



# Forest School Provision Handbook

<b>Approved by: C.Olver</b>	<b>Date: 7.6.24</b>
<b>Reviewed by: S.Perkins</b>	
<b>Next review due by: 7.6.25</b>	

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**Our Forest School Level 3 Leader is Stephanie Perkins**

<b>This handbook has been read by all supporting adults with a regular role</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Sign &amp; Date when read</b>



# Our Forest School Vision



At East Meon School, we believe Forest School is for all. We aim to give every child experiences and opportunities to achieve and aspire to be the very best version of themselves. Our Christian values of Hope, Love and Courage are reflected in our Forest School provision which inspires children to appreciate the natural world and develop their understanding of how we can look after the environment to sustain it for future generations. We provide opportunities for children to challenge themselves and develop their own risk management skills through physical play and adventurous skills such as fire lighting and tool work. In an increasingly busy school schedule, Forest School allows children time to lead their own learning and development, exploring physically and creatively in the natural environment. Forest School Provision is led by a level 3 Forest School Leader but supported by other adults who understand the benefits and ethos of Forest School.

## Forest School Principles



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

Principle 1: Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

Principle 2: Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

Principle 4: Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Principle 5. Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

Principle 6. Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

## Our Forest School Code of Conduct

<b><u>Be kind to the environment</u></b>	We respect the environment in which we are working and understand that it is home to other plants and animals. We try not to cause unnecessary damage to the environment
	We will return creatures to where we found them once we have finished observing them.
	We can play with sticks and stones and other natural materials that we find. We will not pull them from living plants or trees. We will be mindful of where they came from and, if appropriate, return them at the end of the session.
	We can choose to dig carefully by moving soil to look for insects and their habitats using fingers or small sticks found within the area. If children wish to dig further, they are encouraged to do so within the digging area and reminded that holes should not be too large that people can fall in them!
	All tools and equipment will be returned to their correct place at the end of a session and the site will be left tidy and ready for the next group.

<b>Be kind to others</b>	We will be respectful of the choices of others and listen when people ask us to stop or change an activity.
	We will not throw stones or sticks unless we have agreed a designated area and discussed how it can be done safely with an adult.
	Tool work requires close supervision. We will understand that adults can only support 2 children at a time. We can choose to do something else or watch while we wait.
	We keep people safe by following the guidance for specific activities

<b>Be kind to yourself</b>	Forest School gives us opportunities to challenge ourselves. We will remember that we may not always achieve something first try and that things do not have to be completed in one afternoon.
	Take time to enjoy the environment and a moment of calm in your busy day.
	We stay safe by following the guidance for specific activities
	Do not put your fingers in your mouth and nose during sessions.
	We will not eat anything from the natural environment unless it is part of a designated activity with an adult.
	We will always wash our hands after Forest School

<b>Listen</b>	Adults will be clear about boundaries and expectations. Listen and take note of signals you need to be aware of.
	Listen to each other and respect the viewpoints of others

<b>The log circle</b>	This is our special place. We will always be calm here.
	You may <b>not</b> run through (regardless of whether a fire is lit or not) If you wish to move to a new stool you must step out of the circle and walk around the outside of the log circle.

<b>Welfare</b>	We will go to the toilet before we head out to Forest School. If we need the toilet, we will use the Treehouse toilet.
	We will wear appropriate clothing for the session/weather. Long sleeves and trousers at all times. Wellies and waterproofs on wet days.

## Supporting Adult Additional Information

Welcome to East Meon and thank you for giving up your valuable time to help our children!

### Forest School

Forest School is different to traditional schooling. We are encouraging the children to explore and play within the natural environment. It is a child-led approach to learning so children are not expected to complete any specific tasks within the session, although they may wish to try out crafts and activities modelled by the adults. Children are allowed to engage in risky play such as stick fighting, tree climbing and risk benefit analysis for these are detailed further within the handbook. Rather than telling children they cannot do something, we encourage a discussion around why they want to, the benefits they will get from the activity, identifying any risks and discussing how to mitigate them.

Please take your lead from Mrs Perkins, who is our Qualified Forest School Leader. Mostly, you will be asked to support the children in their child-led play. This might take the form of simply supervising, supporting them in negotiating with each other or assessing the best and safest way to achieve their aims.

If you are asked to stay by the fire, this is your sole job and it must not be left unattended.

You must not support children with tool work unless given express permission by Mrs Perkins, who will ensure you have been shown the advised ways to safely teach these skills.

Please ensure you come suitably dressed as detailed in the Code of Conduct. All of the code of conduct applies to adults as well as children.

### Safeguarding

- Our Designated Safeguarding Leads are Miss Olver and Mrs Perkins.
- Forest School is a relaxed situation and, you may find that children share information about their lives with you that you feel concerned about.
- Remember: never promise a child that you can keep information shared as a secret, explain that you will need to share that information with a teacher.
- Always speak immediately after the session with either Mrs Perkins or Miss Olver about any concerns.
- Keep yourself safe too! Make sure you are always in sight of a school adult.
- Photos can be taken on the school ipad and these will be shared on the school website. You must **NOT** use your personal mobile during Forest School Sessions.

## Policy & Procedure Statements

### **SAFEGUARDING**

At Forest School, our standard school Safeguarding Policy will be followed and can be accessed via this link

<https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/east-meon-ce-primary-school/UploadedDocument/acf053c9-a63c-46ce-9bee-d2a52c8db8cb/ems-safeguarding-policy-2023.pdf>

This includes our Prevent duty.

We also follow our standard school Child Protection Policy which can be found

<https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/east-meon-ce-primary-school/UploadedDocument/31afc803-4c87-4d93-a5f8-65db5f257e44/ems-child-protection-policy-2023.pdf>

In addition, visiting parent helpers who have not been directed to this policy previously will be given a condensed version with key information to read prior to the session.

**Staffing** – Forest School follows the Hampshire County Council guidelines for adult to child ratios when sessions are held outside the school grounds. . The ratios for Forest School are:

- under 5 years old 1:6
- under 8 years old 1:8

There must always be 1 adult by the fire when it is lit; a fire should never be unsupervised. Therefore, an additional adult will always be required when a fire is lit or when tools are in use.

Additional adults may be support staff, teachers or parent helpers. Any non-school adults will be DBS checked. All visitors will be expected to sign in at the school office prior to joining the forest school session. They will be given a code of conduct in advance of the session where possible and the Forest School Leader will outline key expectations or responsibilities at the start of each session. Any visitors who are not DBS checked will not be left unsupervised with the children.

All additional adults will be directed to read the code of conduct, which outlines key expectations and procedures. All regular supporting adults will be directed to read this handbook.

The Forest School leader is responsible for activities and ensuring that all adults have understood their responsibilities and expectations.

**LOST/MISSING CHILD** – Our Forest School provision takes place within the main school site which is secured during school hours. Children will be supervised at all times. Should a child be missing or lost, we will check the pond area first and then the rest of the grounds.

**DATA PROTECTION** – At Forest school, the standard school data protection Policy applies.

<https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/east-meon-ce-primary-school/UploadedDocument/a2b61e13-5a1a-4aee-a57a-b9b74cbb1cf6/data-protection-policy-april-2021.pdf>

**Social Media** – Forest School will use one specific ipad to capture the learning and activities undertaken. All children at East Meon school have been asked to complete consent forms for social media and the Forest School Leader will have a list of children with permissions for social media.

## EQUALITY

At Forest School, we follow the standard school equalities policy which can be accessed through the following link.

<https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/east-meon-ce-primary-school/UploadedDocument/8941e33429c7448f85885700112e12ce/equalities-policy.pdf>

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

At Forest School, we follow the standard school Health and Safety policy which can be accessed through the following link.

<https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/east-meon-ce-primary-school/UploadedDocument/1af4c8df-0dfb-4e5c-bfbf-8cca82e3afae/health-and-safety-policy.pdf>

In addition to this, we recognise that Forest School offers a range of experiences and scenarios that do not occur during 'normal' lessons. Specific procedures for risky activities are outlined alongside the risk benefits assessments in section 4. Below we have outlined key differences or additions to the standard school Health and safety policy.

**First Aid/Accident & Emergency** – Forest School leader is first aid trained and will be present in all sessions. A first aid kit will be kept at our base camp to deal with incidents. Where necessary, further support can be sought from the school office as we are an onsite provision.

**Insurances** - Public Liability Insurance is provided fully by Hampshire County Council.

**Cooking including food hygiene** – We may engage in cooking activities as part of our Forest School Provision. Food hygiene expectations will be met as outlined in the Risk Benefit analysis and procedures on p.17

**COSHH** – We have no plans to use any hazardous substances but should this change, the use of them will be carried out under advice and guidance from the COSHH trained Caretaker, Mr Steve Grier.

**Extreme Weather** – Our code of conduct reflects the expectations of children to have suitable clothing for the relevant weather conditions.

**CampFire** – A fire may be lit on occasions when it is deemed beneficial to the activities undertaken or well being of the children. When lit, the fire will be constantly supervised by an adult and children will have been reminded of the rules and behaviour expectations. The risk benefit analysis and procedures on p.12 details the protocols for fire in Forest School.

**Manual Handling** – It is possible that some occasions may require heavy equipment such as logs to be lifted. These will be lifted safely by adults and where necessary support from the Caretaker (who has completed Moving and handling training) will be sought. Adults will be reminded to never lift a child out of a tree (if they got up independently, they will be able to get down with support)

**Risk Management** – The Forest School Leader will assess risks and considered the relevant procedures and provisions required to mitigate them. These are found later in this handbook. On occasion, it may be necessary for the Forest School Leader to make dynamic risk assessments about the activities or situations that arise within a session. These will then be written up as a formal risk benefit analysis after the session and added to the relevant section of the handbook.

**Tools** - Forest School requires some use of tools. These will only be used with supervision from the Forest School Leader (No other adults may supervise tool work unless training has been completed with the Forest School leader or a relevant Forest school qualification). Details of risk benefit analysis and procedures around the use of tools can be found in this handbook on p.15

**Welfare** – The welfare of the children is paramount. Appropriate clothing requirements will be shared with parents prior to the children’s sessions to ensure that children are comfortable being outside for the session. All children have water bottles in school and these will be brought out to ‘basecamp’ for their sessions.

Children will be able to use the toilet located in the treehouse external building during sessions.

## BEHAVIOUR

At Forest School, we follow the standard school behaviour policy which can be accessed through the following link.

<https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/east-meon-ce-primary-school/UploadedDocument/f6ba0182-df2d-43be-b98a-0a8b332b159d/behaviour-policy.pdf>

However, we realise that Forest School is a very different provision to normal lessons. It will not be used as a reward, or removed as a sanction (except where dangerous behaviour has occurred within a Forest School session). Children may be offered additional sessions where it is considered to be of benefit to their development of other skills such as emotional regulation, resilience etc.

Positive behaviour and learning are encouraged through the development of relationships and trust. Adults model positive behaviour and create an atmosphere where everybody is treated as equals. Positive praise is used widely with a focus on the process to build children’s self-esteem and own sense of achievement. We will share children’s achievements (with the child’s permission) with the rest of the group to celebrate their successes.

Children are encouraged to be involved in dynamic risk assessments and discuss the impact of behaviours and how they can be carried out safely rather than simply given a straight ‘no’. However, there will be consistent boundaries which give the children security and an understanding of what is expected. Rules and boundaries are reinforced at the beginning of each session.

Children may be removed from a session if they present as a danger to themselves or others during a session and do not follow clear instructions from an adult to improve their behaviour choices.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Ecological impact of our activities has been considered

### Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)

NB: This is a record of the impacts your activities will have **prior to putting in any control measures**.

Area of woodland affected	Ground layer: fungi & small plants	Field layer: nettles and bramble height	Shrub layer: coppice species and small trees	Canopy Layer: tall trees	Standing dead wood	Invertebrates: spiders, snails, insects	Animals: mammals, amphibians & reptiles	Nesting birds	Soil	Water
<b>Activities having an impact</b>										
<b>Fire Lighting</b>	change chemical makeup, damage high	burning damage medium	smoke damage and sparks damage medium	smoke damage medium	smoke damage medium	burning, change to soil chemical makeup high	smoke inhalation medium	smoke high	change to chemical makeup high	n/a
<b>Collecting Natural Materials</b>	damage, trampling high	damage medium	damage medium	n/a	damage medium	trampling high	disturbance medium	disturbance medium	compaction disturbance high	n/a
<b>Den Building</b>	Trampling, compaction, erosion High	Denudation High	Damage and removal of branches High	n/a	n/a	Disturbance in local area High	Disturbance in local area High	Disturbance in local area Medium	Compaction & erosion High	n/a
<b>Bladed Tools/Crafting</b>	trampling, compaction high	n/a	over harvesting high	damaged by tools medium	n/a	n/a	n/a	disturbance when harvesting medium	trampling high	n/a
<b>Cooking &amp; Eating</b>	contamination medium	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	contamination with food waste medium	contamination with food waste medium	disturbance, contamination with food waste medium	contamination with food waste medium	n/a
<b>Bug hunting</b>	Trampling, compaction, erosion Medium	Denudation Medium	Minor damage Low	n/a	N/A	Disturbance High	Disturbance Medium	Disturbance Low	Compaction & erosion Medium	n/a
<b>All Weather play (Rain)</b>	trampling damage high	trampling medium	n/a	n/a	n/a	trampling, change to water drainage high	disturbance, change to water/soil composition medium	n/a	over watered to change composition high	n/a
<b>Pond Dipping</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	disturbance high	disturbance high	n/a	n/a	disturbance, contamination high
<b>Tree Climbing</b>	Trampling Medium	Minor Damage Low	Damage High	Damage Low	Damage High	Disturbance Trampling High	Disturbance Low	Disturbance High	Compaction Low	N/A

A 3 year woodland management plan has been developed and this can be found in the appendix.

It details our plans to ensure our site is closely monitored to assess the impact of our activities. It also highlights how we aim to be sustainable and to develop the biodiversity of the site.

We have identified opportunities to increase biodiversity through planting new trees and creating a wildflower area over the next few years.

## SITE RISK ASSESSMENT

### Risk assessment and risk management record

### Forest School Site

### Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service

**Establishment** East Meon Primary School

**Leader** Stephanie Perkins

**Location** East Meon Primary School

**Group size** tbc

**Ratio** 1:8 with additional adults for tool work/fires (see activity risk benefit analysis)

**Last updated:** March 2024

Identifying the hazards – assessing the risk	Control measures – reducing the risk
<p><b>Site and its environment</b></p> <p><b>risk rating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uneven ground – slips/trips/falls M</li> <li>Excessive mud – slips/falls M</li> <li>Rubbish, debris, animal faeces that may pose a risk for example in digging area M</li> <li>Wood/branches on ground – trips/falls M</li> <li>pond areas – drowning M</li> </ul>	<p><b>outcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children encouraged to be aware of risks and adjust behaviours accordingly L</li> <li>Suitable clothing worn &amp; areas cordoned off if mud becomes too excessive L</li> <li>Forest School Leader to complete site walk prior to each session to check for rubbish/faeces and to move any excessive trip hazards to a safer location. L</li> <li>Pond area is fenced and locked unless being used for activity – see specific Risk benefit card</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activities</b></p> <p>Separate activity risk benefit analysis has been completed details can be found on the risk benefit analysis &amp; procedure cards</p> <p><b>Group</b></p> <p>Groups will vary in age from 4years to 11years. Children are well known to Forest School Lead as we are a small school L</p> <p>Visitors or additional helpers unsure of how to behave/ support children M</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow procedures indicated on activity cards L</li> </ul> <p>Any children with significant behaviour or access needs will have a separate risk assessment and plan completed.</p> <p>Clear guidance given in terms of expectations, procedures for risky activities and safeguarding L</p>

Ongoing risk assessment	Examples
<p><b>1 Apply the control measures</b></p> <p><b>2 Monitor how effective they are</b></p> <p><b>3 Change, adapt, revise as required</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monitor the weather</li> <li>monitor conditions underfoot</li> <li>monitor behaviour</li> <li>assess group risk awareness in different environments</li> <li>monitor the response of your supporting adults</li> </ul>
<p><b>Completed:</b> Date 20.10.20</p> <p><b>Signed:</b> Group leader Stephanie Perkins</p>	<p>Head of establishment or EVC: Cat Olver</p>

## Risk Benefit Assessments for Forest School Activities

<b>Location::</b>	East Meon School Forest School Area	<b>Date:</b>	22.02.2024
<b>Assessor:</b>	Stephanie Perkins	<b>Review date:</b>	December 24

ACTIVITY	How will young people BENEFIT from this activity?	Possible hazards	Who is at risk?	PRECAUTIONS in place to reduce the risk of injury	Overall risk RATING: L/M/H
FIRE LIGHTING -building fires -cooking on fires - Fire space	* sense of community * warmth/food * science knowledge/ fire triangle * sense of achievement * spiritual/relaxation * communication * perseverance & resilience	x burns/scalds x smoke inhalation x irresponsible use of new skills x fire spreading	Young people & adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated space &amp; adult supervision for fire</li> <li>Clear boundaries &amp; expectations &amp; explanation of risks (no moving through fire circle, kneeling not crouching etc)</li> <li>Safe fire lighting clearly modelled</li> <li>First aid equipment, Fire bucket &amp; water &amp; fire blanket &amp; trained adult</li> <li>Protective glove for handling hot equipment</li> <li>Individual plans/ risk assessments for specific pupils where needed.</li> </ul>	Low
COLLECTING NATURAL MATERIALS	* Creativity * Exploration of the environment * Teamwork * Communication & Language skills * Imagination	x irritable plants (nettles etc) x toxic substances (fungi, berries etc) x splinters/prickles	Young people & adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear boundaries &amp; expectations &amp; explanation of risks – no fingers in mouth</li> <li>First aid equipment &amp; trained adult</li> <li>Hand washing station</li> </ul>	Low
DEN BUILDING	* sense of community * warmth/shelter * DT skills – knot tying, structural approaches * sense of achievement * communication * teamwork * imaginative play * gross motor skills * perseverance/resilience	x bumps/bruises from being hit or wood falling on us x splinters/prickles x slips, trips & falls	Young people & adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated space for den building</li> <li>Clear boundaries &amp; expectations &amp; discussion around how we check it's safe/ how we carry large pieces of wood etc</li> <li>First aid equipment &amp; trained adult</li> <li>Individual plans/ risk assessments for specific pupils where needed.</li> </ul>	Low
BLADED TOOLS - saw - axe - knife - drill	* new practical skills * sense of achievement * communication * perseverance/resilience * begin to self risk assess * fine motor skills * muscle development	x cuts/slices x slips, trips & falls x misuse by children on purpose	Young people & adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated space &amp; 1:1 adult supervision for all tool work</li> <li>Tools kept in locked toolbox when not in use</li> <li>Tools maintained well so they are clean and fit for purpose</li> <li>Clear boundaries &amp; expectations &amp; explanation of risks</li> <li>Children introduced to 'blood bubbles' (working in a safe space) and always sheathing tools when not using them.</li> <li>First aid equipment &amp; trained adult</li> <li>Individual plans/ risk assessments for specific pupils where needed.</li> </ul>	Low
TREE CLIMBING	* muscle development * coordination & balance * sense of achievement * begin to self risk assess	x falls, slips x scrapes & grazes x branches breaking	children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>only climb designated trees</li> <li>no higher than adult shoulder height</li> <li>child only climbs as high as they are comfortable</li> <li>first aid kit &amp; first aider present</li> <li>adult present when climbing</li> </ul>	L

ACTIVITY	How will young people BENEFIT from this activity?	Possible hazards	Who is at risk?	PRECAUTIONS in place to reduce the risk of injury	Overall risk RATING: L/M/H
COOKING EATING HOT DRINKS KELLY KETTLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* sense of community</li> <li>* warmth/food</li> <li>* try new things</li> <li>* sense of achievement</li> <li>* communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x burns/scalds</li> <li>x allergic reactions</li> <li>x cuts from knives/slicing</li> <li>x contamination</li> </ul>	Young people & adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult supervision</li> <li>• Basic food hygiene standards observed</li> <li>• First aid equipment, Fire bucket &amp; water &amp; fire blanket &amp; trained adult</li> <li>• Protective glove for handling hot equipment</li> <li>• Individual plans/ risk assessments for specific pupils where needed.</li> </ul>	Low
BUG HUNTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Knowledge of the natural world &amp; habitats/biodiversity</li> <li>* Exploration of the environment</li> <li>* Teamwork/shared interest</li> <li>* Communication &amp; Language skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x irritable plants (nettles etc)</li> <li>x toxic substances (fungi, berries etc)</li> <li>x splinters/prickles</li> <li>x bites/stings</li> </ul>	Young people & adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear boundaries &amp; expectations &amp; explanation of risks – no fingers in mouth</li> <li>• First aid equipment &amp; trained adult</li> <li>• Hand washing station</li> <li>• Appropriate bug observation equipment available (brushes, containers, id guides)</li> </ul>	Low
ALL WEATHER RAIN/WIND/SNOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Sensory stimulation (rain on canvas, mud between fingers etc)</li> <li>* Exploration of the environment</li> <li>* perseverance/resilience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x cold</li> <li>x wet clothes/hair etc</li> <li>x slips, trips &amp; falls</li> </ul>	Young people & adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear boundaries &amp; expectations &amp; explanation of risks – how should we move around if it's wetter/muddier than usual</li> <li>• First aid equipment &amp; trained adult</li> <li>• Hand washing station</li> <li>• Appropriate clothing worn – all body waterproofs, wellies</li> <li>• Change of clothes for after session</li> <li>• Consider lighting fire if cold &amp; ensure shelter provided.</li> </ul>	Low
POND DIPPING: Slippery pond decking or edges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploration of different habitat</li> <li>• develop knowledge of lifecycles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Slips, trips and falls.</li> <li>x Cuts, grazes and abrasions.</li> <li>x Drowning.</li> <li>x Infections</li> </ul>	Young people; adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepest area is centre of pond – keep to edges.</li> <li>• Perimeter kept clear of dense or high foliage so pond edges are clearly defined and can be seen / avoided.</li> <li>• Dipping area kept clear of trip hazards (e.g. nets, trays)</li> <li>• Pond use reviewed at the start of each session.</li> <li>• Hands out of mouths and washed afterwards</li> <li>• open wounds covered</li> </ul>	Low
ROPES SWINGS SLACKLINES Provisionally risk assessed as not initially available. To be reviewed & procedures card created once these become an available option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gross motor skills</li> <li>• balance &amp; coordination</li> <li>• teamwork</li> <li>• communication &amp; language skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Slips, trips and falls.</li> <li>x Cuts, grazes and abrasions.</li> </ul>	Young people; adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No rope equipment to be used unless checked by an adult</li> <li>• Ropes to be checked regularly for damage</li> <li>• First aid equipment &amp; trained adult</li> <li>• Children discussed how to play safely and expectations clear.</li> </ul>	Low

<b>FIRE LIGHTING</b> (Fire space, building fires, cooking on fires)	
<b>RISKS</b>	<b>BENEFITS</b>
x burns/scalds x smoke inhalation x irresponsible use of new skills x fire spreading	* sense of community * warmth/food * science knowledge/ fire triangle * sense of achievement * spiritual/relaxation * communication * perseverance & resilience
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We will only light a fire when we have a purpose for it. The Forest School leader will take control of the fire lighting and all accompanying adults will be briefed before we start.</li> <li>● A lit fire will not be left unattended by an adult at any point.</li> <li>● A fire may not be lit until it has been confirmed to all that our fire safety equipment is in place. We <b>MUST</b> have water in a fire bucket, a fire blanket and protective gloves for handling hot equipment and our first aid kit.</li> <li>● Open fires will be built within a set space in the centre of our log circle. No one may approach the fire unless invited to by an adult.</li> <li>● Clear expectations &amp; explanation of risks will be given to the group before the fire is lit. This includes no moving through the fire/log circle, kneeling not crouching when tending the fire.</li> <li>● Safe fire lighting will be clearly modelled by the Forest School Lead.</li> <li>● Where necessary, individual plans/ risk assessments for specific pupils where needed.</li> </ul>	

<b>COLLECTING NATURAL MATERIALS</b>	
<b>RISKS</b>	<b>BENEFITS</b>
<p>x irritable plants (nettles etc)</p> <p>x toxic substances (funghi, berries etc)</p> <p>x splinters/prickles</p>	<p>* Creativity</p> <p>* Exploration of the environment</p> <p>* Teamwork</p> <p>* Communication &amp; Language skills</p> <p>* Imagination</p>
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children will be regularly reminded of the need to keep hands away from mouths and eyes when handling natural materials and not to ingest anything unless it is part of a designated activity such as blackberry picking.</li> <li>• Stones may be picked up and moved. Stones may not be thrown. Children might like to make patterns and pictures with them or use them in their play.</li> <li>• Children can carry and play with sticks but are encouraged to think about the risks and how to mitigate them such as non-contact on bodies, considering the size of the sticks they are using etc..</li> <li>• Sticks and stones must not be thrown, unless in an organised activity where risks have been assessed and mitigated such as arranging a determined throwing area and rules to keep everyone safe.</li> <li>• Sticks or materials must not be pulled from living trees and plants.</li> <li>• Children will always wash their hands before eating snacks and after the session.</li> <li>• Individual plans/ risk assessments for specific pupils where needed.</li> </ul>	

<b>DEN BUILDING</b>	
<b>RISKS</b>	<b>BENEFITS</b>
<p>x bumps/bruises from being hit or wood falling on us</p> <p>x splinters/prickles</p> <p>x slips, trips &amp; falls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* sense of community</li> <li>* warmth/shelter</li> <li>* DT skills – knot tying, structural approaches</li> <li>* sense of achievement</li> <li>* communication</li> <li>* teamwork</li> <li>* imaginative play</li> <li>* gross motor skills</li> <li>* perseverance/resilience</li> </ul>
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A specific area will be used for den building</li> <li>• Children will be reminded of the need to be aware of others around them when moving logs and sticks</li> <li>• Large poles will be carried by at least 2 children</li> <li>• Only loose materials may be removed for den building. Children may not take branches off trees for this purpose. Trunks and branches can be used in situ as long as they are not being damaged.</li> <li>• Individual plans/ risk assessments for specific pupils where needed.</li> </ul>	



<b>BLADED TOOLS (saw, axe, knife, drill)</b>	
<b>RISKS</b>	<b>BENEFITS</b>
<p>x cuts/slices</p> <p>x slips, trips &amp; falls</p> <p>x misuse by children on purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* new practical skills</li> <li>* sense of achievement</li> <li>* communication</li> <li>* perseverance/resilience</li> <li>* begin to self-risk assess</li> <li>* fine motor skills</li> <li>* muscle development</li> </ul>
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tool use will be undertaken in a set area of the provision.</li> <li>• Tool use will supervised by the Forest School lead on a 1:1 or 1:2 basis. No other adults will be allowed to supervise tool use unless they have a forest school qualification or have been trained by the Forest School Lead and given permission to do so.</li> <li>• Tool use will be introduced with clear tool talks about the risks and correct procedures to mitigate them such as ‘blood bubbles’ (working in a safe space) and always sheathing tools when not using them. See next page for guidance on correct procedures</li> <li>• Tools will be kept in locked toolbox when not in use and cleaned at the end of sessions.</li> <li>• Tools will be maintained well so they are clean and fit for purpose</li> <li>• First aid equipment will be onsite &amp; a trained adult</li> <li>• Individual plans/ risk assessments for specific pupils where needed.</li> </ul>	

## CORRECT TOOL USE

All children must have received a tool talk prior to being allowed to use the tools and first aider & kit will be onsite.

TOOL	USES	PROCEDURES
Bow saw	Cutting wood cookies and wood for crafting on the saw horse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>operated with an adult to support</li> <li>using a saw horse to hold the wood and adult and child working opposite each other supporting the saw in a 'to me to you' fashion</li> <li>supporting hands the other side of the saw horse to guard them.</li> <li>saw safety cover reattached as soon as finished use.</li> </ul>
Pruning Saw	cutting small branches from the trees for pruning or craft work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>operated with an adult to supervise &amp; support</li> <li>saw safety cover reattached as soon as finished use &amp; return to toolbox</li> </ul>
Loppers	cutting small branches up to thumb thickness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>operated with an adult to support</li> <li>loppers returned to tool bag when not in use</li> </ul>
Secateurs	cutting small branches up to finger thickness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>operated with an adult to supervise and support if needed</li> <li>returned to tool bag when not in use</li> </ul>
Craft Knife	whittling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>operated with 1:1 adult supervision</li> <li>Children will have been shown how to hold the knife and work away from their bodies.</li> <li>Children will face away from their peers and have an understanding of blood bubbles.</li> <li>sheathed and returned to tool bag when not in use</li> </ul>
Hand drills	drilling holes in craft wood and wood cookies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>operated with 1:2 adult supervision</li> <li>returned to tool bag when not in use</li> <li>children are encouraged to use the support vice when drilling wood cookies.</li> </ul>



<b>COOKING &amp; EATING (Including hot drinks)</b>	
<b>RISKS</b>	<b>BENEFITS</b>
x burns/scalds x allergic reactions x cuts from knives/slicing x contamination	* sense of community * warmth/food * try new things * sense of achievement * communication
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All participants will wash their hands prior to handling food or eating.</li> <li>• Basic food hygiene standards will be followed with foods covered when not being cooked to avoid exposure or cross-contamination</li> <li>• Adult supervision will be in place at all times when cooking round the fire or using knives to prepare food.</li> <li>• First aid equipment will be by the log circle.</li> <li>• Protective glove for handling hot equipment such as pots and kettles.</li> <li>• Individual plans/ risk assessments for specific pupils where needed.</li> <li>• Allergies &amp; dietary requirements will be checked from the confirmation on the initial parent letter.</li> </ul>	



<b>BUG HUNTING</b>	
<b>RISKS</b>	<b>BENEFITS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x irritable plants (nettles etc)</li> <li>x toxic substances (funghi, berries etc)</li> <li>x splinters/prickles</li> <li>x bites/stings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Knowledge of the natural world &amp; habitats/biodiversity</li> <li>* Exploration of the environment</li> <li>* Teamwork/shared interest</li> <li>* Communication &amp; Language skills</li> </ul>
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reminders of our 3 main rules and discussion around being gentle, returning creatures to where they were found and logs etc to their original positions. Reminders not to put fingers in mouth while exploring.</li> <li>• First aid equipment available &amp; trained adult</li> <li>• Hand washing station set up</li> <li>• Appropriate bug observation equipment available (brushes, containers, id guides)</li> <li>• Individual plans/ risk assessments for specific pupils where needed.</li> </ul>	



<b>ALL WEATHER EXPLORATION</b>	
<b>RISKS</b>	<b>BENEFITS</b>
x cold x wet clothes/hair etc x slips, trips & falls	* Sensory stimulation (rain on canvas, mud between fingers etc) * Exploration of the environment * perseverance/resilience
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At beginning of the session we will discuss risks presented by the weather &amp; how to reduce them such as how should we move around if it's wetter/muddier than usual, what we can do if we're feeling cold etc.</li> <li>• First aid equipment &amp; trained adult on site</li> <li>• Hand washing station available at all times</li> <li>• Appropriate clothing worn – all body waterproofs, wellies (spares available if needed)</li> <li>• The shelter will be up on wet days to provide a dry area.</li> <li>• Suggested change of clothes brought in for after session on wet days</li> <li>• We will consider lighting a fire if cold to allow children to warm up.</li> <li>• If the weather is so bad that mitigations such as adequate clothing/dry areas/warm fire cannot safely be provided then the session will take place indoors within the lodge.</li> <li>• Individual plans/ risk assessments for specific pupils where needed.</li> </ul>	

<b>POND DIPPING</b>	
<b>RISKS</b>	<b>BENEFITS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Slips, trips and falls.</li> <li>x Cuts, grazes and abrasions.</li> <li>x Drowning.</li> <li>x Infections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● exploration of different habitat</li> <li>● develop knowledge of lifecycles</li> </ul>
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We will start the session with a discussion around the risks and how we keep safe. Keep our hands out of mouths and washed afterwards. Any open wounds on hands covered</li> <li>● An adult will supervise pond dipping at all times and only small groups at a time may dip due to the enclosed nature of our pond area restricting space.</li> <li>● The pond will be kept in good order. The perimeter kept clear of dense or high foliage so pond edges are clearly defined and can be seen / avoided.</li> <li>● Dipping area kept clear of trip hazards (e.g. nets, trays)</li> <li>● All creatures/water will be returned to the pond at the end of the sessions and tray/nets rinsed out.</li> </ul>	



<b>TREE CLIMBING</b>	
<b>RISKS</b>	<b>BENEFITS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Slips, trips and falls.</li> <li>x Cuts, grazes and abrasions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● exploration of different habitat</li> <li>● develop knowledge of lifecycles</li> </ul>
<b>PROCEDURES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children may only climb if an adult is free to 'spot' them</li> <li>● Only the designated climbing trees may be climbed. This is the willow in the copse for KS2 and the 'bent' apple tree for KS1</li> <li>● The ground cover should be checked for sharp objects and a visual check should be made for loose or rotten branches</li> <li>● Children can explore to their own limits or to a maximum height of 1.5m</li> </ul>	



## OUR COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

We have identified the following stakeholders who are likely to have an interest in the development and running of a Forest School Provision on our site, identified the nature of that interest and explained how we will communicate with them. Examples of these communications can be found in the appendices.

Stakeholder	Nature of interest (What they need to know?)	Communication means
Children	What to expect Expectations of them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory talk on 1<sup>st</sup> session</li> <li>• Code of conduct shared</li> <li>• Repetition of expectations at every session &amp; for specific activities/events</li> </ul>
Parents	What is Forest School? What children will need? (kit) What to expect? (mud etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents meeting to share overview/ethos</li> <li>• Parents letter before sessions commence with kit requirements</li> <li>• Updates shared on whole school newsletter to share developments and achievements</li> <li>• handbook available to read</li> </ul>
Staff/Forest School Helpers	What is Forest School? Expectations of them when out supporting sessions. Expectations in terms of kit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff meeting to share overview &amp; ethos</li> <li>• Code of conduct shared with those supporting sessions</li> <li>• Kit expectations shared within the meeting</li> <li>• Handbook shared with them</li> </ul>
Governors	What is Forest School?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share overview/ethos and development of provision with Governing Body at a meeting.</li> <li>• Invitation to visit sessions and observe once up &amp; running.</li> <li>• Handbook available to read</li> </ul>
Neighbours to the school/Villagers	Affected by noise/smoke (washing/windows open etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter to close neighbours and open letter on village facebook site to share which days/times Forest School will be running so they are aware of possibility of smoke &amp; explain the benefits to the children from these activities.</li> </ul>



## Appendices



### Three Year Woodland Management Plan

Our site is an established school grounds but in its infancy as a Forest School Provision. We are fortunate to have large grounds nestled within a rural community but much of this is open grass with minimal established trees. Our vision is to develop a portion of the site to provide a more woodland environment in which to run our Forest School provision.

#### Year 1

We will focus on development of our site as we develop areas to enable us to provide a good forest school provision with opportunities for digging, den building, fire, imaginative play, tool work. This includes creating boundaries to mark out our Forest School area using new tree saplings and deadwood hedges, and removing some old fences to repurpose areas for forest school.

<b>Factor affecting site</b>	<b>How will this affect the site?</b> (denudation, pollution, compaction...)	<b>How will you manage this?</b>  FSL – Forest School Lead C – Children OA – Other adults	<b>How will you monitor the effect of the management?</b>	<b>PHOTOS</b>
Camp Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Denudation of dead wood habitat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- dry out some of the cut trees from last year to split for firewood <b>FSL&amp;C</b></li> <li>- Importing firewood from off site if needed <b>FSL</b></li> <li>- Fire only when appropriate <b>FSL</b></li> <li>- Set area for the fire to minimise disruption to the ground layer <b>FSL</b></li> </ul>	Fixed point photography termly	
Tree planting	Increase number and species of trees. Up to 60 saplings (20 each of rowan, cherry and silver birch) will be planted along the edge of the field and around the proposed forest school area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- planted at grounds day in March 2024 <b>OA &amp;C</b></li> <li>- monitored and looked after, watered when needed etc <b>C &amp; FSL</b></li> </ul>	Fixed point photography yearly	Feb 2024 
Creation of dead hedges	Mark out boundaries while increasing biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- created on grounds day in March 2024 using existing off cuts from tree pruning <b>C&amp;FSL &amp;OA</b></li> </ul>	bughunting survey / bird watching survey with the children to monitor numbers/range of species evident. yearly in MAY	Mar 24 
Manage Apple trees	Damage from children climbing/playing near them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- prune to encourage fruit growth, <b>OA</b></li> <li>- One to be pruned to make branches accessible for</li> </ul>	Fixed point photography yearly	

		younger children to climb <b>OA</b> - check for pests/disease <b>FSL</b>		
Increased footfall in the area	more trampling and disruption of the area than previously.	Explore setting up some no-go areas to provide 'disruption free' habitats to encourage biodiversity eg..wild flower area <b>FSL &amp; C</b>	survey species found before establishment of habitats and after	
Activities/crafting	Could result in overharvesting of wood as we have minimal options available to us	Wood for crafting sought from other sources such as local arborists/tree surgeons. <b>FSL</b> Explore additional hazel stands to plant ready for future years. <b>FSL</b> (See other mitigations listed in 2.1)	Fixed point photography of key trees (eg our hazel stand) Yearly	Feb 2024 Hazel stand  Feb 2024 
Mud kitchen use	Risk of soil erosion as the mud kitchen is based on a sloped area	Explore options to create a retained to reduce risk of soil washing away onto the playground. <b>FSL &amp; Caretaker</b>	Fixed point photography yearly	

**How effective are these measures?** (Evaluation to influence next year's plans)

## Year 2

We will be continuing to develop our site and monitor the growth and development of our young trees. After running the provision for a year, we should be able to re-evaluate and assess the impact of our activities and consider what additional opportunities we can provide. In Year 2, I hope to explore offering some rope activities and so we will need to consider the impact of these on our established trees.

Factor affecting Woodland	How will this affect the woodland?  (denudation, pollution, compaction...)	How will you manage this?  FSL – Forest School Lead C – Children OA – Other adults	How will you monitor the effect of the management?	PHOTOS
Camp Fire	denudation of the dead wood	Continue to monitor the impact of the fire. <b>FSL</b>  Monitor availability of wood on the site for fire wood to assess whether wood needs to be bought in. <b>FSL</b>	Fixed point photography termly	
Growth of young trees	Our young saplings will be susceptible to damage from the games on the field and children.	Continue to monitor the young trees and check they are supported/protected as needed. <b>FSL &amp; C</b>  Consider adding additional saplings where needed	Fixed point photography yearly	
Creation of dead hedges	Dead hedges will have hopefully increased our biodiversity	Continue to add to the dead hedges where needed as other trees are pruned through the year. <b>FSL &amp; C</b>	Bughunt survey by children yearly in MAY	
Apple trees	Impact of children climbing	Monitor impact of climbing and adjust procedures if needed <b>FSL</b>	Fixed point photography yearly	
Activities/ crafting		Re-evaluate the impact of each activity by repeating the EclA to consider whether procedures need to be adapted. This could be done with the children <b>FSL &amp; C</b>	Reviewed EclA form yearly (Summer 2)  Amendments to procedure cards	
Consider adding a wild flower meadow area	To increase biodiversity further and the range of habitats for the children to explore	Evaluate possible locations for establishing a wild flower area, prepare ground and sow seeds. <b>FSL &amp; C</b>	Bughunt survey September & May	
Mud Kitchen area	To ensure soil is not eroding downhill  To consider planting next to retainer to create further biodiversity opportunities.	Monitor soil in the mud kitchen area & resilience of retainer solution <b>FSL &amp; Caretaker</b> Explore planting opportunities with children <b>FSL &amp; C</b>	Fixed point photography yearly  Species survey yearly?	

**How effective are these measures?** (Evaluation to influence next year's plans)

### Year 3

At this stage, Year 3 seems a long way away and until we have started to use the provision regularly it is hard to know where will be impacted the most. Therefore, I have mostly looked to continue our monitoring and evaluating to enable us to dynamically plan how we move forward.

Factor affecting Woodland (activities, resources, access)	How will this affect the woodland? (denudation, pollution, compaction...)	How will you manage this? (how might learners be involved?)	How will you monitor the effect of the management? (include frequency)	Photos
Camp Fire	denudation of the dead wood	Continue to monitor the impact of the fire. <b>FSL</b> Monitor availability of wood on the site for fire wood to assess whether wood needs to be bought in. <b>FSL</b>	Fixed point photography termly	
Growth of young trees	Our young saplings will be susceptible to damage from the games on the field and children.	Continue to monitor the young trees and check they are supported/protected as needed. <b>FSL &amp; C</b> Consider adding additional saplings where needed	Fixed point photography yearly	
Management of dead hedges	Dead hedges will have hopefully increased our biodiversity	Continue to add to the dead hedges where needed as other trees are pruned through the year. <b>FSL &amp; C</b>	Bughunt survey by children yearly in MAY	
Activities/ crafting		Re-evaluate the impact of each activity by repeating the EclA to consider whether procedures need to be adapted. This could be done with the children <b>FSL &amp; C</b>	Reviewed EclA form yearly (Summer 2) Amendments to procedure cards	
Consider adding a wild flower meadow area	To increase biodiversity further and the range of habitats for the children to explore	Evaluate possible locations for establishing a wild flower area, prepare ground and sow seeds. <b>FSL &amp; C</b>	Bughunt survey September & May	

**How effective are these measures?** (Evaluation to influence next year's plans)

## Parent Letter Example



Inspiring learning with love, hope and courage

Headteacher: Miss Cat Oliver (MSc, BA, PGCE)  
Website: <http://www.eastmeon.hants.sch.uk>

Senior Admin Officer: Mrs Catharine Taylor  
Email: [adminoffice@eastmeon.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@eastmeon.hants.sch.uk)

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am delighted to announce that I have reached the stage in my training where I can begin running Forest School sessions at our school. Over the next year, we intend for every year group to receive a 6 week program consisting of one full afternoon each week.

Your child will be doing Forest School on Monday afternoons from April 15<sup>th</sup> to May 20<sup>th</sup>

Forest School is not simply learning outdoors but brings with it an ethos of child led learning in a natural environment. Children will be allowed greater freedoms to direct their activities than they normally enjoy within their class learning and this will undoubtedly involve them getting muddy, wet and sometimes smoky! Children are supported to risk assess their ideas to ensure they are carried out safely. Alongside the child led opportunities, I will be modelling and teaching them some tool skills such as sawing and drilling and there will be opportunities to light fires and cook outdoors.

In order to fully participate children will need:

- long sleeve top and trousers
- wellies or suitable outdoor shoes
- waterproof coat and waterproof trousers. If you are unable to provide waterproof trousers then please send your child with a change of trousers so that they can change if they get wet or muddy.

We hope to develop a bank of spare waterproofs/wellies so if you are unable to provide these then please speak to me.

I would be grateful if you would complete the attached permission slip for your child's sessions.

If you have any further questions about Forest School or would like to know more our Forest School Handbook can be found on the school website or you can speak to me at school or by email ([stephaniep@eastmeonprimary.co.uk](mailto:stephaniep@eastmeonprimary.co.uk))

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs Perkins

### FOREST SCHOOL PERMISSION SLIP

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick for each statement:

I give permission for my child to attend Forest School Sessions and will provide the relevant clothing.

I give permission for photos of my child to be shared on the school website & social media

I give permission for Mrs Perkins to use anonymous photos of my child in her Forest School Leader Training evidence.

Any allergies or dietary requirements:

Any other information you would like us to be aware of:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_