

# **Worsbrough Common Primary School**



## **Forest School and Outdoor Learning Handbook**

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## **Forest School and Outdoor Learning at Worsbrough Common Primary School**

### **What is Forest School?**

‘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’. (Forest School Association)

**Forest School and outdoor learning is an important part of what we offer to our children at Worsbrough Common Primary School. At Worsbrough Common Primary School through our Forest School and Outdoor Learning sessions, we hope to encourage independent, enthusiastic and creative learners who develop holistically through a well-planned and interesting child-centred approach.**

Forest School is based on a fundamental respect for children and young people and for their capacity to instigate, test and maintain curiosity in the world around them.

It believes in the child’s right to play; the right to access the outdoors (and in particular a woodland environment); the right to access risk and the vibrant reality of the natural world and the right to experience a healthy range of emotions through all the challenges of social interaction, in order to build a resilience that will enable continued and creative engagement with their peers and their potential. It is an approach to education that makes use of the outdoor environment to create a unique learning vehicle.

Forest School sessions provide increasingly diverse opportunities for children to benefit from a supportive curriculum that can help children build positive values and attitudes about themselves, about learning and the environment in which they live. Children are given appropriately challenging and achievable tasks that build their confidence, skills and independence and are given the time to thoroughly explore their thoughts, feelings and relationships. This time and reflective practice develops inter- and intra-personal skills, which are well-documented as being directly linked to learning skills.

### **How this links to our setting**

Everyday life always involves a degree of risk and children need to learn how to cope with this. They need to understand that the world can be a dangerous place and that care needs to be taken when negotiating their way round it. Our school’s ethos is one of encouraging confident, lifelong learners who are willing to have a go, showing a can do attitude. Forest School activities promote the understanding that the process is more important than the product and thus are a great way of supporting learning and development in our children.

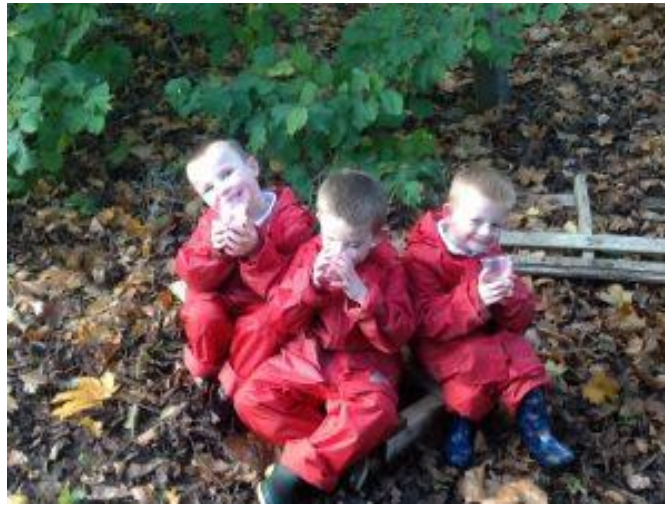
1. All of our children will be given the opportunity to take part in Forest School activities. They will be supported to give each child the maximum potential to develop new skills and be successful in all activities.
2. Children will be offered opportunities to try new things and to express themselves in ways they are confident to use.
3. Children will not feel pressured to take part in any activity they feel uncomfortable or unconfident with.
4. Children will be taught rules and will be encouraged to discuss and voice their opinions with regards to these.
5. Through experiencing learning in a safe and supportive outdoors environment, children gain a sense of value for the wider, natural world, a sense of responsibility for their environment, in addition to growing self-esteem, confidence and physical and emotional strength.



As adults we will support children during Forest School activities with sensitive interventions. We will demonstrate and teach new skills and will scaffold these as appropriate when children are experimenting with their use. Observations and knowledge of the children will enable us to know when to intervene and provide support, using questioning and commentary to promote children's inquiry and independence. There is always success in what happens in these activities, as adults we may need to help children identify what these are.

There isn't always an end product, whether intentionally or not, but there is always learning taking place.

1. Children will be encouraged to ask questions and express ideas.
2. Adults will be learners and investigators alongside children.
3. Adults will use skilled observation and knowledge of the children to provide sensitive interventions, which promote learning and development.



## **We Want Children To**

- Feel safe, secure and happy outdoors
- Become confident and independent learners
- Develop their exploratory and creative drive
- Have time to ask questions and find their own answers.



## **As Adults We Will**

Provide a range of activities that are responsive to children's needs and interests. We will carry out extensive risk assessments and will implement safe practices for the use of equipment, tools and resources. All activities will balance risk with the development benefit and wellbeing of children.

Forest School and Outdoor Learning sessions in our wooded area will be led by our qualified Forest School Leader.

### **The Forest School Leader will**

- Promote the safety and well-being of the children at all times

- Carry out necessary risk assessments
- Carry a first aid kit and administer first aid as required
- Create a positive learning environment, based on each child's needs

**In our sessions the group is encouraged to**

**“Look after yourself, look after each other and look after the woods.”**

**All adults at Forest School will** model appropriate behaviour and safe practices, whilst interacting with the children and each other

- Encourage children to assess if their actions are inconsistent with these principles.
- Encourage good relationships, based on respect of each other
- Promote, honesty, politeness and kindness through example
- Use encouraging language and show appreciation of each child's contributions and effort
- Ensure fair treatment and equality for all attending, regardless of age, gender, ability or race



## Forest School Policies and Procedures

### Forest School and Outdoor Learning Health and Safety Policy

The Forest School Health and Safety Policy is in addition to the School's Health and Safety Policy and does not change the school's position on health and safety matters set out in the original document. To ensure the health and safety of all participants the trained Forest School leader will be present for all activities within the woods. The Forest School leader will hold a current outdoor and paediatric first aid qualification.

**We will establish and maintain a safe and healthy environment by:**

- Establishing, maintaining and evaluating appropriate procedures, policies and risk assessments, as set out in the Handbook
- Ensure the provision of sufficient information and instruction for all adults so that they can contribute to their own health and safety and that of the children they are working with.
- Establish and be familiar with, all emergency procedures including the reporting and recording of procedures.
- Ensure that risk assessments and pre-site safety sweeps take place before children are permitted on to the site. Risk assessments will be held in the handbook. A copy is available in the Forest School 'Happy Sack' located at the cabin, on site.
- Ensure alternative plans are in place should a planned activity be compromised by any health and safety concerns.
- Ensure that Forest School Staff are aware of their responsibilities towards the children.
- Investigate any accidents and use information gathered to inform future risk assessment and policy making.
- Teach all members of the party to maintain their own and others health and safety by involving them in the risk assessment process at appropriate opportunities.
- Maintain the legal adult-child ratio.
- Ensure that safety equipment is in good working order and is used appropriately.

Forest School Leaders assume full responsibility for the maintenance of the Kit bag, First aid kit and any tools brought onto the Forest School site.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***Responsibilities of the Governors***

- Ensure they are aware of Forest School procedures and objectives.
- Ensure they are informed of the health and safety procedures in place for Forest School.

### ***Responsibilities of the Head Teacher***

- Ensure visits comply with the regulations and guidelines.
- Be confident that the Forest School Leader/Group Leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the visit.
- Adequate child protection procedures are in place.
- The risk assessment has been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place.
- The Forest School Leader.
- The adult:child ratio is appropriate..
- Arrangements have been made for the medical and special educational needs of children attending.
- Adequate first aid provision will be available.
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover.

### ***Responsibilities of the Forest School Leader;***

- To plan and lead all Forest School activities
- To ensure that planned activities are within the capabilities of the children taking part, amending plans to provide an inclusive curriculum in its broadest sense.
- To take responsibility for discipline during Forest School sessions (see Behaviour Policy)
- To have an up to date Outdoor First Aid qualification
- To ensure that all participants follow the Clothing Policy
- To carry out thorough risk assessments as described in the Risk Assessment Policy
- To ensure all Forest School policies are regularly reviewed and that review is informed by observations and developing knowledge of the Forest School setting.

### ***Responsibilities of Accompanying Staff***

- To take an active role in Forest School activities, assisting with any discipline issues within the group (see Behaviour Policy)
- To assist with the Forest School Leader in ensuring equipment meets safety standards and to report any concerns about the state of equipment immediately
- To assist the Forest School Leader in teaching children to maintain their own and others' health and safety
- To report accidents or hazards to the Forest School Leader immediately
- To take responsibility for making themselves aware of safety issues, such as the whereabouts of the first aid kit
- To provide their own suitable outdoor clothing and footwear

### ***Responsibilities of the Children***

- To take personal responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety of others
- To listen to and follow safety information given to them
- To ensure they are dressed appropriately for Forest School sessions (see clothing policy)

## **Forest School and Outdoor Learning Risk Assessment Policy**

Our Forest School and Outdoor Learning aims are to develop children's self-esteem, independence and motivation to learn, in a safe environment.

In order that these aims can be met, the Forest School Leader will:

Consistently apply the five-step approach to risk assessment for all Forest School sites and activities

1. Look for hazards
  2. Decide who may be harmed and how
  3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing controls are adequate or whether more should be done. Forest School activities may only proceed if the remaining risk is deemed to be low
  4. Record findings, including daily amendments to standing risk assessments based on site visits or observations
  5. Review assessments on a regular basis (or if circumstances change which may affect the rigour of the assessment) and revise if necessary
- Carry out full risk assessments on each site where Forest School activities will take place. These will be filed in the Handbook. This will be located in the cabin, on site. It will also be available online. Pre-visit checks will be carried out by the Forest School Leader on sites to be used prior to a day's activity, as near to the start of the activity as is reasonably practical.
  - Move activities indoors if, in the opinion of the Forest School Leader, weather conditions such as high winds or the threat/occurrence of electrical storms make it unsafe to work outdoors.
  - Inform staff, volunteers and children of potential hazards and methods of working in order to minimise their risk further.
  - Involve staff, volunteers and children in risk assessment, as appropriate, as part of learning.
  - Ensure that all staff, volunteers and children are aware of the emergency procedures for the site.
  - Be responsible for teaching children adequate skills in order to keep themselves safe, particularly in relation to the use of hand tools and fire.
  - Ensure children and adults will have access to drinks during sessions.

# Forest School and Outdoor Learning Safeguarding Policy

Worsbrough Common Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and for confidentiality. Our Safeguarding Children Policy, which applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school, has six main elements:

We practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who work with children and ensure that all staff are aware of the child protection procedures established by Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board and, where appropriate, the Local Authority, and act on any guidance or advice given by them and ensure that staff with designated responsibility for child protection will receive appropriate training to the minimum standard set out by the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB)

We continually raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe.

We develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse.

We support children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.

We establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We ensure that pupil and parental rights are respected and that vulnerable individuals are protected from risk or exploitation

In addition, adults working within Forest School need to appreciate that when children feel comfortable and content, when their instinct to trust and risk take is encouraged, they may be moved to disclose certain information which they might otherwise keep to themselves. Any volunteer or member of staff who finds that a child is telling them something which concerns them should follow these simple steps:

- Listen, but ask NO leading questions. Remember that you must not promise to 'keep a secret'. The general rule is that adults should make it clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the beginning of the conversation.
- Comfort the child if appropriate.
- Inform the Headteacher (Rebecca Paddock), the Deputy Head (Kate Ainley) , Wellbeing Principal (Lisa Gray), Assistant Head (Jenny Chambers) as soon as possible, try and write everything down straight away or as soon as possible.

## Forest School and Outdoor Learning Whole Class Staffing Policy

Forest School and outdoor learning is an important part of what we offer to our children at Worsbrough Common Primary School. At Worsbrough Common Primary School through our Forest School and Outdoor Learning sessions, we hope to encourage independent, enthusiastic and creative learners who develop holistically through a well-planned and interesting child-centered approach.

Classes will be offered an outdoor learning session, following the Forest School ethos every half term.

Where appropriate the class theme/story may be used as a starting point for planning specific activities and resources for the session. At other times the focus will be more nature based e.g. focussing on the changes in the environment, weather etc. The nature of Forest School and the environment will undoubtedly lend itself to aspects of the National Curriculum, particularly science outcomes.

Throughout the year these outcomes may provide specific focus for the activities and resources offered and provided during sessions, however many of these aspects will be embedded and will be evident throughout with the main focus of the Forest School experience promoting confidence, motivation and wellbeing through play.

Where aspects of the National Curriculum are addressed during Forest School programmes the learning will enhance rather than replace the specific teaching done in class. It may provide hooks to learning, introduce or consolidate knowledge, language etc. and will build on previous learning.

Through experiencing learning in a safe and supportive outdoors environment, children gain a sense of value for the wider, natural world, a sense of responsibility for their environment, in addition to growing self-esteem, confidence and physical and emotional strength.

These sessions will provide invaluable opportunities for class based staff to observe and work with their children in a different environment.

As adults we will support children during Forest School activities with sensitive interventions. We will demonstrate and teach new skills and will scaffold these as appropriate when children are experimenting with their use. Observations and knowledge of the children will enable us to know when to intervene and provide support, using questioning and commentary to promote children's inquiry and independence. There is always success in what happens in these activities, as adults we may need to help children identify what these are.

**In order to fulfill the aims of Forest School and Outdoor Learning it is important that sessions are planned and delivered with appropriate staffing levels. As the sessions are part of the curriculum offer for all children at WCPS at least two adults, ideally all class staff, should attend with their class. On occasions where this may not be possible this should be discussed at the earliest opportunity so that alternative arrangements can be made.**

# Forest School and Outdoor Learning Behaviour Policy

The Forest School and Outdoor Learning Behaviour Policy runs collaboratively with the Worsbrough Common Primary School Behaviour Policy.

During Forest School and outdoor learning opportunities we aim to;

- Build self-esteem, independence and motivation to learn whilst always maintaining a safe environment
- Promote awareness, respect and care for other individuals and for the natural environment
- Reinforce collaborative behaviour
- Develop continuity of expectations and of approach to behaviour management both inside and outside Worsbrough Common Primary School
- Develop awareness of acceptable behaviour and responsible behaviour in an outdoor environment
- Develop in both children and adults a pride in their achievements.

In order that these aims are achieved, certain standards of behaviour must be sustained and reinforced as a continuum of expectations within conventional school time.

## **The Role of the Forest School Leader**

The Forest School Leader will:

- Create a positive environment which encourages and reinforces caring, nurturing and acceptable behaviour towards one another, the environment and the equipment used.
- Promote effective relationships in which all are accepted, valued and treated equally
- Be mindful of the need to maintain safety at all times
- Establish clearly defined standards of behaviour
- Provide a positive role model for all children and adults.
- Place the needs of the children, including needs linked to their preferred learning styles, social and behavioural needs at the centre of the Forest School curriculum to maximize individual success and raise self-esteem.
- Give verbal praise to children demonstrating good work, good behaviour, co-operation and good group work.

## **The Role of the Children**

The children, to the best of their abilities and with or without support will:

- Listen carefully and respond to instructions and requests, especially those concerning safety

- Develop and maintain an acceptable attitude towards one another, the environment and all of the equipment used.

**Management of behaviour will be in line with the school's behaviour policy.**

### **Rewards**

Unconditional positive regard will be used throughout sessions.

Dojo points and proud of my selfie will be used in line with the school's reward system.

### **Consequences**

Where a child or a group of children become disengaged/demonstrate unsafe behaviours or dispositions the Forest School leader will

- Initially try to re-engage the child, reinforcing the importance of acceptable/safe behaviour. This may be by giving praise to other children or reminding the whole group of expected behaviours.
- The Forest School leader may take a child to the side giving a warning and explanation of how their actions may be compromising safety.
- If behaviour continues and is deemed unsafe, the child will be withdrawn from the session/activity. If necessary the child will be taken back to school, this may involve contacting a member of the nurture team or SLT to assist.
- Individual PHPs will be followed.
- The child may miss their next Forest School session if it is felt necessary for their safety and the safety of others.
- Forest School sessions particularly those used for nurture interventions should not be treated as a reward but rather part of the child's timetable and as such great consideration will be taken before a child misses a session as a consequence, particularly if this is as a consequence of something that has happened outside of Forest School.
- In some instances a behaviour contract may be drawn up between the Forest School leader and the child which gives clear expectations and consequences.

## **Forest School and Outdoor Learning Forest School Emergency Action Plan & Prevention**

Details of the group going to the woods will be left at reception each session.

All participating adults and children will be briefed in what to do in case of an emergency.

A whistle will be blown twice as a signal to stop what you are doing, gather with a member of staff at an area designated at the beginning of the session. The Forest School Leader will assess the situation.

They will ensure that the rest of the group are safe from danger and are adequately supervised.

## **Essential Items**

The following items will be available at each session:

Emergency Outdoor First Aid Kit

Emergency whistle

Welfare Kit (wipes, tissues, hand gel, carrier bag)

Medication for individuals

Snacks, drinks and cups

Mobile phone and walkie talkie to be carried by the Forest School leader.

## **In case of medical emergency**

If additional help is needed or in the event of serious injury:

Administer first aid, another member of staff to alert help by contacting reception, who if necessary will call 999.

Member of staff to gather remainder of children and return up to the school building. Forest School leader to blow whistle twice and group will gather together. Place to be designated at the start of each session.

First aider to remain with casualty and continue to monitor, follow first aid outdoor guidelines.

Inform parents / carers as soon as possible

Complete all accident report forms and inform HSE as soon as possible if injury is severe.

## **Requesting attendance by Emergency Services**

When calling 999 be ready with the following information:

Your name

Telephone number -01226 289989

Site Location - Worsbrough Common Primary School, Bruce Ave, Barnsley, S70 4EB

Description of the casualty accident / injury / symptoms.

One member of the staff will meet the ambulance at the site entrance and direct the crew to the incident site. If the injured child is taken to hospital, one member of staff will go with them and the child's parents/carers will be updated about the situation by the staff remaining at school.

In minor cases, the Forest School Leader will arrange to contact the parent of the injured child so they can be collected and taken to the hospital, doctor or home.

## **Emergency Contact Numbers**

Ambulance: 999

### **In case of a missing child**

Worsbrough Common Primary School's fundamental priority in everything it sets out to achieve is to keep all children safe.

If it is discovered that a child is missing from the group, the situation will be taken very seriously from the outset and the following emergency procedure will be implemented:

The Forest School Leader shall be informed immediately who will with another member of staff make an immediate search of the vicinity.

Assemble rest of the children and ensure they are safe using the emergency whistle 2 blows, being mindful not to increase anxiety of the group.

If, after the search, the child has not been located, the Forest School Leader will contact a safeguarding lead within school. School policies and procedures will be followed.

Staff should establish details of the situation, including last known position of the missing child and any timing. These will be recorded on the Emergency Procedures Record Sheet.

### **In case of an intruder entering the Forest School site**

If an intruder was to enter the Forest School site, immediately inform a colleague an intruder is present, ask them to gather the children to a safe area. If possible greet the intruder politely, remain a safe distance away, ask them their business, direct them to reception if needed.

If a child is involved then the police should be called and the child/children involved should be removed from the situation and made to feel safe.

Remember your own safety as well as that of the children's do not approach the intruder if they appear angry or agitated.

Remain calm and try and keep the intruder away from the children without coming into physical contact with them.

### **In case of Severe Weather**

If weather becomes windy whilst on site (if trees are blowing more than 20 degrees), or if the forest school leader feels it is unsafe to carry on, then the group will exit the trees A.S.A.P. and go back up to school for remainder of the session.

Ensure children are correctly dressed for the weather (see clothing guide)

## Forest School and Outdoor Learning Fire Evacuation Policy

**A list of children and adults going to the woods must be left at reception before each session.**

### **Fire Evacuation**

In the event of a fire on the Forest School site, the Forest School Leader will sound the Forest School Emergency whistle (2 blows). Children will move to the safe area as directed at the beginning of the session. Adults will gather and escort the children quietly and calmly to the entrance of the Forest School site.

The Forest School Leader will count all the children and adults, ensuring everyone is accounted for, before leading the children out of the gate onto the school drive and away from the Forest School site. Whilst this is happening, a staff member will use the mobile phone to call the emergency services and then inform the office of the Fire. The group will be escorted back to the main School building.

### **Fire Drill**

If a fire alarm sounds in the main school, the Forest School leader will be contacted via the walkie talkie. The Forest School Leader will sound the Forest School Emergency whistle (2 blows). Children will move to the safe area as directed at the beginning of the session. The Forest School Leader will count all the children and adults, ensuring everyone is accounted for. This information will be passed on to a fire officer using the walkie talkie.

The group will remain on the school field unless advised that it is safe to lead children up the school drive to the collection point on the main playground where the children will become the responsibility of the Class Teacher and the register will be taken following the school fire evacuation procedure.

## Forest School and Outdoor Learning Eating Policy

We recognise that raising awareness of the woodland environment increases children's interest in edible berries and fruits which may be found outside. However, there is no safe way of ensuring that children will always eat correct berries and/or fruit, or that appropriate berries and/or fruit will be clean.

There is also the possibility that by promoting the correct ingestion of berries and/or fruit in Forest School sessions may lead to incorrect identification by children when out of school.

With these considerations in mind, we adopt the following Policy on the eating of food during Forest School sessions: Forest School sessions on-site (i.e. those lasting a maximum of 2 ½ hours) will adopt a nil-by-mouth policy with the following exceptions:

- a. Hot drinks made in storm kettles or supplied in flasks for the group, from commercially available products such as hot chocolate and sugar free fruit squash
- b. Drinks and foods which link directly to the topic, such as elder cordial, which will only be sourced from commercially available products. In such cases, the Forest School Leader will be responsible for checking that no member of the group has any listed allergy to any of the products; if they have, the Forest School Leader will use their discretion as to whether a substitute product or different activity will be most appropriate.
- c. Snacks and packed lunches brought by the children or supplied by school may be consumed by the children whilst on Forest School activities, provided careful monitoring by all staff ensures no berries and/or fruit from the forest is consumed
- d. Children will be taught, at an age appropriate time, reasons why berries and/or fruit from the woodland may not be eaten during Forest School sessions. They will be reassured that fruit from the woodland can be safe to eat, but can equally be dangerous and that adult (i.e. parent) supervision is very important in ensuring only the correct berries are eaten.
- e. Allergies and medical needs will always be taken into account. Individual care plans will be followed.
- f. Dietary requirements i.e. those based on religious belief will be adhered to during sessions.

## Forest School and Outdoor Learning Clothing Policy

During Forest School Activities, all members of the group must follow the following Clothing Policy:

- Appropriate footwear to be worn at all times. Ideally, these will be Wellington boots or walking boots. Trainers or sturdy shoes may be worn. It is recommended that children have a change of footwear for forest school to ensure they have a clean and dry pair to change into when back in school. Open toed shoes/sandals are not permitted for adults and children.
- Long trousers will always be worn at Forest School. This is to protect the person from scratches from brambles, thorns and holly, nettle stings, insect bites, insect stings and from burning by the sun.

- Long sleeves will always be worn at Forest School. This is to protect the person from scratches from brambles, thorns and holly, nettle stings, insect bites, insect stings and from burning by the sun.
- Appropriate waterproofs will be supplied for children by the school at all Forest School sessions. Kit will include a waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers. Waterproofs should be worn over the top of children's own clothes for each session, unless advised otherwise by the Forest School leader.
- In colder weather, children are to be responsible for wearing warm clothing underneath their waterproofs. In cold weather, children should wear hats and gloves, although gloves will need to be removed for some tool work.
- Protective clothing is provided for activities where necessary, e.g. gloves for tool use.

## Forest School and Outdoor Learning Fire Lighting Policy

The school understands the importance of vigilance to fire safety hazards. All staff, volunteers and children are aware of the fire safety procedures set out in this policy.

Campfires and the use of storm kettles are an important part of Forest School and are used in many sessions. Worsbrough Common Primary School aims to ensure that all children and adults participating in Forest School sessions with fires and/or storm kettles will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

### **Location**

- Only previously agreed areas will be used for the campfire.
- The campfire area will be enclosed by logs or large stones to prevent the spread of fire.
- The storm (Kelly) kettle will only be used on flat ground and any woodchip or leaf litter must be brushed away before use.

### **Positioning of Children and Adults**

- Fire areas are surrounded by logs at least 1.5 metres from the fire pit. The logs represent the campfire boundary.
- Once lit an adult will remain by the fire at all times.
- When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area without permission.
- Seating on benches will be organised around the outside of the fire boundary. Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.
- Long sleeves and trousers must always be worn.

- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire. With one to one adult help children may carefully place fuel for the fire on the edge of the fire. We will ensure that the ratio of children to adults is at least 1:4 outside the fire boundary area.
- Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the children: they are advised to turn their head to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes and count to 30 (or ask an adult/peer to count for them)
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.
- If wind direction is variable, the leader should rearrange the seating if at all possible.

### **Type of Fire**

- Criss-cross fires are used to provide a large amount of heat and light and are fast burning.
- Long Log fires are good for cooking as they are slow burning and require little fuel.

### **Cooking**

- If food is to be cooked at Forest School, the Forest School leaders are responsible for ensuring that the food has been transported, cooked and stored in a 'safe to eat' manner.

### **Safety and Responsibility**

- The Forest School Leader will usually light the fire. Small fires may on occasions be lit by children as part of nurture activities. These will be closely supervised by the Forest School leader and will be done one at a time.
- Fires are lit using a fire steel or matches.
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- No plastics are to be burnt.
- If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision.
- Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire.

### **Extinguishing**

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
- Forest School Leaders should ensure that any large remains of wood, especially when using a long log fire, are separated from one another.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred gently until all smoke and steam has ceased.
- Large build ups of potash, from several fires, need to be dispersed. This must only be done when it has totally cooled. It will be finely scattered throughout the woodland to enable natural decomposition.

### **Storm (Kelly) kettles**

- Only Forest School Leaders are to light the fire in the fire pan.
- The Kelly kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground.
- Children can feed the fire with one to one supervision but they must have been shown how to do so safely. Stick held at the end and dropped in from the side; hand should never be placed over the top of the kettle.

- Fuel should burn itself out, but if it doesn't it must be extinguished with water (see above)
- The Kelly kettle will be removed from the fire pan by one of the Forest School leaders. To do this safely they will lift the kettle using the sides of the metal handle, pouring will then be controlled by using one hand on the top of the handle and the other on the chain.
- The Kelly kettle should never be heated with the cork in.

## Forest School and Outdoor Learning Toileting Policy

### ***Toileting:***

Before a Forest School session, children will be given the opportunity to go to the toilet. As a rule sessions only last a maximum of two hours and children don't usually need the toilet again.

However, if a child needs the toilet whilst down on the site, they will be accompanied by a staff member back up to school. If this leaves the Forest School leader alone with a class group a decision will be made regarding the safety of the remaining group. E.g. the group will move to sit on the grass, the fire circle or in the cabin or if necessary the whole group will return to school.

A potty and wipes are available for 'emergencies' for Foundation Stage children if they would not be able to reach the school building in time. This is kept in the Forest School shed. The Forest School leader will dispose of any waste appropriately.

The forest school leader will have wipes available for emergencies!

All adults supporting the Forest School are CRB checked so are able to support children with toileting.

## Forest School and Outdoor Learning Hand Tool Policy

Our School is committed to providing children with access to a wide range of equipment that stimulates learning, development and enjoyment, both indoors and outdoors.

Using small hand tools is an important part of Forest School as it enables children to develop new, practical skills that help them develop self-confidence. Hand tools are to be maintained in good order by the Forest School Leaders. The Forest School leaders will inspect the tools before each session to ensure safety. Children and adults will be taught how to handle tools properly and to treat them with respect. Whilst using hand tools the staff : child ratio is increased.

This will be achieved by following these guidelines:

Tool talks will be given before any tool is used.

- Staff to child ratio will vary depending on the tool in use, and the child in question.

- Staff to child ratio with all tools 1:4 in the Children's centre and the Foundation stage for hammers. Saws 1:2.
- Staff to child ratio 1:2 for bow saws, knives and for KS1 children, all hand tool work. (Hammers 1:4)
- Staff to child ratio can be as high as 1:8 in KS2 with hacksaws and knives, depending on the group.
- Tools will be kept in the tool bag and only removed by the Forest School leaders
- Adult and child sized gloves will be available and are to be used when appropriate.
- Penknives must be opened and closed by Forest School staff
- Running with tools is prohibited
- Pointing with tools is prohibited
- Children will lose permission to use tools if the guidelines are not followed.
- Bill hooks should not be swung or used with gloved hands, and will only be used under the guidance of the Forest School Leaders.
- Bow saws must have a blade guard on them when not in use. Blade guards to be removed and put back only by Forest School staff.
- Wood being sawn must be supported on a saw horse or a natural sawing break - hands must be kept away from the blade. Adults and children must be given instruction and demonstration on the appropriate and safe position with which to saw.
- When using peelers and penknives to whittle, children will remain seated, this must be done at the side of, and downwards of the body, enabling them to whittle away from the body.
- All tools must be counted back into the tool box at the end of the session.
- Volunteer helpers must receive basic training on the use of individual hand tools before being allowed to use them with children.

## Forest School and Outdoor Learning Tree Climbing Policy

Allowing children to find their own limits regarding physical movement in a safe environment with supportive adults lets them develop a healthy relationship with their own bodies and an understanding of their capabilities.

Allowing children to find their own limits regarding physical movement in a safe environment with supportive adults lets them develop a healthy relationship with their own bodies and an understanding of their capabilities.

### Risks

As with any climbing on playground equipment, climbing trees can entail significant risks, resulting in injury or death. Factors increasing risks associated with tree climbing include:

- Climbing in areas out of sight of a supervising adult
- Taking ropes or other equipment up a tree
- Lack of education for children about tree-climbing risks

- Lack of awareness among staff regarding safe play
- Climbing on weak branches (i.e. thinner than pupil's wrist)

The Forest School Leader will identify hazards, including weather, which may make it not possible to climb trees. Through forest school sessions children will be taught how to identify if a tree is safe to climb.

The Forest School leader will be inform all participants of any known hazards at the beginning of a session or when they are identified. Where necessary ribbon or another marker will be placed on trees which are unsafe for climbing.

# Risk – Benefit Assessment

## THE ROLE OF RISK IN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



### Risk Benefit Assessment

Risk Benefit Assessment is an approach to risk assessment that focuses on the benefits of an activity as well as potential risks. It is especially valuable in the context of Forest Schools and outdoor play and learning.

The underlying premise is the importance of elements of risk in the development of children's physical, intellectual and emotional development.

By tackling risks in a safe, managed environment and supported by caring, knowledgeable adults, children gain the skills and confidence to take on bigger risks as they grow older. Risk isn't just about physical actions – for example climbing a tree or using tools. It is also about taking intellectual risks – trying anything for the first time, testing new ideas, accepting other people's opinions etc.

Risk Benefit Assessment enables the Forest School Leader to make decisions regarding the experiences they are offering, evaluating whether the benefits of involvement outweigh the potential risks.

"It is argued that taking risks can have positive implications in terms of children's developmental, social and emotional needs, as well as their overall health. By providing the opportunities for children to manage their own risks in a controlled environment, they will learn vital life skills needed for adulthood, and gain the experience needed to face the unpredictable nature of the world." (Gill, 2007)

Where benefits outweigh the risks consideration still needs to be given to how those risks are to be managed.

Robust risk benefit assessments are an essential part of Forest Schools and outdoor learning at Worsbrough Common Primary School, allowing children and adults freedom to play and learn safely within a challenging environment.

### Four types of risk benefit assessments are carried out.



**GENERIC SITE** - takes into account the site and the general users of the site.



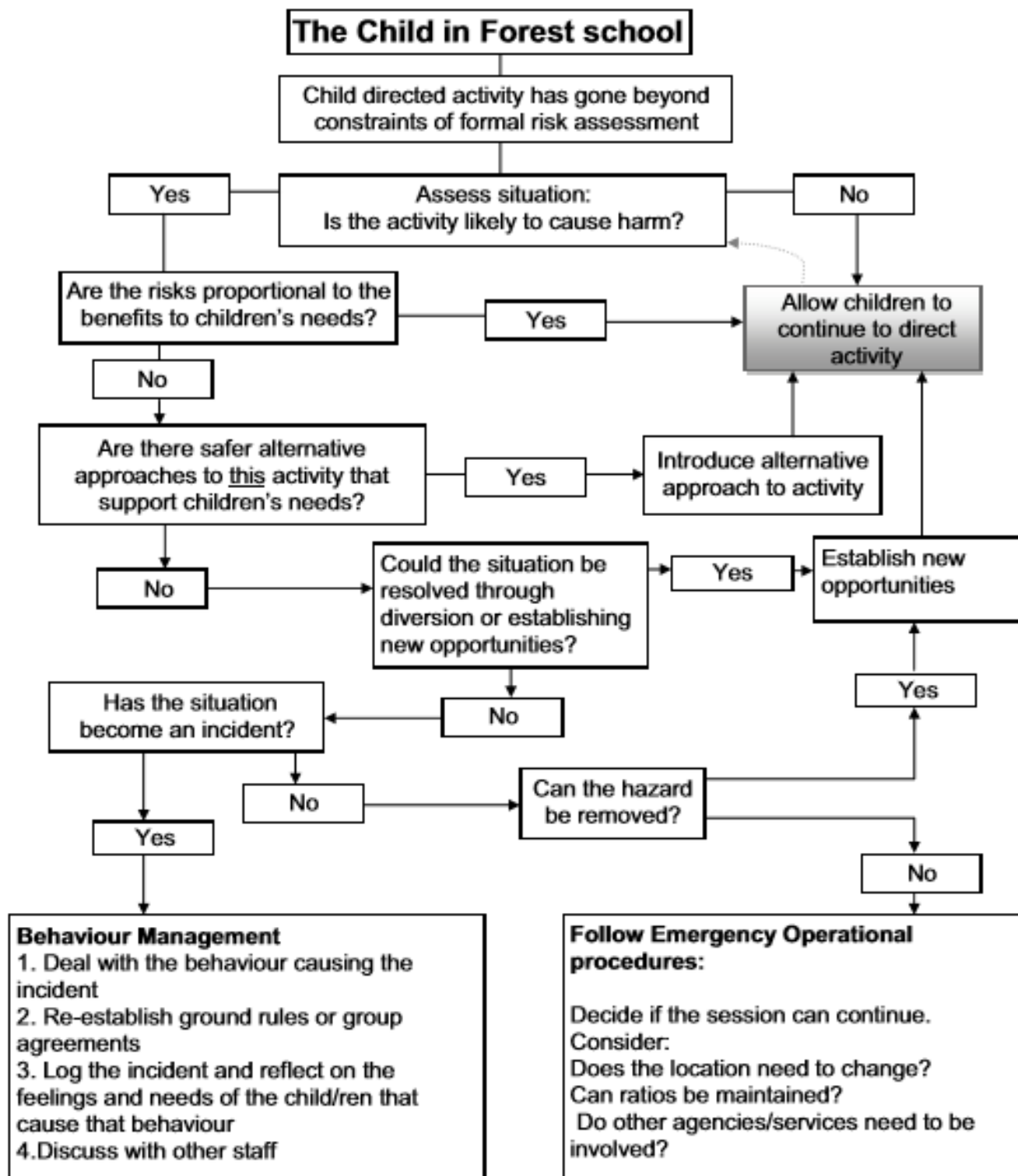
**GENERIC ACTIVITY/EXPERIENCE** -takes into account all aspects of activities, including tool use, games, creative activities. Correct procedures e.g. safe tool use are established and become part of policies and procedures.



**DAILY** -including weather and other factors and changes identified on the day. This can also include assessment of individuals attending the session. This is carried out by the Forest Schools Leader before each session.



**ONGOING/DYNAMIC** -This involves professional judgements during the session in response to changing situations.



*Original document by Dan Rees-Jones Playwork Partnerships 2008*

*Adapted by Lily Horseman and BEYCP Play Team July 2008*

<b>Destination Site:</b> Forest School site, school grounds		<b>Assessment Date:</b> January 2017
<b>Description of site :</b> The site is in the grounds of Worsbrough Common Primary School. The wood surrounds the playing field within the school grounds. It is accessed via a double gate from the school drive. The field/woods are fenced all the way around. It has houses backing on to it from two sides with the other side being Mount Vernon Hospital grounds ( disused). Certain houses on the Bruce Avenue side of the field appear to have made unauthorised openings onto the field, however they are all fenced/gated. The side which backs onto the school has quite a steep incline through the trees. Access from the gate is via a steep slope.		<b>Review Date: August 2019</b>
<b>Activity:</b> <b>Woodland Site</b> <b>General welfare and weather assessment</b>		<b>Assessed by:</b> Gilly Tyree-Milner
<b>Benefits</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Confidence</b> Self-confidence and self-belief that comes from the children having the freedom, time and space, to learn, grown and demonstrate independence.</li><li><b>Social skills</b> The children demonstrate an increased awareness of the consequences of their actions on other people, peers and adults, and acquire a better ability to work co-operatively with others.</li><li><b>Language and communication</b> The children develop more sophisticated uses of both written and spoken language prompted by their visual and sensory experiences at Forest School.</li><li><b>Motivation and concentration</b> Participation in exploratory learning and play activities as well as the ability to focus on specific tasks for extended periods of time.</li><li><b>Physical skills</b> The children develop physical stamina and their gross motor skills through free and easy movement round the Forest School site. They develop fine motor skills by making objects and structures.</li><li><b>Knowledge and understanding</b> Increased respect for the environment develop as well as an interest in their natural surroundings.</li><li><b>New perspectives</b> Adults gain a new perspective and understanding of the children as they observe them in a very different setting and have opportunities to identify their individual learning styles.</li><li><b>Relaxation/Stress relief</b> Being outside in a natural environment has been shown to relieve stress by reducing the levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, in the brain. Children are increasingly assaulted by stressful environments (media, increasing emphasis on targets and testing, screen time, ever busier urban environments), being out in the woods gives them a much needed time to relax, enjoy themselves and have some stress free time.</li><li><b>Connection to nature</b> Children are increasingly being kept indoors because of the understandable problems of traffic and concerns over safety while being unsupervised. As a result some are missing out on the opportunity to get out and connect with</li></ol>	

nature on a personal level. Forest school gives them the time and opportunity to do that. Connecting with nature will allow our future generations understand and value the natural world.

Possible hazard	Who is at risk?	Measures in place to reduce risk of injury
<b>Debris/Litter</b> <b>Cuts/trips/suffocation/entrapment</b> There is a reasonable amount of debris due to the surrounding houses and school, plus the field is also used for recreational activities by third parties after school who tend to leave litter on the field. The litter has blown into the brambles and towards the edges of the woods.	Children and adults	Everyone to be made aware of dangers. Remove before session – Safety sweep Avoid area – mark off appropriately during session Ensure group know not to pick up any litter and know to avoid it. Regular maintenance of site.
<b>Animals</b> <b>Attack/Faeces</b> Dogs from the surrounding houses are let onto the playing fields (unauthorised) Two cats often come into the site.	Children and adults	FS leader to ensure group are aware of dangers. FS leader to carry dog poo bags. If a child notices any they should inform an adult. If a child gets excrement on them, they should inform an adult who will use wet wipes to clean their skin. If it is on the child's clothes they should be accompanied back to the school building to change their clothes. Forest school leader to make everyone aware of the procedure to deal with stray dogs and cats. Instructed not to touch the animals. Everyone will be shown what to do if the cats try to get the children to stroke them. (Fold arms and turn away or walk away). Forest School leader to deal with animals that come near the children.
<b>Paths and Tracks,</b> Trip, slip,	Children and adults	Brief children and adults about the steep, and/or uneven path on entry to the school playing field and upon entry into the woods. Safety sweep to determine suitability of paths. Ensure people take care and do not run Ensure everyone is aware of any hazards identified during the safety sweep.
<b>Brambles, nettles</b> Cuts/scratches Stings	Children and adults	Appropriate clothing – arms and legs covered Brief children on moving around safely Regular maintenance of site, removal of brambles that could cause tripping hazard on pathways.
<b>Branches at eye level</b> Banging head/ Poking in eyes	Children and adults	Branches to be cleared from over paths. FS Leader to warn of dangers during safety talk. Warn the group of the danger of low branches whilst walking around the site Regular maintenance of site

<b>Falling deadwood</b> Impact/crush,/tripping	Children and adults	Safety sweep to identify possible areas and avoid areas at obvious risk Branches removed where necessary. Extra vigilance in times of extremes of weathers (prolonged wet turning to dry, cold turning to warm) Mark off for session if necessary. Children advised not to climb trees during times of extreme weathers.
<b>Berries/mushrooms</b> Poisoning	Children and adults	Nil by mouth policy – explained and reinforced each session. Provision of welfare – handwashing
<b>Weather</b> Including high winds, extreme rain, sun	Children and adults	Forest school leader to assess weather and potential risks from different weather. Where necessary cancel the session, modify the activity to ensure safety or carry out activities for small groups in the cabin. Groups will not enter the woodland during high winds or during thunder and lightning storms.
<b>Clothing</b>	Children and adults	Waterproof/protective clothing will be provided by school for all children. Parents, adults and children will be informed and reminded of the importance of appropriate clothing. Children will have their arms and legs covered. In hot weather children will still cover their arms and legs .These could be lightweight shirts. Even in very hot weather it is shaded and cooler inside the woods. Children and adults will wear appropriate footwear (no open toed shoes/sandals).
<b>General health and welfare</b>	Children and adults	The Forest school leader will ensure they are aware of medical information including food and drink allergies etc. Individual care plans will be followed as appropriate. Drinks and snacks will be provided. In cold weather warm drinks will be provided.
<b>Accidents</b>	Children and adults	The Forest School Leader will hold a current outdoor first aid certificate. A mobile phone and walkie talkie will be carried. First aid kits will be easily accessible. Children and adults will be informed of potential risks and hazards as identified during the safety sweep. Accidents will be reported appropriately following school procedures. Modifications to policies/procedures will be carried out as necessary and measures taken to ensure future safety where appropriate.

<b>Destination Site:</b> Forest School site, school grounds		<b>Assessment Date:</b> January 2017
<b>Activity:</b> Collecting natural materials		<b>Review Date:</b> August 2019
		<b>Assessed by:</b> G.Tyree-Milner
<b>Benefits</b>	In addition to the benefits listed on the woodland, general welfare and weather risk-benefit assessment. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Natural resources encourage children to observe closely and use all their senses.</li> <li>2. Provide opportunities for them to ask questions, and to talk about things they have discovered.</li> <li>3. Encourage expression.</li> <li>4. Support children to make links to other learning.</li> <li>5. Develop and enhance vocabulary.</li> <li>6. "Involuntary attention, as opposed to directed attention, can be cultivated within nature". The "soft fascination" of the natural world can restore focused attention required for directed studies. Involuntary attention is achieved without effort by simply observing what captures our attention. Our mind wanders and takes a rest from concentrated effort, which in turn improves learning. (Marc Berman, Brain Scientist, University of Michigan)</li> </ol>	
<b>Possible hazard</b>	<b>Who is at risk?</b>	<b>Measures in place to reduce risk of injury</b>
<b>Debris/Litter</b> <b>Cuts/trips/suffocation/entrapment</b> There is a reasonable amount of debris due to the surrounding houses and school, plus the field is also used for recreational activities by third parties after school who tend to leave litter on the field. The litter has blown into the brambles and towards the edges of the woods.	Children and adults	Everyone to be made aware of dangers. Remove before session – Safety sweep Avoid area – mark off appropriately during session Ensure group know not to pick up any litter and know to avoid it. Regular maintenance of site.
<b>Animals</b> <b>Attack/Faeces</b> Dogs from the surrounding houses are let onto the playing fields	Children and adults	FS leader to ensure group are aware of dangers. FS leader to carry dog poo bags. If a child notices any they should inform an adult. If a child gets excrement on them, they should inform an adult who will use wet wipes to clean their skin. If it is

(unauthorised) Two cats often come into the site.		on the child's clothes they should be accompanied back to the school building to change their clothes. Forest school leader to make everyone aware of the procedure to deal with stray dogs and cats. Instructed not to touch the animals. Everyone will be shown what to do if the cats try to get the children to stroke them. (Fold arms and turn away or walk away). Forest School leader to deal with animals that come near the children.
<b>Brambles, nettles</b> Cuts/scratches Stings	Children and adults	Appropriate clothing – arms and legs covered Brief children on moving around safely Regular maintenance of site, removal of brambles that could cause tripping hazard on pathways.
<b>Branches at eye level</b> Banging head/ Poking in eyes	Children and adults	Branches to be cleared from over paths. FS Leader to warn of dangers during safety talk. Warn the group of the danger of low branches whilst walking around the site Regular maintenance of site
<b>Falling deadwood</b> Impact/crush,/tripping	Children and adults	Safety sweep to identify possible areas and avoid areas at obvious risk Branches removed where necessary. Extra vigilance in times of extremes of weathers (prolonged wet turning to dry, cold turning to warm) Mark off for session if necessary. Children advised not to climb trees during times of extreme weathers.
<b>Berries/mushrooms</b> Poisoning	Children and adults	Nil by mouth policy – explained and reinforced each session. Provision of welfare – handwashing Group to be shown a fungus so they know not to touch it, FS rule, no pick no lick
<b>Lifting and swinging sticks</b> Bumps, cuts, grazes Back injury, muscle strain	Children and adults	Group to be shown how to carry a stick carefully during safety talk, ensuring they are aware of others when moving, especially when carrying sticks. Leader to ensure correct lifting procedures are used, give guidance before activity and monitor during the activity.
<b>Insects and plants</b> Stings Anaphylactic shock	Children and adults	Avoiding areas that contain stinging plants and insects. Explain which plants may sting, avoid areas containing them FS leader holds current outdoor first aid certificate, Walkie talkie and mobile phone carried by FS leader

<b>Destination Site:</b> Forest School site, school grounds		<b>Assessment Date:</b> January 2017
<b>Activity:</b> <b>Fire</b>		<b>Review Date:</b> August 2019
		<b>Assessed by:</b> G.Tyree-Milner
<b>Benefits</b>	<p>In addition to the benefits listed on the woodland, general welfare and weather risk-benefit assessment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enjoyment, excitement and spiritual reflection.</li> <li>2. In managing a fire, children will learn risk management, responsibility and organisation.</li> <li>3. In using fire as a (cooking) tool, children learn to respect it and use it wisely.</li> <li>4. Children will learn simple science lessons (fire triangle) including the suitability of materials to ignite and keep a fire going, how to balance the right amount of oxygen and heat loss.</li> <li>5. Putting a fire out, environmental responsibility.</li> </ol>	
<b>Possible hazard</b>	<b>Who is at risk?</b>	<b>Measures in place to reduce risk of injury</b>
Igniting the fire OPEN FIRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burns and scalds</li> <li>• Burns to clothes</li> </ul> Fire out of control Falling into fire Smoke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inhalation, irritation</li> </ul> Heat from hot embers. (burns)	<b>Children and adults</b>	Supervision of the fire, one person to be sat beside fire at all times while alight or hot embers remain, to ensure children do not have unsupervised access. Children and adults will be given rules and safety advice and dangers of fire. Clear talk about the use of the fire circle. First aiders and first aid box will be available. Fire proof gloves within easy reach. Fire area will be away from buildings. The fire will not be under overhanging trees which may catch alight. A good supply of water will be available to put out flames and dampen heat. Children have a safety brief before entering the fire pit area. No walking between the seats and fire allowed. When cooking etc. everyone at fire should be on one knee to remain stable.(respect position) or standing. Maximum of 4 people at fire The wind direction will be constantly assessed and children advised to move safely out of smoke direction. Dry suitable wood used to prevent excess smoke. When the fire activity is finished the embers will be dampened and cooled with water and spread out with a spade/stick
Cooking Burns from kettles/pans, burning wood or hot water	Children and adults	F.S. leaders will remove all items from the fire area. All children will be seated when passed any hot item. Stay with Kelly Kettle at all times.

KELLY KETTLE AND HOT WATER		Ensure it is on a sturdy level nonflammable base (it has a high centre of gravity). feed flames through chimney. Use fire safety gloves to remove from base Do not leave cork in spout while heating water. Keep spout away from you to avoid splashes
<b>HOT MARSHALLOWS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Burns to mouth</li> <li>Injury from pointed stick.</li> </ul>	Children and adults	Ensure everyone is aware of risks and understand that the marshmallow will be hot. Where necessary wait until marshmallow is cool before giving to children.

<b>Destination Site:</b> Forest School site, school grounds		<b>Assessment Date:</b> January 2017
<b>Activity:</b> <b>Blindfold activities</b>		<b>Review Date:</b> August 2019
<b>Assessed by:</b> G.Tyree-Milner		
<b>Benefits</b>	In addition to the benefits listed on the woodland, general welfare and weather risk-benefit assessment. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building trust, cooperation and collaboration.</li> <li>Support and promote empathy.</li> <li>Develop use of other senses.</li> <li>Be able to keep self and others safe.</li> <li>Manage risk, identify hazards.</li> <li>See things from someone else's perspective.</li> <li>Support communication and interaction.</li> </ol>	
<b>Possible hazard</b>	<b>Who is at risk?</b>	<b>Measures in place to reduce risk of injury</b>
<b>Tying the blindfold too tightly.</b>	Children	Blindfolds made from soft materials Instruction given on safe use. Forest School leader to monitor throughout activity.
<b>Walking into a branch or tree.</b> Bumps, cuts, grazes <b>Bending over and banging head</b>	Children	Safety sweep carried out before activity. Woodland area risk assessment in place Group to be made aware of the dangers and considerations of leading someone who is blindfolded. First aider present and first aid kit accessible. FS leader to monitor throughout the activity.
<b>Trip/Slip</b>	Children	Safety sweep carried out before activity Ensure group are told to watch out for trip/slip hazards before start of activity,

		Explain to the group to move around safely and to communicate effectively.
Cutting hand on a sharp item	Children	Explain to group to investigate items gently. Tell them there may be rough or sharp parts and to move slowly with light hands.

<b>Destination Site:</b> Forest School site, school grounds		<b>Assessment Date:</b> January 2017
		<b>Review Date:</b> August 2019
<b>Activity:</b> Den making		<b>Assessed by:</b> Gilly Tyree-Milner
<b>Benefits</b>	<p><b>In addition to the benefits listed on the woodland, general welfare and weather risk-benefit assessment.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Den building</i> offers a range of advantages to children of all ages, from physical development to problem solving skills. Children are able to build on their learning by thinking creatively and putting their ideas into reality.</li> <li>2. Building a den is great for encouraging children's imagination and reinforces their sense of self. (Research in the UK, Scandinavia and America has highlighted that building a den and then playing in it can form a really important part of a child's development, encouraging and reinforcing their sense of self.)</li> <li>3. It is also a chance for children to engage in role play, where they can act out situations they may have come across in their own lives. . Imaginative play enables children to rein-act past events or create new ones. Children may use familiar characters in their play such as parents, friends or characters from their favourite stories or television programmes. This allows them to test boundaries and experiment with behaviour and feelings, without direct consequences.</li> <li>4. <b>Fun, enjoyment and motivation.</b> There is a real sense of adventure in building and hiding out in a den, experiencing independence away from adults. A secret den gives children privacy, it is a child's own hideaway place to create in their style and to go to unaccompanied, with their own rules, but in a secure environment</li> <li>5. <i>Den building</i> also supports children's independent learning skills. Children are able to take on a task and work alone to create a den without the guidance or influence of an adult.</li> <li>6. Den building supports collaboration. Den building requires good communication between the members of the group, so children can explain their ideas to one another. They may need to negotiate and be aware of equal contribution from all members of the group too.</li> <li>7. Learning new skills, e.g. tying different knots. Developing a skill with practice.</li> </ol>	

Possible hazard	Who is at risk?	Measures in place to reduce risk of injury
<b>USING ROPES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strangulation</li> <li>• Tripping</li> <li>• Rope burns</li> </ul>	Children and adults	Safety sweep before activity, any unsafe areas or trees identified and managed appropriately i.e. made safe or roped off, and participants informed. Children instructed in correct use, no strings or ropes tied around ourselves or each other. Not to leave ropes tied between trees and left unattended. Correct use modelled, children supervised throughout.
<b>Sharp branches &amp; twigs, thorns</b> Cuts, grazes, scratches	Children and adults	Appropriate clothing to be worn. First Aid equipment available. Qualified outdoor first aider. Get children to 'flag' (verbally or physically) Dead branches and sharp branches Check during safety sweep
<b>Breaking branches</b> falls, bumps, bruises, sprains, broken bones	Children and adults	Check trees for location of dead branches during safety sweep. Encourage children and adults to 'flag'/identify broken branches. Make sure all children can recognise a dead branch by its lack of foliage, bark, twigs or the different sound a dead branch makes (n.b. this may cause problems in winter time when there are no leaves. Look for buds or small twigs to show healthy branches), Check the ground underneath the tree for sharp roots, rocks or branches

<b>Destination Site:</b> Forest School site, school grounds		<b>Assessment Date:</b> January 2017
<b>Activity:</b> <b>Tree Climbing</b>		<b>Review Date:</b> August 2019
		<b>Assessed by:</b> Gilly Tyree-Milner
<b>Benefits</b>	In addition to those benefits identified in the woodland site, general welfare and weather risk-benefit assessment. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personal risk assessment and self-evaluation is a vital skill that all children need to develop. Children will generally only climb as high as they feel safe.</li> <li>2. Tree climbing is amazing for developing the muscles needed for writing and actively learning when children in school.</li> <li>3. Tree climbing is also a great exercise in problem solving.</li> <li>4. It builds confidence as the children have an instant gratification</li> </ol>	

and sense of achievement when they see how far they have climbed or when they conquer a particularly difficult section. The goals that they set are targets that they set themselves; it is these goals that hold they are most proud of as they come from within.

Possible hazard	Who is at risk?	Measures in place to reduce risk of injury
<b>Fall from height</b> Cuts, bruises, scrapes, sprains, broken bones	Children and adults	Identify climbing tree and safety area around the tree. Adult supervision of activity & support for acceptable behaviour. Support development of acceptable climbing skills: 3 points of contact – hands & feet. Identify acceptable height of climb: as appropriate for individual children & their expertise & skill. Clear information given to the group at start of session During wet weather make children aware that the branches will be more slippery. Children not to be put under pressure when climbing, allow children to focus on the activity and speak to them calmly and reassuringly. Adults not to lift children up higher than they could climb without help. Children are not permitted to climb higher than they can reach when stood on the floor. Children must only climb where they can climb unaided. Do not give 'bunk ups' or allow children to use climbing aids. Allow children to focus on the activity and speak to them calmly and reassuringly. Respect children's self-imposed limits on how high they want to climb. When supervised 1:1 this can be increased where appropriate.
<b>Sharp branches &amp; twigs, thorns</b> Cuts, grazes, scratches	Children and adults	Appropriate clothing to be worn. First Aid equipment available. Qualified outdoor first aider. Get children to 'flag' (verbally or physically) Dead branches and sharp branches Check during safety sweep
<b>Breaking branches</b> falls, bumps, bruises, sprains, broken bones	Children and adults	Check trees for location of dead branches during safety sweep. Encourage children and adults to 'flag'/identify broken branches. Make sure all children can recognise a dead branch by its lack of foliage, bark, twigs or the different sound a dead branch makes (n.b. this may cause problems in winter time when there are no leaves. Look for buds or small twigs to show healthy branches), Check the ground underneath the tree for sharp roots, rocks or branches

<b>Child standing on another child's fingers climbing below.</b>	Children and adults	<p>Limit the number of children climbing any one tree.</p> <p>Encourage children to be aware of others and sensitive to different abilities and the speed that others can climb.</p> <p>Adult to supervise where children are climbing.</p> <p>Encourage children to be aware of others and sensitive to different abilities and the speed that others can climb.</p>
<b>Weak or vulnerable trees</b>	Children and adults	<p>Do not climb trees if you see</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broken branches that are hanging precariously or lodged in a tree.</li> <li>• A leaning tree which has air spaces in the soil opposite the trees lean</li> <li>• Cracks in the trunk The tree is dead or mostly dead-</li> <li>• no foliage in summer and no buds or small twigs in winter</li> </ul> <p>thoroughly assess all trees that are used for climbing: Look at the tree from a distance to get a feel for it as a whole. Assess this each time you go back to a tree to note any changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be cautious about allowing tree climbing if you see the following:</li> <li>• Leaning which will often be more evident from afar. Branches that are broken or split</li> <li>• Branch angles that look out of place or unusual.</li> <li>• Large dead branches in the top of the tree.</li> </ul> <p>Look at the trunk and the floor. Assess this each time you go back to a tree to note any changes: Be cautious about allowing tree climbing if you see the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dead branches lying on the ground. It's a good bet there will be more of them up in the tree. Step away from the tree and look up again.</li> <li>• The presence of fungus on or near a tree trunk. This points to root decay and trunk rot</li> <li>• Absence of bark on the trunk which indicates a dead section or a fungus attack.</li> <li>• A long streak of missing bark coming down the trunk which usually means lightning has hit the tree.</li> </ul> <p>If unsure of the status of a tree or the risk it poses ask for advice or professional opinion</p>

<b>Destination Site:</b> Forest School site, school grounds		<b>Assessment Date:</b> January 2017
<b>Activity:</b> <b>Tool Use</b> <b>Knife/Peeler/secateurs/bowsaw/Hammers</b>		<b>Review Date:</b> August 2019
		<b>Assessed by:</b> Gilly Tyree-Milner
<b>Benefits</b>	<p>In addition to the benefits listed on the woodland, general welfare and weather risk-benefit assessment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build confidence, achieve high levels of satisfaction, and have fun.</li> <li>2. Raising self-awareness, and awareness of those around us, through learning safe practice.</li> <li>3. Support communication and collaboration.</li> <li>4. Develop trust.</li> <li>5. It is often noticeable that children who normally will not persevere at a task are prepared to try for far longer when using tools - perhaps because they realise it is something truly challenging but also "real".</li> <li>6. They learn to share and take turns, negotiating and discussing routines and rules.</li> <li>7. They learn to follow agreed rules.</li> </ol>	
<b>Possible hazard</b>	<b>Who is at risk?</b>	<b>Measures in place to reduce risk of injury</b>
Cuts, abrasions,	Children and adults	<p>Instruction on safe cutting procedures by Forest School Leader; supporting adults briefed before activity.</p> <p>Safety 'tool talk' is carried out each time the tool is used in a session.</p> <p>Appropriate staff-child ratio (as per policy)</p> <p>Adult always removes and replaces any safety cover/guard.</p> <p>Appropriate clothing worn, including glove for non-cutting hand(helper hand).</p> <p>Cutting Equipment maintained in good working order – appropriate tool for task.</p> <p>Tools to remain in the designated work area and replaced in tool storage area when not in use.(as per tool talk).</p> <p>FS leader ensures safe proximity of other children entering the 'work area'.</p> <p>FS leader holds a current outdoor first aid certificate, and first aid kit is easily accessible.</p> <p>Equipment counted in at end of the session, and stored safely.</p>
<b>Hammers and nails</b> Hit fingers with hammer Children get hit by moving tools Sharp nails cause injury	Children and adults	<p>Train children to tap lightly to fix nail in place and then move hand away when they hit harder. Start with nails fixed into a wooden log, to support development of this skill.</p> <p>FS leader manages the working area and reinforces safe use.</p> <p>Protruding nails will be hammered down. Children will not remove nails from work area.</p>

## How Forest School supports wellbeing, learning and meets the needs of all involved at Worsbrough Common Primary School.



At Worsbrough Common Primary School we provide a wide variety of Forest School and outdoor learning opportunities at our Forest School site. These range from one off, half termly class sessions, blocks of weekly class sessions, and more long term small group or individual sessions.

Whilst these sessions may vary considerably the experiences aim to meet the learning and development needs of individuals in different ways and at different levels.

Forest School takes a holistic approach seeking to simultaneously address all aspects of development including; social, intellectual, linguistic, physical, emotional, spiritual and creative. In planning activities, sessions and Forest School programmes the aim is to include aspects to support all of these areas of

development. Sometimes these elements may be isolated and very obvious but in general they overlap and may appear to be incidental.

The area used, automatically lends itself to physical development, e.g. in negotiating space, slopes, obstacles etc. The activities have an element that supports fine motor control, e.g. tying knots, making clay models, collecting natural resources. The sessions support intellectual development by providing opportunities to build on children's preferred schemas, making links to what they have done previously, indoors and outdoors. There are opportunities to comment, ask and answer questions and engage in sustained shared thinking as children explore their ideas and put skills and knowledge into practice. All aspects of language development are intrinsic in the opportunities provided, giving children opportunities to develop critical and creative thinking, follow instructions, and develop ways of expressing themselves. It is important to me to offer opportunities for all children to be able to express themselves in a variety of ways, and my observations and knowledge of the children enable me to support individuals to do this.

The activities provided include elements where children will be encouraged to make relationships, there are elements of group work at varying levels so that children are able to interact and participate at different levels. There are reflection activities that enable children to express their feelings, either verbally or with the use of props. The atmosphere and ethos is very positive, valuing everyone's contributions building confidence in children to offer ideas etc. Children are included in the discussions about safety rules and boundaries, and are encouraged to understand the reasons for them, and sometimes question them. This has shown to be a positive thing as children have been able to regulate their own behaviours and remind peers of safety aspects in a non-confrontational manner. This supports spiritual growth, the area of the woods itself also offers a dimension to spiritual development, on the whole children appear to have a sense of awe when they enter the woods. Those working daily with the children often relate how much calmer they are than inside and how they demonstrate behaviours such as collaboration, supporting friends etc. more freely and intensely than in classroom activities.

Activities such as den building, support children in problem solving, they have to decide on where to site their den, think about what considerations they need to take into account for their site, they then have to use the resources they have, as a team, to create their den to some given criteria. Children can then be given the opportunity to 'show off' their den, explaining their choices and decisions and reflecting on what they might do differently, children are encouraged to look for the positives and identify some aspects that given more time they may do next.

All sessions have incorporated risk taking, social and emotional development and the building of self-confidence. The sessions, programmes and activities have met the learning and development needs of individuals in different ways and at different levels.

Forest School is based on the process of learning than on the content. Children are encouraged to direct their own learning through a gradual process moving from adult led to learner led activities. This is particularly so during blocks of Forest School but can also be seen in one of outdoor learning sessions. This process of transition is variable, for some learners it can be almost immediate, or over a few sessions, for some it can take a lot longer, but the nature of Forest School is that it supports learners to do this at their pace by sensitive interactions based on observations of children's learning and behaviour.

This process of transition can be broken into three stages.

- ***Acclimatisation and Discovery***

At this stage learners become familiar with the site, the leader, and the various routines. Our sessions have a similar structure; the beginning starts with the safety aspects, building on these

so children are able to express the safety rules and the reasons behind them, in effect being involved in risk awareness etc. Planned activities involve opportunities to explore the area at their own pace and taking risks at various levels depending on their confidence etc. This planning may involve making resources available to invite children to explore in a variety of ways, rather than a specific activity. Sessions are planned with this similar structure to build confidence and to allow children to build on previous sessions. Some children have been observed in the initial sessions to remain close to the edge of the woods on flatter, more open ground, and later on the free exploration sees them taking more risks and venturing further into the woods. The activities are such that they are within their ability to achieve, they build on things they have done in previous weeks and do not have set outcomes, this enables children to achieve at whatever level and thus build their confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to challenge themselves and take risks. The delivery of activities is such that children are supported to feel safe physically, emotionally and mentally – they are encouraged, praised, listened to. Building relationships between adults and children and between children, trust is fundamental. Language and interactions are positive, children begin to be able to trust these positive responses and their confidence develops further, supporting them to contribute, stretching their thinking and promoting a willingness to ‘have a go’. It must be stated that risk taking isn’t always about negotiating the trickiest of terrain or climbing the highest tree, for some children it is in taking the step to offer a contribution to a discussion or a question or even to just try something new or different. A lot of this stage involves modelling or adult led activities.

- ***Scaffolding and Modelling***

Regular contact with the natural world along with planned experiences children begin to recognise elements of the environment and more specifically changes. This encourages their observation skills, questioning and commenting. By observing what interests children activities are planned and questioning is used to develop meaningful learning experiences. Some of this involves planning next steps and follow up activities that build on what has been seen in the previous activities, but also the flexibility of the activities enables reflection in practice to redirect activities to follow the children’s lead, enabling an individual child’s needs/interests to be followed as well as redirecting the whole group along a child led route. These observations make learning more meaningful for children, following children’s interests makes them more motivated and receptive to learning, providing opportunities to introduce learning new skills, knowledge and ideas. This provides the appropriate environment for scaffolding and modelling learning including risk taking.

- ***Consolidation and Independence***

Children at this stage have confidence to undertake their own projects and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to do this independently. As children feel confident to take risks and try new things and lead their own learning, sensitive interactions and observations need to be in place. Aspects from previous stages e.g. Scaffolding new skills, can take learning even further. Children may be confident to lead their own learning, but this learning could bring with it apprehension or a drop in confidence specific to what they are doing, this doesn’t mean they have lost confidence, it means they are pushing their limits and learning, Forest School supports them to do this. Previous stages and continuing input will support children in being confident to

ask for help when needed, to build on previous learning, make links to things they already know.

Forest School supports individual learners at their level of ability and need. Sessions are delivered in a way that promotes the development of self-confidence and self-esteem supporting wellbeing within this atmosphere of positivity and nurturing. The activities and my input, questioning, commenting and the resources and experiences offered support children at all stages. Children will not all be at the same stage and the nature of Forest School readily supports this.

The benefits on learning, risk taking and dispositions to learning are very obvious in Forest School sessions, in addition to the three stages above, there is a fourth stage.

- ***Transference***

The nature of holistic development and the experiences offered within Forest School enhance and develop children's learning dispositions (supporting learners to learn). The growth in confidence with the development of their learning dispositions is transferable to other aspects of their learning and life in general. It supports their problem solving, approach to tasks, linking ideas, confidence to have a go, communication and social skills all of which are influential to their learning within the classroom. Continued enjoyment of playing outdoors can spread to family life too.

**In summary Forest School supports learning and development by;**

- Giving children choices in activities,
- Observing children to plan next steps
- Introducing relevant, meaningful skills, knowledge and resources based on interests and needs
- Activities are achievable, setting children up to achieve
- The process rather than the product is important
- Open ended tasks are used, there is no right or wrong way of doing something, children's contributions and achievements are celebrated. ( health and safety procedures are the exception)

## Forest School programmes at Worsbrough Common Primary School.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

During the school year classes will take part in forest school programmes on a rota basis, when they are not taking part in weekly sessions they will be offered an half termly outdoor learning session following the forest school ethos.

Where appropriate the class theme/story of the week is used as a starting point for planning specific activities and resources for the session. At other times the focus will be more nature based e.g. focussing on the changes in the environment, weather etc.

There are always opportunities for class teachers and support staff to identify specific areas to target learning and observations. On these occasions the Forest School leader will identify opportunities within the sessions where these can be supported.

It will be through sensitive questioning, commenting, interventions from the Forest School leader and the class staff, and their knowledge of their children that gaps in individual learning or evidence gathering can be filled.

The EYFS is strongly supported in the context of Forest School (with very few exceptions in our setting e.g. toileting/eating/ict) it's ethos, environment, available resources and interactions provide opportunities for class staff to make observations or further learning within both Prime areas and Specific areas. The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Forest School offers massive opportunities to identify examples of learning and to collect evidence reflecting the Characteristics of Effective Learning for all children.

### **Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2**

During the school year classes, from year 1 to year 6 will take part in forest school programmes on a rota basis, when they are not taking part in weekly sessions classes will be offered an half termly outdoor learning session following the forest school ethos.

Where appropriate the class theme/story may be used as a starting point for planning specific activities and resources for the session. At other times the focus will be more nature based e.g. focussing on the changes in the environment, weather etc. The nature of Forest School and the environment will undoubtedly lend itself to aspects of the National Curriculum, particularly science outcomes. Throughout the year these outcomes may provide specific focus for the activities and resources offered and provided during sessions, however many of these aspects will be embedded and will be evident throughout with the main focus of the Forest School experience promoting confidence, motivation and wellbeing through play.

Where aspects of the National Curriculum are addressed during Forest School programmes the learning will enhance rather than replace the specific teaching done in class. It may provide hooks to learning, introduce or consolidate knowledge, language etc. and will build on previous learning.

During one off sessions, as well as blocks, BLP (Building Learning Power) will be evident through the activities and experiences offered. This will particularly promote development of the noticing, perseverance, collaboration and empathy.

### **Nurture Groups.**

Additional Forest School sessions are provided to support children who have been identified by class teachers or the nurture team, usually during pupil progress meetings. This can be in response to Thrive screenings and assessments, and as such will incorporate Thrive action planning to address individual needs. Thrive screening and assessments are being introduced to show the impact of such activities.

Forest School provision aims to encourage resilience, improved self-esteem, motivation, excitement and contentment through play opportunities. Growing confidence and the development of learning dispositions are transferable to other aspects of learning and life in general. It supports their problem solving, approach to tasks, linking ideas, confidence to have a go, communication and social skills all of which are influential to their learning within the classroom.

These small groups provide ideal opportunities to incorporate the use of tools.

## **NATIONAL CURRICULUM IN ENGLAND**

Science programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2 which can link into  
Forest School activities

### Year 1

#### Plants

- identify and name a variety of common wild and garden plants, including deciduous and evergreen trees
- identify and describe the basic structure of a variety of common flowering plants, including trees

#### Animals, including humans

- identify and name a variety of common animals including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals
- identify and name a variety of common animals that are carnivores, herbivores and omnivores
- describe and compare the structure of a variety of common animals (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, including pets)
- identify, name, draw and label the basic parts of the human body and say which part of the body is associated with each sense

#### Everyday materials

- distinguish between an object and the material from which it is made
- identify and name a variety of everyday materials, including wood, plastic, glass, metal, water, and rock
- describe the simple physical properties of a variety of everyday materials
- compare and group together a variety of everyday materials on the basis of their simple physical properties.

#### Seasonal changes

- observe changes across the four seasons
- observe and describe weather associated with the seasons and how day length varies.

## Year 2

### Living things and their habitats

- explore and compare the differences between things that are living, dead, and things that have never been alive
- identify that most living things live in habitats to which they are suited and describe how different habitats provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants, and how they depend on each other
- identify and name a variety of plants and animals in their habitats, including microhabitats
- describe how animals obtain their food from plants and other animals, using the idea of a simple food chain, and identify and name different sources of food.

### Plants

- observe and describe how seeds and bulbs grow into mature plants
- find out and describe how plants need water, light and a suitable temperature to grow and stay healthy.

### Animals, including humans

- notice that animals, including humans, have offspring which grow into adults
- find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival (water, food and air)
- describe the importance for humans of exercise, eating the right amounts of different types of food, and hygiene.

### Uses of everyday materials

- identify and compare the suitability of a variety of everyday materials, including wood, metal, plastic, glass, brick, rock, paper and cardboard for particular uses
- find out how the shapes of solid objects made from some materials can be changed by squashing, bending, twisting and stretching.

## Year 3

### Plants

- identify and describe the functions of different parts of flowering plants: roots, stem/trunk, leaves and flowers
- explore the requirements of plants for life and growth (air, light, water, nutrients from soil, and room to grow) and how they vary from plant to plant
- investigate the way in which water is transported within plants
- explore the part that flowers play in the life cycle of flowering plants, including pollination, seed formation and seed dispersal.

### Animals, including humans

- identify that animals, including humans, need the right types and amount of nutrition, and that they cannot make their own food; they get nutrition from what they eat
- identify that humans and some other animals have skeletons and muscles for support, protection and movement

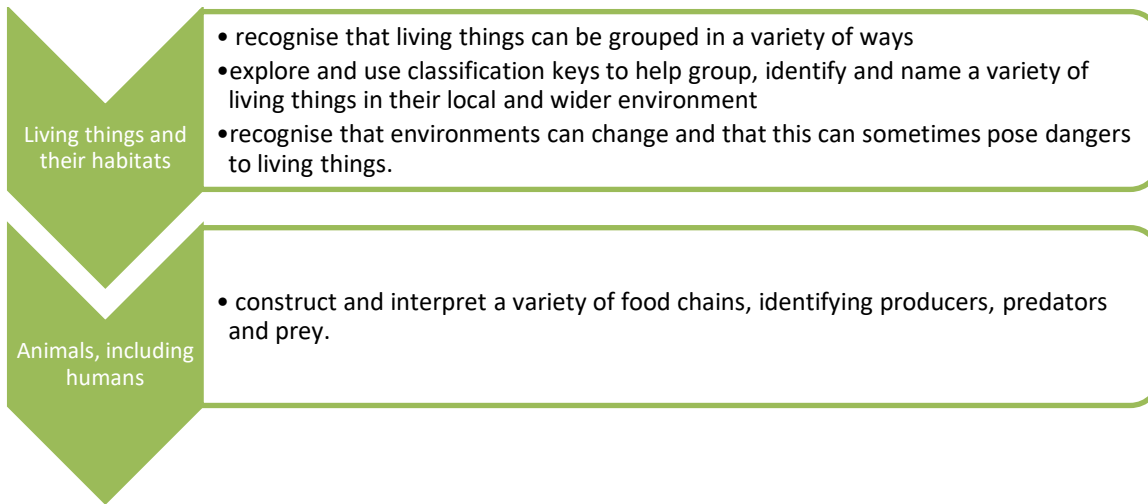
### Rocks

- compare and group together different kinds of rocks on the basis of their appearance and simple physical properties
- describe in simple terms how fossils are formed when things that have lived are trapped within rock
- recognise that soils are made from rocks and organic matter.

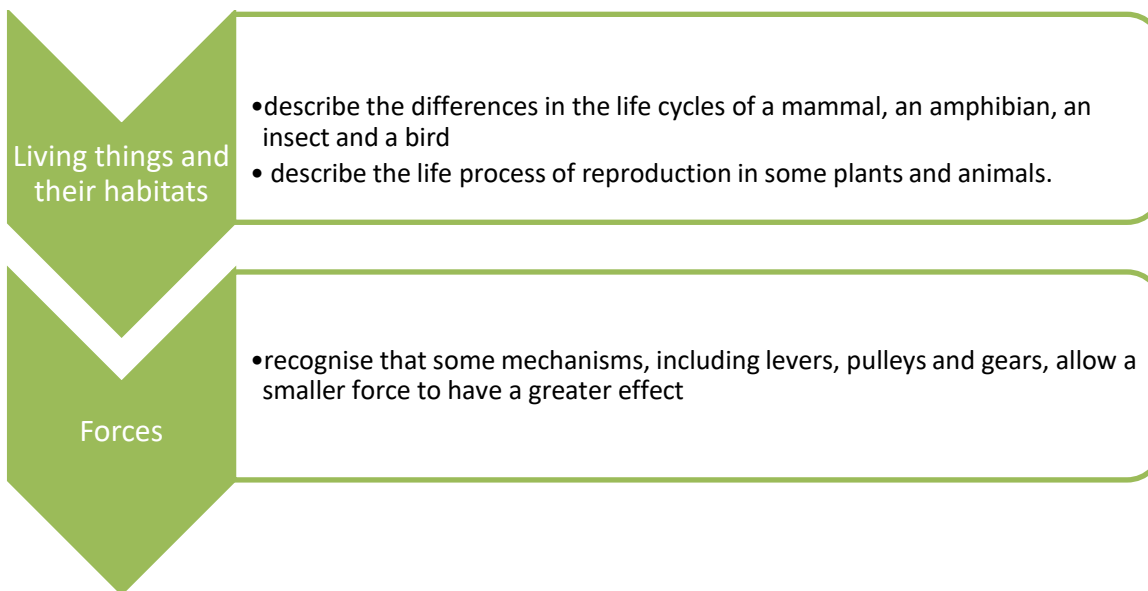
### Light

- recognise that they need light in order to see things and that dark is the absence of light
- notice that light is reflected from surfaces
- recognise that light from the sun can be dangerous and that there are ways to protect their eyes
- recognise that shadows are formed when the light from a light source is blocked by an opaque object
- find patterns in the way that the size of shadows change.

## Year 4



## Year 5



## Year 6

