

Risk Assessment

Area/Activity Assessed	Forest School	Date Completed	28.02.25
		Review Date	February 2026
Assessment Completed By	Karen Walsh (Compliance) Tom Atkinson (Forest School Leader)	Person(s) Consulted	TA/MH

Persons Exposed	Employees	☒	Contractors	☐	Young Person	☒	Expectant Mother	☐	Visitors and/or Public	☐	Trespassers	☐
Frequency of Exposure	Continually	☐	Hourly	☐	Daily	☒	Weekly	☐	Monthly	☐	Yearly	☐
Duration of Exposure	Less than 1hr	☐	1-2 hrs	☐	3-4 hrs	☐	5-6 hrs	☐	7-8 hrs	☐	More than 8 hrs	☒

Probability	5= Very Likely, 4= Likely, 3= Quite Possible, 2= Possible, 1= Unlikely	Low 0-8	Low risk no action required
Severity	5= Catastrophic, 4= Major, 3= Moderate, 2= Minor, 1= Insignificant	Medium 9-15	Medium risk ensure adequate controls are in use
		High 16-25	High risk stop operation and implement adequate control measures

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
			Severity	Probability	Risk	
1.	Incidents occurring due to a slip, trip, fall, or misuse or not following forest school safety guidelines.	- Pre-use inspections of the area are carried out by the forest school lead prior to the session. - Forest school lead has appropriate Forest school training. - Running is prohibited. - A safety talk and demonstrations are delivered to all groups before the session begins. - Adequate supervision is provided, taking into account the children's age and/or any children with special needs/behavioural problems/requiring additional assistance, etc. - All equipment used where possible is child friendly to minimise the chance of injury. - All groups are encouraged to wear suitable clothing and flat footwear (trainers, boots)	5	1	5	

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
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		- Participants refusing to adhere to our safety rules may be refused permission to take any further part in the activity until their behaviour improves. - The forest school lead carries an Emergency First Aid Kit, walkie talkie and mobile phone. - A fire extinguisher, a fire blanket and a mobile phone is taken to the site. In the event of a minor burn/scald first aid will be administered by a qualified first aider. Should a more serious injury occur, an ambulance will be called to transport the injured person to the nearest A&E department.				
2.	Environmental hazards High winds causing dangerous conditions in woodland – risk of falling branches	- The forest school lead will consult Head of School and a decision agreed. The Head of School or Forest School Lead reserves the right to cancel an activity if deemed unsuitable in prevailing weather. - All groups are encouraged to wear suitable clothing and flat footwear (trainers, boots)	3	2	6	
3.	Delay in a person receiving personal emergency medication for an asthma attack and/or an allergic reaction.	- All participants and group teachers/teaching assistance are made aware of the location of the activity in relation to the school building. - The groups teacher/teaching assistant are responsible for ensuring asthma inhalers and/or adrenaline pens are always accessible. - In the event of an allergic reaction, staff are on hand to administer any medication. - Children are told not to put anything, including their hands, near their mouths & wash hands after an activity.	5	1	5	
Collecting Natural Materials to build a shelter						
4.	Children attempting to Lift or carry heavy objects or materials	Pupils are supervised by both the forest school lead and the group's teacher/teaching assistant who will oversee the children and ensure they only collect and carry lightweight materials.	3	1	3	

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5.	Lifting and swinging sticks	- A safety talk and demonstrations are delivered to all groups before the session begins. - Participants refusing to adhere to our safety rules may be refused permission to take any further part in the activity until their behaviour improves.	3	1	3	
6.	Allergic or irritating rash due to contact with Insects, Plants, Toxic Plants or Fungus	- Pre-use inspections of the area are carried out by the forest school lead prior to the session. - Areas that contain stinging plants and insects are avoided. - Areas with high numbers of fungi will not be used. Children are made aware of the danger and are given procedures as to what to do, if they do come into contact with fungi. - The groups teacher/teaching assistant are responsible for ensuring asthma inhalers and/or adrenaline pens are always accessible. - In the event of an allergic reaction, staff are on hand to administer any medication.	2	1	2	
Fire Pit						
7.	Lighting the fire in woodland	- The forest school leader running the activity is familiar and will adhere to the forest school guidelines. - The fire pit area has been carefully selected as per forest school guidelines and all safety measures to avoid tree roots, peaty soil, stones, paths, overhanging branches and/or structures are followed. - Seating around the fire pit is at least 2 metres away from the edge of the fire pit. - A safety talk and demonstrations are delivered to all groups before the session begins. - Depending on the age of the children the fire will either be lit by a member of staff, or the children will be supervised. - Pupils refusing to adhere to our safety rules may be refused permission to take any further part in the activity until their behaviour improves. - A fire extinguisher, a fire blanket and a mobile phone is taken to the site	4	2	8	

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8.	Hot food	- Pupils will be allowed to cook over the fire under the supervision of Forest School leader. - Pupils will be reminded that the food and containers will be hot and to allow it to cool before eating etc. - Pupils are supervised at all times and when necessary are reminded of our fire safety rules.	3	1	3	
9.	Falling into the fire	- Pupils are reminded to walk around the fire pit carefully and no running allowed. - Seating is situated at least 2 metres away from the pit	4	2	8	
10.	Areas set alight	- The fire pit is sited away from potential hazards in accordance with forest school guidelines. - The forest school lead will check the area prior to lighting the fire pit. - Only a small amount of wood is collected, enough to keep the fire alight for the duration of the session.	4	2	8	
11.	After the session or putting the fire out	- The forest school lead will ensure the fire is extinguished completely before leaving the area. - Fires are not left unattended. - A water bucket and extinguisher are kept close by. - Wood used to feed fires are stored in a safe place to prevent deliberate fires being started.	4	2	8	
Kelly Kettle						
12.	Incidents occurring due to incorrectly lighting of the Kelly Kettle or from the steam given off once the water is boiled	- The forest school lead running the activity are familiar and will adhere to forest school guidelines. . - A safety talk and demonstration are delivered to all individuals before the session begins. - Pupils refusing to adhere to our safety rules may be refused permission to take any further part in the activity until their behaviour improves.	4	1	4	

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13.	Kelly Kettle falling over, spilling hot liquid and risk of ground catching light	- Weather conditions are assessed, this activity will not be carried out in high winds or if the Head Teacher and/or the forest school lead deems the activity unsafe. - Kelly kettle will be used on smooth ground before building a fire in the base of the kettle with TINDER. - All pupils will be kept at a distance away. - Pupils and staff are warned not to touch the outside of the kettle nor fire-base when in use as they will be HOT. - The forest school lead assisted by the groups teacher/teaching assistant will use the hot water from the Kelly kettle to make a hot drink for the pupils which will then be handed out to the pupils. - The school have purchased and will use specific cups for this activity in order to reduce the risk of spill's and burns. - The cups will only be half filled to avoid spills.	3	2	6	
Sharp Equipment: Pen Knives, Potato Peelers, Bill Hooks, Bow Saws, Loppers etc						
14.	Incidents occurring due to incorrectly using sharp tools	- The forest school lead running the activity are familiar and will adhere to forest school guidelines. . - A safety talk and demonstration are delivered to all individuals before the session begins. - Pupils refusing to adhere to our safety rules may be refused permission to take any further part in the activity until their behaviour improves.				
15.	Injury during sharp equipment transportation and storage between use	- All pen knives, Potato Peelers, Bill Hooks, Bow Saws, Sledgehammers, Loppers etc have been purchased from a reputable supplier. - All sharp equipment is kept in their sheaths when not being used. - The forest school lead has received and demonstrated that they can use sharp equipment safety as part of their forest school examination. - All sharp equipment is kept locked away in the school when not in use. - During an activity all sharp equipment will be kept secure or hung up by their tethers out of reach of the pupils between use. - All sharp tools and equipment are counted out and back in again after the session.	3	2	6	

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16.	Incidents occurring due to inappropriate tool talks or instruction	- The instructor taking the activity is a qualified forest school instructor and has demonstrated that they know how to use sharp tools safely, have an understanding of how they work and the dangers they can potentially pose to the pupil using them and to those around them. - Before using any tool for the first-time pupils are given a demonstration of the correct manner in which to handle and use the tool. The level of supervision and ratio of staff to pupils will be decided upon based on the group. Bow Saw Used for cutting branches greater than 1 ½ inches in diameter. - Generally, the bowsaw will be used by two pupils at a time. One holding at the hand guard and the other the handle at the opposite end. - Older pupils may be supervised using the bowsaw alone. - Gloves will be worn on the helper hand but not be worn on the hand holding the tool. - When making the initial few cuts each pupil's helper hand will be placed through the centre of the saw and on the wood opposite. This will prevent the blade from jumping onto one of their hands. Once the blade has bitten into the wood and formed a groove, they are safe to hold the wood adjacent to the saw. Geared loppers Used for cutting branches smaller than around 1½ inches in diameter. - Loppers are generally used by one person at a time and are a relatively safe tool to use and a good introduction to using tools in the woodland. Pupils are instructed to ensure they have a good footing and to check that the branch they are cutting is not bearing weight before cutting. - Co-operative work between two pupils will be encouraged by them using the loppers together, one holding the stick or branch to be cut and the other operating the loppers. - It is not necessary to wear gloves when using loppers. Knives Forest school knives are primarily used to cut cord and for whittling.	4	2	8	

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		- Fixed blade knives will be used instead of folding knives as they are deemed safer. - The size of the knives we use have been considered. We have gone for knives with smaller blades, smaller handles and even rounded blade ends as they are a sensible choice for pupils. - Gloves are to be available for use on the helper hand. No glove will be worn on the hand holding the knife. - Pupils are taught the correct position to sit and that they should ensure they are always cutting with arms over their legs and away from the body. - Where necessary a small log will be positioned next to them to carve onto. The log will be positioned to catch the blade at the end of the stroke. Billhook Traditionally used for cutting shrubs and bushes in forest school the billhook is used primarily for splitting wood. - In forest school the billhook will generally used by two people though older children may be comfortable using it alone. - To split wood one pupil will hold the billhook with one hand firmly on the handle and pinching the hook with the other. The blade should be placed at the top of the log to be split. - The second pupil will use a mallet or piece of wood to strike the top of the billhook and drive the blade into the wood. This is repeated until the wood splits. - It is not necessary to wear gloves when using a billhook.				
17.						
18.						

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19.						

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard number	Risk Rating	Who will be responsible for the additional control measures? Name(s)	When will the actions be complete?	Date complete and any comments or note

Acknowledgement

The following members of staff have read this risk assessment.
Their signatures are confirmation that they have read and understood all which is within its contents.

Name	Signature	Date	Name	Signature	Date