

What is Forest School?

Forest School is a specialised approach that sits within the wider context of outdoor experiences and woodland learning. It takes place on a regular basis over a period of time in the same wooded area. Forest School is a pedagogical technique using particular methods to deliver learning and health objectives by a trained Forest School leader (OCN level 3). Forest School leaders deliver programmes which aim to develop confidence, emotional resilience, independence, language and communication skills and increase levels of physical activity and wellbeing in the child, adult or family group.

Forest School differs from Forest Education in that it is a developmental process that involves regular and frequent visits to an outdoor area over an extended period of time. This process is supported by trained leaders who create opportunities for each individual to engage with nature and develop skills within a recognised framework. The process is open-ended and participant-led and, as such, requires a high ratio of adults to participants.

Examples of Forest School activities

- Nature trails and scavenger and bug hunts
- Nature crafts - conker dragons, pine cone gnomes, bird feeders, nature mobiles, leaf prints, teasel hedgehogs and Willow weaving.
- Sensory activities and experiences - Listening to nature, sit spot, playing in the earth, puddle splashing, rolling in leaves, mud sliding, clay creatures and mud pies
- Building and lighting fires
- Playing team, group and tracking games
- Shelter building
- Making gnome and fairy homes
- Nature stories and puppet plays
- Basic tool use to make bug homes, wooden snakes, woodland jewellery, leaf presses, whistles, charcoal pencils and mallets
- Making potions, infusions and balms
- Natural music
- Pond dipping
- Making stick rafts, bark boats, walnut boats, hawthorn fishing rods,
- Natural camouflage
- Constructing ovens and cooking food on fire
- Building wooden and rope bridges and swings
- Blindfold / trust games
- Using a Kelly Kettle
- Cordage -rope and string work
- Art and sculpture work
- Birch tapping

The Forest School Ethos

Making it possible for children to spend regular time out in the forest is an excellent thing to do. Being out in the wild offers extensive opportunities for a whole range of things to happen especially with minimal intervention from "experts". It will be important to recognise when to stand back, so as not to redirect the flow of discovery and enquiry. The relationship between each individual and the natural environment is utterly unique, and a different experience each time.

The value of this experience is:

- Improved agility, balance and motor skills plus a sense of feeling alive!
- Exercise and fresh air improve sleep patterns and appetite.
- A developed sense of care, empathy, trust and co-operation with their peers.
- Improved language and communication skills
- Regular feelings of success and achievement
- An understanding of the relationship between people, nature and the planet and a deep respect for the environment.
- Experiencing awe and reverence and a heightened sense of textures, sights, sounds and smells.
- Enjoying peace, tranquillity and a calm mind which leads to a greater sense of well-being
- Developing a sense of when it is safe to take risks and challenge oneself.
- Improved self care, motivation, inquisitiveness, concentration and focus.
- Improved resilience and the ability to be reflective when working through practical problems and challenges.
- Growing independence and resourcefulness and an ability to manage failure.
- Opportunities to develop creativity, imagination and new skills

The need of human beings to engage with nature does not change. These needs are not always verbally articulated. They need to be picked up from intelligent observation, and an awareness of the possibilities, and met with the provision of opportunities. This cycle should lead to progression in challenge, in understanding, in fulfilment, in achievement, in the recognition and management of risk, in health and wellbeing.

Forest School Roles

Forest School Leader:

The leader is responsible for the sessions and the welfare of all of the children. They are fully qualified as a Forest School Leader (OCN Level 3) and hold a first aid certificate.

Where appropriate they will have responsibility for any activities being run, and the associated Risk Assessments. They were the author of the 'Forest School Handbook' which amongst other things contains Risk Assessments, Policies and Procedures.

They are also responsible for directing any Forest School supporters and helpers.

Forest School Supporters and Helpers:

These could be parents, teachers, teaching assistants or other staff. They will look to the Forest School Leader for guidance on their role on the day. Generally they should allow the child to make their own journey of discovery without being led and only intervene when safety is paramount or guidance is needed.

They will have read the Forest School Handbook and signed the agreement at the back.

They may lead activities once they have attended the Forest School for some time. These will be supported by the Forest School Leader.

Parent/Guardian not attending Forest School with a child:

They should ensure that their child is dressed appropriately for the weather and has spare clothing where needed. This includes the need to wear old clothes.

They should have read the "Information for parents" leaflet, and ensure that their child regularly attends Forest School.

They should talk with their child/children about what they have done at forest school and express positive interest in what they say.

Parent/Guardian attending Forest School with a child:

Parents and guardians should guide children in their own learning and ensure that they allow the child to make their own journey of discovery without being led.

They should ideally refrain from showing their own fear/dislike at the challenges that a Forest School can be perceived to present i.e. mud, spiders, getting dirty.

Forest School Routine

Procedures to be carried out before each session:

- A thorough sweep of the site will be done before each session to check for any litter, glass, animal faeces etc. Any such items shall be collected and disposed of in school.
- A near miss form will be filled in if any hazardous materials are found and handed in to the office.
- All trees will be checked for broken or hanging branches that might potentially fall during a session.
- Check of weather conditions. If it is unduly windy or a thunder storm is imminent or has commenced then it will not be advisable to carry out a Forest School session.

Session Outline

- Change into outdoor clothes and footwear and sit ready with equipment.
 - Encourage all children to go to the toilet to minimise visits during the session.
 - The children will help carry equipment to the gate. They must not walk up the bank.
 - Sit down in log circle to discuss rules, boundaries, group call and respond and any particular safety issues for the session.
- N.B. If a child identifies a potential hazard have them ask another child to stand by it or mark it clearly and then tell an adult.*
- Provide outline for the session, identifying resources and session focus.
 - Children to have time exploring.
 - Snack time ensuring children have cleaned their hands first.
 - Time for reflection and feedback from the group.

Procedures to be carried out at the end of each session:

- Check in all tools and resources and ensure forest school area is tidy.
- Children line up by the gate in pairs
- Children must not walk down the bank but follow the grass path.
- Put resources away
- Change into uniform and ensure wet clothes are in plastic bags and taken home at the end of the school day. (Hang waterproofs on hangers of rail to dry)
- Wash hands.
- Feedback to parents if children have been introduced to any new activities that they should be aware of when dismissing children. (e.g. using magnifying glasses)
- First aid kit needs to be restocked if items have been used during the session.

Toileting Procedure

If a child needs the loo they should inform a member of staff who will accompany them to the Year 2 toilets in the main building. Any 1-1 or high risk activities will be paused until the adult has returned.

Forest School Code of Conduct

"Take only memories; leave only footprints"

Our Forest School Code of Conduct supports the Countryside Code: **Respect, Protect and Enjoy**.

Respect other people: We will respect the local community and other people using the outdoors, remembering that our actions can affect people's lives and livelihoods.

Protect the natural environment: We all have a responsibility to protect the countryside now and for future generations. We will not harm animals, birds, plants or trees and will endeavour to leave no trace of our visit.

Enjoy the outdoors: We will stay safe.

We expect all participants to:

Wear suitable clothing for being outside in all weathers. Children will change in school prior to leaving for the site.

Enter the site respectfully and explore, investigate, learn and play in a manner that will not damage our forest environment or other people. We understand that we share our Forest School with plants and animals and that when we are in our Forest School we are sharing the environment with them.

Stay safe by introducing **fixed boundary markers** to the children at the start of each session through exploration games. These boundaries will have been previously defined by the Level 3 practitioner, taking into account the site, age and experience of the group. Adults will allow children to explore in deep cover but position themselves so that they can visually see a child whilst still allowing them to explore independently. A call and response system will be used each session in case of loss of visual contact. Currently, Forest school sessions will be taking place within the school grounds.

Not eat or drink anything from the site unless it is part of a planned activity led by the Forest School Leader. Children will be reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses. Hand washing facilities will be available to use on site before drinking or eating snacks.

Use **toilets** before leaving school. Children will have free access to toilets during the morning and be accompanied by a responsible adult. Any risky activities will be paused until the adult has returned.

Carry and transport materials safely. Children will be encouraged to roll, lift, drag and pull materials, either by using their hands or ropes. Safe lifting, by bending your knees and keeping your back straight, will be modelled by all adults. Heavier objects will be rolled, lifted or carried by more people working together.

Play with stones safely. Children will be encouraged to select, transport and place stones carefully, taking into account the environment they are taking them from and placing them in. When using stones for artwork or creative games larger stones should be replaced at the end of the session. Children will not be permitted to throw stones unless it is within a designated area and part of a planned session.

Play with sticks safely. Children can carry sticks that are no longer than their arms length and are encouraged to be aware of other people around them. Longer sticks may be dragged or carried with the help of another person when each person is at either end. Sticks will not be thrown unless in a designated area as part of a supervised activity.

Collect wood sparingly and thoughtfully so as not to disturb natural habitats and ecosystems. Wood used for fire making, shelter building or play and exploration will be brought in. Four sizes can be collected: matchstick sized, pencil sized, thumb sized and wrist sized.

Only **dig holes** in designated areas as this activity can destroy habitats and cause accidents. Children may carefully move soil to look for insects and their habitats using fingers or small sticks found within the wooded area.

Be dog aware. Forest school will currently be taking place within the school grounds. Should we go off site; Children will be taught that, even though most dogs are friendly, some can be unpredictable. If dogs approach the group, children and adults will, 'Keep still, keep quiet and keep together", whilst crossing their arms over their shoulders and turning away, if the dog should approach them. The site will be inspected beforehand for dog faeces, but if any should be found, the Forest School leader will bag it to dispose of it at school.

Use ropes for the collection and transportation of Materials only. If children want to use rope for creative play (such as swings or climbing ladders) adults will supervise and teach the correct knot tying and safety measures. Children will not be allowed to tie each other up.

Children will not **Climb trees** in the Enchanted Garden as they are not strong enough to hold a child's weight.

Be aware when walking past **branches at eye level** that may spring back. Children will be taught to keep their distance from the person in front or hold branches back until others have passed through safely.

Light fires safely. The forest school leader will be responsible for all fire lighting activities with all other adults being advised of the safety measures before a session. Children will be taught how to move around a fire area and the correct measures and equipment will be in place before a fire is lit.

Use tools appropriately. All tools are kept in a lockable container in a designated area and all tool use is carried out at a safe distance from other children. Tools should be counted out and in by an adult and children will not be allowed to help themselves. Children will be taught how to use tools safely and there will be a ratio of 1:1 for all tools, except peelers where there will be a ratio of 1:2.

Leave the site as we found it. Everything brought onto site should be removed. Shelters and large structures should be dismantled. There is a designated fire area which should be left in the same state that it was found. Some larger items may be left on site for a short time if there are to be further sessions. But these should not be left for the long term.

Environmental Policy

'When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.'

Our Forest school aims to develop a lifelong love and respect for the natural world. We encourage pupils to be involved in discussions and decisions regarding the site and how to minimise our impact on it whilst improving the biodiversity when opportunities arise.

Our site assessment will enable us to evaluate our environmental impact on the site and put measures in place to minimise damage through erosion and disturbance.

During forest school sessions we will:

- Ensure the sustainable use of natural resources found at the site.
- Pass on knowledge of sustainable management practises to pupils during activities.
- Aim to create minimal or no waste through recycling and reuse of materials encouraging a deeper understanding of how waste is detrimental to the health of the planet as a whole.

- Ensure that fire making and other on site activities are carried out with minimal impact on wildlife following the ethos of leaving no trace.
- Ensure that all litter is taken away and disposed of responsibly and that the reasons are explained to the children.
- Use mainly deadwood that has been brought onto the site for fire lighting and craft activities so that we do not disturb wildlife homes.
- Ensure that designated fire spots are located in areas that do not have any special ecological interest as they can change the PH levels of soils and deplete it of nutrients.
- Ensure that fires are lit away from tree roots as fire can travel along underground roots even when they appear to have been extinguished and ensure that they are properly extinguished.
- Dispose of ash into nettle patches if possible.
- Ensure that food waste from cooking is not left on site as this may increase numbers of particular animal species that will have a detrimental impact on local ecosystems.
- Restrict tree climbing activities to trees that have been assessed as being strong enough to tolerate them.
- Limit activities that involve picking flowers and leaves from living plants.
- Encourage the collection of fallen leaves and flowers.
- Not use wet wipes as they contain plastics which do not easily biodegrade.
- We aim to minimise our ecological footprint by purchasing materials and resources that are produced: as locally as possible; organically; from sustainable or renewable sources; ethically, with regards to environment, and workers' and animal welfare; and with minimum packaging.

Forest School Equipment List

These lists are references to be used to support the planning of a forest school session.

The **Forest School Leader must** always carry an **emergency bag** and **all** other adults should be made aware of the contents in case of an emergency.

The contents of the **emergency bag** will vary depending on the site location being used, the group, time of year and weather conditions. Contents of the bag may also vary as a result of risk assessments.

However, there are some essential items that should be carried on every session that take place within the school grounds.

Essential Items:

Item	Number	Checked out	Checked in
First Aid Kit (pick up from class)			
Emergency Procedures - Ensure other adults know where to find this.			
Register - Medical information and emergency contact details of all adults and children in the group.			
Risk Assessments			
Means of communication (phone or radio) <u>Check signal</u>			
Water container - drinking water			
Container with Individual medication - labelled (parental consent and trained staff to administer)			
Newspaper			
Matches			
Wet wipes (biodegradable environmentally friendly ones)			
Protective gloves			
Species list for site			

Fire safety equipment list

Item	Number	Checked out	Checked in
Heat proof gloves			
Fire blanket			
Water containers (x2)			
Water supply			
Hair bands			
Burns kit			

Tools list

Item	Number	Checked out	Checked in
Palm drills			
Bow saw			
Peelers			
Knife			
Trowels			
Rakes			
Mallet			
Loppers			
Secateurs			

Hand saw			
Butter knives			

Clothing Requirement (for everyone)

“There is not such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing”

- Woolly hat/ Sun hat
- Warm Gloves (Waterproof mittens will be provided by the school)
- Fleece/Jumper
- Long trousers
- Spare socks
- Sturdy Footwear- Trainers/Wellies/Boots
- An emergency change of clothes and a carrier bag for dirty/wet clothing

N.B. Waterproof dungarees and coats will be provided.

Other resources

General	Nature study	Story- telling	Art	Fire pit
Carrier bags	Magnifying glasses	Wildlife puppets	Paintbrushes	Dutch oven
Sun cream (permission req)	ID books	storybooks	string	Scallop shells
Wet wipes		puppets	Colouring	Fire steels
Sugary snacks			Paper	Cotton wool
Tarpaulin			cellotape	Charcoal tin

Rope			Wool	Charcoal cloth
Mallet				King Alfreds
Torch				Kelly kettle
Spare clothes				Tin lid
				Tongs
				Logs
				tinder

Drinks	Toileting	Games	Food Prep	
Hot chocolate	Nappy sacks	headscarves	Plastic bowls	
Water container	Natural soap		plates	
Mugs/cups	Tippy tappy		Forks	
Teaspoons	Hand gel		Spoons	
Tea	trowel		Bowls	
Coffee	Small tarp and rope			
Milk flask				

Policies

Our forest school will adhere to the school policies which can be found online at: <http://www.motcombe.e-sussex.sch.uk/School-Policies> or please ask at the office.

If any adult is concerned about the welfare of a child they are to report it, at an appropriate time, to the Forest School Leader and provide a written explanation at the end of the session which will be placed in the child's PSE file. Confidentiality is important and any issues should not be discussed outside school.

Behaviour Policy

Our forest school promotes the golden rules set out in the behaviour policy.

We listen / We do not interrupt

We are kind and helpful / We don't hurt people's feelings

We work hard / We do not waste time

We look after property / We do not waste or damage things

We are honest / We do not cover up the truth

We are gentle / We do not hurt anybody

Children who have particular behaviour needs will be individually risk assessed and may be required to work 1:1 with an adult.

The forest school leader reserves the right to finish a session at any point if they feel that the safety of participants is at risk.

Equal opportunities and inclusion

Our Forest School is committed to equal opportunities and aims to provide an environment in which all participants feel valued, enjoy regular success and reach their full potential. Our policies help to ensure that we promote these aims, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

We will:

- Request details regarding pupil's specific access or medical requirements prior to planning sessions so that everyone can participate fully during Forest School.
- Adapt activities during a session to ensure that everyone is comfortable and that their physical and emotional needs are being met.
- Ensure equality of access for all children.
- Involve all parents in supporting their child's education
- Take account of all children's personal learning styles when planning for future opportunities.
- Use a wide range of resources to support a variety of learning opportunities.

We will ensure that our children:

- feel secure and valued
- appreciate and value the differences in others
- take responsibility for their own actions
- participate safely, in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs
- use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, learning styles and linguistic needs, without stereotyping
- enjoy both challenge and success

We strongly believe in the many benefits that all people can gain from spending time in a woodland environment and that it will provide a wealth of precious memories. To further ensure that forest school is accessible to everyone we:

- Ask parents to understand that children may get wet and muddy and to provide adequate clothing. (We only stock a limited supply)
- encourage a level of risk-taking, always under close adult supervision.
- actively foster friendships and collaboration between all children and adults.
- Risk assess children with particularly challenging behaviour and may request 1 to 1 adult supervision but their entitlement to participate in Forest School remains the same.

Accident and Emergency Procedures

Although accidents and emergencies are unlikely, they can happen. Our forest school leader is familiar with the appropriate emergency procedures outlined below. If an emergency does occur the Forest School leader will resume control of the whole group. Responsibility may then be delegated when necessary and all accompanying staff must have read and signed the handbook before a session begins.

The group leader will:	Details
Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.	See scenarios

<p>Stop all activities and gather the whole group together, ensuring that they are all safe and moved away from any danger.</p>	<p>All other staff will be allocated roles by the forest school leader.</p>
<p>Attend to any casualty with 1 adult helper. The second helper will walk the children back into their classroom where they will seek the assistance of the class teacher. They should then inform the school office. The attending adult helper should make notes of any changes noted in the casualty over time.</p>	<p>Names and details of casualty will be in the emergency bag with first aid box and copy of emergency procedure.</p>
<p>Phone for an ambulance if needed. The Business Manager is responsible for arranging for a member of staff to transport the student/staff to hospital.</p>	<p><i>Another adult may be asked to do this while the leader attends to the casualty. Give them School address from emergency planning details.</i></p>
<p>Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence. Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident.</p>	<p><i>The group leader will give copies of Notes and reports to the head teacher.</i></p>
<p>Pupil accidents, depending on the severity should be written in the School's First Aid book which is kept in the first aid room. Incidents must be reported to the health and safety officer Gill Bradshaw who will decide whether it needs to be reported to the HSE.</p>	<p><i>These forms should be filled out even if it was a near miss and no one was harmed.</i></p>
<p>Inform the site manager as soon as possible AFTER the incident.</p>	<p>All staff must report any accident (or near misses) involving themselves, visitors or volunteer helpers by recording the details on the near misses form kept in the forest school file. This should be given to Gill Bradshaw.</p>
<p>Ensure that all equipment involved in an accident or incident is retained in an unaltered condition in case it is required by the police. Do not focus on who is at fault. In all cases keep a careful written record i.e. a log, of all facts, events, times and circumstances and retain this record until all matters are finally settled. If possible take photographs.</p>	<p>Do not allow anyone to interview any party member without an independent witness being present.</p>
<p>First aid kits must be re-stocked and</p>	

stock checked every 6 months.	
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NB: No-one in the group should speak to the media. Any enquiries from journalists must be referred to the head teacher. No-one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties, nor sign anything relating to accident liability without clear advice from the LA or relevant Trades Union.

Lost or missing child

1. As soon as child is found to be missing, bring rest of group back in and ensure adult to pupil ratio maintained. Make an immediate search of vicinity and use call and respond continuously.
2. Ask an adult to report to the office.

Death or serious accident

1. Follow First Aid procedure.
2. Stay with casualty, but ensure rest of group is removed from the situation and is safe.
3. School to call parent/guardian/next of kin ASAP.
4. Follow School crisis management procedure.
5. Gain advice on follow up from police.

Poor weather conditions

1. If trees blowing more than 20 degrees, or if group leader feels uncomfortable return to the school building.
2. Use indoor areas or shelter outdoors (away from trees) areas as alternative.

Behaviour problems (See behaviour policy)

1. Remove other children from area of risk (if deemed necessary).
2. If thought necessary, trained members of school staff to use appropriate restraint technique.
3. Debrief child after calm down period.
4. Log incident.
5. Inform parents/guardian.

Fire drill

In the case of a fire drill, all children and adults must walk children down the grass path and line them up with their class in silence.

Health and safety policy

Please read the school's health and safety policy.

Below is a list of additional points and measures which relate directly to our Forest School sessions.

- 1) The trained Forest School Leader is always in charge of the sessions.
- 2) The Forest School leader is in overall charge of the care of children however all adults present must ensure that pupils are kept safe at all times.
- 3) All adult helpers **MUST** sign a form at the end of this handbook to show that they have read and understood its contents and the risk assessments appropriate to the session in which they are helping. They must sign and date the form stating that they comply with the general operating procedures for Forest School (code of conduct).
- 4) The Forest School Leader or Assistant will always carry and take a first aid kit with them to each session. (are there school or first aid kits available?)
- 5) The Forest School Leader or Assistant will always carry an Emergency Bag onto the site for every session.
- 6) The Forest School Leader will always carry a mobile phone and will ensure that there is easy access to a land line if the group is out of range.
- 8) In the event of an emergency, The Forest Leader will ensure that the School contacts the emergency services.
- 9) The Forest School Leader will review the risk assessments before every trip into the School's Forest Site.
- 10) When tools are used the adult child ratio will be 1:1
- 11) There is one exception to this - when using peelers for whittling the ratio can be 1:2.
- 12) The Forest School leader is responsible for the maintenance and checking of all tools and equipment to be used at Forest school, prior to their use.
- 13) The Forest Leader is responsible in training the children in how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately.
- 14) The Forest leader will be responsible for the pre visit check of the Forest School site prior to a Forest School session.
- 15) In order to ensure that children can take measured risks, staff to pupil ratio's of 1:4 will be maintained. If an adult needs to accompany a child to the loo all risky activities will be put on hold until the adult returns.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

Everyone at Motcombe has a responsibility in relation to child protection.

We are committed to:

- taking all reasonable measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of each child and young person (pupil) in our care.
- the practice of safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people. All adult helpers will be DBS checked.
- protecting each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil.

In addition, adults supporting forest school need to be aware that it may be a time when children choose to discuss sensitive matters. Any volunteer, or member of staff, who finds that a child is telling them something that concerns them should follow the course of action set out below in simple steps:

1. **Listen** to the pupil but ask NO leading questions. Allow the child to lead the discussion but do not press for details.
2. **Keep calm and offer reassurance.** Accept what the child says without challenge.
3. **Make NO promises.** 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 Child Protection Officer straight away (the Head, Mrs Tracy Robinson) or the deputy Ms Fiona Day. This may mean pausing an activity so that the adult can leave the site.
5. Keep an accurate, **written record** of the conversation, including the date, the time, the place the conversation occurred in and the essence of what was said and done.

Food Policy

- A Nil by mouth policy is practised with items found within the forest school area.
- Only foods that can be eaten by the whole group will be available, taking into account allergies and religious and cultural restrictions.
- We follow a no nut policy.
- No proteins or dairy will be used during cooking activities.
- Drinking water will be available and a snack and drink will provided during the session.
- All food related activities will be individually risk assessed and all food collected will be washed and checked by the forest school leader before consumption.
- Children will be reminded that they should not gather foods without adult supervision.
- Children will only be allowed to consume hot drinks when they are cool enough to drink safely.

Paths of Communication

Forest School sessions will take place during the school day. If parents would like to find out more about Forest School sessions please arrange a meeting with Jane Wigan via the office. Updates will be included in the school newsletter and on the website. If the children have been introduced to new tools or "risky" activities, the forest school leader will feed back to parents and encourage them to remind children of any safety measures discussed during the session.

Using and Storing Tools

Using a range of tools is necessary in many forest school activities. It is an important part of our work as it enables participants to gain practical skills that help develop self-confidence. The use of tools can build gross and fine motor skills and develops hand eye coordination. The forest school facilitator will ensure that all people participating in sessions with tools do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible. Tools that may be used include bow saws, pruning saws, loppers, drills, secateurs, mallets, palm drills and potato peelers. The following guidelines are to be followed when using tools:

General rules for tool use:

- All tools must have an individual risk assessment.
- Tools are only used for a specific purpose and are checked for damage and working order before being used.
- Tools should be kept in suitable containers in a designated safe area when not in use - none should be left unattended outside this area.
- When using tools with children it should only be with the Forest School Leader.
- Children must never be allowed to help themselves and will always have adult supervision when collecting, transporting and using the tools.
- All tools are counted out and back in at the beginning and end of each session in which they are used.
- When using tools there is a designated tool area.
- School Leader and child will be in the safest working position possible when using the tool.
- Tools are given out for a purpose and all adults should model correct and safe tool use, storage and transportation at all times.
- When using a tool, they are used well away from others in the group, in a 'blood bubble' and ensuring that others are aware that a tool is in use.
- Only walking is permitted when transporting a tool.
- No gloves to be worn when using hand tools that may slip.
- First aiders and first aid kit close by.

Risk assessment guidelines

A SITE risk assessment is undertaken and a DAILY risk assessment and check is made prior to every Forest School session at our Forest site.

In addition, an ACTIVITY risk assessment will be established prior to any activity that may require it. These will include: whittling, cutting wood, shelter building, fire lighting and cooking on an open fire, palm drilling and games.

Specific additional risk assessments will be undertaken for children whose medical condition or whose behaviour requires them. The Forest School leader carries out a

site risk assessment before every visit to a new location. If the site to be visited is further afield a transport risk assessment will also be carried out.

The risk assessment process is detailed below:

- We look for benefits and potential hazards.
- We decide who might be at harm.
- We think about how harm may occur and the worst outcome that we could face.
- We evaluate the current level of risk.
- We decide on a course of action or set of precautions that will be put in place to minimise the potential risk.
- We then re-evaluate the level of risk once our course of action and precautions have been put in place.
- We create a risk assessment and collate them in the Forest School file.
- We inform all adults with accompanying the group and require them to sign each relevant risk assessment to show that they have read and understood the assessments
- We regularly monitor and review each risk assessment.

Site Sweep

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Time:</u>	<u>Weather:</u>
<u>Forest School Leader:</u>		

Checklist	Yes/No	Comments
Fallen/protruding branches		
Poisonous plants		
Base camp		
Brambles/Nettles		
Slippery areas		
Sharp foreign objects		
Faeces		
Weather effects		
Standing water		
Tool area		
Emergency rucksack		
Equipment/resources		
Spare clothes		
Hand washing		
Other hazards identified:		
Actions taken:		

Forest School Medical Information Form

I have read the Motcombe Forest School Information for parents' leaflet and

I am happy for to participate and give my permission for:

Please delete any of the statements below you do not want to give permission for

- The audio recording of conversation
- The use of photographs and videos to be used on the school website

Signed..... Date.....

Print nameRelationship to Participant.....

Address.....

.....

.....Postcode.....

Telephone contact.....

Email contact.....

.....

To help us plan our woodland sessions and first aid provision please answer the following questions:

Is there any activity/task that your child may find difficult for personal, health or mobility reasons?

Is your child currently taking any medication that a first aider or doctor would need to be aware of?

Please return this form to the school office

REGISTER of both children and adults - (This must be placed in emergency bag)

Full Name	Medical Needs	Other needs	Emergency contact details

Forest School leader checklist

All volunteers have read and signed the handbook.		
All volunteers have been shown the emergency bag and are aware of the contents.		
A sweep has been done of the site		
Emergency bag containing first aid kit, list of participants and medication.		
Resources for the session.		
Weather checked		
Risk assessments completed, read and signed by all adults.		
All adults have been DBS checked.		

I have read the Motcombe Forest School handbook and understand my roles and responsibilities. I understand that I must have read the session risk assessments prior to each session and will highlight and record any issues that arise during a session:
(Please sign and print your name and date below)

Signature	Print	Date