



LEARNER'S COPY Frequently Unanswered Criteria Document (V8)

Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC has undertaken a full review of students' work and has compiled this document of frequently unanswered criteria across the 5 Units.

Please use this document to make sure you are complying with our assessment criteria for the Level 3 Forest School Leader's Qualification. Read all the criteria carefully and respond to all that is being asked.

Please sign and date the Student Declaration on page 2 or 3 of ALL unit workbooks and send ALL WORK AS ATTACHMENTS. We cannot accept work sent as links, as links can expire. If files are too large to send as an attachment, try converting them to PDF or send them via the online platform We Transfer (there is a free version).

The word count guideline for answering questions is between 50 – 400 words. Sometimes you may exceed this, however we are not looking for long essays.

Note: Not all criteria are shown in this document - those that are missing are ones that are frequently answered at an adequate/high standard.

USE OF Artificial Intelligence (AI) WITHIN COURSEWORK - We receive work that has been generated with AI. Without a reference, this is considered plagiarism. When we recognise that this may have occurred, we pass it through an AI scanning platform. If it is your choice of reference, we recommend that it is only used as a reference point for further research. **AI IS NOT ALWAYS TRUE** - confirm the information elsewhere, write it in your own words and reference any work that is used, as you would when citing from a book or other source. We are currently working on our AI policy and will share it once it is available.

UNIT 1: Frequently Unanswered Criteria

When submitting your workbooks, please take care to include the information we have highlighted below. **In this unit there are boxes in each criteria titled 'Things to Consider'**. Please read the information within these boxes carefully and respond to what is being asked.

Unit 1: L.O.1 - Be able to apply a range of practical skills relevant to a Forest School programme.

Unit 1: L.O. 2 - Know how to facilitate a range of practical skills relevant to a Forest School programme in line with the Forest School ethos and principles. This means you need to consider the age, developmental stage and previous experience of learners in regard to adult:child ratio and learner's choice of task/tool and woodland materials, specific to your groups.

A.C. 2.1 Explain how to facilitate correct use of PPE with client groups. In this criteria we are looking for appropriate forest school clothing across the seasons with consideration to all weather conditions and protection from scratches, scrapes, stings & ticks e.g. gloves or longer clothing. Also reference PPE for tool use, working with fire and gathering prickly or stinging natural materials, tying back long hair and dangling/loose clothing.

A.C. 2.3 Demonstrate and explain how to facilitate with the client group(s) the safe use of a range of hand tools.

We provide a document via our online resources named, **"Tool Progression Indicators"**. Remember to outline safe working areas and distances with tools and reference knife law/legislation in your country.

Here is a link from the Forest School Association with UK relevant information:

<https://www.forestschoollassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/UK-knife-law-guidance-notes1.pdf>

A.C. 2.4 Demonstrate and explain how to facilitate with client group(s) the tying of a range of knots for different applications at Forest School.

Here you are asked to explain each knot (4 knots) - its use, the instructions for tying it and also include the choice of ropes you might use depending on its use. Consider how you could differentiate the learning to meet the individual needs of your group.

A.C 2.5 In mallet making please make it clear that the stop cut should be made before cutting the mallet from a longer piece of wood as this is safer.

A.C. 2.6 Facilitation of the erection of temporary group shelters considering the following:

Whilst we expect you to give basic instructions for building the shelters and illustrations with annotations of the specific knots, ridgeline, tarp, y-sticks, leaves for waterproofing etc. We also expect you to consider health and safety, for example remembering to put a

ribbon or bandana, or coloured guylines, to make them visible; or refer us to your risk benefit assessment if you have done this for Unit 1 submission.

When considering debris shelters - please consider the ecological impact of gathering wood for building these structures.

A.C. 2.7 Facilitation of the safe use of fire with own client group(s) considering the following:

You need to refer to group management and the set up of the campfire circle. You also need to consider the practices that are appropriate to your age group - these may include songs, or games or reminder words when children walk across the fire circle.

You will also need to refer to landowner permission for fires and comply with your country's legislation around fires e.g in Portugal there are frequent restrictions on fire-making.

A.C. 2.8 Facilitation of safe camp fire cooking considering the information below. The National Forest School Association have recently published [Food Safety Guidance Notes](#). Please take time to read and understand this information so as you can practice safe camp fire cooking within your sessions.

- Share recipes in line with the workbook requirements.
- Explain group management of your group of learners
- Refer to Forest School insurance.
- Describe food hygiene procedures for storage, prepping, cooking and washing up, in line with HACCP and refer to food hygiene policy.
- Consider specific needs of learners' individual dietary/medical/cultural needs.

A.C. 2.9 Facilitation of safe extinguishing of fires considering the following:

This criteria is answered within 2.7.

UNIT 4 – 3.1 and 3.1b Write three comprehensive risk benefit assessments (RBA):

1. To assess a possible Forest School site (site RBA)
2. To assess the benefits and risks of a specific activity that children may be involved with at Forest School (Activity)
3. To assess a particular activity – tool, ropes, den building, fire (Generic RBA)

We need to see the completed risk assessment in advance of your 'Introduction to Forest School' Pilot sessions to check you are writing comprehensive assessments. **These 3 risk benefit assessments need to be submitted with Unit 1.**

Site Risk Benefit Assessment- We recommend this be reviewed annually (unless required before), although be aware of seasonal changes in flora and fauna on your site, which can be included as part of your daily risk assessment.

Activity Risk Benefit Assessment (RBA) - consider all the hazards and risks and the control measures required, from the start to the finish of a specific activity i.e. your Mallet Making RBA is an activity one. You will have thought about all the stages and tools used. In an activity RBA you can refer to the tools RBA which is a generic RBA.

Generic Risk Benefit Assessment - as above, consider the hazards, risks & control measures required, for instance in the tools RBA you would have a heading Bow Saw and consider all the hazards, risks and control measures required for safe storage, handling, maintenance and use, then another heading knives, loppers etc. and carry out the assessment for each, covering all the tools you use at Forest School.

A generic risk benefit assessment isn't directly linked to a specific activity, but can be referred to in an activity RBA, rather than having to write out all the details in an activity assessment. For fires you might consider different types of fire eg. campfire, storm/kelly kettle, scallop shell/fairy fires and consider prepping fire setting, h&s, group management, extinguishing etc.

[UNIT 2: Frequently Unanswered Criteria](#)

Unit 2: L.O.1 Understand the structures of woodlands

(Word count guideline for answering questions below is between 50 – 400 words) The word count is given so that you do not write an essay, rather keep to the key points.

A.C. 1.1 Compare the structures and biodiversity of native broadleaf and coniferous woodland ecosystems.

In this criteria you will need to **identify and explain** both the **Vertical Layers and Horizontal features** within a woodland and **discuss** the following related ecological terms:

- biodiversity
- abiotic elements e.g. soil and water
- natural succession

- ecosystems
- habitats - including the importance of deadwood
- lifecycles
- seasonality
- food chains/webs
- effects of light and photosynthesis
- wildlife corridors in relation to ecosystem

L.O.2 Know how to identify a range of flora and fauna and understand the importance of identification.

A.C. 2.1 Explain why simple identification is important for the Forest School leader. In this criteria you are asked to cover the following areas:

- Identify protected species
- Informing woodland management plans
- Knowledge & understanding for participants
- H & S, including allergies
- Uses of plants
- Sustainability
- Life cycle and seasonal considerations

L.O. 3 Understand the management of woodlands as a sustainable learning environment

A.C. 3.1 Describe woodland management methods and their significance to sustainability.

In this criteria you are asked to **identify the significance** of sustainable woodland management to maintain and improve the long-term health of the woodland.

Methods to include (but not limited to):

- Planting
- timber crops
- monitoring species
- rotating sites uses
- habitat creation
- management of invasive species
- improving biodiversity

Along with the following techniques:

- coppicing
- pollarding

- thinning
- managed grazing
- scalloping and ride management
- woodland products
- reporting biosecurity

L.O. 4 Understand the importance of the relationship between Forest School and the woodland environment.

A.C. 4.1 Evaluate research articles on the benefits of connection with woodland environments on well-being.

The research chosen needs to be substantive, authentic and valid. Refer to the benefits of connection with woodland and natural environments with reference to:

- physical well-being
- psychological and/or emotional health and well-being.

(Please refer to at least 2 research articles). Your evaluation must have a clear structure as below. See our [guidance document](#) for additional information.

When evaluating the research, you should:

1. Introduce the topic
2. Share brief summary of the research
3. Explain how it was conducted (methodology).
4. Discuss the outcomes and how they relate to Forest School.
5. Share your thoughts on the methodology—was it effective or are there any limitations?
6. Reflect on whether the research aligns with your own experiences.

This framework will help you evaluate the research clearly and provide a well-rounded explanation. Feel free to ask if you need further clarification!

A.C. 4.2 Explain how Forest School nurtures connection between participants and the woodland environment.

Comment on approaches to FS delivery that enhance connection with woodland environments, giving examples from practice.

In this criteria we are looking for reference to regular, long-term child-led programmes where learners experience seasonal changes and weather conditions. Use the Forest School ethos and principles to guide you.

[Unit 3 - L.O 1 Understand the Forest School Principles and holistic approach to learning and development in relation to an 'Introduction to Forest School Programme'.](#)

(Word count guideline for answering questions below is between 50 – 400 words)

Please refer to the Unit Learning Outcomes Indicative Content

A.C. 1.1. Summarise how the Forest School principles apply to own programme.

<http://www.forestschoollassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/>

Demonstrate an understanding of the challenges of implementing them and how you may overcome them.

As well as summarising how the Forest School principles apply to your own programme you will need to demonstrate an understanding of the challenges of implementing the principles and criteria with a planned approach to overcoming them. **Consider at least 2 challenges that you faced.**

A.C.1.3 How does Forest School encourage social and emotional development and well-being?

- How does Forest school support the development of **self-esteem and confidence?**
- How does Forest school support the development of **emotional intelligence and resilience?**
- How does forest school encourage **spiritual development?**

Spiritual development can be thought of in terms of developing a sense of awe and wonder in the natural world, stewardship of the natural world, a sense of fellowship/belonging, connection to the lives of our ancestors, space for reflection etc.

Please ensure you have covered all areas in bold.

L.O.2: Understand the value of the play process at Forest School.

A.C. 2.1. Summarise the key characteristics of play and its role at Forest School. Refer to widely recognised principles of play, Article 31 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and current play work practice.

Reference needs to be made to play being child-led, learning, non-directed etc.

A.C. 2.2 Explain, giving examples, how was play and choice integrated into your 'Introduction to Forest School Programme'?

Evidence will be drawn from the learner's plans, observations and evaluations during the 'introduction to Forest School programme'.

Links will need to be made to play theory and/or the Forest School handbook.

L.O. 3: Understand relevant theories of learning and development and their application to Forest School.

A.C. 3.1. Summarise recognised theories of learning and development relating to your own 'Introduction to Forest School Programme'.

In this criteria you will need to summarise a minimum of two recognised learning theories and explain their relevance to a Forest School programme.

Remember to explain how learning theory has been applied to your own introduction to the Forest School programme.

L.O.4 Understand the impact of behaviour on learning and development at Forest School.

A.C. 4.1 Summarise some of the key influences that affect the behaviour of all participants at Forest School.

Include internal and external factors in the wider lives of all adults and children e.g:

- **social:** attachments disorders
- **environmental:** this the physical environment eg. weather, unfamiliar setting for some children, uneven ground etc.
- **Biological:** this hunger, tiredness, hormones (eg adolescents)
- **neural development:** for example ASD, dyspraxia, social emotional delays.

Remember to cover all the factors above.

A.C. 4.2 Explain how a participant's behaviour could impact on one's own and others' learning and development.

A non judgmental approach to behaviour considers how needs (met and unmet) impact young people and how this is expressed as behaviours.

In this criteria you will need to demonstrate your understanding of a non-judgemental approach to behaviour and explain how behaviours impact on the learning and development of both the individual **and others** at Forest School.

A.C. 4.3 Describe how meeting the needs of all participants develops a community of learning; giving examples from your own experience of Forest School.

Reflect on the effectiveness of how your learning community has been developed during:

- the training - how has our training provided a learning community experience?
- during your Pilot 'Introduction to Forest School programme'
- and through your observations of other Forest School programmes (if applicable)

[Unit 4: L.O.1: Understand the development of the Forest School \(Word count guideline for answering questions below is between 50 – 500 words\)](#)

A.C. 1.1 Summarise the factors that have influenced the development of Forest School: locally and in the U.K.

(Include key events and influences in the FS movement and in outdoor learning/environmental education that have informed the current FS Principles and Criteria).

Please comment on the development in your country and give reference to the UK Forest School Association and the development of the 6 principles.

A.C. 1.2 Identify local forest school practice & Networks (in your town/city/county/region/country)

Please include reference to any local Forest School Cluster groups at county level e.g. Sussex FSA, London FSA or equivalent in your locality.

A.C. 1.3 Evaluate one piece of research on Forest School.

(Substantive, authentic, relevant and valid using your own opinions on methodology, outcomes and linking to your own experience)

In this criteria you will need to evaluate one piece of research relevant to Forest School, with links made to your own experience.

Your evaluation must have a clear structure as below. See our [guidance document](#) for additional information.

When evaluating the research, you should:

1. Introduce the topic
2. Share brief summary of the research
3. Explain how it was conducted (methodology).
4. Discuss the outcomes and how they relate to Forest School.
5. Share your thoughts on the methodology—was it effective or are there any limitations?
6. Reflect on whether the research aligns with your own experiences.

This framework will help you evaluate the research clearly and provide a well-rounded explanation. Feel free to ask if you need further clarification!

L.O.2: Be able to manage the ecological impact of a Forest School Programme. (Refer to indicative content within Unit Overview).

A.C. 2.1 Assess the ecological impact of running Forest School Programmes on your own site. Include overview of site and reference to ecological impact as below:

- History of site
- Stakeholders involved with the site
- Ecological survey - ie. flora, fauna, abiotic elements
- Special features
- Designations - ecological and historical
- Type and level of impact
- Mitigations
- Biodiversity action plan (BAP and LBAP) species

A.C. 2.2 Use the ecological impact assessment to create a three-year management plan for sustainable use of your own Forest School site and to enhance biodiversity.

(Refer to resources on management plans and indicative content). Your 3 yr management plan should include:

- Vision for the site
- Plans to enhance biodiversity
- Anticipated use of the site
- Mitigating impact

- Detailing how client group is involved with the management processes
- Evidence of ongoing monitoring
- Biosecurity - if relevant

Remember to include your learners in some of the activities within your three-year management plan.

L.O.3 Be able to develop the underpinning documents required for a Forest School Programme.

A.C. 3.1 Create a Forest School Handbook containing: Please Refer to Forest School Handbook overview/indicative content.

Relevant policies and procedures in line with statutory requirements including documents that underpin good practice for own Forest School Programmes. Include comprehensive risk assessments and risk benefit analysis. (These need to be appropriate to client groups including individual/special needs and should include (not limited to) camp fires, cooking, collecting natural materials, den building, ropes, site, tools and weather.) Include a Forest School communication strategy for all stakeholders. (Include: Landowner/manager; management team; neighbours; organisational partners; other site users; participants; parents/carers; staff; volunteers; any other interested parties.)

Checklist for handbook content:

You will need policies and procedures appropriate to your needs and situation but for guidance your handbook should include:

● Learning and development

- Forest School ethos
- Aims and objectives
- Roles of the adults

● Health and safety

- Staff qualifications, training and responsibilities
- Risk management and assessment
- Daily operating procedures
- Emergency and incident management including lost or missing person
- Insurance details - public liability (and employers - if relevant)
- First Aid provision (including Emergency equipment to be carried) name of first aider and kit list (see online resources) include a copy/photo of first aid qualification certificate
- Administration of medicines
- Manual handling,* use of Personal Protective Equipment, COSHH **or equivalent in your own country

- Reporting procedures (RIDDOR)* and near miss
- Operational & maintenance procedures for tools and equipment
- Fire procedures
- Visitors including procedure for dealing with unplanned visitor on site

- **Welfare requirements**

- Weather, Clothing, Toileting, Food hygiene

- **Protection of Children and Vulnerable Groups**

- Name of designated safeguarding lead DSL
- Safeguarding – responding, recording and reporting
- Disclosure and Barring Service checks - include a copy/photo of DBS Certificate or DBS Update Register Number along with date of issue - or equivalent in your own country.
- Staff training, responsibilities and ratios
- Confidentiality, data protection, photographs/social media etc.
- Parent/carer communication & permissions
- Procedure for dealing with an accusation against an adult on the Forest School site.

- **Equality**

- Equal Opportunities and inclusion

- **Behaviour**

- Behaviour management including anti-bullying

- **Environment & sustainability**

- Ecological impact/code of conduct etc.
- Purchasing/ suppliers
- Woodland management plan
- Landowner agreement (if applicable to site)

- **Communication strategy for all stakeholders**

- **Date for review**

- **If the handbook is your own work, add name to front cover, if you have reviewed an existing handbook or co-written it, please add a statement confirming this and highlight your own work.**

- **The expectation that the handbook should be read by all supporting adults.**

Remember to cover all points on the checklist above.

See further guidance notes at the end of this document, giving further information on some policies/statements that often require additional clarification.

**A.C. 3.1b (seen in indicative content) Forest School Risk Benefit Assessments
Appropriate to client group including individual/special needs and should include (not limited to)**

- Camp fires
- Campfire cooking
- Collecting natural materials - or a generic risk benefit assessment
- Denbuilding
- Ropes - or a generic risk benefit assessment
- Site - ideally yours, or an example.
- Tools - a generic risk benefit assessment
- Weather - link to policy

L.O. 4 Be able to plan a Forest School Programme in line with the Forest School ethos and principles.

A.C. 4.2 Explain the rationale of own Forest School programme showing linked to the individuals' learning and development needs in your client group.

Please include a paragraph about your group and why they are being offered Forest School. Please describe the length of the session, number of children and your aims and/or objectives.

**A.C. 4.3. Plan the first session of an 'Introduction to Forest School programme'.
Session plans to include (but not limited to):**

Practical issues:

- Weather check - on daily risk assessment
- Site check
- Staffing
- Resources ie kit, craft resources, refreshments and handbook
- Safety & welfare equipment
- Risk Benefit Assessments for the experiences in that particular session

Possible Lines of Development: linking to the learning and development needs of the individuals in the group demonstrating how your planning has been informed by the

previous session. (The learner is not required to plan all the sessions for an `Introductory to Forest School Programme` in advance, as each session will be informed by the previous session).

Unit 5 - L.O. Be able to assess the impact of the 'Introduction to Forest School programme' on participants.

A.C. 2.1 Observe a minimum of three individuals and assess the impact of the introduction to Forest School programme on each of the participant's learning and development.

Remember that you **need to show weekly observations for 3 children** during your Introduction for Forest School programme. This means that you provide a **weekly observation sheet (see example templates online) that evidence Week 1 through to Week 6 and demonstrate any changes over time.**

Include a brief description on the background of the child and then a summary of your observations over the FS programme (Refer to Section on Downloadable Observation Resources).

Overall in this criteria we are looking for:

- Some base-line/ background information for each of your 3 children
- Evidence of weekly observations of the 3 focus children from each session showing progression of their learning and development over the programme
- Summative assessment of each child.

A.C. 2.2 Make recommendations for progressing each of the 3 individuals' learning and development as the programme continues – include details of what you think worked well for the children at Forest School in terms of their self-esteem, emotional intelligence, behaviour and learning.

L.O. 3 Be able to evaluate an Introduction to Forest School Programme'.

A.C. 3.1 Evaluate each session of the programme and show how observations and evaluations inform future session plans. Make amendments to the next session plan as appropriate. You must provide written formative assessments

(evaluations) at the end of each session and make recommendations – this can be done on the session plan.

Please **make sure you provide some general information about the group** e.g. age as well as a clear rationale **(can be included in Unit 4 A.C. 4.2)**

A.C. 3.2. Carry out a written summative evaluation on the whole of your ‘Introduction to FS programme’ at the end of the initial six Forest School sessions and explain how this will inform your long-term strategy.

A summative evaluation of the whole programme is required. Along with successes, **consider at least 2 challenges** that you faced, which may include:

- students and leadership team
- Forest School ethos
- Handbook
- Session planning
- Resourcing
- Site management

Please make sure you submit the completed **DELIVERY OBSERVER/MENTOR ASSESSMENT SHEET** which your observer will have completed during one of your ‘Introduction to Forest School Sessions’. The person observing your session has to observe a minimum of one session. They can be another Forest School Leader, if you have another at your setting, or a member of staff at school. Someone with an understanding of Forest School, who you consider has the experience to observe your session and handbook and complete the Observer Assessment Sheet.

GUIDANCE NOTES:

The following information covers aspects of the Forest School Handbook that often require additional work. Please see the list above (Unit 4, A.C. 3.1) for the full contents of the Forest School Handbook.

	What we need to see:
Contents Page	At the front of the handbook create a Contents Page with headings of all information in your handbook and the page number of where this information will be found.

<p>Behaviour Policy</p>	<p>Behaviour expectations of your setting -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Non judgemental approach considers how needs (met and unmet) are expressed as behaviours. ● How you set and model positive behaviour expectations at Forest School ● How you manage behaviour expectations at Forest School
<p>Equality & Diversity Policy</p>	<p>Explain how you promote equality & diversity within your setting to create an inclusive environment.</p>
<p>Fire Policy</p>	<p>To include but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a safe fire circle area ● List the fire safety equipment required when working with a fire ● Group management when working with children around a fire e.g. safety rules, adult:child ratios etc. ● H&S eg. long hair, loose clothing, flammable clothing, ● Weather
<p>First Aid Policy</p>	<p>To include but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A first aider on the Forest School site with the appropriate First Aid Qualification for your setting ● Note that you will need to have relevant medical/dietary information & emergency contact details for your students ● How you will deal with minor injuries including recording of accident/incident ● How you will deal with major injury including recording and reporting of accident/incident - RIDDOR ● Emergency Procedure ● List the content of the First Aid

	<p>equipment needed in your Forest School First Aid Kit - see list in online resources</p>
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<p>Safeguarding Policy</p>	<p>To include but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Name of person responsible for a safeguarding issue ● Procedure for dealing with a disclosure from a child ● Confidentiality ● Procedure for dealing with an accusation against an adult in your setting ● Procedure for dealing with bullying (this could be a statement rather than a policy and is seen as good practice) <p>Procedure for dealing with an accusation made against an adult: We are looking to see how you would deal with an accusation made against an adult member of your team. e.g: Suspend the adult accused from involvement in the Forest School activities whilst the incident is investigated. Inform the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) at your setting (or equivalent in Portugal). The DSL will determine the best course of action – alerting the police, social services, parents etc If you suspect the child is at immediate risk of danger, please call 999 immediately. All safeguarding matters will be dealt with confidentially, professionally and in conjunction with local authorities and safeguarding teams where necessary.</p>
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Communication Strategy	This can be set out as a table. Include how when and why you will communicate with all stakeholders (all persons eg. parents/carers, site managers, landowners,schools etc.) involved with your setting
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Tools Policy	Procedure you have in place for storing, transporting and working with each tool you use on site. With consideration to the age, developmental stage and experience of your students.
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Cooking & Food Hygiene Policy	<p>To include but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safe storage, preparation, cooking of food and washing up (including high risk food) in line with HACCP principles. ● Group management when cooking over a fire <p>See National FSA Food Safety Guidance Notes</p>
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Risk Assessment Policy	Explain the importance and need for risk benefit assessments at Forest School and identify the different types. Include completed and up to date Risk Benefit Assessment documents in your Forest School Handbook.
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COSHH	<p>This is a health & safety aspect that we now cover in the Forest School Handbook, following our recent review.</p> <p>COSHH stands for Control of Substances Hazardous to Health.</p> <p>(Students training in Portugal - check if you have a similar regulation).</p> <p>Include a statement similar to:</p> <p>"Some items that we use at forest school will be subject to health and safety protocol including COSHH guidelines. We will make sure COSHH data sheets are available for any such item we use, and that they are kept in the health and safety folder/Forest School Handbook and a risk assessment carried out."</p> <p>It is for products such as washing up liquids, paints, glues etc.that you might use at Forest School. The COSHH data sheets can be downloaded on line, by searching "COSHH data sheet for....."</p>
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Reviewed May 2025