

Willow Fen Forest School Handbook

Gemma Snape

Version 1.2

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What is Forest School about?

I believe that everyone, adults as well as children, should have regular access to woodland or another natural environment to provide them with outdoor learning activities through play and exploration. Forest School provides a learner-centred approach, where children (and adults!) can learn through self-directed play and exploration on a regular basis.

The Forest School Association summarises Forest School through 6 principles:

- Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a lifelong relationship between the learner and the natural world
- Forest School is 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
- Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning
- Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners
- Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves
- Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners, who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice

Please see the Forest School Association website for further information:

<https://forestschoollassociation.org/>

A wide variety of activities will be available during sessions, and will vary according to the age, ability and experience of the participants. These may include:

- Using tools safely
- Den building
- Rope work
- Fire lighting and cooking
- Natural crafts
- Playing games
- Exploring the woodland
- Sharing songs and stories

Forest School provides a huge range of benefits to those who attend, which has been backed up by a large body of research. Some examples include:

- Improved physical health: the site gives children space and freedom to play. They have the opportunity to run, balance, climb and jump: improving spatial awareness, physical strength and personal resilience.
- Improved mental health: spending time outdoors, especially in woodland, reduces cortisol levels in the brain, lowering stress and calming the whole person. This also makes learning easier.
- Social benefits: play leads to improvements in communication, team building and language skills. Spending time with the same community builds self-confidence.
- Ability to assess risk: children learn about taking and assessing risks. Studies have shown that children who are exposed to appropriate risks at a young age are less likely to take inappropriate risks as they get older
- Improved self-confidence: children develop their confidence as they solve problems, and play with creativity and imagination. This confidence will be taken with them in to other areas of their lives

Play is of vital importance for natural child development, and Forest School provides an ideal environment for purely child-led play. Children will have the freedom to choose which activities they take part in, and if they come up with their own activities than that is even better! Adults attending and supporting must understand the importance of choice in play, and allow the children this freedom.

ALL adults supporting any sessions need to have read this handbook which is available to them prior to the session.

Forest School Code of Conduct

It is important when attending Forest School sessions that we agree a code of conduct to follow to ensure our safety as a community and to show respect to our environment. There are three main principles to follow to ensure a great session, with some example rules to support them:

Look after ourselves

- Stay within the boundary
- Only enter the fire circle with permission

- Do not eat or lick anything without asking an adult

Look after each other

- Drag sticks longer than your arm span, or ask a partner to help
- Do not throw anything without asking an adult

Look after the woodland environment

- Take care when handling any creatures
- Put creatures back where they were found

These rules will be recapped at the beginning of every session, and ways in which to follow the rules will be agreed upon in discussion, with suggestions from the FS leader if needed.

It is important that all of the adults present help the children to understand and follow the rules, to ensure the safety of all. Modelling of the rules by all adults is expected.

Environmental Policies

Ecological Impact

Education activities	Ground layer:	Field Layer:	Under storey Layer:	Canopy Layer:	Actions:
Campfire	Burning and heating of soil - habitat destruction.	Plants unable to grow in fire area. Smoke and CO2 emissions.	Burning tree/shrub branches.	Burning tree branches.	Keeping fire pit in already established area to minimise further destruction. Fire space established in a clearing away from the canopy. Burning only seasoned wood (not green) Limit frequency of fires to when necessary (for warmth or cooking). Planting new trees to replace burned wood.
Tree climbing			Damage to bark and new shoots. Disturbing birds and invertebrates in the trees.		Teach children to look for sturdy, established branches for climbing. Avoid climbing near bird nests.
Cutting green wood			Spoiling growth of trees/shrubs. Disturbing nesting birds. Regeneration of the wood.		Only harvest what is needed. No coppicing/pollarding during nesting season (March-October). Identify trees to ensure sustainable harvest.
Permanent circle	Compaction of soil - preventing growth and habitats.				Prevent damage elsewhere by maintaining a single site. Use already established area in clearing. Ensure there are no rare plants nearby. Create alternative habitats for invertebrates.

Den building		Damage to plant growth Damage to growing trees Disturbing habitats			Model using fallen branches rather than living ones. Use the same logs and branches each session. Ensure children know which log piles are ok to use and white are for a wildlife habitat Check for wildlife before use Return branches when finished Use tree protectors if needed
Bug hunting	Disturbing habitats Risk of killing bugs				Model rolling logs with care and returning them when finished. Check for wildlife around before approaching Model careful, gentle searching and safe handling e.g. with brushes, pooters Return any bugs to where they were found.
Mud kitchen	Digging soil Compaction of soil	Plants unable to grow in the area	Some collection of plant material for 'cooking'		Prevent damage elsewhere by maintaining a single site away from tree roots Create alternative habitats for invertebrates Increase biodiversity of plants in other areas
Crafting	Disturbing leaf litter, removal of fallen sticks, potential introduction of scraps/waste	Some removal of plants	Some removal of branches		Encourage children to 'leave no trace' Only harvest what is needed Identify trees and plants to ensure sustainable harvest
Rope play eg obstacle courses, slack lines, swings etc			Breaking tree branches Bark damage		Remove ropes from damaged branches Take down ropes at the end of a session Talk with the children about how to care for trees Use tree protectors where needed

Landowner's Agreement


TM1570 9316

This agreement is between the Landowner of _____ and Gemma Snape of Willow Fen Forest School.

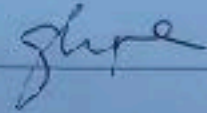
Thank you for allowing us to use your woodland. This letter sets the terms and conditions of use of the woodland by the setting and serves as a clear understanding for the parties involved.

Terms and conditions

- A maximum of 24 children/young children per session will always be accompanied by a Level 3 qualified Forest School Leader (FSL) with enough adults to provide an adult:child ratio of at least 1:5
- A risk assessment will be undertaken by the FSL prior to every session to ensure the wood is safe for the children.
- The group will not use the wood during windy weather
- The health and safety policy will apply at all times. FSLs have a relevant First Aid qualification. They will ensure they have means of communication and an emergency plan should they need to take an injured person out of the wood or evacuate the wood for any reason.
- Any light management tasks necessary to maintain the safety of the site will only be undertaken with the agreement and following advice of the landowner or their nominated representative.
- Occasionally, FSLs will use small fires when conditions permit. FSLs are responsible for ensuring the fire is sited correctly and thoroughly extinguished at the end of the session.
- FSLs will organise all sessions so the woodland is left tidy and with minimal environmental impact, with flora and fauna left as undisturbed as possible, especially during the nesting/breeding/flowering seasons.
- All participants are covered by insurance and parental consent has been obtained.
- The landowner is required to have public liability insurance for the sum of £5 million.

Signed on behalf of the landowner 

Print name: J. K. Grog

Signed on behalf of Willow Fen Forest School 

Print name: Gemma Snape

Position: Forest School Leader

THANK YOU. Forest Schools could not succeed without the generous support of woodland owners/managers.

Woodland Management

A three year management plan for the Forest School site is in place, commencing in 2022. The plan aims to increase the biodiversity of the site using a range of methods including but not limited to: planting (seeds, bulbs), creating habitats (bird boxes, pond, invertebrate habitats) and removing any invasive species which threaten the site. At every stage, children will be involved in carrying out these tasks (where appropriate) and monitoring their effectiveness, eg through surveys and visual assessments.

Year 1

Time of year	Action	Anticipated impact	Involvement of client group	Monitoring impact with clients
Autumn	Plant native spring bulbs once nettles die down Monitor standing deadwood due to wind	Providing early food for insects	Help with planting	Visually/photos - use to inform where more might be planted next spring
Winter	Thinning some of the overgrown hedge along the ditch Ensure some dense areas are left for hibernation, and check for hibernating animals before starting work	Opening out the space to allow more light through the canopy, creating a more diverse habitat	Teaching safe use of pruning secateurs and identifying overgrown areas	Visually/photos - can see different flora growing in the area through the year
Spring	Use thinnings from winter pruning to create log piles Check for and remove invasive species Sow native wildflower seeds in areas identified as overgrown with nettles	Increased numbers and varieties of invertebrates using the habitat Increasing biodiversity in these areas	Children can help to create the piles Children to sow seeds, possibly making and throwing seed bombs	Bug hunts should identify more species Earthworm survey Butterfly count in the summer
Summer	Build and install bat boxes	Increased numbers of bats in the area	Children to help make the boxes and learn about suitable places to install them	Bat surveys in the summer

Year 2

Time of year	Action	Anticipated impact	Involvement of client group	Monitoring impact with clients
Autumn	Plant more native spring bulbs in areas identified in spring as needing more Monitor standing deadwood closely due to wind	Increased insect numbers in spring	Help with planting	Bug hunts
Winter	Build and install bird nestboxes Dig a pond at the North edge of the site Use prunings to create a dead hedge around the pond	Increased numbers of birds nesting in the area Increasing biodiversity Provides an invertebrate habitat as well as safety from the water	Help building and installing the boxes Help build up the hedge	Birdwatch survey Visually/photos Trail camera Bug hunts Earthworm survey in spring
Spring	Sow native wildflower seeds particularly to the East of the fire circle Check for and remove invasive species	Attracting bees and butterflies to the site	Sowing seeds - seed bombs?	Big butterfly count in the summer Moth night in the summer
Summer	Make bee houses using bamboo and elder prunings	Increased numbers of bees in the area	Help making the bee houses	Visually - look for signs the tubes are being used

Year 3

Time of year	Action	Anticipated impact	Involvement of client group	Monitoring impact with clients
Autumn	Plant native wildflower seeds to target areas such as dense nettle patches Monitor standing deadwood closely due to wind	Increased insect numbers	Help to identify suitable areas and sow the seeds	Bug hunts
Winter	Planting bareroot native trees	Regeneration of the woodland along the margins of the field	Help with planting	Visually/photos

Time of year	Action	Anticipated impact	Involvement of client group	Monitoring impact with clients
Spring	Make toad holes from old clay pots Check for and remove invasive species	Increased number of toads in the area	Help making the toad holes	Toad survey in winter
Summer	Make hedgehog homes	Increased number of hedgehogs in the area	Help making the hog houses	Footprint tunnels to identify presence of hedgehogs Trail camera

Insurance

The following items must be on site at all times during a session:

- Fully stocked First Aid kit
- Charged mobile phone
- Emergency procedure
- Emergency contact details for all participants
- Fire water bucket, fire gloves and fire blanket if having a fire
- Site and activity risk assessments
- Daily risk assessment

Equal Opportunity Policies and Procedures

Behaviour Management

WFFS accepts the feelings and emotions affecting conduct at Forest School and works to help learners understand, celebrate and manage those feelings as appropriate to themselves and others.

WFFS understands that there are a number of key influences that could potentially affect the behaviour (positively or negatively) of all participants at Forest School. There are many techniques, practices and strategies that can encourage and maintain appropriate conduct at Forest School. This can include specific interventions such as diversion, de-escalation and positive handling, including clear rewards and sanctions that are suitable to the age and client group.

Behaviour during sessions will be observed and reflected upon within the sessions, dealing with incidents as they occur. The FS leader will take the behaviour of a group and/or individuals into account when planning activities and only continue if the group or individual is deemed to be displaying safe behaviour.

Inclusion and Access

WFFS works with participants and their carers to ensure that ALL have equal access to the FS site and activities.

WFFS believes that diversity is a positive asset and values the contribution made by all members of society. We are committed to the principles and practices that support Equal Opportunities. We will endeavour to implement all aspects of this policy in our work and the way we operate.

WFFS will strive to ensure that we do not discriminate against any person on the grounds of:

- age
- sex
- race, nationality or colour
- marital status
- disability
- sexuality
- religion

- responsibilities for dependants
- unrelated criminal convictions

We will try to tackle any discrimination as it arises and work in a way that will provide a positive example to those with whom we work.

Health and Safety

Emergency procedures

In the event of a major emergency, the Forest School leader will call the emergency services and inform them of the incident and location, following the emergency procedure card in the appendix.

All people on site will assemble at the fire circle, which will be made safe (fires extinguished, all tools put away). The group will then follow the guidance from the emergency services, and be taken home by parents.

All minor incidents should be dealt with by the Forest School leader and recorded on an Accident form.

Evacuation Procedure

All participants will assemble around the fire circle, which will be made safe (fires extinguished, all tools put away). The Forest School leader will do a head count and check everyone off on the attendance register. A nominated adult will lead the group along the path back up towards the playing field, and the Forest School leader will follow behind to ensure all have vacated the area.

Outdoor Cooking and Food Hygiene

Sharing food and drink as a community is an important part of Forest School. The Forest School leader will provide hand washing facilities at each session where food and/or drink is prepared. The outdoor cooking risk assessment and code of practice will be followed.

It is the responsibility of the parents to advise the Forest School Leader of any food allergies and dietary requirements.

Extreme Weather

High winds: if the forecast is for high winds, the FS leader will consider the site for safety via a pre visit. If dangerous trees have been identified either at the site or en route to the site, the session will be cancelled. This is highly likely if winds reach 30mph+.

Thunderstorm: sessions will be cancelled if storms are forecast. If a storm develops unexpectedly while on site, the FS leader will judge whether it is safer to stay put with the group until it blows over or to abandon the session. If so, parents will be contacted.

Extremes of temperature: in high temperatures, it is important to take breaks, drink plenty of water and seek shade. The use of fire will be limited on very dry ground. During very hot, sunny sessions, the session will take place only under the canopy of the woodland, and not in the open field area.

During exceptionally cold conditions, the FS leader will consider the vulnerability of the group and whether sufficient shelter and clothing is available. If maintaining warmth and morale is not possible, the session may be cancelled or postponed.

Fire Safety

As part of the Forest School experience it is often desirable to have an open fire within the site to allow children to enhance their learning and development with some risky activities. All fires take place within the clearly marked fire circle. Before any fires are lit, the Forest School leader will discuss with the group how to keep themselves safe, and follow the fires risk assessment and code of practice.

First Aid

The Forest School leader is a qualified first aider (16 hour outdoor and paediatric first aid) and carries a recommended full first aid kit. Emergency plans have been written and will be followed in the unlikely event of an accident. All incidents will be recorded on an accident form (see appendix).

Please ensure that the FS leader knows of any relevant medical conditions, specific learning needs, or allergies. Consent for the appropriate use of First Aid where necessary will be sought from parents/carers before children attend sessions.

Allergies, Allergic Reactions and Medication Procedure

It is the duty of parents to ensure that the Forest School leader is made aware of any known allergies.

The Forest School leader is aware of the signs and symptoms of possible allergic reactions in case of unknown or first reactions in a child. These could include a rash, itchy skin, runny eyes, stomach upsets, swelling of mouth/tongue, shortness of breath, chest pain, wheezing and anaphylaxis.

Where inhalers/medications are needed to be accessible during a Forest School activity, these remain the responsibility of the parents.

Manual Handling

Forest School activities can be physically demanding for all participants, so manual handling best practice should be followed (especially for lifting heavy objects). Safe lifting is demonstrated by bending knees and keeping backs straight - this should always be modelled by adults. Heavier objects should be rolled, lifted or carried by more than one person.

Risk-Benefit Analysis

Many of the activities carried out in Forest School carry an element of risk. However, there are also many benefits to the activities carried out, including teaching children and young people how to identify and mitigate these risks for themselves. Therefore, for all activities where a risk assessment is carried out, a risk-benefit analysis is also conducted to show the advantages of the activity being carried out. These can be found in the Risk Assessments section of the handbook.

Tool Use

Many Forest School activities rely on the safe use of tools. All tool use should follow the tool use code of practice. The Forest School Leader will count tools in and out and will check tools before use to ensure it is in good, safe working order. Children will always have appropriate adult supervision when handling tools (refer to the Tool use code of practice). All adults will model correct and safe tool use, storage and transportation.

All tools and PPE will be provided by the Forest School Leader - please do not bring your own.

Toileting and Sanitation arrangements

As there are no toilets on site, a designated area for 'wild wees' is screened off for general use. This area is away from the main site, away from water features and is discrete. Toilet paper is to be bagged and removed. If children need support with this, it is the responsibility of the parents.

Clean water is available for hand washing near the fire circle at the end of the path to the toileting area. This is available for hand washing prior to consuming any food or drink.

Welfare including Clothing

Clothing: it is a parents responsibility to ensure that children are appropriately dressed for Forest School. This should protect them from extremes of heat or cold, keep them covered to reduce the likelihood of cuts, stings and scrapes, fit appropriately for comfort and meet any religious requirements. If a child is not wearing appropriate clothing and none can be provided, they will not be able to participate in the session.

Suggested clothing list:

- waterproof trousers
- waterproof coat with a hood
- long sleeved top
- full length trousers
- warm boots (wellies can be cold in winter)
- warm socks
- gloves and woolly hat (in winter)
- sunhat (in summer)
- close toed shoes (no sandals)

It is important that it is acceptable for their clothes to get wet and muddy during their play. We work on the principle that "there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing".

Risk Assessments and Codes of Practice

General risks of Forest School sessions:

Hazard	Risks	Level of risk	Likelihood	Control measures
Adverse Weather	Hypothermia Heat stroke Dehydration Fatigue/ exhaustion Sunburn Lightning strike	H	L	Provide shelter/shade where necessary Check weather forecast - cancel sessions if high winds or lightning storms forecast Ensure access to drinking water
Separation from group	Injury/exposure	H	L	Children and adults present to be shown where the site boundaries are Lost or Missing Child policy in place.
General Public	Personal harm	H	L	Discuss personal safety with the group. Visitor Policy and Procedures in place.
Dogs	Dog bite/attack Faeces	M/H	L	Advise groups not to approach dogs. Remove faeces where possible. Hand washing facilities available.
Falling trees/ branches	Serious crush injuries Fatalities	H	L	No sessions to run during high winds. Cordon off unsafe areas. Tree surveys conducted regularly.
Wasp/bee stings	Anaphylactic shock	H	L	Cordon off areas with known hives/ nests Use signage to advise Participants with known reactions to be flagged to Forest School Leader.
Infected tick bite	Lyme disease	H	L	Wear long clothing. Advise to check for ticks after visit and to visit GP if flu-like symptoms or rash develop
Insufficient hand washing	Infection	L	L	Provide portable hand washing facilities. Advise to wash hands after activities and before eating.
Generic benefits of Forest School: develops connection with nature, builds self-worth, confidence and self esteem, encourages independent learning, promotes safe play and risk assessing, develops physical and social skills, introduces new skills and equipment.				

Fires

Risk assessment:

Risks	Level of risk	Likelihood	Control measures	Probable benefits
Burns	M/H	L	<p>Explain dangers of fire</p> <p>Set up logs for fire circle >1.5m from fire</p> <p>Children only enter fire circle with permission and at suitable ratios</p> <p>Water available to douse fire and treat burns</p> <p>First Aider and First Aid kit on site</p> <p>Demonstrate safe use of fire steels - downwards, away from body, think about blood bubble before use</p> <p>Ensure bowls or shells etc to light small fires are set stably on a clear base</p> <p>Long hair to be tied back</p> <p>Use of fireproof gloves (by adults) to transfer fire</p> <p>No other gloves to be worn</p> <p>Adults to monitor clothing - unsuitable materials or hanging, loose fitting garments to be addressed</p> <p>One adult to remain with fire until it is extinguished.</p>	<p>Children learn how to use fire safely</p> <p>Develops risk awareness</p> <p>Develops self confidence</p> <p>Allows children to take risks in a safe environment</p> <p>Children learn fire isn't something to be afraid of</p> <p>Builds community</p> <p>Enjoyable</p> <p>Children learn a new skill</p> <p>Children observe the science of fire</p>
Smoke inhalation	L/M	M	<p>Advise children to stay up wind of fire</p>	
Fire spreading	H	L	<p>Do not light fires during exceptionally dry periods</p> <p>Water available to douse fire</p> <p>Ensure fire is fully extinguished before leaving the site</p> <p>Fires to only be lit in the fire circle</p> <p>One adult to remain with fire until it is extinguished.</p> <p>Soil type is not too peaty</p> <p>Leaves and debris cleared from fire area</p> <p>No overhanging branches</p>	

Code of Practice:

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ACTIVITY TO TAKE PLACE:

- Adhere to adult: child supervision ratios
- Qualified first aider is present
- Site Emergency Information is in place including knowledge of nearest vehicle access point
- Appropriate Risk Assessments are in place and adhered to
- Guidance in the Health & Safety & Safeguarding policy must be followed.
- Parents/volunteers must be suitably experienced in the activity and have received relevant training (where appropriate).
- Where necessary, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be supplied and used

Fire site

- Permission has been obtained by landowner
- Fires to be lit in established fire circle to leave as little impact as possible
- Overgrown vegetation to be removed
- Clear ground hazards such as leaf litter
- Ensure there are clearly defined exit routes from fire circle and that these are kept clear
- Fire to be lit in dug fire pit
- Never surround the fire with stones as some rocks can explode when heated.
- Means of putting the fire out (water, earth bucket or fire blanket) must be immediately to hand and clearly visible
- Ensure fire gloves are to hand
- A competent person must be responsible for the fire at all times and ensure it is out and safe to leave at the end of the session
- Exercise extreme caution in periods of sustained dry weather; consider not having a fire if particularly dry
- Fires should be kept to a reasonable size for their purpose
- Never leave fires unattended
- Be aware of the wind direction when lighting fires
- Do not light fires in high wind
- Ensure fire is out and ash is cooled before leaving the site

Participants

- Fire should only be considered if the group are deemed in a receptive mood and demonstrating sensible and safe behaviours. Extinguish fire if unacceptable behaviour or ratios change (e.g. if a child is removed from the session) and the activity becomes unsafe.
- Children must always be kept at a safe distance (minimum 1.5m) from the fire
- Ensure seating logs are stable, securing with stakes if necessary
- Children (& adults) can approach the fire/enter the fire circle **only** if invited by leader to perform a specific task e.g. to add wood/cook food/assist leader. The group leader must always have overall charge of these procedures
- All movement must be around the outside of the circle (except when approaching the fire to perform a task)
- A traffic light warning system will be used: Red dragon (ignoring fire safety and walking across circle with no key purpose), amber dragon (about to walk across circle but correcting themselves) and green dragon (going around the outside of the circle) to recognise and identify safe/unsafe behaviour.
- Be aware of wind direction and advise group to move if smoke/ash blowing directly at them
- Engaging participants in returning the fire site to how it was found helps to instil the 'leave no trace' ethos

Using a tarp over a fire:

- Ensure good clearance between tarp and fire
- Be aware of need for tarp to be higher if windy
- Ensure guy lines and pegs are clearly marked with clearly visible means and pointed out to the group
- If wind picks up or becomes gusty, lifting the tarp and dropping it to an unsafe level, then extinguish the fire and take down the tarp

Fire Steels

- Tinder should be placed on a non-flammable surface, eg. a shell or a fire bowl or on top of a fire stack if lighting fire directly
- Striking action should always be downwards and away from the body, upwind of tinder to prevent burns from ignited tinder
- Only use tinder approved by the group leader
- Long hair and loose clothing eg long sleeves or scarves must be secured. Never light a fire while wearing gloves

- Ignited tinder should be transported to main fire **by an adult** using fire gloves. A stick should be used to secure cotton wool or char cloth during transportation if using

Individual fire lighting in fire bowls/shells

- Consider the age and suitability of the group before undertaking lighting of small, individual fires in fire bowls or shells
- Maximum of **three** children to be within the fire circle for the purpose of lighting fires, with 1:1 supervision
- All long hair and loose clothing must be tied back or tucked in
- Gloves must not be worn (other than fire gloves)
- Ensure that you have a large enough area so that there is sufficient space between groups for individuals (supervising adults) to move around safely. Maintain a fire circle, with groups positioned on the edge of the circle, that individuals should not walk across
- Introduce and provide time to practise with fire steels before lighting of the fires begins
- Go through all steps of fire lighting, including what to do if the fire becomes too big or out of control, before fire lighting begins
- Ensure that all groups have all the materials that they need before any fires are lit, in order to minimise moving around lighted fires. Position additional fire-lighting materials in such a way that individuals do not have to cross the fire circle to reach them
- Ensure that the area under/around the bowls/shells is clear of leaf litter and anything flammable
- Keep an eye on all fires to ensure that they do not become too big
- Transferring small fires to a central fire to be done by adults wearing fire gloves
- If using Vaseline, always refer to it as dragon snot, fire fuel or something non-descript, do not refer to household name (so children don't make the association with something they may easily find in their home.)
- If using Char cloth, cotton wool or dragon snot and transferring to a central fire, consider using a small stick to hold in place and prevent embers/sparks being blown.

Outdoor Cooking

Risk assessment:

Risks	Level of risk	Likelihood	Control measures	Probable benefits
Burns	M	M	Warn children that things will be hot Allow things to cool before tasting If using sticks to cook with, warn of dangers of waving them around (eg to put out a flame) and to blow instead Limited number of children cooking around the fire at one time. First Aider and First Aid kit on site throughout.	Same as for Fire Lighting Develops an interest in cooking Fun Good achievement
Food poisoning	M	L	FS leader has Level 2 Food Safety certificate HACCP to be followed at all times - see below	

Code of Practice:

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ACTIVITY TO TAKE PLACE:

- Adhere to adult:child supervision ratios
- Qualified First Aider present
- Qualified Level 2 Food Safety person present
- Where necessary, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment must be supplied and used

Cooking

- Ensure good hygiene procedures are followed - hand washing before handling any food. No touching of face or sampling of foods during preparation.
- Use a designated food preparation area away from other activities.
- Ensure a specific, labelled water carrier is used for drinking/cooking/washing water, regularly cleaned and stored in the freezer when not in use
- Be aware of allergies within the group and, if using known allergens, ensure those individuals do not come into contact with said allergen. Always use separate

pans/utensils for foods containing allergens and for dietary requirements.

Prepare non-allergen food first and store away from others.

- Provide heat-proof gloves for handling hot items, and ensure only adults handle these.
- Safe cooking distance is a child's arm length away from the fire.
- Establish a 'cool down' rule for eating hot food.
- Ensure participants stay a safe cooking distance from the fire, useful to determine this by length of stick ie child's arm length.
- Sticks should be held with blunt end on the ground until marshmallow or bread is on.
- Advise group not to shake marshmallows if they catch fire – always blow.
- Toasted marshmallows are very hot, participants should wait until marshmallow feels cool to the touch before putting in mouth to reduce chance of burning mouth.
- When cooking damper bread, advise group to turn bread regularly and when baked, allow cooling down time.
- Discard or collect pointed sticks after use to avoid injury.

Food Preparation

- Ensure leader holds Food Safety Certificate (Level 2) for anything more than marshmallows, popcorn or damper bread
- Wash all hands prior to preparing food
- No touching of face or sampling of food during preparation
- Blue food-safe plasters must be used to cover any cuts when preparing food
- Use a designated food preparation area away from other activities
- Where possible, use wipeable table cloths that can be regularly wiped clean with antibacterial spray
- Ensure a specific, labelled water carrier is used for drinking/cooking/washing water. This should be regularly cleaned and stored in the freezer when not in use
- Use separate boards and knives for different food groups, where possible, colour coded as per the HACCP table below
- Be aware of allergies within the group and if using known allergens, ensure those individuals do not come into contact with said allergen. Allow preparation of non-allergen food first and store away from others. Wipe down surfaces and wash utensils in hot, soapy water after use with allergens
- Always use separate pans and utensils for foods containing allergens or for dietary requirements.
- Refer to HACCP table below

Hazard Analysis

A food hazard is something which could make food unsafe or unfit to eat. There are 4 types of food safety hazards:

- microbiological (involving harmful bacteria, viruses or moulds)
- chemical (involving chemical contamination)
- physical (involving objects getting into food)

Safety tips to complement the HACCP table:

- Prepare food hygienically using a common sense approach
- Leaders to supervise and instruct participants appropriately
- Choose foodstuffs suitable to the event, considering food safety guidelines
- Segregate food handlers who handle raw meat away from others
- Cook foods thoroughly and serve quickly
- Keep chilled foods in a cool bag until needed, and open only when needed
- Thorough, frequent hand washing using cold water to remove debris and then apply sanitising gel
- Ensure clean, suitable utensils are used at all times, and strive for colour coding where there is a potential cross contamination risk
- Follow appropriate personal hygiene at all times: tie back loose hair, cover cuts with blue, waterproof dressings, minimise touching the food

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points: the formal system for assessing food hazards:

STEP	HAZARD	CONTROL	MONITORING PROCEDURE
Purchase	Food may be contaminated (Microbial and Physical)	Reputable supplier Pack into separate bags Minimise journey & store correctly ASAP Awareness of time restriction	Visual checks Date checks (Use by & Best before)
Transport to site	Potential further contamination (Microbial & Physical)	Separate clean cool bags used for raw meat & milk. Sanitized frozen ice packs used appropriate to amount of chilled food & outside temperature.	Visual check Temp control Cleaning schedule – regular cleaning of cool bags and ice packs

Storage (chilled)	Bacterial growth	Clean cool bags with ice packs Separate bags for raw meat & milk Other foodstuffs in separate bags	Visual check Date check (do not use foods past 'best before' date) Rotate stock (first in – first out policy)
Storage (dried)	Physical contamination	Place all dried food on clean washable ground mat and/or in plastic, washable containers. Label containers appropriately	Visual check Date check (do not use foods past 'best before' date) Rotate stock (first in – first out policy)
Preparation	Further potential cross contamination	Prepare all raw meat with dedicated (numbered or coloured) separate coded knives Prepare vegetables with dedicated separate knives Peelers used for food must be different to those used for wood Equipment/utensils used for raw meat, used away from potential routes of cross contamination (Aim for colour coded utensils and boards suitable for task)	All staff and volunteers must ensure this is followed by ALL food handlers.
	Microbial contaminations from water source	All water for consumption or washing to be carried in regularly sanitised containers	Ensure regular sanitising of containers



Cooking	Bacterial survival	Cook over fire with intense heat Juices run clear from meat products	Visual check Food eaten immediately 'on site' Discard any unused food
	Physical contamination	Keep lids on cooking pots whenever possible, keep fire stoking to a minimum whilst cooking. When embers placed on cooking pot, ensure they do NOT get into food	Visual check Monitor - supervision
	Chemical contamination	Do NOT use aluminium or copper cooking pots – especially with acid foods	Discard and replace with stainless steel or other suitable alternatives
Waste	Bacterial growth	Waste check on ground Separate bags used for food and utensils Throw away unused foods Utensils taken away from site for thorough washing	Visual check

Slacklines

Risk assessment:

Risks	Level of risk	Likelihood	Control measures	Probable benefits
Falling from slackline	M	m	Slackline attached and checked it is safe to use as	Promotes vestibular (balance) development

Risks	Level of risk	Likelihood	Control measures	Probable benefits
Laceration from slackline	M	L	directed in instructions Choice of site to be clear of debris and other physical hazards Participants shown how to use the line safely Safety line erected for participants to hold on to Practical clothing and footwear to be used Slackline to be no more than 30cm from the ground Equipment and children monitored during the session - slackline in good condition	Opportunity for risk taking Encourages team work Builds self-confidence, coordination and core strength Fun Physical wellbeing

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ACTIVITY TO TAKE PLACE

- Adhere to adult: child supervision ratios
- Qualified first aider is present
- Site emergency information is in place including knowledge of nearest vehicle access point
- Appropriate Risk Assessments are in place and adhered to
- Guidance in the Health & Safety & Safeguarding policy must be followed.
- Parents/volunteers must be suitably experienced in the activity and have received relevant training (where appropriate)
- Where necessary, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be supplied and used.

Safe working with slack lines

- All equipment to be regularly checked and maintained. Worn or damaged kit not to be used
- Slackline to be set up adhering to manufacturers guidelines
- Select strong, healthy trees on level ground that are capable of supporting the tension of the slackline
- Tree protectors to be used at each end to minimise damage to bark/growing tree
- Slackline to be no more than 30cm from the ground

- Site chosen to be cleared of debris and other physical hazards which could cause an injury if fallen on, such as rocks and tree stumps
- Make sure that the ratchet is positioned on the underside of the strap and the line is not twisted before tightening
- Adult to test the line after it is put up before children use it
- Ratchet to be covered by excess line to reduce risk of injury if fallen on
- Participants to be supervised by an adult
- Only one child on the slackline at a time
- Bare feet make it easier to grip the slackline

Ropes, Tarps and Hammocks (including shelter building)

Risk assessment:

Risks	Level of risk	Likelihood	Control measures	Probable benefits
Crush injuries from collapsing dens	M/H	L	Regular checks by adults Participants not to enter until shelter is checked by an adults Shelters only demolished when no one is inside First Aider and First Aid kit on site throughout.	Promotes vestibular (balance) development. Provides hands-on learning. Opportunity for risk taking. Encourages team work and creativity. Builds self-confidence, co-ordination and strength. Fun. Co-operative working with others. Builds decision making skills, and problem solving skills through trial and error. Opportunity for imaginative play.
Back injuries from incorrect manual handling	M	L	Demonstrate and model safe lifting and carrying - bending knees not back Sticks longer than child's height to be carried by two people Logs thicker than child's thighs to be rolled. First Aider and First Aid kit on site throughout.	
Head or eye injuries from sticks	M	L/M	Warn of risks Ensure groups are spread out Sticks longer than child's height to be carried by two people. First Aider and First Aid kit on site throughout.	

Risks	Level of risk	Likelihood	Control measures	Probable benefits
Friction burns from ropes	L	M	Ensure ropes are well maintained and suitable for the job. First Aider and First Aid kit on site throughout.	
Head injury, breaks, strains and sprains from falls	M	L	Clear landing under ropes to remove obstacles. No swings close to tree trunks to minimise collision risk. Adults to 'spot' children on ropes. Limit numbers on ropes. Ensure spectators are a good distance away. First Aider and First Aid kit on site throughout.	

Code of practice:

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ACTIVITY TO TAKE PLACE

- Adhere to adult: child supervision ratios
- Qualified first aider is present
- Site emergency information is in place including knowledge of nearest vehicle access point
- Appropriate Risk Assessments are in place and adhered to
- Guidance in the Health & Safety & Safeguarding policy must be followed.
- Parents/volunteers must be suitably experienced in the activity and have received relevant training (where appropriate)
- Where necessary, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be supplied and used.

Safe working with ropes and hammocks and dens

- All ropes and hammocks must be regularly maintained and examined and checked for damage before each use. Worn or damaged kit must be replaced by the Forest School leader
- Ensure trees used regularly are subject to regular inspection and tree safety maintenance

- Ensure trees/limbs chosen are strong, healthy and will take the weight of users
- Ensure weather conditions are suitable for rope use - ie. Do not use in high winds.
- Clear the ground of debris and designate a specific area for the activity, clear of other activities and people
- Set clear rules with participants on how to safely take part in rope activities
- Participants may need direct supervision when participating in rope activities. Supervision ratios should be based on age, ability and behaviour of the group
- Participants advised to remove/ tie back dangling clothing, jewellery or hair
- Be aware of people around you and look out for them when moving sticks and logs
- Follow manual handling guidelines when moving sticks and logs
- When den building:
 - Ensure the widest end of the sticks are in contact with the ground
 - Don't enter the structure until an adult has checked it
 - Start with big sticks for the main structure, then add smaller ones
 - Don't add to the shelter when anyone is inside
 - Don't use fresh or living vegetation
 - Dismantle the den before ending the session, removing the smaller stuff first
 - If possible, assign one adult to each shelter

Specific rope activities - guidance to be followed:

Rope swing

- Boundary to be marked on the floor around the site. Individuals only cross the boundary when it is their turn.

Rope bridge

- Young children will need close spotting
- Ensure an adult tests the bridge before use

Hammocks

- Ensure an adult tests the hammock before use
- Observe the maximum loading weight of the hammock

Tarps

- Highlight guy ropes to prevent trip hazards

Tree climbing

Risks	Level of risk	Likelihood	Control measures	Probable benefits
Bumps and scrapes	L	M	Limit numbers climbing a tree at one time. Adults to spot children while climbing.	Allows children to take risks in a safe, risk assessed environment. Supports physical and vestibular development. Allows children to challenge themselves. Fun. Opportunity for imaginative play. Opportunities for cooperation and turn taking.
Breaks, sprains and strains from falling	M/H	L	No climbing past 1.5m. Adults to spot children while climbing. Children taught rule of 3 points of contact. Emergency plan for serious incidents (eg broken limb) in place. Site risk assessed daily prior to use with participants. Unsafe/rotten trees cordoned off. Regular tree safety checks carried out. First Aider and First Aid kit on site throughout.	

Code of Practice:

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ACTIVITIES TO TAKE PLACE

- Adhere to adult: child supervision ratios
- Qualified first aider is present (Forest School leader)
- Site Emergency Information is in place including knowledge of nearest vehicle access point
- Appropriate Risk Assessments are in place and adhered to
- Guidance in the Health & Safety & Safeguarding policy must be followed
- Parents and volunteers must be suitably experienced in the activity and have received relevant training (where appropriate)

Safe tree climbing

- There are limited trees in the WFFS site which are suitable for climbing - adults will be made aware of which are appropriate.
- Before allowing children to climb, trees must be checked for loose or rotten branches, as well as the ground surrounding the tree for any hazards.
- Adults should be aware of children's footwear - wellies may be difficult to climb in.
- A child will only be able to climb a tree if the FS leader believes it is safe for them to do so.
- No climbing during wet or windy weather.

- Adult to spot child climbing.
- Only one child climbing a tree at a time.
- Children only allowed to climb to height of 1.5m.
- No equipment to be take up in to the tree.
- Teach children the rule of 3 points of contact.

Tool Use and Storage

Risk assessment:

Risks	Level of risk	Likelihood	Control measures	Probable benefits
Personal injury - minor or major cuts, scrapes and bruises	L/M/H	L	<p>Safe tool handling talk and demonstration before every use.</p> <p>Discussion and demonstration of 'blood bubble' safe working distance reinforced.</p> <p>Close supervision at appropriate ratio (see COP below)</p> <p>Provide correct PPE and explain their use</p> <p>Using blades - demonstrate and explain drawing cutting blade away from body (especially major arteries) and towards the floor.</p> <p>Only use tools with receptive groups demonstrating safe, responsible behaviours.</p> <p>Stop tool use if behaviours or ratios change and the activity becomes unsafe.</p> <p>Count tools in and out.</p> <p>Only use if leader and adults have training in tool use and are competent in their use.</p> <p>First Aider and First Aid kit on site throughout.</p>	<p>Opportunity for risk taking</p> <p>Allows children to build confidence</p> <p>Children learn to trust their abilities</p> <p>Sense of responsibility and achievement.</p> <p>Develops fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination</p> <p>Learning a transferrable skill</p> <p>Provides opportunities to be creative.</p> <p>Fun.</p>

Code of practice:

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ACTIVITIES TO TAKE PLACE

- Adhere to adult: child supervision ratios
- Qualified first aider is present (Forest School leader)
- Site Emergency Information is in place including knowledge of nearest vehicle access point
- Appropriate Risk Assessments are in place and adhered to
- Guidance in the Health & Safety & Safeguarding policy must be followed

- Parents and volunteers must be suitably experienced in the activity and have received relevant training (where appropriate)
- Where necessary, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be supplied and used

Safe Working with Tools

- All tools must be regularly maintained and checked for damage before **each** use. Worn or damaged tools should be given to the Forest School leader to be repaired or replaced
- Individuals must not use **any** tool without prior instruction and clear demonstration on safe use and safe carrying techniques
- Start each session with a tool use talk/training session, even if tools have been used before
- Tools should only be used if the children are deemed in a receptive mood and demonstrating sensible and safe behaviours. Stop tool use if unacceptable behaviour or ratios change (e.g. if a child is removed from the session) and the activity becomes unsafe
- First time users of all tools should be supervised on a 1:1 basis until deemed competent
- Maintain safe working distances at all times (blood bubble: a sphere of space with radius of length equal to or more than the length from the body centre to the end of the blade)
- Ensure assisting adults are aware that their role is to supervise and not to work on own task
- Do not use tools if weather conditions make tool use unsafe (eg. High winds)
- No gloves to be worn on the hand holding any swinging tools.
- Tool area to be set up away from main walkways and working area.
- Tools should be counted in and out at start and end of session.

Supervision ratios:

The minimum ages are at the discretion of the Forest School leader and will be considered in conjunction with ability and behaviour of the group. Meeting of the minimum age requirement does not guarantee that tools will be used. Tools will NOT be used with children under the stated minimum age. The ratios given represent adult:tool.

Tool	Min age	MINIMUM RATIOS	
		0-3	4+
Metal trowel	1	1:6	1:6
Small hammer/mallet	1	1:1	1:2
Palm drills	1	1:1	1:4
Vegetable Peeler	1	1:1	1:4
Screwdriver	6	x	1:2
Manual hand held drills	1	1:1	1:1
Froe or other splitting tool eg stationary axe/billhook	1	1:1	1:1
Bow saw	1	1:1	1:1
Loppers	3	1:1	1:1
Hammers	3	x	1:1
Secateurs	4	x	1:1
Knives	6	x	1:1

Use of specific tools - the following guidelines direct safe use of certain tool groups:

Potato peeler:

- Peelers may be used as a tool for peeling bark from green sticks and very light whittling tasks.
- A glove should be worn on the non-tool-holding hand.
- Peelers should only be used while seated and at a safe distance from others; blood bubble.
- Adopt a safe working position: all parts of the body to be kept away from the tool whilst working, either sit with elbows on knees, off to one side or whilst kneeling behind a block and working down onto it.
- Direction of work should always be away from the body.

Bow Saws:

- When not in use, blade guards should be in place and the saw stored with the blade positioned facing down towards the ground.
- Blade guards to be removed by supervising adult
- Bowsaws should be carried by your side with the teeth facing the ground. They should not be swung backwards and forwards or held over the shoulder
- Bowsaws can be used to cut anything larger than 1 inch in diameter

- When using a bowsaw it is essential to wear a glove on the non-tool-holding hand
- Ensure item being cut is supported either using a saw horse or over another log and braced by other participants. Gloves must be worn on bracing hands.
- Body should be positioned so that saw is drawn freely to the side of the body, not over legs

Loppers:

- Loppers should be carried with the tip angled downwards, held by the lower arm of the loppers to ensure that the blade does not open
- When not in use, lie loppers on the ground or stand up against a tree away from main walking routes or work area
- Always hold by handles and ensure body is kept out of closing lopper arms
- Do not place hands near cutting edge
- Only attempt to cut wood less than 2cm in diameter

Secateurs

- Carry with tip pointing downwards
- Always put in locked position when not in use.
- When not in use, lie on the ground or stand up against a tree away from main walking routes or work area
- Always hold by handles
- Do not place hands near cutting edge
- Only attempt to cut wood up to 1cm in diameter

Knives

- All knives to be sheathed when not in use, with sheath clicked into place
- Knives only to be removed from sheath when sitting
- Sheath to be worn on cord around body when knife in use
- Maintain safe working distances (blood bubble)
- Adopt a safe working position: all parts of the body to be kept away from the tool whilst working, either sit with elbows on knees, off to one side or whilst kneeling behind a block and working down onto it
- Gloves to be worn on bracing hand until fully competent but not the hand holding the knife.
- Knives **MUST** be counted in and out at the start/end of an activity to ensure all are accounted for
- Participants always instructed to push the blade away from their body rather than towards it

Mallets:

- Can be used with a knife or an axe to split wood along the grain.
- Gloves should **not** be worn on the dominant hand when using swinging tools.
- Ensure participants understand that mallets are **only** to be used for the purpose specified, eg knocking in a stake/tent peg or splitting wood.

Using a knife to split wood with a partner:

- Person 1 to hold knife by the handle and kneel on one knee
- Knife positioned on wood which should be sitting firmly on a work stump
- Person 1 to determine they are ready by verbal communication and eye contact with person 2
- Person 2 to use a mallet to split the wood by firmly hitting the centre of the back of the tool blade driving it through the wood.
- DO NOT hold the piece of wood; it is to be held in position by the presence of the knife.

Upright and Palm drills

- Work on a secure stable stump and always drill downwards onto a stable surface.
- Always wear a glove on the hand bracing the item to be drilled.
- When working with a partner, ensure verbal and visual communication to confirm you are ready

Fire Steels

- Tinder should be placed on a non-flammable surface, eg. a shell or a fire bowl or on top of a fire stack if lighting fire directly
- Striking action should always be downwards and away from the body, upwind of tinder to prevent burns from ignited tinder
- Only use tinder as approved by the group leader
- Long hair and loose clothing eg long sleeves or scarves must be secured. Never light a fire wearing gloves
- Ignited tinder should be transported to main fire by an adult using fire gloves. A stick should be used to secure cotton wool or char cloth during transportation if using

Site

Risk assessment:

Hazards	Risks	Level of risk	Likelihood	Control measures
Low/no mobile signal	Unable to obtain emergency assistance	H	L	Address and postcode in handbook Ensure mobile is charged before sessions Phone can roam on to other networks for emergency calls
Tree layer: - Falling branches - Overhanging branches	Crush injuries Death	H	L	Daily site check Regular tree survey
Shrub layer: - poisonous plants (hemlock) - thorns (hawthorn)	Poisoning Puncture wounds - possible bacterial infection	M/H	L/M	No lick, no pick reminders to children Teach children and adults how to identify dangerous plants Raise awareness
Field layer: - poisonous plants (foxglove, Lords and Ladies) - Mushrooms	Poisoning	M	L	No lick, no pick reminders to children Raise awareness Teach identification
Ground layer: - Slips, trips and falls - Broken glass and rubbish	Personal injury, risk of breaks, sprains and strains	M	L	Daily site assessment Remind participants of the risks FS leader to sweep area of rubbish before sessions Raise awareness
Ditches	Personal injury, risk of breaks, sprains and strains	L	L	Raise awareness Daily site assessment Discuss safe movement in and out of ditches Adults to model safe movement
Slope down to site from park	Personal injury, risk of breaks, sprains and strains	M	L	No running on slope Daily site assessment

Safeguarding

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults, and WFFS understands their responsibility while the participants are in our care. We are committed to ensuring our environment is safe from abuse, and that any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with.

The FS leader has undertaken a Safeguarding Children Level 2 which will be kept up to date.

Anti-bullying

Bullying can be defined as: repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group, that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

WFFS has a zero-tolerance attitude towards bullying, and will act immediately to work with any affected participants to protect them from future harm. We will also work with any perpetrators, understanding that there may be a number of underlying reasons causing this behaviour. Where necessary, the FS leader will also communicate with and work with the parents.

Confidentiality

WFFS will never promise to keep any disclosure a secret, and will try to ensure that the person making the disclosure understands the need to pass on any information to the appropriate people to promote a good outcome.

Where possible, consent from the person making a disclosure to share what they have said will be sought, although a lack of consent should not prohibit the appropriate sharing of information.

Data Protection and GDPR Policy and Procedures

WFFS is committed to protecting personal data. Our collection and use of personal data follows the Data Protection Act 2018 and also considers the rights and wishes of all participants whose data is collected, (photographic, video,

written). The same considerations are made for the sharing of collected data, particularly on social media / for publicity. Please refer to the Social Media Policy.

WFFS will collect data from the clients attending sessions. Basic information about you including your name and contact details (including emergency contacts) will be collected. In line with data protection laws, WFFS will not collect, store or process your personal details if you are under 13 years of age; unless we have the express permission from parent or guardians to do so.

There are some situations where WFFS will collect sensitive personal data such as medical conditions. When we do so, we will be very clear as to why we are collecting such information, and we will only do so with your specific consent and permission. We will also collect sensitive personal data if you have an accident during one of our Forest School sessions. This information will be retained for legal reasons, for safeguarding purposes and to protect us (including in the event of an insurance or legal claim). If this does occur, we will take extra care to ensure your privacy rights are protected.

All of the personal data we process is processed by us in the UK and all our IT systems are hosted and maintained within the European Economic Area (EEA). This is done in accordance with guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Electronic data and databases are stored on secure computer systems and we control who has access to information (using both physical and electronic means). We will only use and store information for as long as it required for the purposes it was collected for. We continually review the information we hold and delete any that is no longer required.

Disclosure or Accusation Policy and Procedures

Any concern will be taken seriously, and acted upon immediately.

The FS leader is made aware, through training, of signs of abuse in children including physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and acts of neglect. It is not the FS leader's role to investigate incidents or abuse or look for signs of abuse.

If the FS leader or a volunteer has concerns about a child, it is their legal responsibility to report these concerns.

All leaders and volunteers must:

- Ensure that the person disclosing information about concerns or abuse can speak without interruption
- Deal with allegations of domestic abuse within a child's home or bullying in the same way as any other allegation
- Advise that information will be passed on to Children and Young People's Services
- Record the facts immediately and inform the FS leader
- All records must be factual, evidence based, written in the same language/ wording as they were disclosed, then dated and signed
- A disclosure form can be found in the appendix, and copies will be available during every FS session
- The FS lead will proceed with any referrals in line with the procedure set out by the Suffolk's Local Child Safeguarding board
- **If there is an immediate safeguarding concern, ANYONE can call Suffolk's Safeguarding Children Board 'Customer First' on 0808 800 4005**
- **In an emergency, call 999**

DBS

The FS leader is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Any regular volunteers will also be provided with a DBS check.

Lost or Missing Child Policy and Procedures

This procedure should be instigated and followed by the FS leader in the event of any person attending the session (child or adult) going missing from a group.

- All of the group will be immediately called back to the fire circle. They will be counted, and the missing member confirmed. The FS leader will note the time.
- The FS leader must ensure the safety of the remaining participants and at least 2 adults must remain with them at all times.
- One or more adults should immediately start looking for the missing person
- If they are not found within **five minutes**, the FS leader will call the police by phoning 999
- The FS leader will make notes on: a description of the person including clothing, any information on their last known location and time, any information regarding special medical or learning needs. This information will be passed on to the police

Social Media Policy

There may be opportunities during sessions to use photographic images, such as children using cameras to capture nature, or staff capturing child observations. Parents may not take images during sessions.

The FSL leader may wish to take pictures for promotion or for sharing good practice - permission for this will be sought from parents before sessions begin. If the parent does not wish photos to be used, then their child will not be included in any photographs. No names will be shared with the images, and they will be stored on a secure network in line with GDPR.

Prevent

Prevent is about safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from radicalisation. The process for sharing these concerns is the same as for any other safeguarding concern, and the same form can be used for both. Any concerns should be passed on to the FS leader who has undergone Prevent training, who will then seek advice from the local authority on how to proceed.

The main steps to follow regarding a concern are:

Notice → check → share

What gives cause for concern? If you are concerned, make a note of these concerns on a safeguarding form.

Who can help put that into context? Discuss your concerns with the FS leader, who is Prevent trained.

Who is best qualified to take this forward? The FS leader will ensure that the information is used to support the individual in the best way, following advice from the local authority where appropriate.

Visitor Policy and Procedures

Invited visitors can enhance the Forest School community through their own skills and experience, and by joining in with celebrations. Uninvited visitors are not

always a threat, and procedures are detailed below to ensure they do not disrupt sessions.

Invited visitors are briefed before attending sessions on the policies in place, and should read the handbook. Before sessions begin, adults and children will be briefed on any visitors that are expected, and all adults will be introduced to the children. This links to the safeguarding policy and procedures.

Visitors and volunteers will be vetted by gathering references, employment history or a record of qualifications, or we will have had prior personal knowledge of the person. No participants will be left unsupervised with a visitor if a DBS certificate hasn't been seen.

If an uninvited visitor enters the site, the Forest School leader will approach them to gauge the situation and act accordingly. Unwanted or unexpected visitors on site will be challenged by an adult and reminded that they are on private property. They should be escorted off the site. If the adult needs support, they must call for help from another adult present. The police should be called if needed.

Information for Supervising Adults

Ratios

Children will be accompanied by parents or guardians for sessions at Willow Fen Forest School. A minimum ratio of 1:6 adult:children must be followed at all times.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Forest School leader is in charge of the Forest School sessions. However, all adults involved in the session are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe and following the Forest School rules.

All helpers will receive a briefing prior to the session regarding activity or site related issues.

The FS leader will review the site risk assessment before every session, and any relevant risk assessments for planned activities.

The FS leader is responsible for the maintenance and checking of all tools and equipment to be used, prior to their use.

The FS leader is responsible for training the children and other adults in the safe use of tools, referring to the tool use codes of practice.

All adult helpers are expected to model safe, responsible behaviour reflecting the Forest School ethos.

Communication Strategy for Stakeholders

Parents/carers: A letter will be sent to parents/carers prior to sessions starting to inform them of the benefits of FS, what sessions may involve and any other important information they need to know. Parents/carers will be asked to sign and return a consent form giving consent for the activities and for First Aid. A sample of this letter/form can be found in the appendix. Parents will be attending the sessions, so other questions and/or feedback can be shared verbally during or after sessions. The FS leader's contact email address will also be provided so they can share any feedback or concerns at other times.

Participants: Participants will be involved in sharing what they have enjoyed and what else they may wish to do verbally during and at the end of a session. It is important that they feel involved in, and indeed central to, the planning process.

Volunteers: The FS leader will introduce themselves to volunteers before they arrive, and share the handbook with them. The volunteer will be responsible for familiarising themselves with the contents, and will sign to confirm they understand their roles and responsibilities. The volunteer will feed any observations back verbally to the FS leader at the end of a session where appropriate to inform future planning.

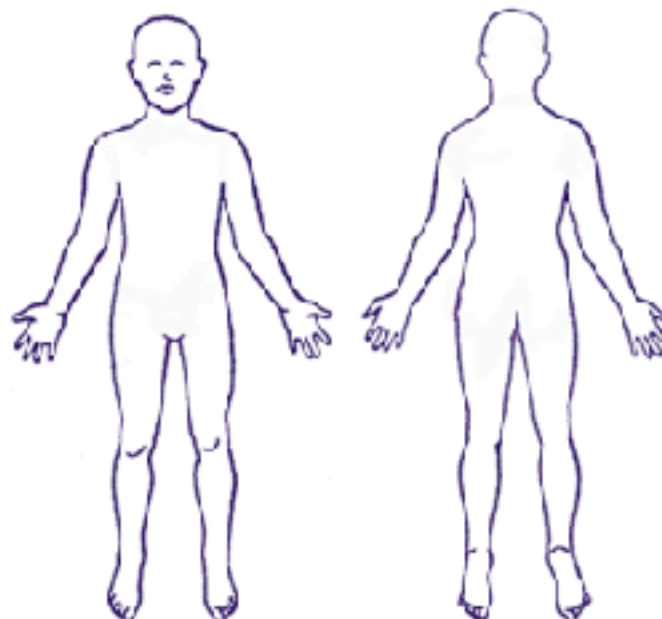
Landowner: The Forest School Leader will inform the landowner of any hazards or concerns about the site, and discuss appropriate action. This will take place face-to-face as and when necessary.

Appendix

Accident Record - Casualty Monitoring Card

Date	Time	Location – six fig grid including map letter code
Cas name		Address
Cas tel no		
ICE Name		ICE tel number(s)
Mechanism of injury. (What happened? How did it happen to the casualty?)		
Name of first aider		Tel numbers of first aiders present

Indicate injury site on diagrams and add any comments



	Information	Questions to ask	Casualty reply
S	Signs Symptoms	Do you mind if I make a record? How are you feeling? Can I look at the injury?	
A	Allergies Age Athleticism	Is this the first time occurred? What is your job/hobbies?	
M	Medication	Have you recently taken any medication? Details	
P	Past history	When did you last visit the doctor/hospital?	
L	Last meal	What have you eaten recently?	
E	Events	What happened?	

Other comments

Time (24 hr clock)				
Pulse	Rate (per min)			
	Character			
Breathing	Rate (per min)			
	Character			
Temperature	Warm/dry			
	Hot/wet			
	Hot/dry			
	Cold/wet			
	Cold/dry			
Colour				
Level of consciousness	Alert			
	Voice			
	Pain			
	Unresponsive			
Pulse present	Radial pulse			
	Femoral pulse			
	Carotid pulse			

PULSE character can be described as Strong (S), Weak (W), Bounding (B), Regular (R), Irregular (I)
 BREATHING can be described as Deep (D), Shallow (S), Wheezy (W), Bubbly (B), Noisy (N)

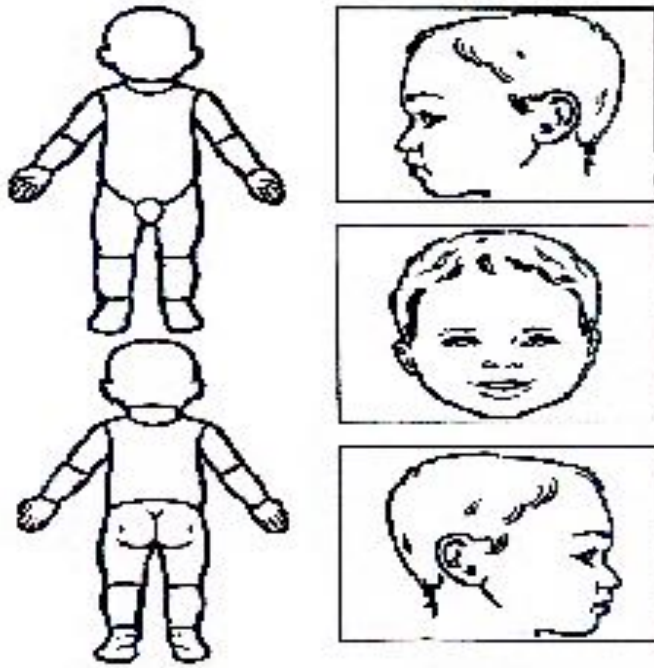
Recording Form for Safeguarding Concerns

Staff, volunteers and regular visitors are required to complete this form and pass it to Gemma Snape if they have a safeguarding concern about a child attending our sessions.

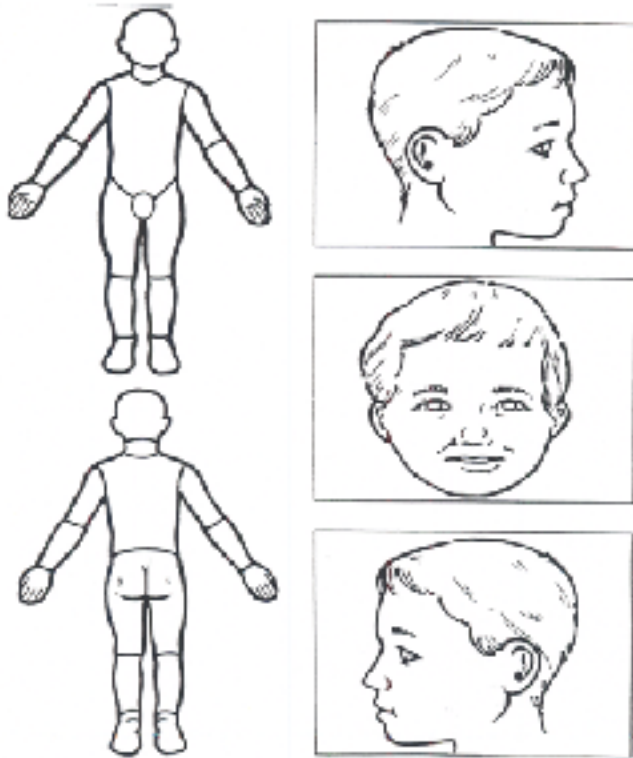
Information Required	Enter Information Here
Full name of child	
Date of birth	
Your name and role	
<p>Nature of concern/ disclosure.</p> <p>Please include where you were when the child made a disclosure, what you saw, who else was there, what did the child say or do and what you said. Where possible, use the child's own words.</p> <p>[Ensure that if there is an injury this is recorded (size and shape) and a body map is completed]</p> <p><i>[Make it clear if you have a raised a concern about a similar issue previously]</i></p>	
Time & date of incident:	
Name and position of the person you passing this to?	
Your Signature	
Time and date form completed	
Time form received by Gemma Snape	
Action Taken by Gemma Snape	

Body Map - young child

Young child



Body Map - older child



Indicate clearly where the injury was seen

Near Miss Reporting Form

This form should be completed whenever a Near Miss occurs - an incident WITHOUT injury to person or damage to property.

Date of near miss:	Time of near miss:	Location of near miss:
Who was involved?		
What is their role in WFFS?		
Name of any witnesses:		
Description of near miss:		
Steps taken to prevent a reoccurrence of this type of near miss incident:		
Signature of person completing report:		Date:
Name and role in WFFS:		

Emergency Procedure Card

Forest School closest address:

Fen View, Thorndon, Suffolk, IP23 7JW

Closest vehicle point:

Next to play equipment in small car park

Site Grid Reference: TM 13923 70120/TM 139 701

Vehicle Access Grid Reference: TM 13808 69974/TM 138 699

Site What3words reference: REPRINTS PINTS ISSUE

Vehicle Access What3words reference: WORKERS CLASPING HAPPILY

Daily Risk Assessment Form

Willow Fen site assessed by: _____ on: _____

To be assessed	Hazard(s)	Risk	Level	Likelihood	Action required?
Access to emergency services	Unable to obtain emergency access				
Tree layer	Falling branches, overhanging branches				
Shrub layer	Picking berries Thorns				
Field layer	Hemlock Lords and ladies Berries Mushrooms				
Ground layer	Silica Trips Falls				
Fire	Burns Fire spreading Smoke				
Weather	Wind Storms				
Anaphylaxis	Bee stings Tree nuts				
Other					

Parent/carer Letter and Permission Form

Willow Fen Forest School

Dear Parents/Carers,

Whilst at Forest School, sessions may include the following activities:

- Tool use
 - Fire lighting/campfire cooking
 - Tree climbing
 - Den building
- and many more!

Please give your consent for the above by signing and returning the form below. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at gsnape@willowfen.co.uk for further details.

Children will need suitable clothing to keep warm and dry, and arms and legs must be covered. Please be aware that these clothes may get very dirty!

Children will need:

- Long sleeved top
- Waterproof jacket
- Socks
- Trousers
- Wellies, boots or sturdy shoes

During winter, extra layers, hats, gloves and thick tops should also be provided.

Many thanks,

Gemma Snape
Forest School Leader

Please complete and return this slip to me, in person or via gsnape@willowfen.co.uk

Name of child: _____

I give consent for my child to attend and participate in Forest School sessions

I give consent for my child to be administered anti-histamine cream

I give consent for photos to be taken

I give consent for photos to be used on social media

I give consent for First Aid to be administered by a qualified First Aider in the event of a minor accident

Does your child have any known medical conditions which I need to be aware of? If yes, please give details.

Does your child have any known allergies or special dietary requirements? If yes, please give details.

Please provide contact details for someone to contact in an emergency:

Name: _____ Phone number: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Level 2 certificate



DBS certificate

DBS Fee Charged		Certificate Number	001791652728
Applicant Personal Details		Date of Issue:	28 JULY 2022
Surname:	SNAFE	Employment Details	
Forename(s):	GEMMA LOUISE	Position applied for:	CHIEF WORKFORCE FOREST SCHOOL LEADER
Other Names:	MCGOLDRICK, GEMMA LOUISE	Name of Employer:	WILLOW FEN FOREST SCHOOL
Date of Birth:	16 SEPTEMBER 1989	Countersignatory Details	
Place of Birth:	STEVEYAGE HERTFORDSHIRE	Registered Person/Body:	ADVENTURE PLUS
Gender:	FEMALE	Countersignatory:	MARGARET AHMEDAGE

Police Records of Convictions, Cautions, Reprimands and Warnings
NONE RECORDED

Information from the list held under Section 142 of the Education Act 2002
NONE RECORDED

DBS Children's Barred List information
NONE RECORDED

DBS Adults' Barred List information
NOT REQUESTED

Other relevant information disclosed at the Chief Police Officer(s) discretion
NONE RECORDED

Enhanced Certificate
 This document is an Enhanced Criminal Record Certificate with the meaning of sections 113B and 116 of the Police Act 1997.

THIS CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY

Disclosure and Barring Service, PO Box 165, Liverpool, L69 3JH. Helpline: 0300 200 190

Continued on page 2

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First Aid Certificates



This is to certify that
Gemma Louise Snape
has successfully passed

ITC Level 3 Award in Paediatric First Aid

Qualification Accreditation Number: 601/3327/2 Qualification Credit Value: 2

The learner has been awarded credit(s) for the following unit(s):

Unit Title	Code	Level	Credits
Emergency Paediatric First Aid	Y/617/3908	3	1
Managing Paediatric Illness, Injuries and Emergencies	R/617/3910	3	1

This certificate is valid for 3 years from the date of issue

Centre Details: Peritia Training
Venue: Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Foxburrow Farm, Woodbridge

Certificate Number: WB30A5F5
Date of issue: 06/12/2021
Expires: 06/12/2024

Signed:

Bernie Hartshorn
(ITC Awards Manager)

ofqual
REGULATED
register.ofqual.gov.uk



To check the validity of ITC certificates please visit www.itcfirst.org.uk/certificates



This is to certify that
Gemma Louise Snape
has successfully passed
16 Hour Forest School First Aid Course

Forest School First Aid - 2 Days

This certificate is valid for 3 years from the date of issue

Centre Details: Peritia Training
Venue: Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Foxburrow Farm, Woodbridge

Certificate Number: WBZLY546
Date of issue: 06/12/2021
Expires: 06/12/2024

Signed:

Bernie Hartshorn (ITC Awards Manager)



To check the validity of ITC certificates please visit www.itcfirst.org.uk/certificates

Prevent certificate



This document certifies that

Gemma Snape

Willow Fen Forest School

Reference Number: BG19ZEP81656339525

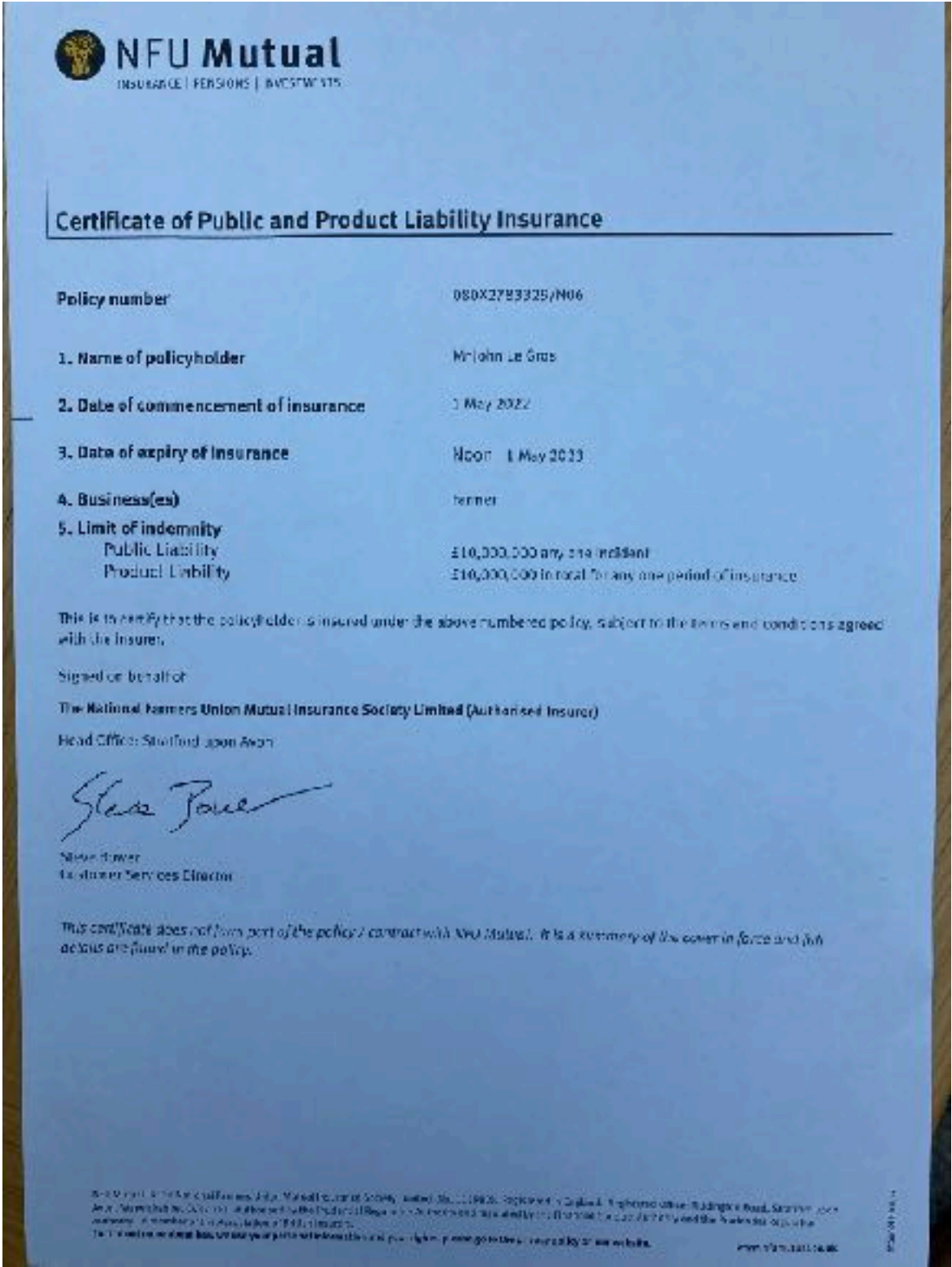
Completed the Prevent Online Training Course
2022-06-27 14:18:45

This introductory training provides a foundation on which to develop further knowledge around the risks of radicalisation and the kinds of support available to those at risk.

www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk

 HM Government

Landowner Public Liability Insurance



With thanks to the Suffolk Wildlife Trust for the use of parts of their handbook, policies and procedures, and thanks to Thorndon CEVC School and Kim Free for the use of parts of their handbook and support in writing this handbook.