

A young child with light hair and blue eyes is climbing a tree trunk. The child is wearing a blue puffer jacket with a red hood and red gloves. The background is a forest floor covered in dry leaves and twigs.

Grass Roots Muddy Boots

Forest School

Our Ways of Working
Handbook

A child wearing a blue raincoat is standing in a lush green forest. The child is holding a bow and arrow, aiming the arrow towards the camera. The background is filled with various green plants and trees, creating a dense natural setting.

Our Mission

The 3 pillars

To enable children to care for:

**THEMSELVES
EACH OTHER
OUR NATURAL WORLD**

What is in this handbook and why is it useful?

This handbook has been written for any organisation or individual who is interested in the way we work at Grass Roots Muddy Boots. The purpose of it is to share information about what we all need to do to ensure that children have the best experience possible at Forest School. It is by no means complete or perfect but is a working document that is added to and changed as we find out more about what works and what doesn't.



Hello...

here are a few lines about me and how Grass Roots Muddy Boots was founded.

In 2016 I decided to truly 'walk the walk' and invest in the well-being of children, by setting up my own Forest School; offering unique and inspirational experiences to children.

I am a qualified nurse, primary school teacher, SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) and Early Years leader. All of which, in their own way, have led me to start this unforgettable journey of learning through play with children in nature.

Come and play the Forest School way!

Sally Wolff - Founder of Grass Roots Muddy Boots

CONTENTS	Page
Our Values	3
What is Forest School?	5
How does Forest School help children?	6
What kind of sessions do we run?	9
What happens at Forest School?	10
Meet the Grass Roots team	11-12
Testimonials	13-14
Expectations from Children, Parents, Schools and Grass Roots	15-19
Sustainability Statement	20
Ecological Impact	21-24
The way we like to do things	25
Hygiene, Transmission of Corona Virus, Food and Drink	26
Behaviour and Equal Opportunities	27
Personal Protective Clothing	28-29
Tool Use	30-38
Fire Use	39
Emergencies and Major Incidents	40
Health and Safety	41
First Aid and Administration of Medicines	42
Booking a place for Holiday Club, Refunds and Cancellation	43

Our Values

ALL children are included at Grass Roots Muddy Boots.

We put play at the heart of our Forest School. Children are given the opportunity to feel good about themselves and their abilities by learning in a way that suits them.

We like to have fun 😊

We know that all children are unique and learn in different ways. We pride ourselves on putting each child at the centre of their own development, empowering them to follow their own interests, explore and stay curious.

We know that children have an incredible ability to teach themselves given the right environment and we strive to achieve this.

We support the development of the 'whole child', their wellbeing, relationships with others and acquisition of skills and knowledge.

What is Forest School?

Forest School is a child-centred inspirational learning process, that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term programme that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking.

It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting.

Forest School has a developmental ethos shared by thousands of trained practitioners around the world, who are constantly developing their learning styles and skills to support new and imaginative learners.

Its roots reach back to the open-air culture, friluftsliv, or free air life, seen as a way of life in Scandinavia where Forest School began. It arrived in the UK in 1993 and has grown from strength to strength since then.

The process helps and facilitates more than knowledge-gathering, it helps learners develop socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually.

It creates a safe, non-judgemental nurturing environment for learners to try stuff out and take risks. Forest School inspires a deep and meaningful connection to the world and an understanding of how a learner fits within it.

Our approach to risk means that learners constantly expand on their abilities by solving real-world issues, building self-belief and resilience. We believe that risk is more than just potential for physical harm, but a more holistic thing, there are risks in everything we do, and we grow by overcoming them. Forest School therefore, helps participants to become, healthy, resilient, creative and independent learners.

There is lots of research out there to support the outcomes of Forest School, but we know that it isn't just the educational outcomes and research that matter, our learners and leaders love it too!

FSA Forest School Association 2022

<https://forestschoollassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/>

How does Forest School help children?

These are just a few ...

- It promotes positive well-being
- Children learn through free play
- It supports children's interests and natural curiosities
- Children build strong relationships
- Improves children's communication skills
- Children learn to be resilient
- Children learn the value of failing in the learning process
- It develops children's physical development
- Children learn how to assess their own level of risk
- Children learn how to keep themselves safe
- It promotes independence and problem solving skills
- Children develop high levels of creativity
- Children become more confident
- Children begin to understand empathy for others
- Children learn to cooperate and work collaboratively
- Develop listening and attention skills
- Children understand physical boundaries
- Children develop knowledge and an appreciation of the natural world and how to protect it.

What kind of sessions do we run?

School Curriculum Sessions - Most of our Forest School provision is done in Primary Schools. These are usually week-long blocks. For example a week in Summer term, a week in Autumn term. **Contact Sally on 07904214006**

We serve North Yorkshire primary schools and are currently working in collaboration with ...

Kirk Smeaton CE Primary School

Fairburn Community Primary

Badsworth VC CE Junior and Infant School

Athelstan Community Primary School

Cliffe VC Primary School

Riccall Primary School

Holiday Clubs - Grass Roots collaborates with TreeTops Forest School to provide holiday clubs, run from both our woodland sites in Bishop wood, Cawood and Bluebell wood, Knaresborough. [More information](#)

Woodland Birthday Parties - These are run in collaboration with TreeTops Forest School. They are run by Siobhan and include campfire food and use of tools. [More information](#)

Early Years 'Little Shoots' sessions - These sessions are run in collaboration with TreeTops Forest School and are held on a Friday afternoon at Bishop Wood, Cawood. [More information](#)

What happens at Forest School?

Groups are kept to between 10 and 15 children and usually are either a morning or afternoon.

We usually start with a welcoming group game, story or a finding/detective activity in the woodlands.

Children have the opportunity to play freely within the continuous provision of the woodlands. This means that children can choose where they want to play and what they would like to learn more about. Examples of free play provision would be: ropes, tarpaulins, a nature basket, rope swing, leaf art, den building, natural bracelets, hammock play, open ended creative area with examples of small books, stick people, small world people, dream catchers, wands etc.

If children wish, they can take part in focused activities that are led by adults. They will be from one of the 3 areas of Forest School skill based learning: Fire, woodcraft or shelter. Fire and woodcraft are always adult led and will involve learning how to safely use different tools to create items from wood and early fire lighting and cooking skills. We will be able to alter the activities once we find out what the children's interests are. Examples of activities are: Den building, foraging, campfire cooking, making a mallet, charcoal pencil, boat, bow and arrow, medal, fairy house, bug hunting, use of a nature camera to observe animals.

Finally, towards the end of the Forest School session children will gather around the campfire for a story, songs and most importantly get a chance to reflect.

Children are also offered the opportunity to access a WILD Passport



Simply put, this is a resource that GRMB has purchased and can be used in any school or at the holiday club. Children receive a pocket size record book of skills that increase in difficulty. The skills and knowledge outcomes can be that can be marked when achieved.

The five elements are: Woodcraft, Shelter, Fire, Nature and Rope. Children love the ownership of learning that it offers. Parents can also get involved and gain an insight into what children are learning at Forest School.

Schools have also found this resource useful as evidence of progression.

The record books are £6 each. Parents of children that attend Holiday Club can contact me on 07904214006 if they wish to buy one. Children can work through the skills at their own pace, there is no time limit on it.

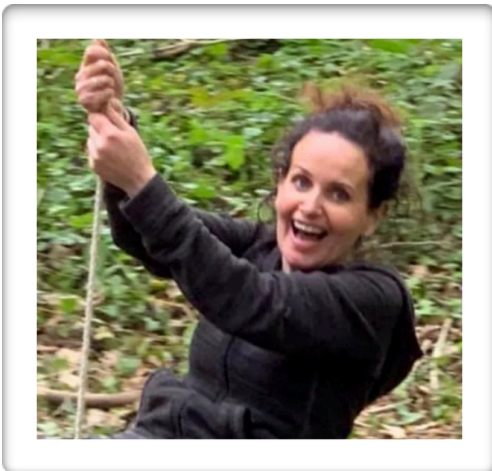
For more information click the [BLOG](#) button below..

[BLOG](#)

Meet the Grass Roots Team

The Forest School Leaders

The role of the leader is to plan sessions according to children's interests. They may start out with a few ideas that will change completely once they start to get to know the children and find out what they are in to so they are very flexible and open to change.

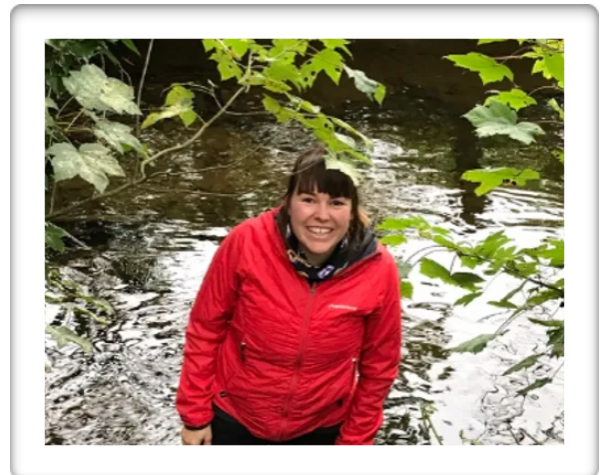


Siobhan

Siobhan and I met when we did our Forest School leader training together. Siobhan works in a primary school as well as running her own Forest School called Treetops. We collaborate and run Holiday Clubs together

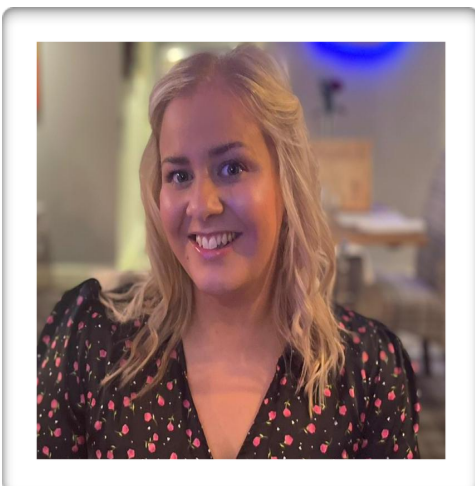
Sophie

Sophie left her teaching career to pursue her interest and belief in the Forest School ethos. She works as a Freelance Forest School leader for Grass Roots and runs Kids Unfurled Forest School.



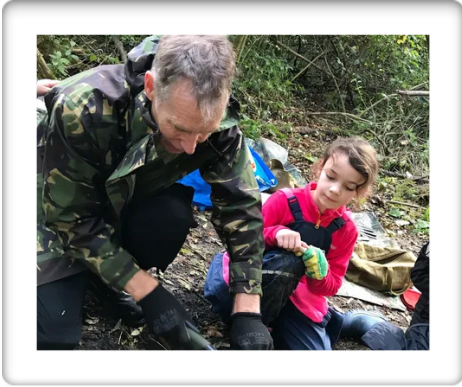
Hayley

Hayley joined Grass Roots in 2022 after a CPD day sparked her interest in Forest School. She has gone on to complete her leader training through Grass Roots...the first to do this! ... and is now working as a freelancer for us.



The Forest School Adult helpers

Helpers are amazing people at Forest School. They are adults who want to be involved because they believe in the Forest School ethos. Our adults are from all walks of life which is great for the children because they get to access all the knowledge and experience.



Phil

Phil is a retired police officer who loves playing out and having a positive impact on young people.



Millie

Millie is currently a student and really enjoys helping children learn through play.



Chris

Chris has a horticultural background and enjoys fostering new skills in young children.



Rob

Rob is a retired teacher. He is a keen gardener and enjoys teaching outdoors



Tasha

Tasha is a big fan of the outdoors and learning through play.

Testimonials

What do some of the children who come to Forest School think?

[Click here to find out](#)

I love Forest School and I always look forward to seeing Sally again. I always take charge of the fire area and love flipping pancakes. All the time we have loads of fun creating things out of wood and pretending to battle with swords and spears. We also go out foraging on walks around Bishopwood. Everything about Forest School is great (Brendan).

They both really enjoyed it last week. I asked Austin tonight if he wanted to go again at Easter. He responded saying, book me on every holiday until I'm too old to go



I really enjoy crafting and making toys out of wood and mesh. At Forest School I would like to make a log cabin as I have not made one yet. I love going on walks around Bishopwood and exploring new places (Erin).

What do some of the parents think?

My experience of my two children attending Forest School is nothing but overwhelmingly positive. My children come home muddy, happy and excited to tell me about their day. They have always loved the outdoors but attending Forest School has only enhanced their love of nature. If they could attend Forest School every weekend then they would! They have the opportunity to be a part of so many activities that otherwise would not be available to them. They enjoy being given extra responsibility and their confidence in and knowledge of the outdoors never ceases to amaze me. A huge thank-you to Sally and Siobhan, as it is their love and passion for Forest School and outdoor learning which makes Grass Roots Muddy Boots so very enjoyable.

Rianne x

Alex absolutely loved the 3 days at forest school and got a great deal out of it. I think even more than usual due to current situation. For 3 days the world felt normal for a 9 year old! Thank you xxx

Expectations

What is expected of the children?

The role of the children is to experience this unique opportunity to feel a sense of freedom and enjoy exploring and discovering. They learn to take responsibility for their own learning.

Here are the specifics..

These are the 3 rules that we teach children at Forest School.

Look after yourself

Look after each other

Look after nature

What is expected of parents?

- It is important that parents are **open and honest** with us about their child's behaviour at school and home. Parents/carers can do this online when completing the booking form or giving Siobhan or I a ring to have a chat. (07904214006)
- We need to understand **your child's background** and if they have suffered any past trauma that may translate into specific behaviours; such as foster care for example. This is so we can keep them safe and help them integrate into the group.
- Unexpected behaviour can be really detrimental to the whole group experience. If we know about what to expect we can avoid this from escalating. Siobhan and Sally are experienced in helping children manage their 'big' feelings.
- **Suncream and insect repellent** It is expected that you will apply these before coming to Forest School. So before they come to school if they are doing Forest School that day. We sometimes go to our Bishop Wood site to play out and the midges can be prevalent in the summer months. If children need a re-application, bring the lotions/sprays into school and let your teacher know your child has them.
- **Change of clothes** this is really important and never wasted, even if children bring the change of clothing home every time unused. Having a dry pair of trousers or socks to put on when you are wet on a cold winter day is GOLD!
- **Bag** It is useful to have a 'Forest School bag' that children can bring into school on Forest School days.
- **Water bottle** its important to have a full water bottle too.
- **Lunch** if your child is attending a holiday club please pack them lunch. We would recommend that you pack plenty of healthy snacks as well as whatever they would normally have in a packed lunch. We teach children to care about the planet so it would be great of you could use eco

conscious packaging solutions. We will ask children to take all their packaging home with them so that you know what they have had to eat and they are taking responsibility for their own litter.

- With regard to Holiday Clubs we expect parents to have read and **understood the terms and conditions** that are on the booking website. We also ask parents to **book and pay** for their child's place online prior to the start of the session.
- Parents are expected to ensure that children have the **correct kit. This is really important.** Children will be able to play out in all weathers but if they are not dressed appropriately they play is often cut short. The correct clothing is also essential to protect their bodies, for example long trousers to protect their skin from brambles. This is a short video which may help



Winter kit list

- trouser and top base layer
- warm mid-layer (joggers and warm jumper)
- waterproof coat and trousers
- two pairs of socks. Long socks on top
- walking boots/wellies
- hat/gloves/snood

Grass Roots
Muddy BUts

Summer kit list

- Leggings /joggers
- waterproof trousers
- waterproof coat
- Insect repellent and sun cream
- Sun hat

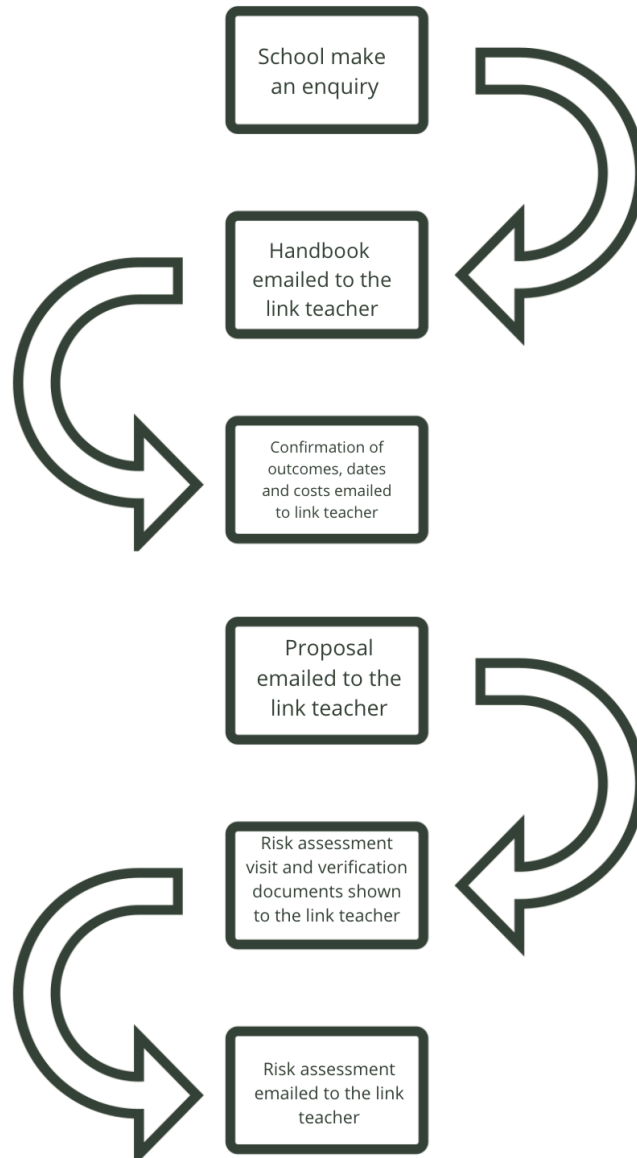
Grass Roots
Muddy BUts

What is expected of school?

- The **first port of call for any communication** over and above the delivery of the session, **should be with Sally and not the FS staff on site**. It is important to know that the staff on site are only responsible for the delivery of the session. Anything outside of this should be discussed with Sally.
- School will appoint a link teacher for me to communicate with.
- The link teacher should read the handbook and disseminate information through school as they see fit.
- Provide GRMB workers with **school's external visitor policy**. This will include which documents are required for verification.
- Explain how we access the toilets
- Confirm any **staff that will be joining** in the sessions
- Confirm any children's **additional needs** that are relevant; this includes medical (**inc. allergies**), behavioural, educational, emotional
- A member of **school staff will be able to take photographs** if you wish.
- We expect school to have an appreciation of our belief in the benefit of **children taking risks** and while a thorough risk assessment has taken place to ensure the balance of risk and benefit, children's natural play engages them in risk and sometimes minor injuries.
- If an injury occurs, GRMB workers will tell the child's teacher who can then pass this onto their parents. **We will record the injury in our records but not in the school record book.**
- Schools should be responsible for **passing on information to parents** about what to expect at Forest School. This includes the kit they will need and the nature of the play. All the information that is needed is in this handbook but don't hesitate to get in touch if there is anything else you need.
- We expect that payment for the agreed Forest School provision will be paid within two weeks of receiving the invoice.

What can schools expect from Grass Roots Muddy Boots?

This is our process....



- I will provide the link teacher for Forest School with all the information you will need to know about us and how we work by emailing this **handbook** following the initial enquiry.
- I will confirm **dates, cost and outcomes** with the link teacher via email.
- A **proposal** will be sent to the link teacher via email. This will confirm dates, cost and outcomes in writing. It will also contain a suggested timetable, detailing group sizes, times and focused activities and the risk assessment.
- I will visit the school to perform a risk assessment and provide you with **DBS and insurance** documents that you will need for all the staff that will be working. The staff hold their own original DBS documents so whilst I can bring a copy of this the original will have to be shown on the first day by that member of staff. They will also bring some **photo ID**.
- I will email a copy of the **risk assessment** to the link teacher.
- I will need **school's permission to have an open fire** on the school site.
- A high standard of personalised learning for the children in our care
- A genuine interest in children's interests and the ability to respond and adapt planning to help children explore these further.
- We will '**leave no trace**' of fire, litter or property.
- We will bring all the **resources** needed for the sessions.
- Friendly and approachable GRMB workers
- Open and honest approach with a willingness to collaborate and help school out where they can.
- We will **follow school protocols** whilst on site.
- Staff will carry their personal mobile phones but will **not take any photographs** of children. Staff are asked only to get mobile phones out if this is absolutely necessary. They may, however, use them in their lunch break.
- Staff will only need to **access school to use the toilet**
- All **injuries will be recorded in Grass Roots Muddy Boots accident book** and reported to the child's teacher to pass on to parents. GRMB workers will not be responsible for writing accidents in the school record book. We are happy to talk to any parents that have further questions about any incident that occurred whilst at Forest School.
- Schools can expect to be invoiced at the end of a week long block of Forest School provision. If there are subsequent blocks running then you will be invoiced at the end of the last one.

Sustainability Statement

Caring for

**ourselves
each other
the natural world**

our three pillars at Grass Roots Muddy Boots

We aim to connect and strengthen children's relationship with themselves, each other and the natural world. Helping our planet repair itself isn't about caring for nature alone; we believe it is about making sure that everyone is treated equally and have equal access to Forest school opportunities. We care for life on land and life below the water and begin to understand how we are all linked and reliant on each other and nature.

We teach children to respect all life and resources.

We support children to recognise gender equality and develop a sense of justice.

We welcome children of diverse cultures and backgrounds valuing the contribution that diversity brings. We 'leave no trace' and conserve nature through the creation and consideration of natural habitats. Our ecological impact is continually assessed. The things we do to maintain an equilibrium include the rotation of sites, tree planting and woodland management techniques such as coppicing. We support the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)



Name of the site: Bishop Wood, Cawood

Access is gained off Bishopdyke road which leads into the woods down a private track called Hammersike road.

This site belongs to The Forestry Commission England, the woodland is public right of way, however there is no public access for cars unless we open the gates. The site is set next to the dyke and on the edge of the woods next to the farmer's field



The blue dot is the location of the site and the red is where the vehicle access is.

53 degrees 48' 52' North
1 degree 09' 45' West



Ecological impact

Ecological Impact Assessment and Management Plan

Archeological interest of the site and soil type. The soils at Bishop Wood are predominantly poorly drained groundwater gleys with drier parts of the wood providing areas of brown surface-water gley. Based on the Forest Research Ecological Site Classification, soils are classed as 'moist' soil moisture regime (SMR) and 'medium' soil nutrient regime (SNR). These characteristics present a wide range of species suitable for growing across the site and one that would be expected to give rise to lowland woodland types; mixed broadleaved with bluebell (W10) and alder-ash with bottle sedge (W7). **Ref Forestry England Forest Plan 2017**

Bedrock The flat landscape is formed on drift geology remnant from lake deposits laid down during and after the last Ice Age across what was Lake Humber. These superficial glaciolacustrine and fluvial deposits are laid over bedrock of Triassic Mercia Mudstone where as a consequence of glacial activity and meltwater processes, silts and clays were deposited.

Ref Forestry England Forest Plan 2017

Flora and fauna in the woodland

Bishop Wood Forest is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and is locally important for a range of flora, fauna and bio-diverse habitats.

Plants

A network of drains and ditches pass through and adjacent to the forest, providing a large area of riparian habitat. These sites typically support a more diverse woodland structure where native broadleaf tree species, shrubs and ground flora can naturally regenerate, providing ecologically diverse habitat corridors across the forest. An Internal Drainage Board drain passes through the wood.

Trees	<p>Broadleaves are the dominant species group at 60% of the woodland area with pines at 34% and the remainder comprised of other conifer species and open/felled land. There are few areas of mappable permanent open ground within the wood due to its fertile nature and ability to quickly regenerate once cleared of trees. However, forest roads and rides provide an excellent resource for herb-rich verges and can account for up to 13 hectares of open space</p> <p>Ref Forestry England Forest Plan 2017</p>
Fungi	<p>Fungi are common with a lot of dead wood lying around. One of the most common is <i>Daldinia concentrica</i> or King Alfred's cakes which grows on dead wood.</p>
Mosses	<p>Not that common the forest floor is dry due to the pine canopy</p>
Birds	<p>The forest is home to a wide range of national and regionally important declining woodland birds including Song Thrush Lesser Redpoll Garden Warbler Willow warbler Willow Tit Bullfinch Dunnock Yellowhammer</p>
Butterflies (Lepidoptera)	<p>Argent and Sable moth</p>
Mammals	<p>Badgers, foxes, rabbits</p>
Insects	<p>beetles, woodlice, spiders</p>
Management	
<p>Currently under the management of The Forestry Commission England who we are in regular contact with and have visits every few months to check on the ecological impact of the sessions.</p>	

Ecological impact of running a Forest School programme at this site

	Denudation	Compaction	Pollution	Corruption
Exploring	Removal of fast growing flora and fallen dead wood	New footpaths have been trodden in creating new access	Noise may have disturbed fauna and possible nesting birds in Spring.	spread of seeds on feet and clothes and bringing in horse chestnuts for example to thread.
Campfire lighting	Clearing of the area of flora	fire site and the surrounding area has been stripped of fire wood	smoke although we are away from the public. Potential rubbish left.	children leave their fruit snack remains this could encourage rats.
Den building	removal of branches and dead wood from the floor.	Den building area created over time that has been flattened.	string left behind	Adding man made items to the den
Woodcraft	removal of branches	tool site created	leaving tools or string behind	leaving tools or string behind.
Measures to maintain ecology	coppice or pollarding will regrow the branches. Use fallen wood.	Rotate sites/rest the site or create a pond where the ground has been compacted to encourage wildlife.	collect charred wood from the site, checking tools back in, talking to children about leaving no trace	take dens down to discourage others from using the den and leaving man made items behind

Monitoring Each session should have some dedicated time to collect all items carried onto the site, clear rubbish and make sure there is no trace. The site could be compared by taking pictures in different seasons over the years. There has definitely been a change in the site positively; the children have made it their own and the site has evolved to include different areas and access points. Negatively; it is very compacted and is now visible from the path mainly due to the canopy falling and seasonal changes.

Recommendations To rest the site over winter, to discuss with the land owner various options in order to maintain as natural environment as possible.

The way we like to do things

We think it is important that people who work with us are really clear about the way we do things. It is also important for parents, schools and other partners to know this. This section of 'Our Ways of Working' is dedicated to the more specific ways we like things done to keep everyone safe.

I like to keep things simple so have decided to design this handbook like a 'one stop shop' with everything in it.

This next section therefore has all the ways we like to work. These are particularly relevant when we are running holiday clubs because we are working on our own site as an independent organisation. However when we are working in schools we adhere to the school's policies and procedures as well as are own.

Hygiene

- We will provide hand washing facilities, to enable children to wash and dry their hands.
- Children are asked to wash their hands before they eat food and after they have used the toilet
- Hand sanitiser is provided in addition to this but is not to be used as substitute.
- If we are in one of our two woodland sites, we use a composting toilet, this teaches children about caring for the planet and reduces the use of chemicals
- A new hole is dug each day and filled in at the end of the day
- One child at once
- A wind break is provided for privacy and the toilet is sited in an inconspicuous place
- Wood shavings and water are added to help with decomposition
- There is a camping toilet provided as a seat and this is cleaned each day
- No trace is left in the woodland

Transmission of Corona Virus

- We adhere to current Government guidance
- The risk of transmission outside is extremely low.
- Steps we have taken mitigate any risk are:
 - I. Hand washing available on entry to camp.
 - II. We are outside all the time
 - III. No use of small enclosed spaces such as a storm shelter (only in emergencies)
 - IV. In school staff will only go inside to use the toilet
 - V. Staff use their facemasks at their own discretion
 - VI. Children should not be attending if they have suffered any of the symptoms of Corona virus in the last 7 days
 - VII. They will be isolated from the group until they are collected.
 - VIII. Parents are asked to collect their children as soon as possible if they start to display symptoms

Food and Drink

- Children are expected to bring a drink of water to Forest School in a named bottle
- We carry a supply of water for hand washing but this is not to be used as drinking water to avoid cross contamination
- Children bring their own packed lunches to holiday club which is held in one of our two woodland sites.
- Children are allowed to eat their lunch where they choose and are reminded to eat their food out of their packed lunch boxes.
- Food prepared on the fire must be done or supervised by an adult that has completed an approved by GRMB food handling course at level 2.
- Food should be prepared, stored and cooked within the latest guidelines of an approved outdoor food handling course. [Level 2 training](#)
- Children are encouraged to bring eco conscious food packaging solutions and are asked to take all their litter home. This is so parents can see what children have eaten and also so children take responsibility for their own waste

Behaviour

- We are committed to positive behaviour management and understand that all children are different and have had different experiences and sometimes trauma in their lives.
- Children are given time to settle into the group and understand the rules that they are expected to follow in order to keep them safe.
- In return they will experience great rewards of being trusted and feel a sense of freedom to learn.
- Children's behaviour is very much managed as a partnership between the leader and parents/ carers and relies on both sides being open and honest about how children respond to different situations.
- It is important that parents are open and honest with us about their child's behaviour at school and home.
- Sometimes parents feel a sense of shame and don't always feel that they can be open about the degree of issues that their child has.
- We are non judgemental and are here to help.
- Children's self esteem and self respect is nurtured and fostered at all times and we need as much information about how we can meet individual children's needs as possible.
- Other children need to be considered too so if a child requires a more attention from one of the adults it is vital that we know this in order to get the staff ratios right.
- Adults talk to children positively and calmly and praise the good behaviour rather than highlight the negative behaviour.
- If the situation arises that a child's behaviour is too challenging for the number of staff we have or other children's safety is put at risk then we will have to ask for parents to remove the child.
- This is the last resort and we will always keep parents informed so this doesn't come as a shock.
- Conflict between children is a natural part of development and learning and children are encouraged to solve their own problems, however, the safety of children and staff comes first.

Equal Opportunities Policy.

Grass Roots Muddy Boots welcomes and celebrates diversity and the strength this brings to Forest School sessions. The ethos of Forest School is one of inclusivity, teaching children to celebrate difference.

- Bullying is not tolerated
- We teach children about consent and that "stop means stop" in every situation
- Children build strong friendships and relationships
- Foster a caring environment
- Treat all adults and children with respect
- Adapt the environment so that those with disabilities can be included
- Encourage feedback from children and parents on fairness
- Treat people as individuals
- Model kind language

Personal Protective Equipment Information

- All children are different and your child may get cold easily and therefore require more layers.
- Please go with what is right for your child but remember that it is better to have too many clothes than not enough.
- Bring spare clothes in a bag that your child recognises
- Layer clothing to trap warm air inside
- If you are a parent this is the most important part of Forest School. If children get cold or wet their play ends.
- Schools have the responsibility to inform parents of the importance of the right clothing at Forest School
- This kit is **not only to protect children from the elements it is to protect their bodies from injury.**
- Children can explore more if they are in the right clothing.
- We will provide children with gloves when using tools

Forest School situation	Personal Protective Equipment
Winter	Waterproof trousers Long under trousers - thermals /joggers etc Long warm socks Sturdy boots or wellies At least 2 layers of clothing on top Warm waterproof coat Gloves and hat
Summer	Long light weight trousers Long socks Sturdy boots Waterproof top and bottom Long sleeved t shirt Sun hat Sun cream applied before setting off and to be taken on the session.
Collecting natural materials	Gloves Hand washing facilities
Using tools	Glove on left hand if right handed and vice versa. Long trousers Sturdy boots Long socks
Transporting logs.	Gloves Sturdy boots Long socks Long trousers
Entering shallow water	Wellies / waders Waterproof trousers

Tool Use

- This section allows you to see how we teach children to use tools safely.
- Children are taught skills in; sawing, whittling, carving, chopping, drilling
- A specific area is set up for tool use
- There are specific rules to keep children safe in the tool area
- These rules are explained in the briefing at the start of the session

Rules

- I. You must be invited in by the FS leader
 - II. No running through the tool area
 - III. You need to feel calm
 - IV. The FS leader will give you a 'tool talk' before you use the tool.
 - V. Always wear a rigger glove on your 'helping hand'
 - VI. Use a raised platform or a saw horse to saw wood
 - VII. Always have wood underneath when needing something to brace against during drilling or whittling
 - VIII. Whittle/carve away from your body (the exception is a 'pull cut' but this is for experienced whittlers)
 - IX. Ensure you have a safe working space. When you are working with the tool make sure you are two arms and tools away from anyone else.
 - X. Adopt the safe sitting stance
 - XI. Children are responsible for their own safety once they have been briefed.
 - XII. Re sheath knives with their cover
 - XIII. Allow an adult to put the guard on the bow saw
 - XIV. Return tools to the tool mat
 - XV. Tools are checked in at the start and end of the session
-
- Ratios are not set in stone, this is because all children have different capabilities. Age isn't always a predictor of ability
 - FS leaders will assess the ability of the group all the time and will respond accordingly in terms of activities and ratios.
 - FS leaders will use their skill and experience to adapt the rules for those children who are physically unable to adhere to the rules and will ensure safety.

Procedure

Peeler	
Purpose	To whittle a stick to remove the bark.
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Making a giro musical instrument. Making a fire tool to cook with. Making a stick sword. Make a bow and arrow.
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Explain the features; name, handle, blade, pointed end.
PPE	Glove on the 'helping hand' (the hand holding the stick).
Adult:Child ratio	Age 3-5 years 1:1 Reception and nursery children. Age 6-8 years 1: 3 KS1 Age 9 years and upwards 1:5 KS2 Ability of the child is also considered.
Transporting	Model to the children walking to and from the tool area with the pointed end down towards the ground.
Method of Use	Push the blade away from you down the stick making sure that the peeler is at the right angle for the blade to cut into the wood.
Cleaning	Use a soft cloth to remove any bit of wood from the blade after use. Make sure children are involved in this process.
Maintenance	Sharpen as required using a sharpening stone. Remove and label any tools from the kit bag that need maintenance.
Storage	Keep in a secure place in a dry bag, clean and free from wood.

Knife	
Purpose	Whittle and carve
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Swords, stick families, woodland animals
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Explain the features; name, handle, blade, pointed end. Model removing from the sheath and re-sheathing.
PPE	Glove on the 'helping hand' (the hand holding the stick).
Adult:Child ratio	Age 3-5 years 1:1 Reception and nursery children. Age 6-8 years 1: 3 KS1 Age 9 years and upwards 1:5 KS2 Ability of the child is also considered.
Transporting	Transported with the sheath on.
Method of Use	Hold with the handle. Blade facing away. Push away from your body in a dynamic move from the elbow. Stand or sit.
Cleaning	Use a soft cloth to remove any bit of wood from the blade after use. Make sure children are involved in this process.
Maintenance	Sharpen as required using a sharpening stone. Remove and label any tools from the kit bag that need maintenance. Steel wool any rust off the blade and apply oil.
Storage	Keep in a secure place in a dry bag or box

Bill Hook or Froe	
Purpose	For splitting logs.
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Splitting initial pieces of wood for; a woodland book, making a mallet
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Explain the features; name, handle, blade, sharp edge, blunt edge, used with a mallet
PPE	It is not necessary to wear gloves.
Adult:Child ratio	Age 3-8 years 1:2 Reception, nursery and KS1 Age 9 years and upwards 1:4 KS2 Ability of the child is also considered.
Transporting	Model to the children walking to and from the tool area with the blade pointing down, guard on and carried by the handle.
Method of Use	Working as a pair. One child uses the mallet and one child holds the bill hook in place using the handle and pinching the hook at the end. The blade is placed where the log is to be split again resting on a log and the child counts to 3 then says hit, at this point the other child hits the blunt side of the bill hook once. This is repeated until the wood is split. Make sure that the wood is sound and not rotting or wet. This makes it crumbly and difficult to split. The size of the bill hook to be used depends on the size of the wood.
Cleaning	Use a soft cloth to remove any bit of wood from the blade after use. Make sure children are involved in this process. Any mud must be removed as this speeds up the rusting process. This may require washing and drying well with an old rag.
Maintenance	Sharpen as required using a sharpening stone. Remove and label any tools from the kit bag that need maintenance.
Storage	Keep in a secure place in a dry bag, clean and free from wood.

Bow saw	
Purpose	For sawing branches larger than a 50p piece
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Making legs for a woodland seat. Making a fairy or elf house. Cutting wood for a mallet or book
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Explain the features; name, handle, blade, sharp edge, blunt edge, safety cover (adults only)
PPE	Glove on the helping hand
Adult:Child ratio	Age 3-8 years 1:2 Reception, nursery and KS1 Age 9 years and upwards 1:4 KS2 Ability of the child is also considered.
Transporting	Model to the children walking to and from the tool area with the blade pointing down, guard on and carried by the handle. Highlight to children never to attempt to replace the magnetic blade cover.
Method of Use	Working as a pair. Both children have a glove on their helping hand. The piece of wood to be cut could be rested on another log to raise it up off the ground. This means that the blade would go into the supporting log rather than the ground when the stick is sawn through. The blade would potentially get damaged if it went into the ground. Firstly, the child holding the handle side of the saw would make 3 draws 'at least' which is pulling the saw towards the body taking it off and repeating. This will make a cut in the wood as a guide and support for the blade. Both children would brace the wood with their gloved helping hand and another helper could stand on the end of the wood to help in this process. The child at the side without the handle holds the small arch of the saw to mirror their partner's grip and children work together using a forward and back motion until the saw is through the wood. If the saw gets stuck this is often known as 'pinching' this is when the wood is nipping the saw so it can't move. By easing the wood apart it will ease this. Make sure the children know what to do with the open blade once finished. There is a tendency to discard the saw making it dangerous for others.
Cleaning	Use a soft cloth to remove any bit of wood from the blade after use. Make sure children are involved in this process. Any mud must be removed as this speeds up the rusting process. This may require washing and drying well with an old rag.
Maintenance	Sharpen as required using a sharpening stone. Remove and label any tools from the kit bag that need maintenance.
Storage	Keep in a secure place in a dry carpenter's bag, clean and free from wood.

Hand drill	
Purpose	For making holes
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Make a wooden cookie, pan hook and stand for cooking.
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Explain the features; name, handle, blade, sharp edge, blunt edge.
PPE	It is not necessary to wear gloves.
Adult:Child ratio	Age 3-8 years 1:3 Reception, nursery and KS1 Age 9 years and upwards 1:5 KS2 Ability of the child is also considered.
Transporting	Model to the children walking to and from the tool area with the blade pointing down.
Method of Use	Working as a pair (one holding the wood and one using the tool) The child using the tool will have to hold onto the wood too to enable them to use the drill effectively. Children reminded to drill clockwise and then to remove the drill rewind it the opposite way. Also that they should keep checking how far they are through the wood so as not to drill into the log they are drilling on. Always drill onto wood or the tool will get damaged.
Cleaning	Use a soft cloth to remove any bit of wood from the bit after use. Make sure children are involved in this process. Any mud must be removed as this speeds up the rusting process. This may require washing and drying well with an old rag.
Maintenance	Remove and label any tools from the kit bag that need maintenance.
Storage	Keep in a secure place in a dry bag, clean and free from wood.

Folding Saw	
Purpose	For sawing branches the size of a 50p piece
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Making legs for a woodland seat. Making a fairy or elf house.
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Explain the features; name, handle, blade, sharp edge, blunt edge.
PPE	Glove on the helping hand
Adult:Child ratio	Age 3-8 years 1:2 Reception, nursery and KS1 Age 9 years and upwards 1:4 KS2 Ability of the child is also considered.
Transporting	Model to the children walking to and from the tool area with the blade away and carried by the handle. Highlight to children to be extra careful when folding the saw away. There is a bit of a knack with pressing the button and folding at the same time and the gap that the blade goes into in narrow. This is a teaching point in itself.
Method of Use	Working as a pair. Both children have a glove on their helping hand. The piece of wood to be cut could be rested on another log to raise it up off the ground. This means that the blade would go into the supporting log rather than the ground when the stick is sawn through. The blade would potentially get damaged if it went into the ground. Firstly, the child holding the saw would make 3 draws 'at least' which is pulling the saw towards the body taking it off and repeating. This will make a cut in the wood as a guide and support for the blade. Both children would brace the wood with their gloved helping hand and another helper could stand on the end of the wood to help in this process. The child at the side without the saw holds the wood to be cut. If using both hands to grip then both must be gloved. Using a forward and back motion until the saw is through the wood the child holding the knife uses this action. If the saw gets stuck this is often known as 'pinching' this is when the wood is nipping the saw so it can't move. By easing the wood apart it will ease this. Make sure the children know what to do with the open blade once finished. There is a tendency to discard the saw making it dangerous for others.
Cleaning	Use a soft cloth to remove any bit of wood from the blade after use. Make sure children are involved in this process. Any mud must be removed as this speeds up the rusting process. This may require washing and drying well with an old rag.
Maintenance	Replace the blade if necessary. Remove and label any tools from the kit bag that need maintenance.
Storage	Keep in a secure place in a dry tool bag, clean and free from wood.

Loppers	
Purpose	For cutting branches less than a 50p
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Clearing a Forest School site, collecting fire wood, making a stickman, woodland pencil.
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Explain the features; name, handle, blade, sharp edge, blunt edge.
PPE	No gloves for tool use only for holding the wood.
Adult:Child ratio	Age 3-8 years 1:1 Reception, nursery and KS1 Age 9 years and upwards 1:4 KS2 Ability of the child is also considered.
Transporting	Model to the children walking to and from the tool area with the blade pointing down, guard on and carried by the handle. Loppers are quite heavy and can easily fall apart at the handles opening the blade.
Method of Use	Working as a pair. Children holding the wood in place need to wear gloves. The stick that is being cut is laid in the moth of the blade. The loppers are used on the floor with the lower handle lying on the ground and the upper handle in the air. This method is good for small children as they just have to put their weight down on the top handle to make the cut. An adult will need to stabilise the tool and also be there to hold the loppers after the cut is made.
Cleaning	Use a soft cloth to remove any bit of wood from the blade after use. Make sure children are involved in this process. Any mud must be removed as this speeds up the rusting process. This may require washing and drying well with an old rag.
Maintenance	Sharpen as required using a sharpening stone. Remove and label any tools from the kit bag that need maintenance.
Storage	Keep in a secure place in a dry tool bag, clean and free from wood.

Secateurs	
Purpose	For cutting twigs
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Clearing a Forest School site, collecting fire wood, making a stickman, woodland pencil.
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Explain the features; name, handle, blade, sharp edge, blunt edge.
PPE	No gloves for tool use only for holding the wood.
Adult:Child ratio	Age 3-8 years 1:1 Reception, nursery and KS1 Age 9 years and upwards 1:4 KS2 Ability of the child is also considered.
Transporting	Model to the children walking to and from the tool area with the blade pointing down, guard on and carried by the handle. Secateurs can be quite difficult to lock and can easily fall apart at the handles opening the blade.
Method of Use	Working as a pair. Children holding the wood in place need to wear gloves. The stick that is being cut is laid in the mouth of the blade. Children squeeze the handles together making sure the twig is well inside the mouth of the tool.
Cleaning	Use a soft cloth to remove any bit of wood from the blade after use. Make sure children are involved in this process. Any mud must be removed as this speeds up the rusting process. This may require washing and drying well with an old rag.
Maintenance	Sharpen as required using a sharpening stone. Remove and label any tools from the kit bag that need maintenance.
Storage	Keep in a secure place in a dry tool bag, clean and free from wood.

Fire use

- At Grass Roots Muddy boots, fire is a central part of our sessions.
- Fire is taught by a FS leader who is always present when a fire is lit.
- The landowner's permission has been granted to have a fire
- The ground is checked for peat. If peat is present then the fire needs to be off the ground in a fire bowl.
- Fire is not used on windy days
- Ensure the canopy of trees or tarp is not directly over the fire
- Emergency water is available and burns kit
- Fires can be temporary or permanent

Rules

- I. Children learn that they always need an adult with them
- II. Safe sit in order to move their body away from the fire if there is the need.
- III. This is a high risk area but if rules are followed the risk of injury is low.
- IV. No running in the fire circle
- V. Children need to be calm
- VI. Only fire should be in the fire square
- VII. We leave no trace of fire
- VIII. Children know where the emergency water and burns kit are.
- IX. Long hair is tied back
- X. Sleeves are raised
- XI. Toggles are tucked away.
- XII. Food from the fire needs to be blown 10 times before eating

Children will have the opportunity to learn:

- Using a flint and steel to get a spark
- Lighting a piece of cotton wool
- Collecting a grading wood
- Identifying kindling
- Building a fire
- Different fire lays
- Maintaining a fire
- Cooking on a fire - in, on top, on a stick
- Use of a storm kettle
- Extinguishing a fire safely

Procedure for extinguishing a fire

- I. Use a sturdy stick to spread the ashes, this will put the flames out
- II. Pour the emergency water around the outside of the fire and work your way in
- III. Keep pouring water on until the steam stops
- IV. Remove charred wood but remember this will hold it's heat for a long time!
- V. Mix in leaf litter to the ash so there is no trace of the fire.
- VI. Put branches used for the fire square back in the woodland.

Emergencies

Young person separated from the group

- Stand still and shout
- Second adult blow the whistle for return and gather all the other children at basecamp
- Check all the boundaries
- Contact the police and parents if the child not found
- Contact the police if any suspicious people seen
- Contact the child's parents
- When separating into two groups for a walk for example. Be mindful of the ages of children/abilities that are in the groups.
- Always take a mobile phone and a second adult.

Major incident (This is when one of the emergency services is required)

- Emergency services are called using mobile phone.
- The O/S coordinates are given over the phone to the emergency services and details of the incident which will be recorded on the risk assessment. Second adult wearing a high visibility jacket makes their way to the rendezvous to meet the emergency services.
- Second adult leads the emergency team to the site.
- First adult delivers First Aid as per Outdoor First Aid Manual and training.
- Second adult contacts parents
- When on a school site follow school procedure. This is the same for any sort of drill.

Health & Safety

- We encourage participants to face new challenges and to learn to take reasonable risks.
 - In order to do that safely, risk assessments are written and reviewed annually.
 - Dynamic risk assessments are performed in the moment continually at Forest School. This is because situations change and FS leaders must adapt quickly.
 - Risks can rarely be eliminated entirely, but they can be reduced to a minimum without unduly limiting opportunities for children to explore and learn.
 - Children are taught to start assessing their own risk in order to keep themselves safe.
 - We have a streamline process for communicating with parents and schools
 - This handbook is updated annually
 - We are continually learning and adapting to improve the health and safety of the children and adults in our care.
-
- All FS leaders will have:
 - I. Level 2 food handling certificate (completed in the last 3 years)
 - II. FS leader level 3 qualification
 - III. Outdoor paediatric first aid certificate including resuscitation (completed in the last 3 years)
-
- All adult helpers have an enhanced DBS check done in the last 3 years.
 - Staff who are waiting for a DBS check to come through may work in a supervised role under the guidance of the member of FS staff that has an enhanced DBS check. This member of staff must however feel confident that they can see the unverified member of staff at all times.
 - All staff are insured under GRMB. Freelance staff will also have their own insurance.
 - GRMB insurance includes tree climbing and rope swings.
 - FS leaders are responsible for the smooth running of the session and will make their own plans to this end.
 - FS staff will continually carry out dynamic (on the spot) risk assessments as things can change quickly at Forest School
 - Staff will be familiar with the risk assessment, they will work to it and add to it as they see fit
 - Take reasonable care of their own and others' Health and Safety

First Aid and Administration of Medicines

- At least one adult will have the paediatric and outdoor first aid training on site
- An up to date, stocked First Aid Kit, along with relevant emergency equipment, which will always be readily accessible.
- A record of injuries that required First Aid will be kept.
- Teacher (if in school) or parents/carers will be made aware of any injuries and the treatment given.
- Forest School leaders are responsible for keeping the First Aid box up to date and stocked.
- Forest School leaders are not responsible for making entries into the school accident book.
- Near misses are reflected upon and actioned in the risk assessment.
- It is **ESSENTIAL** that school/parents/carers give all the details of any allergies or intolerances. In the case of holiday club this is done on the online booking form.

At Holiday Club..

- There will also be a mobile phone on site and in the event of a serious accident the emergency procedures will be followed
- If the injury requires a plaster in the first aider's opinion, then one is used.
- If an unprescribed lotion or medicine is required. the first aider member of staff will contact the child's parent or carer to seek permission. For example a bee sting that needs sting relief.
- If a child has a splinter the first aider will attempt with the child and parent/carer's consent to remove it.
- The above are carried out if more harm would be caused by leaving the injury untreated.
- In the case of emergency first aid. This would be carried out without permission in order to sustain life. This is the member of staff's duty of care.
- Parents/ Carers should inform the leader if a child has been administered medicines prior to the session.
- **Adults are not able to administer medicines on site. Only in exceptional circumstances will the leader do this after parents have completed an administration of medicines form and the leader has checked the prescription.**
- Children should be well enough to attend the session and all activities. This is a decision that is made by the parents at the start of the session. However, if the leader feels that a child is not well enough or health deteriorates during a session they reserve the right to ask the parent/carer to collect the child from the session.
- **If a child has vomiting they should be 48 hours clear of any further sickness before coming to a session.**
- Anaphylaxis emergency red bags should be brought by the child and carried by the leader.
- This also applies to medicines.
- In the situation that children are on regular medication but are well enough to come to Forest School for example regular Piriton is given for hay fever, parents/carers should give children their medication before and after the session to avoid children missing a dose in the day.

Booking Holiday Club - These clubs are run in collaboration with another Forest School called TreeTops. We run the clubs every North Yorkshire school holiday at Arkendale, Knaresborough and Bishop Wood, Cawood.

- are booked and paid for in advance.
- once a session has been booked online the child's place is secure.

Refunds

- Refunds can be given up to 24 hours before the session
- If your child has to self isolate due to Covid-19 we will give you a refund
- Refunds will not be given if the session has already started but later has to be abandoned due to adverse weather or extenuating circumstances.





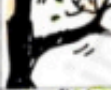








Cancellation

- You can cancel your place online up to 24 hours before the session and have the option to get a refund or transfer the ticket. If you transfer the ticket it must be for a ticket of the exact same value. This can all be done on the booking site.
- If a child doesn't turn up on time we will attempt to contact the parents, however, if they don't turn up at all then no refund will be given.
- We are a small business making caring for our customers a priority, so where possible we will always try to transfer your ticket, however if you don't turn up or you cancel within 24 hours then this is one of the situations where someone else could have had the place so we would be unable to give you a refund.

Adverse weather - Assessments of weather conditions will be taken prior to a visit and the forecast will be monitored. Sessions will be cancelled if:

- the temperature is deemed extreme,.
- if the wind speed is assessed as amber on the scale.
- if there is lightening in the woods.
- Where possible, the sessions will carry on regardless of the weather as long as it is deemed as safe.
- If the weather deteriorates suddenly during a session, the Forest School leaders will decide whether to leave the site, use alternative accommodation or return the participants to their setting/contact parents for collection.
- In the event of cancellation parents are told as early in the morning as is possible. Parents are individually contacted by phone and email.
- In the event of the session being abandoned we will contact individual parents, get the children to a place of safety and wait for them to be collected.

WIND SPEEDS

Scale	Description	miles Per hour	Effects	Risk
0	Calm	0-1	 smoke rises	
1	Light air	1-3	 Smoke drifts	
2	Light breeze	4-7	 "Leaves rustle"	
3	Gentle breeze	8-12	 "Twigs move"	
4	Moderate breeze	13-18	 "Leaves and small branches sway"	
5	Fresh breeze	18-24	 Small trees sway	
6	Strong breeze	25-31	 "Large branches sway"	
7	Moderate gale	32-38	 "Whole trees in motion"	
8	Fresh gale	39-46	 Twigs break off trees	
9	Strong gale	47-55	 Branches break off trees	
10	Whole gale	56-64	 Trees uprooted	
11	Storm	65-74	 Widespread damage	
12	Hurricane	75+	 Devastation	

Lily 2018 - kindinplay.com

As mentioned at the start of this handbook, the contents are by no means exhaustive. It is added to and changed in the belief that unless it contains information that is useful to schools and parents it has no purpose.

With this in mind I welcome you to give any feedback good or not so good so we can get better at delivering the right information to you.

Get in contact using the details below...

Grass Roots Muddy Boots

Sally Wolff
Grass Roots Muddy Boots
Forest School
Yorkshire
07904214006
sally@grassrootsmuddyboots.com
www.grassrootsmuddyboots.com

These are a few of the organisations that GRMB has collaborated with in the past and continue to work alongside

