****A tent in the woods

Description automatically generated

**GetOut Handbook**

Reviewed by Chloe Clark August 2024 – Next Annual Review Due August 2025.

**Review Policy:** Review document annually in case of changes to stated law, in light of change of practice due to incidents or near miss and in case of updated knowledge.

Signed: ****

Date: 17/08/24

Staff Sign-off

All staff attending sessions need to have read the handbook and confirmed this by return email stating “I (name) have read the handbook and accompanying risk assessments”

**FS Leader 1:** **Date:**

**FS Leader 2: Date:**

**Volunteers: Date:**

**Supervising School Staff: Date:**

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**Welcome**

We are GetOut, a Forest School founded in Gifford Community Woodland in 2024. We are a team of three enthusiastic Forest School leaders who want to share their knowledge and love of the outdoors with children and families across East Lothian.

**Our Aims**

Our aim at GetOut is to provide a safe space for learners to learn, grow, explore in the natural world, and to foster an understanding of and curiosity about nature.

Forest School has six principles which were agreed by the Forest School Community in 2011. These are:

**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.** Forest School groups at GCW will be offered blocks of at least 6 weeks to immerse themselves in the woodland and experience the changes that occur there over time. Lessons will be planned with a structure and be loosely based around themes, but participants will be free to follow their own curiosities and develop learning in areas that spark their interest.

**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.** GCW Forest School aims to give the local community the chance to learn more about their local woodlands, so that they can become comfortable and confident here. This will include gaining practical knowledge such as what grows and lives in this habitat, and knowledge of tools and outdoor skills. When combined these will allow groups to have the ability to care for the woodlands themselves and ensure they are enjoyed by future generations for years to come.

**3. Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.** Our Forest School puts the learner at the heart of every session. No curriculum is followed, but learners are given the chance to explore and be curious about the world around them and their role in it. Groups will be given space and time for free play and to complete tasks such as nature connection, meditation, crafts, and tool use. Tasks will be appropriate, and achievable, to each age group with the aim to build their confidence, resilience and independence. At all times there will be plenty of choice so that groups can involve themselves in activities that develop their own interests. They will be encouraged to explore their thoughts, feelings, and relationships (with themselves, nature and their peers) whilst doing this. Group leaders, and assistants, will always be on hand to assist and guide but will aim to help groups follow their own path rather than direct and instruct.

**4. Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.** Groups will be given the chance to assess their surroundings, including any potential hazards, use appropriate tools and have a campfire. All participants will be able to build their independence by learning to assess risk for themselves. They will gain confidence in their own ability to respect potential dangers, either of their environment or instruments such as tools and fire, in the knowledge that they can harness them safely and sensibly. A qualified group leader or assistant will always be present when tools or fire are being used to ensure safety.

**5. Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.** Gifford Community Woodlands Forest School will be run by a qualified Forest School practitioner, assisted by local volunteers who will be fully briefed before each session to ensure the safety of all participants.

**6. Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.** At our Forest School we remind participants to “Take care of yourself, take care of others and take care of the woods”. We aim to provide a safe space for these groups to learn more about themselves in order to benefit their own health and happiness; to work with their peers and help each other achieve their goals together, promoting inclusion and companionship; and to develop their understanding of the natural world around them, the importance of being outside in nature and how they can feel a sense of ownership to care for their natural environment.

**Health & Safety**

**Ratios**

Forest School will take place with a minimum of 1 adult to 8 learners. The ratio of adults may increase depending on the learners' needs and type of session. Forest School sessions will not go ahead with less than 2 adults present. All staff will be PVG checked and FS leaders will brief volunteers as required.

**Risk Assessment**

In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974,we aim to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of all staff and participants at our Forest School. Although Forest School does carry risk, we will create a safe environment by identifying hazards and ensuring the correct, safe storage and maintenance of all equipment. It is the Forest School Leader’s responsibility to carry out risk assessments. These will include general site risk assessment, activity specific risk assessments, daily risk assessments looking for changes or new risks and dynamic risk assessments which occur when a new or unpredicted activity or situation occurs. Forest School learners are also encouraged to identify risk themselves and think about what is or isn’t safe, thus supporting them to become responsible for themselves and others around them. There are of course many risks that may be unforeseen by learners and the Forest School leaders are responsible for carrying out a risk assessment prior to each session. This will be communicated to all supervising adults by email for the site and activities assessments but any daily risk assessment points which differ from the original site assessment or dynamic risk assessment will be shared verbally on the day, so that they are aware of any risks and what they can do to reduce or avoid them. All adults will take reasonable care for their own health and safety and will follow risk assessment measures to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the Forest School learners they are supervising.

**Insurance**

GetOut as an organisation has the necessary liability insurance to opperate as a Forest School sessions. The Insurance covers FS leaders ‘providing activities for children and adults of all ages. General forest school work including shelter building, use of hand tools (including knives), tree climbing to head height, use of swings rope swings and play equipment for children of primary school age, occasional lopping/coppicing, felling (diameters less than 6”), foraging, low level charcoal making (twigs/tins/cans), green woodworking, gardening sessions including tuition, pond/stream dipping, face painting, birthday parties, camp fires, overnight camps etc.’ Public Liability £5, 000, 000 any one Occurrence. Products Liability £5, 000, 000 any one Occurrence. Property Damage £250 each and every Occurrence.

**Fire**

Campfires are an important part of Forest School and we aim to offer at least one session including fire to every group. We will always check with the landowner before lighting a fire in a session. Fires are a chance to teach learners about the dangers of fire and how to respect it. Learners will be taught how to keep themselves, and others, safe around the fire and it will not be included in their first session. Any campfire site we use or create will be surrounded by safe boundaries, safely positioned seating, and situated in a clearing away from debris and overhanging branches. We have a fire safety blanket which should be made available before lighting. Fuel will be brought onsite by FS leader to avoid depleting precious deadwood onsite. After the fire has been lit using matches or flint and steel, children will be reminded to stay seated and not approach the fire unless given permission e.g. to toast a marshmallow. At the end of the session it is the Forest School Leader’s responsibility to ensure that the remainder of the fire is broken up and that water is poured over the site until no heat or glowing embers remain. Water will be brought onsite and put aside solely for this purpose. In the interest of sustainability we will only hold one or two campfires for each Forest School block. There will only be a fire lit when there are 2 adults on site – one to supervise the fire and one to supervise children round fire. If a FS Leader found themselves in an emergency situation working alone, then any fire must be extinguished. Please refer to Appendice D for detailed fire risk-management documentation/procedure.

**Lone Working**

Under no circumstances should a FS leader plan to take a group out on their own. Under exceptional circumstances e.g. if other leader or volunteer is diverted to help with an emergency situation, or has an accident themselves then the procedure would be to contact the school/parents and take the group back – this might mean the school sending an adult to walk the group back with the leader for ratios. In an emergency situation, tools should be automatically put away and fires extinguished. If a FS leader is working on site on their own before or after a session e.g. setting up, then it is important that another adult is aware of their whereabouts and that the FS leader is contactable by a fully charged mobile phone.

**Tools**

The use of tools at Forest School aims to develop physical skills and confidence and teaches learners how to manage risks safely. Tools are not used at every session, and only introduced when the Forest School Leader has observed a group and considers them ready. A risk benefit assessment is carried out prior to the session and tools are only used for a particular activity that is age and skill appropriate to the learners. The types of tools which we might use include a bow saw, hand drill, palm drill, hammers and a fixed blade knife.

The Forest School leader demonstrates how to use tools safely, including correct positioning of the body, discussion of the participant’s “blood bubble” and spatial awareness, and use of PPE such as gloves or eye protection. Any PPE will be provided by the forest school and the Forest School leader is responsible for ensuring they are in good condition and suitable for task. A designated area for tool use is set up and clearly marked. Only three participants are allowed in the area to ensure appropriate space for working, and constant supervision from the Forest School leader or qualified assistant. Tools are counted out and back in again at the end of the session, after which they are cleaned and stored safely.For more information on safe handling of individual tools that may be used in the Forest School environment see the OWL Tool Use Guide [Link](https://owlscotland.org/resources/tool-use-guidance/) Please refer to Appendix C for risk assessments/operating procedure for fixed blade knife and bow saw as examples.

**Transport**

Groups should normally make their own way to the site where the Forest School leader will meet them. In some situations, school pupils can be escorted to and from the school by a member of the Forest School with accompanying school staff. If travelling by car, aim to park at a distance and walk into the woodland site.

**COSHH**

Our Forest School has a duty, under Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002, to prevent all those present at Forest School sessions from coming into contact with substances hazardous to health. Therefore, wherever possible, we avoid the use of any substances hazardous to health in the woodland. If substances need to be used, such as cleaning substances, they are kept stored away from children and there will be hygiene measures in place, along with PPE, to protect the safety of the leader or assistant using them.

**Medical and Dietary Requirements**

Prior to sessions the Forest School leader should be made aware of any medical conditions and dietary requirements of learners and volunteers. This will be shared with assistants where appropriate.

**Manual Handling**

Tasks at Forest School involving manual handling may include carrying and moving equipment or natural items, such as logs, to set up the site, or helping a learner up if they have fallen. It is important that these tasks are carried out carefully to avoid injury and that the Forest School leader and assistants model good practice to learners.

**First Aid**

Any accidents or incidents should be reported to the Forest School leader who is required to hold an up to date outdoor first aid certificate and will administer first aid if appropriate, whilst the assistants will supervise the other participants in an area which is away from the incident. A first aid kit which will be checked regularly, will be placed in a secure position, accessible to the leader and all assistants. After administering first aid the Forest School leader will fill out an incident form, including what first aid was given. If appropriate, parent/career will be contacted. Near miss incidents should also be recorded by the FS leader on the incident form and shared with the other leaders and staff.

**Emergency Procedure**

In the event of an emergency whereby the emergency services are required. The procedure below (as found on our emergency card) should be followed, using the relevant information provided. This exemplar card is for Gifford Woodland but other locations would be assessed similarly.

**Address: Welfare camp between Fawn wood and Speedy wood,**

**Station Rd, Gifford, EH41 4QQ**

**Yester Primary School Contact –** 01620 810435

**Mobile phone numbers used at forest School**- Nev Kilkenny 07966751896

Liz Doig 07775436174

Holly Briggs 07540524847

Corrina Dawson 07711050172

Chloe Clark 07554980754

**Location:** The Sessions will take place at:



**Grid Reference**: NT528683 **What Three Words:** tunes:charities:schools

**BRN**: 257712. **Main Location Code:** 77/364/0042

**Dial 999** and ask for an ambulance. Let them know you are with a group of children and their age.

**Ambulance Access to the site -** Use entrance at the end of Station Road, follow track to gate, open gate and drive to turning area. Site is located to left of the track. A volunteer should stand at the woodland entrance to mark the exact location.

**Trained Emergency First Aiders** would take the lead in an emergency.

* Initial assessment to be carried out by emergency first aider, following the ABCDE approach (see below). Apply first aid as appropriate. E.g, raise limb, provide bandage, put into safe airway position.
* Other member of staff to supervise children.
* Decision to be made about action to be taken. If hospital treatment is required phone 999, then phone primary school and/or parent (if not a school group.)
* The trained first aider will decide if they need to stay in the woods with the child, or if the child can be taken out and back to the school or parent.
* Other adults to stay with rest of group and return to school or meting point if appropriate. One other adult to stay with trained first aider until emergency services arrive. Their job would be to watch out for paramedic’s and guide them into the site.
* First aider to monitor vital responses so maximum information can be provided when emergency services arrive e.g. consciousness levels, breathing and pulse.

A – Assess for danger and responses C - Circulation E - Emotion. Ensure

B – Breathing and open airway D - Deformity nothing is missed.

**Missing Child Procedure**

Every precaution is taken during a session to make sure that every child is safe and accounted for, and to ensure that they are all within the forest school boundary which will have been outlined at the start of the block or session. Regular head counts are carried out. In the event of a lost or missing child the Forest School leader will blow their whistle and quietly gather the group together. One adult will stay with the group whilst the others (taking a whistle) will conduct a search of the woodlands. If the child is found they should sound the whistle and return to welfare camp. If the child has not been found within 8 minutes the police should be phoned and the emergency procedure described above should be followed.

**Incident Monitoring**

For any first aid, significant missing child incident or significant near miss incident, an incident form must be filled out and a copy kept by the GetOut and one sent to parents via school. Significant incidents should also be discussed with landowners if appropriate.

**Ticks**

GCW has many deer, and other animals, living in it which are known to carry ticks. These are tiny, spider-like animals which attach themselves to animals and people. They can carry Lyme disease, which left untreated can cause serious illness. Not all ticks carry disease and if they do the quicker a tick is removed, the less chance there is of anything being passed on. The Forest School leader will have a tick remover at all sessions in case any are found on visible parts of participants.

To avoid the risk of tick bites we ask that ALL participants wear long trousers and long sleeves and insect repellent, and that when home they are thoroughly checked all over their body for ticks, including their head, hairline and neck. If a tick is found it should be removed with a tick remover tool (from chemists) and antiseptic applied to the bite if at home or washed thoroughly if at Forest School. For more information, please see [Lyme Disease UK](https://lymediseaseuk.com/).

**Hygiene**

**Cooking/Food Hygiene (See Also Appendix E)**

Check for allergies/food intolerance/dietary issues before sessions. Groups attending Forest School are encouraged to bring their own water bottles and snack. They are taught not to eat anything found in the woodland and to avoid putting their hands near their mouths during sessions. An appropriate time will be assigned for learners to eat their snack, before which, soap and water is provided for hand washing. If a child has forgotten a snack and is hungry (and has no allergies) then the forest school leader may provide them with a biscuit. If leaders are handling snacks or making drinks they must thoroughly handwash before doing so and high levels of food hygiene maintained throughout (see Appendix E). During the winter months the forest school leaders might provide hot drinks from a thermos. Again check for allergies before giving hot juice or hot chocolate. If hot drinks are served, bring hot water in a thermos flask but let it cool to drinking temperature before sealing flask to bring to avoid risk of scalds.

Later in the term, the group may participate in cooking something very simple, such as marshmallows, over a fire (see Appendix D for Fire Risk Assessment and Appendix E: SOP for Food Hygiene). Before any other significant campfire cooking takes place a full activity risk assessment must be carried out for this in addition to the existing Fire Risk Assessment and Food Hygiene SOP.

**Toilet**

All participants will be encouraged to go to the toilet before attending sessions. We will arrange appropriate toileting facilities dependent on site. There will be a chemical or sawdust toilet located in a tent within the Forest School site so that children can safely and independently access it during sessions. Children should let a grown up know if they are going to use the toilet so that they are not unaccounted for in a headcount. During a group’s first session they will be shown the procedure for using this. There will be a container outside the tent containing toilet paper. The participant will take this with them into the tent and close the zip, signalling that the toilet is in use. All toilet paper is collected in a closed bin next to the toilet. This bag is removed and put into waste off-site after every session. They will then unzip the tent and replace the container outside. Soap and water and paper towels will be provided to wash and dry their hands. If children have to use the toilet for a poo, then they need to notify an adult as it means waste is disposed of differently. Adults other than the child’s own parents should not assist with toileting or changing or enter the tent while either is occurring. The toilet will be checked, and if it has been used, emptied by the Forest School leader at the end of a session into a toilet or in a closed bag in a bin off site. Wild-weeing is not encouraged during school sessions due to the large numbers of public walking through the woodland and lack of privacy.

**Handwashing**

A designated hand-washing site is always in place on site including running water from a hanging bag or spray and eco soap with a drip bowl underneath. Paper towels are provided and should be placed in the bin after use. The drip bowl will be removed and water emptied off site at the end of sessions. Children will be reminded to wash hands after toileting, before eating and handling food/drink, and after touching potentially harmful plants/trees/fungi.

**Welfare**

**Clothing**

We ask all participants to come to Forest School appropriately dressed so that they feel comfortable to learn.

In cold weather this includes many layers as if the participant becomes too warm layers can be removed and put back on as needed. Layers should include;

* Long comfortable trousers
* Long sleeved t-shirt/vest
* Long sleeved jumper
* Warm coat
* Hat and gloves
* Thick socks
* Sturdy shoes or boots

In hot weather participants should still wear long sleeves and trousers to protect from sunburn, stings, scratches, and insect bites. Warm weather clothing should include;

* Long comfortable trousers
* Long sleeved t-shirt
* Sun hat
* Sun cream to be applied before attending
* Socks
* Sturdy shoes – never open toes

We ask, where possible, that waterproof trousers and coats are brought to sessions whatever the weather as waterproof trousers will allow participants to kneel and sit more comfortably on rough, potentially damp, ground in all seasons. Even in summer the weather can change so coats can be worn or taken off as needed. Whatever the weather, shoes need to be comfortable and sturdy enough for playing on uneven ground and to protect feet from sticks and hidden obstacles. We have a good supply of waterproof trousers to borrow so please ask if needed.

**Behaviour**

We aim to promote good relationships so that all members of our Forest School can work together and enjoy their time spent learning in the forest. Our Forest School aims to promote each individual’s confidence and independence, but safety is also a consideration so it is essential that all groups are informed of what behaviour is expected of them. Our rules are:

**Take care of yourself -** Learners are expected to listen respectfully to Forest School leaders and supporting adults, and follow any instructions given relating to how to stay safe in the forest and when using equipment.

**Take care of others -** Learners are expected to listen respectfully to their peers and act appropriately to encourage each other to have fun together and keep each other safe.

**Take care of the forest -** Learners are expected to treat their surroundings with respect and not cause any damage to the plants or animals they encounter.

We understand that children thrive on genuine praise, recognition and affection and that good behaviour is grounded in healthy, respectful relationships. Therefore, all Forest School leaders and assistants will lead by example, modelling respect and kindness, and nurturing high self-esteem. Learners will be encouraged to see themselves as part of a team, appreciating each other and following rules together, as well as focusing on their independent behaviour and growth.

If unacceptable behaviour does occur, we will have a restorative framework to resolve difficulties constructively. If needed, safe space will be provided for learners to calm down and be ready to talk. The restorative framework for discussion with all those involved could include:

What happened? How were you feeling? How do you feel now?

Who else has been affected? What do you need/need to do now?

If unacceptable behaviour continues we will note down the incident on an incident form to allow parents/carers to be informed. If it is a school group we will speak to school.

**Equality**

In line with the Equality Act 2010, our Forest School aims to create a fair environment where everyone can participate and fulfil their potential regardless of their sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, or beliefs. Nobody, whether assistant or learner, will be discriminated against, singled out or treated differently for any reason.

**Safeguarding**

All adults working or helping at Forest School have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of each young person in their care. The Forest School leader and woodland assistants will hold a PVG certificate to ensure they can work with children. Any concerns about a child or anything they have said which make staff members feel at all uncomfortable must be reported to the Forest School leader who will liaise with school or child protection as appropriate. Always be alert to the possibility of non-accidental injury. Be aware of children who are particularly needy of adult company.

All adults working or helping at Forest School have a responsibility, in relation to child protection, to safeguard and promote the welfare of each child and young person in their care. The Forest School leader, must practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of volunteers to work with children at Forest School; all volunteers must hold a PVG certificate in accordance with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007. All adults have a duty to protect each child from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another child. Assistants must report any concerns to the Forest School leader. This will then be relayed without delay to the headteacher of the child’s school and/or Children’s Services at East Lothian Council. If Forest School Staff are accused of any wrongdoing, or if the FS leader has any concerns about another staff member then this will immediately be discussed with the Chair of the community woodland (for Gifford sessions) and or school/East Lothian child protection if appropriate. If a FS leader witnesses behaviour or conversation from another staff member which they feel to be inappropriate in any way then they must intervene and then report the incident to the Chair of the community woodland and/or Yester primary school and/or East Lothian child protection if appropriate. If a child who is not at the primary school makes a disclosure to forest school staff then this must be reported to the intake and assessment team or the Emergency Social Care Service by calling 0800 731 6969 (freephone) at any time out with normal office hours (Monday to Thursday 5pm to 8.30am, weekends from Friday 3.55pm to 8.30am) or reported back to the school child protection officer, if a school group. Please refer to <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/23055/edinburgh-and-the-lothians-multi-agency-child-protection-procedures> if any further information or guidance required.

The long term, regular sessions of Forest School, along with the process of building up trust and confidence in that environment, may mean that children feel more comfortable and may be moved to disclose information which they might have otherwise kept to themselves. Any adult present, who finds that a child is telling them something that concerns them, should follow the course of action set out below:

1. Listen but ask no leading questions. Let the child lead the discussion and do not press for details.

2. Keep calm and reassure the child.

3. Make no promises i.e. you cannot ‘keep a secret’. You should make it understood that there are limits to confidentiality at the start of the disclosure.

4. Inform the Forest School leader who will report this to the headteacher and/or Children’s Services.

5. Keep an accurate, written record of the conversation, including date, time and place. Write what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record must be factual and must not contain conjecture.

**Anti - Bullying**

Bullying is defined as an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone, whether physical or emotional. This will not be tolerated at Forest School and all instances will be dealt with immediately to ensure the safety and well-being of learners. All leaders and assistants model correct behaviour and will respond consistently to recognise and stop any acts of bullying. This includes an immediate verbal response, explaining to the participant why the behaviour was unacceptable and providing a safe space for this to be discussed. If the bullying continues the participant may be withdrawn from activities and the incident logged to be passed on to the school and/or parent/carer. Getting It Right For Every Child (2006) GIRFEC is the Scottish Government’s approach to supporting children and young people. This is in line with the Forest School ethos of focusing on the young person as an individual, to help nurture their own growth and development. Whilst we do not tolerate bullying of any kind, this also helps us focus on the participant carrying out the unacceptable behaviour, so we can help them understand why it is not acceptable and encourage discussion as to why they may be acting this way.

**Data Protection, Personal Data Handling & Confidentiality**

We only collect data, voluntarily provided, from the learner’s parent/carer or school. We will only collect data that is genuinely needed, such as contact details, medical information, or education and development details, and will hold it in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDRP) 2018. i.e. personal data will not be shared with anyone unless we have their consent. Names will be replaced by a first name initial wherever possible such as on planning/observations/evaluations. All personal details of participants will be kept confidentially and will not be discussed with anyone outside of our Forest School. (Source: Corinna Dawson’s Handbook). Data will be held in a folder throughout the course of the sessions and will be taken to and from the woodland sessions in this folder, and stored appropriately both during and out-with sessions. Data will be confidentially shredded/burned when no longer needed. It will only be kept as long as the child is attending FS sessions.

**Photographs**

Photographs may be taken to record participant learning and development in line with child’s existing school photo consent. Any photos taken by FS staff will not include children’s faces. For private/non-school FS sessions, photo consent would be part of application form. Groups will be asked to keep phones off or away to ensure no photos are taken by anyone attending Forest School.

**Consent**

School will be responsible for gaining parental consent for woodland trips. Please see Appendix A for details of consent form. For other woodland groups, it will be the Forest School Leaders’ responsibility to ensure that consent forms have been completed.

**Complaints and Grievance**

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with immediately. If you have a complaint, please speak directly to the Forest School leader to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss your concerns. If your concerns cannot be resolved through discussion then please submit a formal complaint, in writing, to GetOut by emailing [getouteastlothian@gmail.com](mailto:getouteastlothian@gmail.com) .

**Headcounts**

The forest school leader is responsible for taking a written register (ticking off names) at the start of each session and will also be responsible for regular headcounts throughout and at the end of the session before the group walks back to school.

**Environmental**

**Cancellation Policy**

Forest School will take place in all weather and it is important that participants are dressed accordingly. Extreme weather conditions that may cause Forest School to be cancelled could include:

* High winds (over 35mph) where there is an increased risk of danger due to falling trees. (In the case of school sessions these may be relocated to the school playground or in some circumstances the classroom).
* Heavy snow forecast to continue during a session with freezing conditions (below 0) that increases risk of slips and hypothermia.
* Heavy rains forecast to continue during a session making it difficult to have any activities not under shelter, or which increase the risk of flooding and slips.

All groups will be advised of cancellation or location change by phone call as early as possible on the morning of the session. The only other reason for cancellation/postponement of sessions would be if there was an unforeseen staffing issue which would mean we couldn’t fulfil our staffing ratios.

**Sustainability Policy**

The impact of Forest School on sites which are used regularly throughout the year needs to be carefully monitored.

**Permission**

Bearing in mind the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC), GetOut will always ask landowner’s permission before using a woodland site for Forest School but in particular before lighting a fire.

**Denudation**

The removal or reduction of woodland resources for activities could have a detrimental effect on the ecology of the area. To avoid this, learners are reminded of the rule - 1 in 20, i.e. only to pick a flower/ leaf/fruiting body etc if there are plenty. Forest School leaders will provide wood for fires to ensure no habitat is destroyed by the burning of deadwood.

**Compaction**

The continuous use of an area over time can lead to compaction of the soil which has a deleterious effect on its structure and restricts plant growth. Forest School will monitor impact on regularly used sites by taking pictures at the start and end of a Forest School term. The Forest School site will be surveyed annually, working with landowners, to assess if Forest School is adversely affecting this part of the woodland from overuse. If this is found to be the case, we will help identify another site that could be used in rotation.

**Pollution**

Any litter from groups e.g. snack wrappers are collected in a black bag and removed. Forest School leaders will empty the chemical/sawdust toilet off-site at the end of a session. Paper waste is put in a lidded bin next to the toilet and the bag from this is emptied into the main site bin bag at the end of each session and sealed and disposed in a bin off-site. Any other liquid waste such as unwanted hot drinks and water from the handwash drip bowl should be removed from the site at the end of a session and emptied down a drain at home.

**Corruption**

Care should be taken to ensure that noise does not cause unnecessary disturbance to local residents or protected wildlife i.e. badgers. Care should be taken with tools and clothing to prevent the spread of invasive or non-native species. Any leftover food should be removed from the FS site and either put in food recycling if waste, or stored/transported appropriately and used again if absolutely safe to do so. Un-drunk hot chocolate and other hot drinks will be poured into a basin and taken away at the end of the session.

**Environmental Choices**

Wherever possible, the Forest School will make environmentally sensitive choices e.g. environmentally friendly cleaning chemicals for the toilet, kiln dry clay as opposed to air dry clay due to plastic fibres in it.

**Appendices**

1. **Communication**

**Example of GetOut Incident Form**

| Name of child: | Date: | Person Dealing with Incident: |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| Nature of Incident;  Signed…………………………………………….. Signed………………………………………………………  (staff member) (parent/carer)  Date………………………………………………… Date……………………………………………………………. | | |

Copy to be retained by Forest School. Duplicate to be given to parent/carer.

1. **Sample email sent to school requesting medical information.**

For the next group of P2s who will be starting Forest School on 9th Feb, can you please forward any information about allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements, medical conditions and ASN.

Many thanks

The GetOut Team

[getouteastlothain@gmail.com](mailto:getouteastlothain@gmail.com)

1. **Parents Consent Form (sent out by primary school)**

**PARENTAL INFORMATION AND CONSENT FOR DAY VISIT**A black and white logo with a bird flying

Description automatically generated

***Name of School/establishment***

**(*insert group/ class name*) trip to (insert location)**

As part of (*insert aims of visit*) we have organised a visit to *(insert location)* on *(insert date).*

The Trip Leader will be (*Provide details*)

Travel will be by (*insert details)* leaving at (*insert details)* and returning at *(insert details.)*

Your child will need to bring (*(insert details.)*

During the visit your child will (*provide details about activities*)

*Add further details as required (cost etc)*

At all times young people will be supervised as per Local Authority guidelines and will be covered by East LothianCouncil’s insurance.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the visit please get in touch.

We will use the medical and contact information you previously provided. If there is specific medical or personal information that you have not already provided, that might affect your child during the trip or if there is any change to the emergency contacts, please let us know.

**Parental Consent For Day Visit**

I agree to my son/daughter taking part in the visit to (insert location) on (insert date/dates)

If you are unable to get hold of emergency contacts I agree to my child being given emergency medical treatment as deemed necessary by a competent medical practitioner, including anaesthetic and blood transfusion. (If you do not agree please provide details below.)

Please detail below any medical or personal information which might be relevant to the visit not previously provided. Emergency Contact Details during Visit if different to that held by school.

|  |
| --- |

| **Name of Young Person:** |  | **Class:** |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date of Birth:** |  |  |  |

| **Name of Parent/Guardian:** |  | **Relationship to Young Person:** |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Signature:** |  | **Date:** |  |

**Appendix B: Daily Operating Procedure**

**PRIOR TO SESSION:**

**Weather**

Check weather forecast at least 24 hrs in advance and then again first thing in the morning of the session. If potential extreme weather hot/cold/ winds or storms discuss with GetOut team/landowner/school as appropriate. Make extra provisions/ adapt plans or cancel session if necessary.

**Group**

Ensure all relevant medical, dietary and ASN information known about group in advance.

**Staffing**

Check in advance that all staff that you are expecting, are aware of this and available.

**Equipment**

Check all equipment planning to use for session in good condition and ready for transport to site. Tools safely stored. First Aid Kit and Fire Blanket. Copy of handbook. Mobile phone charged.

**Site Check**

Arrive at site in plenty of time to do a visual safety check of trees/ vegetation/ facilities and set up.

**Daily Risk Assessment**

Complete and sign.

**Volunteer Briefing**

Volunteers to arrive 15-30 mins in advance of session for briefing re plans for session, location of First Aid Kit and other safety information and to help with set up. Mention any medical, dietary or ASN issues which helpers need to be made aware of.

**Set Up**

Toilet and hand washing facilities.

Hammock if using.

Fire Blanket and fire area if planning fire.

Tool area cordon if planning to use tools.

Craft activity if planned and needed at start.

**DURING SESSION:**

**Weather**

Continue to monitor weather conditions throughout session and adjust plans accordingly.

**Participants**

Head count/verbal register by FS Leader at start of session and further regular head counts and check ins during session to ensure all present and OK, by FS Leader. Include a break in activities for eating and drinking.

**Safety**

Discussions about safety as needed e.g. boundaries, fire, plants, tools, behaviour. Try to illicit from participants as much as possible. Dynamic risk assessments as situations arise. Regular headcounts.

**Toilet**

Brief group about how to use toilet and to let an adult know if they have done a poo, so that the toilet can be emptied in advance of the next session.

**Observations**

Ongoing observation of participants throughout session. Take notes if necessary.

**END OF SESSION:**

**Participants and Staff**

Reflective discussion. Ideas for next session. Check belongings. Any litter in the bin bag. Head count. Thank volunteers. Write up observations/evaluation once participants have left to feed into planning for next session.

**Site**

Ensure site left as it was found. Equipment all safely collected, counted and stored as per legal requirements. Remove and dispose of any rubbish. Dismantle hand washing facility. Fires fully extinguished and soil cool. Toilet emptied/refilled as per toilet policy. Report any issues to management.

**Appendix C: Risk Assessment for Commonly Used Tools**

**GetOut Risk Assessment for use of fixed blade knife**

| **Gifford Community Woodland Forest School Risk Assessment for use of fixed blade knife.** | **Completed By: Chloe Clark**  **Date: 12/01/24** |
| --- | --- |
| **Brief description of activity:** For older children using a fixed blade knife to whittle sticks down to a point e.g. for cooking marshmallows on the fire. Review risk-assessment if there is a near miss or accident. |  |
| **Benefits of Experience/Activity:** By handling knives in a structured, safe environment, children will learn how to safely handle/store/use knives at home and be respectful of the risks involved in using a knife - the learning will be about fixed-blade knives but much of the learning will be transferable to other knives they might encounter e.g. penknives and kitchen knives. By handling tools responsibly children are exposed to risk and learn how to deal with it in other areas of their life. There is a sense of trust in letting children use something which they may perceive to be used by ‘adults’ and so this can help build confidence and self-esteem. There is also a sense of achievement in ‘making’ something for themself. Using a knife to whittle could benefit fine motor skill development. | |

| **Hazard (activity steps)** | **Risk** | **Evaluation** | **Control action** | **Final evaluation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group watches leader demonstrate fixed blade knife. Leader describes knife and talks children through safety talk. Leader then demonstrates de-sheathing knife and whittling. | Leader cuts self while de-sheathing knife. Knife slips whilst leader whittling and they sustain a cut injury to their leg or hand. This would be witnessed by children which may cause distress. Knife slips from hand of leader in direction of learners or in unpredictable direction. | Moderate | Keep group at more than two arms and a tool length from demonstration (‘blood bubble’ from Woodland Session 3). Leader uses safe knife practice through demonstration. Leader positions self in safe 3 point kneel - body position with dominant knee down and bottom off heel. Leader picks up knife by handle, holding like a bike handlebar. Leader removes sheath from knife safely and carefully, removing sheath in a straight line. Hold stick in non-dominant hand. Demonstrate whittling away from body using dominant hand to hold knife. Keep arm straight and cut using shoulder particularly over ‘knots’. Re-sheath knife immediately after use. | Tolerable |
| Learner moves to where they will be working.  Leader carries knife to seated child. | Risk of child starting whittling unsupervised in hidden part of site.  Risk of child tripping/falling while walking with knife.  Risk of leader harming themself either cut or stab when walking with knife. | Moderate  Substantial  Substantial | 1:1 supervision of this activity. Children educated that only allowed to use tools within a roped area. Learner has to ask permission to enter rope circle. Learner asked to zip jacket before starting.  Leader takes knife to child. Leader waits until learner in position then takes knife and leaves it on ground, still in sheath where learner will be working.  Leader holds sheathed knife by side and walks slowly/cautiously. Arm straight with blade pointing to the ground. | Tolerable  Tolerable  Tolerable |
| Knife is unsheathed | Risk of child cutting hand or elsewhere if they un-sheath knife. | Moderate | Leader always unsheathes knife, then lays back on ground for learner to pick up by brightly coloured handle (Woodland Session 3). | Tolerable |
| Learner moves to three point kneeling stance. | Risk of putting hand or knee on knife on ground. | Moderate | Kneel on dominant knee keeping bottom off heel. Leader does not un-sheath or put knife down for learner to pick up until learner is safely in position. | Tolerable |
| Learner picks up fixed blade knife. | Learner gets cut on hand from picking up knife. | Moderate | Leader gets eye contact with learner before they pick it up. Learner must be in three point kneeling position before they pick up knife. Learner picks up knife from the ground using dominant hand, by the brightly coloured plastic handle, holding it like the handlebar of a bike. | Tolerable |
| Learner places blade on stick. | Knife unpredictably slides from stick and cuts/stabs hand or leg or elsewhere.  Small risk of learner accidentally hurting leader or other child with knife if hand or knife slips unpredictably.  Very small risk of unstable or angry child ‘weilding’ knife in a threatening manner, accompanied by very small risk of child injuring self, leader, other or causing stress and distress to rest of group and to leader. | Substantial  Moderate  Substantial | Advise learner not to wear glove on either hand to reduce risk. 1:1 supervision. Learner should be in three point kneeling stance. Before child starts, should be able to repeat back key points from safety talk. (Hogarth, R. 2022). As soon as blade is picked up, point away from body. Take time picking up blade and placing on stick. No rush.  At all times the child holding the knife should remain within the roped area. No children should enter the roped area without asking, and all other learners should be two arms plus a tool’s length away from learner to maintain ‘blood bubble’ and safe distance.  Very much up to FS leader to know children well and read any alarming behaviour/mood signs before child is allowed to enter rope circle. Child who is feeling upset/distressed/angry or whose behaviour is unpredictable should not be allowed into the rope circle unless their behaviour settles significantly. | Tolerable  Tolerable  Tolerable |
| Learner starts to whittle beech stick. | Knife unpredictably slides from stick and cuts/stabs hand or leg or elsewhere. | Substantial | Keep arm straight. Learner advised to only whittle in direction away from self. Only whittle about a hand’s length of the stick. Advise learner to whittle slowly and not rush. | Tolerable |
| Learner hits a knot on stick. | Learner uses too much force or blade bounces off knot and unpredictably slides from stick and cuts/stabs hand or leg or elsewhere. | Substantial | Advise learner to slow down. Learner advised to keep arm straight and cut from the shoulder using more the shoulder muscles to work over the knot. Continue to whittle away from the body. Advise learner to remove ‘fluffy’ bits by cutting into stick. | Tolerable |
| Learner completes task and lays knife on the ground. | Risk of learner cutting hand or knee as places knife on ground. Or risk of learner forgetting it is there and leaning on it. | Moderate | Learner advised to put knife down slowly. 1:1 supervision means that as soon as knife is placed down, the leader can safely re-sheath the knife for the learner. | Tolerable |
| Leader picks up and re-sheaths knife as soon as task is finished and learner has laid down knife. | Risk of leader cutting hand as they re-sheath knife. | Moderate | Leader should always pick up the knife by its brightly coloured handle, holding with the blade pointing towards the ground. The Leader should re-sheath knife carefully putting sheath onto knife blade whilst watching to avoid cutting hand. | Tolerable |
| Learner walks away from knife and leaves roped area. | Learner trips as they walk away - risk of falling on knife in roped area. | Moderate | Leader re-sheaths knife **before** learner gets up and walks out of roped area. | Tolerable |
| Leader walks to bag with knife. | Leader cuts hand on knife whilst carrying or falls onto knife whilst walking. | Moderate | Leader holds sheathed knife by its handle, by their side with straight arm as walks slowly, and cautiously to tool bag. Sheathed blade pointing towards the ground whilst walking. | Tolerable |
| Leader puts knife in bag. | Leader cuts hand on knife or other knife already in bag when putting it in bag. | Moderate | Always hold knife by its handle. All knives should have been re-sheathed immediately after use and before storage. | Tolerable. |
| Child attempts to remove knife from bag. | Risk of child cutting hand or using knife un-supervised. | Moderate | Leader locks bag or box after knife returned. Coded lock on bag/box. Bag stored in a safe place out of sight/reach as per UK knife law. Children educated that only leaders are allowed access to bag. | Trivial |

**References**

The Forest School Training Collaborative (2020) *Activity Risk Assessment* Available at: GURUCAN APP: Forest School (FOLA)

Module 2: Woodland Sessions: Risk Assessment (Accessed 13th January 2024).

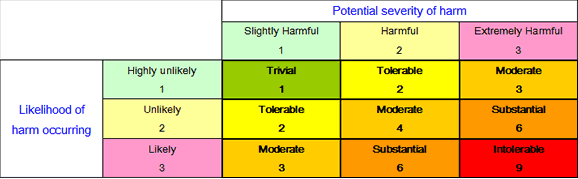
The Forest School Training Collaborative (2016) *Fixed Blade Knife* Available at: GURUCAN APP: Forest School (FOLA) Module 2: Woodland Sessions: Using Tools (Accessed 13th January 2024).

Hogarth, R. (2022) *Forest school demonstrating safe use of sheath knife* Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QT7vXkD7Yuc> (Accessed 13th January 2024).

**GetOut Risk Assessment for use of bow saw**

| **Gifford Community Woodland Forest School Risk Assessment for use of bow saw.** | **Completed By: Chloe Clark**  **Date: 09/04/24** |
| --- | --- |
| **Brief description of activity:** Children using bow saw to cut wood cookies to decorate. Review risk-assessment if there is a near miss or accident. |  |
| **Benefits of Experience/Activity:** By handling tools in a structured, safe environment, children will learn how to safely handle/store/use tools at home/in the real world and be respectful of the risks involved in using tools. By handling tools responsibly children are exposed to risk and learn how to deal with it in other areas of their life. There is a sense of trust in letting children use something which they may perceive to be used by ‘adults’ and so this can help build confidence and self-esteem. There is also a sense of achievement in ‘making’ something for themself. Using a bow saw to cut thin slices requires good fine-motor skills, and helps develop these in a supervised environment. | |

| **Hazard (activity steps)** | **Risk** | **Evaluation** | **Control action** | **Final evaluation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group watches leader demonstrate use of bow saw. Leader names parts of the saw and talks children through safety talk including which part to hold (the handle), how to carry, how to pass safely, and how to use safely and how to put down safely.  Leader then demonstrates saw, starting with three short backward cuts to start off.  Leader continues demonstrating cutting wood until cookie is complete. | Leader cuts self while de-guarding saw.  Saw slips whilst leader sawing and they sustain a cut injury to their leg or hand. This would be witnessed by children which may cause distress.    Bow saw slips from hand of leader in direction of learners or in unpredictable direction.  The larger piece of wood falls on foot of leader causing crush or other injury to foot.  The leader cuts hand or leg if saw slips or jumps. | Moderate  Moderate  Tolerable  Tolerable  Tolerable | Remove saw guard slowly and carefully pulling firmly but gently away from the blade.  Leader uses safe bow saw practice throughout demonstration. Leader positions self in safe stance with dominant knee/leg stepped back under saw arm. Non dominant hand wearing protective glove and holding wood firmly in position on other side of tree or saw-horse to avoid injury if saw jumps. Leader picks up saw by handle using dominant hand. Leader removes guard from bow saw safely and carefully, removing sheath in a straight line.  Keep group at more than two arms and a tool length from demonstration (‘blood bubble’).  Use non-dominant hand to hold wood securely in place. Use a solid/reliable/pre-checked saw-horse. If sawing a large piece of wood protective boots might be needed to avoid crush injury. Keep dominant foot stepped back at all times.  Saw with slow deliberate movements. Keep supporting hand behind saw-horse at all times. Continue to wear glove on holding hand. Keep non dominant leg stepped back. | Tolerable  Tolerable  Trivial  Trivial  Trivial |
| Learner moves to where they will be sawing at the saw-horse.  Leader carries saw to child. | Risk of child starting sawing unsupervised in hidden part of site.  Risk of child tripping/falling while walking with saw.  Risk of leader harming themself either their body or leg, when walking with bow saw to saw horse. | Moderate  Moderate  Substantial | 1:1 supervision of this activity. Children educated that only allowed to use tools within a defined roped area. Learner has to ask permission to enter rope circle.  Only one learner in roped area at a time and under supervision of FS leader. Learner asked to zip jacket before starting. Only FS Leader walks with saw and hands it to the child by laying on the ground with the handle facing child and guard removed or leaning against sawhorse.  Leader always takes saw to child. Leader walks with guard-on saw by side and walks slowly/cautiously. Arm straight with blade pointing to the ground. | Tolerable  Trivial  Tolerable |
| Bow saw is unsheathed and laid on the ground. | Risk of child cutting hand or elsewhere if they de-guard saw.  Risk of leader cutting hand as de-guards bow saw. | Moderate  Tolerable | Leader always de-guards saw, then lays back on ground for learner to pick up by handle.  Remove guard slowly and carefully pulling firmly away from saw blade.  Lay bow saw against saw horse with handle facing learner. Or on ground with blade facing inward and bow facing away from child. | Tolerable  Trivial |
| Learner picks up bow saw. | Learner gets cut on hand from picking up bow saw | Moderate | Leader gets eye contact with learner before they pick it up. Learner advised to only pick up saw when asked to. Learner must be in appropriate position before they pick up saw with dominant leg back. Learner must have a glove on helper hand before picking up saw. Learner picks up saw from the ground using dominant and non-gloved hand, by the black plastic handle. | Tolerable |
| Learner places saw blade onto the piece of wood. | Saw blade unpredictably slides from stick and cuts hand or leg or elsewhere.  Small risk of learner accidentally hurting leader or other child with saw blade if hand or saw slips unpredictably.  Very small risk of unstable or angry child ‘weilding’ saw in a threatening or irresponsible manner, accompanied by very small risk of child injuring self, leader, other or causing stress and distress to rest of group and to leader. | Substantial  Tolerable  Substantial | Advise learner to wear glove on supporting hand to reduce risk. 1:1 supervision. Learner should be in safe stance with dominant leg back and holding/supporting hand behind the wood of saw-horse or other side of a tree. Before child starts, should be able to repeat back key points from the safety talk. As soon as bow is picked up, point away from body. Take time picking up bow saw and placing gently in position on the wood. No rush.  At all times the child holding the bow saw should remain within the roped area. No other children should enter the roped area without asking, and all other learners should be two arms plus a tool’s length away from learner to maintain ‘blood bubble’ and safe distance.  Very much up to FS leader to know children well and read any alarming behaviour/mood signs before child is allowed to enter rope circle. Child who is feeling upset/distressed/angry or whose behaviour is unpredictable should not be allowed into the rope circle unless their behaviour settles significantly. | Tolerable  Trivial  Tolerable |
| Learner makes three initial backward cuts with the saw to create a groove. | Higher risk of saw jumping at this early stage as no groove to sit in.  Risk of cutting non-dominant hand with saw blade.  Risk of saw blade slipping and cutting leg.  Risk to other learners in the tool area. | Moderate  Moderate  Moderate  Moderate | Take time and make saw strokes only in a backward direction. Slow and steady.  Wear a protective glove on non-dominant hand and keep it on other side of saw horse or behind tree if you are using a saw horse which is lashed to a tree.  Keep dominant leg stepped back from saw horse at all times.  No other learners to enter tool area – just one at a time and others to stay behind roped area and also at blood bubble distance away. (Two arms and a tool’s length away). | Tolerable  Tolerable  Tolerable  Tolerable |
| Learner starts to saw the wood. | Saw unpredictably slides from wood and cuts hand or leg or elsewhere.  Other learner injured when saw slips.  Clothing eg scarf gets caught in saw leading to choking or other injury.  Learner tries to remove debris or caught clothing from blade and gets cut on hand/fingers. | Substantial  Moderate  Moderate  Moderate | Keep lower arm straight. Advise learner to saw slowly and not rush. Use the full length of the saw blade. If necessary, leader can support by holding the opposite side of the bow saw. Advise learner to stop immediately at any point if asked to.  Maintain blood bubble at all times – two arms and a tool’s length away from person with saw.  Remove loose items such as scarves before sawing and do up any zips/fasteners on jackets.  Initially tap blade off saw horse to remove debris. Always use a brush to remove debris from blade. Do not touch blade. All loose clothing zipped up or if necessary e.g, scarf removed before starts sawing. | Tolerable  Tolerable  Tolerable  Tolerable |
| Learner nears end of sawing the wood. Thin piece of wood remaining. | Learner uses too much force or blade bounces unpredictably slides from log and cuts/stabs hand or leg or elsewhere.  Risk of piece of wood falling on foot. | Substantial  Tolerable | Advise learner to slow down at this point and saw very slowly and gently using shorter motion. Learner advised to keep arm bent at elbow and saw from the shoulder.  Keep non-dominant leg stepped back as sawing. | Tolerable  Trivial |
| Thin piece of wood left sticking out of end of the cut wood. Learner attempts to cut through the tiny splinter/piece of wood. | Saw at risk of slipping as this piece of wood will cut through easily. | Moderate | Might be safer to saw this bit off on the ground. If so learner must position themselves in a three point kneel with dominant knee back. Holding hand should still be behind another piece of wood or position next to a tree so that the saw can’t slip in direction and injure non-dominant hand. Keep protective glove on non-dominant hand. | Tolerable |
| Learner completes task and lays bow saw down against saw-horse. | Risk of learner cutting hand or knee as places bow saw down.  Or risk of learner forgetting it is there and leaning on it. | Moderate  Moderate | Learner advised to put saw down slowly and lean it blade down against the saw horse.  1:1 supervision means that as soon as saw is placed down, the leader can safely re-guard the bowsaw for the learner. | Tolerable  Tolerable |
| Learner leans down to pick up wood cookie. | Learner hits head off larger piece of wood or saw-horse when standing back up. | Tolerable | Adult to remind child to be careful if at risk of bumping head. Adult can put their hand on the piece of wood to avoid potential collision. | Tolerable |
| Leader picks up and re-sheaths bow saw as soon as task is finished and learner has laid down saw. | Risk of leader cutting hand as they re-sheath saw.  Risk of learner attempting to re-guard saw and sustaining cut injury to hand or wrist. | Moderate | Learners advised that only adults re-guard bow saws. Leader should always pick up the saw by its handle. The Leader should re-sheath saw slowly and carefully put guard onto saw blade whilst watching to avoid cutting hand. | Tolerable |
| Learner walks away from saw and leaves roped area. | Learner trips as they walk away - risk of falling on saw in roped area.  Risk of tripping on the saw itself. | Moderate  Moderate | Leader re-guards saw **before** learner gets up and walks out of roped area.  If possible store saw by hanging up or leaning on the sawhorse so that it won’t be stood on or tripped over. Do not leave tools unsupervised. | Tolerable  Tolerable |
| Leader walks to bag with saw. | Leader cuts hand on saw whilst carrying.  or falls onto saw whilst walking.  Leader cuts leg on blade whilst walking. | Moderate  Moderate  Moderate | Leader holds the already sheathed bow saw by its ‘bow’, by their side with straight arm as walks slowly, and cautiously to tool bag.  No running with tool in hand. Ensure sheath is on bow saw at all times when being transported.  Keep bow saw blade sheathed at all times when transporting. | Tolerable  Tolerable  Tolerable |
| Leader puts bow saw in bag. | Leader cuts hand on saw or other saw already in bag when putting it in bag. | Moderate | Always hold saw by its handle or bow. All saws should have been re-sheathed immediately after use and before storage. No unsheathed saws in bag. | Tolerable. |
| Child attempts to remove bow saw from bag. | Risk of child cutting hand on tools in bag including saw, or removing and using bow saw un-supervised. | Moderate | Leader locks bag or box after saw returned. Coded lock on bag/box. Bag stored in a safe place out of sight/reach. Children educated that only leaders are allowed access to tool bag. | Tolerable |

**

Risk Assessment Matrix (FSTC, 2020)

**References**

Forest School Training Collaborative (2020) *Activity Risk Assessment* Available at: GURUCAN APP: Forest School (FOLA) Module 2: Woodland Sessions: Risk Assessment: Example Activity Bow Saw (Accessed 9th April 2024).

**Appendix D:**

**GetOut Risk Assessment for Campfire**

| **GetOut Forest School Risk Assessment for onsite Campfire**  Speak to landowner before lighting any fire. | **Completed By: Chloe Clark**  **Date: 17/08/24** |
| --- | --- |
| **Brief description of activity:** Campfire being lit within allocated fire space for warmth and atmosphere. |  |
| **Benefits of Experience/Activity:** Fire provides many benefits for learners. Warmth, atmosphere, a focal point to sing, talk and gather round. It can be used for cooking. The process of building and lighting a fire can help children work on fine motor skills. Taking calculated and managed risks can help children assess risk for themselves later in life. Building and lighting a fire can provide children (and adults!) with a great sense of achievement. As fire building and lighting are seen by children as ‘adult’ skills, being allowed to build and light a fire can help build confidence in learners. Lighting and putting out a fire safely is an important life skill. Knowing about fire safety such as ‘stop, drop and roll’ which can be taught as part of fire experience is also an important life skill and transferable to other situations. | |

| **Hazard (activity steps)** | **Risk** | **Evaluation** | **Control action** | **Final evaluation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Learners collect a variety of small sticks for kindling. use safely and how to put down safely. | Risk of touching harmful wood e.g. yew.  Risk of collecting wood with toxic smoke. | Moderate  Tolerable | Ensure that all children wash hands after activity and before eating. Leader to show children harmful trees such as yew, laburnum, rhododendron, oleander, laurel so that they can identify and avoid them. | Tolerable  Trivial |
| Choose an appropriate fire site. | Risk of damage to site eg burning trees, roots, field/ground layer.  Risk of fire spreading into welfare camp area. | Moderate  Moderate | Only use pre-established fire site. Ensure that fire site is appropriately positioned to avoid overhanging trees, roots and away from excessive undergrowth.  Use pre-established fire site which has an appropriate fire surround and boundary to best contain fire. | Tolerable  Tolerable |
| Leader demonstrates how to light a match.  OR  Leader demonstrates how to use flint and steel. | Risk of adult burning their hand or finger. Risk of hair or clothing catching fire.  Risk of adult burning their hand or finger. Risk of hair or clothing catching fire. | Tolerable  Tolerable | Take care when lighting match. Strike away from the body. Do up jacket, secure hair and any loose clothing before starting to light fire.  Take care when using flint and steel. Strike away from the body. Do up jacket, secure hair and any loose clothing before starting to light fire. | Trivial  Trivial |
| Learners use kindling, tinder and firewood to build fire. | Risk of touching poisonous wood.  Risk of collecting poisonous wood which is not suitable for burning. | Tolerable  Tolerable | Children to wash hands after this activity.  FS leader to supervise wood collection and look at what is being used before fire is fully assembled and lit. | Trivial  Trivial |
| Tinder is created by learner by dipping cotton wool in paraffin wax. | Risk of highly flammable paraffin wax remaining on learner’s hand or clothing. | Moderate | Child supervised closely and adult ensures that their hands are thoroughly washed after preparing tinder. Ensure no paraffin wax goes on clothing and if so then that clothing cannot be worn next to fire. Eg remove jacket. | Tolerable |
| Match is lit by learner.  OR  Flint and steel is used by learner to create spark. | Risk of child burning self on match. | Moderate | 1:1 supervision of this activity. Fire to be lit at arms length. Only older children permitted to light fire or leader. Always under close supervision of leader showing child how to strike match or flint and steel. | Tolerable |
| Tinder is lit by leader or older child. | Risk of child burning self while igniting tinder.  Risk of child setting clothing alight when lighting tinder.  Risk of setting hair alight when lighting fire. | Moderate  Substantial  Substantial | Close 1:1 supervision of the child lighting the fire. Child light fire at arms length. Use pre-prepared FS fire lighting kit. Use paraffin wax on cotton wool to increase chance of success for learners.  All jackets to be zipped up and all hanging items such as ties and scarfs to be removed or secured/tucked in before lighting of tinder.  Long hair should be tied back or tucked into hat before lighting fire. | Tolerable  Moderate  Moderate |
| Air is blown into tinder to help flame establish. | Risk of smoke inhalation by child or by leader. | Moderate | Use a balloon pump to blow air into fire rather than blowing air using lungs! | Tolerable |
| Sticks are repositioned over tinder. | Risk of twigs/kindling igniting quickly and burning child’s hand or finger. | Moderate | Always have bottled water on standby to run over a burn and into a bowl within which hand can swirl water.  Adults to reposition sticks on fire using fireproof glove or tongs/another stick. | Tolerable |
| Larger wood is repositioned over smaller kindling. | Risk of hand being burned as reposition logs. | Moderate | Use a fireproof glove to reposition wood and only adult to do this. Children advised that they are not to touch fire once lit. | Tolerable |
| Kindling and larger pieces of wood start to burn. | Sparks jump out of fire and could burn a child or burn their clothing/set alight. | Moderate | Children stay in their seats at a safe distance from fire. All children educated in ‘stop, drop and roll’ safety technique before lighting fire.  Keep adequate water and fire blanket and first aid kit to hand at all times. | Tolerable |
| Fire takes hold and becomes established with larger flames. | Risk of larger flames reaching too close to children and causing a burn to skin or clothing.  Risk of sparks from fire jumping onto children and burning their skin or clothes.  Risk of fire getting out of hand too quickly.  Risk of fire spreading into an overhanging tree.  Risk of fire spreading across dry woodland ground or by spark onto dry area.  Risk of child tripping and falling into fire.  Member of public approaches fire – risk of getting burned or distracting forest school leader. | Moderate  Moderate  Substantial  Moderate | Children stay in their set seats which are positioned at a safe distance. Keep sufficient cold water at hand to calm the flames if too high, fire blanket and first aid kit. Also all children educated in ‘stop, drop and roll’ safety technique before lighting fire.  Keep water and fire blanket close at hand to throw over a new area of fire. Don’t light a fire on particularly windy days or when the ground has been too dry for a prolonged period. Identify escape routes prior to lighting fire. Have a fire meeting point established in case something goes wrong. Have a reasonable amount of water onsite to extinguish fires.  Children to remain seated during time that fire is burning unless they have asked to leave their seat eg to go to the toilet. Remove all trip hazards from area surrounding campfire. Clear area of safe movement around fire (a step and a full length trip).  FS leader or assistant advises any members of public to stay back from fire as it is essential that FS leader can concentrate on the safety of learners and nothing else. | Tolerable  Tolerable  Moderate  Tolerable |
| Fire requires re-fuelling. | Child gets up to collect more firewood or bring across from wood store. Risk of child tripping and falling into fire. | Substantial | Only adult to refuel fire. There is seating round the fire at a safe distance. Children to stay seated unless they have asked to get out of their seats – eg to go to toilet. Ensure fire area is free of trip hazards before lighting. Ensure that leader has enough firewood for purpose at the side of fire before the fire is lit so that nobody is walking around. | Moderate |
| Fire starts smoking badly or  wind blows smoke in direction of learners. | Risk of smoke inhalation by learners potentially causing problems with breathing particularly for asthmatics and making people feel unwell. | Moderate  Tolerable | Sit learners far enough back from fire. If smoke is extremely bad then move learners away from fire to another area.  Only burn kiln dried wood as main fuel and avoid too much kindling from on site as green or wet wood more likely to produce excessive smoke. Don’t burn species which produce noxious smoke.  Reposition learners if possible to move them out of smoky area. Sit them far enough back from fire. | Tolerable  Trivial |
| Several larger logs are added. | Risk of log falling out of fire and too close to a child and causing a burn to their foot or leg.  Risks of sparks jumping out from new firewood when added and jumping onto a child and burning them or clothing. | Substantial  Moderate | Children stay in their set seats which are positioned at a safe distance. Keep sufficient cold water at hand to calm the flames if too high, fire blanket and first aid kit. Also all children educated in ‘stop, drop and roll’ safety technique before lighting fire.  Try not to add wood which is more likely to spark such as parts of old pallet. | Moderate  Tolerable. |
| Fire is burning low and needs stoked. | Risk of sparks or bits flying out of fire as poked with a stick. Risk of spark burning child or leader.  Risk of poker stick going on fire or accidentally burning hand as stokes fire. | Moderate  Moderate | Try not to use more ‘sparky’ wood. Poke fire carefully. Children stay in their set seats which are positioned at a safe distance. Keep sufficient cold water at hand to calm the flames if too high, fire blanket and first aid kit. Also all children educated in ‘stop, drop and roll’ safety technique before lighting fire.  Stoke fire using a green stick which is less likely to go on fire and child wearing a protective fire glove. | Tolerable  Tolerable |
| Fire is allowed to burn out. | Risk of children approaching fire when they think it has gone out. | Moderate | Do not add any further firewood to the fire. Forest School Leader to continue to supervise the fire at all times and not leave until fully extinguished and ground cold. Children advised that they have to either stay in their safe seats or move away from the fire area altogether. | Tolerable |
| Larger fire embers are broken up and spread over ground. | Risk of hand being burned or scalded by heat or bits of hot ember bouncing up. | Moderate | Only adult to do this. Use a green stick to move these embers and wear a fire resistant glove whilst doing this. | Tolerable |
| Water is poured onto broken up and dispersed fire pieces to cool the remaining wood/ charcoal and soil. | Risk of steam causing scalds to learners if too close. | Moderate | Ensure that enough water is onsite and next to the fire prior to lighting fire to extinguish it, and under no circumstances light a fire if insufficient water is onsite to extinguish it. All children to remain seated or move away from the fire area whilst fire still hot. Continuous adult supervision of fire, particularly at this stage. Adult only to pour water on dying fire and to wear a protective fire glove. | Tolerable |
| Once cooled, remove any large pieces from site, to leave no trace.  Put cover back on fire when ground completely cool. | Risk of child or leader burning hand on a piece of wood which isn’t completely cooled.  Risk of igniting bin bag or container which remains removed in and causing fire.  Risk of igniting wooden cover if still hot. | Substantial  Tolerable  Moderate | Use sufficient water to ensure remaining wood is cooled. Use colour of wood as a guide. Black wood is more likely to be cool than grey embers. Check wood for any glowing areas before touching and use a protective fire glove to do so. Turn any larger pieces over with a stick and break up and leave for a reasonable amount of time before handling. Hold other hand over soil/piece of charcoal to feel if any warmth left in it. Preferable to let fire burn out completely but this is not always possible with limited time. Do not put any remains into in bag until absolutely cold.  Do not replace cover until completely cool. | Moderate  Trivial  Tolerable |

**References**

Forest School Training Collaborative (2020) *Activity Risk Assessment* Available at: GURUCAN APP: Forest School (FOLA) Module 2: Woodland Sessions: Risk Assessment: Example Activity Bow Saw (Accessed 9th April 2024).

Forest School Training Collaborative (2020) *Firelighting PDF* Available at: GURUCAN APP: Forest School (FOLA) Module 2: Woodland Sessions: Fire (Including Kelly Kettle).

Forest School Training Collaborative (2020) *Fire Site Checks* Available at: GURUCAN APP: Forest School (FOLA) Module 2: Woodland Sessions: Fire (Including Kelly Kettle)

**Appendix E:**

**Standard Operating Procedure for Food Hygiene and Basic Cooking**

**(To be used with Fire Risk Assessment Document)**

| **Activity** | **Guidelines** |
| --- | --- |
| General Food Handling | * For groups preparing food on a regular basis, the Forest School leader will hold an up-to-date certificate in food hygiene. * Before preparing and handling food all leaders and participants must wash their hands with soap and water provided, and no food should be placed on the forest floor. Meat will not be cooked at Forest School. * In some cases it will be necessary for FS leaders to use gloves to handle foods e.g. when skin on hands is damaged but in most cases handwashing is sufficient. * Ensure check allergies/dietary before serving any food or drink. |
| Transporting and Storing Food | * All food is transported/stored securely wrapped, labelled and checked to be in date. * Store food away from allergens such as nuts. * Perishable foods should be transported and stored in a cool box or similar and kept at fridge temperature (where appropriate) for the duration of the session. * Items which are opened and may be re-used should be dated on opening using a sharpie. |
| Serving Food | * Food should be served in clean cups/plates provided by the Forest School. * These should be taken away and washed and dried off-site before next use. * Nut Free Policy. |
| Meat | * Avoid cooking meat in FS sessions as there are too many risks involved. |
| Serving Hot Drinks | * Bring hot water in a thermos to make up hot drinks. * Water should be at drinking temperature in the thermos to avoid scalds. * Don’t overfill cups. |
| Toasting Marshmallows  Risks include: eating with dirty hands, burning mouth or hand on hot marshmallow, being burned by someone else’s/or own hot marshmallow or toasting fork, using toxic wood as a stick, picking up hot fork. Choking hazard for small children. | * Fire use in line with Camp Fire Risk Assessment Document. * Wash hands prior to starting activity. * Only toast marshmallows on a very long stick (check type of wood) or long telescopic fork. * Do not walk around with hot marshmallow/hot toasting fork. * If available can wear fire safety glove on toasting hand to protect from heat. * Only hold toasting forks by the handle. * Be aware of choking hazard for small children – do not give to preschool children. * Be aware that these are very hot – warn children to cool marshmallow thoroughly by blowing before attempting to eat to avoid burning mouth. * Advise children to remove marshmallow from fork using their hand before eating to avoid burning mouth on hot fork or marshmallow. * If marshmallow falls on the ground or into fire leave it – don’t try to retrieve/eat it. It will burn out or FS leader can put it in the waste at the end. * As with all campfire activities very close supervision required. * Keep cold water and fire blanket and first aid on hand for emergency use. * FS Leader to take used telescopic metal forks and store within fire surround in case someone is tempted to pick them up and burns hand on hot metal, instead of picking up by handle. * Be aware of religious/dietary reasons within group for not eating marshmallows. * Ensure 2 adults at the fire and 1 to assist if children need help with something away from fire site. |
| Making Campfire Popcorn  Risks include: Burning hand on hot metal mesh, popcorn popping into someone’s face/eye after mesh is opened, burning mouth/hand on hot popcorn. Choking hazard for small children. | * Fire use in line with Camp Fire Risk Assessment Document. * Ensure that handle of mesh is held using a heatproof/fireproof glove. * Keep mesh closed for a few moments after removing from fire in case further kernels pop. * Allow popcorn to cool for a few moments before serving. * Be aware that mesh/sieve may still be hot so don’t lay it down outside fire surround in case someone steps on or tries to pick it up. * Allow mesh to fully cool before putting it away. * Don’t give to pre-school children due to choking hazard. |

For any other campfire cooking, a full activity risk assessment must be completed prior to the session as for any risky activity.