

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

Area/Activity Assessed	Forest School	Date Completed	31.01.25
		Review Date	Sept 2025
Assessment Completed By	V Foreman, M Hudson and J Derbyshire	Person(s) Consulted	The Forest School Leaders, SBM, Health and Safety Officer Compliance Education

Persons Exposed	Employees	☒	Contractors	☐	Young Person	☒	Expectant Mother	☐	Visitors and/or Public	☐	Trespassers	☐
Frequency of Exposure	Continually	☐	Hourly	☐	Daily	☐	Weekly	☒	Monthly	☐	Yearly	☐
Duration of Exposure	Less than 1hr	☐	1-2 hrs	☒	3-4 hrs	☒	5-6 hrs	☐	7-8 hrs	☐	More than 8 hrs	☐

Probability	5= Very Likely, 4= Likely, 3= Quite Possible, 2= Possible, 1= Unlikely	Low 0-8	Low risk no action required
Severity	5= Catastrophic, 4= Major, 3= Moderate, 2= Minor, 1= Insignificant	Medium 9-15	Medium risk ensure adequate controls are in use
		High 16-25	High risk stop operation and implement adequate control measures

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
			Severity	Probability	Risk	
1.	Children absconding	- The forest school area is situated in one corner of the school field in the wood area. This area is inside the school perimeter fencing. - Access is restricted to unauthorised areas of the school premises. - All external access gates are secure. - All staff are always vigilant to strangers hanging around or engaging with the pupils. - Good communication links with the school have been established.	4	1	4	- Regular head counts at beginning of session and throughout - Boundaries shared as part of welcome Fire circle, reminder to remain within the boundaries and respond to gathering 'wolf call'
2.	General Welfare and weather	- The forest school leader will keep an eye on the local weather reports. - The forest school lead will consult the School Business Manager, Joanne Derbyshire (H&S lead) and a decision agreed. The SBM reserves the right to cancel an activity if deemed unsuitable in prevailing weather. - All groups are encouraged to wear suitable clothing and flat, waterproof footwear with covered toes and a good grip (trainers, boots) - The wooden sheltered area (Owl Camp) is available to use and will provide refuge from the weather.	3	2	6	

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
			Severity	Probability	Risk	
		- The trees provide natural shade from the sun, pupils will be encouraged to wear sun hats and suncream in the summer months. - The toilets within the school will be used and a toilet rota will be drawn up with staff if necessary. - Pupils are instructed before heading out to the forest school that they are not to eat anything in the forest school environment such as berries, seeds or fungi. Pupils are also reminded about not putting their hands into their mouth during forest school or up their noses, - Hand wipes to was hands and sanitiser are available and pupils are encouraged to wash their hands before eating any snacks or drinks we may bring outside with us.				
3.	Incidents occurring due to a slip, trip, fall, or misuse or not following forest school safety guidelines.	- Daily site check inspections of the area are carried out by the forest school lead prior to the session. - Running is prohibited in the tool area and fire circle - A safety talk and demonstrations are delivered to all groups before the session begins. - Adequate supervision is provided, taking into account the children's age and/or any children with special needs/behavioural problems/requiring additional assistance, etc. A ratio of 1:10 primary aged children to adult or lower will be in place for all sessions - All equipment used where possible is child friendly to minimise the chance of injury. - All groups are encouraged to wear suitable clothing and flat footwear (trainers, boots) - Participants refusing to adhere to our safety rules may be refused permission to take any further part in the activity until their behaviour improves. - The forest school lead carries an Emergency First Aid Kit and mobile phone. - A 5l bucket of water, a fire blanket and a mobile phone is taken to the site. In the event of a minor burn/scald first aid will be administered by a qualified first aider. Should a more serious injury occur, an ambulance	5	1	5	

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
			Severity	Probability	Risk	
		will be called to transport the injured person to the nearest A&E department.				
4.	Trees on school grounds	- The trees which sit within the school perimeter fencing undergo a bi-annually tree survey. - After adverse weather (strong winds) the school Caretaker will conduct a visual inspection of the school grounds. - Any broken branches are reported for removal. - Any branches or twigs at eye level will be removed by the Caretaker or the contractor who looks after the pruning of hedges in the school. - Pupils are allowed to climb trees up to 3 metres	5	1	5	- Arrange for the trees to be inspected and ask the tree survivors advise before erecting low rope courses or hammocks etc. - As part of daily site checks, inform participants if any trees do not look fit for climbing due to size or damage
5.	Delay in a person receiving personal emergency medication for an asthma attack and/or an allergic reaction.	- All participants and group teachers/teaching assistance are made aware of the location of the activity in relation to the school building. - The Forest School leader/ assistant are responsible for ensuring asthma inhalers and/or adrenaline pens are always accessible. - In the event of an allergic reaction, staff are on hand to administer any medication. - Children are reminded not to put anything, including their hands, near their mouths & wash hands after an activity.	5	1	5	
Collecting Natural Materials to build a shelter						
6.	Children attempting to Lift or carry heavy objects or materials	- Pupils are supervised by both the forest school lead and the group's teacher/teaching assistant who will oversee the children and ensure they only collect and carry lightweight materials. - Participants will be advised to bend knees when lifting	3	1	3	Wheelbarrow available to support the transportation of larger/ heavier materials

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
			Severity	Probability	Risk	
7.	Lifting and swinging sticks	- A safety talk and demonstrations are delivered to all groups before the session begins. Reminder of shared safety expected behaviours - Participants refusing to adhere to our safety rules may be refused permission to take any further part in the activity until they can demonstrate understanding of how to keep each other safe.	3	1	3	
8.	Allergic or irritating rash due to contact with Insects, Plants, Toxic Plants or Fungus	- Daily site inspections of the area are carried out by the forest school lead prior to the session. - Areas that contain stinging plants and insects are highlighted to learners. - Areas with high numbers of fungi will also be shared; children are made aware of the danger and are given procedures as to what to do, if they do come into contact with fungi. - The groups teacher/teaching assistant are responsible for ensuring asthma inhalers and/or adrenaline pens are always accessible. - In the event of an allergic reaction, staff are on hand to administer any medication. Forest School leaders are outdoor first aid trained	2	1	2	
Fire Pit						
9.	Lighting the fire in woodland	- The forest school leader running the activity is familiar and will adhere to the forest school guidelines. - The fire pit area has been carefully selected as per forest school guidelines and all safety measures to avoid tree roots, peaty soil, stones, paths, overhanging branches and/or structures are followed. - Seating around the fire pit is at least one metre away from the edge of the fire pit. - A safety talk and demonstrations are delivered to all groups before the session begins. - Depending on the age of the children the fire will either be lit by a member of staff, or the children will be supervised on a 1:1 basis. - Pupils refusing to adhere to our safety rules may be refused permission to take any further part in the activity until their behaviour improves. - A 5l bucket of water, a fire blanket and a mobile phone is taken to the site	4	2	8	

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
			Severity	Probability	Risk	
10.	Hot food	- Pupils will be allowed to support in supervised cooking of food over the campfire. This may include grilling, boiling, baking or frying. This must be supervised by the L3 Forest School Leader at a ratio of no more than 1:4 - Pupils will be allowed to cook a marshmallow over the fire on a stick. - Pupils will be reminded that the food and the stick will be hot and to allow it to cool before eating etc. - Pupils are supervised at all times and when necessary are reminded of our fire safety rules.	3	1	3	
11.	Falling into the fire	- Pupils are reminded to walk around the fire pit carefully and no running allowed. - Seating is situated at least 1 metres away from the pit	4	2	8	
12.	Areas set alight	- The fire pit is sited away from potential hazards in accordance with forest school guidelines. - The forest school lead will check the area prior to lighting the fire pit. - Only a small amount of wood is collected, enough to keep the fire alight for the duration of the session.	4	2	8	
13.	After the session or putting the fire out	- The forest school lead will ensure the fire is extinguished completely before leaving the area. - Fires are not left unattended. - A water bucket and extinguisher are kept close by. - Wood used to feed fires are stored in a safe place to prevent deliberate fires being started.	4	2	8	
Kelly Kettle						
14.	Incidents occurring due to incorrectly lighting of the Kelly Kettle or from the steam given off once the water is boiled	- The forest school lead running the activity are familiar and will adhere to forest school guidelines. . - A safety talk and demonstration are delivered to all groups before the session begins. - Pupils refusing to adhere to our safety rules may be refused permission to take any further part in the activity until their behaviour improves.	4	1	4	

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
			Severity	Probability	Risk	
15.	Kelly Kettle falling over, spilling hot liquid and risk of ground catching light	- Weather conditions are assessed, this activity will not be carried out in high winds or if the Head Teacher and/or the forest school lead deems the activity unsafe. - Kelly kettle will be used on smooth ground before building a fire in the base of the kettle with TINDER. - All pupils will be kept at a distance away. - Pupils and staff are warned not to touch the outside of the kettle nor fire-base when in use as they will be HOT. - The forest school lead assisted by the groups teacher/teaching assistant will use the hot water from the Kelly kettle to make a hot drink for the pupils which will then be handed out to the pupils. - The school have purchased and will use specific cups for this activity in order to reduce the risk of spill's and burns. - The cups will only be half filled to avoid spills.	3	2	6	
Sharp Equipment: Sheath Knives, Potato Peelers, Bill Hooks, Bow Saws, Loppers, secateurs etc						
16.	Incidents occurring due to incorrectly using sharp tools	- The forest school lead running the activity are familiar and will adhere to forest school guidelines. . - A safety talk and demonstration are delivered to all groups before the session begins. - Pupils refusing to adhere to our safety rules may be refused permission to take any further part in the activity until their behaviour improves.				
17.	Injury during sharp equipment transportation and storage between use	- All pen knives, Potato Peelers, Bill Hooks, Bow Saws, Sledgehammers, Loppers etc have been purchased from a reputable supplier. - All sharp equipment is kept in their sheaths when not being used. - The forest school lead has received and demonstrated that they can use sharp equipment safety as part of their forest school examination. - All sharp equipment is kept locked away in the school when not in use. - During an activity all sharp equipment will be kept secure or hung up by their tethers out of reach of the pupils between use. - All sharp tools and equipment are counted out and back in again after the session.	3	2	6	

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
			Severity	Probability	Risk	
18.	Incidents occurring due to inappropriate tool talks or instruction	- The instructor taking the activity is a qualified forest school instructor and has demonstrated that they know how to use sharp tools safety, have an understanding of how they work and the dangers they can potentially pose to the pupil using them and to those around them. - Before using any tool for the first-time pupils are given a demonstration of the correct manner in which to handle and use the tool. The level of supervision and ratio of staff to pupils will be decided upon based on the group. Bow Saw Used for cutting branches greater than 1 ½ inches in diameter. - Generally, the bowsaw will be used by two pupils at a time. One holding at the hand guard and the other the handle at the opposite end. - Older pupils may be supervised using the bowsaw alone. - Gloves will be worn on the helper hand but not be worn on the hand holding the tool. - When making the initial few cuts each pupil's helper hand will be placed through the centre of the saw and on the wood opposite. This will prevent the blade from jumping onto one of their hands. Once the blade has bitten into the wood and formed a groove, they are safe to hold the wood adjacent to the saw. Geared loppers Used for cutting branches smaller than around 1½ inches in diameter. - Loppers are generally used by one person at a time and are a relatively safe tool to use and a good introduction to using tools in the woodland. Pupils are instructed to ensure they have a good footing and to check that the branch they are cutting is not bearing weight before cutting. - Co-operative work between two pupils will be encouraged by them using the loppers together, one holding the stick or branch to be cut and the other operating the loppers. - It is not necessary to wear gloves when using loppers. Sheath Knives Forest school knives are primarily used to cut cord and for whittling. - Fixed blade knives will be used instead of folding knives	4	2	8	Tool Talks to be compiled

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
			Severity	Probability	Risk	
		- The size of the knives we use have been considered. We have gone for knives with smaller blades and smaller handles as they are a sensible choice for pupils. - Gloves are to be available for use on the helper hand. No glove will be worn on the hand holding the knife. - Pupils are taught the correct position to sit and that they should ensure they are always cutting with arms over their legs and away from the body. - Where necessary a small log will be positioned next to them to carve onto. The log will be positioned to catch the blade at the end of the stroke. Billhook Traditionally used for cutting shrubs and bushes in forest school the billhook is used primarily for splitting wood. - In forest school the billhook will be used by two people at a time - To split wood one pupil will hold the billhook with one hand firmly on the handle and pinching the hook with the other. The blade should be placed at the top of the log to be split. - The second pupil will use a mallet or piece of wood to strike the top of the billhook and drive the blade into the wood. This is repeated until the wood splits. - It is not necessary to wear gloves when using a billhook.				
Outdoor Games, Blind folding, Rope and String Activities etc						
19.	Unsuitable activity area	- As the outdoor games can be delivered within various locations around school. The forest school leader will carry out a 'dynamic risk assessment' on the day based on the number of participants and what games have been planned and the weather. - Any additional safety rules will be communicated to the group prior to the session beginning	3	1	3	

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
			Severity	Probability	Risk	
20.	Lack of supervision	- The forest school leader running the session are experienced and competent. - Adequate supervision is provided, taking into account the children's age and/or any children with special needs/behavioural problems/requiring additional assistance, etc. - The groups teachers/teaching assistants are required to assist in the supervision of the children. - If necessary, groups are split into smaller activity groups which rotate between activities throughout the session.	4	1	4	
21.	Children wondering off or getting lost within the grounds	- The forest school area is situated in one corner of the school field in the wood area. This area is inside the school perimeter fencing. - If necessary, boundary markers will be strategically placed around the outside edge of the activity area and participants are instructed not to wonder outside this boundary. - All Staff are always vigilant to strangers hanging around or engaging with the pupils. - In the event of a lost child/children all remaining children will be escorted back to the school whilst a search party is formed to look for the missing child/children.	3	1	3	
22.	Incidents occurring due to a slip, trip, fall, or misuse or not following forest school safety guidelines.	- Pre-use inspections of the area are carried out by the forest school leader prior to the session. - All pupils will be clearly informed of the rules of the games and reminded the shared group expectations for staying safe and happy - The forest school leader running the session, reserves the right to stop/abandon the session at any time if the risk outweighs the risk benefit	3	1	3	
Low Rope/Beam Courses, Swings and Hammocks						
23.	Incidents occurring due to incorrect installation	- The trees which sit within the school perimeter fencing undergo a bi-annual tree survey. - The school will consult the tree survey or ask for a tree surveys advise before erecting any low rope course, swings or hammocks.	4	2	8	Arrange for the trees to be inspected and ask the tree survivors advise before erecting low rope courses or hammocks etc.

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
			Severity	Probability	Risk	
		- All trees selected to form the low rope course have been checked to see if they are strong enough to withstand the horizontal or vertical force that will be placed upon them. - The instructor taking the activity is a qualified forest school instructor and has demonstrated that they know how to tie knots and erect low rope courses, swings, and hammocks safely and has an understanding of the dangers if not erected correctly. - An impact absorbing surface is provided where the 'free fall height' is greater than 60cm (0.6m). Therefore, the soil level around the trees will be monitored and maintained to prevent tree root trip hazards and provide a soft surface for the pupils to land on. - All low rope courses, swings and hammocks will be weight checked by an adult prior to allowing any pupils on it.				
24.	Lack of supervision	- The forest school leader running the session are experienced and competent. - Adequate supervision is provided, taking into account the children's age and/or any children with special needs/behavioural problems/requiring additional assistance, etc. - The groups teachers/teaching assistants are required to assist in the supervision of the children.	4	1	4	
25.	Misuse of the equipment by unauthorised persons	- The low rope course is located within the forest school area, pupils are not allowed within the area unless accompanied by a member of the staff. - A safety talk and demonstration are delivered to all groups before the low rope activity begins. - Where pupils refusing to adhere to the safety rules pose a danger to self or others, they will be guided to reset with an adult in line with agreed behaviour expectations for safety.	4	2	8	
26.	Fall from height and slip, trips, and falls.	- Routine inspections are carried out by the forest school leader. - The forest school leader and group teachers/teaching assistants supervising the use of the equipment are familiar with the procedures for use, i.e., maximum numbers permitted on the apparatus at any one time, etc.	4	2	8	

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

No	Hazard	Existing Control Measures	Residual Risk			Additional Control Measures
			Severity	Probability	Risk	
		- The standing rope or beam will not be any higher than 60cm (0.6m) from the ground. A central rope will be strung across to provide a hand hold for the pupils whilst traversing across. - A safety talk and demonstration are delivered to all groups before the low rope activity begins. - A clearance area around the swing and hammock will be kept clear to prevent others being hit.				

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

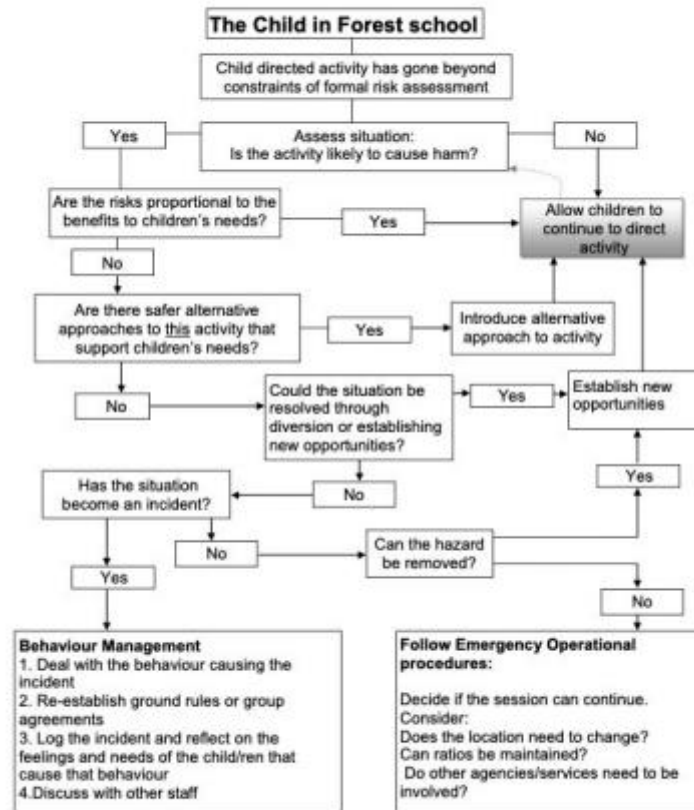
ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard number	Risk Rating	Who will be responsible for the additional control measures? Name(s)	When will the actions be complete?	Date complete and any comments or note
4 and 23	Med	School Business Manager	Before erecting any low rope courses or hammocks	
18	Low	The Forest School Leader	Before commencing any sessions	

Risk Benefit Assessment of the above activities:

Benefit	Impact	How It Supports Learning and Development
Physical activity and fitness	High	Enhances physical health, improves coordination, and helps develop fine and gross motor skills.
Environmental education and awareness	High	Encourages respect for nature, fosters an understanding of ecosystems, and develops an awareness of environmental issues.
Teamwork and social skills	High	Promotes collaboration, problem-solving, and communication through group activities.
Creativity and imagination	High	Provides opportunities for creative play, role-playing, and building things from natural materials.
Confidence and independence	High	Builds self-esteem through independent decision-making, responsibility, and risk-taking in a safe and supported environment.
Mental well-being	High	Reduces stress and anxiety by connecting with nature, promoting mindfulness, and offering a break from traditional classroom settings.
Problem-solving and resilience	High	Encourages critical thinking and adaptability through challenges like outdoor tasks, navigation, and building projects.
Connection to the natural world	High	Develops a sense of belonging to the environment, fostering a connection that can lead to a more sustainable and caring approach to the planet.

Dynamic Risk Assessments at Forest School



Original document by Dan Rees-Jones Playwork Partnerships 2008
Adapted by Lily Horseman and BEYCP Play Team July 2008

Chorlton CofE Forest School Daily Site Check Risk Assessment

To be completed before each session by Forest School Leader

Location: Chorlton C of E Primary on site Forest School

The Forest School takes place on site in a specially designed area. The site has no public access. The site contains a range of trees and green space. There are a variety of trees and ground flora (bramble) that has created a habitat for some birds and insects. The animals on site do not present any risk. The site contains logs, natural den making materials, a fire pit, bug hotels and a selection of shelter structures. These have all been specially designed and implemented to ensure the highest levels of safety. As the forest school is onsite there is access to phones, the nearest phone is located in the Nursery building, and the Forest School leader will carry a mobile phone for the duration of the session. There is a large gate to the right of the site that allows only authorised vehicles access. This gate is locked at all other times. This site is closed to the public so no dogs are present on the site. There is also no access to water, such as a pond on the site.

Hazard	Persons at risk	Prevention measures	Probability	Severity	RR	Measures to be taken
Vehicles on site	Pupils and adults	Restrictive gates that are locked at all times to prevent vehicle access	1	1	2	FSL to check site prior to any sessions and check with site manager that no vehicles are due to enter site through gates. If any vehicle is due during session this will be discussed with group to ensure they understand safety procedures.
Litter and debris Cut Trip Entrap Suffocation	Pupils and adults	Bins located on nearby school playground	4	1	4	FSL to check site prior to any sessions and remove any rubbish or debris. The site will also be checked by the site manager. The FSL will also ensure the group understand the dangers linked to rubbish and debris
Paths and tracks	Pupils and adults	The mains paths leading to the forest school area are all maintained and	2	2	4	FSL to monitor any changes and report to site manager.

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

Trips due to uneven, slippery or broken		checked by the site manager				FSL to remind participants to be cautious if travelling through the less developed pathways through the trees and shrubbery
Exposed roots and other hazards off main paths Trip Slip Sting Cut	Pupils and adults	Main hazard- debris and brambles. Maintained as part of school gardening maintenance	2	2	4	The FSL will do a sweep of the area prior to any sessions to ensure hazards are removed. The FSL will also discuss the hazards with groups and ensure they understand the safety procedures.
Holes, animal burrows and ditches Falling Getting trapped	Pupils and adults	The site is regularly maintained to ensure these are not present. There is no current level of danger	1	3	3	If an area is discovered the FSL will remove group from risk and ensure the site manager is informed so the risk can be dealt with. The FSL will discuss risk with group so they know to inform the leader if they come across any cavity.
Broken walls, fences and boundaries Cut Crushing Tripping Entrapment	Pupils and adults	The site has been cleared in preparation for the installation and all boundaries have been checked to ensure safety. There are few boundaries around the site. Fencing is new and in excellent condition	1	2	2	FSL and site manager to complete regular checks of the area, including the boundaries. Boundaries are discussed with group so they understand them.
Low branches on paths Banging head Poking in eye	Pupils and adults	The site/paths has been cleared in preparation for installation and any	1	4	4	FSL and site manager to complete regular checks of the area. Any low branches will be removed. FSL will do complete sweep of area prior to any session. If group are using

Risk Benefit Assessments

Risk Assessment No: Activities

		low branches have been removed.				another area other than onsite Forest school area the FSL must lead the group.
Low branches on site Banging head Poking in eye	Pupils and adults	The site has been cleared in preparation for installation and any low branches have been removed.	1	4	4	FSL and site manager to complete regular checks of the area. Any low branches will be removed. FSL will do complete sweep of area prior to any session. If group are using another area other than onsite Forest school area the FSL must lead the group.
Dead trees and branches Impact Crush Tripping	Pupils and adults	The site has been cleared in preparation for installation and any low branches, dead trees etc have been removed.	2	4	8	FSL and site manager to complete regular checks of the area. Any low/dead branches will be removed. FSL will do complete sweep of area prior to any session. If group are using another area other than onsite Forest school area the FSL must lead the group.
Insects, wasps, plants and fungi Possible allergic reaction, poisoning, choking	Pupils and adults	Information on allergies to be collected on consent forms prior to forest school sessions	3	3	6	FSL to check allergy information collected prior to sessions. FSL to discuss risks of wasps and poisonous plants with group- warn children not to eat any wild plants etc and ensure they wash hands before and after session. FSL to carry antiseptic wipes in first aid kit
Weather (hot, cold, wet)	Pupils and adults	Seasonal kit list sent to all parents Children asked to bring suncream in warm weather	2	2	4	FSL to ensure children are appropriately dressed prior to session.

Acknowledgement

The following members of staff have read this risk assessment.
Their signatures are confirmation that they have read and understood all which is within its contents.

Name	Signature	Date	Name	Signature	Date