North Wootton Academy

Eastern Multi-Academy Trust
Empower - Motivate - Aspire - Transform

FOREST SCHOOL

AT

NORTH WOOTTON ACADEMY

Introduction to Forest School

"Forest school offers children and young people the opportunity, over repeated visits, to engage with the rich natural diversity of the woodland environment to help build confidence, sensitivity, resilience and curiosity."

Forest School Training Company

What is Forest School?

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

Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and complements the wider context of outdoor and woodland education. The ethos is shared by thousands of trained practitioners across the UK and beyond. Its roots reach back to early years pioneers in outdoor learning and across the sea to Scandinavia.

In order for Forest School education to be called Forest School, the programme must follow a set of principles and a particular ethos. These principles were first articulated by the Forest School Community in 2002. They were reviewed in 2011 and sent out for a 5-month consultation to Forest School networks and practitioners in all UK nations. They were published on the Institute for Outdoor Learning Forest School SIG page in Feb 2012, and in the minutes of the GB trainers' network.

Principles of Forest School

Principle 1

Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

Principle 2

Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

Principle 3

Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners

Principle 4

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

Principle 5

Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

Principle 6

Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

What does Forest School look like at North Wootton Academy?

Forest school is a unique and inspirational learning process where children can develop their self-worth alongside enriching all areas of their learning in a real-life context.
Forest school is a process that children at North Wootton Academy are honoured to be a part of, where they use their own 'on-site' woodland area.
It is a hands on learning experience, personalised to each child and motivated by their own interests and passions.
We believe that developing emotional intelligence, self-esteem and social skills are the key foundations that a person needs, and time is taken to develop these. During Forest School, children will be motivated and feel empowered to achieve tasks and activities that challenge their individual aspirations in ways that they learn best.
In Forest School, children will develop an understanding and connection with the natural world, appreciate our rural surroundings, work with tools, play, explore, and learn the boundaries of behaviour by managing risks.

Examples of Forest School Activities

- Exploring the natural environment through their sense of awe and wonder.
- Den and shelter building to develop their own games and imaginative play.
- Camp fires and cooking
- Tree climbing and tree stump balancing
- Natural crafts
- Tool use (only when the Level 3 leader feels confidence from the individual.
- Scavenger/minibeast hunts
- Team building games
- Storytelling

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Principle (James Grimsby) to ensure that the school has the correct insurance to cover the activities carried out in Forest School sessions.

A qualified Level 3 Forest School Leader (Emma Bond) must always be present for a Forest School session. If no Forest School leader is present, outdoor learning sessions can still happen in the forest area, but Forest School related activities must not take place.

All members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that they follow the school policies in terms of safeguarding, health and safety, first aid etc.

Any first aid can be carried out by any trained First Aid member present at forest school (providing they have had basic first aid training), however, it is advised that a 'Forest School first aid' trained staff member (Emma Bond) oversees and is aware of any first aid carried out if it is not them. Their outdoor first aid qualification must be renewed every three years. Staff are to follow the usual procedures to log any first aid.

Name	Job Role
James Grimsby	Principal Designated Safeguarding Lead
Michele Hammond	Deputy Principal
Emma Bond	Level 3 Forest School Leader EYFS Lead Class Teacher
Oliver Whitby	Chair of Governors

Role of the Forest School Leader

My name is Miss Emma Bond and I am the Forest School Leader at North Wootton Academy. It is my role to lead the Forest School planning, delivery of sessions and evaluations of the Forest School programme to each group of learners. It is also my role to take full responsibility of the policies and risk assessments ensuring they are followed at all times to ensure quality assurance and safe Forest School sessions. This will be supported by the signing of this handbook to show that everyone supporting at Forest School has read and agreed to the procedures in place in this document. Each session of Forest School, I will be supported by at least 2 teaching assistants from North Wootton Academy. I will only use North Wootton Academy staff to support sessions as they have all up to date DBS checks and all teaching assistants are first aid trained in addition to me having my Outdoor First Aid qualification.

Within each Forest School session, I aim to observe children's interactions with nature through child initiated play. Observations of learners will include their self-esteem and self-confidence in addition to their social, emotional and physical development. I will also observe their creativity and intellectual development.

My role is to support, encourage, stand back and observe, without interference unless the children are putting themselves or others at risk. I introduce games and activities to help the children learn about the natural world, to recognise hazards and to assess potential risks to themselves and others.

Forest School Rules

It is the Forest School Leader's responsibility to ensure all members of supporting staff are aware of the rules in Forest School.

Enter/Exit of Woodland Site	Children enter the site through the magic pathway into a world they desire. When leaving the site, we say 'thank you for letting us explore'.
Woodland Boundaries	The children are taught the woodland area boundaries. We use "1,2,3 where are you?" to group the children at the end. The children then wolf howl to say "I'm here!"
Use of Sticks	Children can play with sticks assuming they have measured the stick and it is no longer than their arm. If they need longer sticks for building, children will drag them bottom of the stick on the floor. Sticks must not be thrown or pulled from living trees.
Digging	Children can carefully dig and move soil to search for minibeasts but deep pits/holes must not be created.
Ropes and String	Rope and string can be used adult supervision.
Fire	Wood maybe collected from the site for fire lighting, but only what is needed. Fires will be created in a fire square and never left unattended. See fire risk assessment for more details.
Tools	Tools are used for a purpose and all adults should model their correct use, storage and transportation at all times. Tools are used well away from other active children and only walking is permitted when carrying them. Gloves are never worn when using tools. See tool use policy and risk assessment for more details.
Food and Drink	Food and drink cannot be consumed in the woodland area unless part of an activity. Children must be reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses. When having drinks and snacks children will use wipes & water to clean their hands before consumption. Emergency water (for drinking and washing) will be taken every session.

Forest School Site

The Forest School site is located on the grounds of North Wootton Academy. The site is located at the end of the school field and is displayed on the map below using a red circle.

The FS site is made up of mixed deciduous trees, mainly Oak and Birch. The site does have a lot of Holly too. Around the boundaries, there is a mixture of climbing plants such as Ivy.

The FS site is managed carefully at the moment and as our Forest School progresses we hope to allow the site to go a little wilder and develop a deeper diversity.

The site is within school grounds and is not accessible to the public but the perimeter need to be carefully monitored as the site seems to be a magnet for local youths. Given the nature of some of our young people, the site is carefully monitored for tripping hazards.

Children taking part in Forest School are encouraged to minimise their impact on the site. This includes:

- Finding out about the different animals and plants that live in and amongst the trees.
- Learning to respect habitats.
- Careful observations of live animals.
- Leaving lying deadwood in place to encourage habitats.
- Taking all materials and litter with them when they leave the site.
- Ensuring that the site is left like they found it.

A Typical Forest School Session

Each Forest School sessions follows a simple routine. The session begins by the children getting ready to go outside by dressing appropriately—waterproofs suits and wellies. We then travel across the school field in an orderly line where we then go through the rules and routines. The children help to collect and transport resources we need to take to the forest.

We always meet at the forest entrance before heading in. A circle area of tree stumps has been created which is central to everything that happens at Forest School. It is where the group assembles and socialises.

At the start of each session, children and leaders sit and talk about what they enjoyed in their previous sessions and what they are planning to do during this session.

Many activities take place in or around the circle, such as natural art and woodwork.

Early sessions of Forest School involve children getting to know the forest area and learning basic safety rules. They then progress to more complex and detailed tasks and are given more “free time” for personalised learning.

At the end of each session, children are encouraged to help leaders pack away tools and equipment they have been using and help to return the woodland to the state in which they found it.

Daily Operating Procedures

Pre-Visit Checks—Carried out by FS Leader

- Run through risk assessments, amend and update them as required.
- Remove any trip hazards within the forest area.
- Cut back any overhanging branches from trees.
- Ensure all paths and walkways are clear.
- Ensure risk assessments have been completed for each activity (if required).
- Ensure circle area is clear with stable logs for sitting on.
- Set up hand washing station.
- Check the green and black rucksack is fully stocked with the necessary items.
- Ensure all activities have the correct resources required.
- Check the tools are in good working order.
- Ensure mobile phone is fully charged and school radio has sufficient battery and office radio is switched on.

Start of Forest School Session

- Register taken and headcount completed in class line order.
- Run through Forest School rules and site boundaries with the children.
- Remind children of behaviour expectations and how to maintain safety.
- Travel safely to Forest School Site.

During the Forest School Session

- Children to choose their activities.
- Forest School Leader to model activities set up for children to choose from.
- Carry out regular check ins ("1,2,3 where are you?" with headcounts).
- Take photos and make observations of individual children.

End of Forest School Session

- Tidy up Forest School Site, return all resources to the shed. Count and pack away all equipment and resources.
- Assemble class line order to carry out a headcount.
- Ensure Forest School Site is left with a 'no trace policy'.
- Walk back to school, toilet and get changed.
- Complete a Forest School Session evaluation.

Health and Safety

The following points are in addition to our Health and Safety policy which can be found on the school website. These Health and Safety points directly relate to Forest School sessions:

- It doesn't matter how many adults attend the Forest School session but the person in charge is always the trained Forest School Leader.
- The Forest School Leader has overall duty of care for the children in his/her charge, but all adults are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure children are safe.
- Everyone who is supporting in a Forest School session must sign and date a form to show they have read this handbook and appropriate risk assessments and understand and agree to comply with the general operating procedures for Forest School.
- The Forest School Leader or Assistant will always carry a First Aid kit and emergency bag.
- When tools are used the adult:child ratio will always be 1:1

Forest Schools aims to encourage risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others. Through appropriate risk and challenge, children can build their confidence and solve problems and it is the Forest School leader who is responsible for ensuring that there are no unacceptable levels of risk.

To do this we:

- Look for potential hazards and decide who might be at harm.
- Think about how harm may occur and the worst outcome that we could face.
- Evaluate the current level of risk and decide on a course of action that will be put in place to minimise the potential risk.
- Re-evaluate the level of risk once our course of action has been put in place.
- Create a risk assessment and collate them in the Forest School file.
- Inform all adults that accompany the group and require them to sign each relevant risk assessment to show that they have read and understood them
- Regularly monitor and review each risk assessment. Through effective risk assessment and management the Forest School leader is responsible for ensuring that pupils are not exposed to unacceptable levels of risk.

Risk assessments in place are:

- Site risk assessment
- Activity risk assessments (e.g. for tool use, fire)
- Any pupil specific risk assessment (e.g. behaviour, medical)
- A daily site check before each session

As well as risk assessments, there will be appropriate staff to pupil ratios for each session, taking into account activities planned for and the needs of individuals.

Health and Safety Contd...

Cancellation

Forest school sessions will not take place for various reasons:

- Adverse weather conditions (high winds, thunderstorms, heavy rain).
- After the daily site check—if the leader believes there is something that the children are at risk of e.g. hanging dead wood, recent tree falling.
- Level 3 Forest School Leader is unable to deliver sessions.

In the event of cancelling a Forest School session, enhanced provision activities will be set up in the classrooms for the children to continue the child-centred approach.

Food and Drink

Children do not have access to food in the woodland area. If the session is longer than 60 minutes, water bottles can be taken. The only food consumed in the woodland area is food from an activity e.g. smores on the camp fire. Emergency water, for handwashing and drinking, will be taken down to the forest every session.

Toileting

There are no toilet facilities at the woodland area. The nearest toilets are located on back at school and children can walk across the field with a member of staff should they choose to use the toilets. 'Wild wees' are encouraged. Handwashing facilities are taken during every session.

Equipment

Essential Equipment	Additional Equipment
First Aid Kit	Fire kit and burns kit (camp fire activity).
Emergency Procedures	Eye wash
Medical Information & Contact Details	Survival Blankets
Risk Assessments	Hot Water in a Flask
Mobile Phone & School Radio	Snacks
Whistle	Torch
Individual Medication	Welfare Kits

Forest School Fire Policy

At North Wootton Academy Forest School, campfires are an important element of a Forest School session. The experience of a camp fire encourages learners to listen to one another, listen to camp fire stories, join in with camp fire singing and ultimately, cooking and sharing food.
"Staring into a fire can reduce blood pressure and induce a trance like state which can result in long term advantages such as reduced blood pressure, better quality sleep and a calmer mind. These all contribute to an improved health and well-being".
https://www.charltonandjenrick.co.uk/news/2020/05/the-psychological-benefits-of-a-warming-fire/

North Wootton Academy Forest School aims to ensure that learners participant with fire as safely and enjoyable as possible.

Preparation for a Camp Fire

- The location of the camp fire will be the same every session. Location of the camp fire is in the centre of the seating circle near the forest entrance. The camp fire will be in a shallow fire pit surrounded by damp small tree trunks.
- The camp fire area will be assessed to ensure the ground is clear of any trip hazards, e.g. new growth of weeds.
- Learners will be educated and will agree to follow the camp fire rules before participating in the camp fire experience. If camp fires are used in sessions with Early Years children, additional staff will be required to ensure highest safety.
- The seating circle stumps are positioned approximately 1.5 metres away from the camp fire with reasonable gaps between each stump to ensure exit points are frequent and clear.
- The seating circle stumps are securely positioned in the ground to ensure they remain stable, without wobbling.
- Leaners must never walk within the seating circle. Learners must always walk around the outside to find their seating stump and the seating circle must never be crossed.
- A fire blanket must be positioned close by with a watering can full of water and the first aid kit.

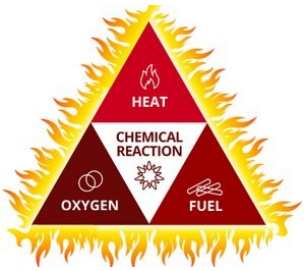
Lighting the Camp Fire

- The camp fire will always be lit by the Level 3 Forest School Leader (Emma Bond) and it will be supervised by the leader at all times. Children in Early Years and Key Stage 1 are too young to be near the fire.
- Nothing must be thrown onto the fire at any point.
- Learners may use long bamboo sticks to hold food over the fire. Learners may only leave their seating stump if instructed by the Forest School Leader.
- Leaners must kneel beside the fire or in a stable position.
- Any loose clothing (scarves) must be removed before approaching the fire and hair must be tied back.
- A fire glove must be worn at all times when assisting the fire.

Forest School Fire Policy Continued

- Learners should avoid sitting in the direction of smoke. If a seating stump is available on the other side of the circle, learners are encouraged to walk around the outside of the circle and change seats.
- If there isn't a free seating stump, learners should cover their face with their hand, close their eyes or simply turn their head away.
- Fires must only be ignited using matches or a fire steel. Lighters must not be used!
- Fires should only be built up using wood (twigs and sticks). Any materials, other than wood, should not go on the fire.

In order for the fire to be lit, learners will be educated about the 'Fire Triangle'.



https://www.firerescue1.com/fire-products/apparatus-accessories/articles/what-is-a-fire-triangle-4HSY7X5xagWZR5KQ/

Learners will be able to participant in the lighting of the camp fire by collecting the resources needed.

- **Tinder:** dry grass, very dry leaves, dry bark, very fine (match stick size) twigs, dry pine cone needles.
- **Kindling:** dry very small twigs (thickness of a toothpick), dry small twigs (thickness of a pencil), larger twigs (thickness of a thumb).

Wood needs to be very dry which makes a nice snapping sound when snapped or broken.

Putting out the Camp Fire

Ideally, the camp fire should be extinguished when the fire has burnt down to ash. However, due to time restraints, this may not always be possible. The camp fire will be extinguished by the Level 3 Forest School Leader only!

- The Forest School Leader will carefully pour small amounts of water over the fire.
- Cinders and ash will be moved around to reduce the levels of oxygen before adding more water on.
- Smoke levels will be assessed and water will be poured on gradually when smoke levels have reduced.
- The Leader will use a large poking stick to move the fire remains around to allow it to cool quicker.
- Water will continue to be poured on until there is no smoke left.
- All camp fires will be put out at the end of every session.
- Water will be the only material used to distinguish the fire.
- Camp fires cannot be left unattended at any time until all the smoke has gone.

Policy Created: October 2021

Review Date: October 2022

Forest School Tool Policy

"Using tools in forest school allows children to experience danger in the form of risky equipment". Therefore, at North Wootton Academy Forest School, we aim for learners to experience a sensible level of danger by using hand tools confidently and safely.
https://earlyimpactlearning.com/10-forest-school-tools-activities/

Hand tools will only be introduced to learners in a Forest School session if the Forest School leader feels the learner is confident and capable to engage in risky equipment. If the Forest School leader does not feel confident about the learners capability, hand tools will not be introduced until the Forest School leader is 100% comfortable.

Tool Safety

- All hand tools will be stored in a locked toolbox which only the Forest School Leader has access to.
- There will be a set number of tools in the toolbox that will need to be counted in and out.
- Each hand tool has a specific use and learners will be educated on the correct use for each tool.
- Learners will be educated how hand tools should be carried and moved around the Forest School site.
- The Forest School site will have a designated 'tool use' area away from the rest of the activities.
- Learners must never run with a hand tool.
- Forest School leader will check for any damages before and after a Forest School session.
- Forest School leader will clean tools after every session (if used).
- All bladed tools will be covered with a protective sheath.

Tools Used at North Wootton Academy Forest School

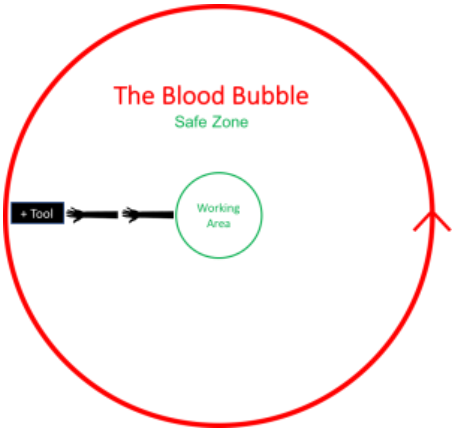
The Forest School Leader will decide on appropriate tools for specific age groups and if the tool is the correct tool for the desired activity.

- **Potato Peelers**—used for peeling vegetables only ready to be cooked on the camp fire.
- **Gimlets**—used for making small holes.
- **Knife**—used for food preparation (chopping vegetables) and whittling of wood.
- **Bow Saw**—used for harvesting green wood e.g. branches. Bow saw can be used in pairs.
- **Folding Saw**—used for cutting branches. They can get into smaller spaces compared with the bow saw. They can only be used by one person at a time.
- **Hand Drill**—used for making holes in wood that are larger than gimlets. They are harder to use than a gimlet, often used as progression from a gimlet.
- **Mallet**—used for den building, hammering wooden pegs into the ground.
- **Hammer**—used for leaf bashing onto material.
- **Loppers**—used for pruning shrubs and chopping branches.
- **Handsaw**—used for cutting branches, planks of wood and smaller logs. They can only be used by one person at a time. Not as effective when cutting fresh green wood in comparison to the bow saw.

Forest School Tool Policy Continued

- **Secateurs**—used for pruning and cutting smaller branches.
- **Rakes**—used for clearing leaf litter, clearing pathways.
- **Spade**—used for digging.

When using hand tools, learners will be educated about the blood bubble.



http://learningintheleaves.co.uk/hand-tools

'The Blood Bubble' is the safe working space around an individual or pair of individuals. The name is designed to show that this is the safe distance bystanders should stay out of to avoid being hurt, when a tool is in use. The 'Blood Bubble' is given a consistent size (two arms and a tools length) so learners easily remember. With younger children it maybe necessary to mark out the 'Blood Bubble', as they may not be able to visualise the size of the area.
http://learningintheleaves.co.uk/hand-tools

When hand tools are being used, learners are educated about the 'safe stance' or sometimes known as the 'respect position'.
The 'safe stance' or 'respect position' involves the learner(s) kneeling on one knee. This position gives learners a stable base whilst opening up space for them to use tools safely. The respect position also enables learners to move quickly out of the way if they should need too. When taking the respect position, learners should think carefully about where they are kneeling in relation to the job they are completing or the tool which they are using.
http://learningintheleaves.co.uk/hand-tools

Hand tools will only ever be introduced on a 1:1/1:2 basis depending on capability of the learners.

Policy Created: October 2021
Review Date: October 2022

Food Hygiene Policy

"A campfire is a great opportunity and novel way of introducing learners to cooking. Preparing food and eating together around the fire fosters a sense of camaraderie among the group, promotes fine motor skills (by chopping and stirring), can boost children's confidence in their own abilities and can help promote a healthy relationship with food and nature, all of which can benefit learners in wider life". https://www.lancswt.org.uk/blog/molly-toal/cooking-treats-forest-school

Therefore, at North Wootton Academy Forest School, we aim to promote good food hygiene within learners to promote a connection between nature and being healthy.

Initially, we adopt a 'nil by mouth' policy unless a specific activity has been led by the Forest School Leader. The 'nil by mouth' policy is used to eradicate dangerous foraging e.g. eating poisonous berries. Generally speaking, children who are ready to engage in simple cooking activities on the camp fire will participate in activities like toasting marshmallows and making s'mores. Cooking is always led by the Forest School Leader.

Preparation of Food

- Learners hands will be washed thoroughly with soap and water using the handwashing facilities in the Forest Area.
- If learners have any open wounds (cuts/grazes), these will be required to be covered using blue plasters or gloves.
- Any food that needs preparing e.g. vegetables chopping, cheese sliced, will be done on a clean chopping board.
- Raw meat will not be used for any form of cooking in Forest School sessions.
- All food will be checked against their 'use by' dates.
- Any food that needs to be refrigerated will be stored in the fridge in Acorns classroom until ready to leave for the Forest School session.

Food Disposal

- All unwanted food will be tied in a bin bag and disposed of in the normal waste disposal process carried out by Churchills Cleaning Team.
- Food waste cannot be left down in the Forest School area due to the possibility of unwanted rodents, e.g. rats.
- Food waste cannot be used to feed Forest animals e.g. muntjac deer, pigeons, squirrels.

Food Equipment

- All equipment that was used for food preparation must be cleaned using hot soapy water back at the main school building.

Policy Created: October 2021
Review Date: October 2022

Accident and Emergency

Outdoor First Aider: Miss Emma Bond
Paediatric First Aider: Mrs Aimee Rix and Mrs Michelle Barnes
General First Aider: Miss Mandy Brewer and Mrs Theresa Dunn,

Minor Incidents

1. Individual assessed by a first aid trained staff member.
2. Treat as required (first aid kit hung on the tree near the shed), gaining additional assistance if required (additional support form other staff members, or asking an 'outdoor first aid' trained member of staff to carry out first aid if more appropriate).
3. Fill in first aid book to record incident, any injuries to face or head, school office will be notified to contact home (if a child has been hurt). First aid book to be completed in school on return.

Major Incident

1. Member of staff to attend casualties immediately (normally outdoor first aid trained member of staff). If they are unable, any first aid trained member of staff to attend but outdoor first aid staff member will be notified.
2. Ensure the rest of the group immediately stop what they are doing and congregate safely around the circle supervised by a school member of staff.
3. Assess the situation and distinguish between walking wounded (person is able to walk to get help e.g. broken arm), or a more serious accident (person is unable to walk) e.g. unconscious). Forest School Leader to contact school office. School office to contact emergency services, if necessary, (999) and inform parent.
4. Monitor incident and make notes while comforting casualty.
5. When deemed safe, get the rest of the children with their designated adult to go back inside until the emergency is dealt with.
6. Complete incident report form/write in 'First Aid book'. Senior leadership team to complete online reporting forms, review incident, review our practice, and review the forest rules to ensure quality assurance. Report to RIDDOR for any major incidents.

RIDDOR Reporting

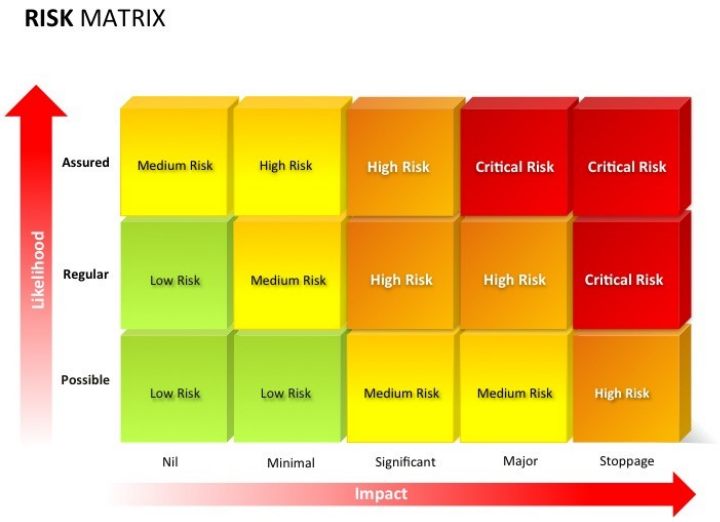
RIDDOR puts duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises (the Responsible Person) to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences (near misses).

Near Miss

In the case of a near miss, the senior leadership team will review risk assessments and review practice to ensure quality assurance.

Risk Management

- Here at North Wootton Academy, we are fully aware of the risks that need to be considered when delivering Forest School sessions. From these risks, there are benefits that we believe children should experience. Taking appropriate risk is a vital part of learning and developing and we want to ensure children are experiencing risk in a safe environment. The Forest School Leader will always ensure that appropriate and regular risk assessments are carried out, monitored and reviewed. Children are also encouraged to check for possible risks, e.g. tree stumps, hanging dead wood, berries, nettles and brambles. Wildlife and different weather conditions can create new challenges and changes to the forest area. These will need to be assessed prior to each session and may alter previously arranged activities.
- When conducting the daily site check and appropriate risk assessments, the following diagram is used to highlight to risk probability along with the impact.



https://tentwelveinsights.com/2015/04/13/the-pain-of-losing-by-one-point/

The diagram above allows the severity of the risk and impact to be analysed. Activities can only take place if they are 'low risk'. If the activity falls within the 'critical risk', it must not take place. However, if the activity is 'medium or high' risk, control actions must take place and a judgement must be made as to whether or not it is an appropriate risk to make. Procedures can happen in response to a risk assessment (such as making specific rules to reduce the risk) to then enable an activity to take place.

Clothing

Children and adults will not be permitted to go to Forest School without appropriate clothing that protects them from extremes of heat and cold, keep them covered to reduce the risk of cuts and scrapes, that fits appropriately for comfort, and that meets any religious requirements.

Children and adults are encouraged to think about the practicalities of their clothing for outdoor activities and to be aware they are likely to get dirty. In the forest area, it is often cooler than expected under the trees.

Appropriate Clothing List:

- Waterproof trousers
- Waterproof coat, with a hood
- Long sleeved top/jumper
- Full length trousers/tights
- Wellies
- Warm socks (with a spare pair)
- Gloves and hats
- Sun hat

"There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing."

Staff need to be aware of how children in their class react to different weather conditions and how this affects their sensory processing.
We do have a large selection of spare clothing however not enough for everyone so having their own kit is easier.

Equal Opportunities

The Governors and staff of North Wootton Academy are committed to the principle and practice of equality of opportunity.

We have an inclusive ethos which means all staff, pupils and parents work together to ensure that everyone, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or social background can thrive.

Our community is predominately white British but we also serve pupils and their families from other backgrounds. Alongside our commitment to valuing the cultural inheritance of all the pupils in the school, the lack of diversity in our immediate area highlights the need to develop our pupils understanding and appreciation of equality and diversity in both the school and wider British society.

Through our PSHE, RE and assemblies, we ensure our pupils consider and value diversity and celebrate different cultural inheritances, even if they have little direct experience of them.

Pupils are taught to respect and celebrate difference and understand that everyone, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation or disability has equal value. Staff model respect and understanding in all their dealings within school. Empathy and care for others are part of our core values.

Children with medical needs or disabilities will be supported by a staff member to ensure they are able to take part in the Forest School sessions. Those children who can display challenging behaviour will be individually risk assessed and may need additional staffing to ensure they are included in the Forest School sessions.

Policies and Procedures Outlined

Tools

- At North Wootton Academy, tools may be used at Forest School if learners wish to develop new skills, but will always be done safely. Tools which may be used are: hammers, gimlets, saws, loppers and secateurs. The Forest School leader will ensure that tools are safe to use (cleaned, maintained, replaced when necessary) and that gloves are never worn when using the tools. Children will never help themselves to any tool and when a tool is in use it will always be on a 1:1 basis with the Forest School leader in a designated area, away from other learners/activities - all tools are stored and transported safely in a lockable box and then stored at school instead of in the Forest School shed in the woodland area.

Fire

- A fire can act as a focal point for a group at Forest School, but also can provide heat and warmth. The Forest School leader will ensure that the fire is light in a fire circle away from overhanging trees and is attended at all times by a member of staff who has been briefed. Children will understand not to walk through it or run near it and remain behind the fire surround (logs). All hair must be tied back and all loose clothing (e.g. scarf) needs to be removed. An established fire area will also have a recognisable safety tree where a fire blanket, plunge bucket, fire glove and full watering can are stored and everyone knows where they are. Only dead wood is used and only enough wood is used as needed - any fire is fully extinguished at the end of a session using the 'no trace' method.

Foraging

- Forest school sessions may include foraging, for example of blackberries or nettles. The Forest School leader will again take a 'risk benefit' approach and ensure that: - participants are offered gloves to avoid stings - participants understand that nothing is to be eaten and hands should not be put in or near or mouth - allergy information for the group has been checked prior to the session. Children are taught of the risks of foraging.

Each of these three areas have their own risk assessment and policy in detail and can be requested.

North Wootton Academy Mission and Values

How does Forest School support the mission and values?

Mission:
To prepare our children for a successful future in Norfolk through academic strength, an appreciation of their world and a knowledge of how they can contribute towards making it better.

Values:
As such, we aim to instill a number of core values:
Transform – to understand their responsibility in maintaining and changing the school and wider environment for the better.

Empower – to give the children the knowledge, skills and understanding to be successful by themselves.

Aspire – to place no limit on what they wish to achieve.

Motivation – to understand that success is based upon the effort that is given.

Wonder – to appreciate the world around them.

Open-minded – to be accepting of others, their actions and their ideas.

Respect – to treat others how you wish to be treated.

Kindness – to think about the feelings of others before their own.

Whilst each of the values has individual importance, our overarching aim is to ensure our children understand that a successful life in a successful world involves T.E.A.M.W.O.R.K in which everyone must contribute.

Use of Photographs

At North Wootton Academy, we aim to promote an environment where everyone feels happy and safe. Therefore, when a child joins North Wootton Academy, all parents/carers are required to give permission as to whether their child can be photographed/videoed. They then give/do not give consent to share photos and videos on social media, the school website and/or in the newspaper. These consents must be checked before each new Forest School group. Photos must only be taken on school iPads.

Confidentiality

Any adult working within Forest School sessions must appreciate that conversations had within the setting are confidential. If an adult finds a child is telling something that concerns them, the safeguarding procedure and policy must be followed.

In addition to this:

- All parental consent forms and medical information are kept with the Forest School Leader during sessions and are otherwise kept securely in school.
- All adults will be made aware that discussions with children at Forest School are confidential.

Missing Child

In the event of a missing child, make an immediate search of the Forest School site using the emergency whistle procedure.
Assemble class line order to then be able to carry out a headcount.
Forest School Leader to contact the school office. Principal and Office Manager will then carry out a school grounds search while a office member of staff will contact the police and the parent/carer.

Unwanted Visitor

In the event of an unwanted visitor entering the Forest School site, the visitor will be challenged and asked to leave politely.
Use the emergency whistle to assemble class line order to then be able to carry out a headcount to ensure all children are safe.
If a child is involved with the unwanted visitor, the Forest School Leader will contact the school office, Principal and Office Manager who will then come down to the Forest School site while a office member of staff will contact the police and the parent/carer.

Safeguarding

Here at North Wootton Academy, our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mr James Grimsby (Principal) and in his absence, Mrs Nikki Graham, Mrs Carolyn Saddleton and Miss Sam Broughton are our Deputy Safeguarding Leads. It is our responsibility as teaching staff and as adults to promptly report any concerns to the safeguarding lead, just as we do within school. All teaching staff will have had safeguarding training, and know the process to report any concerns. It is the responsibility of the Forest School leader to make volunteers aware of the appropriate way to record any safeguarding concerns. This must be recorded on the child protection form (whether it be a serious concern or a 'nagging doubt'). These forms will be available inside the green and black rucksack. Additional forms can be found in the main staff room on the 'safeguarding' board.

All staff are required to have a DBS check and any volunteers helping regularly at Forest School sessions will also be required to undertake a full check. Any volunteers or member of staff who finds that a child is telling them something which concerns them should follow North Wootton Academy's safeguarding procedure.

Recording and Reporting—Disclosure Procedure

Should a child make a disclosure to a member of staff while at a Forest School session, they must collect a safeguarding form from the green and black rucksack and report it immediately. Dates, times and a nature of disclosure must always be recorded by the adult in pen. No leading questions can be asked and adults must explain to the child that they cannot keep secrets. All notes must be as accurate as possible. The safeguarding form must then be passed to a member of the safeguarding team mentioned above. It is not the Forest School Leaders responsibility to investigate these concerns.

Our full safeguarding policy can be found on our website or by following this link:
https://www.northwoottonacademy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Safeguarding-NWA-2019-20.pdf

North Wootton Academy Forest School Communication Strategy

Here at North Wootton Academy Forest School, we aim to provide transparency of what happens at Forest School to all parties that are involved. We will share risk assessments and policies to ensure quality assurance.

Communication with Landowners, Site Management and Grounds People

We will communicate with these groups of people if there are any significant changes to the Forest School site, activities that we would like to complete if they could have affect the immediate environment e.g. camp fire use. We will also communicate woodland management plans. The best form of communication is via email.

Communication with North Wootton Staff Members

We will communicate with North Wootton staff members in person through direct conversations and a communal Forest School Communication board that will be located in the Infant Hall.

Policies, procedures, handbook and risk assessments will be emailed directly to the staff members and shared via One Drive.

Communication with Parents

Communication to parents will be via electronic letters using the online system ParentMail which the majority of parents have signed up to. For the parents who do not have access to the electronic letter system, we will send hard copies of the written letters home with the child. Occasionally, text messages via Pupil Asset will be used to inform parents of any first aid issues that may have arisen.

The school website will be used to share risk assessments, policies, procedures and the hand-book. Forest School at North Wootton Academy will also have its own dedicated page on the website where we will share experiences with parents and to prospective parents and children. The children's online learning journey (Tapestry) will also be used at the end of each session to share each session with parents.

Communicating with North Wootton Academy Pupils

A communal display board will be set up in the Infant Hall which will showcase Forest School at North Wootton Academy through pictures and pupil voice. Immersion days will also be planned for each class throughout the year.

Handbook Sign Off Sheet

I confirm that I have read a copy of this handbook written by Emma Bond and agree to abide by the policies and procedures it contains.

Name	Signature	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term

Additional Information

If you have any additional questions please contact Emma Bond on **emma.bond@nwt.eastern-mat.co.uk**. Alternatively, contact the school office on **office@nwt.eastern-mat.co.uk**.

The school website is:
https://www.northwoottonacademy.co.uk/

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Forest School Fun