

Forest School Handbook



Section 1:

History

Forest School is a long term outdoor programme of activities delivered by trained practitioners within a natural environment and whatever the weather! Our programme will be tailored to meet the needs of the children as they grow in confidence, skills and understanding.

Principles and Ethos of Forest School:

The ethos of our Forest School allows learners the time and space to develop skills, interests and understanding through practical, hands-on experiences. It also allows practitioners to step back and observe the children in order to then encourage and inspire individuals to achieve through careful scaffolding and facilitating. We support the six principles of Forest School, which were agreed by the UK Forest School community in 2011.

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.

- Forest School takes place regularly, ideally at least every other week, with the same group of learners, over an extended period of time, if practicable encompassing the seasons.
- A Forest School programme has a structure which is based on the observations and collaborative work between learners and practitioners. This structure should clearly demonstrate progression of learning.
- The initial sessions of any programme establish physical and behavioural boundaries as well as making initial observations on which to base future programme development.

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.

- Whilst woodland is the ideal environment for Forest School, many other sites, some with only a few trees, are able to support good Forest School practice.
- The woodland is ideally suited to match the needs of the programme and the learners, providing them with the space and environment in which to explore and discover.
- A Forest School programme constantly monitors its ecological impact and works within a sustainable site management plan agreed between the landowner/ manager, the forest school practitioner and the learners.

- Forest School aims to foster a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences in order to develop long-term, environmentally sustainable attitudes and practices in staff, learners and the wider community.
- Forest School uses natural resources for inspiration, to enable ideas and to encourage intrinsic motivation.

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

- Where appropriate, the Forest School leader will aim to link experiences at Forest School to home, work and /or school education
- Forest School programmes aim to develop, where appropriate, the physical, social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of the learner.

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

- Forest School opportunities are designed to build on an individual's innate motivation, positive attitudes and/or interests.
- Forest School uses tools and fires only where deemed appropriate to the learners and dependent on completion of a baseline risk assessment.
- Any Forest School experience follows a Risk–Benefit process managed jointly by the practitioner and learner that is tailored to the developmental stage of the learner.

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

- Forest School is led by qualified Forest School practitioners, who are required to hold a minimum of an accredited Level 3 Forest School qualification.
- There is a high ratio of practitioner/adults to learners.
- Practitioners and adults regularly helping at Forest School are subject to relevant checks into their suitability to have prolonged contact with children, young people and vulnerable people.
- Practitioners need to hold an up-to-date first aid qualification, which includes paediatric (if appropriate) and outdoor elements.

- Forest School is backed by relevant working documents, which contain all the policies and procedures required for running Forest School and which establish the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.

- The Forest School leader is a reflective practitioner and sees themselves, therefore, as a learner too.

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

- A learner-centred pedagogical approach is employed by Forest School that is responsive to the needs and interests of learners.

- The Practitioner models the pedagogy, which they promote during their programmes through careful planning, appropriate dialogue and relationship building.

- Play and choice are an integral part of the Forest School learning process, and play is recognised as vital to learning and development at Forest School.

- Forest School provides a stimulus for all learning preferences and dispositions.

- Reflective practice is a feature of each session to ensure learners and practitioners can understand their achievements, develop emotional intelligence and plan for the future.

- Practitioner observation is an important element of Forest School pedagogy. Observations feed into 'scaffolding' and tailoring experiences to learning and development at Forest School.

Section 2:

Communication:

Forest School involves the majority of school community so it is vital that everyone has access to the same information. A generic leaflet (see appendix 1) is available in school and on the website.

School Staff

Twilight CPD sessions will be provided when needed to ensure staff are aware of how forest school operates and how tools etc are used. The handbook is available to all staff. Rachel Murray is the Forest School Leader and she will be the first point of contact for any queries or questions staff may have. All documents are available to staff in the staff shared drive, in a folder titled 'Forest School'. All equipment is kept in shed on Forest school site. Each class teacher will be able to talk to Forest School Practitioner about with the sessions before the session, where possible forest school will complement the topic being undertaken by the class.

Parents

Parents receive an email before each session reminding them that their child is going to be attending Forest School. Where new or different activities are being undertaken the parents will be asked for consent. All parents and Carers have been given the leaflet and this is available in the website alongside the dates of each forest school session. Photos/videos are posted on website. Further information about Forest School is also included in newsletters. A copy of the abridged handbook will be available to view on the school website. Parents are welcome to attend for Forest School.

Volunteers

This is given to Volunteers along with a copy of the leaflet. All volunteers will have an induction meeting with Rachel Murray. All activities are demonstrated to the volunteers and they are instructed in appropriate protocols.

Wider Community

The website has a section for Forest School. Rachel Murray regularly liaises with immediate neighbours especially when changes are being made to the site. The local newspaper is invited up to Forest School.

Section 3

Wellbeing

This section outlines expectations for the wellbeing of the participants and staff of forest school. It should be read as a series of protocols which must be adhered to.

Our Forest School Code of Conduct

Entering the Forest: We will enter the Forest respectfully and know that when at Forest School specific expectations are in place. We will explore, investigate, learn and play in a manner that will not damage our Forest environment. We understand that we share our Forest School with plants and animals and that when we are in our Forest School we are sharing the environment with them.

Boundaries: Before each session begins children are made aware of how far that they can explore and of any fixed boundary markers. If children move to explore hidden areas an adult should also move into the cover deep enough to be able to see the children but allowing the children the freedom to explore independently. If you lose sight of a child shout '1,2,3, let me see?' The children have been taught to respond "1,2,3, yoohoo" through games that are practised regularly.

Lighting a fire: When lighting a fire the Forest School leader will take control of the operation and all accompanying adults will be briefed before we start. A lit fire will not be left unattended at any point. A fire may not be lit until it has been confirmed to all that our fire safety equipment is in place. Open fires will be built within designated fire circles.

Tree Climbing: An adult must be present when wanting to climb trees in the Forest School. The ground cover should be checked for 'sharp objects' and the tree identified as suitable for climbing. A visual check must be made for loose and rotten branches. Children are permitted to explore to their own limits or to a maximum height of 1.5m. Adults should be near enough to catch if a child should fall but far enough away to not be invasive to the children's exploration

Carrying and Transporting Materials: Children are encouraged to roll, lift, drag and to pull materials, either by using their hands or by using ropes. We encourage safe lifting by bending our knees and keeping our back straight. Safe lifting should always be modelled by adults. Heavier objects should be rolled, lifted or carried by more people working together.

Rope and String Use: We encourage the collection and transportation of materials. We do not allow children to tie up each other. If a child has a good idea and wants to tie up

something, for example a tarp or a swing, an adult should help them as needed, modelling appropriate knot tying and modelling how to talk through ideas and decisions.

Picking up and playing with stones: Stones may be picked up and transported. Children often like to make patterns and pictures with them. Stones may not be thrown. They may be dropped but thought must be given to whether it is safe to do so, i.e. what is beneath where I am dropping it?

Using Tools: All tools have their own clear code of conduct for correct use which will include consideration of specific personal protective equipment, correct use of a specific body posture, and consideration of the appropriate types of activity that each tool may be used for. (See tool use protocols).

Picking up and playing with sticks: Children can carry sticks shorter than their arm's length but are encouraged to think about how close they are to other children. Sticks must be carried pointing towards the floor. Longer sticks may be dragged or carried with the help of another person when each person is at either end. Sticks must not be thrown.

Eating and Drinking: Nil by mouth policy for anything found in the Forest, unless this activity has been specifically planned for during the session (e.g. blackberry picking). Children must be reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses. When having drinks and snacks children will use wipes & water to clean their hands before consumption.

Collecting wood: Wood is collected for fire lighting purposes. It is collected in four thicknesses – matchstick sized, pencil sized, thumb sized and wrist sized. Sticks may be collected for creating pictures and patterns but should be collected sparingly so as not to disrupt creature habitats.

Clothing: It is important that all children and staff have appropriate clothing suitable for all weather conditions.

Forest School leader will ensure that they carry items of spare clothing in the kit bags. If any child is considered inappropriately dressed for Forest School and alternative clothing cannot be found in school that child will remain at school

Winter

Vest or T-shirt

Long sleeved top

Jumper

Waterproof coat

Socks

Trousers

Waterproof trousers

Wellies

Hat, gloves and scarf.

Summer

T-shirt or top

Light trousers (where girls are wearing their summer school dresses they will be asked to change in to their PE trousers)

Socks

Trainers, shoes or Wellington boots.

(Sandals and flip-flops are not suitable.)

Sunhat

Sunglasses (if required.)

Participants are also responsible for providing their own insect repellent and sunscreen.

Toileting: Before a Forest School session, children will be given the opportunity to go to the toilet. While at Forest school the children will be allowed to return to school to use the toilets.

Weather

Before the session use a local forecast to assess safety of running. The site should be assessed prior to taking out a group. Try and leave cancellation as late as possible. Below is a short outline of conditions that may lead to a cancellation of a session:

- A rough guide is don't enter woods in winds of force 4 increasing to 5.
- In windy conditions keep a watchful eye on the surrounding tree branches.
- A rule of thumb is to leave the wood if substantial tree branches are blowing at 20 degrees or more.
- Be aware that it is possible for tree limbs and branches to drop on any day.
- Check Young Peoples clothing before going out on cold days.
- Carry spare clothing and a shelter sheet, such as a parachute.
- If the children are getting too cold either warm them up through exercise, shared shelter, sitting by the fire or going inside.
- In the case of an electrical storm, children will be guided by an adult to safe shelter and conduct (Avoid tall trees especially Oak, crouch down on the balls of your feet with your feet close together. Keep your hands on your knees and lower your head. Get as low as possible without touching your hands or knees to the ground. DO NOT LIE DOWN).
- In the case of extreme heat, children will be encouraged to drink plenty of water, wear suitable clothing, seek shelter from the sun when necessary and staff will monitor the situation and end session if necessary.

- Where children are distressed by extreme weather conditions a decision can be made to end a session either for that child or the in some cases the whole group. It is important to remember emotional wellbeing is as important as physical wellbeing.

Daily Operating Procedure

What to do before the session

- Check that all risk assessments are in place, particularly the check list
- Assess the site for new hazards
- Set up activities
- Take up and check equipment
- Prepare snack and drink
- Ensure that there is correct staff/client ratio and that all staff are familiar with this handbook.

Before walk up

- Register: Register to be completed by class teacher
- Check children are appropriately dressed
- Ensure children have water bottles
- Make sure children have been to the loo
- Do head count of children
- Remind them of the walk up rules

What to do during the session

Ongoing risk assessment: Ongoing risk assessments to be carried out by Rachel Murray.

Head count: carry out regular head counts, particularly when entering and leaving site.

Run carousel of activities. Observe and evaluate.

What to do after the session

- Head count
- Tool Check and tools maintenance.
- Evaluation for next session the learning is reviewed and evaluated. Rachel Murray will discuss any observations with the other adults who have attended the session and will review the session in general. Evaluate the plan for the session that has just been completed and then plan for the next session taking due consideration of all observations and comments made.

Section 4:

Policies and protocols:

As Lunsford Forest school operates as an integral part of the Primary School it is subject to the policies of the school which can be found in full here:

<http://www.lunsford.kent.sch.uk/policies/>

All staff and volunteers are asked to read the policies and pay particular attention to the following which can found in appendix 2:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and safety policy
- Confidentiality policy

Safeguarding Statement

Lunsford Primary School is committed to the safeguarding of all pupils in our care. To that end, all staff, governors and volunteers will help keep our children safe by:

- Adhering to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Providing a safe place for our children to learn and develop
- Ensuring that our behaviour does not make any child or member of the school community, uncomfortable or leave us vulnerable to accusation
- Having the children's physical, emotional, and personal safety at the forefront of all we do.
- Immediately notifying the DCPC of any concerns, however trivial they may seem, in order to pull together a picture of any potential safeguarding issues.

All staff employed by the school, and volunteers who work in school for a set minimum of time as outlined in official guidance, will be subject to DBS checks. References will be sought and safer recruitment procedures adhered to at all times.

Code of Conduct:

Code of behaviour

Do keep to this code at all times.

Do treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Do set an example for others to follow.

Do treat all young people equally – do not show favouritism.

Do plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least within sight and hearing of others.

Do follow the recommended adult-to-young people ratios for activities.

Do respect a young person's right to personal privacy.

Do avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust, e.g. a sexual relationship with a young person who is over the age of consent.

Do allow young people to talk about any concerns they may have.

Do encourage others to challenge attitudes or behaviours they do not like.

Do avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour, e.g. tantrums and crushes

Do make everyone (young people, parents and carers and volunteers) aware of our safeguarding arrangements.

Do remember this code at sensitive moments, e.g. when helping someone who has been bullied, bereaved or abused.

Do tell other adults where you are and what you are doing

Do remember someone else might misinterpret your actions, even if you mean well.

Do take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer them to designated person immediately.

Do not trivialise abuse.

Do not form a relationship with a young person that is an abuse of trust.

Do not allow abusive activities, e.g. initiation ceremonies or bullying.

Do not take part in inappropriate behaviour or contact, whether physical, verbal or sexual.

Do not make suggestive remarks or threats to a young person, even in fun.

Do not use inappropriate language when writing, phoning, emailing or using the internet.

Do not let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported.

Do not rely just on your good name to protect you.

Confidentiality

It is important never to repeat anything overheard or witnessed in school. If there are any concerns regarding a child/children please discuss with the designated teacher. A copy of the Confidentiality Policy is available

Equality and diversity:

We operate under the School's policy on Equality and Diversity namely:

Equal Opportunities Statement: We promote equality and the building of a democracy in which all members have rights and responsibilities, and the same opportunity to benefit from, and take part, in the education provided by the school – within and beyond its premises. Diversity is valued as a rich resource that can contribute to the learning of all pupils and staff.

Disability Statement: Lunsford Primary School is proud to be an inclusive school. We offer access to a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils regardless of disability. We strive to

ensure all pupils can access, educationally and physically, all learning opportunities within and beyond the school. Within the confines of an old building, we aim to ensure that all users can access key learning areas, and will ensure that no user experiences any discrimination or reduced entitlement to learning due to being unable to physically access areas of the school.

As with any additional needs the school works closely with parents and appropriate outside agencies to ensure equality of access for all.

Every Child Matters: This Effective Learning policy demonstrates how we aim also to meet the five outcomes outlined in the document 'Every Child Matters – Change for Children 2004' (DfES publication – 1088-2004, version 1.0); namely:

1. Be healthy
2. Stay safe
3. Enjoy and achieve through learning
4. Make a positive contribution to society
5. Achieve economic well-being

Behaviour protocol

Forest School aims to:

1. Build self-esteem, independence, motivation to learn whilst always maintaining a safe environment
2. Promote awareness, respect and care for other individuals and for the natural environment
3. Reinforce collaborative behaviour
4. Develop continuity of expectations and of approach to behaviour management both at Forest School, in school and beyond
5. Develop awareness of acceptable behaviour and responsible behaviour in an outdoor environment
6. 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 across school. It is understood throughout school that rudeness and impertinence are unacceptable but also we must show children appropriate responses and appropriate ways to behave. Persistent rudeness and impertinence should be reported to the Forest School Leader. A copy of the school Behaviour Policy is available either through Rachel Murray or in the school office.

Supporting the Children to Listen and engage

- Use words children understand.
- Use the child's name if you know it. If not, ask what it is.
- Make eye contact and get on the same level as the child.
- Speak calmly – a bit louder possibly but DO NOT SHOUT.
- Look and sound confident and be firm.
- Be friendly – smile!
- Have fun within limits.
- Listen to children – remember they learn by copying!
- Always do what you say you are going to do.
- Where appropriate take a child to the side and talk to them on a 1:1.
- Try clapping hands or rhyme motions to get the attention of the children.
- Stand quietly to get attention.
- Explain why you are doing something.
- Apologise to a child if you are in the wrong. You earn their respect by showing you are prepared to do this.

How we encourage good behaviour:

- Adults should show an interest and listen to the children
- All children should be treated fairly and equally. Don't label children and jump to the wrong conclusions
- Give gentle reminders
- Adults should stay calm. This will help you to remain in authority and be effective
- Give praise frequently – it's more effective than criticism
- Adults should recognise and reward good behaviour
- Adults should encourage children to take responsibility
- Adults should encourage children to apologise and be considerate and caring of other people's feelings
- Help children out of awkward situations which would prevent bad behaviour occurring
- Smile and appear happy; hence producing happy children
- Adults being polite to children
- Talk to pupils in informal situations
- Greet pupils, especially those with whom you have difficulty
- Set high standards in all you do with pupils

How to prevent inappropriate behaviour

At Lunsford Primary School we believe it is more effective to try to prevent inappropriate behaviour. The following are guidelines.

What to look for:

- Noise level – too loud, too quiet, excessive laughter
- Groupings – large groups or isolated child
- Facial expression – crying, looking worried, upset or angry, frowning
- Body language – hunched shoulders, inappropriate physical contact, or overly boisterous play
- Pupils checking of adults whereabouts

Think about your:

- Voice – avoid the 'loudness cycle'
- Gesture – pointing
- Body language – hunched shoulders, extended neck, tense
- Proximity – invasion of personal space
- Facial expression – looking miserable and cross
- Language: If a child is rude to you it is easy to respond with 'Don't you dare talk to me like that.' or 'Who do you think you're talking to?' These sorts of responses, while understandable, can often make matters worse. A more appropriate reply may be to say something like 'I beg your pardon?' or 'Did you say something?' Remarks like this give the child a chance to take back what was said. You can then go on to say quietly but very firmly that you will not accept rudeness.

Avoid Conflict by:

- Making rules and boundaries clear
- Give choices – this helps avoid more confrontation
- Remain in control of yourself
- Don't shout
- Explain how you feel
- Always follow up the incident
- Rebuild the relationship

We must ensure that children understand that the following are unacceptable:

- bullying – i.e. repetitive incidents to the same child

- treating people in a way you would not want to be treated
- fighting (other than play fighting)
- swearing
- rudeness
- tripping people up/aggressiveness.
- taking other people's property
- name calling
- being cheeky

Positive rewards:

Please catch children behaving well. It sets a good example for others and shows that we are watching them doing something good. Feel free to give out House Points.

Risk Protocol:

We encourage our children, in a safe and structured way, to take risks. Children learn by their mistakes and by being free to make them in a comfortable and safe surrounding. When appropriate children should be encouraged to "have a go" at an activity, take a risk and learn from their experiences.

'Providers should strike a balance between the risks and the benefits. This should be done on the basis of a risk assessment. Crucially this risk assessment should involve a risk-benefit trade off between safety and other goals, which should be spelt out in the provider's policy'.
Managing Risk in Play Provision – A Position Statement by the Play Safety Forum. Children's Play Council, 2002.

We have a legal duty to carry out Risk Assessments but this does not mean that children have to miss out on a whole load of adventurous activity and fun! If the risk or potential harm from the activity is acceptable or can be managed/minimised and the benefits for the value in the activity outweigh the risk then that has to be a goer.

If risk in children's lives is eliminated then not only do their environments become sterile and boring but children will not want to be part of it. They will go and find the fun elsewhere or create their own, which could result in unwanted behaviour.

Children also need to learn how to assess risks and be responsible for their own safety, and this can be done by involving children in discussing an activity, highlighting what the risks are, how the risks can be reduced or substituted and what are the fun elements they will get out of the activity that outweighs the risks that are left. This exercise of consultation and

participation with children also creates an equal relationship where children and young people feel they are listened to, their contribution is valued and that they are not constantly beholden to adults in the setting for the adults to give them the go ahead to do everything. They have a stake in the process too.

Risk benefit templates are no different from the usual risk assessments that are carried out – apart from one important factor – we also record what the *benefits* of the activities to give a balanced holistic account of the activity. This provides us with the confidence and the means to provide a more risk taking play environment.

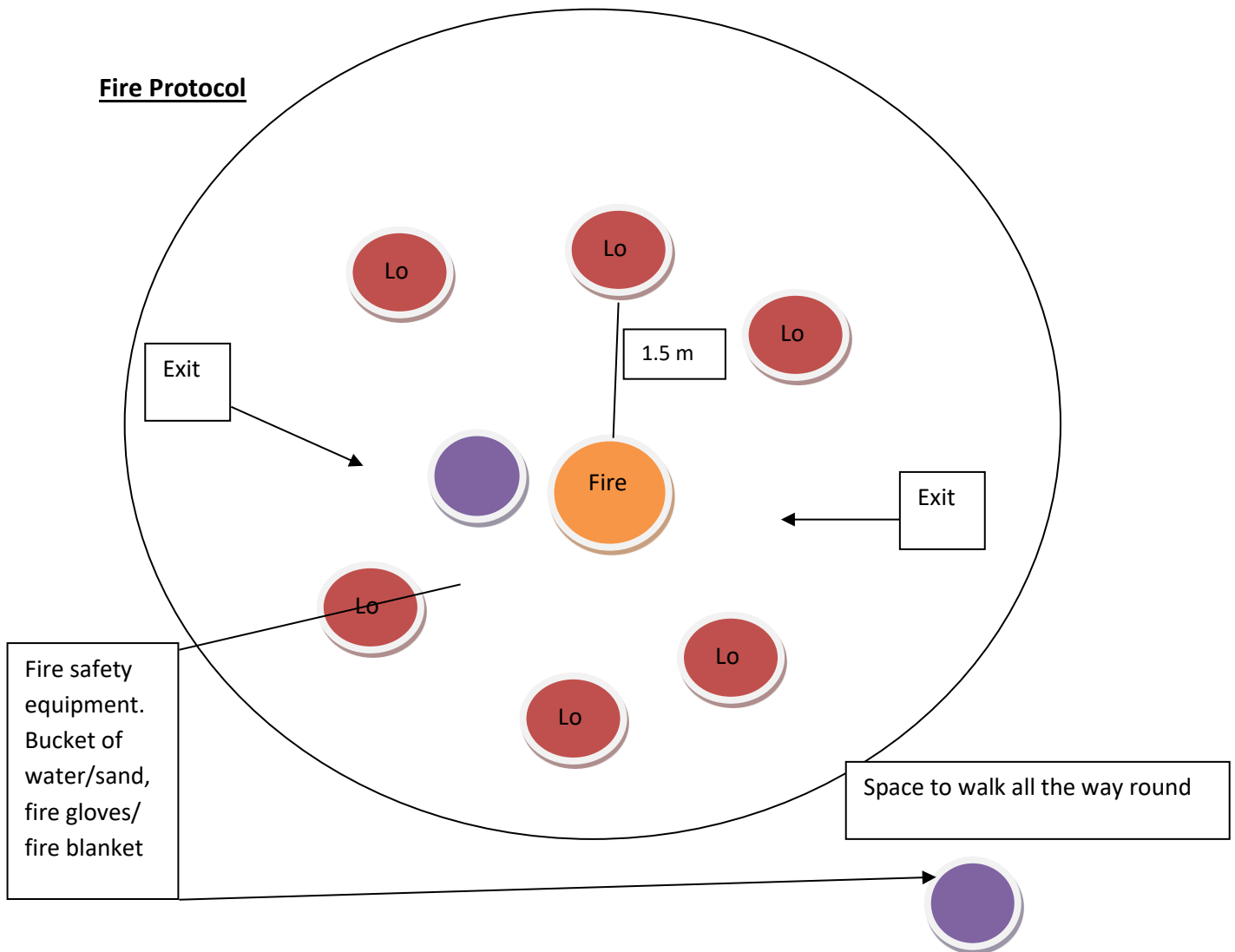
There are three main areas to think about once an activity has been identified

- Acknowledge what the benefits are – what benefits will the children gain? This could cover areas such as *increased confidence, sense of achievement, freedom, physical development, contact with nature, trying out an activity that is usually seen as adult, social skills, fine motor skills/sharing skills*. The lists goes on and remember to involve the children and if possible think about getting comments from parents or other people that may come to your setting.
- What are the risks – this needs child and adult input as you are looking at the obvious risks as well as the ones that are not so obvious. Many heads of mixed ages are better than one. You then need to think how you can remove or minimize the risk and how this will be communicated to staff, all children [being aware of the individual needs of the children] and the parents.
- Put safety measures in place that you have identified and record this – this will cover the likelihood of the risk happening, who could be harmed and what you are doing to reduce/eliminate. It will also need to record what to do if an accident/incident does occur.

Alongside dynamic risk assessment at Forest School we conduct four levels of Risk Analysis (see appendix 3 for examples):

- 1) Site Assessment
- 2) Daily Check
- 3) Activity Risk benefit Assessment
- 4) Tool/resource Risk Benefit Analysis

Fire Protocol



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- Establish a fire area, checking for branches beforehand.
- Mark out fire area – circle should be at least 1.5 meters away from the fire all round. Train young people how to approach and leave before lighting a fire. A fire circle can be made using log sitting stools or in the learning area.
- Don't light in windy or very dry conditions.
- Keep fires approx 4m from any shelter built from easily combusting materials. If a shelter is designed to have an integral fire establish safety rules and multiple exits before use (check design with an expert and keep a record of this).
- Ensure fire kit, including fire resistant gloves and water, is close by.
- A kneeling position should be used when sitting around the fire.
- Never leave a fire unattended.
- No one may enter the fire circle perimeter unless invited to do so by an adult.
- There may be no running past the fire circle.
- No items must be carried and placed within the fire circle unless by an adult.

- If you wish to move around the fire to a new stool you must step out of the circle and walk around the outside of the log circle.
- Even when the fire is unlit we will treat it as if it is lit.

When Children are Lighting or Managing a Fire

- Remove gloves.
- Tuck in hair/hat tails.
- Ensure jacket sleeves etc are not past wrists.
- If young people have fires restrict flame height to equivalent of your knee

When Cooking

- Check client group does not suffer from food allergies or that other reasons, such as religious reasons, do not permit individuals to handle or consume certain food types. Ensure you have up-to date information about allergies and religion.
- Food hygiene regulations should be followed.
- Risk assess working area and activity.
- Food hygiene regulations should be followed.
- Carry antiseptic wipes or soap and water for hand washing. Have a plant sprayer filled with water to clean hands, this qualifies as running water.
- Split open food and check it is cooked before consumption.
- When cooking with a stick use green wood and remove bark before cooking using a knife and scraping action.
- Don't re-heat cooked food.
- Avoid foods that need a lot of fat to cook in case of pan fire.
- Get young people to tuck in long hair and tie, roll up or fasten loose clothing.

Tool Protocol

Tools should be checked before and after each session and monitored when in use. Duct tape is carried to make safe any tools which break during the session.

Only in the use of the bow saw should a glove be worn when using tools. Peelers and small snipping tools are kept in the tree wrap. Saws, knives and loppers are kept in the Forest School box on site.

When introducing a new tool:

- Ask the children what it is and what it is for.

- Discuss uses for the tool at Forest School.
- Emphasise that all movements should be made in the direction away from the body.
- Keep the hand holding the wood as far away as possible from the blade.
- Always assume safe position – for example Low kneel.
- When passing tools, ensure eye contact is maintained. A useful script is:
 - '(child 2's name). I am passing you the _____'.

Tool then placed on ground in front of child 2 ready to be picked up safely.

Secateurs and Loppers

Using small chopping tools – secateurs, scissors, loppers

Benefit of Activity	Hazards	Risks	Risk Level	Control Actions	Revised Risk Level
self-esteem, confidence, knowledge of keeping safe, sense of achievement	Sharp blades	Serious injury—cuts, lacerations	High	<p>Tool talk and demonstration before pupils allowed to use tools.</p> <p>Safety reminders at the beginning of each session.</p> <p>Supervision at a distance required, close supervision if group leader deems appropriate for individual child.</p> <p>All tools to be kept in good working order.</p>	Low

				Emergency procedures in place, first aid kit and mobile phones carried at all times.	
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General information/Safety rules/Storage

Secateurs are used for cutting twigs and branches that are too thick to be cut by scissors.

Loppers are used for cutting twigs and branches that are too thick to be cut by secateurs.

Secateurs should always have the safety lock in place when being carried. They should be carried by the handle, with the point towards the ground. One hand should be on each handle when using the loppers and ensure there is a safe working area. When using secateurs the working area should be clear of others. The other hand should be held well away from the blade.

Tool Safety Check

Examine handles and hinges. Spray with WD40 if stiff.

Make sure there are no signs of damage or rusting.

Open the handles over your lap. Use a thumb to wipe the blades at a right angle, it should feel rough.

Ensure the locking and spring mechanisms on the secateurs are working properly.

Tool Maintenance and Cleaning

Use a cloth to wipe the blade clean and dry.

Oil the tool and sharpen with sharpening stone as required.

Vegetable Peelers

Benefit of Activity	Hazards	Risks	Risk Level	Control Actions	Revised Risk Level
self-esteem, confidence, knowledge of keeping safe, sense of achievement	Sharp blades	cuts, lacerations	medium	Tool talk and demonstration before pupils allowed to use tools. Safety reminders at the beginning of each session. Supervision at a distance required, close supervision if group leader deems appropriate for individual child. All tools to be kept in good working order. Emergency procedures in place, first aid kit and mobile phones carried at all times.	Low

General information/Safety rules/Storage

This tool is used for whittling wood.

Children should be reminded of safety rules above. Peelers work best with green wood. Dead wood can be tricky, requiring children to use more pressure.

Peelers should be carried by the handle with the blade pointing down.

Peelers are stored in the tool box.

Tool Safety Check

Check the handle, ensuring the grip is securely in place.

Wiggle the handle and blade to ensure they are attached securely together.

Tool Maintenance and Cleaning

To clean the peelers, run a gloved finger down each side to remove bark and dirt.

On return to school, ensure the peelers are dry.

Bow-Saw

Benefit of Activity	Hazards	Risks	Risk Level	Control Actions	Revised Risk Level
self-esteem, confidence, knowledge of keeping safe, sense of achievement	Sharp blades	Serious injury—cuts, lacerations	High	Tool talk and demonstration before pupils allowed to use tools. Safety reminders at the beginning of each session. Supervision at a distance required, close supervision if group leader deems appropriate for individual child. Always used hand over sawing technique All tools to be kept in good working order.	Low

				Emergency procedures in place, first aid kit and mobile phones carried at all times.	
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General information/Safety rules/Storage

When using a bow saw use the handover method. Bow saws should be used in pairs. Children should be kneeling seated at either side of the piece of wood, with their legs at a distance from the saw. The hand holding the wood should be away from the blade. Bow saws are carried at the side of the body with the teeth facing backwards. Guards should be on at all times when saw is not in use and when being carried and transported.

Tool Safety Check

Examine the handle for damage. Ensure the blade is firmly attached to the handle. Examine the blade for chips and replace when necessary. Check the blade cover for damage and replace when necessary.

Tool Maintenance and Cleaning

Dry the blade, guard and handle.

Knife

Benefit of Activity	Hazards	Risks	Risk Level	Control Actions	Revised Risk Level
self-esteem, confidence, knowledge of keeping safe, sense of achievement	Sharp blades	Serious injury—cuts, lacerations	High	Tool talk and demonstration before pupils allowed to use knives Safety reminders at the beginning of each session. Close supervision. All knives to be	Low

				kept in good working order. Group leader to supervise and control access to knives. Knife sign in and out book Emergency procedures in place, first aid kit and mobile phones carried at all times.	
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General information/Safety rules/Storage

Knives are used for whittling and other controlled wood work. Knives should always have safety cover on when being carried and not in use. Safe seated position (with Legs apart and elbow on knees) or kneeling position depending on the task should be used. The blood bubble criteria should be adhered to at all times. Knives should be numbered kept in a secure box and signed out.

Tool Safety Check

Check the blade, handle and cover for any damage or rust. Check blade for sharpness. The blade should feel rough. Use the knife to test sharpness. Check that the handle is secure and that the blade does not wobble.

Tool Maintenance and Cleaning

Wipe the knife clean and dry. Rust needs to be sanded off. Sharpen when necessary using the sharpening stone. A sharp knife is safer than a blunt one.

Food and Drink Protocol:

The following protocol should be followed at Forest School:

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. Children will be provided a drink and biscuit at all Forest School session. This will usually take the form of hot chocolate and a rich tea biscuit. Blackcurrant is provided for those with lactose allergies and a stock of gluten free products are kept at school.

Activities will include cooking of food and wild food and the trying of these. Children will be instructed through an adult protocol. This is where nothing goes in their mouth until an adult has checked it. 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.

When using Cooking as an activity

- Check client group does not suffer from food allergies or that other reasons, such as religious reasons, do not permit individuals to handle or consume certain food types. Ensure you have up-to date information about allergies and religion.
- Food hygiene regulations should be followed.
- Risk assess working area and activity.
- Food hygiene regulations should be followed.
- Carry antiseptic wipes or soap and water for hand washing. Have a plant sprayer filled with water to clean hands, this qualifies as running water.
- Split open food and check it is cooked before consumption.
- When cooking with a stick use green wood and remove bark before cooking using a knife and scraping action.
- Don't re-heat cooked food.
- Avoid foods that need a lot of fat to cook in case of pan fire.
- Get young people to tuck in long hair and tie, roll up or fasten loose clothing.

Food Hygiene Procedure will be followed:

- All perishable food must be stored in a cool box / bag and wrapped in appropriate packaging to avoid attracting insects and vermin.
- Food must never be left uncovered at any time.
- All unused food stuffs and packaging must be disposed of appropriately.
- All cleaning products must be kept out of the reach of children.
- Hands must be cleaned before handling food and utensils.

- All water provided By Forest School must be fresh i.e. provided in sealed containers.
- Raw meats must be stored separately to cooked meats in a chilled container.
- Make sure products are used within the 'use by' date.
- Do not handle food items if suffering from colds or similar infections.
- Cover all cuts and grazes in the appropriate manner.
- Clean all food utensils and place in storage.
- Children are only permitted to eat at designated times.
- Please refer to: Guide to the Food Hygiene General Regulations,1970

Wild Food

Forest School recognises that developing awareness and relationships with nature necessitates the children's confident ability to recognise and interact appropriately with trees and plants. Huge benefits result from the ongoing development of these relationships. With safe and professional guidance the children are shown some uses of the plants for food, medicine and other practical uses. This greatly enhances their appreciation of their environment and leads to motivation to protect it. Other benefits include gathering the plants and processing them together, which, as an activity, promotes team work, community and can be developed to increase understanding of indigenous people and their values, as well as an appreciation for our own heritage uses of native plants. The children also gain self-confidence in being able to correctly identify plants and trees (especially when, in doing, they may then go on to use it) appropriately.

Main benefits:

- Self reliance
- Ecological awareness of inter-connectedness (e.g. weather & seasons, natural navigation, how they affect the plants, which insect, animal and bird species are directly reliant to certain species etc., and how our use of these plants affects the eco-system.)
- Team work
- Confidence building
- Direct inter-active relationship with the environment
- Understanding risk
- Enhance knowledge (naturalist)
- Empathy
- Development of sense (safe, successful gathering requires all physical senses)
- Education about sustainability – practical skills used in foraging, including pruning and coppicing
- Important and valuable supplement to modern diet as wild foods are rich in minerals, vitamins and nutrients quality largely absent from the modern diet. Many

of these plant also help the body to de-toxify which is particularly valuable in modern times when we are bombarded by population.

Development of practical skills and tool use:

- Pruning, use of loppers, secateurs and pruning saw
- Coppicing
- Digging sticks, trowels etc. for roots
- Use of fire and cooking techniques Preparation of wild foods can involve many different processing techniques
- Development of understanding source of foods and the energy required in processing. This develops appreciation and relationships with nature.

Risks:

We recognise the risks presented by the use of wild plants, and place great importance on the recognition and avoidance of these risks. The most obvious risk is the ingestion of poisonous plant matter, however this offers one of the greatest benefits of foraging. The very presence of poisonous species naturally enhances the sensory and observational skills, necessary to make accurate identification. The presence of these species means that we must be constantly vigilant and respectful in this activity.

Risk	Steps taken to minimise
Misidentification of plants leading to ingestion of poisonous species	Expert guidance giving clear tools for accurate identification Children must always take any plant to a knowledge (identified) forest school leader before putting into mouth Plants are only ever picked as a specific activity and then under adult supervision
Poisonous look-a-likes are gathered with edible species	If more than one plant species are gathered as wild food, they are gathered separately When plants are being sorted, the Forest Leader in charge of foraging checks all samples to the best of their ability Participants will be clearly and precisely shown poisonous look-a-like species. There will be a variety of teaching techniques for assuring the differences are understood
Disruption and possible destruction of ecosystems by over harvesting	Education and awareness of ecological impact is an important value of forest schooling Participants are taught how to harvest sustainability with care and respect

Protected and less common species of plants	<p>Basic ecological surveys of the area where activities will be carried out will be made before the sessions</p> <p>The main leader in charge of leading the sessions on gathering wild plants will have good knowledge of protected species and which species are abundant in the environment</p> <p>Gathering will be minimal, and will take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Animals, birds and insects which may be reliant on particular species - Never harvesting more than a small percentage of a species in one area - Protected and less common species will not be used - Whether opportunity is presented to
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Emergencies:

Summary:

<u>First Aid</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow Policy and Procedures Document. Any illness or injury to be treated by a qualified first aider. 2. Check Dr -A-B-C, Administer First Aid. 3. Remove others in group from the situation, ensuring they are safe. 4. Notify school office. And if necessary call for further assistance, or notify emergency services. 5. Have medical details available in medical bag, and notify parents/guardians as appropriate.
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	<p>6. All accidents, however minor, must be reported to the Principal who will complete an accident report form.</p> <p>7. Follow up to parents as usual.</p>
<u>Missing Child</u>	<p>1. On discovery of missing child use '1,2,3, where are you?' procedure and recall rest of the group.</p> <p>2. Activity for the rest of the group shall be suspended in order that up to two members of staff, including the Forest School Facilitator if appropriate may be released to conduct a search which shall last no more than five minutes. The rest of the Group will be kept in the learning area and sedentary activities such as having a snack, singing or sharing activity run by remaining adults.</p> <p>3. A five minute interval is immediately timed by Rachel Murray.</p> <p>4. Once the five minute interval has expired The class teacher will contact emergency services giving grid reference on daily check list</p> <p>5. The school will be informed so that they can contact the child's parents and inform them of the situation.</p> <p>6. Staff should corroborate details of the situation, including last known position of the missing child and any timings. These will be recorded on the Emergency Procedures Record Sheet</p>

<p><u>Death or serious Incident</u></p> <p><u>(Procedure based on work prepared by Chris Bridge, Head Teacher of Huntington School)</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow First Aid procedures 2. Remain with causality and remove others in group from the situation, ensuring they are safe. 3. Immediately notify school office 4. School to inform emergency services, specifically the police 5. The police will notify the parents/guardians/next of kin. 6. Gain advice on follow up from the police 7. Report to RIDDOR and Ofsted.
<p><u>Stranger or Uninvited Person</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Challenge intruder, asking them to leave immediately. Escort them from the site. 2. Inform the School's Office and Child Protection Liaison Officer. 3. If a child is involved the police must be called, and the child/children involved are to be removed from situation and made to feel safe. 4. Parents/guardian should be briefed by Forest School Leader ASAP or in accordance with advice of the Police, ASAP.
<p><u>Serious Behaviour Problems</u></p>	<p>Always adhere to school policy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talk child involved down. 2. Remove other children from the area of risk, if it is deemed to be necessary.

	3. Inform office and call for help as needed. 4. Debrief child after calm down period. 5. Log incident. 6. Inform parents/guardian 7. Create risk assessment, if necessary 8. Close supervision and monitoring of behaviour.
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Emergency Procedure Protocol

All participants will be briefed in what to do in case of emergency. A whistle will be blown as a signal to stop what you are doing, gather with a member of staff, be silent and wait for instructions. The Forest School Leader will assess the situation, the nature and extent of the injury/accident. They will ensure that the rest of the group are safe from danger and are adequately supervised. They will attend to the casualty, giving first aid of necessary. An incident report will be completed later.

In case of injury

If anyone sustains an injury or illness which cannot be treated by first aid on site and requires medical assistance:

1. In serious cases, 999 should be dialled using a mobile phone carried by the Forest School Leader and then the school will be notified. The school will be responsible for notifying the parent.
2. The rest of the group will be supervised away from the incident and if in danger, will be moved to safety.
3. One member of the staff will meet the ambulance at the site entrance and direct the crew to the incident site.
4. If the injured child is taken to hospital, one member of staff will go with them and the child's parent will be updated about the situation by the staff remaining at school.
5. 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.

Home Contact:

Mobile reception and number: Good reception across the site 07702754436

Emergency procedure and access details:

The site can be accessed via the drive through a double gate.

Nearest A and E: Maidstone Hospital

Nearest accessible landline: School Office

Requesting Attendance by Emergency Services

- Dial 999 and ask for the emergency service. Be ready with the following information:

Telephone number (mobile number if call is made on a mobile – see above)

Details of your location

A brief description of the problem (for example, if you are requesting an ambulance, you will need to describe the symptoms of the person who is injured/ill)

State that the crew will be met by _____ at the entrance to the location to the site.

Speak clearly and slowly and be ready to repeat the information if asked.

If an emergency occurs where RM is needed to administer first aid the Class Teacher will resume control of the group and the volunteers will support the continuation of the activity where possible. If this is not possible the children will be asked to return to the learning area for hot chocolate and biscuit. The volunteers will run sedentary games or if viable Eagle eye or another favourite. Where an emergency occurs which does not require first aid the emergency will be dealt with by the class teacher and RM will continue Forest school delivery.

Lost or Missing Person Protocol

Children are instructed that they have to stay within the fenced site and each group is counted in and out of the sessions. They know to immediately gather around the adult shouts come home *insert class name* or 1,2,3

In the event of a suspected lost or missing person the other staff will be informed and will search the site.

- Activity for the rest of the group shall be suspended in order that up to two members of staff, including the Forest School Facilitator if appropriate, may be released to conduct a search which shall last no more than five minutes. The rest of the Group will be kept in the learning area and sedentary activities such as having a snack, singing or sharing activity run by remaining adults.
- A five minute interval is immediately timed by Rachel Murray.
- Once the five minute interval has expired The class teacher will contact emergency services giving grid reference on daily check list
- The school will be informed so that they can contact the child's parents and inform them of the situation.

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