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

http://www.forestschoolassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/

Our forest school sessions will compliment classroom learning and where possible reiterate topic work. It is about experiencing this in a natural setting with high adult to children ratios going at each child's own pace. Forest school encourages children to both want to learn and to learn in different ways that suit them. It lends itself to awakening senses, if children listen more, see more and feel more, they will learn more.



Woodland Trust have offered us the fantastic opportunity of a permanent site for our forest school in Kiln Wood. Children will be able to gain a sense of ownership with this site and help manage it through the year. We will be working with nature and the natural materials around us.

The role of the forest school leader and volunteers is to help implement the child-centred ethos of Forest School and encourage children to assess and take risk safely, gain independence and self-confidence through time in the woods.

Environmental Policy

One of the principles of Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. The children are to be taught about respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both the children and adults will be encouraged to respect their environment and to be aware of the conservation issues of our forest school area. Children will be involved in site checks and the planning of environmental games will help support this.



Daily operating procedures

Before a session begins

- a site risk assessment will be carried out by the forest school leader.
- A toileting area will be set up
- Forest school signs informing general public who we are will be put out
- When applicable a shelter will be put up
- Tree stumps will be put in fire circle.
- Fresh water will be collected from school

During a session

- Regular head counts will be taken by all adults
- When necessary, dynamic risk assessments will be done by forest school leader

At the end of a session

- All trace of fire and/or activity will be removed.
- Tree stumps will be put to side
- Signs and boundary markers will be taken down

Weather policy

Forest school will take place in all weathers except where weather poses a risk to safety. If there are thunder and lightening storms or high winds where there is a high risk of falling trees or branches the session will be cancelled.

- A rule of thumb is to leave the wood if the wind speed exceeds 6-7 on the Beaufort scale. See chart below
- Be aware that it is possible for tree limbs and branches to drop on any day.
- Check Young Peoples clothing before going out on cold days.
- Carry spare clothing and a shelter sheet, such as a parachute.
- If the children are getting too cold either warm them up through exercise, shared shelter, sitting by the fire or going inside.

The Beaufort Scale					
Rating	Description	Wind Speed	Indicators		
0	Calm	at 1.6 km/h	Smoke rises straight up		
1-3	Light wind	up to 29 km/h	Leaves and twigs move, flags blow out		
4-5	Moderate wind	up to 35 km/h	Small trees sway, waves on lake		
6-7	Strong wind	up to 87 km/h	Large trees sway, makes walking hard		
8-9	Gale	up to 97 km/h	Slates fall of roofs		
10-11	Storm	up to 116 km/h	Widespread damage		

Cancellation policy

There may be times when Forest School sessions have to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. These may be:-

- Staff illness which prevents staff / child ratios being met.
- Severe weather conditions.

• Any situation that poses a health and safety risk.

In the event of this situation arising we recommend that; Back up sessions should be in place that can be undertaken in school. We will endeavour to run Forest School sessions whenever possible, however, reserve the right to cancel on the day, informing our client group as soon as possible.

Adult-child ratios

Forest school sessions will take place with a minimum adult:child ratio of 1:5

Toileting policy

- Children are toileted before leaving school.
- A site is allocated with a cross of sticks, with a tarp screen erected for privacy. It should be 20 metres away from water courses.
- Eco friendly toilet paper is used. 1 bag for clean toilet rolls, 1 for used paper.
- A hole of app. 6-8 inches is dug. Children are told that they can use a stick if they have missed the hole. Earth is replaced after completion.
- Children wash their hands with plant spray, which qualifies as running water and use antibacterial solution. Hands are dried using hand towels which are collected and washed after return to school.

Clothing Policy

Both children and adults will be expected to dress appropriately for the seasonal and daily weather conditions.

Long sleeves, trousers and enclosed footwear will be expected at all times Except when religious reasons prevent this. A suitable alternative will then be agreed.

Winter

Layering will be recommended such as vest or T-shirt, long sleeved top, fleece or thick jumper, thick socks or 2 pairs of thin ones and trousers.

Waterproof Jacket, waterproof over trousers, wellington boots, gloves, hat and scarf.

Summer

Layering is again recommended with long sleeves and trousers. On sunny days the addition of a sun hat. Waterproofs will be weather dependent.

Health and Safety procedures-

Forest school leader

The forest school leader is responsible for the immediate safety of the pupils at the forest school site. The leader will:

undertake required site risk assessments both daily and seasonally. Risk assessments for activities

keep records of hazards identified on site by volunteers and the remedial action taken and when;

follow safe working procedures personally; ensure equipment, including personal protection equipment, is maintained in a safe condition.

give adequate safety information in sessions as required; ensure that special working procedures, protective clothing and equipment, etc., are provided and used where necessary;

ensure that clear instructions and warnings are given, to students, verbally as often as necessary;

ensure all accidents are recorded in the Incident/Accident Report Book.

Volunteers and helpers

Introduction

Our Forest School would not be able to exist without the time, skills and commitment of volunteers in the community who will help to supervise and support learning in our woodland setting. Volunteers will be involved in the most appropriate activity for their skills and interests.

- All regular volunteers are DBS checked and those not checked will not be left unsupervised with children.
- Volunteers will have an introduction session to forest school

Benefits for the Volunteer

Volunteering provides opportunities for people to use their skills and abilities on behalf of others. It is a great way to gain more confidence in the outdoors and activities that can be continued out of forest school with children and grandchildren. It also provides opportunities to expand their own skills.

Benefits for our forest school

Volunteers can often be flexible in the times they are available and provide interests and knowledge which complement those of the forest school leader. Volunteers can bring different perspectives to problems and sometimes offer a more impartial view. Our forest school can benefit from the wide range of skills and life experience that volunteers bring. They can bring in fresh ideas.

Volunteer Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to:

- be punctual at all times
- bring any issues about participants to the forest school leader in a timely and appropriate fashion
- any personal issues, unless absolutely necessary should be managed outside of the work programme and a meeting arranged
- read and understand the required Policies & Procedures
- understand and commit to forest school principles and values
- ensure they have the information needed to carry out their designated tasks
- identify any training needs related to their volunteering role and working within their own limits
- maintain Confidentiality
- give their commitment to being present and focused throughout the programme
- be willing to undertake training and practice days if required
- give reasonable notice of absence or termination of service
- declare any conflicts of interest

Professional Boundaries for Volunteers

Role and responsibilities

While the forest school leader is introducing and running activities, it is the volunteers who act as the glue to the process - holding the whole group together and ensuring that they are paying attention, being respectful and listening to their instruction. It is especially important to make sure that this happens where there are health and safety issues (i.e. when using any tools, cooking, or making and putting out fires). During activities, your role is to support the participants to get as much out of the session as possible. You will usually be assigned to oversee one small group at a time rather than the whole group.

A volunteer is expected to:-

- Be on time usually there will be a team meeting after the site is set up and before the programme begins.
- Support the forest school leader so activities run smoothly.
- Oversee the safe participation of the children. This means generally you are supervising them as a group rather than taking part in activities. One exception to this is games – everyone is encouraged to join in with games although you will need to apply vigilance.
- Encourage children to join in.
- Model participation and involvement, respect, listening and environmental awareness.
- Help with 'village' tasks such as organising the refreshments, washing up, setting up and down, gathering materials, keeping wood and water replenished, maintaining the fires, checking on the compost toilets and general housekeeping.
- Have an awareness of the health and safety of the site at all times.
- Model the behaviour expected from the children including use of the compost toilets, use of language and not smoking on site, putting out fires properly, recycling, picking-up litter.

A volunteer is not expected to:-

- Lead any activities.
- Interrupt forest school leader during the programmes
- Present their ideas for activities/sessions during the actual programme.
- Make notes during sessions, or do anything that will distract them from their role.

Personal boundaries for volunteers

Do

- Dress appropriately for the conditions
- Explain / ask permission if you need to touch someone and only touch children appropriate to the activity being shown / learned and with minimum contact
- Give positive feedback relating to performance
- Challenge incidents of inappropriate behaviour/language responsibly e.g. stopping team bonding activities that involve abuse, humiliation or risk taking; prohibiting anything hurtful, bullying, scapegoating etc.
- Be aware that mentoring is very different from friendship

Don't

- Manually handle any child or get involved in restraint (where this is needed)
- Wander off with a child
- Take photos or video with your own equipment
- Share information about participants to anyone outside of the forest school team
- Ask children leading questions or anything too personal or emotive.

Volunteers (and forest school leader) are expected to hold back their own personal opinions, stories, experiences and lives unless directed as part of a session. If required to share information because a child is asking, the advice is to keep it short and concise, bringing the focus back to the child as quickly as possible (eg 'Why is it important for you to know that? Have you any experience of that? etc). If a volunteer hears, sees or notices something of concern, this should be reported to the forest school leader as soon as possible.

And finally..

Thank you so much for volunteering. Without volunteers our forest school sessions cannot run. Of course there are rules and regulations, there has to be, but this should be a fun and fulfilling experience promoting life-long learning.



The forest school leader is the First Aid Co-ordinator and is responsible for supporting health and welfare issues within the Site and in particular:

- 1. To be responsible for attending to and monitoring pupil or helper illness/injury and to refer child to their own doctor or hospital as appropriate;
- 2. Monitoring of first aid equipment and boxes on Forest School site;
- 3. to assist in the development and health promotion activities at the Forest School site.

First Aid Procedure – (see also Policy on the Provision of First Aid)

There should be at least one qualified person on site at any one time.

First aid boxes are brought to the forest school site for every session. The forest school leader provides first aid support and maintains a central supply of first aid materials to supplement first aid boxes. School will be expected to inform the forest school leader if any child has an allergy and a list of any such children will be kept and displayed with the first aid box along with emergency contact numbers and relevant medical history of all volunteers.

All injuries, which come to the forest school leader's attention, no matter how slight, should be recorded in the Minor Injuries book and/or County Council Incident/Accident Report Book.

There will be a minor injuries form and "bump notes" located in first aid box to be completed by the person administering first aid. In case of doubt as to whether or not a child's parent should be immediately alerted, contact the headteacher or in their absence the Deputy. Err on the side of caution. In the event of an accident, the school will be contacted, if the parents (and their nominated contacts) are unavailable, we may consider it wise to send a pupil to hospital. In these cases the pupil will be accompanied by a member of staff.

A summary of the arrangements for first aid and accident reporting is included in the school prospectus.

Accident Recording and Reporting - (see also Policy on Accident Reporting and Investigation)

In the event of an accident the following procedure must be followed:

- summon assistance.
- if the injury is of a minor nature ensure follow-up treatment is carried out by reporting to the forest school leader, a qualified First Aider.
- if the injury is of a major nature then an ambulance should be summoned immediately without undue delay attempting to contact parents or guardians.
- The forest school leader will stay with the injured person and administer first aid.
- The other children on site need to be called together and supervised by a volunteer away from the injured person.

- The second volunteer should go to the wood access point to await ambulance.
- if the injured is mobile then he/she should be taken for emergency treatment to the Hospital. Forest school leader is responsible for arranging for an adult to transport the student/staff to hospital.

The adult taking the injured person should:

- stay with the injured person and return with them; or
- stay with the injured person until the parent/guardian arrives at the hospital and return to school.

Forest school leader must report any accident (or near misses) involving either themselves, visitors or volunteer helpers by recording the details in the County Council's Incident/Accident Report Book. Pupil accidents, depending on the severity will be reported either on the Minor Injuries Form and/ or County Council's Incident/Accident Report Book.

The office administrator will ensure that these forms are forwarded to PAT Health and Safety team at County Hall, Lewes. As the school is obliged to report certain categories of injury or dangerous occurrence to the Health and Safety Executive it is important that the headteacher or office administrator is notified at the earliest opportunity of accidents or incidents that are of a serious nature to determine if the HSE should be informed.

All accidents will be investigated, including the review of relevant risk assessments, to prevent re-occurrence. The headteacher will monitor the accidents to identify trends and the governing body will receive information on accidents on a regular basis.

Health Issues

Smoking. – (see also the CSA Policy on No Smoking) In an effort to reduce the risk to health from passive smoking, this forest school is a no smoking site.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse. - (see also the Policy on Drugs and Alcohol)

Staff attending work while under the influence of alcohol or drugs creates an unprofessional image of the school and increases the risk of accidents both to themselves and to colleagues. To minimise the probability of accidents from alcohol or drug abuse, staff whose judgment is impaired will be excluded from work and will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Hand tools and Equipment. (see also school Policy on Work Equipment) An inventory of all equipment is kept by the forest school leader. The hand tools available are to be used under strict guidance and close supervision of leader or volunteers, when used by pupils. Such equipment – even simple items such as scissors – must be counted in and put away where there is a chance that an accident might occur due to a lower level of supervision.

Risk assessments will be in place for all tool use before an activity takes place.

Violence At Work (see also Policy on Violence at Work)

All volunteers must report to the forest school leader who will report to the headteacher any incident of aggression or violence (or near misses) directed to themselves from any source. All incidents of violence will be reported to the PAT Health and Safety team at County Hall on the Incident/Accident Report Book.

Administration of Medicines (see also Policy on the Administration of Medicines)

Inhalers for asthmatics will be taken to forest school site but kept in first aid box to be available for immediate use. This is in order to prevent damage or loss which might occur if they are kept on a child's person, to allow an accurate record of usage to be kept and for the safety of other pupils in the school.

Training and Information (see also the Health and Safety Training Policy)

A volunteer will receive a specific induction relevant to the activities they are undertaking in forest school.

Risk management

Appropriate risk is essential to healthy child development. Through risk and challenge children can test themselves, solve problems, develop skills, gain both confidence and self-esteem. It is the role of the Forest School leader to manage risks effectively so that children and young people are not exposed to unacceptable levels of risk. Through planned activities, children will build up these skills to carry out tasks safely, without harm.

The forest school leader will assess the abilities and manage their exposure to risk accordingly.

- A seasonal site risk assessment will be carried out as well as daily site risk assessment, activity risk assessment and dynamic risk assessments throughout session.
- A hazard is anything that may potentially cause harm.
- An accident is anything that causes harm.
- A near miss is anytime harm was narrowly avoided.
- Risk is worked out by first identifying a hazard, the potential accident. The severity of the consequence of the hazard is then graded 1-4. The likelihood of it occurring is also graded 1-4. Risk is likelihood multiplied by the severity as shown in the table below.

Likelihood		Hazard severity		Risk Factor (likelihood x hazard severity)	
1	Very unlikely	1	Minor injury, scratches, bruises, burns etc.	1-3	Low
2	Unlikely	2	Moderate injury, cuts, grazing, burns etc.	4-7	Moderate
3	Likely	3	Serious- Person requires hospital treatment or time of school/work	8-12	High
4	Very likely	4	Significant, risk of death or loss of limbs/ eyesight etc.	13-16	Very High

Once the risk factors have been worked out. Steps will be put in place to reduce risk. Where the risk factor still remains high the activity will not take place.

Within forest school the process of risk assessment and management should be shared with the children so that they can develop the awareness skills and decisionmaking required to assess and manage risk independently. Supporting and enabling children to take responsibility for their actions and choices can empower them to care for themselves and each other.

Child Protection

1 INTRODUCTION

Our Forest School follows the school's child protection policy which can be found on the school website.

In line with the law, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years. This policy applies to all adults in our forest school, including all regular and temporary volunteers, external service or activity providers

• Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

- Our pupils' welfare is our paramount concern. The governing body will ensure that our school will safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and work together with other agencies to ensure that our school has adequate arrangements to identify, assess and support those children who are suffering or likely to suffer harm.
- Our school is a community and all those directly connected, staff members, governors, parents, families and pupils, have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure.
- Any cause for concern will be reported to the headmaster.

OUR SCHOOL ETHOS

- 1. We believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.
- 2. We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our forest school that will help children feel safe and respected. We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to.
- 3. We recognise that all adults within the forest school, including the forest school leader and volunteers have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm.
- 4. The school will work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

FOREST SCHOOL SITE SECURITY

- The forest School leader and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure children are safe and within the boundaries of the defined forest school area. This area must be clearly defined at the beginning of every forest school session.
- Our forest school site has open public access. If a child talks to a member of the public within our site, they must be supervised at all times and within earshot.
- The forest school leader and the volunteers will undertake regular head counts.
- Our forest school will not accept the behaviour of any individual, parent or anyone else, that threatens security or leads others, child or adult, to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to remove the children from the forest school site.

Missing child

In the event of a child found to be missing after a head count all children will be called and gathered together.

- 1 adult will remain with the children while the other two adults will begin a search of the immediate area calling for a response.
- Once this has been completed if the child is still missing the police will be called.
- The school office will be contacted and the remaining children escorted back to school by the volunteers.
- They will then return to continue search.
- The forest school leader will remain on site and await police.

Equality & Diversity

Forest school Leader will ensure all their children:

- Feel secure and know their contributions are valued
- Appreciate and value the difference they see in others.
- Take responsibility for their own actions.
- Participate safely in activities, where necessary, in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs.
- Are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success.
- Use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping.
- Have a common experience that allows for a range of different learning styles.
- Have targets that enable them to succeed.
- Are encouraged to participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs

Racism and Inclusion

The school has implemented the recommendations of The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: MacPherson Report (1999). Our forest school follows the school policy.

The forest school leader will be flexible in their planning and offer appropriate challenges to all pupils, regardless of ethnic or social background. Any racist incidents are recorded and reported to the headteacher by the forest school leader who will report to the governing body and the LEA Further details are to be found in the school's Racial Equality Policy.

Summary

In our forest school the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and wellbeing of every child are important. We follow the necessary regulations to ensure that we take the experiences and needs of all our children into account when planning for learning.

Emergency procedure and details

Details

Location name Blackboys Cof E School Address School Lane Postcode TN22 5LL	Site name Kiln Wood Site grid ref or postcode TQ52420(OS Map)
01825 Nearest main road junction	Designated meeting place (to meet
Lewes Rd and Hollow Lane, Blackboys	emergency services) Hollow lane entrance to Kiln wood. Approx. 200m down from junction with Lewes rd Grid ref/postcode TN22
Type of access to the site (eg. 4wheel drive/ on foot etc.)	Suitable helicopter landing area
On Foot approx. 50m from site	Grid ref:
Nearest doctor	Nearest A+E

Uckfield community hospital Name Uckfield, East Sussex Phone no. 01825 769999	Phone no. 01323 417400 Address Eastbourne General King's Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex Postcode BN21 2UD
Site owner/manager contact details Name Dave B Phone no. 0343 Mobile no. 07771	Nearest landline Blackboys Inn Location Lewes Road, Blackboys, Phone no. 01825
Mobile phone reception Good Where Contact details of leaders Name mobile no. 077	Local police New Town, Uckfield, TN22 5DL Phone no. 01273

Emergency Procedure

• an ambulance should be summoned

summoned immediately without undue delay attempting to contact parents or guardians.

- The forest school leader will stay with the injured person and administer first aid.
- The other children on site need to be called together and supervised by a volunteer away from the injured person.
- The second volunteer should go to the wood access point to await ambulance.
- if the injured is mobile then he/she should be taken for emergency treatment to the Hospital. Forest school leader is responsible for arranging for an adult to transport the student/staff to hospital.

The adult taking the injured person should:

- stay with the injured person and return with them; or
- stay with the injured person until the parent/guardian arrives at the hospital and return to school.

Tool Safety and Tool Operating Procedure

The forest school leader is responsible for the safe usage and maintenance of all tools. Tools are always checked and counted before each session, at the end of a session the tools are recounted and the tools are maintained as outlined below.

A demonstration of correct tool use should always before children are to working with tools. Individual's competence should always be taken into account before they use tools to assess level of assistance needed

Bow-Saw

General information/Safety rules/Transportation

A bow-saw can have two types of blades. Pegged and even teeth are used for seasoned and dry wood.



The raker blade is specifically designed for cutting green wood with every third or forth notch having a V shape.



Bow-saws are carried down by the side with the teeth pointing downwards and the guard firmly in place. Saw covers should always be on while carrying or whilst in tool bag. Never leave a saw flat on the ground, hang them up with the covers on, on a saw horse or leaning against a tree. Use new saw blades yourself to wear them in before use with young children. Set aside a quieter area for working the bow-saw, ideally on a saw horse which will provide a physical barrier between the holding hand and the sawing hand. The working space should be clear without any trip hazards, check the canopy, look out for eye hazards.



When introducing the bow saw to young children hold the other side of the handle and with your other arm going over the blade to prevent it jumping up.

Ensure knees are parallel with saw and beside blade not underneath.

How to maintain, clean and store the tool

Clean the blade with a rag.. On putting away make sure that the blade and guard are dry.

Pruning saw



Follow same arm over blade as the bow saw.



How to conduct a tool safety check

Check the closing mechanism is working properly and the blade is secure when open. Check the tip of the blade has not been broken and the blade has no chips.

How to maintain, clean and store the tool

Clean the blade with a rag.. On putting away make sure that the blade and guard are dry.

Fixed-blade Knife

General information/Safety rules/Transportation

Fixed-blade knives are used for whittling and to perform a power cut. Knives should always be in their holder when not in use or when carrying. Never wear a glove on working hand and never cut towards yourself. Keep the holding hand as far away from the blade as possible but always maintain control of material to allow cuts to be safe. Cut away from yourself and down towards the ground with minimum force with elbows on knees.



Always assume safe position. Always ensure others are out of reach atleast an arm's length plus the length of the blade, a blood bubble.

How to conduct a tool safety check

Check that there are no cracks in the sheath. Visually look for any signs of denting, rust etc. Check for sharpness. The whole blade should look dark, draw a thumb sideways at right angles. The blade should feel rough. Use the knife to further test it's sharpness. Check that the handle and attachment are adequate and do not wobble.

How to maintain, clean and store the tool

Clean the knife with a rag. Rust is more likely to appear on a high-carbon blade and needs to be sanded off. On return from side make sure that the knife and guard are dry. Sharpening stones can be used or a kitchen knife tool. When using kitchen knife tools the knife may need to be replaced more often. Make sure the blades are sharp, because they are safer sharp – set up your learners to succeed.

Loppers and Secateurs

General information/Safety rules/Transportation



Secateurs are used for cutting twigs and small branches, loppers are used for bigger branches. Always assess if the correct tool has been selected for the job. Loppers should be carried at the side holding on to the bottom handle, making sure that the blade has a smiley face. The tools should be transported in a sturdy bag of appropriate size. Always have both hands on the handle. Set up a secure working area and keep at a safe distance, called a blood bubble. When passing tools follow a script where eye contact is maintained. The person passing the tool asks "Are you ready?" on affirmative reply say "I am passing you the tool" before doing so.

With smaller children the loppers should be used with an adult holding the handles as well as the child. They should be facing each other.



How to conduct a tool safety check

Examine handles and hinges. Make sure there are no signs of replacement, cracking or rusting. To check the blade on a lopper make sure it cannot close on you by using your body as a bar. Draw your thumb at right angles over the blade, it should feel rough. Visually examine the blade for any light shining through, in which case the tool will have to be discarded. Secateurs have an extra closing mechanism, make sure this is working properly. Open up the secateurs and place over knee to make sure they cannot close as you check the blade.

How to maintain, clean and store the tool

To clean the tools make sure you cannot be damaged, use a cloth to wipe the blade. Oil the tool and use sharpening stones when required.