkie Talkie to link to school office Prior Assessments of site for hazardous areas- make children aware and clear area e.g brambles on paths
Missing Child A child may wander off during a Forest Schools session	Low	Participants	Children told and asked about the boundaries and Forest Schools Rules Regular Headcount. No access out of the school grounds,
Bites and Stings from Bees/ Wasps and stinging nettles/ ticks	Med	Anyone	Warn not to catch bees/ wasps and be aware of stinging nettles. Long Trousers and closed footwear to be worn. Brambles /Nettles to be cleared Schools Gardeners focus on removing nettles in certain areas Make participants aware and check for ticks
Mushrooms and fungi	Med	Participants	Ensure that children do not eat anything they find and keep their hands out of their mouths and wash them thoroughly after the session
Allergies or children’s existing conditions	Med	Participants	All staff to be aware of any known allergies or existing conditions and be aware of treatment required
Poisonous Plants	Low	Participants	Site to been inspected and any poisonous plants removed Children aware not to put their hands in their mouths



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Building dens or other activities using sticks and branches – risk of sharp objects.	Med	Participants	Children to be aware of dangers and carry / hold sticks carefully being aware of others around them. Injuries / accidents to be dealt with accordingly Site checked
Supporting notes: <i>First Aid Kit to be checked/ restocked regularly and brought to woodland during Forest School sessions</i>			

Site: St Marys CE Primary Woodland Area (including pond and surrounding school field)

Completed by: Jayne Boast

Date completed: 7.9.23

Hazards	Risk	Who might be harmed	Action
Falling branches and falling trees	Low	Children Adults	Site checked regularly to ensure no fallen or dangerous branches or trees. Check for damage to trees prior to sessions Manage a damaged tree Use gradient app to assess slope of trees and monitor Avoid using of an area if necessary Cancel sessions due to high winds – see weather risk-benefit for more details.
Sharp branches and thorns	Medium	Children	Children to be aware, any cuts or injuries to be dealt with on site. Larger cuts / more serious injuries to be dealt with in school. In the event of severe injuries 999 to be called.
Animal faeces - infection, Toxicariasis Wild animals	Low	Children Adults	Area checked by staff before use with children. Children to be made aware not to touch or pick up any animal droppings. Hands to be cleaned and anti bac gel to be used. Be respectful of wildlife and keep distance if disturbed
Bacteria / viruses Infection of staff and pupils and transmission of the virus	Medium	Children Adults	Children and staff will wash their hands before going to Forest School. Facilities for handwashing will be available during the sessions. Warm water, soap and paper towels will be available. Tissues will be available and children will be reminded of the ‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’ approach. This will be included in the usual ‘safety talk’ at the beginning of sessions where we talk about looking after ourselves, each other and



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			the woods. Children will continue to be reminded to not put things in their mouths or touch their face. Where handwashing is required this will be facilitated by an adult to reduce risk of any cross contamination. Paper towels and tissues will be disposed of in a disposable bag which will be disposed of between different groups. Children and adults will wash hands on return to the school building
Unauthorised person	Low	Children Adults	The woodland site is within schools fenced boundary However, children know to notify an adult if an adult is on site that they do not know. As part of schools safeguarding policy children/ adults know that visitors badge must be worn for any visitors on site and to raise any concerns to an adult.
Using string	Low	Adults Children	Children will be instructed how to use string to make dens and tie sticks together. Close supervision.
Woodwork Area/ tools Impact to fingers/ hand Infection (Splinters) Injury to eye from nail rebound/ debris in eye Cuts, bruises	Low	Children	Safety talk given and repeated prior to use of tools. Limit number of pupils using the equipment Strict use of tools on a 1:1 basis under close supervision. Demonstration on how to use each of the tools used Safety Goggles to be used Tools regularly checked
Extreme weather	Med	All	Ensure children are wearing the correct clothing Seek shelter Cancel session if thunderstorm/ high winds as needed
Pond	Med	Participants	Discuss safety near water prior Avoid children getting too close to edge See Pond dipping risk assessment for more details
Supporting notes:			



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RISK-BENEFIT ASSESSMENT (3.1)

Activity: Weather
Completed by: Jayne Boast

Date completed: 7.9.23

<p>Benefits: The participants can experience all seasonal changes and be immersed in nature in all its forms. This will help develop their understanding of the natural environment, will create a sensory experience as well as building self-confidence and enjoyment in a range of weather conditions.</p>			
Hazards	Risk	Who might be harmed	Action
<p>Cold – Hyperthermia</p> <p>Ice - Slipping</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>All participants & staff</p>	<p>Participants must be suitably dressed for weather conditions and provide spare waterproofs/ coats/ boots. Encourage layers to keep warm. Check the weather forecast ahead of the session to assist planning and delivery – use sheltered areas as necessary. Avoid areas that are at increased risk of slipping especially in icy conditions.</p>
<p>Wind – falling branches/ trees or objects being lifted off the ground</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>All participants & staff</p>	<p>Check weather forecast ahead of the session to assist planning and delivery – use sheltered areas as necessary/ stay out of the woodland area and cancel sessions if strong winds. Regular checks of trees (increased slopping/ fallen branches), shelters for structural damage.</p>
<p>Heat – dehydration/ heat stroke</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>All participants & staff</p>	<p>Participants must be suitably dressed for weather conditions and provide spare hats/ sun cream. Encourage drinking/ all participants to bring water bottles. Check the weather forecast ahead of the session to assist planning and delivery – use sheltered areas for shade.</p>
<p>Sun – being sunburnt</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>All participants & staff</p>	<p>Participants must be suitably dressed for weather conditions and provide spare hats/ sun cream. Encourage drinking/ all participants to bring water bottles. Check the weather forecast ahead of the session to assist planning and delivery – use sheltered areas for shade.</p>



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Rain – injury from slipping/ getting wet	Medium	All participants & staff	Participants must be suitably dressed for weather conditions and provide spare waterproofs/ coats/ boots. Check weather forecast ahead of the session to assist planning and delivery – use sheltered areas/ create shelters using tarpaulins as necessary. Avoid areas that are at increased risk of slipping especially in very wet conditions.
Thunderstorms – lightening strikes	Unlikely risk of being struck by lightning but serious	All participants & staff	Check the weather forecast ahead of the session to assist planning and delivery – if thunderstorms cancel the session. If a thunderstorm is heard during the session, return to the school site.
Supporting notes: (reasons for difficult decisions) Avoid woodland areas during high winds, assess mature trees regularly for slopping			

RISK-BENEFIT ASSESSMENT (3.1)

Activity: Tools

Completed by: Jayne Boast

Date completed: 7.9.23

Benefits: Allows participants to create woodland crafts using natural materials which will in turn develop their self-confidence, sense of achievement and being closer to the woodland environment. Allows participants to be involved in coppicing and develop their understanding of sustainability			
Hazards	Risk	Who might be harmed	Action
Cutting injury from saw/ blade whilst in storage	Medium/ Low	Staff member Children accessing if not secure storage arrangements	Blades to be checked for wear or damage before storing. Blade guards to be checked and secured before storing. Tools to be locked in the shed so staff can access but not able to be accessed by children.
Injury during transportation	Medium	Participants/ staff members	Tool kept in closed tool bag. Bow saws to be carried at arms-length, arm hanging down. Blade guards must be in place. On reaching site, tools to be placed on the ground so that they are clearly visible and away from general walkways
Injury (e.g Cuts, puncture wound or amputation) during use of tools	Medium	All Participants/ staff members	Group briefed with safe working use of saw, (see detailed notes for each tool in tools section) and demonstration given by a responsible adult. Safe working space and an appropriate stance to keep the body out of danger. Suitable work surface to be used -stable. Adult to monitor and advise on use of tools. After use, blade guard to be put back on tools as required and put back in pre-arranged safe place (shed). Glove must be worn on bracing hand at all times



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Injury from damaged tool	Medium	Participants/ staff members	Tools to be examined for damage before and after use. Worn or damaged blades to be replaced/ rust removed etc.
Burns sustained to clothing or hair during use – e.g Fire Steel Tool	High	Participants/ staff members	Long hair to be tied back before using the tool. Loose clothing e.g. overlong sleeves to be folded back. Clear demonstrations / correct use Burns kit is ready to use. Have a water bucket and water supply to cool burns. Children aware of fire safety and boundaries prior

Supporting notes: (reasons for difficult decisions)

Ensure the Forest School Leader supervises the client group when using tools and ensure appropriate Forest School Leader to participant ratio dependent on the age and abilities.

Children assessed on their skills/ ability and only when confident able to use a particular tool. 1-1 monitoring

RISK-BENEFIT ASSESSMENT (3.1)

Activity: Ropes

Completed by: Jayne Boast

Date completed:

Benefits: Learn different knots and use these when creating woodland crafts Confidence when erecting structures or shelters (Tarpaulins or obstacle courses)			
Hazards	Risk	Who might be harmed	Action
Rope burns	Medium	Participants	Provide gloves if appropriate Avoid games that involve excessive pulling on ropes
Entanglement – leading to falls	Medium	Participants	Supervision by the forest leader Emphasise that children do not climb in areas where ropes are being used to avoid entanglement/ strangulation Ensure ropes are stored correctly – count them in and out
Trips	Medium	Participants	Consider the height of ropes when attached to trees so they are not a trip hazard. Make sure participants are aware. Ensure ropes are stored correctly – count them in and out



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Strangulation	Unlikely but serious	Participants	Use ropes under the supervision of the Forest Schools leader. Ensure participants don't put ropes around their neck and avoid ropes at neck height being left unattended. Use brightly coloured ropes.

Supporting notes: (reasons for difficult decisions)

Ensure Forest School Leader supervises the client group using ropes to ensure appropriate Forest School Leader to participant ratio dependent on the age and abilities.

RISK-BENEFIT ASSESSMENT (3.1)

Activity: Campfire and Camp cooking
Completed by: Jayne Boast

Date completed:

<p>Benefits: This brings all participants together around an open fire – strengthening a sense of community amongst its participants, developing cooking skills and helping to keep warm. Through experiences such as starting fires using a firelighter children can develop their resilience and determination to achieve and satisfaction that they have met their goals.</p>			
Hazards	Risk	Who might be harmed	Action
Burns and sparks	High	All participants and staff	Long hair to be tied back before using the tool. Loose clothing e.g. overlong sleeves to be folded back. Burns kit is ready to use. Have a water bucket and water supply to cool burns. Clear demonstrations / correct use Children aware of fore safety and boundaries prior – always walk/ not allowed inside the marked fire pit area, sit on stumps at safe distance away. Use long bamboo sticks to reduce risk of children getting close to fire.
Inhalation of smoke/ contact with eyes	Likely but not serious	All participants and staff	Highlight to participants about first working out the wind direction / that they should remove themselves from smoke blowing their way. Burn dry wood as this will smoke less, Encourage children to close eyes if smoke has got in their eyes/ eye wash in First Aid box.
Food Poisoning	Low	All participants and staff	Ensure that food is cooked correctly. Select food that will not be at risk of food poisoning.



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Burns and scalds from eating and drinking hot food and drink	Medium	All participants	Burns kit/ First Aid kit and bucket of cold water is always available close to the fire.
Grass Fires	Medium –at certain times of year	All participants	Always use the firepit and refrain from lighting fires during summer months – no ground fires Fire blanket / Fire beaters present.
Trip and falls near the fire	Low	All participants and staff	Ensure a safe area is marked so the participants cannot get too close to the fire

Supporting notes: (reasons for difficult decisions)

Ensure Forest School Leader supervise the lighting fires or when cooking on an open fire and ensure appropriate Forest School Leader to participant ratio dependent on the age and abilities.



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RISK-BENEFIT ASSESSMENT (3.1)

Activity: Building Shelters

Completed by: Jayne Boast

Date completed: 7.9.23

Benefits: This develops fine motor development, team work, resilience and perseverance. The client can use ropes for a purpose. There is a great sense of satisfaction in achieving their aim. It also develop creativity and independence skills.

Hazards	Risk	Who might be harmed	Action
Using ropes - Strangulation Being trapped by a rope	Medium	All participants	Model and discuss use of ropes. Ensure you have the correct ratios Be aware of how many ropes we have Ropes to be accounted for at end Assess suitability of ropes prior Process praise the children
Using tarps – suffocation	Low	All participants	Model and discuss use of tarps Ensure tarps used follow safety requirements Correct ratios Carry out head counts Check the weather and area prior to use Process praise the children
Using logs/ branches – Being hit by a long/branch Dropping on a limb	High	All participants	Teach rules on travelling with logs/branches (drag branch if longer than arm) Explain how to work as a team if transporting heavy log/branch
Tying ropes to trees Tripping	High	All participants	-Use bright ropes or attach ribbons for awareness - Ensure ratio is correct -Modelling -Teach about tree suitability -Assess
Large or small objects falling – bumps/ bruises	Low	All participants	Check weather prior Assess trees prior Pick suitable area to carry out activity
Pegs – puncture wound	Low	All participants	Use plastic pegs Demonstrate how to carry with pegs Count pegs Pegs to all be accounted for at the end
Shelter collapsing	Low	All participants	Model how to build shelters correctly to avoid shelters collapsing / think carefully about location of shelter etc Avoid going under shelters in adverse weather conditions

Supporting notes: (reasons for difficult decisions)

Ensure Forest School Leader supervises client group when building shelters to ensure appropriate Forest School Leader to participant ratio dependent on the age and abilities.



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RISK-BENEFIT ASSESSMENT (3.1)

Activity: Collecting Natural Materials

Completed by: Jayne Boast

Date completed: 7.9.23

Benefits:
Freedom, play, natural setting, self-awareness, safety – taking risks, teamwork, respect, warmth, light, attentiveness, using and identifying material, tool use, self-esteem, emotional development

Hazards	Risk	Who might be harmed	Action
Uneven / wet ground Slips, trips and falls resulting in injuries	Likely but not serious	Participants	Pre-site visit form completed. Site risk assessment checked. Supervision with correct ratios Area for activity selected to avoid obvious hazards. Brief group of any known areas that may present safety issues.
Plants and fungi	Medium – high risk if ingested	All Participants	Pre-visit site check completed and plant hazardous areas identified and shared with group – establish expectations Group fully briefed about the poisonous/inedible properties of some plants and fungi. No eating policy Supervision with correct ratios Access to hand sanitiser Take mobile phones, trained first aider and a stocked first aid box
Insect bites	Medium	All Participants	Fauna identification seasonally Ensure children have any relevant medication / creams (parental consent) Children to wear appropriate clothing – long sleeves and long trouser legs
Soil borne diseases, dog or fox waste	Medium	All Participants	Pre-visit (daily sweep) completed – identify and cover / remove / establish a boundary Remind children to leave well alone if they come across it
Lifting / swinging sticks	Medium	All Participants	Show the children how to lift larger boughs of dead wood Remind children not to swing behind Remind children to be aware of each other
Inappropriate lashings	Medium	All Participants	Gloves for heavy/ thick rope pulling Ropes – bright coloured/ marked for easy identification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All ropes will be checked regularly ● Children will be tightly supervised Children will begin to learn how to tie effective/ safe knots

Supporting notes: (reasons for difficult decisions)

Before each session the site will be checked and cleared where necessary. The Forest School leaders will ensure that they have access to up to date identification guides for fungi and plants. The equipment bag for each session will contain gloves, rubbish bags and poo bags for disposal of litter, debris or faeces. Individual risk assessments for vulnerable children and adults will be completed with regards to collecting natural materials



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COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ACTION PLAN (3.1)

Action	Date action by	Success criteria	Date achieved
Meeting with to Headteacher/ Business Manager – Discussion about areas of development and 3 year plan Agree a mown areas with the Headteacher/ Garden contractors and those that must remain natural	June 23	Shared vision for Forest School Grounds maintained regularly	On going
Governors Meeting – Discussion needs for our Woodland Area/ Angela Kay – Suggestion of Tesco community Fundraiser (500- 1500)		Funds to begin to develop Woodland Area with new Learning Hut	1.11.23 – Confirmed that we came first! Tesco’s community fund £1,500
Parents and Carers – Tapestry post about correct kit to bring/ Forest School Ethos / Policy shared. Added to Starting School prospectus – add letter and agreement 23-24 prospectus	June 23	Aware of benefits of Forest Schools and its Ethos	Sept 23
Staff – Share completed handbook with staff	July 23	Staff aware of their roles responsibilities during Forest School Sessions	Nov 23
Volunteers – Share completed handbook with staff	July 23	Volunteers aware of their roles and responsibilities during Forest School Sessions	Nov 23
Participants – share Forest School principles/ expectation in child friendly language Establish Routines	Sept 23		
Friends of St Mary’s Meeting – Discussion on development ideas / funding		£4,000 donated to replace	



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Meeting Business Manager – Look at suitable huts to replace old hut deemed to be unsafe/ health and safety risk Governors meeting approval – 15.11.23	Nov 23	Hut will be replaced – enhanced opportunities for further learning	
Meeting Headteacher/ Business manager to use funds from Sports Premium towards purchasing needed tools £1,000 agreed	Sept 23	New tools purchased and enhancing learning further	
Survey report – assess risks of significant trees. Forest School given a copy of report by Business manager – discussed impact of this	Nov 23	Trees removed as required Plan to plant new trees	



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Dear Parents: (include in Prospectus)

We run a Forest School within the school grounds. It is planned that all children should have a ‘Forest School experience’ during their time at St Marys.

The location will be the enclosed woodland at the end of our playground. The Leaders Forest School is Jayne Boast. Please read the following important information, fill in the Parent School Agreement and return it to your child’s class teacher.

Information about Forest School

Forest School is run by trained Leaders and aims to build up children’s skills, abilities and confidence week by week through practical hands-on activities in the outdoors. It gives them the chance to explore, learn and discover at their own pace in a safe and supportive space.

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

- Woodwork using tools, e.g. making musical instruments, jewellery, decorative items
- Natural art
- Fire lighting
- Using knots and lashings
- Shelter building
- Bug hunts

There are many benefits to Forest School. For example, it can:

- 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 children to take care of themselves and others.
- Foster care, appreciation and respect for wildlife and wild places.
- Broaden knowledge and understanding of the natural world.

Safety at Forest School

There is always a high adult to participant ratio at Forest School. All activities are thoroughly risk assessed before the start of each session and Leaders continue to monitor the safety of the group as activities progress. There is always a trained first aider present at each session and a written emergency plan to follow.

Who will be running the Forest School sessions?

Sessions will be overseen by Forest School leader Jayne Boast. They will be assisted by St Mary’s staff.

What your child needs to wear for Forest School

The Forest School sessions will take place entirely outside in the woods whatever the weather. We will provide a shelter from the elements, but it is still important that your child wears clothes that are waterproof and warm and that are OK to get wet and muddy.

Your child should wear:

- Waterproof coat



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- Waterproof trousers (if they own a pair)
- Wellington boots (or sturdy walking boots)
- Comfortable long trousers
- Comfortable, warm long sleeved top or fleece
- Long sleeved T-shirt.
- Thick socks if the weather's cold - thermal if possible or two pairs of thinner ones

School Parent Agreement

The School	The Family	The child
We will aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to :-	I/we will aim to work in partnership with the school and its staff to:-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will aim to follow the rules of the forest:-
✓ provide high quality teaching & learning through a broad and balanced curriculum	✓ ensure that my child will attend school regularly and on time	✓ I will be gentle
✓ value each child as an individual	✓ ensure that my child is equipped appropriately for Forest School	✓ I will be kind
✓ understand that each child has their own learning style	✓ let the school know about any concerns and problems which might affect my child's behaviour or progress	✓ I will try my best
✓ encourage each child to achieve their personal best in all areas	✓ support my child in opportunities for learning at home	✓ I will be honest
✓ provide opportunities for children to learn and practice new skills	✓ attend parent consultations and discussions about my child's progress and school life	✓ I will listen to others
✓ encourage collaborative learning	✓ support the school policies and their rules for promoting good behaviour.	✓ I will look after living things
✓ encourage children to take risks in their own learning	✓ respond promptly to school correspondence	
✓ provide a high ratio of adults to children		
✓ ensure all adults working with our children are fit to do so		

If you are available to help volunteer to support at our Forest School session Thursday afternoon session, please let Mrs Boast know.



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Tesco Grant

Dear Parents,

As finances get tighter, we are looking at creative and innovative ways to generate income as a school.

Working closely with our governors, St Mary's will feature in the Tesco Community Grant Scheme. Voting will commence in store from the first week of July 2023 until the end of September 2023.

We have entered to raise money to develop our forest school area even further. We have been investing in this this year as children and staff value the space a great deal. We know we are lucky to have such a beautiful place to explore, learn and play.

The project with the highest number of votes across our region will receive £1,500 (or the amount that was requested up to this value), the second placed project £1,000 (or the amount that was requested up to this value), and the third placed project £500.

You will find St Mary's voting at:

York Low Ousegate Exp YO1 9QX
Piccadilly York Exp YO1 9TU
York Tadcaster Rd Ext YO24 1LW
York Acomb Wood Exp YO24 3XN

To vote, you will need to make a purchase within a store of any value. You will receive one token per transaction and it's not necessary to purchase a carrier bag in order to receive a token.

Be sure to pop the blue token in the St Mary's section next time you're in one of the participating tesco stores!

Thank you

Mr Boast and the team



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Forest School Policy

Intent for Forest School at St Mary’s

Forest School is an educational 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. It is a specialised learning approach that sits within and complements the wider context of outdoor and woodland education. Its roots reach back to early years pioneers in outdoor learning and across the sea to Scandinavia. The Forest School programme at St Mary’s Primary School encourages and inspires children (EY and KS1) to experience, explore and learn about nature in our forest environment. They are often challenged by our ever-changing weather conditions; developing knowledge and real awareness of the Seasons.

Aims of Forest School at St Mary’s

We aim to provide our children with the exciting opportunity to love, appreciate and value the importance of protecting our beautiful, natural environment. At Forest School all children are viewed as:

- equal, unique and valuable
- competent to explore & discover
- entitled to experience appropriate risk and challenge
- entitled to choose, and to initiate and drive their own learning and development
- entitled to experience regular success
- entitled to develop positive relationships with themselves and other people
- entitled to develop a strong, positive relationship with their natural world

Forest School learning at St Mary’s is achieved through the following:

- a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.
- using a natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world (the wildlife area at the bottom of the field).
- using a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.
- promoting the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
- offering learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Impact

The impact of our ambitious curriculum is that children are confident, independent learners who are eager to discover more. They have the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed in future transitions and they can apply this knowledge in everyday situations. They can confidently express their views but also have Mutual respect for others.



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We hope this has given you a flavour of the learning that takes place in Reception, but if you have any further questions, please feel free to contact our Reception teachers:

Mrs Jayne Boast

Reviewed – March 2025