



Abbey Road Primary School Forest School Handbook



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1. What is a Forest School?

The Forest School concept originated in Denmark, originally aimed at pre-school children. The benefits of learning outside were seen to improve children's social and communication skills and build self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities. In the long term, this also helped to raise their academic achievements.

2. The Abbey Road Forest School approach to learning

In our Forest School sessions, we aim to build up a child's confidence, self-esteem and self-worth to enable them to be a **lifelong learner**. We give the children opportunities to learn through different experiences, ultimately through play and exploration.

The sessions are child led and will deviate from planned experiences in order to follow the children's interests. We build up a community allowing the children to feel relaxed and happy with their peers. We play games and have fun getting to know each other well and form a community together.

The sessions teach children about their natural environment: they identify trees and wildlife. They learn practical skills of shelter building, tying knots and using tools safely. The sessions provide opportunities for children to develop their own learning, self-awareness, social and communication skills and emotional intelligence at a pace, and in an environment, that is non-threatening, not classroom based and therefore flexible to meet their needs.

3. A Typical Abbey Road Forest School Session

Each two-hour Abbey Road Forest School session follows a simple routine. The session starts with participants (usually around 12-16 – dependent on adult / child ratio) changing into appropriate clothing. We meet in the school garden to register the children and remind them of rules and routines. We take this opportunity to visit the toilet as we are nearby.

We walk as a group to our log circle, often with a simple task attached e.g. Chinese whispers to get the children into the right frame of mind. When we arrive at the log circle, we share a drink and snack that is provided by staff. Whilst the children eat and drink, we reflect on what we enjoyed about last week's session / did / looking forward to in our forest sessions / planning to do.

Early sessions involve group games to build a sense of community. Getting to know each other well and the site we are using, is very important, as is knowing the basic safety rules.

Each session is planned around a theme / story. Suggested experiences are planned for and resourced where necessary, although the children are encouraged to develop the theme in their own way and thus choose their own learning journeys. Parts of the sessions will be flexible and allow the children to follow their interests and fascinations. The sessions involve practical hands-on experiences which aim to build up children's skills, abilities and confidence week by week. As the weeks progress, learners are given more freedom and responsibility to explore their interests and therefore initiate and direct their own learning.

At the end of each session, we offer the children the opportunity to share their experiences if they so wish. Reviewing and reflecting on the experiences that have taken place supports confidence building and communication skills. A game involving reflection on the session also happens at this time. Children then help to return the woodland to the state in which it was found and help to return tools and materials to the Forest School shed.

Children are given regular opportunities to take appropriate risks, such as tool use, fire lighting and tree climbing. These opportunities build self-confidence, allow children to learn and develop their physical and mental limits and make them better equipped to handle risk.

Abbey Road Forest School uses natural resources to stimulate imagination, creativity and investigation.

Experiences can include:

- ✓ Den / Shelter building
- ✓ Natural art and sculpture
- ✓ Using knots and lashings; rope and string work
- ✓ Fire building and lighting
- ✓ Animal tracking and mini-beast hunts
- ✓ Tree investigations
- ✓ Climbing and balancing
- ✓ Woodwork using tools – woodland and traditional crafts – bush craft
- ✓ Creating animal shelters and feeders
- ✓ Collecting, identifying and sorting natural materials such as leaves
- ✓ Team games
- ✓ Identification, observation, respect and understanding of flora and fauna within the site
- ✓ Sensory tasks
- ✓ Campfire singing and storytelling
- ✓ Cooking and making drinks on an open fire
- ✓ Developing stories and drama, and meeting imaginary characters
- ✓ Physical movement games and experiences
- ✓ Imaginative play
- ✓ Problem solving

Most experiences are curriculum linked and span a number of subjects including Maths, English, Art, Design and Technology, Science, Music and Geography. Forest School complements the cross curricular approach we value here at Abbey Road.

4. Benefits of Forest School

Abbey Road Forest School is aimed at every child within school whatever their age or ability. Mixing children of different ages is a significant and important part of our approach. The aim of Forest School is to develop the person as a whole. It is particularly suited to people who have low self-esteem, a low sense of worth or those who struggle for various reasons to learn in a traditional classroom setting.

Completing small achievable tasks, coupled with genuine praise from leaders and peers, helps to boost confidence and self-esteem.

Research has shown that these experiences can improve attitudes to learning – children don't realise they are learning, or **recognise** that learning can be fun and enjoyable and not just pencil and paper based. This new positive outlook is then transferred to the classroom where these children are often found to be more motivated and able to concentrate better.

Benefits of Forest School:

- ✓ Develops physical – fine and gross motor skills through using a range of natural materials, tools and engaging with nature.
- ✓ Encourages children to be active in the fresh air.
- ✓ Heightens self-awareness and improves emotional and social skills
- ✓ Promotes co-operative and group working
- ✓ Encourages children to take care of themselves and others.
- ✓ Fosters care, appreciation and respect for wildlife and wild places
- ✓ Broadens knowledge and understanding of the natural world

How does Forest School accommodate Multiple Intelligences?

Everybody has a different style of learning. During Forest School sessions, we endeavour to cater for multiple intelligences.

People Smarts - We develop a sense of community through games and experiences. Children are encouraged to work with a variety of people, make new friends and communicate their feelings in different ways. Many of the games we play include these characteristics.

Nature Smarts - We give them lots of opportunities to investigate the natural world. These children will love being amongst nature in the outdoors. We set up experiences for the children to explore and be fascinated by the natural world.

Maths / Logic Smarts - Many of our games and experiences involve some sort of problem solving. All children are encouraged to use reasoning skills to solve problems.

Body Smarts - These children will love the practical nature of forest school sessions such as building dens, lifting and carrying equipment, resources and loose parts, as well as using their sensory skills to discover and explore nature.

Self Smarts - Each Forest school sessions involves some reflection time where children are given time to think and reflect independently. Experiences often involve the use of imagination and intrinsic motivation in child-initiated play.

Word Smarts - We encourage the children to talk and listen carefully to each other. Group working and discussing ideas is central to some experiences. These children will also enjoy learning and remembering facts about the natural world.

Music Smarts - Each Forest School session involves at least one song / singing. We encourage the children to listen carefully to nature, play listening games and games that involve a rhythm e.g Gorilla bogey song / game

Picture Smarts – Every Forest School session involves watching, observing demonstrations, observing others. We ensure there is an element of creativity in each session. Reflection at the end of sessions often involves creating pictures / scenes / props from natural objects / loose parts.

How Forest School supports Schemas?

Schemas are mechanisms that build perceptions, value and beliefs, building patterns of understanding through which to evaluate other patterns within the world.

As leaders, we observe the children each week so that we can learn what motivates and interests them. We then plan to develop these motivations and interests through a range of games, provisions and resources. Through doing this, children will become more self-motivated and therefore learn more effectively.

As well as providing new resources / experiences each week, we ensure that previous learning and sessions can be repeated / tried again if the children so wish. We ensure that equipment from previous weeks is always available so that children can have the opportunity to repeat the same processes and fully embed their learning.

The outdoors provides a huge range of opportunities for children to explore their schemas. Some examples of this are:

- Transporting logs and sticks
- pouring and mixing water with mud
- mixing with sticks
- building dens
- swinging on ropes

5. Contingency in case of bad weather

The whole idea of Forest Schools is that it happens in all weathers and elements. However, if the weather is deemed dangerous such as high winds, extreme heat/cold or during thunderstorms, the session may be postponed. Forest School leaders will use the BBC weather forecast online to make judgements about expected conditions.

As the saying goes 'There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing!' We therefore ensure that children have appropriate clothing: waterproof coats; trousers; sturdy, waterproof shoes / boots; clothing that doesn't matter if it gets dirty / damaged; hats; jumpers; layers and gloves for cold weather; warm socks and a spare pair; sunhats; sunscreen; and cool, long-sleeved clothing that covers arms and legs for hot weather.

Snacks and drinks provided for the sessions are appropriate to the weather. For example – extra water in hot weather and a warm drink in cold weather.

In the event of rain, Forest School will continue. We will build a temporary shelter (as a team) to work underneath. To keep warm, we will huddle together and use the parachute / bivi tent from the 'Happy Bag' to create a temporary tent that is warm and dry.

In the event of high winds, thunderstorms, extreme cold or heat, we will dynamically risk assess the area and situation. If we feel it is no longer safe to be in the area, we will move to the outdoor sheltered classroom / inside school.

6. Forest School Staff

Abbey Road Forest School sessions are led by Mrs Seagrave and Mrs Smith who are Level 3 Forest School Practitioners. Any additional staff or volunteers are briefed fully before each session and have been subject to an enhanced DBS check.

7. Abbey Road Forest School Site

Our Forest School takes place within our school grounds, which is a large, greenfield site with mixed deciduous trees: Oak, Silver Birch, Hazel, Field Maple, Hazelnut and Lime. Many of the trees are well established and a number have been newly planted by our Forest School to create more of a woodland area. Our Forest School base has a circle of logs which we use for seating in our sessions. This area is fenced off, and contains a wildlife area and pond. Our site is managed carefully at the moment and as our Forest School progresses, we hope to allow the site to go a little wilder to develop a deeper diversity.

The site is within school grounds and is not accessible to the public.

Children taking part in Abbey Road Forest School Sessions are encouraged to minimize their impact upon the site. This includes:

- ✓ Finding out about the flora and fauna of the site
- ✓ Respecting animal homes
- ✓ Careful observation of flora and fauna
- ✓ Leaving lying deadwood in place
- ✓ Taking all materials and litter with them when they leave
- ✓ Ensuring the site is left as it was found

8. Contents of 'The Happy Bag' – Safety Equipment and General Session equipment dependent upon weather and activities

Register

Health and safety forms

Medical information and medication for specific children (epipens and inhalers)

Bin liners

Tarpaulins and pegs

Washing up bowl and antibacterial gel

Kelly kettle

Biscuits

Plastic beakers

String and rope

scissors

Pencils and paper

Magnifying glasses

Tissues

Risk assessments

Handbook

torch

2 x mobile phones from different networks

Parachute / Bovi tent

Foam mat and foil blanket

Whistle

Wet wipes

Bottle of water and plastic cups

Packet of Kendal Mint Cake / sugary snacks

Spare set of clothing and waterproof coat and trousers

First Aid Kit for outdoors:

- First aid guidance book
- Disposable bag for medical waste
- Gloves
- Bites / stings cream or spray – parental permission required
- Bandages
- Instant ice pack
- Burns gel
- Accident forms
- Burn dressing
- Sun cream (parental permission required)
- Dressings
- CPR face shield
- Eye wash
- Plasters
- Scissors
- Micropore tape
- Antiseptic wipes
- Casualty monitoring cards
- Tick remover
- Cling film
- Sterile water

This bag will accompany us to every session and will remain in a central area – usually by the log circle.

Fire Safety Equipment:

- Flame retardant gauntlet gloves
- Fire blanket
- Bucket of water
- Dragon's sneeze lighter
- Cotton wool – Pixie pillows
- Matches in case of emergency
- kindling

Tools – all tools are counted out and back at the beginning and end of each session. When not in use, they are kept in a locked shed. Before each tool is used it is checked for damage and working order.

Each tool type is kept in its own suitable container, many of which lock. Children must never be allowed to help themselves. Adult supervision is required when collecting, transporting and storing tools.

Tools are only used for a specific purpose. Leaders will model correct and safe use, storage and transportation at all times as well as demonstrate this through regular tool talks. Tools are used in safe areas (at least 2 arm lengths away from other) and walking is only permitted when transporting the tool safely.

Tools:

- Bag and box
- Bow saw
- Potato peelers
- Scissors
- Knives in protective sheaths in a lockable box
- Hammers
- Hand drill
- Rope
- Work gloves
- Bill hook
- Loppers

9. Toilets and Handwashing procedure

Our Forest School site is located within the school grounds and is within easy reach of the toilets and sinks inside the school building. All children are encouraged to use the toilet and wash hands before each session, and should they need to use it during the session, they are sent into school in pairs.

At the end of each session, children are told to wash their hands in these facilities.

When preparing and eating food in our forest area, we will provide antibacterial hand gel, wet wipes and a portable hand wash station with running water (from a big bottle or canister) and antibacterial soap with paper hand towels.

10. Abbey Road Forest School Rules and behaviour management

During our Forest School sessions, rules are taught and discussed through fun games. A community is built up through the games and leaders reinforce and reward good role models rather than criticising negative behaviour unless it is dangerous. At the start of each session, a quick recap of our rules is reinforced by the children.

Our Forest School Rules

- We respect ourselves, our leaders and each other by listening and being kind
- We care for flora and fauna
- We only use loose parts from the forest floor.
- We stay within the Forest School boundary
- We keep everything out of our mouths.
- Drag sticks behind you.

- We follow the tool talks.
- We wash our hands after each session.
- We come to our session dressed for the weather and conditions.
- We have FUN!

Fire Circle Rules

- We walk around the outside of the fire circle to get to the other side
- We only enter the inner fire circle when instructed by the Forest School Leader
- The inner circle is shown by a ring of white flour.
- We always kneel in the 'Respect' position (one knee on the floor) when by the fire.
- We keep our clothing and hair away from the fire.
- We wear flame retardant gloves when using the fire for cooking.

Behaviour Management

- ✓ It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that all children feel safe, respected and valued.
- ✓ Praising good behaviour and ignoring negative behaviour is our primary strategy.
- ✓ Rules and expectations are made clear at the start of each session and we ensure they are understood by all of the children.
- ✓ All staff and leaders will be made aware of the social and emotional needs of the children within our care.
- ✓ Parent helpers should refer any challenging behaviour to the Forest School Leader.
- ✓ If a child's behaviour puts themselves or other children at risk we will ask them to 'stop'.

- ✓ If the behaviour does not stop we will intervene, and as a last resort remove the child from the forest school area into the school building to spend time with a member of the SLT. The school behaviour steps will be followed and parents and class teachers will be informed.
- ✓ Forest School and Abbey Road will not tolerate any bullying of any kind. Bullying is an action taken by one or more people with the deliberate intention of hurting another person. This can be either physically or emotionally and the relationship often involves an imbalance of power. Bullying is not an isolated incident but continual or repetitive. Signs of bullying will be referred to the Headteacher as per the school anti-bullying policy. (see school website for details)

11. Roles and responsibilities of Forest School Leaders, children and volunteers. – daily operating procedures

Role of Forest School Leader

- ✓ To plan, lead and evaluate all Forest School experiences
- ✓ To ensure observations of individuals inform future plans
- ✓ To ensure that planned experiences are relevant and differentiated
- ✓ To amend plans and provide an inclusive curriculum enabling all children to achieve
- ✓ To take responsibility for positive behaviour management throughout sessions (see Behaviour section)
- ✓ To have an up to date Forest School First Aid Certificate
- ✓ To ensure that all necessary medication is available (e.g. epipens / inhalers)
- ✓ To ensure First Aid kits are available and stocked for each session
- ✓ To ensure that all participants are adequately dressed for the weather

- ✓ To ensure that adults participating understand their role in promoting emotional intelligence, self esteem and learning at Forest Schools.
- ✓ To carry out risk assessments before and during each session (see Risk Assessment section)
- ✓ To ensure that the Forest School Handbook is up to date and reviewed annually or sooner if necessary

Role and Responsibilities of the children

- ✓ To take personal responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety of others
- ✓ To listen to and follow instructions given to them
- ✓ To bring appropriate clothing and footwear to Forest School sessions.

Roles and Responsibilities of Adults

It is expected that all adults will take an active part in the Forest School experiences. They will be prepared to get muddy.

- ✓ Where possible, Forest School aims to be child led using a range of experiences. Adults are encouraged to support child initiated learning rather than dictate or take over.
- ✓ Demonstrate how to do things (modelling new skills e.g knot tying)
- ✓ Extend children's learning through open – ended questioning
- ✓ Get to know the children's needs through observations and ensure that all physical and emotional needs are met.
- ✓ Read the handbook and sign to say you will follow the procedures in place.
- ✓ Read plans prior to the session and follow session risk assessments.
- ✓ Alert the Forest School Leader immediately if anyone (adult or child) requires first aid, or has an accident.

- ✓ ONLY use tools if the Forest School Leader has instructed you to do so. Follow appropriate tool talks and lead by example when handling and using tools.

Report any safety or maintenance concerns immediately to the Forest School Leader.

- ✓ Be aware of the location of the First Aid Kit.
- ✓ Follow the Forest School Leaders's instructions regarding open fires. Ask if you are unsure.
- ✓ Stay within the boundaries and inform the leader should you need to leave the area or experience you are supervising.
- ✓ Take responsibility for your own safety and actions. Report and remove hazards as they occur.
- ✓ Discretely record observational notes and share with other adults.
- ✓ Ensure you wear appropriate clothing and footwear to match the weather and conditions.
- ✓ At the end of each session ensure that all resources are tidied away and leave the Forest as it was found.

Normal Operating Procedures

- ✓ The Forest School Leader will complete a risk assessment before each Forest School session (Factors such as weather, fallen branches and litter need to be taken into consideration – see risk assessment)
- ✓ Tools will be checked for safety and condition before each session.
- ✓ Tools will be kept in a secure container and there will be a designated tool area.
- ✓ The Happy Bag will be carried to each session (see Happy Bag contents)
- ✓ If there are any changes to the risk assessments, appropriate action and plans will be put into place and risk assessments reviewed and amended.

- ✓ All adults and volunteers will be briefed at the start of the session and plans and risk assessments will be shared.
- ✓ The register will be taken each session and regular head counts will take place.
- ✓ Sessions will follow the same pattern each time. (Gather in garden, toilet. Walk to fire circle, Reflection, snack and drink, Community games, Theme / Focus of session, discussion of possible experiences, child led learning, evaluation of session, tidying up and washing hands.)
- ✓ The Forest School Leader will ensure the children are safe and happy, and observe the children’s learning interests and styles.
- ✓ The Forest School Leader will reflect and evaluate the session to aid planning for the next session.
- ✓ After the session, the Forest School Leader will carry out cleaning and maintenance of tools, using oily rags, sharpening or replacing if necessary and storing safely.

12. Health and safety procedures and policies - Risk Assessments food hygiene, fire lighting, tool use, daily and activity based risk assessment

Link to RA	Areas of Emotional Intelligence				
	Intra personal skills			Inter personal skills	
Identified hazard	Self awareness	Self regulation	Self motivation	Empathy	Social Skills
Tree Climbing	My arms are not very strong at the moment	Keep 2 points of contact at all times	I want to push myself and climb to the next branch	Praise each other’s efforts	Supporting each other physically and verbally

Sun and wintry weather	Hot sun makes me burn And the wind makes me feel cold and the rain makes me feel wet	I will wear suitable clothing / sun screen / find shade and wear sun hat	I want to keep myself well and comfortable so I can carry on	Reminding each other about suitable clothing	Support each other to find shade / shelter
Faeces	I know that it smells horrible and can be messy	I will keep away from it and let an adult know straight away	I want to keep myself safe and clean	Make sure your friends do not stand in it	Taking it seriously and ensuring everyone is safe
Tools	I know that tools can cause harm is not used correctly	I will follow the tool talks carefully	I want to be safe and keep everyone else safe	Remind each other of rules / safety	Remind others if they have forgotten the safety rules
Mushrooms and fungi and berries	I know that they can be poisonous and make you poorly	I know that I should not touch them and tell an adult where I have found them	I want to keep myself and my friends well and safe	Remind each other not to touch them	Tell others where they have been found and remind of risks
Wasps and bees	I know that they might sting me if they are scared	I know that I need to stay calm when one comes near me	I don't want to be stung / hurt	Reassure others when wasps or bees are around to remain calm	Warning others of where they are and reminding to stay calm
Debris and rubbish	I know that some litter can be harmful to myself and wildlife	I will use gloves / litter pickers to dispose of it	I want everyone and wildlife to remain safe	I want to keep wildlife and each other safe	Remind each other about debris and rubbish – communicate clearly to adult
Fire	I know that fire can burn and get out of control easily	I will follow the rules of staying behind the barrier and when near the fire I will use the respect position	I want to keep myself and everyone and the environment safe	To reassure people that if we all follow the rules we will all be safe	Remind others about rules of barriers and respect position

Tree stumps	I know that I could trip over and hurt myself on tree stumps and roots	I will look carefully as I move around the forest area	I don't want to fall over and hurt myself	I want to make sure everyone is safe	Remind others of roots / branches etc sticking out / causing a trip hazard
Boundaries	I know that I have to stay within the forest school boundary to keep safe	I will listen and follow the boundary rules to keep myself away from harm	I want to stay safe and be able to see and hear the leader and enjoy my forest experience	Remind my friends to remain within the boundaries to keep them safe from harm	Remind others of boundaries and tell an adult if rules are broken
Sticks	I know that sticks can cause harm to people's eyes if not used sensibly	I will keep my stick in a low position and away from people's eyes	I don't want to hurt my eyes or my friend's eyes	I want to make sure everyone is safe and has fun	Remind others about holding and using sticks safely – rules and dangers
Ropes and swings	I know that I could fall and hurt myself or get a rope burn / strangle myself	I will listen and follow to the instructions carefully	I don't want to hurt myself or others	I want to make sure everyone has fun and stays safe	Remind others about safety rules of ropes and swings – be observant and tell an adult if rules are not followed

Risk Assessment for an Open Fire

The purpose of an open fire is to offer the children an acceptable risk activity to enhance their learning opportunities and own coping strategies. If we only provide a sanitised environment and risk adverse activities children will not explore and discover the world for themselves, they will only experience a safety conscious environment. However safeguards must be in place to ensure the activity is at an appropriate level for their abilities and understanding without turning the activity into a safety first pursuit.

Encounters with certain types of risk help children to learn how to manage those risks. To help children with this they will first be reminded of the safety rules about being beside fire.

Only children willing to participate will be included in the activity those with fears of fire will have the opportunity to talk to staff for reassurance.

Children will use a long green stick to cook on the open fire (toast, marshmallow, twists) and wear fire safety gloves

Children will be asked questions about the fire, cooking and safety to enhance their understanding.

Children's knowledge will be tested before they cook on the fire

Hazard	Harm	at Risk	existing measures/ new measures	who will do it when?
Fire & heat	burning to skin & clothes	all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of the fire, one forest school trained person to be sat beside fire at all times while alight or hot embers remain, to ensure children do not have unsupervised access. • Children will be given rules and safety advice and dangers of fire prior to visiting the fire. • First aiders and first aid box will be available. • Fire proof gloves within easy reach. 	JS / MS for each fire lighting
Fire out of control	as above and damage to area.	all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • Fire will be on a slab surrounded by stones to prevent the fire escaping the area. • Fire area will be away from buildings. • The fire will not be under overhanging trees which may catch alight. • Buckets of water will be available to put out flames and dampen heat. • A fire blanket will be available to wrap around person who may be alight. 	JS / MS to check site, and responsible for fire control.

Hazard	Harm	at Risk	existing measures/ new measures	who will do it when?
Falls into fire	burning to skin & clothes	all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • Children have a safety briefing before entering the fire pit area. • No walking between the seats and fire allowed. • When cooking etc. everyone at fire should be on one knee to remain stable. RESPECT position • Maximum of 4 people at fire (inc. adults). 	JS / MS - to give safety briefing , all staff check rules are followed.
Smoke	inhalation, irritation	all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The position of the fire will be away from buildings. • The wind direction will be constantly assessed and children advised to move safely out of smoke direction. • Dry suitable wood used to prevent excess smoke. • Use clear goggles if needed. 	JS / MS - wood supply & site - all staff advise children
Heat from hot embers.	burning to skin & clothes	all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the fire activity is finished the embers will be dampened and cooled with water and spread out with a spade. • Ensure fire is completely out and there are no red or hot embers remaining. 	JS / MS

Risk Assessment for Tool and Equipment Use in Forest School

Bill Hook

Hazard	Harm	at risk	existing measures / new measures	who will do it? when?
Improper use of bill hook	wounds	person using bill hook and those close by.	<p>*Inform person using bill hook of tool talk (see hand book). Children to practice and learn the tool talk speech</p> <p>*No glove needed on hand using tool, glove on other hand.</p> <p>*First aiders and first aid kit close by.</p> <p>*Tools counted in and out each session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to one supervision for early years children. • Use in designated area for tools • Remind others in area to stay clear of tools. • Keep in cover when not in use and store in tool bag. 	JS / MS - during session.

Bow Saw

Hazard	Harm	at risk	existing measures / new measures	who will do it? when?
improper use of bow saw falling branches	wounds	person using bow saw and those near by	<p>*Inform person using bow saw of tool talk (see hand book). Children to practice and learn the tool talk speech</p> <p>*No glove needed on hand using tool, glove on non sawing hand.</p> <p>*First aiders and first aid kit close by.</p> <p>*Tools counted in and out each session.</p> <p>One to one supervision for early years children.</p> <p>Ensure safety of site if using outside of designated tool use area.</p> <p>If sawing branches from a tree ensure no one or property will be hurt or damaged when it falls.</p> <p>Remind others in area to stay clear of tools.</p> <p>Keep blade cover on when not in use and store in tool bag.</p>	JS / MS - during session.

Sheath Knives

Hazard	Harm	at risk	existing measures / new measures	who will do it? when?
improper use of knives	wounds	person using knife and those near by	<p>*Inform person using knives of tool talk (see hand book). Children to practice and learn the tool talk speech</p> <p>*No glove needed on hand using tool, glove on non knife hand.</p> <p>*First aiders and first aid kit close by.</p> <p>*Tools counted in and out each session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to one supervision for early years children. • Use in designated area for tools. • Keep in cover when not in use and store in tool bag. • Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools. 	JS / MS - during session.

Potato Peeler

Hazard	Harm	at risk	existing measures / new measures	who will do it? when?
improper use of potato peeler	wounds	person using potato peeler and those near by	<p>*Inform person using potato peeler of tool talk (see hand book). Children to practice and learn the tool talk speech</p> <p>*No glove needed on hand using tool, glove on other hand.</p> <p>*First aiders and first aid kit close by.</p> <p>*Tools counted in and out each session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-1 ratio supervision for early years children. • Use in designated area for tools • Keep in cover when not in use and store in tool bag. • Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools. 	JS / MS - during session.

Mallet

Hazard	Harm	at risk	existing measures / new measures	who will do it? when?
improper use of mallet	bumps and grazes	person using mallet and those near by	<p>*Inform person using mallet of tool talk (see hand book). Children to practice and learn the tool talk speech</p> <p>*No glove needed</p> <p>*First aiders and first aid kit close by.</p> <p>*Tools counted in and out each session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to one supervision for early years children. • Keep in cover when not in use and store in tool bag. • Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools. 	JS / MS- during session.

Loppers

Hazard	Harm	at risk	existing measures / new measures	who will do it? when?
improper use of loppers falling branches		person using loppers and those near by	<p>*Inform person using loppers of tool talk (see hand book). Children to practice and learn the tool talk speech</p> <p>*No glove needed, both hand will be on tool.</p> <p>*First aiders and first aid kit close by.</p> <p>*Tools counted in and out each session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One to one supervision for early years children. • Keep in cover when not in use and store in tool bag. • Remind others in vicinity to stay clear of tools. • If sawing branches from a tree ensure no one or property will be hurt or damaged when it falls. 	JS / MS - during session

Kelly Kettle

Hazard	Harm	at risk		who will do it? when?
Fire & hot metal	Burns	all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *as open fire precautions (see handbook) *Stay with Kelly Kettle at all times. *Ensure it is on a sturdy level non flammable base (it has a high centre of gravity). *feed flames through chimney. *Use fire safety gloves to remove base. 	JS / MS - during session
Hot water	Scalds	all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have air hole opposite side to spout. *Do not leave cork spout in while heating water. *Keep spout away from you to avoid splashes. 	

Risk Assessment Form for Forest School Site

Description of the site: Area is owned by Abbey Road Primary School and is within their school grounds surrounded by high fences, hedgerows and gates. The site is used by the school and pre-school. Smaller fauna such as cats, hedgehogs, foxes and rabbits can enter. The site is a small broadleaved woodland with mature lime and oak trees. The area has no running, still or boggy water sections. One side of the woodland has residential properties and one has a public right of way leading to allotments and the school entrance. Debris occasionally comes into the area through this side. There is a circle within the woodland area with tree trunk seats that will eventually become the fire circle.

	Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Probability (P) 1-5	Severity 1-5	Rating PXS 1-25	existing measures / new measures	who will do it ? when?	Benefits SPICES
1	nettles and bushes	Stinging / scratching	all	4	2	8	make children aware, clear pathways and main play areas. Children to wear long trousers.	JS / MS - prior to each visit	Intellectual – learning about cause and effect – stings / scratches defence mechanisms. Learn about dot leaves. Communicating risks to each other
2	berried flora	poisoning	children	2	4	8	inform all children not to pick or eat berries. Wash hands before eating.	JS / MS- on visit	Intellectual – learning about nature and how berries can be harmful and significance of 'red'. Communicating – reminding each other of risks
3	tree roots and stumps	tripping	all	5	2	10	inform all to take care in woods, clear walkways of bramble roots.	All - on visit	Social and emotional – reminding each other of risks of tripping, observation of tree roots and flora at ground level

	Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Probability (P) 1-5	Severity 1-5	Rating PXS 1-25	existing measures / new measures	who will do it ? when?	Benefits SPICES
4	tree branches	branches falling, children falling on children / poking eyes on low branches	all	2	4	8	pre-visit & continuous risk check, remove hanging dead wood. Remind children of risks.	JS / MS -prior to each visit and during visit.	Intellectual – engage children in identifying possible hung branches / low branches. Learn about pruning and importance. Social and emotional – looking after each other to ensure safety
5	sticks	Hitting / poking eyes / splinters	all	3	2 / 3	6-9	inform children of rules, use a stick no longer than your arm, no hitting. Discuss stick make up and risks of splinters	JS / MS - on visit	Intellectual – learning about make up of sticks, knowing the danger of sticks in eyes, spiritual – knowing how to behave and play safely.
6	faeces	contamination	all	4	2	8	pre-visit & continuous risk check, remove and discard safely.	JS / MS -prior to & on visit.	Communicating – explaining to others where there is a risk of faeces and why we do not touch it. Intellectual – understanding the risk of faeces.

	Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Probability (P) 1-5	Severity 1-5	Rating PXS 1- 25	existing measures / new measures	who will do it ? when?	Benefits SPICES
7	debris / rubbish (glass, metal, paper)	Cuts and grazes	all	4	2	8	pre-visit & continuous risk check, ask children not to pick up rubbish, inform an adult if they find something, adult to remove safely or encourage children to use gloves / litter pickers	JS / MS -prior to & on visit.	Intellectual – danger to wildlife. Spiritual – caring for the environment and wildlife / nature
8	fire	burns, out of control.	all	2	4	8	<i>*separate risk assessment for activity is available in handbook</i> , trained staff present at all times, safety procedures followed.	JS / MS -prior to & on visit.	Intellectual – fire safety – benefits and risks of fire Emotional – respecting the fire and each other's safety
9	perimeter fence & gates	escape of children	children	1	2	2	ensure all gates are closed and main gates are locked. Register children on entry and supervise throughout, ensure children are aware of boundaries, send children to toilets inside school building in 2s.	all - on visit	Emotional – taking care of each other when visiting the toilet, Communicating – telling and adult where you are going Social – aware of rules and boundaries – which builds the community

	Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Probability (P) 1-5	Severity 1-5	Rating PXS 1- 25	existing measures / new measures	who will do it ? when?	Benefits SPICES
10	Mushrooms and fungi	poisoning	children	2	2/3	6-9	inform all children and adults to look only, no touching. Wash hands if touched by accident.	all - on visit	Intellectual – learning about dangers of flora.but also the benefits of fungi Communicating – if fungi is spotted informing the group leader and community
11	bees, wasps, ants, ticks	stings and bites	all	3	2	6	check area for nests, avoid contact, first aider always on site, seek medical aid (999) if anaphylactic shock.	all - on visit	Intellectual – understanding the difference between bees and wasps and how to react when they are around. Understanding why they sting. Emotional – understanding how to react in a calm way around the flying insects
12	tools	cuts, grazes, injury to limbs.	all	3	3/4	9-12	tools stored away from premises, used on a one to one basis, <i>*separate risk assessment for each tool available in Forest School handbook</i> , strict supervision, correct use of tools. Tool talks	All - on visit	Intellectual – understanding use of each tool and how to use safely. Communicating – when using tools in pairs and tool talks Emotional – understanding how the other person on the pair feels

	Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Probability (P) 1-5	Severity 1-5	Rating PXS 1- 25	existing measures / new measures	who will do it ? when?	Benefits SPICES
13	boundaries	escapees	children	1	2	2	children informed of boundaries, staff supervise the boundary. Correct adult / children ratio for age of children and knowing the community of children well – extra risk assessment for children with additional needs who are likely to escape.	All - on visit	Social – understanding the importance of supporting each other and looking after each other within the community. Spiritual – helping and supporting others. Intellectual – understanding the need for boundaries
14	ropes and swings	Falls, rope burns	children	3	3	9	check quality of ropes & knots. first aider on site at all times. Teach children how to use rope safely. Adult supervision at all times when using ropes	All - on visit	Intellectual – understanding properties of rope. Taking risks and building confidence to try new activities
15	Climbing trees	falls	children	3	3	9	first aider on site at all times, support children to manage their own risks. Adult supervision of climbing	All - on visit	Intellectual – taking risks to build confidence, social working together to support climbing safely and successfully

	Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Probability (P) 1-5	Severity 1-5	Rating PXS 1- 25	existing measures / new measures	who will do it ? when?	Benefits SPICES
16	Weather – Hot sun and cold weather	Sun burn / sun stroke, hyperthermia	ALL	3	3/4	9-12	Children told to wear long trousers and long sleeved tops suitable for the weather (long and loose in warm weather and thick and warm in cold weather). Wear layers in cold weather and suitable waterproof coats. Hoods, hats, gloves and scarves needed in wintry conditions – spares kept in school if necessary. Sun cream to be worn in hot weather, seek shade throughout session, sun hats to be worn and water available at all times. Hot drinks available in cold weather and more active games played. Use of parachute for community games when shelter is necessary, building of tarps and tents for shade and shelter.	JS / MS each session	Intellectual – understanding the impact of weather on their health and wellbeing. Preparing for all weathers and eventualities Physical – building shelters and shade Spiritual – being aware of how you are feeling and adapting activities to suit

Emergency Arrangements

Serious Accident: Seek additional adult help, provide first aid, call ambulance 999, inform parents (next of kin). Return all other children into the classroom, keep them calm, read stories, sing songs etc. Write up accident report form, inform HSE, assess risk assessment and make new adjustments for future.

Minor Accident: Provide first aid, complete accident report form, inform parents (carer), assess risk assessment and make adjustments for future.

Weather change: Make dynamic risk assessment, seek shelter in outdoor classroom or return to indoor classroom.

Safety Advice

Clothing: long trousers and long sleeves, warm clothing in cold weather, waterproof clothing in wet weather. Safety gauntlets at fire, work wear gloves for using tools and collecting rubbish. Spare clothing available in the classroom for emergencies.

Communications: Mobile phones carried by leaders on 2 separate networks, land line available in school office.

First Aid: woodland first aid kit to be taken for each visit. **See handbook for full list of what is needed.*

Food and Drink: wash hands before eating, sit for eating and drinking, take snack and drink for full sessions, take cups, wet wipes and rubbish bags **See handbook for full list of what is needed.*

Children's safety advice: remind children of rules being outside. **See handbook for full list.*

Staff safety advice: Staff to discuss any worries before entering the site before each session and decide if it is safe to enter as a team. Consider weather, environment, state of site etc.

Food Hygiene

We teach the children not to eat anything they have found. Food provided by Forest School Leaders should be eaten in the log circle after washing hands at the start of each session.

When children are ready, they will take part in cooking experiences by the fire. These will include: toasting marshmallows and damper bread. As skills develop, this will include cooking vegetable dishes such as kebabs, baked apples, pineapple sponges and pancakes. Wild food will not be used to avoid confusion amongst the children as to what is safe and unsafe to eat.

Food preparation, transport and storage

- ✓ Hands will be washed thoroughly with running water (school toilet facilities / large canister of water) and soap.
- ✓ Cuts and grazes will be covered with blue plasters
- ✓ Most food preparation will take place in the school kitchen
- ✓ Any preparation carried out by the fire will be carried out using clean equipment that has been stored in a clean and covered box.
- ✓ Food will be stored in clean containers and transported in a cool bag to and from the site.
- ✓ Food will remain covered to avoid attracting flies / insects
- ✓ All 'use by' dates will be checked on foods before eating.
- ✓ Water for cooking and drinking will be provided in cleaned and sealed storage canisters.
- ✓ All food will be checked by an adult to ensure it is fully cooked before eating / remind children if food is too hot to eat to count to 20 whilst blowing.
- ✓ Children will be asked to sit still in the log circle around the fire.

- ✓ All food not eaten or cooked will be placed in rubbish bags and disposed of in the appropriate manner within school – e.g compost bins / recycling / general waste.
- ✓ The cooking and eating area is checked to ensure all food traces are removed to avoid attracting vermin.
- ✓ All utensils and pans will be placed in a cool box and transported back to school. These will be washed in the school kitchen using hot, soapy running water.

13. **Designated first aiders and insurance**

Both Mrs Smith and Mrs Seagrave have been trained in ITC Outdoor First Aid and are the designated first aiders for Forest School sessions. The First Aid Kit will be in the Happy Bag each session and stored in a central place. Both Forest School leaders carry a mobile phone in the event of an emergency call needing to be made. In the event of a serious accident, an ambulance will be called. One of the Forest School leaders will remain with the casualty, whilst the other continues the session away from the casualty / removes the children to safety within the school building. In the case of a serious accident involving the Forest School leader, help will be available in the school building close by.

All first aid incidents and accidents will be recorded in the school reporting book and forms completed as necessary for the parents and Local Authority.

Our Forest School Sessions are covered under School insurance for outdoor activities. (see school website)

14. Environmental impact, phase one survey, impact assessment, 3 year plan

Stage One – Description of the Forest School Site

Phase one Survey

Description of Forest School Site		
Name of Wood / Site	Location	Grid Reference
Abbey Road Forest On school field	Abbey Road Primary School Tewkesbury Close, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5ND	SK 59758 36868
Owner		
Nottingham County Council County Hall West Bridgford Nottingham NG2 7QP		
Description of Site		
<p>Flat area edged with hawthorn hedgerows. Lined with 10 mature Lime trees and 1 mature oak tree. Newly planted oak tree, 4 x maple trees, 4 x silver birch trees, 5 x hazel trees.</p> <p>One small wildlife pond, no slopes. Close to school toilets and first aid facilities – maximum 50m.</p> <p>Housing estate backs onto large hedgerow on one boundary. Other boundary backs onto a school playing field. Beyond this is a public recreation field. There are some allotments alongside the public footpath at the side of the school.</p> <p>The school is about 1 mile from a town centre and less than 3 miles from Nottingham City Centre.</p>		
Woodland Description		
Flora	Trees	Mature lime trees on the outer edge of the area. One mature oak tree in the corner. Newly planted oak trees, 4 x maple trees, 4x silver birch, 5x hazel trees. Hawthorn hedgerows
	Plants	Grass, dandelions, daisies, clover
	Fungi	Some honey fungus has been found on the stump of an old Rowan Tree but this is not in our Forest school area.

	Mosses	Hypnum and Eurhynchium spp – feathery fern like stems, light green in colour, found in the shaded areas with poor drainage.
Fauna	Birds	Magpies, great tit, blackbirds, sparrows and robins
	Mammals	Foxes, squirrels, cats
	Insects	Bees, woodlice, worms, ladybirds, snails, ants, wasps
Abiotic Elements		
Water	Original underground springs have been found in the school grounds. However, these are not part of the Forest School area.	
Soil	Soil monthly temperature- 7.79c Annual Temp 10.64C Soil Texture – loam to clay soil- depth is deep	
Bedrock / Surface Rock	Soil Parent material- claystone/Mudstone	
Archaeological Considerations		
One of the oak trees on the far east of the school grounds borders a public footpath. Unfortunately, this suffered fire damage from vandals, and was deemed to be unsafe. Even though this tree had a TPO (Tree Preservation Order) on it, for safety reasons it was chopped down. The trunk remains in the grounds as a habitat.		
Management History		
History of our land is sketchy and tricky to find out. Recent history has been easier to access. It appears that much of the land on which the school and grounds were built was an orchard. 90% of these trees were taken away in the early part of the 20 th century to make way for allotments and water filter beds used by the Council. These subsequently became landfill sites when the council decided to sell the land to build houses and a school. The landfill was used to level the land underneath. In 1966 the school was built, with many of the original trees being kept as part of the grounds. In recent years, sinkholes have appeared on the school fields revealing corrugated metal underneath and water sources. It is thought these were originally underground springs or wells. This would explain why the flora and trees grows so well on our grounds as well as why it often floods!		

Long Term Vision

Our plan is to plant more trees to create a wooded area and return the area to what it was many years ago. We have planted oak, hazel, field maple and silver birch trees, along with wildflowers. We plan to introduce felled trees and branches and logs to encourage a range of flora and fauna to visit our site. Over the years, we hope to see this grow and develop and see our children learning and growing through our developing woodland. We also hope that it will become a rich and diverse area for us to develop our Forest School sessions. The trees on site are managed by an external company employed by the school to assess tree health and maintenance. Through Forest School sessions, we intend to engage the children in pruning and maintenance as necessary.

Impact Matrix to Assess the Ecological Effects of Forest Schools Activities

Activity	Ground Layer	Field Layer	Shrub Layer	Canopy Layer
Outside Art	<p>Compaction by people trampling and moving leaves and sticks, possible habitats</p> <p>Negative- temporary and reversible</p>	<p>Compaction by people trampling and moving leaves and sticks, possible habitats</p> <p>Negative- temporary and reversible</p>	<p>Protection of this layer- teach children not to remove anything that is growing</p> <p>Positive – temporary few years</p>	<p>Loose branches falling and protection of bird nests</p> <p>Positive permanent</p>
Den Building	<p>Disturbing habitats</p> <p>Negative Permanent</p>	<p>Compaction by people trampling</p> <p>Negative temporary and reversible</p>	<p>Protection of newly planted trees. Ensure that branches and trunks are well developed to take the tension of the rope.</p> <p>Positive permanent and irreversible</p>	<p>Protection of newly planted trees. Ensure that branches and trunks are well developed to take the tension of the rope.</p> <p>Positive permanent and irreversible</p>
Fire Lighting	<p>Compaction by people trampling</p> <p>Scorching of ground</p> <p>Negative temporary and reversible</p>	<p>Disturbing habitats by collecting fire wood</p> <p>Negative Permanent</p>	<p>Ensure firewood is collected from the forest floor and not living trees</p> <p>Positive permanent</p>	<p>Ensure fire circle is not overhung by branches and low trees</p> <p>Positive permanent</p>

Short Term –blue Medium Term- Orange Long Term – Red Permanent (e.g. 100 years) – Temporary (e.g. 0 – Decades) – Reversible

Three Year Management Plan

Factors	Location map ref	Current situation	Target situation	Preventative measures	Monitoring	Method of management	Time Scale
Pathways	Main entrance along hedgerow Small other tracks throughout	Difficult and muddy during poor weather. Hedge can become overgrown	To make it more weather proof and safe	Hedgerows are pruned by external agencies Prune any branches that stick out	Review growth of hedge and condition of path each session	Children to monitor path and assist with laying of bark	Year 1 Lay bark path Year 2 Maintain path 3 Maintain and extend where necessary
Deadwood	At the end of the field	Children play on the dead wood disturbing habitats	To build a bug hotel using the dead wood for insects to thrive	Encourage to observe without disturbing	Regular observation by the children of the habitat during session	Regular building of bug hotel and checking that wood and other are not depleting	Year 1 Create bug hotel Year 2 and 3 Maintain hotel
Nettles	On main walkway	Growth over path	Protective clothing and discuss the risk of nettles. Teach about the medical properties of dot leaves	Cut back nettles that have overgrown and pose a risk	Each session	Cut back	Year 1-3 maintain
Ground Cover	Main Forest school area	Grass is in a good state of growth with daisies, clover and dandelions	To maintain the grass growth and grow a greater range of wild flowers	To rotate area used for log seat circle	Check condition of grass each session	Observation and movement of logs	Year 1 Sew seeds Year 2 maintain wildflower seeds and grass seeds

					In dry weather ensure seeds are watered.		Year 3 Reassess the ground
Wildlife	In trees and bushes	Habitats are being disturbed by the children using loose parts	To make bug hotel Make bird feeders and make bee homes	Educate children on helping wildlife	Observation and support from the RSBP	Avoid damage to wildlife homes	Year 1 build Year 2 and 3 maintain
Fire circle	To the north of the site, away from the hedgerow and trees overhead	Circle of seats but no fire	To build a fire with a surrounding barrier	To have a fire on a slab	Check for scorching of surrounding area	Children can help to maintain the area	Year 1 build Year 2 improve Year 3 Maintain
New trees	Edge of school field	Established trees around the edge of field	Expand the woodland	Tree covers to protect new bark from wildlife	Keep check on new growth Water daily in hot weather for first year Inform the grounds people to take care when cutting the grass	Monthly check	Year 1 plant Year 2 Maintain Year 3 Prune as necessary
Forest school shed	Within school garden	Shared with gardening club Small storage area for Forest school equipment	Shed is organised, stocked and secure To create a log store for drying and burning timber	Ensure equipment is put back in the correct place and locked with two padlocks	Each visit check security and tidiness of shed. Keep free of fire hazards	FS leaders to check stock and organise a dried log pile area	Year 1 organise shed Year 2 make a log store Year 3 Maintain and fill log store

15. Safeguarding

The full Child Protection policy for the school can be viewed on the website, and should be followed alongside the following:

Abbey Road Forest School's safeguarding policy is to ensure every child who is a registered pupil at our school is safe and protected from harm. The policy gives clear direction about the expected behaviour and legal responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children at Abbey Road School. It is the responsibility of every member of staff, volunteer and regular visitor to our school to ensure that they carry out the requirements of this procedure, and at all times, work in a way that will safeguard and promote the welfare of everyone.

The very nature of Forest Schools allows children to investigate and take risks in a safe environment. As Forest School Leaders we will promote this investigation and child-initiated play, whilst ensuring children follow safe guidelines and rules.