

Forest School Handbook



Hedworthfield Primary
School

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1. The History of Forest Schools

Forest School originated in Scandinavia in the 1950's where Gosta Frohm who worked for the Swedish Outdoor Association noted that young children were becoming distanced from nature. He believed that by providing sensory experiences outdoors, that this would make up for the restrictions and limitations of modern life. Gosta Frohm went on to set up his own outdoor Skogsmulle school for 5 and 6 year olds. Other programmes for other age groups then arose.

In 1993 a group of nursery nurses at Bridgewater College in Somerset visited Denmark to observe their pre-school system. The nursery nurses were impressed with the largely outdoor, child centred and play based approach to education that they decided to set up their own Forest School. In 1995, Bridgewater college developed a BTEch in Forest School and soon Forest school was being offered across the UK.

In 2002 a network of practitioners held the first national conference at which a UK definition of Forest School was formulated. :

'An inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults regular opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a local woodland environment.'

<https://forestschoollassociation.org/history-of-forest-school/>

In 2012 a new professional association for Forest School was formed called The Forest School Association. Since then Forest School has continued to grow, with many schools and nurseries now sending their staff to undertake the Level 3 training.

2. What is Forest School?

Forest school is a child centred approach to learning offering opportunities to support play, exploration, take supported risks and gives the learners hands on, valuable experiences of the natural world.

The Forest School Ethos is based on 6 key principles. When these principles are used in unison then the value of Forest school is highlighted.

1. *Forest school is a long term process of frequent and regular sessions. Planning, adaptation, observations, and reviewing are integral parts of forest school*

In order to have the most impact during forest school sessions, it is important that the children have regular weekly access. This allows them to review recent learning, and build on skills over a sustained period of time.

2. *Forest school takes place in a natural wooded environment to support the development of the relationship between the learner and the natural world.*

The children will gain a respect for their natural world as they learn how they impact on their own environment. Practitioners promote a love of the natural world and how we can sustain and manage it appropriately.

3. *Forest school aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.*

Sessions will focus on the whole child and the importance of catering for the different areas of learning in order to give them equal focus. Sessions promote social, physical, intellectual, communication, emotional and spiritual development.

4. *Forest school offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.*

The Forest Schools approach to risk means that learners expand on their abilities by problem solving, developing their self-belief and encouraging resilience. The use of tools and fires comes with risk but sessions follow a risk-benefit process. Practitioners will only introduce tools and fire use when the learners are ready. Forest school rules including establishing boundaries are communicated clearly with the learners.

5. *Forest school is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practise*

Policies and procedures are adhered to including up to date DBS checks, first aid training and forest school leader course completion. During sessions, there is a high adult to child ratio to ensure correct supervision levels are maintained.

6. *Forest school uses a range of learner centred processes to create a community for learning and development.*

The pedagogy surrounding Forest school and learning is responsive to the needs and interests of the children. Practitioners are up to date with pedagogy and use this to create an ethos which encourages a positive regard for nature, learning through discovery, shared learning, recognising the learners as individuals and encouraging personal well-being.

3. The Benefits of Forest School

Holistic development recognises the depth to a person and appreciates them as an individual made up of lots of different layers. According to the spices model, an individual can be considered as developing in 6 different areas;

1. **Social** (how we negotiate and collaborate with others)
2. **Physical** (how we use our senses and body to navigate and interact with the world)
3. **Intellectual** (to reason, clarify, question, problem solve)
4. **Communication** (how we exchange ideas with others through verbal and non-verbal cues)
5. **Emotional** (the ability to recognise and influence our emotional state, and that of others)
6. **Spiritual** (Sense of purpose)

When educating children, we need to focus on all of these areas in order to develop the learner as a whole. By teaching holistically, the children learn about their connection with the world around them and they develop into well rounded individuals.

During forest school sessions all areas of development are accounted for and many opportunities are offered to help the children develop in a holistic manner.

1. **Social:** The children access forest school sessions in a group setting so social skills have a great emphasis. Group projects, games, scavenger hunts and building dens allows for lots of practise on developing their social skills. We gather around the fire circle at the beginning and end of the session. The children are encouraged to listen, join in and follow our forest school rules.
2. **Physical:** The children move from stump to stump and use other materials to travel and climb on. Uneven terrain such as the long grass supports the children's balance. They are also provided with wheelbarrows to transport objects around the site. A mud kitchen and digging equipment allows them to develop gross and fine motor skills. Transient art materials using natural materials, allows them to further develop their fine motor skills.
3. **Intellectual:** The children develop their understanding of key topics/vocabulary. Through challenging opportunities, the children are encouraged to problem solve and question their learning.
4. **Communication:** We talk about the names of objects and talk about their properties. When we find insects, we name them and talk about the features we can see. Through group projects and using tools during partner work, communication is key. We gather around the fire circle at the beginning and end of the session. The children are encouraged to listen, join in and contribute their own ideas.
5. **Emotional:** During sessions, the children learn to regulate their emotions. They receive a feeling of achievement when they accomplish a task and are sometimes challenged to be resilient when tasks are difficult. Children having high levels of self-esteem are key to a successful session.
6. **Spiritual:** The children are learning respect for themselves, others and the natural environment that they are working in. They are accessing an environment that may also offer them an opportunity for relaxation and to reflect on their own thoughts.

4. Where is Forest School located at Hedworthfield?

Hedworthfield Primary is located within the Hedworth housing estate of Jarrow.



In recent years, the school have developed a beautiful forest school site.

The site can be located at the back right hand corner of the school field, situated behind the nursery garden.

5. Our Forest School Site

Our fire pit area is a great place for keeping warm and for cooking on. It also is designed to allow maximum safety to all.



Other areas of the site encourage physical development when using tools and equipment such as wheelbarrows, spades, and rakes. The children may also choose to balance and move from stump to stump developing their problem solving skills.





The Mud kitchen has various learning opportunities which promotes imaginative play, mathematical language and supports social development.



Our bird hide offers opportunities for observation of wildlife as well as an open ended resource for children to follow own storylines.



There are many trees and plants that are growing on our site. Species include apple and pear trees, rowan, dog wood, oak and birch trees.



Activities on offer vary and will link to the children's current interests and skill set. Opportunities may include, planting seeds, making bird feeders or exploring art through using natural objects.



Our forest school shed is where all of our resources are kept and offers shelter during the different seasons of the year. It is also a place where children can choose some quiet time to read a book.



6. Our Aims

Our aims during a forest school session at Hedworthfield are;

- To give every child the opportunity to take ownership of their learning.
- To develop practical skills
- To build self-esteem, confidence and a positive mind-set by providing achievable yet challenging opportunities.
- To provide a bespoke delivery of the session where every child's individual learning style is met.
- To develop social and team building skills, thus enabling the child to work better within group activities within the classroom.
- To provide a secure happy and welcoming environment where children feel challenged, relaxed and inspired.
- Provoke curiosity that encourages further exploration.



7. Roles and Responsibilities

The Forest School Leader will have the overall responsibility for:

- Risk assessments for each session, pre-visit site checks and continuous safety monitoring.
- Ensuring necessary equipment is taken onto the site.
- Supervision of fire use, following procedures set out in this document
- Supervision of tools use, cleaning and storing.

Staff/ students / volunteers: will model good practice throughout the session, carry out delegated roles and responsibilities, and will support and extend the children’s learning. All staff are responsible for keeping up to date with policies and procedures related to forest school sessions.

8. Forest School Clothing Guide

We value and recognise the effort it takes to ensure your child comes prepared, so that they can get the most out of Forest School sessions. In particular, this means making sure they are appropriately dressed. Please see below for our recommendations.



- A waterproof jacket and trousers
- Appropriate footwear for example wellies. Thick socks are advised in the colder months as wellies can get very cold.
- Sun cream/sun hat in warmer weather

- A water bottle
- Extra layers (PJs under uniform, a warm hat, and gloves in colder weather)

Toileting at Forest School

We have a potty located in our forest school shed where toileting and nappy changes take place. Children are supervised as appropriate when going to the toilet, we support their independence and are respectful of their privacy. Older children are encouraged to use the toilet before sessions and can be taken back into the main school building if the toilet is needed.

9. A Typical Forest School Session

The outdoor environment allows children to be creative in an outdoor setting and have the space to explore activities that interest them. Sessions will always include a beginning and an end of session activity which encourages group gatherings.

Before any session starts the following guidelines will be followed:

- All staff, volunteers and parent helpers will familiarise themselves with the Forest school handbook and the policies within it before taking part in the session.
- The Forest school leader/staff will gather all the equipment needed for the session using the check list provided (Appendix 1)
- Dynamic risk assessment will have been completed (see Health and Safety section of this handbook for further information)

Before arriving at Forest school, the children are asked to use the toilet and then retrieve their own set of outdoor clothing. When all staff and children are ready, the group leader will take a head count. If the group leaving is not the full class, the numbers will be communicated with staff in the Nursery/Infant/Junior school building. The group will then walk to the forest school site.

During EYFS Sessions, we share and follow this route with the children in order to establish clear routines and encourage positional instructions.

EYFS Exploration Session 1 (Hedworthfield)



Our journey to **Forest School**:



When arriving at the site, the children will climb over the stile and sit around the fire circle. This is where key messages for the session are communicated, including opportunities on offer, health and safety considerations and reminders of Forest school rules.

The children will then take part in free play, exploring and investigating and following their own interests. Adults will offer experiences during this time to enhance the children's learning and development. Some activities may include;

- Going on a bug hunt
- Using tools for a purpose
- Building a shelter
- Exploring the changes within the different seasons
- Natural crafts
- Enjoying a marshmallow by the fire
- Making mud treats in the mud kitchen

Regular head counts will be completed and where necessary the command '123, Where are you?' will gather the children back at the fire circle.

The children may also gather around the fire circle for a story, to join in songs or as a fire lighting activity.

At the end of the session, there will be a 'tidying-up' time when everyone will be expected to take part.

- Any tools used will be counted back into the tool box.

- Any stumps or logs will be returned/rolled back to their original position
- Shelters will be taken down.
- Any litter removed from the site.
- All equipment will then be returned to the forest school shed and locked away.

Before leaving the forest school area, the group leader will carry out a headcount before returning to the Nursery/Infant/Junior school building. All medicine will then be returned to the correct classroom.

10. Behaviour Policy

The Forest School leader, staff and children will follow the school's Behaviour Policy. The behaviour policy is strongly linked to the key values of:

Respect: We aim to teach children to respect and value themselves, their peers, adults, property, local community and world. In doing so, we teach children to respect differences between themselves and others and instil pride in our children.

Responsibility: We teach children to be responsible for their own behaviour. We also encourage children to be responsible for setting a good example to others (especially our younger children) and having ownership of their school and responsibility for the type of school they wish to have.

Resilience: We teach children to be resilient in school and in life. There are times when other influences will impact on behaviour. It may be the actions of another person that cause us to react or a situation does not go our way. By building resilience our children will be better placed to deal with a range of situations which they may face in school and in society. Resilience will allow them to control and manage their own behaviour in those situations.

Engagement: We expect our pupils to engage in their education, school community, local community and in life. This means having the confidence and self-worth to engage, a sense of belonging to a community or multiple communities and a sense of being supported and supporting others.

Positive Behaviour: The schools behaviour policy should be adhered to at all times. Children respond to positive praise and encouragement and must have ownership of their behaviour choices. The positive reward system links to taught sessions as part of our family group system which teach children behaviours which support teaching and learning and how to manage misbehaviour. The school system is based upon a points system. For our behaviour system to work it is vital that staff look for opportunities to praise the 'good' behaviours wherever possible. This will reinforce the message that good behaviour gains rewards. Class points can be awarded for good behaviour/effort and collected to result in an agreed class reward at the end of each half term.

School Rules: Spending time establishing expectations of behaviour and setting clear rules allow children to know the expectations: Children and adults are expected to be ready for learning.

Further information regarding the school's reward and consequence system can be found in the HF Behaviour Policy. All policies and procedures apply to all aspects of school life including forest school sessions.

11. Health and Safety

One of the key principles of forest school is that;

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

- Forest School opportunities are designed to build on an individual's innate motivation, positive attitudes and/or interests.
- Forest School uses tools and fires only where deemed appropriate to the learners, and dependent on completion of a baseline risk assessment.
- Any Forest School experience follows a Risk–Benefit process managed jointly by the practitioner and learner that is tailored to the developmental stage of the learner.

[\(https://forestschoollassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/\)](https://forestschoollassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/)

In forest school sessions, we give the children the freedom and opportunity to take ownership over their learning. By taking appropriate risks, the children develop responsibility, resilience and independence.

Children are regularly exposed to risks during forest school through the use of tools, fire and opportunities on offer such as den building, climbing trees and exposure to pond areas. It is important that there is a clear balance between risk and benefit. Forest school sessions give the learners the opportunities to learn about risks themselves and take some responsibility for their safety and their well-being. A careful consideration of age and experience of forest school influences the risk taking opportunities on offer.

The management of risk is needed to ensure the safe guarding of staff and learners is in place. This can be achieved through having risk assessments in place. Risk assessments outline

1. The Hazard or risk that has been identified
2. The Significance of the Risk – how dangerous is it?
3. Any actions that can be taken to control or limit the risk.
4. Conclude whether the benefits from the risk outweigh the potential harm.

Below is an overview of key vocabulary linked to the risk assessment process

	Definition
Hazard	Anything that has the potential to cause harm, either physical or psychological.
Risk	The likelihood of potential harm from the hazard being realised.
Accident	An unplanned, uncontrolled event which has led to injury to people, damage to property, damage to the environment or some other loss.
Near Miss	An incident which could have led to injury or damage. The occurrence of a near miss should inform you and alter your practise.
Incident	An event or occurrence caused by ignoring or not adhering to set rules, boundaries or laws.
Safety	Taking positive steps to identify accident causes and implement suitable preventative measures.

Risk assessments:

A Site Risk Assessment is undertaken each week and a Dynamic Risk Assessment is made prior to every Forest School session at our site. In addition, an Activity Risk Assessment will be established prior to any activity that may require it. These will include: whittling, cutting wood, fire lighting, cooking on an open fire and palm drilling. Specific additional risk assessments will be undertaken for children whose medical condition or whose behaviour requires them.

The Forest School Leader will assess weather conditions regularly. All children and adults will wear appropriate clothing depending upon the weather conditions. An open fire risk assessment will be carried

out before a fire is allowed and protection procedures followed. A Forest School Leader will be present at all times and children will be reminded of safe practice.

The school has a Health and Safety Policy, and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy to enhance aspects of health and safety.

Please find below our site assessment form

SITE RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Location: Hedworthfield Primary School, Jarrow					Date: 05/05/23					
	Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Existing Preventative Measures	Probability (P)	Severity (S) 1-5	Rating (PXS) 1-25	New Preventative Measures	Who/When	Benefits
1	Use of a Bow Saw, Loppers, Sheath Knife, Bill Hook, Mallet -Injury during transportation -Tool slipping when in use -bow saw blade snapping	Cuts Injury	Staff and children	Tool Talks given by staff to learners before introducing a new tool. Recap safety measures before use. Ensure all learners are in safe position during use e.g. cutting away from body, respect position. Appropriate ratio of adult-child to allow for sufficient supervision whilst tools are in use. Leader to check tools for loose or broken parts When tools are not in use, tools are kept in the designated place/tool box on and off site. First Aid Kit available at all times. First Aid qualifications held by staff.	2	3	6	Monitor / Review	Forest School Lead and school staff	Fine and gross motor development Opportunities for peer work Building self-esteem and self confidence Social skills Problem solving opportunities Develop safety awareness
2	Fire	Burns	Staff and	Children are introduced to the fire	2	3	6	Monitor /	Forest School	

	Igniting the fire		child ren	pit circle from their first visit and code of conduct is explained.				Review	Lead and school staff	Awareness and respect of fire
3	Extinguishing a fire	Burns	Staff and child ren	<p>Adults model and children copy safely moving in and out of the fire pit (without being lit). This will be modelled every session until children can demonstrate this independently.</p> <p>First Aid Kit available at all times</p> <p>Qualified first aider on site</p> <p>Fire to be lit at arms-length using fire lighter kits</p> <p>Fires only to be lit by a Forest School leader</p> <p>Person lighting fire to use the respect position</p> <p>Appropriate ratio of adults-children</p> <p>Seating around the fire to be at least 2m away from the fire</p> <p>Learners to not move around when the fire is lit.</p> <p>Emergency evacuation policy in place.</p> <p>Sufficient water available for safe extinguishing of the fire.</p>	2	3	6			Promotes group working
4	Cooking	Burns (mouth/skin)	Staff and child ren	All children will be told about the dangers of eating food directly from fire	2	3	6	Monitor / Review	Forest School Lead and school staff	Awareness and respect of fire

				<p>Staff will wait for food to cool before handing to children</p> <p>Children told to blow on food to cool it down</p> <p>Appropriate ratio of adults-children</p>						<p>Enjoying social experience</p> <p>Experiencing a range of foods cooked on the camp fire</p>
5	<p>Building shelters</p> <p>-Shelter collapsing</p> <p>-knots slipping</p> <p>-sharp edges</p>	<p>Entanglement</p> <p>Bangs to the head/body</p> <p>Scratches</p>	<p>Staff and children</p>	<p>Forest school Leader to assess weather conditions/check weather forecasts</p> <p>Forest School Leader to teach/ensure correct knots are used when using rope and that knots are secure.</p> <p>Shelters are taken down after every session.</p> <p>Forest School Leader to check shelters are secure before in use</p> <p>First Aid Kit available at all times</p> <p>Qualified first aider on site</p> <p>Appropriate ratio of adults-children</p>	2	4	8	Monitor / Review	<p>Forest School Lead and school staff</p>	<p>Encourages team work</p> <p>Promotes self-esteem and self-confidence</p> <p>Allows for problem solving strategies</p>
6	<p>Use of ropes/paracord/twine</p>	<p>Entanglement</p> <p>Strangulation (in extreme cases)</p> <p>Rope burns</p> <p>Tripping</p>	<p>Staff and children</p>	<p>First Aid Kit available at all times</p> <p>Qualified first aider on site</p> <p>Policy and Procedure for rope use to be taught to the children.</p> <p>All equipment is checked regularly to meet specified health and safety standards</p>	2	5	10	Monitor / Review	<p>Forest School Lead and school staff</p>	<p>Encourages team work</p> <p>Promotes self-esteem and self-confidence</p> <p>Allows for problem solving strategies</p>

				Gloves to be worn when appropriate Appropriate ratio of adults-children						
7	Insect Bites or stings	Itchy or painful reactions to sting or bite Anaphylactic shock (in extreme cases)	Staff and children	Health care plans complete to inform FS Leader of allergic reactions First Aid Kit available at all times (Epi-pen/allergy medicine available if required) Qualified first aider on site	2 1	2 4	4 4	Monitor / Review	Forest School Lead and school staff	Observe insects in their natural environment Show care and concern for insects
8	Pond Area	Risk of illness from consuming water Drowning (highly unlikely due to how shallow the pond area is)	Staff and children	Appropriate ratio of adults-children Safety briefing given to children -do not enter the pond -no drinking from the pond area First Aid Kit available at all times Qualified first aider on site	2	5	10	Monitor / Review	Forest School Lead and school staff	Observe wildlife First hand observations of life cycles e.g. frog
9	Extreme Hot/Cold Weather	Wet, cold feet and hands Risk of sunburn, sun stroke, heat	Staff and children	Leader is aware of weather reports and will decide if it is safe to operate Forest School Appropriate outdoor clothing must be worn at all times	3	4	12	Monitor / Review	Forest School Lead and school staff	Endless play possibilities Encourages resilience Opportunities to explore seasonal change

		exhaustion		<p>Limit time outdoors if weather is too extreme</p> <p>Facilities in place to afford sun protection e.g. shaded areas (outdoor classroom/shed, and tarpaulin)</p> <p>Sun protection including suncream and hat provided for warmer seasons.</p> <p>Regular 'check-ins' with children while playing to see that they are warm/cool enough</p> <p>Drinks and snacks available</p>						
10	Collecting Natural materials	<p>Poisonous flora/fungi</p> <p>Stings</p> <p>Cuts/s crapes</p>	Staff and children	<p>No picking without adult checking plants/fungi</p> <p>Children and adults taught which plants and fungi need to be avoided</p> <p>Wash hands after forest school session</p> <p>First Aid Kit available at all times</p> <p>Qualified first aider on site</p>	1	4	4	Monitor / Review	Forest School Lead and school staff	Opportunities for plant identification
11	Uneven ground	Slips, trips, or falls	Staff and children	<p>Children and adults are encouraged to wear appropriate footwear</p> <p>Children warned about areas that may be more of a hazard.</p> <p>The Stile will be kept obstruction free to allow for safe entry</p>	3	3	9	Monitor / Review	Forest School Lead and school staff	Supports the development of physical skills including balance and co-ordination skills.

				<p>and exit into Forest School.</p> <p>Staff to remind children throughout session to pick up resources dropped on floor & tidy areas as they finish playing/working in them.</p> <p>Area checked to ensure no litter/animal excretion/foreign objects are present on the field on route to Forest School and Forest School grounds</p> <p>First Aid Kit available at all times</p> <p>Qualified first aider on site</p>						
1 3	Low Branches/Trees	<p>Poking eye, poking skin, scratching</p> <p>Banging head or body</p> <p>Splinters</p>	Staff and children	<p>Children are made aware of low hanging limbs of trees</p> <p>Encourage children when walking to hold the branch or low tree back for the person behind them so there is not snap-back</p> <p>First Aid Kit available at all times</p> <p>Qualified first aider on site</p>	3	3	9	<p>Monitor / Review</p> <p>Mark with a ribbon sections that children or adults repeatedly injure themselves on</p>	Forest School Lead and school staff	Opportunity to observe new trees, their growth and changes
1 4	Blindfolds	Slips, trips, bangs	Staff and children	<p>Ensure the group are aware of dangers of leading someone who is blindfolded</p> <p>Ensure group are told to watch out for trip/slip hazards before activity</p> <p>Explain to the group how to communicate</p>	3	3	9	<p>Monitor / Review</p>	Forest School Lead and school staff	<p>Social skills</p> <p>Problem solving</p> <p>Trust/Team building</p> <p>Heightened senses</p>

				effectively and move around safely						
1 5	General Health and Welfare	Dehydration Illness	Staff and children	Drinks available for the children to access Snack available Appropriate footwear and clothing worn by all learners to suit the current weather conditions. Spare clothing box to be kept in the forest school shed. Leader to have a secure knowledge of adult's and children's medical needs/allergies. Inhalers and other medicine to be available when required Qualified first aider on site Phone available for emergencies	3	3	9	Monitor / Review	Forest School Lead and school staff	Happy/Content learners
1 6	Absconding from Forest School		Children	Ensure the boundaries of the Forest School are maintained. Forest school is a primary boundary – school gates will be locked when Forest School is in session. Children reminded of safety and boundaries within Forest School. A meeting place established within Forest School and children to respond to call from lead '1, 2, 3, Where are you?'	3	2	6	Monitor / Review	Forest School Lead and school staff	

				Regular head counts and counting children in and out.						
17	Litter/Animal Faeces	Infection through cuts/grazed skin Ingestion	Adults and children	Wet wipes and hand sanitiser provided. All staff and pupils wash hand thoroughly at the end of the session. Plasters used to cover any cuts. All animal faeces removed before each session (bag and throw away).	2	2	4	Monitor / Review	Forest School Lead and school staff	Highlight importance of a clean environment

Your comments:

If visiting this site/activity/tool, your recommendations will be followed.

Your main concerns:

Emergency Procedure: If an emergency occurs on the Forest School site, the FS leader should maintain or resume control of the group overall. They will, however, delegate responsibility when necessary. The group leader will:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.
- Administer first aid treatment if appropriate
- Phone for an ambulance if appropriate. Another adult may be asked to do this.
- Ensure that the entire group are safe and looked after and kept together.
- All other adults will be told as soon as possible and allocated roles; roles may be changed as needed.
- First Aid box will be on site.
- Inform the school of the name of the casualty and details of their injuries plus action taken so far.
- The head teacher will notify parents, providing as full a factual account of the incident as soon as possible.
- Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident.

- Complete an accident report form as soon as possible. Contact LA as necessary

12. Assessment of Impact of Forest School

There are many ways that running a Forest School programme can affect the ecology of the site. It is important to us as a school that we recognise the impact that we have on our natural environment ensuring that we have a minimal negative impact on the site.

Please find below an overview of our impact matrix.

Impact Matrix to Assess the Ecological Effects of Forest Schools Activities

Key for Impact Matrix:

P – Positive N – Negative

S – Short Term

M – Medium Term

L – Long Term

Perm – Permanent (e.g. 100 years)

Temp-Temporary (e.g. 0-Decades)

R - Reversible

Activity	Ground Layer	Field Layer	Shrub Layer	Canopy Layer
Path clearing-Grass cut back by council.	N/S Plants might be lost. However, some wild growing areas will be left. If left to regrow should recover.	N/S Plants might be lost. However, some wild growing areas will be left. If left to regrow should recover.		
Moving around the site	N/S Trampling ground flora Disturbing leaf litter	N/S Trampling plants	Minimal effect	
Litter Picking – Area always checked by adult first.	P/S/Temp Litter removal is good for flora and fauna. Due to the urban area litter will return.	P/S/Temp Litter removal good for flora and fauna. Due to the urban area litter will return.	P/S/Temp Litter removal good for flora and fauna. Due to the urban area litter will return.	P/S/Temp Litter removal good for flora and fauna. Due to the urban area litter will return.
Scavenger hunts	N/S/Temp Trampling ground flora	N/M/Temp	N/M/Temp	

	Disturbing leaf litter	Taking materials such as twigs, leaves and berries	Damage to trees from picking leaves and berries	
Creating habitats	P/N/S/Temp Disturbing ground flora Reduction of leaf litter effecting decomposition cycle	P/N/M/Temp Taking materials such as twigs and leaves Can have a positive impact on fauna that can use habitat made	P/N/M/Temp Damage to trees from picking materials Can have a positive impact on fauna that can use habitat made	P/N/M/Temp Damage to trees from picking materials
Fire Lighting –Ensure set up and cleaning are supervised.	N/M Logs/twigs burnt, are left on ground layer.	N/M Areas maybe cleared for fire. Area would recover in time.		
Tool use (e.g. bow saw) - Cutting of ground wood and collecting of appropriate branches.	N/P/M Movement of ground layer for cutting area When collecting wood from alternative site, although this has a negative impact, the ground layer will receive more sunlight allowing new plants to thrive.	N/P/M When collecting wood from alternative site, although this has a negative impact, the field layer will receive more sunlight allowing new plants to thrive.		

13. Additional Policies

Hedworthfield Primary School has many additional policies which will be adhered to alongside this handbook during Forest School sessions. Please refer to the policies below for further information;

<https://hedworthfieldprimary.com/policies-2/>

HF Behaviour Policy

HF Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Mosaic SEND Policy

Data Protection Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Mosaic Equality Policy

Mosaic Anti-Bullying Policy

HF Early Years Policy

Mosaic First Aid Policy

Mosaic Medical Conditions Policy

Mosaic Risk Assessment Policy

Mosaic Complaints Policy

Monitoring of policy: This policy will be reviewed annually in September 2024 or before should any incidents arise or laws and policies change.

Signature of Headteacher:

Signature of Chair of Governors:

Signature of Forest School Leader:

14. Appendix 1

Forest School Equipment List	
Water jug/cups/drinks bottles/snack	
First Aid Kit (ensure resources are replenished and checked regularly)	
Medication	
Bin bags	
Wipes/nappy sacks	
Jerry can full for extinguishing fire	
Spare clothing (ensure any clothes used have been washed and replaced)	
Fire equipment box (Fire striker, natural materials, fire blanket, first aid resources)	
Enhancement resources linked to planning	