

Rooted Forest School Handbook

Checked and updated – November 2023

Review Date - November 2024

I have read and understood the policies and procedures for working as a freelance Level 3 practitioner/ Level 2 practitioner/ trainee practitioner/ paid support staff/ volunteer with Rooted Forest School. I agree to work to these policies at all times and take responsibility for my own actions when delivering sessions for Rooted Forest School

| Name | Role: choose from Level 3 practitioner/ Level 2 practitioner/ trainee practitioner/ paid support staff/ volunteer | Signature | Date |
|------|---|-----------|------|
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Rooted Forest School Policies and Procedures

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Aims and Vision of Forest School

By allowing children and young people to participate in the Forest School experience, we aim to:

- encourage independence and team building
- encourage exploration and experimentation through solving practical problems
- foster an understanding of our connection to the natural world
- develop a sense of achievement and well-being
- develop a knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the environment
- develop confidence in challenging situations
- encourage self-assessment and self-management of risk
- link these positive outdoor experiences with curriculum and topic work in class where requested
- introduce new skills and ways of working which children may not have experienced before

Our vision through Forest School is:

- To create an area where children can develop and learn at their own pace through self-chosen activities and planned ones
- To make learning fun
- To create a sense of community where children work positively together towards common goals
- To promote a sense of responsibility and consideration for all around them
- To promote resilience, independence and creative thinking
- To foster a connection with nature and a caring approach to the natural world
- To provide an environment that encourages children to make positive choices regarding behaviour and supports self regulation.

We intend to achieve this through a Forest School environment which will inspire and nurture the children in a manner in which they can feel safe, happy and challenged.

DBS Checking

We are required to seek a Disclosure and Barring Service for all employees and volunteers who work unsupervised with young people and vulnerable adults.

One off volunteers may not be DBS checked but a written risk assessment will be put in place to ensure the safety of participants. This will include these volunteers not having unsupervised access to vulnerable children and young people.

DBS information is gathered from practitioners and checked online. DBS information (certificate number, full name and date of birth) is recorded for sharing with settings before the practitioner starts delivering sessions.

When working for an existing childcare organisation e.g. School, Nursery, we will pass on DBS information for a practitioner. The organisation will then be responsible for checking this DBS online.

When working as our own organisation e.g. Holiday Club, we will ask to see and note the number of a copy of all staff and volunteer's DBS certificates. If practitioners do not have a current DBS, Rooted Forest School will apply for one for them.

DBS disclosures will be renewed every three years if staff are not on the update system. DBS disclosures on the update system will be checked every 3 years.

Sensitive information is stored in the Rooted Forest School password protected google drive.

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to inform Rooted Forest School of any change in circumstances relating to their Disclosure.

Adult : Child Ratios

We will have a minimum of two adults on site at any time. Children will be supported using recommended child to adult ratios.

- Age 0 - 2 years. 1 adult to 3 children.
- Age 2 - 3 years. 1 adult to 4 children.
- Age 4 - 8 years. 1 adult to 6 children.
- Age 9 - 12 years. 1 adult to 8 children.
- Age 13 - 18 years. 1 adult to 10 children.

If we are working with fire or tools our ratios should be smaller.

1:1 when first using sharp tools to allow easy assessment this can grow as the practitioner gets to know the children/ young people

1:4 immediately next to the fire.

Health and Safety

Risk Assessment (see in conjunction with Risk Assessment policy and procedure)

Generic risk assessment, Risk benefit assessments and a pre-session assessment of the site will be carried out on the site before the Forest School session starts. Any actions which go beyond the existing risk assessment will be dynamically risk assessed by the practitioner.

Tree Safety

- If possible, a yearly tree survey will be carried out by a qualified arboriculturist and any necessary work completed to ensure the safety of the site. This will be funded by the setting we are working with unless the site is managed by Rooted.
- If this is not possible, the safety of the trees will be considered as part of the Risk Assessment process including the pre-safety checklist and any dangerous areas avoided
- Sites will not be used in High Winds of 30mph plus.

Weather

Forest school will take place in all weathers unless deemed to be unsafe due to high wind, or where accessing or leaving the site may cause harm e.g. flooding, snow/ ice

High Wind

It is widely recognised that being in the woodland with high winds can be dangerous but deciding when to leave a site can be difficult. To make a decision about this you will need to consider the type and age of the trees and the condition they are in as well as when the last tree survey was carried out.

As a rule, we would usually suggest that 34mph winds are the cut off point for working in a woodland but make sure that continuous assessment is taking place to monitor when to call the end of a session. If whole trees are in motion, then small branches can drop but large dead branches may also drop if you are in a woodland with some dead wood. If this is the case and you know which area can be risky then cordon that area off if you know the wind is going to get to 30 mph.

How to assess the wind.

1. Know your site- be aware of what trees are problematic, if there are any trees that could cause an issue have these permanently marked so that everyone knows to beware of them.
2. Check the forecast before and during the session if you can, that way you can be aware of what might be on its way and you can have an alternative plan if needed.
3. When you get to the site check to see what the wind is like and use the attached guide to identify how fast the wind is currently.
4. Record your observations of the pre-session check list
5. If it's likely to be windy think about how to set up your site, don't set up activities directly under big canopy's, consider cordoning off areas that are at higher risk of falling branches
6. At the start of the session warn people of the possibility of high wind and why it's important to be aware of any changes. They might notice something different earlier than you do.

7. Monitor throughout and if needed relocate if the wind reaches high speeds.

Snow

Snow is great fun to play in and can help children to see an area in a completely different way. It can bring some dangers such as branches heavy with snow may snap and drop, children may become too cold. Ensure that either snow is removed from branches that may cause problems or that areas underneath such branches are cordoned off.

Ensure that children are dressed appropriately for the weather by communicating appropriate clothing to parents using the letter.

Provide additional warm clothing if needed, provide hot drinks, hand warmers and hot water bottles. Ensure activities are active to warm children up.

WIND FORCE SCALE
Adapted from the Beaufort Scale

| | |
|--|--|
|  <p>Smoke rises straight up. Less than 1 mile per hour. CALM</p> <p>0</p> |  <p>Large branches in motion; umbrellas hard to hold; telephone wires whistle. 25-31 miles per hour STRONG BREEZE</p> <p>6</p> |
|  <p>Smoke drifts; weather vanes still. 1-3 miles per hour. LIGHT AIR</p> <p>1</p> |  <p>Whole trees in motion; walking against wind difficult. 32-38 miles per hour. MODERATE GALE</p> <p>7</p> |
|  <p>Leaves rustle and weather vanes move. 4-7 miles per hour. SLIGHT BREEZE</p> <p>2</p> |  <p>Twigs break off the trees. 39-46 miles per hour. FRESH GALE</p> <p>8</p> |
|  <p>Leaves and small twigs in constant motion; light flag extended. 8-12 miles per hour GENTLE BREEZE</p> <p>3</p> |  <p>Slight building damage. 47-54 miles per hour. STRONG GALE</p> <p>9</p> |
|  <p>Dust, dry leaves, loose papers raised; small branches move. 13-18 miles per hour. MODERATE BREEZE</p> <p>4</p> |  <p>Seldom happens inland; trees uprooted; much damage. 55-63 miles per hour. WHOLE GALE</p> <p>10</p> |
|  <p>Small trees in leaf start to sway; crested wavelets form on lakes. 19-24 miles per hour. FRESH BREEZE</p> <p>5</p> |  <p>Very rare; much general damage. 64-72 miles per hour. STORM</p> <p>11</p> |
|  <p>Ballon Explorium</p> |  <p>Anything over 73 miles per hour is a HURRICANE</p> <p>12</p> |

- All Forest School Leaders will hold a valid First Aid Certificate
- There will be a qualified First Aider with the group at all times
- A fully stocked First Aid kit will be carried at all times
- If working offsite, children's medical information will be carried along with any medication needed for particular conditions e.g Asthma, Allergies.
- If working on site, this information may be kept in the school office. Rooted practitioners should know where this is kept and have a clear way of accessing this information if required.
- Any first aid that takes place needs to be recorded on the first aid minor incident log or the accident reporting form. Sometimes the school will complete this form, but practitioners should also complete a form so that we can review any accidents or near misses annually.

Practitioners should ensure that the following is taken to each session

- Charged Mobile Phone
- Emergency procedures form and contact details
- Whistle
- Burns kit if a fire is to be lit

First Aiders will maintain first aid kit and ensure that the following is included:

- Large Plasters
- Medium Plasters
- Small Plasters
- Scissors
- Gloves
- Triangular Bandage
- Wound Dressings
- Eyepad
- Alcohol free moist cleansing tissues
- Instant Ice Pack

Personal Protective Equipment

- Suitable protective equipment will be provided to participants for using tools
- This includes gloves for tool and fire use.
- The equipment will be carefully stored and checked regularly to see that it is fit for purpose

Forest School kit list

Forest School promotes children being outside throughout the year and in all weathers. It is therefore vital that children (and accompanying adults) have suitable clothing. It is advisable that children wear long trousers and long sleeves (even in summer) when out in natural areas, due to natural hazards such as stinging nettles, brambles, biting and stinging insects etc. It may be advisable for children to wear old clothes, as they will get dirty and smoky if we have a campfire. In all weathers we strongly suggest a full change of clothes if children are on site all day or if you want them to be in clean clothes for the journey home.

Autumn/Winter

This time of year it's best to be well prepared. Several thin layers help to trap heat keeping children toasty warm. We strongly advise:

- Minimum of four layers on top e.g. thermal vest or vest, t-shirt, long sleeve top and jumper
- 2 pairs of trousers e.g. thermals or leggings and trousers
- 2 pairs of socks
- Waterproof coat and trousers
- Wellies
- Hats, gloves and scarf

In wet weather full waterproofs would be useful for your child's comfort, when planning what children should wear don't be fooled by full sun in the mornings, the weather can soon change!

Spring/Summer

In spring please ensure children come prepared for all weathers. In the summer, hats and sun cream are advisable. Children may not be able to take part in activities if they are wearing unsuitable footwear such as sandals.

We strongly advise:

Long sleeve top, jumper

Trousers

Socks

Trainers or outdoor shoes

Manual Handling

Correct handling techniques must be followed to minimise the risks of injury. A variety of injuries may result from poor manual handling. Don't attempt to lift anything that is too heavy, assess the item first for size, shape and weight, ask for help if needed. Bend legs to pick up the item and lift with a straight back. Take the route into consideration especially on a hill, slope or slippery terrain.

The Forest School Practitioner is responsible for modelling safe manual handling to the children and assessing their age and ability whether it is safe and appropriate for them to move loads such as logs or rocks.

Manual handling for children should include rolling heavy items and carrying in teams.

Fire Safety

- When sessions include fire lighting the ratio of adults to children will ensure that one trained member of staff will attend the fire at all times that it is lit
- 5 litres of clean water, a clean bucket and a towel will be available and situated next to the fire at all times it is lit
- Weather conditions will be monitored and if very dry or windy suitable precautions will be taken against fire spreading
- Children and accompanying adults will be well trained in log circle rules and they will be applied consistently
- All participants will sit down on logs when around the fire and only walk around the outside of the log circle
- Children will only be invited into the log circle for specific activities such as cooking and only four children at a time will be allowed inside the log circle

Tool Safety

- When sessions include tool use, the ratio of adults to children will ensure that one trained member of staff is responsible for working with the tools in an appropriate and safe way.
- Tools will be kept in good condition in a safe place between sessions.
- Tools will be regularly checked with the tool maintenance checklist or pre-session checklist completed each time.
- Tools will be stored safely at the forest school site with sharp edges covered and only accessed with supervision from a trained member of staff

Safe Tool Use Procedures

Build up skills in tool use, start with the basics to teach skills, technique and muscle strength before moving on to bigger tools.

Name: **Loppers** (Bypass or Anvil types)

Annotate: Handles (grips), shaft, hinge, pivot nut, cutting edge

Check: Grips are not damaged or loose, extension locks (if present), cutting edge is clean, hinge free to open and close and secure
PPE – Gloves, long trousers (preferably over trousers / overalls), working boots.

Handling: Carry at your side with hand on shaft, pass shaft first

Purpose: Used for cutting branches up to 50 pence piece diameter approx.

Use: Use length of shaft to give maximum leverage, put wood to be cut as close to the hinge as possible, be aware of your own working space being clear of obstructions / trip hazards etc. Make sure the area to be cut is clear of people. When cutting above head height a hard hat may be necessary.

Finish: Clean the cutting edge after use, close the cutting edge before storing in the tool bag.

Maintain: Periodically wash and clean off sap from blade, keep blade sharp by honing with wet or dry sharpening stone

Name: **Bowsaw**

Annotate: Handle, blade, blade clip

Check: Blade is secure and sharp
PPE – Glove on non-working hand. Close fitting glove on working hand if required. Long trousers (preferably over trousers / overalls), working boots.

Handling: Carry at your side with blade facing down, pass using the handle

Purpose: Used for cutting green and dead wood (blades differ for each type) up to a size determined by the limitations of the handle size. Use with a child to help them understand a sawing technique.

Use: Use stepped cuts for standing live wood. Secure wood lengths before sawing. Use three backward cuts (with hand through blade) to start the cut and then use saw on both push and pull action.

Finish: Clean the cutting edge after use, Clip blade guard on before storing in tool bag

Maintain: When the blade gets blunt, replace it with a new one. Replace damaged or lost blade guards

Build up skills in knife use, start with a potato peeler or a butter knife to teach skills, technique and muscle strength before moving on to sharper knives.

Name: **Potato peeler**

Annotate: Handle, cutting edge

Check: Blade secure

PPE – Glove on non-working hand, trousers..

Handling: Carry at your side using handle, pass handle first

Purpose: Used for de-barking sticks and making tinder.

Use: Stand or sit securely, lock elbows into your body and work the blade moving away from you. Check you have enough personal space to work safely.

Finish: Clean the cutting edge after use, store in the tool bag or box.

Maintain: Periodically wash and clean off sap from blade, replace when blunt.

Name: **Penknife** (Sheath, locking or non-locking types)

Annotate: Handle, blade, hinge (folding types), lock

Check: Blade secure, hinge secure, locking device functions

PPE – Glove on non-working hand, long trousers, (preferably over trousers/ overalls) working boots.

Handling: Close or sheath the knife when not in use. Pass using handle.

Purpose: Used for cutting, shaping, de-barking and carving

Use: Build up to this by using a butterknife first. Sit or stand comfortably and securely. Check you have enough personal space to work safely (blood bubble). Hold the wood you are carving across your body in a hug. Lock elbows into the body and work the blade moving away from you.

Finish: Clean the blade after use, close or sheath blade before storing in the tool bag.

Maintain: Periodically wash and clean off sap from blade, keep blade sharp by honing with wet or dry sharpening stone

Name: **Secateurs** (Bypass or anvil type)

Annotate: Handles (grips), hinge, pivot nut, cutting edge, securing mechanism & spring

Check: Grips are not damaged or loose, cutting edge is clean, hinge free to open and close and secure, securing mechanism works
PPE – Gloves on non-working hand, long trousers (preferably over trousers / overalls), working boots.

Handling: Make sure secateurs are closed. Carry at your side with hand on shaft, pass handles first

Purpose: Used for cutting small branches up to 2.5cm diameter approx.

Use: Use length of handles to give maximum leverage, put wood to be cut as close to the hinge as possible, be aware of your own working space being clear of obstructions / trip hazards etc. Make sure the area to be cut is clear of people.

Finish: Clean the cutting edge after use, close the cutting edge and secure before storing in the tool bag.

Maintain: Periodically wash and clean off sap from blade, keep blade sharp by honing with wet or dry sharpening stone

Name: **Pruning saw**

Annotate: Handle, blade, hinge, lock.

Check: Blade is secure and sharp, hinge secure, lock works.
PPE – Glove on non-working hand. Close fitting glove on working hand if required. Long trousers (preferably overtrousers / overalls), working boots.

Handling: Carry folded, pass using the handle or folded.

Purpose: Used for cutting green and dead wood, up to about 10cm + depending upon size of blade.

Use: Use stepped cuts for standing live wood. Secure wood lengths before sawing. Establish a groove to start the cut, most pruning saws work on the pull action.

Finish: Clean the cutting edge after use, fold and secure the blade before storing in the tool bag.

Maintain: When the blade gets blunt, replace it with a new one.

Only use tools that you are confident in using yourself and know how to teach according to Forest School regulations. Use of an axe or bill hook without a mallet to split wood should be built up over time to ensure that the user has good upper body strength.

Name: **Billhook** (many different styles available)

Annotate: Handle, cutting edge.

Check: Handle is not loose.

PPE – Glove on non-working hand, long trousers (preferably over trousers/ overalls), steel toe cap boots

Handling: Carry at your side with the cutting edge facing down. Pass using handle

Purpose: Used for splitting green wood, stripping poles of side branches, hedge-laying, coppicing.

Use: Log to be split is placed on a secure surface, billhook is placed on top and hit with a wooden mallet. For other uses refer to BTCV manual

Finish: Clean the blade after use, wrap the blade before storing in the tool bag.

Maintain: Periodically wash and clean off sap from blade, keep blade sharp by honing with wet or dry sharpening stone

Name: **Axe** (small hatchet)

Annotate: Handle, axe head, poll or butt of axe head, curved cutting edge, axe eye

Check: Ensure that the handle is secure in the axe head, check axe eye for damage

PPE – Gloves, long trousers (preferably over trousers / overalls), working boots preferably with steel toe caps.

Handling: Carry at your side with blade sheath in place.

Purpose: Can be used for chopping, whittling and splitting wood.

Use: When chopping with an axe, always position yourself to the side of the blade's arc. When whittling with an axe, ensure that you have a glove on the holding hand and that the hand is behind the face of the wood that is being whittled. When splitting wood place the axe head onto the round and strike with a wooden mallet. Do not use metal on metal.

Finish: Clean the axe blade after use; ensure that the head is dry before replacing the blade sheath and storing.

Maintain: Periodically wash and clean off sap from the axe's cutting edge. Ensure that the bevel is sharp by honing with wet or dry sharpening stone. Always dry the axe thoroughly before storing.

Food and Drink Policy

- Forest School activities use lots of energy, therefore snack and meal times are an important part of the session/day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating.
- We aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. We will sometimes provide hot chocolate during sessions (especially in the winter)
- Fresh drinking water is constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the session.

Food Safety

- RFS or the setting will find out children's dietary needs, including any allergies. This list is taken to all Forest School sessions. All staff/ volunteers are made aware of this, children will only be given food/ drink in line with parents wishes.
- Hands will be washed before food or snacks are consumed. We use running warm water, antibacterial soap and paper towels for this. We may sometimes also use antibacterial hand gel.
- Practitioners who are serving food will be trained in Food Hygiene to Level 2
- Any food taken to Forest School sessions will be stored in bags or boxes at the appropriate temperature. For example, milk should be stored in a cool bag on warm days. Temperatures will be monitored and recorded
- We tend to avoid cooking meat in the woodland due to the difficulty testing if it is thoroughly cooked. However, when we do cook meat, we will ensure it is kept in a cool bag/box and that it is thoroughly cooked through before serving. Meat will be probed to check it has reached a safe temperature before serving
- Good hygiene practices will be followed at all times when handling and preparing food at Forest School
- Children will be taught reasons why berries or fruit may not be eaten during Forest Schools activities. They will be reassured that fruit from woodland can be safe to eat, but can equally be dangerous and adult supervision is required to ensure correct berries are eaten.

Toileting Procedure

There are no toilet facilities at many Forest School sites. Therefore, all children will be reminded to use the toilet before leaving the school.

Temporary toilet facilities will be available at the Forest School site away from the central area with a plastic toilet/ latrine dug and a toilet tent/ screening for privacy

The area will be moved periodically in line with the Ecological Assessment.

In the event of someone needing to use the toilet when we are at the woods, the following procedure will be followed:

- The child will be directed to use the toilet area. If necessary, children will be shown how to use the toilet if it is different to others they have used before. Leaders can stay in earshot if the child will need help.
- Toilet paper, running water, hand soap and paper towels will be provided for sanitation.
- Any accidents will be dealt with by the child with verbal assistance from the Forest School leader if necessary.
- Volunteer helpers will not be expected to deal with toileting

Managing risk is a core learning objective in Forest School and is essential for the well-being of children and adults in sessions. We like to encourage people to verbally identify risks as part of their general risk awareness. The children will also be encouraged to notify adults of any perceived risks, which they feel have not been discussed.

It is essential that Risk Assessments are carried out prior to a session which will give time and opportunity to assess dangers and put in place appropriate risk management. Although activities may carry a risk which may be high, the risk may become acceptable if measures are put into action to reduce this risk through safe practices.

Level of risk categories:

| Level of Risk | Level of Concern | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Example | | |
| Low | Not Important | |
| Nettles | | |
| Fairly Important | Common, dealt with during tasks | Tripping |
| Very Important | Action before commencing work | Fire |
| Lighting | Most Important | Immediate Action |
| Tree Falling | | |

There is a requirement for a full Site Risk Assessment which will be reviewed annually. In addition there will be daily assessments which will look at short term risks – weather, changes in site etc. These risk assessments will be shared with all children and adults in an appropriate way.

Risk Assessment Policy

Risk Assessment includes a five step process:

- Identify and assess the risks
- Determine appropriate actions
- Implement the actions
- Monitor the results
- Provide feedback

Risk Management Strategies

- A full site risk assessment will be carried out and reviewed at the beginning of each year
- Activity Risk/Benefit assessments will be carried out for all activities and potential activities which may take place
- A daily risk assessment of the site will be carried out prior to any session.
- Ongoing dynamic Risk Assessment will be carried out by the FSL continuously during sessions and any changes or potential risks will be added to the full site RA.

Risk to Property

- All tools to be kept in a secure store.
- People bringing their own equipment onto the Forest School site, do so at their own risk and at the discretion of the Forest School Leader.

Risks to People

- All adults are aware of the main guidelines contained in the Forest School Handbook.
- All risk assessments are shared with all adults and children before the session begins.

Actions to Minimise Risk

- Activity risk assessments are shared with children and behaviour guidelines are continually reinforced.
- Any risks identified in the risk assessment are addressed by the Forest School leader before sessions commence.

Insurance

- We will check that landowners hold Public Liability Insurance **up to £££**
- The Forest School Leader is covered for the type of activities carried out by specialist Forest School Insurance held with Birnbeck Insurance Ltd

Contingency

- First Aid procedures are covered in the Health and Safety section of the Forest School handbook.
- Fire procedures are covered in the Health and Safety section of the Forest School handbook.
- Emergency action plan is covered in the Health and Safety section of the Forest School handbook.

Monitoring and Feedback

- The Forest School Handbook will be fully reviewed annually.
 - A full Forest School site risk assessment will take place at every new site
 - A daily risk assessment will take place prior to each session.
 - Adults will be asked for verbal feedback on risk assessments at the end of each session.
-
- A generic Risk Assessment has been carried out for the Forest School site and is enclosed
 - This includes a Grid Reference, What3Words, Postcode and directions to the site as well as other contact numbers and the closest defibrillator.
 - Hazards identified at the site have been noted and assessed with regard to their likelihood and severity and control measures have been put in place to reduce the risk
 - This Risk Assessment is carried out with the group at all times
 - The Risk Assessment is reviewed periodically and updated as new hazards are noted e.g. seasonal changes
 - Risk Benefit Assessments will be carried out for each of the activities before a session takes place. These will be reviewed and updated as necessary.
 - These will identify specific risks associated with particular activities e.g. Fire Lighting, Tool Use.
 - These Risk Assessments will also be site specific where required.
 - A Pre-Session Assessment will be carried out before each session to check for changes or new risks at the site e.g. Fallen branches, Vandalism. This will be recorded on the pre-session checklist.
 - Individual Risk Assessments will be carried out for participants who are identified as potentially high risk or vulnerable
 - Dynamic Risk Assessment will be carried out as an ongoing process during sessions and any new or updated risks will be added to the risk assessment

Accident Reporting

Persons other than participants:

- record accident in Forest School accident book
- complete accident form RIDDOR 3 if necessary
- for any major injury contact LA's Health & Safety Coordinator immediately
- send on any accident form within 24 hours

Participants:

- record accident in Forest School accident book or minor incident log
- parents to be informed of any accident requiring first aid by means of an accident form
- minor injuries will be treated by the Forest School leader on site using the FS first aid kit
- injured pupils must be supervised at all times. In the event of an accident a member of staff should remain with the injured pupil while another adult contacts the Emergency Services if necessary

All records relating to accidents must allow for the following data to be gathered: date, time, name, sex, age group, nature of injury, location of accident, description of circumstances.

COMMUNICATIONS

There are two main routes for communicating concerns about potential or actual risks, faults or damage:

- Notify the Forest School Leader
- FS leader to update risk assessment and remedy as necessary

CONFIDENTIALITY/RECORD KEEPING

Where it is necessary for Rooted Forest School to keep hard records of children's names and personal information, these will only be held by the practitioner for a necessary amount of time i.e. during Forest School sessions and will be then held centrally by Rooted Forest School in a locked box in a private location

Digital bookings and records from private events will be stored on the bookwhen website and is only accessible by the director and Forest School and Outdoor Learning Coordinator of Rooted Forest School. This information will not be shared with anyone without prior consent.

Staff will only discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff when working directly with these families, on a need to know basis. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person.

Staff and volunteers will not disclose any personal information regarding families, children, young people or vulnerable adults or other staff outside of the immediate team on a need to know basis only.

Photographs of children will only be taken with the written permission of parents/carers (on the consent form) and will be used in accordance with these permissions. These will be stored on the Rooted password protected Google drive or Canva (also password protected). Names and personal details will not be stored with photographs.

MEDICATION

Any necessary medication to be held by the Forest School Leader from the beginning of session or by child if old enough to be responsible for it.

In the case of pre-booked sessions, a consent form will be completed by parents stating any medication, allergies, or dietary requirements. These forms will be kept accessible at all times during the session.

During drop in sessions, children will be expected to be responsible for their own medication and will be asked at the beginning of the session to make the Leader aware of any medical conditions, medication or allergies. Participants will also be reminded about allergies before any food or drink activities

Rooted Forest School Daily Procedures

Process for working with settings

A lead practitioner will be assigned to each setting prior to each new half term.

- This **practitioner** will be responsible for their settings for the whole half term including:
 - Liaising with the school regarding the needs/ interests of the children or topics if Outdoor Learning is taking place.
 - Outline planning for the half term – to be completed before the sessions begin.
 - Weekly detailed planning based on outline plan, children's interest and previous weeks.
 - Sending a copy of the outline plan to the setting near the beginning of the half term to be shared with any staff attending.
 - Sending a copy of the outline plan with info on what the children have enjoyed to any other practitioners covering a session in a half term block.
 - Arriving in time for each session (at least half an hour before the start time).
 - Filling in the pre-session check in the FS folder for each setting before every session.
- **Rooted Forest School's** Forest School and Outdoor Learning Coordinator will be responsible for:
 - Completing Risk Assessments for each site and activities as well as policies and procedures to apply to all settings – all practitioners should ensure they have read all of these documents before starting any sessions.
 - Liaising with the settings to discuss dates and timings of sessions.
 - Ensuring settings know what the ethos of Forest School is and are clear whether they are hosting Forest School or Outdoor Learning sessions.
 - Sending DBS, First Aid Certificate, Forest School certificate and Insurance information to settings prior to start date.
 - Cambium Sustainable insurance covers anyone working under the Rooted Forest School name at any setting.
 - Providing settings with details of how the sessions will run and what they need to provide e.g. children's medical info, transport to site, children's medical equipment.
- The **setting** will be responsible for:
 - Providing children's medical forms (using the template sent by Rooted or their own design) and ensuring they are brought to the site with the group if necessary.
 - Providing children's medical equipment and ensuring it is in date and fit for use.
 - Ensuring enough staff are sent to meet school ratios (1:5 is best practice).
 - Ensuring group sizes are kept small. 15 max wherever possible.
 - Informing practitioners of any behaviour or other needs in a particular group.
 - Ensuring that Forest School is not used as a reward or a sanction- Forest School is for all.
- The following need to be taken to all sessions:
 - First Aid Kit
 - Mobile Phone
 - Shelter sheet and ropes to erect
 - Children's water bottles.
 - Snack for pre-school sessions (fruit or biscuits)
 - Spare trousers for children
 - If the site is away from the school: Toilet roll, Spade/trowel
 - Some toileting arrangement (either back in setting, toilet tent or tarp to ensure privacy)

- Handwashing equipment with antibacterial soap and paper towels if it's cold weather.

Procedure for record keeping – Rooted Forest School

Folders will be created for each setting we work with and be left in a secure place at the setting in between sessions. This means that all practitioners will be able to access the folder and the important information it contains at all times.

Where the Forest School site is on school grounds, the folder will be kept in the school office and collected by the Forest School practitioner before the session. Where the site is off school's grounds, the folder will be collected from the school office by the accompanying staff from the school and given to the Forest School practitioner on arrival at the site.

Any record keeping and observations will be carried out by the Forest School practitioner before the folder is returned to the school at the end of the session. In this way, we will ensure children's personal information such as medical conditions and contact information are kept confidential and not removed from the site in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Observations of the children and their development at Forest School will be carried out anonymously during the sessions and the results will be given to the school for the purposes of assessing the impact of the Forest School sessions on particular pupils.

Each setting's folder will contain:

- Risk Assessment for the site
- Emergency Procedure for the site
- Risk Assessments for all activities
- All Policies and Procedures
- Consent forms or relevant information for children attending the sessions
 - Name
 - Emergency contact name and number
 - Medical conditions including allergies and any medication needed
 - Contact details of family doctor
 - Consent for child to receive first aid
 - Dietary Information e.g intolerances, vegetarian etc.
- Pre-Session Checks
- Minor Incident record
- Accident Recording sheets
- Observation Templates
- Supporting Adult record
- Plans for sessions

Workshop Delivery

Rooted Forest School will operate on a 'client led' basis that will introduce all children and young people to the natural world and new experiences whilst following their interests and requests as directed by the needs of the client group

The forest school session will last for the length of time agreed and will be facilitated by the same Forest School practitioner each week. Should a time arise that this practitioner is not going to be available, we will give 4 weeks' notice to discuss a plan to introduce a new practitioner. Rooted Forest School will make available all resources and equipment necessary to run each session.

Rooted Forest School shall be responsible for providing the sessions in accordance with all current Health and Safety and related legislation. Site and activity risk assessments are completed for the event by Rooted Forest School are shared with the client to ensure the safety of attendees and staff.

If for some reason, uncontrollable circumstances should arise beyond our control (e.g. inclement weather or illness) resulting in the event needing to be altered or cancelled, the setting will be contacted as soon as possible, and alternative arrangements agreed. If for some reason the setting cancels the session, a minimum 48 hours' notice will need to be given to via the Forest School and Outdoor Learning Delivery Coordinator (07846374585), if 48 hours' notice is not given the setting will still be expected to pay for the session.

Welfare kit bag

practitioners should ensure that the following items are taken to each session:

| | |
|--|--|
| Charged mobile phone | Risk assessment for the site and equipment |
| Emergency procedures form and contact details. Whistle if using as a call. | Running handwashing water (warm if possible), anti bac soap and hand towel |
| Burns kit if a fire is to be lit | Shelter sheet and ropes to erect |
| Drinking water and cups | Healthy snack for pre-school sessions |
| Spare set of clothes for children (ensure this is of the correct size) | Some toileting arrangement (either back in setting, toilet tent or tarp to ensure privacy) |
| Spare gloves and hat | Toilet roll if using an onsite toilet |

Daily Procedure

Prior to session we will:

- Carry out a pre-session check using the form to record any changes at the site.
- Refer to the pre-session check and the site Risk-Assessment and carry out any actions required.
- Ensure any equipment required for the session has been checked out from the store and is in good working order.
- Check the contents of the Forest School Emergency bag against the inventory (see inventory).
- Ensure we have permission forms, medical forms and any medication required for any member of the group.
- Ensure we have session plans and Risk Assessment for the site and the individual activities.
- Ensure we have a mobile phone, charged and ready for use.
- Ensure we have a full First Aid Kit.

On departure we will:

- Check we have a register for all participants and staff.
- Check children have waterproof clothing and check all have suitable footwear. Limited spares will be provided when necessary.

At Forest School site we will:

- Brief participants on Health and Safety (from Risk Assessment) and encourage the children to get involved in the process.
- Educate participants on any poisonous or harmful plants growing on site.
- Define boundaries with the children and make sure all are aware of them.
- Ensure all participants are aware of the Emergency procedure.
- Brief all on the desired activities and outcomes for the session.

On leaving site and at return we will:

- Count children and make sure all are safe and well.
- Leave the site free of rubbish and as undamaged as possible (See Ecological Assessment).
- Check and return any equipment used.
- Advise all to wash their hands before eating.
- Make any necessary records e.g Accident Book, Evaluation.

Information for Supporting Adults

The Forest School Leader will brief you on the guidelines, risks assessments and plans for the session.

Dress appropriately for the weather and outside environment

Children will be counted for the session by all adults and agreed. The children will also be counted back by all adults and agreed.

All gates and doors to be closed, and only opened by adults

Remind children not to put fingers/hands in or near mouth.

Should any litter be found, notify the Forest School Leader immediately.

Children can only climb trees if allowed by the Forest School Leader.

Any First Aid can only be administered by the Forest School Leader.

Any issues or concerns to be immediately reported to the Forest School Leader

Maintain confidentiality at all times regarding participants, only talk to the practitioner about attendees.

Safety is paramount

If requested to supervise a particular activity, remain there unless notified by the Forest School Leader.

If an unknown person is spotted, notify the Forest School Leader immediately.

In the event of an Emergency, the Forest School Leader will deal with the situation. A supporting adult may be asked to phone for an ambulance or support the rest of the group away from the incident.

In the event of a threatening incident, the group will move away from danger and possibly leave the woods

Volunteers will not be expected to deal with or help with toileting.

Please, no photographs of participants taken by assistants.

Observation is THE main role

Safe practices for Fire Lighting Procedure

Fire Safety:

- Check weather conditions, e.g. wind direction and speed
- Check ground conditions, not too dry
- Site – open, level and dry
- Outer sitting area around the pit
- Inner Safety Ring
- Fire Pit made with logs not stones
- Walk around the sitting area, not through
- First Aid close by – including cling film, burn gel, clean water
- Large bucket of water to extinguish fire
- Never leave the fire attended
- Extinguish fire with water
- Children briefed in Emergency noise at start of each session (see emergency procedures).

How to make a fire:

- Place a base layer of green sticks (if lighting on the ground)
- Create floorboards of dry kindling
- Scrunch up dry newspaper or cotton wool and place on top
- Light the cotton wool with a striker
- quickly add a handful of fine dry twigs
- Build up a pyramid using larger twigs
- Do not leave fire once lit
- Add larger sticks and logs to make a cooking fire

How to extinguish a fire:

- If using and transporting a fire pit, give plenty of time for the pit to cool down.
- Spread the fire out with a stick or tongs and leave to go out by itself
- Sprinkle water over the top of any sticks still alight to avoid creating excess smoke
- Following this, fully extinguish with a large amount of water
- Spread ashes with a stick
- Check all is extinguished by looking at embers
- Check with hand that there is no residual heat
- Remove ash and charcoal inline with Ecological Impact Assessment for site

Lone Working Policy

Lone workers can be anyone who works by his/herself without direct contact or supervision. For our purposes, particular examples are:

- Practitioners working onsite by themselves
- Practitioners travelling alone to deliver sessions
- Practitioners delivering 1:1 sessions (separate procedure below)

Workers may need extra consideration in terms of lone working if they are vulnerable for other reasons, eg if they are pregnant, young, old or have medical issues.

When Forest School work is carried out alone, there is a need to think carefully about safeguarding all participants. This will be accomplished in the following ways:

Rooted Forest School/ Cambium Sustainable Ltd value all our workers and have a duty of care to make sure you are safe and well while working for us. We encourage you to be proactive in terms of your own safety, and empower you to take responsibility by making choices that are in your own best interests as a priority.

Worker responsibilities.

There are some things workers can do to support safe and healthy lone working. Be prepared! Check the weather, make sure your phone is charged, check your vehicle is road-safe, find out about the area you are going to in advance, be aware of your environment, make sure you know how to access First Aid should you need it. Take particular care if you are: ill, the weather is bad, you're not sure of phone coverage, you will be in an isolated area.

Procedure for lone working

Staff who have concerns about working alone are invited to discuss the situation with the Forest School and Outdoor Learning Coordinator and make a risk assessment. This could include:

- Agreeing times of day to work
- Setting up a system of checking in during or after the period of lone working
- Ensuring someone else is on site
- Rehearsing an action plan should an incident arise

Any incidents should be reported as soon as possible in order to access support and provide information that can help Rooted Forest School/Cambium Sustainable keep this policy up to date and of maximum use.

Practitioners delivering 1:1 sessions

If a session is 1:1 with a participant, the safeguarding of all will be accomplished in the following ways:

- Another adult will be on site and reachable by phone or walkie talkie.
- In the event of a fire, accident or incident the emergency procedure will be followed.
- In the event of the Forest School Leader having an accident, the participant will be responsible for contacting the other adult and also the emergency services using the Risk Assessment to provide the location of the site, the directions and the condition of the casualty. This will be discussed and agreed with participants beforehand. A procedure should be written somewhere they can see easily in an emergency (inside the shed door if open, in the Forest School file if left out).
- The school, parents or home will have the Forest School Leader's contact details and get in touch if any issues arise while at Forest School.
- The school, parents or home will be informed of the location of the site and the times of the session and the return the young person will return.
- Responsible behaviour will be expected at all times, tools and other risky activities will only take place if the Forest School Leader judges it to be safe.
- Any behaviour issues arising at Forest School will be dealt with by the Forest School leader, the school/ parent/ carer and other relevant agencies will be informed.
- Any concerns arising from any person should be reported to the Forest School Leader or school/ parent/ carer/ relevant agency as soon as possible so they can be dealt with promptly.
- Photographs will not be taken unless signed permission has been received.

Emergency Procedures for a 1:1 session

In the event of an accident, injury or illness or an unexpected or threatening event we will:

- Calmly and quickly assess the nature of the incident before calling the emergency services.
- Using the Risk Assessment, inform the emergency services of the Grid Reference, Postcode and directions to the site as well as the nature of the incident and any medical information about the patient.
- If required and appropriate, administer first aid to the injured person in line with relevant training.
- Call another on site adult for support using either mobile phone or walkie talkies if available.
- In the event of an unexpected or threatening event, move well away from the danger area, count all participants and assess the safest course of action.
- Ensure that the relevant staff, parents and carers are informed as quickly as possible.
- Make a record of the event on an Incident Log.

Safeguarding

1. Introduction

Safeguarding children is the responsibility of us all. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004. Under the terms of the Children Act 1989 anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child/young person.

These guidelines are for the use of all paid staff, volunteers and visitors. We will make them available to the parents and carers of the children and young people to whom we offer a service.

Through them, we will endeavour to ensure that:

- Children and young people are listened to, valued and respected
- All staff and volunteers are aware of the need to be alert to the signs of abuse and know what to do with their concerns
- All staff and volunteers are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures
- All staff and volunteers are given appropriate support and training

All child protection concerns should be acted upon immediately. If you are concerned that a child might be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, you should tell the designated member of staff in the setting and a designated child protection officer. Your designated officers are:

Sam Goddard – 07891 173 950 info@rootedforestschool.co.uk

Jo Dainty – 07846 374 585 jo@rootedforestschool.co.uk

In an emergency situation, contact a social worker/the Police directly:

Herefordshire Children's Services

In office hours: The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (01432) 260800

Out of office hours: the emergency duty team 01905 768020

In an emergency: 999

West Mercia Police: 0300 333 3000 (non emergency)

Powys

In office hours: 01597 827666

Out of hours emergency duty team: 0345 054 4847

Online form <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/8155/Report-a-concern-about-a-child>

In an emergency 999

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

2. Recognising signs of abuse

It can often be difficult to recognise abuse. Children may behave strangely or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their families experience changes. It is nevertheless important to know what could indicate that abuse is taking place and to be alert to the need to consult further. Someone can abuse a child by actively inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place within a family, in an institutional or community setting, by telephone or on the Internet. Abuse can be carried out by someone known to a child or by a complete stranger.

If you are worried about a child it is important that you keep a written record of any physical or behavioural signs and symptoms. In this way you can monitor whether or not a pattern emerges and provide evidence to any investigation if required. Share this with a designated child protection officer as soon as you can. Any records should give details of the child's name, date of birth and address and be kept in a locked/secure cabinet to avoid unauthorised access.

3. What to do with your concerns

In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse about an adult or another child or young person, it is important that you:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour;
- Let them know that you take what they are saying seriously;(e.g. by focusing your attention on them)
- Do **not** attempt to question or interview them yourself;
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them. **Do not promise to keep what they tell you secret;**
- Inform your designated (lead person) child protection officer as soon as possible;
- Make a written record of the incident or events.

4. Allegations made against leaders, staff and volunteers

Organisations that work or come into contact with children and young people need to be aware of the possibility that allegations of abuse will be made against members of their staff or volunteers. Allegations will usually be that some kind of abuse has taken place. They can be made by children and young people and they can be made by other concerned adults. Allegations can be made for a variety of reasons.

All allegations should be brought to the notice of the designated child protection officer immediately. In cases where the allegation is made against this person, the complainant should approach another Forest School Leader. Don't delay:

- Make sure that the child in question is safe and away from the person alleged to have abused the child
- Contact the designated child protection officer
- Contact the Referral and Assessment Team/West Mercia Police
- Contact the parents or carers of the child if advised to do so by the social worker/police officer in charge of allegations

5. Safer recruitment

The application of rigorous procedures for the recruitment of any staff or volunteers who come into contact with children, both directly and indirectly, can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made that are founded. As an absolute minimum, the following standards should be followed:

- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services Check before they start employment or activities with us – anyone who refuses to do so should not be employed (in either a paid or unpaid capacity);
- We will make a judgement regarding each person's appropriateness to fulfil a role depending on the outcome of a DBS check, informal interview and trial session.
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) will be interviewed informally to establish previous experience of working in an environment where there is contact with children and perceptions of acceptable behaviour;
- New members of staff whether paid or unpaid will be clear about their responsibilities and wherever possible, work to an agreed job/role description;
- These guidelines will be available to everyone and fully discussed as part of an induction process.

6. Good practice

All staff are responsible for children/young people whilst they are engaged in activities provided by the Forest School group and must make sure that health and safety guidelines are adhered to.

All staff working with children should receive regular supervision from a more experienced staff member and should attend basic safeguarding children training.

Staff should be alert to strangers on the site or frequently waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose. Where possible there should always be at least two adults present with a group of children– it is vital that agreed ratios of adult to child are adequate to ensure safety.

Children should not be collected by people other than their parents/carers unless notification has been received.

If a child is not collected after a session it is reasonable to wait approximately half an hour for a parent or carer to arrive. If the parent or carer cannot be contacted, staff should contact the Referral and Assessment Team/Emergency Duty Team out of work hours or the police and request assistance. To minimise the risk posed to children by adults the following good practice should be followed:

- Always remember that while you are caring for other people's children you are in a position of trust and your responsibilities to them and the organisation must be uppermost in your mind at all times.
- Never use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking or hitting.
- Do not smoke in front of any child or young person.
- Do not use non-prescribed drugs or be under the influence of alcohol.
- Never behave in a way that frightens or demeans any child or young person.

- Do not use any racist, sexist, discriminatory or offensive language.
- Generally you should not give children presents or personal items or receive such gifts/presents from children/young people or their families. (Any exceptions to this would be agreed with the named person for child protection/manager and the child/young person's parent)
- You should not invite a young person to your home or arrange to see them outside the set activity times.
- You should not engage in any sexual activity (this would include using sexualised language) with a young person you meet through your duties or start a personal relationship with them, this would be an abuse of trust and as such is illegal.
- Exercise caution about being alone with a child or young person. In situations where this may be needed (for example where a young person wants to speak in private) think about ways of making this seem less secret for example by telling another worker or volunteer what you are doing and where you are, leaving a door ajar, being in earshot of others and lastly note the conversation in the log.
- Physical contact should be open and initiated by the child's needs, e.g. for a hug when upset.
- Always prompt children to carry out personal care themselves and if they cannot manage ask if they would like help.
- Do talk explicitly to children and young people about their right to be kept safe from harm.
- Do listen to children and young people and take every opportunity to raise their self esteem.
- Do work as a team with your co-workers/volunteers. Agree with them what is expected from young people and be consistent in following this expectation.
- If you have to speak to a child/young person about their emotional regulation remember you are challenging 'what they did' not 'who they are'.
- Do make sure you have read the Safeguarding Children Procedure and that you feel confident that you know how to recognise when a child may be suffering harm, how to handle any disclosure and how to report any concerns.
- Do seek advice and support from your colleagues, activity leaders or supervisors and your designated person for child protection.
- Do seek opportunities for training if you feel that it would help you

Safe Touch Policy

Physical touch is an essential part of human relationships and within the role of a Forest School Practitioner you may be required to have physical contact with the children and young people that you are caring for. There are occasions where it is entirely appropriate for staff to have some physical contact with the children and young people they are caring for. However, it is crucial that in all circumstances, staff only touch children in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities. Touch can be used to facilitate relaxation, comfort, celebrate an achievement or enable the child or young person to enjoy a positive emotional experience.

Staff should:

- Be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.
- Always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently
- Work within the Health and Safety Regulations.
- Be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and always be sensitive to issues of gender.
- Understand that physical contact in some circumstances can be easily misinterpreted.
- Follow the Safe Care Plan and Child's Individual Placement Care Plan guidelines.
- Ensure that their touch is non-abusive, with no intention to cause pain or injury, that it is in the best interest of the child and others
- Be aware that if they are alone with a child/young person that they have informed another staff on duty what they are doing and where they will be situated in order to ensure safeguards are in place (e.g. member of staff in eye sight/ear shot.) These incidents must be recorded.

Staff must not:

- Touch a child in a way that may be considered indecent, for example, do not touch within the bathing (bikini/trunks) costume area of a child or on/in any erogenous zones, e.g.
on the neck/lips, middle of the back.
- Indulge in play fighting or horse play.

Rooted Forest School will:

- Ensure a system is in place for recording incidents and means by which information about incidents and outcomes can be easily shared with staff from the setting and/or parents
(i.e. recorded on an incident form and sent to the safeguarding lead of the school/setting)
- Ensure professional/organisational guidance is available re physical contact
- Be explicit about what physical contact is appropriate for adults working at our settings

- Record any concerns raised.

Behaviour Expression/ Behaviour Policy

Children are expected to:

- Pay attention to the Forest School Leader and listen to instructions
- Demonstrate consideration for the environment, equipment and other people during all activities
- Take responsibility for their actions with regard to tool use, movement of items such as logs, sticks etc.
- View accidents and incidents as part of the learning process which all can benefit and learn from

Adults are expected to:

- Provide clear limits to provide a secure emotional space and to ensure that everyone is safe
- Limit barriers and restrictions on the child's natural desire to explore and develop their own ideas and concepts
- Be calm, clear, consistent
- Role model appropriate behaviour and safe practice at all times
- Treat all children and Young People with respect and kindness
- Listen to children and take their views into account when developing programmes and behaviour procedures
- Support each child in developing self confidence, self esteem and feelings of competence.
- Be aware of each family's individual situations and cultural differences
- Know and work to these policies and procedures for best practice
- Be flexible and adaptable in their approach to delivering sessions
- View accidents and incidents as part of the learning process which all can benefit and learn from

We will request the Educational Healthcare Plan from settings when working with children with additional needs or diagnosed conditions. We will always be aware that every child is unique and has their own range of issues and factors which could affect their behaviour. Every effort will be made to use positive strategies to encourage children to self regulate. These will include role modelling, a focus on the positive behaviour where possible, activities to help children self-regulate their emotions, providing a safe, quiet space for children to calm down.

For repeated struggles, the Forest School practitioner should try to identify and address triggers in order to help regulate the child's emotional state and, in turn, their behaviours by:

- Recognising that the way that we interact with children has a significant impact on how the child will respond, and that all children are individuals.
- Acknowledging the child's experience and modelling appropriate ways of managing emotional challenges.
- Supporting children to feel safe enough to express and work through their feelings, so that they do not fear their emotions but instead trust in their own ability to work through their challenges.
- Respectfully offering intervention and support when children struggle with conflict and overwhelming emotions.

- Communicate clearly that physical aggression towards others is not appropriate behaviour, and prevent these behaviours where possible.
- Work in partnership with other practitioners, school staff, parents and carers to ensure consistency.
- Sanctions will not be used.

Anti-bullying policy

Methods for helping children to prevent bullying will include:

- Discussing looking after yourself and other as well as the environment at the start of each session as part of safety rules
- Team building activities

If bullying occurs during a session:

- Confidentially record and report the bullying incident(s) using the incident sheet as soon as possible and pass this to the class teacher if in a setting, or Rooted Forest School's safeguarding officer
- If it's a holiday club or family session Parents/ carers will be informed

Following investigation an incident we will follow the restorative justice approach:

- At the heart of restorative justice is the idea that everyone is inherently worthy and that our connection to one another is what matters most.
- Following the Forest School ethos, we aim to create safe and supportive space. This helps to create a community able to talk openly and honestly about experiences and feelings.
- Facilitating a fair responsive process in which everyone can share their stories, hear the impact of their actions, repair the relational harm and figure out the best way forward, together.

Where incidents have to be investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored where possible to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Tips for dealing with a situation using language and terms that children and young people will be used to hearing.

If children are regularly struggling to regulate their emotions, they may be used to people talking to them about making the right choices- for example, if we are able to be calm and use the tools correctly, we can have the tools out. If we are able to sit still by the fire, we could do some cooking or fire starting; but they need to make the choice to try to control the way they need to behave around the more risky equipment. If you can see that their behaviour is escalating, you can remove them from the situation by asking them to help you, or collect something or remind them about making the right choice and give them the reason why it's important.

- Don't always use distraction- it doesn't help children deal with their emotions
- Validate their anxiety- 'I can see that you're feeling angry' and that ok, you can be angry.
but it's not ok to hit or hurt someone because you're angry
- Talk about how they can manage that feeling. E.g. Can we have a plan so that when you feel like this you can help yourself to feel better?
- Deep, slow breathing through your nose will stop your heart feeling so fast.
- Talk about how you feel, name the feeling and then say how you are dealing with that feeling. It will help them to understand how they are feeling, how to recognise it and what to do with it.
- Remember- You don't always have to fix everything for them- just listen and encourage them to sort it for themselves. Just listening will help.

Emotional regulation games:

- Animal yoga- have a dice with different animals on and then do a yoga pose like an animal.
- Breathing in exercise- use a flower or leaves to breath in the scent
- Waiting games- simon says, snap using leaves
- Have a bag of objects to use to tell a story- take it in turns to tell a tale, it can be related to the young person but try not to make it exactly like them if you are talking about issues they find it hard to deal with.

Emergency Procedures

- 1. Accident and emergency**
- 2. Lockdown procedure- behaviour**
- 3. Lockdown procedure - threatening event**
- 4. Lost child**
- 5. Absconded child**
- 6. Weather emergency**
- 7. 1:1 session (see page 33)**

1. In the event of an accident, injury or illness we will:

- Calmly and quickly assess the nature of the incident before calling the emergency services and the school office (if working with another setting)
- Using the Risk Assessment, inform the emergency services of the Grid Reference, Postcode and directions to the site as well as the nature of the incident and any medical information about the patient
- If appropriate, administer first aid to the injured person in line with relevant training
- Call the rest of the group together using a whistle signal and keep them away from the area of the incident with one member of staff while the other is with the injured person
- Ensure that the relevant staff, parents and carers are informed as quickly as possible
- Make a record of the event on an Incident Log

2. Lockdown procedure - behaviour

In the event of behaviour that is deemed by the Forest School Leader to be unsafe or out of control, the following procedure will be implemented:

1. All tools will be gathered in and put away in a lockable tool box and hidden away if possible, or an adult will stay with this tool box and ensure it is kept safe
2. If lit, the fire will be extinguished with plenty of water and made safe
3. All participants not involved in the incident will be gathered in a safe area using the agreed call. This may be around the log circle or in another area if this is not a safe area
4. A game or story will be used to keep the rest of the group safe and contained whilst the incident is taking place
5. One or more adults will deal with the incident, using appropriate strategies as outlined on the participants Educational Behaviour Plan or Risk Assessment.
6. The adults will stay in touch with each other via mobile phone or walkie talkie
7. A decision will be made as to the next course of action
8. Allow the incident to play out and the participant to self-regulate and rejoin the group
9. Call for emergency help from the setting or police if necessary

3. Lockdown procedure - threatening event

- Calmly and quickly assess the nature of the incident before contacting the setting's office (if working with another setting)
- Call the rest of the group together using a whistle signal and move the group well away from the danger area, count all participants and assess the safest course of action
- If needed, contact the emergency services
- Using the Risk Assessment, inform the emergency services of the Grid Reference, Postcode and directions to the site as well as the nature of the incident
- Ensure that the relevant staff, parents and carers are informed as quickly as possible
- Make a record of the event on an Incident Log

4. Lost Child Procedure

- As soon as the situation is realised, call in all children and adults back to base to do a head count.
- Inform all staff and participants of the missing person.
- Keep all other children together, away from the search
- Organise a supervised search for the missing person, calling their name.
- Take into account of the young person's favourite places on site and look here first
- Contact emergency services and parent/ carer if the person is not found after 10 minutes (depending the size of the site).
- Continue looking until emergency services and or parent arrives.

5. Absconded Child Procedure:

- look for the child in places that they usually hide, or follow in the general direction (be aware that chasing may lead some children to run, you may need to follow at a safe distance). Information on children presenting these behaviours should be in their personal Risk Assessment so follow those guidelines
- Work with another adult if possible or keep in touch with another adult via mobile phone or walkie talkie if not.
- If you feel that either yourself or the young person are in danger, contact the parent or carer and emergency services for support.
- Following the incident record the facts and share with the setting and the child protection officer
- After the incident, talk to the young person about the experience, follow the policy for supporting emotional regulation to create a plan for helping them to find a quiet space away from others when needed in future.

6. Weather Emergency

Before each session check the weather forecast to ensure awareness of possible weather emergencies

Calmly and quickly assess the nature of the weather

If you consider the weather poses a threat to the safety of the group quickly speak to the other staff/ volunteers and identify a safer area to relocate to if possible.

Call the rest of the group together using the designated signal and move the group well away from any danger areas, count all participants

Move the group to a safer area quickly and efficiently.
If working with another setting, let the office/ setting know that you have changed location.

Cancellation Policy

Rooted Forest School Sessions will be cancelled in the event if:

- An extreme or dangerous weather condition has been forecast, such as flash flooding, high winds (34mpg +), thunderstorms, temperature extremes, blizzard, hurricane or another event
- Flooding, snow or ice has made the woodland inaccessible.
- We do not have the minimum number of participants required to run the session.
- The Forest School Practitioner is too ill and an alternative practitioner cannot be found.

If an event is going to be cancelled due to bad weather, an announcement will be made at least two hours before the event. If you are uncertain, please check the Facebook event page for updates.

When a cancellation does occur, it will be by a post on the Facebook event page and directly via phone call, text message/ messenger/ WhatsApp. If you are still unsure, you can always contact one of the event's hosts to clarify.

If a practitioner arrives at a Rooted Forest School event and decides that it feels unsafe to continue, they will remain in the parking lot until the normal starting time to notify anyone else who arrives (unless it is unsafe to do so).

If an event is going to be cancelled due to insufficient numbers of bookings we will endeavour to let you know the night before the event, in this instance you will have the option of booking an alternative event/activity with us or receiving a refund, minus the booking fee.

Failure to attend an event/activity will be deemed a cancellation by you and you will forfeit 100% of the fee.

Schools and settings

When working with schools or other settings we will always try to offer an alternative venue if weather is too extreme for a woodland to be used. If this is not possible we will endeavour to give 24 hours notice of closure, however we may need to cancel on the day if weather changes suddenly / overnight.

Sites will not be used in High Winds and each practitioner and file has a chart showing wind strength to aid decision making.

One to One sessions:

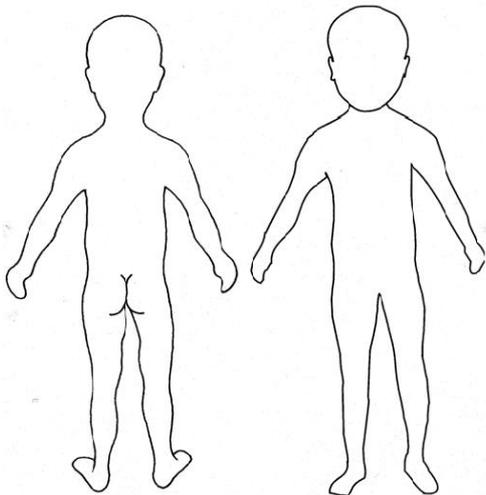
If for some reason, uncontrollable circumstances should arise beyond Rooted Forest School's control (e.g. extreme weather or illness) resulting in the event needing to be altered or cancelled, the setting and the young person's parents will be contacted as soon as possible and alternative arrangements agreed. A minimum of two hours notice will need to be given for this, especially where children are arriving via taxi or travel long distances.

If for some reason the young person cannot attend, a minimum 48 hours notice will need to be given to Rooted Forest School via their main contact, if 48 hours notice is not given, the setting will still be expected to pay for the session.

Accident/Incident Report form

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--|----------------|--|
| Date: | | School: | |
| Time: | | Location: | |
| DOB: | | Name of Child: | |
| Description of accident: | | | |
| Injuries sustained: | | | |
| Treatment/First aid given: | | | |

Show the location of the injury:



Back

Front

Name of person who dealt with the accident: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of witness (If appropriate): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of parent/carer: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Further action:

Do you need to make amendments to your risk assessment as a result of the accident? Yes
No

Does the accident need reporting to Ofsted? Yes No

Does the accident need reporting to RIDDOR? Yes No

