



Waterside Primary Academy

Happy Children Learn

Forest School Handbook

To be read by all Forest School leaders, assistants and helpers

Waterside Primary Academy

Black Horse Avenue

Chesham

Buckinghamshire

HP5 1QU

Written by Stacey Scott and Aimee Read

August 2025

(Review June 2026)

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Vision Statement

Our school's vision, aims and values are important for keeping all members of our community focused on our core purpose. The statements below act as a guiding north star for our whole school community and we aim to make all decisions with these at the forefront of our thinking.

We believe that happy children learn. We are committed to providing a welcoming, positive, safe and stimulating environment for children to learn, where everyone is equal and all are valued. Through creating happy memories through our learning journeys, we want all children to enjoy their learning, achieve their potential and become motivated and independent life-long learners.

In Early Years, we provide a safe, developmentally appropriate, nurturing environment that promotes social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth, as well as a positive self-image and a love of learning.

Our behaviour values of Caring, Attitude, Respect, Effort and Safety (CARES) are vital components to life at Waterside. Through these, we encourage self-discipline and resilience so that all our children experience success and aspire to reach their full potential.

Our Curriculum is designed to encourage curiosity and a zest for learning, with children encouraged to ask probing questions throughout the Curriculum in order to shape their future learning. The thematic approach of our curriculum gives children the experience of real-life learning, with links to our local community, whilst also taking into consideration current affairs. We want our children to flourish and progress confidently to the next stages of their learning and value the support of our school and the local Waterside community in helping us achieve this – it takes a village to raise a child.

Our overall goal as a school is to equip our young people with the skills and mind-set to thrive and then take on life in the modern world.

What is Forest School?

Forest School is a long term holistic learning process that aims to raise self-awareness and self-esteem in participants. Regular sessions take place in a woodland environment, where the landscape itself adds to the experience of learning. Qualified practitioners, trained in child development, self-esteem and learning theories facilitate sessions to gain personal outcomes for each participant. Forest school can be applied to all age groups and abilities, and can be linked to the National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Forest School England Definition

Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers children and young people opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self-esteem, through hands on learning experiences in a local woodland environment

Forest School England Principles

National Forest School Association Principles for Waterside Primary Academy School

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 review are integral elements of Forest School.

Forest School provision will take place:

- on a weekly basis in all seasons through the whole school year
- Forest School sessions will take place during a minimum of two hours for children to engage in uninterrupted play cycles and deep learning opportunities

- Sessions will have a minimum of 3 adults, where no higher risk activities are taking place, in accordance with the FSA principles.
- Sessions are planned according to the groups and individual members' needs and interests. All regular participating adults are involved in observing, reviewing, planning and adapting to provide progression in learning and building on previous experiences. Plans are made in collaboration with all participants through reflective conversations during and at the end of sessions.

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.

Forest School:

- provides a space for children to connect with nature and develop a sense of belonging to our Forest School community of learning
- takes place on our school site or on Hill Farm Road next to the school field
- supports all participants to develop an understanding of our place in nature and to become stewards of the local and wider natural environment for the future
- encourages activities that model long-term pro-environmental behaviours, minimise and mitigate any negative environmental impacts and promote positive environmental impacts to enhance the natural resources on our Forest School site, the wooded and natural areas of the school grounds and during visits to Hill Farm Road

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners. Forest School will provide a space for independent and collaborative learning and development opportunities to evolve in order to develop:

- social and communication skills, e.g. through working together on child-led projects and games, carefully considering how we communicate with each other, and the consequences of our choices of communication
- creative and thinking skills, e.g. through using natural and open-ended resources
- physical gross and fine motor skills, e.g. through den building and tree climbing or craft and tool work
- independence, resilience and problem-solving skills, e.g. through a focus on the process and not the product of any activities, and through the choice of how to spend their time, with adult support as appropriate
- emotional intelligence and wellbeing, through being in a small group in an informal learning environment where adults model active and empathic listening and support children in their understanding of their own emotions.

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

Forest School provision enables all participants to:

- take managed risks in a supportive environment, to develop everyone's ability to manage our own risks and to predict and understand the consequences of our actions
- explore both physical and emotional risks through our understanding that what is high risk for one person, e.g. sharing their views in group discussions or climbing a tree, may be low risk for another.

- learn from mistakes in a non-judgmental environment and therefore develop confidence in the learning process
- trust in the innate capabilities of children to sense their own limits and innate sense of self-preservation
- take part in discussions of risk-benefit in order to develop a sense of proportionality regarding the use and purpose of tools, fire and other high risk activities, which are appropriate to their developmental stage and when requested by the children.

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

Forest School provision will:

- be led by Stacey Scott and Aimee Read, Forest School level 3 qualified practitioners, a Recognised Provider with the National Forest School Association. Both practitioners hold a current Paediatric outdoor first aid qualification (March 25).
- be led by adults who consider themselves facilitators and mentors alongside the children and adults.
- have a high adult: child ratio with DBS checked supporting adults and clearly stated staff and volunteer roles and responsibilities in our Forest School planning and policy documents.

Principle 6: Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning. The Forest School leader and supporting adults will observe and talk to the children to respond to the children's ideas, needs and interests. As a result, our Forest School is carefully planned to provide children with opportunities to:

- choose child-led, play-based activities
- reflect on and discuss their learning and activities during and after sessions
- develop their understanding, communication skills and social and emotional skills We encourage DBS-checked local community volunteers and parent helpers to support sessions regularly and to share their life experience and world knowledge to build our community of learning

Forest School at Waterside

We are very fortunate at Waterside with the sites that are available to us to use for Forest School. We have 2 sites available all of which are provide a different woodland experience for the children.

Site 1: On site area at the bottom of our playing field.

Site 2 – a Site off Hill Farm Road – Through gate at the bottom of our field. Shared by our community allotment.

Communication with all stakeholders

- Updates will be shared with parents via Dojo which is a secure site that all parents have access to. Photos and videos can also be shared here
- Half termly newsletters will be shared with our trust Kings Education Trust and with our families.
- Staff will have a staff meeting at the beginning of the academic year so that they are clear on our vision for Forest School
- Buckland- our gardening providers are informed of which areas need maintaining and which areas need to be left to nature. Photos have been taken to support the different staff coming onto site
- When using our off-site base, the school will inform the neighbouring community of our intentions

This Handbook is available online and in the office and is shared with all adults who take part in Forest School sessions.







History of Forest School area being used

Our Hill Farm Road site is open to the community. It has historically been used by the local community for countryside walks. There is also a community allotment near the site is maintained by Chesham Town. They visit on the last Sunday of every month. This site was briefly used for Forest school over two years ago but was not maintained.

Our on-site Forest school base was created in January 2025. It was originally used as an extension to the football pitch. In January, the site was developed to have a base camp, orchard and bug hotel area.

Rules of Forest School

All children participating are encouraged to be involved in the decisions about their environment and safety; however, there are a few rules that the children will be made aware of at the start of their Forest School experience. Behind each rule, there is a range of learning opportunities that will encourage children to engage with and understand these rules. They are:

-  Look after your Forest School
-  Do not pick anything growing. No pick, no lick
-  Do not put fingers or anything else in your mouth. No pick, no lick
-  Carry sticks carefully. If it's as big as you it takes 2. If you can cover it with your thumb it takes 1.
-  Stay within the boundary. We don't go over it, we don't go under it
-  If there's a gate, we wait.

The Countryside Code:

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

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

Environmental impact





Our onsite Forest School will be used once a week for our sessions. To ensure minimal impact on this area, it will be rotated with our off-site Forest school. The site consists of a log circle area for base camp, log pile and a big open area with a growing orchard.

The most noticeable impact on this site is likely to be the grass from children moving around in the area, log seating area will damage the grass underneath it, digging area and den building area. It will be therefore necessary to move the areas around through the seasons.








Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Buy equipment	Buy shed to store equipment	Replenish equipment
Forest School- training	Forest School CPD	Engage with other Forest School leads
First Aid training	Maintaining First Aid supplies	First Aid renewal
Set up Digging area	Maintain digging area	Buy more digging equipment
Establish base Camp	Rest area	Move area
Planting Orchard	Maintain Orchard	Parent information evening

Forest School Routines

Procedures to be carried out before each session:


-  A thorough sweep of the site will be done before each session to check for any litter, glass, animal faeces, etc. Any such items should be collected using a plastic bag and disposable gloves and will be noted on the safety sweep.
-  A written record will be kept of each sweep with the handbook. This should state if any hazards were found and how they are dealt with.
-  Trees will be checked for any broken or dead branches which may fall.
-  A check will be made of the weather conditions, and the short term forecast. If it is windy, or a thunder storm has started or is imminent then it will not be advised to carry out Forest School session.

Procedures to be carried out during each session:


-  Put on protective clothing and footwear.
-  Wear seasonal clothing e.g. hat in the summer, coat and layers in the winter
-  Apply sun cream as and when needed.
-  Walk to the area, discussing things to be seen on the way.
-  Discuss any safety issues on the day.
-  Walk to base camp.
-  Sit down, discuss rules and any safety issues again. It is advised to walk the boundary for at least the first session.

Toileting Arrangements


On site-

-  Children are asked to go to the toilet before their Forest School session starts.





Off-site-

-  Children are asked to go to the toilet before their Forest School session starts. If children need to go to the toilet while at Forest School, we will radio ahead to school to let them know a children and adult (either a member of staff or a volunteer who is DBS checked) are heading back to school to use the toilet.

Wet or soiling-

-  If a child has a wetting or soiling accident they will be changed in accordance with the schools intimate care policy by an appropriate member of staff back at school. If needed parents will be called to support.

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

-  Discuss how the session went with the children, allowing the children to give feedback. This will inform planning for the next session
-  Clear everything away and ensure the site has been returned to nature
-  Return back to school.
-  Get dressed back into school uniform.

Legislation-

All of the below link to our behaviour, safeguarding, equality, health and safety, social media and visitor policies. You can request a copy of these from the office or visit our school website

In accordance with **Health & Safety at Work Act 1974** and **Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999** - Forest School leaders/ assistants have a duty to provide and maintain a safe and healthy working environment with risk assessments and procedures laid down for serious and imminent danger.

In accordance with **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995** – the Forest School leader/ assistant will report any work related injuries lasting over three days, diseases or dangerous occurrence that may not have resulted in reportable injury, but which clearly could have near misses - OFSTED should be notified of any significant injuries within 14 days. First Aid will be given by named staff in school, or first aid will be bought to the casualty if required. Injuries and accidents should be recorded in the Forest School log

Children Act 1989 and Equality Act 2010- The policies, procedures and activities during forest school sessions, shall embody the principles that all persons are equal and will receive equal opportunities and treatment.

Staff involved in Forest School will ensure that no person will be granted privileged or discriminated against because of their race, skin colour, national origin, religion, age, physical disability or gender.

Staff of Forest School will:

- Promote equal opportunities statement
- Apply the statement in their work and activities.

- Bring to the attention of the Forest School Leader any occurrence, relative to Forest School sessions, where this has not been applied.
- wherever possible, adjustments will be made to accommodate children with allergies, medical conditions or behavioural issues. This may include additional adult helpers, adapting the site if physically possible or adapting activities.
- All participants should feel that their experiences and contributions are worthwhile, so raising self-esteem and confidence.

Department for Education

Confirmation of risk protection arrangement (RPA) membership

The Department for Education's risk protection arrangement (RPA) is a voluntary arrangement for academies, free schools and local authority maintained schools. It is an alternative to insurance through which the cost of risks that materialise will be covered by government funds.

The following academy trust or multi-academy trust is a member of the RPA.

NAME OF MEMBER ORGANISATION:	Waterside Primary Academy
MEMBERSHIP NO/URN:	149097
MEMBERSHIP PERIOD:	01 September 2024 to 31 August 2025
RPA MEMBERSHIP RULES:	Standard

(1) Limit of indemnity	EMPLOYER'S LIABILITY Unlimited
(2) Limit of indemnity	THIRD PARTY PUBLIC LIABILITY Unlimited
(3) Limit of indemnity	PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY Unlimited
(4) Limit of indemnity	PROPERTY DAMAGE Loss of or damage by any risk not excluded to any property owned by or the responsibility of the Member including property the responsibility of the Member due to a lease or hire agreement Cover Reinstatement value of the property

Limit: Reinstatement value of the property

NOTES:

1. Indemnity is subject to the RPA membership rules.
2. In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1 of Schedule 2 of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/2573), the Secretary of State for Education hereby certifies that any claim established against the named member organisation above in respect of any liability to the employees of the kind mentioned in section 1(1) of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 will, to any extent to which it is otherwise incapable of being satisfied by the aforementioned employer, be satisfied out of moneys provided by parliament.
3. A General Principles Clause is included.

Signed: S.E.D.W.M.M. Dated: 01 September 2024

Susan Dawson
Director of Commercial for Sector and Commercial Operations

Department for Education

Forest School Essential Equipment List

The following list of essential equipment must be available for each Forest School session and should be kept in the emergency rucksack.

- Register with emergency numbers/contact numbers
- Medical forms
- Mobile phone
- Walkie talkie
- Cotton wool/ newspaper
- Fire lighters
- Flint
- Wet wipes
- Protective gloves
- Sun cream
- First aid kit (see first aid kit list)
- Scissors
- Water bottle with water for drinking/washing
- Sleeping bag/survival bag
- Thermal wrap sheet
- Map of local area
- Containers for medical equipment (epi-pen, inhalers,)
- Carry bag for dirty wet clothing
- Anti-bacteria gel

- 🌳 Water for first aid
- 🌳 First aid handbook

Clothing list

The following list of appropriate clothing is for everyone participating in Forest School; **Children, staff and other adult helpers/volunteers.**

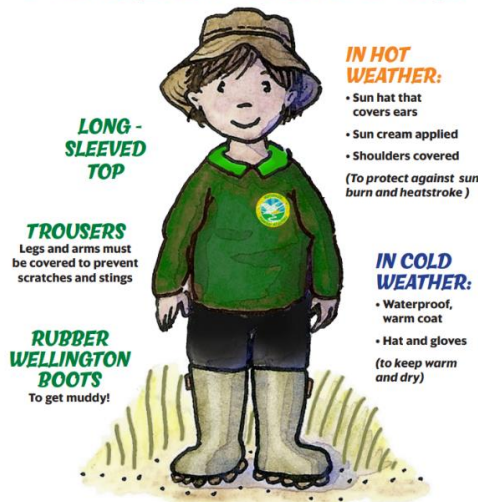
Winter

- 🌳 T-shirt
- 🌳 Long sleeved top
- 🌳 Hooded top/fleece or thick jumper
- 🌳 Waterproof jacket
- 🌳 Thick socks
- 🌳 Trousers
- 🌳 Waterproof trousers
- 🌳 Wellington boots
- 🌳 Hat, gloves and scarf

Summer

- 🌳 Long sleeved top. Arms must be covered at all times.
- 🌳 Light trousers. **No** shorts. Legs to be covered at all times.
- 🌳 Socks
- 🌳 Trainers. **No** open toed shoes
- 🌳 Sunhat
- 🌳 Sunglasses if required.





FOREST SCHOOL









Children/ adults are responsible for providing their own sun cream and **must** be able to apply it themselves. **Short sleeved T-shirts and shorts cannot be worn whatever the weather. Arms and legs must be covered during Forest School sessions.**

Forest School Routines





Procedures to be carried out before each session:

-  A thorough sweep of the site will be done before each session to check for any litter, glass, animal faeces, etc. Any such items should be collected using a plastic bag and disposable gloves and will be noted on the safety sweep.
-  A written record will be kept of each sweep. This should state if any hazards were found and how they are dealt with.
-  Trees will be checked for any broken or dead branches which may fall.
-  A check will be made of the weather conditions, and the short-term forecast. If it is windy, or a thunderstorm has started or is imminent then it will not be advised to carry out Forest School session.

Procedures to be carried out during each session:

-  Put on protective clothing and footwear.
-  Apply sun cream as and when needed.
-  Walk to the area, discussing things to be seen on the way.
-  Discuss any safety issues on the day.
-  Walk to base camp.
-  Site down, discuss rules and any safety issues again. It is advised to walk the boundary for at least the first session.

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

-  Discuss how the session went with the children, allowing the children to give feedback.
-  Clear everything away.
-  Return back to school.
-  Get dressed back into school uniform.










Forest School First Aid

A first aid Kit will be available for all on and off site Forest School Activities along with individual pupil's medication. The 2 Forest School leaders Mrs Scott and Miss Read are qualified paediatric outdoor first Aiders.

First Aid Kit List

The following first aid kit list will be taken to Forest School session and will be topped up and checked by Mrs Scott and Miss Read.

This will include

-  1 x first aid handbook
-  1x protective face shield for CPR
-  30x sterile wrapped plasters
-  2x sterile eye pads
-  4x triangle bandages
-  6x medium wound dressings
-  6x large wound dressings
-  10x small wound dressings
-  1x medical tape

- 🌳 1x first aid scissors
- 🌳 10x finger bandage
- 🌳 1x litre of sterile water

[Sun Policy- a copy of the school's sun protection policy can be found on our school website](#)

- Ensure the children have plenty of fresh drinking water on site
- Children should wear a cap or hat
- Children will be encouraged to apply sun cream before entering school or prior to the session.
- If days are particularly hot, activities should be considered that involve using the trees as shade. Alternatively, tarpaulin can be used to create shade.
- Children will be given regular opportunities to rest in the shade. Time outside will be kept to a minimum if it is particularly hot.

Travel policy

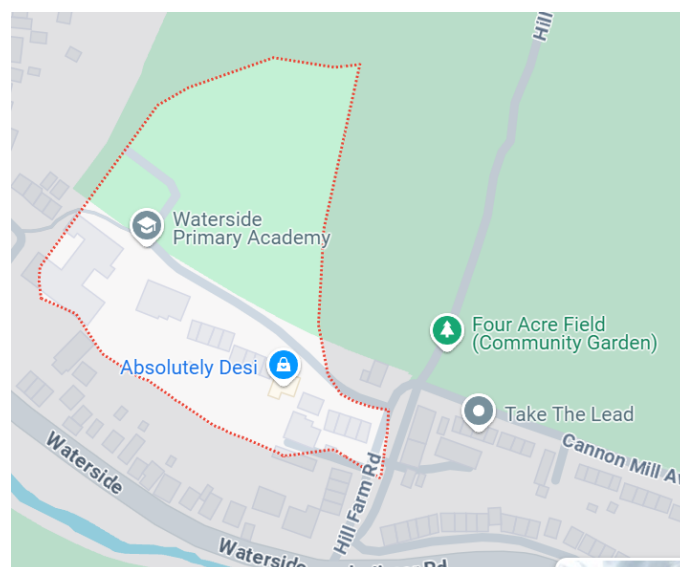
We have two Forest School sites.

Onsite base camp

The children will leave the classroom and walk across the field to the forest entrance. If children were to leave the premises, then the school's standard risk assessment and travel procedures would be applied.

Offsite base camp

Children will need to wear high Vis jackets. The children will leave the classroom and walk across the carpark to the main school entrance at Blackhorse Avenue. An adult will lead the children, with an adult in the middle of the line and an adult at the end. The children will walk along Blackhorse Avenue. Turn left on to Hill Farm Road and walk to base camp. All adults must be DBS checked. The Forest School lead must have the Forest school handbook, medical forms and a mobile phone on them in case of emergencies.



Medical Information Forms

<u>Childs Full name</u>		
<u>Date of Birth</u>		
<u>Contact name and relationship to child</u>	<u>Name:</u>	
	<u>Relationship:</u>	
<u>Home address</u>		
<u>Phone numbers</u>	<u>Home -</u>	
	<u>Work-</u>	
	<u>Mobile -</u>	
<u>Doctor contact details</u>		
<u>Illness</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Medication needed please specify</u>
Asthma/ Bronchitis		
Sight/hearing difficulties		
Heart condition		
Diabetes		
Epilepsy		
Allergies e.g. Pollen,nuts,materials		
Have you been stung by a wasp or bee? If yes, describe the reaction		
Date of last tetanus injection		

Signed:

Date:

Designated person Responsibility

Individual job cards will be available for each individual for the session. These are kept in the emergency rucksack and will be distributed by the Forest School Leader

Forest School leader Responsibility

- To comply with the contents of the Forest School Handbook
- Wear appropriate clothing – positive role modelling!
- To fulfil the role of responsible person for Health & Safety – keeping the children safe
- To provide appropriate Forest School activities – according to the age, stage of development of the children, season and weather
- To lead a facilitative group of adults in observing the children and recording those observations in an appropriate way
- To appropriately brief other adults participating in Forest School at any given time

Teacher/Learning Support Assistant Responsibilities

- To comply with the contents of the Forest School Handbook
- Wear appropriate clothing – positive role modelling!
- To assist the Forest School Leader in observing the children and recording those observations in an appropriate way
- To assist in keeping the children safe
- To deal with any toileting issues
- To assist the Forest School Leader in any Forest School activities as directed, according to the activity, season and weather

Parent Helper/Volunteer Responsibilities

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

Forest School Emergency Procedures: Medical Emergency (serious injury, poisoning or illness)

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

- Forest School Leader to obtain the attention of all the children and adults present by shouting 123 Base camp. This will indicate that they need to stop and immediately to return to their base camps.
- Depending on the nature of the incident, all children will be held at base camp under the supervision of the other Forest School lead and LSA. In the meantime, the patient will be assessed, monitored, and treated, if necessary, by the Forest School Leader.
- The Forest School lead will inform the emergency services, out of 1 of the 3 adults, 1 adult will phone/go to the office to tell them about the emergency. The office will then call next of kin/parents. If the situation is of a life-threatening nature, this will be done as priority, The what3words will be used as the location reference if off site and the school postcode will be given for onsite.

- If necessary, the remaining children will be counted by the LSA and Adult Helpers and returned safely to the school. If off site, they will await instructions from the Forest School Leader once the Casualty has been attended to.
- Following any incident or emergency the Forest School Leader will ensure that the full details are recorded in the Forest School accident book

Forest School Emergency Procedures: Fire.

On Site: Standard school Fire procedures will be followed.

Off site

- If a fire spreads or becomes out of control and attempts to extinguish it have failed, the Forest School Leader or assisting adult will shout 123 Base Camp. Upon hearing this, all adults and children should immediately stop what they are doing, leave any tools, resources or belongings, and follow instructions given by the Forest School Leader.
- Staff will account for the presence of all children and adults and assemble the group ready to evacuate.
- A final head count will be made, and upon all children and adults being present, evacuation will begin immediately, taking the safest route back to school. Forest School Leader will notify school via phone. Adults will lead the group swiftly, with the Forest School Leader leading and the other Forest School Lead assistant following behind the last child. The Fire brigade will be called en route back to School.

Forest School Emergency Procedures: Missing Child

- If anybody suspects a person may be missing, they should immediately alert the Forest School Leader.
- If a fire has been lit it will be extinguished immediately and tools gathered to a safe place by supporting adults.
- If after an initial sweep of the site, the person is not found, the group should assemble and find out where and when the person was last seen. The Forest School Leader will continue to search for the child while the rest of the group is at base camp.
- If the person is not found within 5 minutes, the Forest School Leader will seek additional help and begin to organize a search party. Any additional supporting adults will remain with the group and await further instructions. The emergency rucksack will remain with the Forest School Leader during the search.
- If outside agencies are involved with the search their advice will be followed.
- If there is a reason to believe that a child has been abducted, the Police will be immediately informed and their advice followed. The remaining children will be immediately returned to school.

Policies and Procedures Health and Safety

The School Health and Safety policy will be always followed. A full copy is available. You need to know your responsibilities.

Your health, your safety - A guide for workers

This information is from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in collaboration with the Trades Union Congress (TUC). HSE is a government organisation that works to protect the health, safety and welfare of workers by enforcing health and safety law and offering advice and support. The TUC represents over 70 trade unions with over 6.5 million members. It campaigns for fairness and decent standards at work. If you

are an employee (full- or part-time, temporary or permanent), this information explains what your rights are, what you should expect from your employer, what responsibilities you have and where to go for help. It also applies to you if you are a young person doing work experience, an apprentice, charity worker, mobile worker or homeworker. If you are a temporary, casual or agency worker, the employment business/agency, contractor or hirer you are working for has a legal duty to ensure you receive the rights set out here.

You have the right:

- To work in places where all the risks to your health and safety are properly controlled.
- To stop working and leave the area if you think you are in danger.
- To inform your employer about health and safety issues or concerns.
- To contact HSE or your local authority if you still have health and safety concerns and not get into trouble.
- To join a trade union and be a safety representative.
- To paid time off work for training if you are a safety representative.
- To a rest break of at least 20 minutes if you work more than six hours at a stretch and to an annual period of paid leave.

You must:

- Take care of your own health and safety and that of people who may be affected by what you do (or do not do).
- Co-operate with others on health and safety, and not interfere with, or misuse, anything provided for your health, safety or welfare.

Your employer must tell you:

- About risks to your health and safety from current or proposed working practices.
- About things or changes that may harm or affect your health and safety.
- How to do your job safely.
- What is done to protect your health and safety.
- How to get first-aid treatment.
- What to do in an emergency.

Your employer must provide, free of charge:

- Training to do your job safely
- Protection for you at work when necessary (such as clothing, shoes or boots, eye and ear protection, gloves, masks etc.).
- Health checks if there is a danger of ill health because of your work.
- Regular health checks if you work nights and a check before you start.
- (Note: If you are genuinely self-employed you are responsible for providing your own first-aid arrangements, training, protective equipment and health checks, and for organising your own working time.)

Your employer must provide you with the following information:

- Health and safety law: What you should know. This should give the contact details of people who can help.
- Their health and safety policy statement.
- An up-to-date Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) certificate visible in your place of work.

What to do if you are concerned about your health and safety:

- Phone HSE's Infoline 08701 545500 for advice or to complain, or the TUC's Know Your Rights line 0870 600 4882.
- If you would like to speak to someone in a language more suitable to you please call 08701 545500 and tell the operator which language
- If you have lost your job because of a health and safety matter you may be able to complain to an Employment Tribunal. Ask your trade union or local Citizens Advice Bureau for advice.

Policies and Procedures Continued

Considerations for Equality and Inclusion in Forest School sessions all persons should be treated equally. We aim to and are committed to

- Providing a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.
- Including and valuing the contribution of all children and adults to our understanding of equality and diversity.
- A thread which runs through all of the activities of Forest School.

The legal framework for this guidance is:

- Race Relations Act 1976;
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986;
- Children's Act 1989; •

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Insurance

Certificate of Employers' Liability Insurance

Jacqui Blackmore

Policy NO:149097

Policy holder: Waterside Primary Academy

Date: 01 September 2024 to 31st August 2025

Medical information forms

All participants (including visitors) must complete a medical information form prior to starting any Forest School activity. The completed forms will be kept in a file in the emergency rucksack. The information provided will be subject to the School confidentiality policy. All forms must be kept up to date and reviewed 3 times a year. A copy of the Medical Information Form is found at the back of this handbook.

Risk Assessment

A full risk assessment will be carried out of any Forest School site prior to the start of any Forest School Activity. Due to the nature of Forest School any site being used must have a full Risk Assessment 3 times a year. The latest Risk Assessment must be kept with the Forest School Handbook. A copy of the Risk Assessment is saved with this Handbook.

Safety Sweep

A safety sweep of the Forest School Site will take place prior to the start of any Forest School Session to look for and assess any immediate risks. All safety sweeps will be recorded and filed in the Forest School

Health and Safety Folder by the Forest School Leader. A copy of a safety sweep form is found at the back of this handbook.

Risk Management on Tools:

General rules for tool use:

- All tools must have an individual risk assessment in the Health and Safety folder.
- Ensure safe storage at school with nominated Forest School Leader access and responsibility.
- Ensure safe storage and responsibility by Forest School Leader at the Forest School site.
- Never walk around with tools.
- Always make sure tools are clean and sharp before using them.
- When using tools with children it should only be with the Forest School Leader. Always sit when using tools.
- Tools must only be used in the designated tool area.

Penknife:

- Must be with the Forest School Leader.
- Always sit down when using the penknife Ensure penknife is closed and locked when not in use.
- Open the penknife away from you sitting down with plenty of room around you.
- Always use the penknife away from your body.
- Always insure that the children are supported when using the penknife on a 1:1 or 1:2 ratio dependant on their age and experience.

Bow Saw:

- Ensure that the guard is in place when not in use.
- Must only be used with the Forest School Leader.
- Must only be used in the designated tool area.
- Must be used with a safety glove.
- Should be used with a saw horse where possible.
- Talk to the children about how to hold a bow saw.
- Ensure safe storage and safe handling in Forest School.

Bill Hook:

- Ensure that the guard is in place when not in use.
- Must only be used with the Forest School Leader.
- Must only be used in the designated tool area.
- Talk to the children about how to hit the Bill Hook.
- Ensure safe storage and safe handling in Forest School.

Safety Sweep Evidence

Before each Forest School session there will be a safety sweep for the Forest School site, to look for and assess immediate risks. All safety sweeps will be recorded and filled by the Forest School Leader. Safety sweeps will be kept with the Forest School Handbook.

Name of Forest School Leader:		
Date:	Time:	Weather:
Checklist	Yes/No	Comments
Fallen branches		
Low branches		
Protruding thorns		
Brambles/nettles		
Slippery areas		
Broken glass/Needles		
Vandalism		
Weather effects		
Standing water		
Boundary line/fence		
Base camp		

Tool area roped off		
Emergency rucksack		
Equipment ready		
Spare clothes		
Other hazards identified:		
Action taken:		
Forest School Lead Signature:		

Dynamic Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who is at Risk?	Control Measures in Place	Dynamic Adjustments (if needed)	Risk Level (L/M/H)
Tree branches, uneven ground	Children, staff	Site inspection before session; clear trip hazards; remind children of 'feet first' rules.	Mark slippery areas; re-route activities.	Low–Medium
Tool use (knives, saws)	Children	1:1 supervision; tool use area marked; safety briefing before use; PPE (gloves if appropriate).	Remove tools if behaviour changes or weather worsens.	Medium
Fire lighting & campfire area	Children, staff	Controlled fire area; fire triangle enforced; fire bucket/water present; children closely supervised; no running.	Cancel fire if wind picks up or children not responding safely.	Medium–High
Rope swings / balance lines	Children	Installed securely; checked before each session; adult supervised; safe fall zones clear of debris.	Remove if ropes or trees are damaged.	Medium
Insect bites / stings	Children, staff	Long sleeves recommended; first aid kit with antihistamines; awareness of allergies.	Administer first aid as needed; monitor reactions.	Low–Medium
Getting lost / straying off site	Children	Clear boundaries set; whistle signals explained; regular head counts; buddy system.	Bring all children in for a reminder if boundary is breached.	Medium
Adverse weather changes	Children, staff	Monitor forecast; bring shelter/tarp; warm clothing; cancel session in dangerous conditions (e.g. high winds, lightning).	Stop session if risk increases.	Medium–High
Child behaviour (unexpected risk)	Children, staff	Clear expectations set; 1:4 or better adult-child ratio; remove child from activity if behaviour unsafe.	Adapt activities to suit group needs.	Medium
Water hazards (ponds/streams)	Children	Avoid or supervise closely; clear rules about access; ensure footwear is suitable.	Relocate activity if water level is high or fast-moving.	Medium–High
Allergies / medical needs	Children	Medical info on site; trained first aider present; medications carried as required.	React according to individual care plans.	Medium

Emergency laminated card

Emergency Card- Off site Base Camp

Who- Forest school leaders: Stacey Scott and Aimee Read

Where- Waterside Primary Academy, Blackhorse Avenue, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 1QU
01494 786608

Location- What Three Words: glove.farms.dash

In case of an emergency: Either 1,2,3 Basecamp or return children to school site. If needed call for assistance. Either 01494 786608 or 999

Emergency Card- On site Base Camp

Who- Forest school leaders: Stacey Scott and Aimee Read

Where- Waterside Primary Academy, Blackhorse Avenue, Chesham, Bucks, HP5 1QU
01494 786608

Location- What Three Words: lifts.flown.brass

In case of an emergency: Either 1,2,3 Basecamp or return children to class. If needed call for assistance. Either 01494 786608, Radio for support or 999

