



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

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ACTIVITY RISK-BENEFIT ASSESSMENT Unit 4 3.2

ESTABLISHMENT: Treetops Forest School in collaboration with Grass Roots Muddy Boots Forest School

ASSESSMENT DATE:
13/06/2020

PROPOSED ACTIVITY / ENVIRONMENT: Bishop Wood, N Yorkshire, YO8 3RB

COMPLETD BY: Sally
Wolff/Siobhan Bamforth

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES: Team work and confidence building using context of a higher risk activity as a stimulus.

BENEFITS: Self esteem, strength, resilience, problem solving, judgement, empathy, responsibility, role models, self control, sense of achievement, development of new skills and knowledge.

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Ensure you include specific trees, plants, animals, areas (such as pits, stone areas etc), features (ponds, seating, shelters etc) applicable to your site assessment, every site will be different and therefore have different hazards.

Hazards	Risk	Who might be harmed?	Control measures	What further actions are needed to control the risk?	Tick if these actions are in place	Outcome
List significant hazards that may result in serious harm or affect people in the party.	Indicate the level of risk involved	List groups of people who are especially at risk from the hazards identified.	List existing controls or note where information may be found. (e.g. information, instruction training, systems or procedures)	List the risks that are not adequately controlled and propose actions that are needed to reduce or eliminate the risks.		
Uneven ground, tree roots, rabbit holes, boulders: causing slips and trips.	MEDIUM	Children and adult leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing prior to entering risk area. Appropriate footwear prior to entering risk area Supervision of children by staff along the trail <p>ALL staff to always carry out a dynamic risk assessment and amend procedures to minimize risks involved.</p>	<p>FS leader will carry a mobile phone</p> <p>FS has passed the Outdoor Paediatric First Aid Course Jan 2020.</p> <p>First aid kit and emergency contact details carried for all children and staff.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LOW
Animals Dog - bites	MEDIUM	Children and adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any anxious children to be supported where needed if a dog enters base camp, staff to remain with children until the owner of the dog takes control of the dog. 			LOW

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<p>Insects / Small animals: bites, stings allergic reactions, venomous bites</p>	<p>HIGH/ MEDIUM</p>	<p>Children and adult leaders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult supervision • Children with allergies are to be given a prophylactic dose of anti histamines by parents where necessary • mobile phone • emergency contacts • first aid kit 	<p>Discussion with parents of children with allergies re; treatment before the session FS has passed the Outdoor Paediatric First Aid Course Jan 2020 On going risk assessment done before each session and a dynamic risk assessment done during each session to reduce risk. If a snake is seen, then the leader to keep the children calm and stamp her feet to allow the snake time to move away.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>LOW</p>
<p>River, dyke, standing water : drowning, hypothermia, water born disease</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>Children and adult leaders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of children by staff • Briefing of all persons by lead adult prior to entering risk area • Children to be made aware of risks, suitable boundaries highlight. • First aid kit (containing silver warming blanket) and emergency contacts list. 	<p>FS has passed the Outdoor Paediatric First Aid Course Jan 2020. FS leader familiar with symptoms and risk of Weil's disease. area Children receive safety briefing prior to free choice At the time of the visit there was no water present in the dyke due to minimal rain – this will be checked on the day of the part and boundaries and supervision adapted accordingly. A clear boundary area will be identified with the begin children before independent learning.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>LOW</p>
<p>Contamination / disease : dog faeces / animal faeces</p>	<p>HIGH/ MEDIUM</p>	<p>Children and adult leaders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of children by staff • Briefing of all persons by lead adult prior to entering risk are • Antibacterial hand gel and wipes/hand wash facilities • Children to be taught about not touching poo and appropriate staff:children ratio maintained. • Site to be checked before each session. 		<p>✓</p>	<p>MED</p>

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<p>Use of natural materials during activities: soft tissue injury, splinters, cuts, contusions, contaminants</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>	<p>Children and adult leaders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of children by staff • Briefing of all persons by lead adult prior to activities • Antibacterial hand gel and wipes • First aid kit containing eye injury bandages • Hazard spotting by adults prior to activity • Carriage of sterile/distilled water in case of injury can be used as an eye wash. • Leader has mobile phone and emergency contacts. • Long trousers and socks are a non negotiable on the kit list. 	<p>I</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>LOW</p>
<p>Young people separated from group: Abuse by public, Lost child Car park</p>	<p>LOW</p>	<p>Pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of children by staff • Briefing of all persons by lead adult prior to entering risk area • Boundaries clarified and modelled to the children. • Use of a whistle to return. • Children to stay within base camp unless accompanied by an adult • mobile phone and emergency contact list carried. • Suitable ratio maintained • Once parents have dropped off children, the main gate will be locked to stop any vehicles entering. During the time of drop up/pick up all children need to remain in base camp. 	<p>In the event of someone being lost advised to stand still and shout. Base camp is clearly marked by the dyke, car park and wire fence and children are talked through the boundaries prior to each session. In the event of staff having any concerns regarding specific children then these children will be closely supervised until they are comfortable that the child understands and adheres to the boundaries. In the event of a child going missing all the other children to stay with the other adult and the leader to go and look for the child using the return whistle and calling name. Parents and police to be contacted ASAP if child has not returned. Call the police if any suspicious activity or people are noted.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>LOW Private woodland site</p>
<p>Poisoning, infection, accident: Wild berries/fruits, contaminants, sharp objects, standing water, falls from height</p>	<p>HIGH/ MEDIUM</p>	<p>Pupils and adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess risks in specific environment • Brief young people re poison/infection hazards • Supervision of children by staff • First aid provision • Lead adult to hazard spot and brief persons prior to entry into risk areas • Mobile phone to be available for emergency use • Carriage of flora and fauna identification key specifically made for the site. • Children to be taught and reminded nil by mouth unless FS leader says otherwise • All edible plants to be checked by FS leader prior to ingestion. 		<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>LOW</p>

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<p>Extreme weather : Sun burn, heat stroke Cold weather, rain High Winds, lightning</p>	HIGH/ MEDIUM	Pupils and adults	<p>Supervision of children by staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing of all persons by lead adult prior to entering risk area • Appropriate clothing / head protection / parents, guardians to ensure sun screen application prior to trip • In case of adverse weather appropriate clothing / wet weather clothing • Extreme winds, lightning storm, POSTPONE TRIP • In the event of extreme weather forecast (cold/rain) an email to parents will be sent to remind them of kit required and the importance of this. 	<p>Kit list provided and parents reminded that children will not be allowed to attend unless they have appropriate clothing.</p>	<p>✓</p>	LOW
<p>MAJOR INCIDENT This is when one of the emergency services is required. Reduce the risk of the situation worsening.</p>	MEDIUM	Pupils and adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile phone and emergency contacts • One adult to stay with the child. If the casualty/missing person is an adult then the most responsible and capable two children take the role of the other adult. • other adult to ring the emergency services and give exact location in the woodland. • Tell the emergency services the nearest Emergency vehicle access point. • Other adult/children to meet at emergency services rendezvous point to guide the emergency services to the site. • Other adult/children to carry second adults mobile phone in order to keep in contact. 	<p>Emergency service point is the car park to woodland – Emergency services to be provide with the code to unlock the gate.</p>	<p>✓</p>	LOW
<p>Ticks</p>	MEDIUM	Pupils and adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All to wear long socks and long trousers as per kit list. • Children to be checked on the night of doing the session for evidence of a tick- information located on parent information. • Teach children to check themselves after the session. • FS leader to carry tick removal tool. • FS leader able to identify a tick and remove safely and inform parents at home time. Any concerns parents to be advised to seek medical advice. 	<p>Include information about ticks and permission to remove them on parental info during the enrolment process.</p>	<p>✓</p>	LOW

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<p>Group members injured: -</p> <p>Potato Peelers - cuts, scrapes</p> <p>Knife - cuts, stab wounds, loss of digit</p> <p>Secateurs - cuts, stab wounds, loss of digit</p> <p>Loppers - cuts, stab wounds, loss of digit</p>	<p>HIGH/ MEDIUM</p>	<p>Pupils</p>	<p>Tool condition checked before use. Any broken or blunted tools not used in session and repaired, sharpened or thrown away.</p> <p>All tools are kept with leader's kit and counted out and in. Use of check list for this.</p> <p>Appropriate adult modelling and supervision of safe and correct handling of specific tools is followed:</p> <p>Peeler use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:3 adult ratio (age and need dependent) • Ensure safe distance from others • Pupil must kneel on one knee and, support wood on bent knee. • Blade action must always be away from body. • When walking with peeler keep arm to the side and point down. • Safe temporary storage is to store the blade end in soil. Permanent storage is to hang on an allocated branch. <p>Knife Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:2 adult ratio (age and need dependent) • Body position as peeler use • Blade must be locked close when not in use and locked open when in use. • Carried and stored with blade locked closed <p>: secateurs use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 adult ratio (age and need dependent) • Ensure hands are clear from blade. • When carrying ensure blades are locked closed and pointing towards the floor. <p>Lopper use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 adult ratio (age and need dependent) • Ensure hands are clear from blades and only cut wood below head height. • Cut wood thickness thumb thickness and less. • When carrying ensure blade points toward the floor and the blades are closed. • Safe storage is to lean the loppers against a tree trunk blade down. 	<p>Check work area is safe before activity any hazardous debris present is removed if possible. Tool use must happen away from other children's activities.</p> <p>Appropriate adult ratios are followed for activity; 1:2 for using potato peelers (initially - this may go up when confident of pupil's ability) 1:1 ratio for all other tool use.</p> <p>When carrying tools correct procedures must be followed (eg blade facing down) and pupil must walk.</p> <p>All adult helpers aware of correct procedures for safe use and storage of tools.</p> <p>Adults First aid trained and kit and mobile phone in kit.</p> <p>Emergency/medical information at hand. Tools to be regularly maintained and free from rust. This is to reduce the risk of sustaining a tetanus prone injury or an injury sustained from broken equipment</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>LOW</p>
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Saw – cuts, loss of digit/limb	HIGH/ MEDIUM	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saw use: 1:2 adult ratio (age and need dependent) Pupils to use pruning saw and bow saws only Ensure loose wood is made secure If cutting live wood it must be below head height Keep hands away from blade, glove on hand not holding saw. Saw using whole of the blade. Ensure blade covered when not in use. Carried pointing downwards, blade facing backwards with blade guard on. Safe storage is to lean against a tree trunk with blade guard on. <p>Hand drill use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1:3 adult ratio (age and need dependent) Ensure a sturdy surface to stabilize the wood to be drilled. drill away from self Keep fingers away from the exit site of the drill Carry safely with the Sharpe end facing down. 		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LOW
Hand drill						
Entanglement	MEDIUM	Pupils and adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instruct in the safe use of rope and string. Adult supervision to ensure rope or string is not wrapped or tied around the body or neck of any individual. Leader to carry an effective cutting blade with a safety side so as not to injure the casualty. First aid kit and emergency contact numbers. 	FS leader to have completed Paed Outdoor First Aid qualification Jan 2020	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LOW

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Rope burn	MEDIUM	Pupils and adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gloves are worn if the activity involves pulling. Adult supervision. First aid and emergency contacts. 	FS leader to have completed Paed Outdoor First Aid qualification Jan 2020	✓	LOW
Transporting Logs for fire triangle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Backstrain Eye/face/foot injury 	MEDIUM	Pupils and adults transporting materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate safe lifting and rolling techniques. Carry larger materials in teams and/or using ropes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult supervision Consistent support as required 	✓	LOW
Collecting of firewood: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eye pokers scratches Foot injury splinters 	MEDIUM	Pupils and adults collecting materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate appropriate ways of collecting materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult supervision and modelling of behaviours. 	✓	LOW
Fire Triangle set-up;	HIGH	Pupils and adults	<p>ENSURE SITE OF FIRE IS APPROPRIATE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permission asked from land owner Not within low over hanging branches Observe wind direction (if wind too strong do not light fire) <p>FIRE TRIANGLE SET UP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire within an enclosed area of logs Use of fire pit for all fires Seating is a minimum of 1.5m from fire and pegged to prevent rolling 5m radius 'walking' boundary Planned and cleared 'escape route' Any potential tripping hazards removed from fire area All evidence of fire removed from site after each session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult support children to practice appropriate behaviour before fire lit. Fire lighting equipment stored safely Site prepared well. Continually assess wind strength and direction. Play games involving not entering the fire triangle to embed the rules. 	✓	LOW

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<p>Fire lighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • burns 	HIGH	Pupils and adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults to supervise the start and maintenance of fire • Adults/children to access the fire only in a safe sitting (one knee up/one knee down position) • Fire managed so flames get no higher than knee height. • Fire first aid kit in designated area. • Cold clean water available. • All evidence of fire removed from site after each session. • Children to be supervised by the fire at all times • Dynamic RA to be done at all times to reduce the risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult supervision at all times • Practice appropriate behaviour. • No tools/sticks etc within the fire triangle. • Bucket of water/sand nearby • Paediatric outdoor first aid completed Jan 2020 • Appropriate ratio of children to adults near fire, age and ability dependable. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LOW
<p>Cooking on Fire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burns • Stomach upset (hygiene) 	HIGH/	Pupils and adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If using long sticks to toast items – demonstrate safe handling ie not waving them around and retracting them in so not to burn others. • Molten marshmallows – IO blow rule! • Hygiene – ensure pupils use wet-wipes before handling food. • Cook only low risk food which is edible raw anyway. • All evidence of fire removed from site after each session • Dynamic RA at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult supervision at all times with physical support if children require it. • Ensure supply of wet-wipes • Bucket of water/sand nearby • Paediatric outdoor first aid completed Jan 2020 • Appropriate adult/child ratio 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LOW
<p>Extinguishing fire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burns – including steam burns 	MEDIUM	adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only adults should carefully extinguish fire. • All traces of fire to be removed for the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire triangle should be disassembled is not being used again. • 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LOW

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Inappropriate behaviour from children in the group.	HIGH	children and adults	Leader must ensure that she has all the medical background of all the children at the booking process. Parents are contacted who have flagged up any issues by phone before the session. Both leaders are trained in safe restraint procedures. Behaviour is deescalated by non confrontational methods as an early intervention. If a child's behaviour becomes dangerous to other children, move them to a safe place with a second adult.	See behaviour policy. Parents will be called and asked to remove their child if their behaviour is unacceptable. parents may be asked to stay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MEDIUM
Movement of cars in car park Impact of moving vehicle	MEDIUM	Children and adults	Car park to be used by Little Shoots sessions – parents are asked to keep close supervision of their child and FS staff to remind them of expectations. In the event of using the car park for holiday clubs then FS staff to ensure children are ware of hazards and dangers and children to be supervised at all times and gates locked during the session.	Parents to reminded of expectations FS staff to supervise children during moving of any vehicles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LOW
Dyke running at the side of the site boundary Drowning Infections due to dirty water	MEDIUM	Children	Following heavy rain or certain times of the year the water level might be high in the dyke. FS leader to check the suitability of using the dyke and make any necessary rules and behavior expectations following the outcome of the site assessment. If the water level is medium children must be supervised whilst using the dyke. A decision might be make at high water levels not to use the dyke.	Dynamic RA will always be carried out at each session Suitability of dyke to be checked Children must wash hands before eating Any open wounds should be covered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LOW

Following each session – all evidence of Forest School session to be removed and the site will be put back its original state.

The Risk Assessment needs to be read in conjunction with the additional measures outlined below during the Coronavirus Pandemic. The following advise has been taken from the Government and Public Health England.

Hazards	Risk	Who might be harmed?	Control measures	What further actions are needed to control the risk?	Tick if these actions are in place	Outcome
List significant hazards that may result in serious harm or affect people in the party.	Indicate the level of risk involved	List groups of people who are especially at risk from the hazards identified.	List existing controls or note where information may be found. (e.g. information, instruction training, systems or procedures)	List the risks that are not adequately controlled and propose actions that are needed to reduce or eliminate the risks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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<p>Coronavirus, risk of infection spread</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>	<p>Children and adults</p>	<p>Reducing the Risk Taken from the above guidance, children will be working in social bubbles; these bubbles will be no more than 20 children with a maximum daily number of 15 children and the children will remain in this social bubble for that week. Once parents have signed their child up to that week then no amendments can be made.</p> <p>If a child becomes unwell If any child in that bubble displays symptoms of Coronavirus they will be removed from base camp. Staff will care for them whilst wearing PPE. Parents will be contacted; the child will be sent home and will be expected to self-isolate for 7 days.</p> <p>If a child or member of staff tests positive for Coronavirus ALL of their social bubble group will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. Children and staff will be encouraged to take a Coronavirus test.</p> <p>The importance of hygiene Children will not be expected to socially distance (see above social bubble) Evidence shows that the risk of infection is significantly reduced outside. As Forest School is delivered outside the risk of infection is reduced. We will talk to the children about avoiding close contact and working in their own space. We will ensure that they wash their hands thoroughly throughout the day using soap and water and or hand sanitiser. Children will be expected to wash their hands at key points during the day for example when arriving in base camp, before and after eating or preparing food and after going to the toilet The toilet will be cleaned down regularly throughout the day by an adult wearing gloves. We will encourage children to use tissues if they sneeze, following the 'Catch it, kill it, bin it approach'. During Forest School children are taught not to touch their mouth, face, nose and children will be reminded of this at the start of each session and throughout where necessary. All shared tools will be cleaned between each use. Where the use of gloves are required children will need to wash their hands thoroughly before and after each use. ALL children will have their own water bottle, clean water will be available for a refill. Children will be encouraged to put any 'makes' that they have made during the session straight into their bag to go home.</p> <p>Maintaining Social Distancing Due to the size of the social bubbles and the nature of Forest School being outside, a staggered start or markers are not needed. Where possible, parents are asked to drop off/pick up by one family member. Staff to observe closely as parents/carers start to arrive for children to go home.</p>	<p>Parents information updated to include the new procedures relating to coronavirus including social bubble and drop off and pick ups.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>LOW</p>
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