



Forest School Handbook



Forest School at Bledington

Our forest school is a child led experience that allows pupils to build resilience, make decisions and challenge themselves, while connecting to nature in a fun and safe outdoor environment.

Handbook contents

- 1. What is Forest School?**
- 2. Forest School Principles**
- 3. The benefits of Forest School**
- 4. Our Forest School site**
- 5. What happens at Forest School?**
- 6. Types of activities at Forest School**
- 7. Code of Conduct for the Forest**
- 8. Policy Statements and Procedures**
 - **Safeguarding**
 - **Behaviour**
 - **Equality**
 - **Communications strategy**
- 9. Health and Safety:**
 - **Accident and Emergency**
 - **Fire**
 - **Cooking (and Food hygiene)**
 - **Tools**
 - **Weather**
 - **Toileting**
 - **First Aid**
- 10. Risk Assessments**

1. What is Forest School?

Forest School is a child-centred inspirational learning process, that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term program that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting. (The Forest School Association)

We hope that every child that takes part in Bledington Forest School will have an opportunity to learn and grow at a speed that suits them. We hope that they will have fun and gain an appreciation of the natural world around them. They will make choices, problem solve, take risks and grow physically, socially and emotionally and through a range of outdoor activities.

2. Forest School Principles

Principle 1: Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

When Forest School is established, we aim to offer every class an opportunity to attend sessions on a regular basis. Ideally, this will be one afternoon a week for 12 weeks. Planning will be based on developing skills and also on the interest of the children as they are asked to feedback on their favourite activities and ones they would like to try. Observations and evaluations are carried out during and after each session.

Principle 2: Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

Bledington School has access to an area of native woodland within the school grounds that will be used.

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners

Activities offered will allow all children to take part in activities outdoors that are not part of the national curriculum. They will be encouraged to stay safe, but to

challenge themselves e.g. to cut some wood with a bow saw or to climb a up a tree. We aim to allow our children to have a choice in the woods – what do they want to do today? This will develop not only thinking and problem-solving skills, “How do I tie that bit of rope to make a swing?” but foster independence.

Principle 4: Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

All sessions will have a safety briefing for the area and the activities being undertaken. Ongoing 'rules' e.g. no licking and picking will be re-enforced before each session. Within these parameters children will have opportunity to explore and find out about their environment for themselves.

Principle 5. Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

Bledington's Forest School is led and managed by a level 3 qualified Forest School leader. It is supported by a team of adult volunteers.

Principle 6. Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning

Within each session a range of activities will be available to the children. They may be a more focused activity at the start of a session based on a theme eg natural explorers, followed by a time of child led choices e.g. tying knots to make a den, playing on a rope swing, imaginative play, whittling stick.

3. Benefits of Forest School

Forest School has been proven to bring many and varied benefits to participants of all ages, including those leading and assisting with sessions. Regular attendance can increase a child's confidence and self-esteem through exploration, problem solving, and being encouraged to learn how to assess and take appropriate risks. The child-led nature of activities can often mean information is retained better and also generally increases curiosity and motivation to learn in general. This motivation can have a positive impact on attitude to learning in school.

Children have been shown to improve in their confidence and communication to work with others, and children who were initially un-cooperative can become increasingly involved in sessions, sharing and working together for positive outcomes.

Learners also gain a respect for nature which can lead them to appreciate the wider, natural world and feel a responsibility for it.

In summary the benefits include:

- Build resilience (the skill of coping with risk and failure).
- Gain a sense of achievement.
- Increase motivation and concentration.
- Improve problem solving.
- Expand their vocabulary and communication skills.
- Feel empowered and have new perspectives.
- Build positive relationships with adults and peers.
- Have overall improved wellbeing and mental health.

4. Our Forest School Site

We are lucky to have access to a large outdoor space within our school grounds. As well as a school garden with vegetable beds and outdoor classroom where activities can be held, the main Forest School activities take place in an area of natural woodland spanning the length of the back of the school field. The area contains a range of native trees and shrubs such as oak and ash. In the site there is a temporary seating circle and a small wooden 'hut' that children can play in.



5. What happens at Forest School?

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 gather any resources we need to take out with us in our trunk.

The group then walks to the Forest School site and gathers at the meeting circle. We have a reminder of our code of conduct and site boundaries and any behaviour expectations required. The circle is central to everything that happens at Forest School, as it is a point where the group assembles and socialises. At the start of the session, participants and adults sit together and talk about what they did last session and what they are planning to do during the current one.

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 choice and learning.

At the end of each session participants gather together to have a snack and share their favourite moments by passing round our Forest School Owl. Participants help leaders to pack away any materials they have been using and help to return the woodland to the state in which they found it.

6. What activities might we be doing?

Forest School activities are diverse and are mainly based on the location of the site and the age/ability of the participants. All activities aim to allow the children freedom to explore and to learn more about the woodland environment. The following list are some of the activities we currently run or plan to run in future sessions:

- Shelter and den building
- Tool use - knives, palm drills, bowsaws
- Studying wildlife
- Playing games
- Sensory activities
- Rope and string work eg rope swings and slack lines
- Art and natural sculpture work
- Woodland and traditional craft
- Developing stories and drama, and meeting imaginary characters
- Fire lighting

7. Forest School Code of Conduct

Our code of conduct is relevant to **all** participants, adults and children and is in place to create a safe and nurturing learning environment for everyone involved.

Boundaries

During their first Forest School session children will learn where the physical boundaries for activities are and any no-go zones. Each group will work together to generate some rules for safe and happy learning and children will understand that they are expected to follow them. This will include an agreed call back sign (whistle and 1,2,3 where are you) to enable a speedy return if needed by the Forest School Leader.

Entering the Forest School site

At Forest School we learn to respect the world around us. When we enter the site we will be aware that we share the space with plants, birds and animals and we need to work in a way that will not damage or harm anything

Toileting

Children will be encouraged to use the toilets before a session starts. They may go to the toilet in pairs during the session, remembering to take off outdoor boots before going inside.

Collecting natural materials

Natural materials can be collected for art, sculpture and woodland craft. Children are encouraged to look for the materials themselves, but leaders will supervise to check that nothing harmful is gathered. Children are not allowed to eat anything gathered on foraging trips without adult supervision. They are encouraged not to pick living things, such a flowers.

Carrying larger materials

Children will be taught how to lift, roll drag or pull heavier materials safely using hands or ropes, keeping a straight back and bending he knees. Teamwork is encouraged!

Digging

When investigating the environment, children may carefully move logs or stones to look for insects, taking care not to harm the creatures or destroy their habitat.

They can dig under the soil using their fingers or small sticks but they may not use tools to dig deep holes.

Using tools

Children will be taught the correct way to use tools at Forest School. This will include the use of safety equipment, like gloves and awareness of others around them. Some Tools will have a marked zone for their use. All tool use will be under strict adult supervision, 121 where necessary for the task being undertaken e.g. whittling.

Tree climbing

Climbing trees is a great opportunity for children to learn to manage their own risks. They will be shown how to climb safely, checking the ground below for sharp objects, looking for a safe path of ascent and descent and which trees are suitable for climbing. Children are permitted to reach their own limits to a maximum of 1.5 metres. Adults will supervise tree climbing activities and ensure that children are wearing appropriate clothes and shoes. The Forest School leader will assess identified climbing trees during pre session checks.

Sticks and stones

Throwing sticks and stones is not permitted at Forest School. Children may pick up sticks shorter than their arm. Longer sticks must be dragged behind them. Stones can be dropped but children must check what is underneath before dropping them.

Using ropes

Children will learn a useful selection of knots for different uses. Adults will supervise activities where ropes are tied to trees for tarps or shelters. Safety tapes will be used if ropes are considered to be in dangerous locations. Children are also shown how to use ropes and string to move or carry materials.

Eating and Drinking

Children will be encouraged to bring their water bottles with them. Anti-bacterial hand wash, wipes or sanitiser gel will be provided for hand washing before eating or drinking any snacks during Forest School.

Leaving the site

At the end of each session there will be a short time of reflection before the participants leave the site. All personal belongings must be taken away, any craft created can be taken home, and the site must be left as it was found.

8. Policy Statements and Procedures

Safeguarding

At Bledington School we are committed to the safety of all staff, pupils and other adults on site.

We are committed to:

- taking all reasonable measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of each child and young person (pupil) in our care
- the practice of safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people
- protecting each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil

Access to our full Safeguarding Policy can be found on the [school website](#).

Behaviour

In addition to our main school Behaviour Policy ([see BPS website](#)) we will also

Form Forest School 'rules' at our initial session for each group, and re-enforce these rules through action and reminders during each session. These rules will include discussion on keeping safe while having fun.

- Expectations while at Forest School
- Boundaries of the site
- Time out for unsafe practice
- No pick and no lick policy
- Safety during activities (relating to risk assessments)

Equality

At Bledington School we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Bledington School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

Full policy can be accessed on the [School Website](#).

Communications Strategy

| Who | What | When | How |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Parents | What is Forest School? When will it be running? What equipment will children need? Can any adults help run sessions? What we have been doing | Before first session Ongoing | Via meeting (Reception Parents) Posted on Seesaw platform Pages on School Website Display Board in school School newsletter Social Media for session updates |
| Headteacher/School leadership | Health and safety info is provided Risk Assessments have been checked by SLT Update on how sessions are running and activities taking place | Before first sessions As required when RA undergo an annual review | Shared via email Discussed face to face as required |
| Other School staff | What have we been doing in sessions Liaison with EYFS for Learning Goals Feedback on any observations of children General feedback on behaviour and activities | As required, before sessions with their class and anything changes | Staff meetings face to face |
| Children/client group | Forest School is exciting and fun Forest School is another place to learn We will be trying lots of things that might be new to us | | |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|--|
| | We need to keep ourselves safe at Forest School | | |
| Volunteers | We will provide you with support before and during sessions We will ensure you have access to equipment needed You will have access to relevant health and safety information You will enjoy the sessions and have fun | Before sessions begin As sessions are running | Verbally Email |
| Neighbours/local community | Bledington Primary School is running Forest School Sessions What Forest School is What we have been up to | Seasonally | School website Social media (in line with policy) |
| Site maintenance team | If anything is dangerous (eg trees) that need to be dealt with | We want Forest School environment to be safe for everyone involved | Via School administrator who will pass on message |

9. Health and Safety Procedures for Forest School

Emergency Procedures

At Forest School the school's Emergency Procedure will be followed. In addition to this all staff, volunteers and participants will be briefed on what to do in the case of an emergency.

A whistle will be blown as a signal to stop what you are doing, gather with an adult, be silent and wait for instructions. The Forest School Leader will assess the situation, the nature and extent of the injury/accident. They will ensure the rest of the group are safe from danger and adequately supervised. An accident form will be completed later. A RIDDOR record will be created, along with an Accident report for any death, serious injury or 7-day injury.

If anyone sustains an injury or illness which cannot be treated by first aid on site and requires medical assistance:

In serious cases, the Emergency Services will be contacted (see below) using the phone carried by the Forest School Leader. Then the school will be notified. The school office will be responsible for contacting the injured party's emergency contact.

The rest of the group will be supervised away from the incident and if in danger, will be moved to safety.

One member of staff from school will meet the ambulance at the school entrance and direct the crew to the incident site.

If the injured party is taken to hospital, one member of staff will go with them and the injured party's emergency contact will be updated about the situation by the school office staff.

In minor cases, the Forest School Leader will arrange to contact the injured party's emergency contact so that they can be collected and taken to hospital, doctor or home - as appropriate.

Emergency Contact Numbers:

Ambulance/Fire = 999

School Office = 01993 658388

If Requesting attendance by Emergency Services:

Dial 999 and ask for ambulance or fire. Be ready with the following information:

School number - 01993 658388

School post code - OX7 6US

What 3 words: fruitcake.scars.untruth (FS site) or handbag.triangles.mug (School Office)

Ambulance access - Thames Water access lane for vehicle or school field for air ambulance.

Lost Child/Person Procedure

Although Forest School sessions take place within Bledington Primary School grounds, the following procedure should be instigated and followed by the Forest School Leader responsible for a group in the event of any person (adult or child) going missing from the Forest School group. Adults attending Forest School would also be made aware, confidentially, if it is felt that any child might be at risk of trying to leave the session/school premises.

1. Blow the whistle. This signals that everyone should move to the Forest School circle. This recall will be shared with the children and they will be reminded regularly of its importance.
2. Conduct a head count to check that all other members of the group are present.
3. Have two members of staff or volunteers stay with the group at the Forest School circle and await further instructions. Their role is to minimise anxiety and keep the children busy with e.g. a story.
4. Send the remaining adult/s to search the immediate area for an agreed length of time (e.g. 10 minutes). Arrange for them to return to the agreed meeting place at an agreed time. Searchers should stay within an area they know and be aware of their own safety.
5. Alert school staff to the fact that there is a missing person.
6. If the missing person is not found in the agreed length of time, everyone should walk back to school. Here the rest of the group can wait in safety and comfort.
7. Organise a second search party. Any available staff member who knows the site can be recruited to help this second search. Searchers should work in pairs with at least one carrying a mobile phone with sufficient credit and battery life. Arrange for them to search for a specified length of time (e.g. 10 minutes) and return to reception at an agreed time.
8. If the missing person is not found by this second search, then with SMT consent, contact the police. The decision may be made to do this while the second search is

in progress depending on circumstances. At this point, a decision will need to be made regarding the rest of the group, in consultation with the SMT. It is likely that once they have changed out of their waterproofs, it will be best for the children to return to normal lessons.

Areas for search:

- All outside fields and areas
- The school car park
- Toilets within school
- All classrooms, cloakrooms and hall in school
- The field behind the Forest School site and Thames Water access lane

After the incident is over, complete a full report using the Incident Report Form.

Daily Procedures and checks

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.

Pre-visit checks:

- Run through the site risk assessment and amend/update as necessary.
- Remove all visible litter and animal faeces.
- Remove obvious trip hazards and mark off areas as out-of-bounds (where appropriate).
- Cut any overhanging vegetation, that could cause injury, from paths.
- Ensure risk assessments are completed for all activities.
- Erect shelter(s).
- Set up Forest School circle.
- Set up hand washing station.
- Check that the forest school rucksack contains all necessary items (see section on Forest School equipment), including all emergency procedure information, a stocked and in date first aid kit, fire blanket and fresh water.
- Check the materials and resources needed for the activities planned.
- Check that all tools to be used are in good working order.
- Check phone is in working order and is fully charged.

At the start of the session:

- Take register and head count.

- Remind children about physical boundaries (use visual cues when needed) and that they must stay within these. In the first sessions, and at the beginning of each session 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 (when using fire).

Throughout the session:

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

At the end of the session:

- Carry out a final head count and escort the group back to the school.
- Count and pack up all equipment and resources.
- Clear fire area and make safe, remove ash and cover over the site of fire (when using fire).
- Evaluate the session/write up observations.

Session health and safety checklist**Date of session****Checked by**

- To ensure the safety of children and adults attending Forest School sessions, checks need to be made before, during and at the end of each session. It is the Forest School Leader's responsibility to ensure that all checks have been completed. This must be used each time a session is held.
- Pre session**

| Activity | Checked |
|---|---------|
| Check site and individual RA and update as required | |
| Remove faeces/litter | |
| Remove trip hazards/mark any out of bounds areas | |
| Remove overhanging branches at eye level | |
| Erect any shelters | |
| Set up FS circle area | |
| Set up hand washing | |
| Check emergency rucksack | |
| Check any tools due to be used | |
| Check and set up equipment | |
| Check phone/s charged | |
| Ensure all adults know their role for the day | |

- Start of session**

| Activity | Checked |
|--|---------|
| Take register/head count | |
| Inform/remind children of boundaries | |
| Remind children of FS code of conduct and suitable behaviour | |
| When relevant, inform/remind children about tool and fire safety | |

- During session**

| Activity | Checked |
|---|---------|
| Be alert to what children are doing/where they are on the site | |
| Regular head counts or 123 where are you? | |
| Remind children of conduct and safety for activities | |
| Conduct observations and take photos | |
| Deal with any negative behaviours in line with agreed school policy | |

- After session**

| Activity | Checked |
|--|---------|
| Final head count | |
| Take down/pack up resources | |
| Clear fire area and make safe (if using) | |

In addition to tools and equipment needed for each session the Forest School leader will always take an emergency rucksack with them. The bag will be the

responsibility of the Forest Schools Leader and will be positioned in the wooden hut during each of the sessions (all participants will know of its location and it will be flagged using a high vis vest).

Before each session the contents of the bag will be checked by the Forest School leader and should contain:

- First Aid kit
- Burns kit
- Emergency procedures - these will be placed outside the bag on a clipboard for easy access by any adult)
- Medical information for each individual along with any necessary medication - inhalers, epi-pens etc.
- Risk Assessments
- Mobile phone (checked for working order and battery strength)
- Clean Water in sealed bottles (min 2)
- Emergency whistle
- Emergency Life Blanket (Space / foil blanket)
- Appropriate Clothing

Fire Safety

To ensure that everyone stays safe on site and that risk is managed effectively, Forest School Leaders will follow a campfire procedure.

Forest School Leaders will:

- Keep igniters in a safe location until being used
- Ensure there is a supply of water to douse the fire
- Always have a fire blanket close to the fire site
- Ascertain the location and size of the fire to be built
- Carry out a pre-visit site check and risk assess the site and the activity
- Stop the activity in the event of unforeseen circumstances making it unsafe
- Douse fires at completion and check them after 30 minutes to ensure that they have not spread.

When lighting fires, Forest School Leaders will:

- Not wear loose clothing and tie long hair back
- Ensure that children have their hair tied back and also have no loose clothing.
- Wear fire gauntlets.

- Allow only one child at a time to help with fire construction / approach the fire.
- Ensure all participants know how to kneel on one knee when close to the fire
- Put out the fire with water when finished and make the fire site 'good'.

Cooking and Food hygiene

Everyone involved in Forest School should follow the food hygiene rules below:

- Wash hands before and during cooking and tie long hair back
- 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
- 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.
- Keep utensils clean and regularly wash tea towels and cloths
- Store food in clean plastic containers with non-leaking lids
- Remove rubbish and food scraps away at the end of the session to avoid attracting vermin to the site

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.

Tool use

Forest school sessions are an ideal opportunity to learn to use, and gain confidence in, using a range of tools. Tools are used with strict adult supervision and can only

be given to children by an adult. Where necessary, they will be sported in locked containers and will be transported to and from the site by an adult.

Potato Peelers (to peel bark and/or develop skills before knife use)

- Rest the wood you are peeling on the ground or on a bench and not on your leg.
- Hold the potato peeler away from your body and peel away from yourself towards the ground.
- Keep the hand not holding the tool away from sharp end of potato peeler.
- Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work. If possible, work on the blue tarpaulin.
- Children only to use when sitting or kneeling - remind them not to move around when using the peeler.
- Children to be supervised at a maximum ratio of 1 adult:2 children

Knives (to whittle small sticks, peel bark and cut string)

- Never wear a glove on the hand holding the tool - it makes the handle hard to grip safely. Wear a safety glove on your helper hand.
- Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work. Stop if anyone comes too close.
- Hold the knife away from your body and cut away from yourself.
- Children to be supervised at a ratio of 1 adult:1 child

Bow Saws (for cutting wood with a diameter greater than a 2 pence piece)

- Wear a glove on the non-sawing (helping) hand only
- Use the saw to the side of your body and not in front.
- Keep your non sawing hand away from the blade when sawing.
- Saw with relaxed strokes using the full length of the blade. Let the blade do the work - don't force it, especially if it sticks.
- Hold the wood you are sawing firmly or get a helper to assist.
- Use the Saw Horse when possible
- Carry with the frame at your side with the blade facing down, like carrying a handbag.
- Keep the blade covered when not in use and especially when transporting.

Loppers

- Loppers - use for cutting wood with a diameter smaller than a 2 pence piece
- Always carry with blades closed (and locked if applicable).
- When not in use leave with blades closed (and locked if applicable).
- Do not exceed the cutting capacity of the tool.

- Use away from your body and keep hand not holding tool away from blades.
- Children only to use when sitting or kneeling.

Palm drills

- Children must kneel to use the palm drill.
- They should not wear a glove on their drilling hand, but may wear one on their helping hand.
- Wood to be drilled should be placed on a flat surface, ideally a stump or wooden sleeper.
- Drill should be transported carefully, with the drill bit facing the floor.
- Drill use should be supervised by an adult with a ratio of 1 adult:2 children

Extreme Weather

Forest school sessions will go ahead in all but the most extreme weather (high winds, extreme cold or thunderstorms). Children taking part will be dressed for the prevailing conditions and have appropriate kit in school on Forest School afternoons. When it is wet a shelter will be built immediately by a trained adult so that there is a sheltered area that is available from the start that can be used.

In the event of more extreme conditions e.g. torrential rain or high winds we will assess and cancel the session if it cannot be run safely. Indoor learning based on a forest theme may be run as an alternative.

Toileting

Children attending Forest School sessions will be asked to go to the toilet before they leave school. As the Forest site is close to the main school, children who need the toilet will go in pairs back into the Infants toilet in school in pairs and must tell an adult before they go and as soon as they come back. An assisting adult will accompany all children as required.

First Aid

Forest School Leaders has both a standard and outdoor paediatric First Aid Certificate. An appropriate First Aid kit will be brought to the Forest school site for all sessions in the emergency rucksack.

10. Risk Assessments

A site risk assessment is undertaken each week and a daily risk assessment and check is made prior to every Forest School session at our 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, use of ropes, fire lighting and cooking on an open fire, and palm drilling.

Forest School Site Risk Assessment

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Venue: | Bledington Primary School |
| Assessment carried out by: | Emma Droy |
| Signature: | |
| Date: | Feb 25 |

Description of site

Bledington Primary School's Forest School area is situated on the school grounds, along the north-eastern boundary of the site. It is comprised of a mixed broadleaved woodland with understorey. Access to the Forest is from either end of the woodland. It is fenced on three sides and opens on to the school playing field on the forth side. The sire contains a small wooden hut, a pole tepee and informal seating circle. There is no current fire area.

Risks on site

| Hazard | Level of risk | Mitigations |
|---|---------------|---|
| Slips/trips/falls: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uneven ground / holes• Wet slippery surface• Muddy ground• Icy ground | Medium | Verbal/visual instruction to walk carefully and look where they are walking Wear appropriate footwear Mark off area if necessary Remove obvious trip hazards on pre-visit site check, where possible |

| | | |
|---|--------|--|
| • Roots/branches on floor | | |
| Insect bites or stings | Medium | Verbal/visual warning not approach or try to catch bees and wasps Monitor site for nest activity and avoid nest sites Keep arms and legs covered Check anyone with severe allergies has two epi-pens and adult can administer it |
| Exposure to weather (extreme heat or cold) | Medium | Ensure participants are suitably dressed in layers for cold Provide shade/shelter Warm drinks in colder weather, where possible In hot weather ensure suncream, hats and drinks Alternative indoor arrangements if session cannot proceed Have emergency bivvy available |
| Low branches causing eye injuries | Low | Point out location of low branches in arrival at site Remove/chop back before session as required |
| Brambles, prickly or thorny plants and stinging nettles | Low | Point out where these area Ask chn to avoid where possible |
| Edible fruits/seeds/nuts | Low | Verbal/visual instruction that some fruit/berries and fungi are poisonous, and should not be eaten or touched Ensure hands are washed before eating and verbal instruction to keep hands away from face Remind No pick, No lick rule Ensure FS Leader aware of what poisonous plants are on site Ensure FS leaders knows how to administer 1 st Aid for poisons |
| Litter | Low | Remove any harmful litter during pre-visit site check Encourage chn to tell and adult if they find anything, rather than pick it up |
| High Winds | | Check site before session Plan alternative indoor activities if unable to run session – winds greater than 40mph |
| Bacteria in soils | Low | Ensure hands are not put in mouths and washed before eating/drinking |
| Animal faeces | Low | Check and clear (where necessary) during pre session inspection Warn children if eg bird droppings present |
| Damaged trees | Low | Visual check during pre session check Report any damage to office for contractors Keep away from this area |

Activity Risk Assessments

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Activity: | Tool Use (various hand tools to include: Palm drills, loppers, peelers, bowsaw and hacksaw) |
| Assessment carried out by: | Emma Droy |
| Signature: | |
| Date: | Feb 25 |

| Hazard | Harm | Who can be harmed | Likelihood | Level of risk | Action proposed |
|--|------|-------------------|------------|---------------|--|
| Injury while storing | cuts | Adults | medium | low | Store tools in a secure box, accessed by adults only |
| Injury while transporting | cuts | Adults | low | low | Transport in closed box by adults Tools put in tarpaulin (blood bubble) once at site |
| Injury while using | cuts | All participants | medium | medium | Clear instructions for using tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users to wear a glove on bracing hand • Only use while seated • Use away from body • Tools must be used 121 with an adult Tools checked before each use Tools replaced if damaged |
| Benefits: Using tools is a lifelong skill that most adults use daily. Using hazardous objects as tools can reduce their use as weapons. In light of this, tool use is an important learning experience for all ages. | | | | | |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Activity: | <i>Climbing</i> (Trees/obstacles/logs) |
| Assessment carried out by: | Emma Droy |
| Signature: | |
| Date: | Feb 25 |

| Hazard | Harm | Who can be harmed | Likelihood | Level of risk | Action proposed |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------|---------------|--|
| Falls to ground/ on to objects | Injury/broken bones/head injury | Adults/children | medium | low | Close supervision by an adult Children know how high they can climb FS leader aware of procedures for fall from height |
| Becoming 'hung up' by feet or limbs, leading to injury. | | Adults/children | low | low | Close adult supervision Limit numbers climbing at any one time |
| Participants falling on each other or being kicked accidentally while below climbing activity. | Bruises/head injury | All participants | low | low | Children advised to keep a safe distance from the tree being climbed Limit numbers on any one tree Close adult supervision |
| Branches breaking/falling | Injury to persons on ground | All participants | low | low | Trees for climbing checked by adult before each session Close adult supervision |
| Benefits: Tree climbing is an enjoyable, memorable, confidence building activity that can develop physical literacy and risk management skills in all ages. | | | | | |

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|----------------------------|---|
| Activity: | <i>Tarps, hammocks and rope swings/Rope play</i> |
| Assessment carried out by: | Emma Droy |
| Signature: | |
| Date: | Feb 25 |

| Hazard | Harm | Who can be harmed | Likelihood | Level of risk | Action proposed |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------|------------|---------------|---|
| Behaviour of participants | Cuts Injuries Broken bones | All | Low | Low | <p>Expectations of safety and behaviour will be talked about at the beginning of each session. If unsafe behaviour continues the student will be removed from this activity.</p> <p>Students will be informed of safe rope use, they should only be used for tarps and dens.</p> <p>Students will be shown how to use hammocks appropriately. How to get in and out safely.</p> |
| Rope visibility | Head or neck injury Cuts Injuries Broken bones | All | Medium | Medium | <p>High Vis rope used where possible or eg high vis vest attached to ropes.</p> <p>Rope not placed at head/neck height</p> <p>Participants warned to look out for ropes around the site.</p> |
| Condition of ropes | Cuts/scrapes Injuries Broken bones | All | Low | Low | <p>Rope checked before each use</p> <p>Rope replaced if damaged</p> |
| Knots | Cuts Injuries | All participants | Low | Low | <p>Clear instructions for tying knots</p> <p>Chn told where/when they can practise their knots.</p> |

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| | Broken bones | | | | |
| Rope burn | Burns Injuries Broken bones | All participants | Medium | Medium | Explain the rules of safe rope use. Don't wrap rope around hands or the body. FS leader must check knots before weight is put on them. Burn kit available |
| Loose/broken branches | Cuts/scrapes Bruises Injuries Broken bones | All participants | Low | Medium | Dangerous or loose branches will be identified during the daily site sweep. They will be removed where possible. Ropes or hammocks should not be tied to branches unless the Forest School leader or Adult helpers have advised that it is safe to do so just in case they break. |
| Hammocks and tarps | Cuts/scrapes bruises Injuries Broken bones | All participants | Low | Medium | Ropes securing hammocks and tarps must be tied to trees with appropriate knots. The Forest School leader or Adult helpers will check that the hammock is safe to use before students climb in. The ground below hammocks and tarps needs to be cleared from stones or branches. The space above the hammock and tarps needs to be checked and cleared of any loose branches Swings will only be erected using recommend knots and by an adult. Adult will check swings before children use them. |
| Benefits: sense of achievement at learning to tie knots and use them eg to build a shelter | | | | | |

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|----------------------------|--|
| Activity: | <i>Fires and Campfire Cooking</i> |
| Assessment carried out by: | Emma Droy |
| Signature: | |
| Date: | Feb 25 |

| Hazard | Harm | Who can be harmed | Likelihood | Level of risk | Action proposed |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------|---------------|--|
| Burns from the sparks or items placed on the fire or recently removed from the fire (e.g. saucepans or sticks). | burns | All | medium | medium | Fire gauntlets to be worn when lifting hot objects |
| Falling into fire | burns | All | low | high | All participants taught how to lean on one knee FS Leader has burn kit beside fire |
| Fire spreading | Destruction of habitats burns | All | low | medium | Water carried to fire site in fire bucket Fire blanket available Fire is managed carefully Assess how dry/windy area is before lighting fire Ensure fire properly extinguished before leaving site |
| Exploding stones | Burn/eye injuries | All | low | high | Stones for fire circle checked before use Fire pits used as alternative |
| Scalds from boiling water and fats used in cooking, following a spill or steam escape. | scalds | All participants | medium | medium | Hot cooking items should be kept within the marked fire area. Cooking fats should be used with care. Hot water should be poured carefully, with hands kept away from cups or other containers |
| Food poisoning from poorly prepared food | Sickness | All | Low | low | Adult to check food is properly cooked Only prepare simple foods eg toasting marshmallows/potatoes |

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|---|--|--|-----|------|---|
| | | | | | hand and personal hygiene of a good standard; clean implements and containers, working on mats or tarpaulins below containers or chopping boards to prevent contamination; |
| Allergic reaction to foods being cooked | | | low | high | Have list of allergies for each participant on site with medication relevant to condition |
| Benefits: Enjoyment, excitement and reflection. In managing a fire, participants will learn risk management, responsibility. In using fire as a (cooking) tool, children learn to respect it and use it wisely. Participants will learn simple science (fire triangle) including the suitability of materials to ignite and keep a fire going, how to balance the right amount of oxygen and heat loss. Individuals will also learn about simple food preparation, meals and food types. They will also learn food hygiene basics, in a challenging practical environment. Putting a fire out, clearing up and taking items away will teach environmental responsibility and personal respect. In preparing, cooking and eating simple foods on an open fire groups will connect with food production, and enjoy social time. | | | | | |

To ensure the safety of children and adults attending Forest School sessions, checks need to be made before, during and at the end of each session. It is the Forest School Leader's responsibility to ensure that all checks have been completed. This must be used each time a session is held.

