



Forest School Handbook





Contents

1. Introduction	Page 3
2. Forest School Policy	Page 5
3. Ecological Impact Assessment and Management Plan	Page 8
4. Personal Protective Equipment Information	Page 12
5. Using Tools Procedures	Page 13
6. Camp Fire Procedure	Page 18
7. Hygiene Procedure	Page 20
8. Emergency or Serious Incident Procedure	Page 21
9. Daily Operating Procedure	Page 22
10. Booking and Cancellation Procedures	Page 23
11. Accidents and Near Misses Procedure	Page 24
12. How we balance risk and benefit	Page 25
13. How we communicate	Page 29
Appendix 1 - Booking form	
Appendix 2 - Risk Benefit Assessments	
Appendix 3 - Additional Policies	
Appendix 4 - Insurance details	



.....just a few lines to allow me to introduce myself and 'Grass Roots Muddy Boots'. My name is Sally Wolff and I have decided to truly 'walk the walk' and invest in the well-being of children, by offering them some unique and inspirational experiences.

I am a qualified primary school teacher, SENCo and Early Years leader. All of which, in their own way, have led me to become a Forest School Leader and start my own business, which offers Forest School opportunities to children age 3 -11 years.

Come and play the Forest School way!

Introduction to Grass Roots Muddy Boots

So what is Forest School?

'Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.'

The Forest School Association.

Forest School originates from Scandinavia and has grown in popularity in the UK since the early 2000s. It is the opportunity for children to engage with their organic



instincts of being close to nature. Some may liken it to good old fashioned playing out and may recognise some of the activities as things that they used to do when they were children: building dens, making rope swings, playing hide and seek, climbing trees. Children are given the opportunity to experience freedom to choose activities and lead their own learning, following their interests and hopefully discovering hidden talents. It is not just one thing it is a combination of free play and direct teaching with children's own self discovery and exploration woven through everything they do. In



essence.... **children are allowed to be children**, away from the ever growing pressures of life. It is their right to play! Play is where our children learn their most valuable lessons in a safe, motivating environment where there are lots of right answers to questions. Children's self-esteem and confidence is fostered in a nurturing environment. Forest School offers all 'the goodies' in life, the things that we can't quantify, the things that make us a good people. They are attributes such as kindness, empathy, resilience, not giving up, having a go, ability to share, cooperate and collaborate, help others, have a strong sense of self and be a good friend. These are the building blocks for their future and if we get them right for children at a young age then we provide a great springboard into life and it's amazing possibilities! Children are given a sense of freedom within specific safety rules that they learn to follow quickly in order to experience all the fun that lies ahead. They are offered a sense of risk and challenge as is normal in life, they become good self-assessors of risk and benefit, a life skill that is invaluable. The three skill strands of Forest School are: shelter, fire and tools and children are directly taught skills in these areas. So this is what I'm invested in, I believe in it educationally and for the well-being of not just children but adults as well, after all, don't we all love to play?



Forest School Policy

Our Ethos

No child can fail at Forest School. It is inclusive, offering **ALL** learners the opportunity to achieve. It takes place regularly, in all weathers, with the same group of children. It is a holistic approach and allows children to feel proud of their achievements and new found talents. It is exciting and fun offering children a unique sense of freedom and adventure.

Aims

- * Develop self-esteem
- * Develop self-confidence
- * Form positive relationships
- * Develop empathy for others
- * Learn to cooperate and work collaboratively
- * Develop listening and attention skills
- * Abide by set rules to stay safe
- * Develop knowledge and appreciation of the natural environment and sustainability.

Ecological Considerations

We also aim to teach children about wildlife and the fragile habitats that are present in the woodland. We promote awareness and respect for the environment and children are encouraged to start challenging their own choices around sustainability. For example, the litter that they have, where they stand in the woodland, what happens to the fire when we leave. We teach a non negotiable of **LEAVE NO TRACE** and the children get into the routine of leaving the woodland as they found it.



The Role of the Forest School Leader

The role of the Forest School Leader is to plan the activities to be delivered in the session. This may change according to assessments made of children interests and abilities. The activities need to be inclusive as I will have children aged 3 years to 12 years so will need to plan low floor high ceiling activities. Planning needs to incorporate the adult helpers available and the ratios required. In terms of safety, the activities should be risk assessed, the site be checked prior to the visit, a site survey should be done, helpers DBS checked, all kit checked and the weather checked. Although this sounds structured these elements of the role are responsibilities which support learning and development by being prepared. The sessions are then facilitated by the leader and helpers, there may be some direct teaching of tools or fire for example but once skills have been taught there should be a reduction in direct teaching towards child led learning, allowing the child to discover, explore and apply the skills learnt. Part of the session will be free play when the children can lead their own learning whilst abiding by certain safety rules, for example, returning to the whistle. During this time children are able to revisit activities that they may have been shown and develop them further. An example of this may be 'Fairy Houses', I have a fairy box with things to make a small world in, which I will leave out at the bottom of a tree. The children may well access it independently refining their skills from the last time they accessed it. The forest School leader and helpers should be looking and listening during free play to see what children's interests are and plan for this either immediately or the next day.

What do the helpers do? Helpers are amazing people at Forest School. They are usually volunteers who just want to get involved because they are on board with the Forest School ethos. Our volunteers are from all walks of life which is great for the children because they get to access all the knowledge and experience. A good helper,



however, won't tell the children all the answers because their wisdom tells them that it is a greater gift to find the answers out for yourself! Check out our helpers profiles on Grass Roots Muddy Boots website to find out more about them. All of them our DBS checked and are known personally by me. If you are interested in becoming a helper please let me know. The role is invaluable and it involves facilitating children's learning, so as mentioned, not telling them all the answers but providing the right prompts shall we say. Helpers shared feedback with the leader and share successes and possible next steps and what the children are really fascinated by. **Also see Health and safety policy for helpers responsibilities.**

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 have a responsibility for their own learning to a certain extent and need to abide by some rules in order to stay safe. There is also an expectation that the children will look after their own belongings.

What is expected of parents? Parents should make sure that children arrive on time and have the appropriate **kit, snack and drink**. They are required to complete a booking form before I am able to take their child on the session. Parents are also responsible to let the Forest School leader know if there are any changes to their **child's medical needs**. Children will be outdoors for the whole session, regardless of the weather so it is really important that they are dressed appropriately. This is just a guide as all children are different and in summer will obviously require less clothing depending on the weather. **Please see the Personal Protective Equipment Information on page 12.**

Ecological Impact Assessment and Management Plan

Name of the site: Kirk Smeaton Woodland.

GRID REF: SE511170

Access is gained off Main Street in Kirk Smeaton. It is a public right of way that is sign posted and used regularly by the public.



The track follows the river Went to the right and privately owned woodland to the left, a water plant to the right.

Context of the site This is a privately owned wood, the landowner is a local farmer called Pauline Cooper, who has kindly given us permission to have Forest School there. The woodland would be used by the public and is very close to Brockdale Nature Reserve that is owned by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and is a site of special interest for nesting birds. (SSI) The farmer uses the glade to the right for grazing horses.

Size of the site approximately an acre. The boundaries we use are the fence at the furthest point, the path and river at either side and the glade at the top of the site.

Topography of the site physical features include the River Went which flows to the right of the site. The elevation is 22 metres so is fairly flat.



Ecological Impact Assessment and Management Plan

Archeological interest of the site and soil type. The soil type is limestone and when I did an initial survey with the help of a volunteer from the woodland he specified that the limestone soil was of special interest and wasn't common for a woodland floor. In terms of archaeological interest, the limestone outcrop which stretches from Nottinghamshire up to Durham has been found to be home to late pre-Roman Iron age and Roman period and implies a prosperous agricultural background to the settlements. Yorkshire Archaeological Journal (1987)

Bedrock The site lies in a valley the 'River Went flows through the craggy and steep sided gorge formed after the last ice-age when glacial melt-water burst through the magnesian limestone rock. the right of the site on the other side of the river are the crags' <http://www.gwt.org.uk/reserves/brockadale-nature-reserve>

Flora and fauna in the woodland

Plants	Cow parsley, Herb robert, Bird's Eye, Himalayan balsam, wild Arum. Predominantly, brambles, nettles, wild garlic, wild parsley
Trees	Silver Birch and non native trees are rare. The majority are typical broad woodland species like British Oak, Ash, Elder.
Fungi	Fungi are very common due to the woodland floor being damp, cold and a lot of dead wood lying around. The most common is Daldinia concentrica or King Alfred's cakes which grows on dead wood.
Mosses	See above and mosses are also common for this reason.
Birds	Kingfisher although rare has been seen on the banks of the river. Wagtails, Chaffinch, Chiffchaffs, Kestrel, Buzzard, Bluntits and Coal tits
Mammals	Badgers, foxes and black and brown rabbits are very common.
Insects	Lots of Butterflies on the wildflowers, beetles, woodlice, spiders

Management



Currently there isn't any management in place of this section of woodland and if left would just be wild. The glade next to the site which we sometimes use for access is used for grazing horses in the summer. Forest School has been using the site regularly for the last eight months. The frequency has been once a week May-July and every day for one week in July and October. The group included 10 children and two adults.

References

Yorkshire Archeological Journal 1987 Vol 59. Available at https://archive.org/stream/YAJ0591987/YAJ0591987_djvu.txt (accessed 15/11/17)

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust website. Brockdale Nature Reserve. Available at <http://www.ywt.org.uk/reserves/brockdale-nature-reserve> (Accessed 15/11/17)

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.

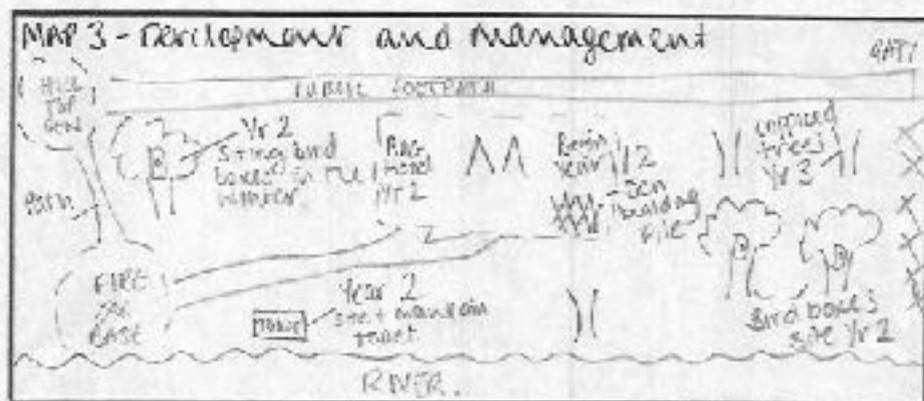
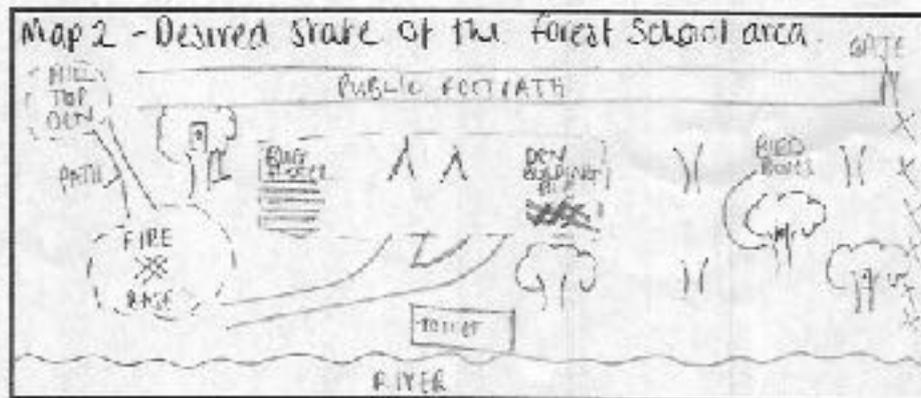
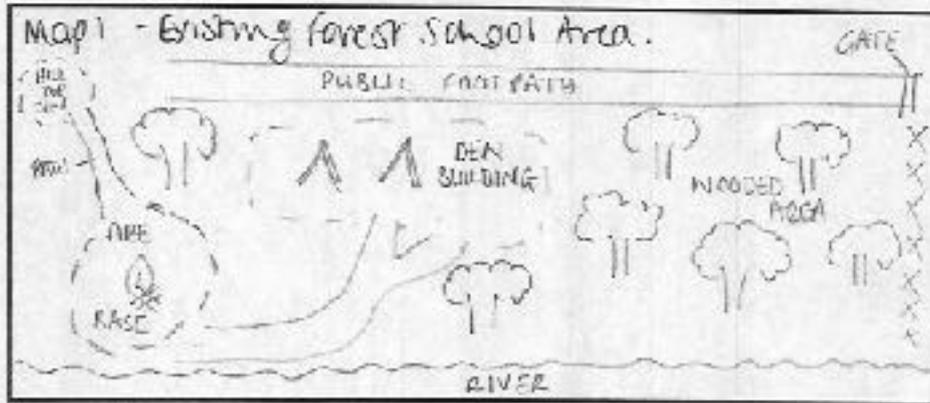


Measures to maintain ecology	coppice or pollarding will regrow the branches. Use fallen wood.	Rotate sites/rest the site or create a pond where the ground has been compacted to encourage wildlife.	collect charred wood from the site, checking tools back in, talking to children about leaving no trace	take 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.

	Maintenance	Development tasks	Use
Year 1	Keep pathways and basecamp site clear Establish boundaries Rest the site from November to Spring	Lop any over hanging brambles and nettles Children use the site and define the boundaries. check the recovery of the site and make sure that all the wood used in the camp is scattered back into the woodland	Access, fire area and den building forest School activities Wildlife on the woodland floor, canopy and understorey can begin to grow again, the canopy will grow again in the spring. Allow compaction to lessen.



Unit 3.2.1 Sally Wolff



Personal Protective Equipment Information

Forest School situation	Personal Protective Equipment
Winter	<p>Waterproof trousers Long under trousers Long warm socks Sturdy boots (not wellies) At least 2 layers of clothing on top Warm waterproof coat Gloves and hat</p>
Summer	<p>Long light weight trousers Long socks Sturdy boots Shower proof jacket Long sleeved t shirt Sun hat Sun cream applied before setting off and to be taken on the session.</p>
Collecting natural materials	<p>Gloves Hand washing facilities</p>
Pausing a bow saw to cut a length of wood.	<p>Glove on left hand if right handed and vice versa. Long trousers Sturdy boots Long socks</p>
Using a bill hook to take the side branches off lengths of wood.	<p>Glove on the hand holding the branch. Sturdy boots Long trousers Long socks</p>
Walking in the woodland.	<p>Sturdy boots long socks Long trousers Hi-Vis jacket</p>



Transporting logs.

Gloves

Sturdy boots

Long socks

Long trousers



Using Tools

Tool	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 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.
Working Space	Model Forest School stance When you are working with the tool make sure you (and your partner) are two arms and tools away from anyone else.
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.
Checking	Use the Forest School tool checklist at the beginning and end of the session to count the tools out and in.
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.
Tool	Knife
Purpose	Multi purpose tool. Can be used for cutting or making woodland objects.
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Making a giro musical instrument. Making a fire tool to cook with. peel small slithers off wood to make a woodland whistle. Make a woodland book. Cut cord.
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Explain the features; name, handle, blade, pointed end, sharp edge, blunt edge, cover (push till it clicks)
PPE	Glove on the helper hand.
Adult:Child ratio	Age 3-5 years !:1 Reception and nursery children. Age 6-8 years !:3 KS1 Age 9 years and upwards !: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.
Working Space	Model Forest School stance When you are working with the tool make sure you (and your partner) are two arms and tools away from anyone else.
Method of Use	Working away from the body, holding the handle, with a glove on the helper hand put pressure downwards to cut into the wood. It is helpful to position a small log underneath the wood being cut so that the blade potentially can go into this after cutting through the wood.
Checking	Use the Forest School tool checklist at the beginning and end of the session to count the tools out and in.
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.

Tool	Bow saw
Purpose	For sawing branches into smaller pieces.
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Making legs for a woodland seat. Cutting initial pieces of wood for; roof of a bug hotel, fire tool to hold a pot over a fire etc
Safety Equipment or Design Feature	Explain the features; name, handle, blade, sharp edge, blunt edge, magnetic cover
PPE	Glove on the helper 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.
Working Space	Model Forest School stance When you are working with the tool make sure you (and your partner) are two arms and tools away from anyone else.



Method of Use	Working as a pair. Both children have a glove on their helper hand. The piece of wood to be cut would be rested on another small log to raise it up off the ground and so that the blade would go into that when through the wood rather than the ground. Firstly one of the children would make 2-3 draws of the blade to give a starting point for the blade to fit into. The children would brace the wood with their helping hand which would be crossed with the other person's hand under the handle. This prevents the blade potentially jumping onto their arms. The ungloved hand holds the handle at each end and children create a smooth pushing and pulling action letting the blade do the work.
Checking	Use the Forest School tool checklist at the beginning and end of the session to count the tools out and in.
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.
Tool	Bill hook
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.



Working Space	Model Forest School stance When you are working with the tool make sure you (and your partner) are two arms and tools away from anyone else.
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.
Checking	Use the Forest School tool checklist at the beginning and end of the session to count the tools out and in.
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.



Campfire Procedure

Introduction and safety around fire before it is lit

- 🔥 Highlight the fire area as a “no go” area, possibly play some games to endorse this.
- 🔥 The fire area should be large enough to ensure that children are 1.5m away from the fire.
- 🔥 There should be a gap in the canopy of the trees to reduce the risk of over hanging branches catching fire.
- 🔥 Ensure that all the required areas are prepared: First Aid, Hand washing area, emergency water/extinguishing purposes, food prep.
- 🔥 Highlight all the areas and their purpose to the group.
- 🔥 Children should check that long hair is tied back and no toggles or anything else is dangling from their bodies creating a fire hazard.
- 🔥 Talk about **The fire Triangle** of heat, oxygen and fuel.
- 🔥 Demonstrate safe sitting and allow children to practice this.
- 🔥 Model building a fire in preparation fro lighting it.
- 🔥 Identify the parts of the flint and steel and that this will create a spark and therefore heat in the fire triangle. Show the cotton wool as the fuel.

Lighting and managing the fire

- 🔥 Demonstrate lighting the cotton wool and then feeding the fire quickly with small pieces of dry kindling followed by sticks in three sizes of little finger, middle finger and wrist.
- 🔥 Children should feed the fire from their safe sitting position and use the fire glove if necessary

Cooking on the fire

Before handling food hands must be washed in the hand washing area either with soap and water or alcohol gel and dried properly.

- 🔥 Cooking should only take place once the fire is hot enough, the flames have died down and the embers are glowing. The food can burn if not.
- 🔥 **In the fire cooking** to make bread ash cakes. use a fire glove to place a small cake amount of dough in the hot ash at the bottom of the fire. Check that the dough inside is



no longer sticky, remove using the fire glove or a fire tool and brush off the ash. Use the IO blow rule, then touch with fingers, repeat if necessary.

🔥 On a stick cooking place chunks of food onto a skewer and hold over the glowing embers of the fire. Avoid placing directly into a flame as this will burn the food on the outside and leave the inside uncooked. The stick may also catch fire. An alternative is to lie the skewer on top of a horizontal griddle as described below. Again, use the IO blow rule as described above.

🔥 On top of the fire cooking Ensure that the shape of the fore accommodates placing a griddle/pan/kettle on top of it. It must be a fairly even surface. Make sure that the fire gloves is used to re-arrange or take the food off the heat as the handles may be hot. Heat oil in the pan and once this is sizzling drop the bread soaked in egg and milk in the pan. There must be enough oil or butter so that the bread doesn't stick to the pan. Turn as appropriate and then when golden on both sides lift the pan off using the fire glove and place it on the ground in the fire area. Using a spatula lift out the food onto a plate and observe the IO blow rule as described above.

Extinguishing a camp fire

- 🔥 Using a sturdy long stick spread the ashes to begin the process of putting the fire out
- 🔥 Using the emergency water gently pour over all the remains of the fire.
- 🔥 REMEMBER THAT THE WOOD WILL HOLD THE HEAT FOR QUITE A WHILE.
- 🔥 Using the stick turn the ashes and soil together making sure the fire is out.

Permanent fire site

- 🔥 Take charred wood away from the site
- 🔥 Leave the fire area in place

Temporary fire site

- 🔥 Remove all charred wood from the site
- 🔥 Integrate the ashes into the soil and combine with leaf litter to disguise.
- 🔥 Place the branches of the fire area back into the woodland
- 🔥 Remove all traces of woodland seats



Hygiene Procedure

-  Perishable food that is to be consumed at the site is to be pre prepared at Grass Roots Muddy Boots kitchen.
-  Food is kept in Grass Roots Muddy Boots kitchen in a fridge or freezer as long as possible.
-  It is to be transported in the red cool bag and is covered in an air tight container/ plastic bag/cling/foil and labelled.
-  Food should not be left uncovered at any time to avoid contamination.
-  Children should only handle their own food.
-  Raw meat to be kept separate and food handler to wash hands in between handling meat.
-  separate containers/cutlery/crockery/pans etc to be used for children suffering with food allergies.
-  medical needs form to be completed by all parents indicating food allergies.
-  All utensils/cutlery and crockery to be cleaned after the session in a dishwasher at high heat.
-  All food is within the use by date
-  All openings in the skin caused by abrasions to be covered
-  Children to clean their hands at the washing station provided with soap and water or alcohol gel and dry them thoroughly.
-  A designated eating time is to be used
-  Children should be seated when eating
-  Fresh water provided in large blue sealed water container

Please make reference to Health and safety policy.



Emergency and Serious Incidents.

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

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. **Main st SE519166** No vehicle access. **Tiger Inn SE393589 with vehicle access.** Second adult wearing a high visibility jacket makes their way to Main st (Kirk Smeaton) the Tiger Inn (Coneythorpe)
-  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



Daily Operations

- * All children to meet at designated rendezvous. Kirk Smeaton School or Tiger Inn at Coneythorpe.
- * Children must be wearing the appropriate kit. The leader reserves the right to call parents and ask them to collect their child if they are wearing inappropriate clothing.
- * All Parents must have returned their child's booking form (Appendix I) and made the leader aware of any changes on the day, in terms, of medicines administered to illness.
- * A minimum of two adults to a maximum of 10 children will normally be the case. If this increases it is a 1:5 ratio adult to child ratio
- * There will be an adult at either end of the single file line of children both wearing HV jackets
- * Children will carry their own possessions in their bags and will be expected to help with carrying the kit.
- * One adult will check the road is clear from both sides as they stand on the corner of Main Street and have a clear view. They will then stand in then ask the adult from the back to stand in the middle of the road and signal the children in front of them to cross the road. The other adult leads the way
- * Once on the woodland path children are able to go at their own pace in front as long as they can see the adults.
- * If children meet another adult they are to move to the side and let them pass. If they have dog they do not touch it unless it is well known to them
- * Children set up their designated areas at basecamp
- * Children have their snack and drink and dispose of their own litter in an appropriate way. Fruit can be thrown into the woodland for the birds and wrappers to be put back in their bags and taken home.
- * Children do not leave the boundary area without an adult
- * Children have freedom within the boundaries as long as they stick to the rules of safety
- * Children observe rules around safety near a fire and tools (see tool and fire procedures)
- * The site is always cleared and we leave 'NO trace'
- * The return walk is made and the children must wait at the last gate for an adult before going up the hill to the main road.
- * Children wait on the bench at the top for everyone before reversing the road crossing procedure.
- * Children meet parents back at the meeting point.
- * Any adult that is unfamiliar to the leader who is collecting must be able to give the agreed password from the booking form before the child is released into their care. **The leader reserves the right to refuse an unfamiliar adult.** (see safeguarding children policy)



Booking and Cancellling

Grass Roots Muddy Boots Forest School courses are booked and paid for in advance. They are in blocks of at least six weeks usually. Once a course is booked by a parent/carer they will be invoiced. When this is paid the child's place is secure. If a parent should change their mind they can have a refund within two weeks of the course starting, however, after this point

no refund is available because the place cannot be filled in time. **Exceptional circumstances will be considered.** Booking is taken on a first come first served basis and a list is kept of the order that children have booked on. However, if payment is not made by the invoice due date their place could be given to the next person on the list.

Parents will get one reminder email before this happens. Receipt of payment and confirmation of their place will be sent by email.

If a child doesn't turn up on time then the leader will attempt to contact the parent and then the group will set off as arranged. There will be no refund for the session.

It is part of the parent's responsibility to read the course information and are signing to that effect on the booking form that they have read and understood it.



Accidents and Near Misses

-  Leader must hold an up to date Outdoor First Aid certificate
-  Leader assessment made of the injury
-  Treat using Outdoor First Aid Training as per manual
-  Use appropriate equipment from the fire or first aid box
-  Record the accident in the accident book
-  Report to parents on return

Incidents and near misses:

Record in designated near miss record book and report the incident to parents. Reflect on the incident by creating a new risk assessment from the incident.



How we balance risk and benefit

Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury.

Play Safety Forum. Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide D Ball et al (2013)
<http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/172644/managing-risk-in-play-provision.pdf> accessed 22/11/17

Managing risk is a vital part of planning and delivering a Forest School Programme. Risk but equally as important, the benefit of taking risks lies at the heart of the Forest School ethos. A balance between the two must be found in order for children to experience challenge learning to assess risk for themselves and protecting themselves from serious harm. Risk is part of our every day lives, therefore teaching children to manage it is an important tool to have in their life tool kit. It is therefore impossible to eliminate risk altogether as it is an intrinsic part of play and how children learn, we can however anticipate risk and put in place policies and procedures to minimise the risk whilst maximising the benefit.

Assessment of risk should be a proactive process rather than reactive. There are Forest School activities that carry obvious risk such as ones involving fire and tools. The benefits of such activities are that they build resilience, concentration, physical skills and many more as described in Unit 3 2.7. The benefits would be documented on a risk-benefit assessment and then categorised as recorded below. the risk starts as medium or high and then after control measures have been put in place the risk should be reduced. The process informs policy and procedure documentation and I have personally found it useful for clarification in my own mind of the risks and the steps that I should include automatically in my planning and communication with the children and adults.

Useful documents

Play Safety Forum. Managing risk in play provision: A position statement. reprint (2008)

<http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/120462/managing-risk-play-safety-forum.pdf> accessed 21/11/17

SEE APPENDIX 2 FOR RISK BENEFIT ASSESSMENTS

How we communicate

