



Forest School Handbook



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1. The Forest School Ethos

At Hardingstone Academy we **Learn, Achieve, Enjoy Together** and value a holistic approach to education.

The Forest School approach encompasses the physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and social aspects to learning and development. Over time children enhance their sense of self, community, belonging and sense of achievement.

Forest School takes place in the outdoor environment involving open ended purposeful experiences for all, focussing heavily on the process of learning, encompassing all learning styles. Learners are encouraged and supported to follow their own lines of enquiry, exploring freely in our safe environment whilst also having the opportunity to take suitable risks. This type of enquiry-based learning has been proven to develop self-esteem and confidence.

This concept originates from the Danish approach to environmental learning and places a huge importance on outdoor learning and the positive impacts this has on a child's development.

Hardingstone Academy aims to give every child the opportunity to reach their full holistic potential.

2. Principles and criteria for good practice

The Forest School ethos has 6 principles:

- 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

3. What happens at Forest School

At Hardingstone Academy our sessions are designed and led by our Forest School leader.

These generally take place on a weekly basis in small or class groups of children. The session last between 1 – 2 hours. The sessions are designed to involve hands on activities and aim to increase learners confidence in their own skills and abilities. Learners are given freedom to explore and engage with the site at their own individual pace. Sessions are child centred and children are encourage to explore their own interests.

Sessions involve the use of natural materials for activities such as:

- Building a range of shelter

- Art and creative activities
- Learning about using knots
- Fire lighting
- Tracking animals
- Bug hunts
- Bird spotting
- Story telling
- Investigating the wildlife and plant life in the area
- Climbing and balancing
- Woodworking to make a range of items
- Creating bug homes and bird feeders and bird boxes
- Collecting, identifying and sorting natural materials such as leaves
- Team games

The activities that take place have strong links both to the Early Years Foundation Stage and the national curriculum. Covering areas such as maths and English, art, science, geography and history.

4. The benefits of Forest School

Forest School is open to all ages and abilities and it aspires to develop the learners holistically. It adds value to children's learning and for those children in particular that may struggle to learn in the classroom environment.

Forest School sessions are proven to enhance children's skills. These skills are then transferred into the classroom environment where learners are found to be more motivated and show high levels of concentration.

- **Confidence:** children had the freedom, time and space to learn and demonstrate independence
- **Social skills:** children gained increased awareness of the consequences of their actions on peers through team activities such as sharing tools and participating in play
- **Communication:** language development was prompted by the children's sensory experiences
- **Motivation:** the woodland tended to fascinate the children and they developed a keenness to participate and the ability to concentrate over longer periods of time
- **Physical skills:** these improvements were characterised by the development of physical stamina and gross and fine motor skills
- **Knowledge and understanding:** the children developed an interest in the natural surroundings and respect for the environment

5. Forest School Staff

Our Forest School at Hardingstone Academy is run by Amy Hoye who is working towards her Level 3 Award for Forest School Practitioners.

All staff and volunteers have undergone an appropriate selection process to assess their skills and suitability for working with children and have been subject to enhanced DBS checks. All sessions are staffed by a qualified first aider and all staff have access to a recommended first aid kit.

6. The Forest School site

Our Forest School takes place in a small wooded area at the bottom of our school field. It is made up of mixed deciduous trees, mainly sycamore, field maple, elm and Holly. Around the fence area there are a mixture of climbing plants such as ivy.

The woodland is will develop over time and we hop to develop a deeper diversity.

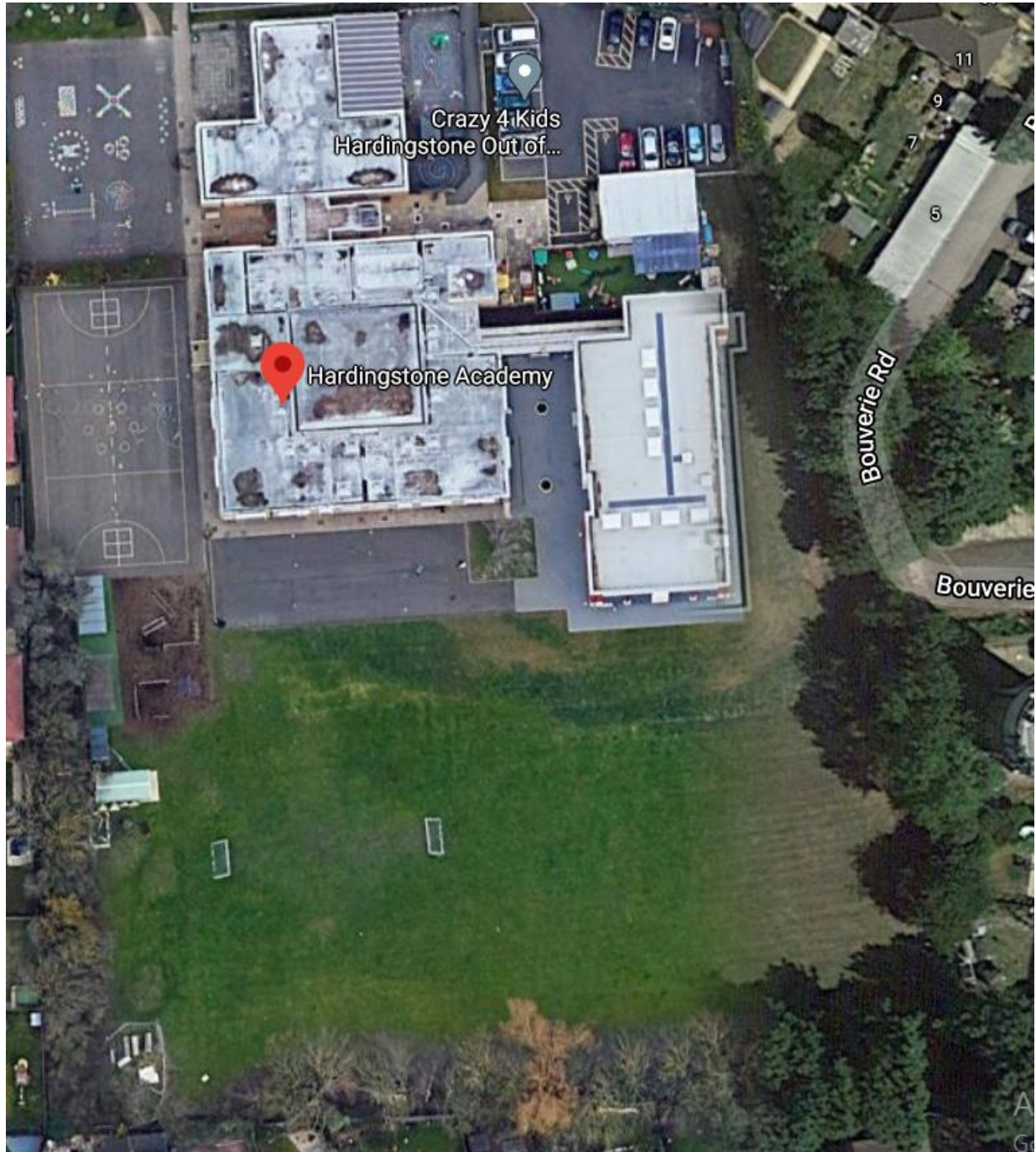
The site is within school grounds and is not accessible to the public.

Children taking part in Forest School will also be encouraged to minimise their impact on the site. This will include:

- Finding out about the different animals and plants that live in and amongst the trees
- Learning to respect animals' homes
- Careful observation of live animals
- Leaving lying deadwood in place
- Taking all materials and litter with them when they leave
- Ensuring that the site is left like they found it

7. Phase one site survey

Description of Forest School Site		
Name of wood / site	Location	Grid reference
Hardingstone Academy	Hardingsone Academy, Martins Lane, Hardingstone, Northampton, NN4 6DJ	SP 76451 57486
Owner (including full contact details)		
Hardingsone Academy, Martins Lane, Hardingstone, Northampton, NN4 6DJ 01604 761250		
Other identified stakeholders		
School governing body Sports England		
General Description: Landscape context / topography (geographical location and features e.g. alongside river, steep slopes etc...)		



The area of the school site being used is at the bottom of the playing field. There is a slight slope leading down from the main area of the school onto the main playing field where it then levels out again. The site is enclosed by fencing and trees and shrubs.

The area is situated in an urban area of Northamptonshire. The site is surrounded by residential buildings. Due to this location litter can often be found on the site.

Ground – grey mudstone, siltstone, shelly and shell-detrital limestone and calcareous mudstone – slightly gravelly sand clay – ph 8.0

Water – nearest surface watercourse 645m to the northeast of the site

Woodland description		
Flora	Trees	Deciduous woodland – species include; sycamore, hawthorn, silver birch, field maple, oak, holly and elm
	Plants	Nettles, bramble, snowberry, broad leaved docks, goosegrass
	Fungi	None identified
	Mosses	None identified
Fauna	Birds	Blue tit, seagulls (of different types), pigeons, red kites, starlings, blackbirds, jays, crows, rooks, magpies, robins.
	Mammals	Signs of foxes, squirrels, hedgehogs, mice and rats.
	Insects	Woodlouse, worms, bumble bees, wasps, hoverflies, ladybirds.
Abiotic elements		
Water	There is no water at this site.	
Soil	Slightly gravelly sand clay – ph 8.0 – leaf litter is present on the ground.	
Bedrock / surface rock	There is no exposed rock in this area.	
	The bedrock has been identified as limestone	

Archaeological considerations	
There is no known archaeological considerations.	

Management history of site	
(e.g. when was the wood established, previous uses etc...)	
1884 – The site which the school is now situated on was recoded as agricultural fields.	
1950 – Regimental Depot Barracks were recorded as being situated on the current school site.	
1965 – Housing beginning to be erected in the village	
1977 – The current school building is established with trees being planted around the site.	

Long term vision	
To be regularly used by the school to provide a Forest School area.	
To continue to enhance the area – planting, providing homes for birds and insects.	
Provide opportunities for outside groups in the local community to get involved with planting.	
To enhance the range of woodland materials on offer for learners to interact with.	

Impact matrix to assess the ecological effects of Forest School activities

Key for impact matrix

P – Positive

S – Short term

Per – Permanent (100+ years)

N – Negative

M – Medium term

Temp – temporary

L – Long term

R – Reversible

Activity	Aspect	Area Impacted on				Mitigation
Clearing in bottom area by fence – currently overgrown in places – some has already been cut back	Removal of shrubs	Ground layer N, S, R Some plants may be lost, however some area will be left to continue to grow naturally. If left to re grow it should recover.	Field layer N, S, R Some plants may be lost, however some area will be left to continue to grow naturally. If left to re grow it should recover.			Only clear certain areas. A large amount of shrubs to be left to grow naturally
Litter picking	Removal of litter	All layers P, S, Temp Removal of litter is good for both flora and fauna of the site. Due to where the area is situated, the litter will return				Ensure correct PPE is worn suitable for collection of waste.
Shelter building	Taking wood from the woodland for activities	Ground layer	Field layer	Understory		Limit the frequency and evaluate the

		N, S, R Damage by trampling to flora when the site is in use. Braking leaves and branches during the building process. Area should recover when left.	N, S, R Damage by trampling to flora when the site is in use. Braking leaves and branches during the building process. Area should recover when left.	N, S, R Braking leaves and branches during the building process. Area should recover when left.		amount of dry, dead wood around the woodland before removing any. Collect only the minimum amount needed. Reserve specific areas for deadwood conservation.
Planting new trees and shrubs	Bringing new species of flora onto site	Ground layer P, L, R New trees and shrubs to be planted to enhance the site and provide new homes for nature.	Field layer P, L, R New trees and shrubs to be planted to enhance the site and provide new homes for nature.			Planted in accordance with instructions Maintained to be carried out
Homes for birds and insects	Sourcing wood	Ground layer P, L, R Area to attract insects. Some damage may occur to flora but should recover when left.	Understory P, L, R Bird boxes. Damage may be done during installation however should recover when left.			Consider areas where this may happen to ensure that it can thrive
Fire pit area to be made	Sourcing wood	Ground layer N, M, P/R A small proportion of grass will be lost due to placement of the firepit surround however should				Wood to be used that is already on site

		recover when removed.				
Fire lighting	Sourcing wood Siting the fire Where to do it Extinguishing	Ground layer N, M, P/R Wood burnt; ash left on ground. Fire area cleared correctly ash should be unnoticeable and will eventually degrade. Fire area is in a place far enough away from trees to ensure there is no damage.				Use a sustainable source for buying in wood, rather than using the woodlands resources All fires should be lit in the fire pit, or on trays and not in or on the ground. Designate a fixed location for fires, leaving other areas free to grow as normal. Ensure that all fires are fully extinguished before leaving the site
Bow saw	Tool use	Ground layer N, M, P/R Collection of wood for cutting, would replenish over time. Movement of ground layer for cutting areas.	All layers N/P, M, T When collecting wood for cutting, some branches, trees maybe felled. This is negative, the ground layer will receive more sunlight allowing new or enhanced growth.			Ensure all safety aspects are covered and correct PPE is used.
Collecting materials	Using sticks, leaves, flowers etc for activities	Ground layer S, N Disturbing leaf litter. Should regenerate over time.				Ensure that only fallen leaves or flowers are collected.

<p>Tree climbing</p>	<p>Tampering with trees by climbing/ tying things on etc</p> <p>Where to do it</p> <p>Resources</p>	<p>Ground layer</p> <p>S, N</p> <p>Damage to plants that are more sensitive to losing leaves or flowers. Damage to trees that aren't as strong as others. Soil compaction from regular use. Breaking leaves and sticks off of Flora for building use would deplete resources and could destroy habitats.</p>			<p>Restrict activities to tree that are suitable and can tolerate the activity.</p> <p>Designate a fixed location for den building, leaving other areas free to grow as normal.</p> <p>Have a selection of resources available for the children to use each time, rather than creating new ones</p>
<p>Children learning in the area</p>	<p>Noise</p>	<p>S</p> <p>Residents in the area. Resident will be made aware the intended use of the area.</p>			<p>Resident will be made aware the intended use of the area.</p> <p>Small groups of children.</p>
<p>Cooking</p>	<p>Food waste</p>	<p>Ground layer</p> <p>T, S</p> <p>Food waste may attract animals to the site or increase the numbers of certain species, leading to adverse changes in biodiversity.</p>			<p>Make sure all left over food goes back to school and is placed in the bin</p>

7.3 Year Sustainable Woodland Management Plan

Name of wood:	Hardingstone Academy school site
Aims:	To develop the area to provide habitats for wildlife alongside providing opportunities for children to learn about the area and protecting wildlife.

Factor	Location or map reference	Current situation	Target situation	Preventative measures	Monitoring	Method of management	Timescale
e.g. Pathways	Main path from entrance N to S Small other tracks throughout	Main established but difficult and muddy during poor weather	Improved and easier access to site	Groups to use small parallel track for Forest School activities throughout Winter	Review each term, help of the children	Children to help identify which paths to improve and which to open up. Children to assist with laying of bark	Year 1 – Create bark paths Year 2 – Maintain paths Year 3 – Maintain and extend where necessary
Pathways	No main pathway	There is no formal pathway to the area – the area is situated the bottom of the school playing field. The area is grass and can get slightly	To create a pathway to the area.	Small groups in the area. Alternate path to site.	Review each half term with the help of the children	Children to help identify a good route to the area and assist with the laying of bark.	Year 1 – plan for and begin to create bark path Year 2 – complete path and maintain Year 3 – Maintain

		muddy during bad weather.					and extend where necessary.
Deadwood	Throughout the area.	In various places around the site.	Stacked for use as firewood or used to create insect habitats. Larger pieces to be used to make a fire area and seating.	Provide access of a range of deadwood for learners to use. Place wood for fire area in a good location for storage until used.	Monitor each visit.	Discuss with children about wood that has been designated for habitat purposes. Children to use the wood from the wood store as resources. Children to help build habitats.	Year 1 – create fire area, wood store area and begin to build habitats with the children. Year 2 – Maintain areas. Year 3 – maintain areas.
Nettles	Small amount throughout the site of differing varieties.	Mainly situated around the edges of the site when a little overgrown.	Nettles continue to be manageable.	Regular cutting back where needed and education for the learners. Wearing of suitable footwear and long trousers for all using the area.	Involve children during visits to monitor where the nettles are – can use markers to highlight where they are.	Children to identify with support where management may be needed and to aid in the clearing if needed.	Year 1 – establish areas of concern and monitor. Year 2 and 3 – maintain areas.
Ground cover	Throughout the site.	Is dependant on where on the site – high use areas there is	Consistency throughout usable area.	Area is limited to ensure that activities have minimal impact on	Monitor at each session. Rotate areas used or when significant	Children to be involved in discussion and monitoring of the	Year 1 – establish areas that are to be used and how this

		very little – where it has been left to grow it is quite thick.		ground and shrub level plants.	negative impact is noticed.	woodland floor. When selecting materials for activities – this should be done over a wider area and rotated.	can be rotated and monitor. Year 2 and 3 – monitor
Wildlife	Throughout the site.	Throughout the site. This can be impacted by children and activities.	Children to help build and protect designated habitats for wildlife.	Designated protected areas. Education on the importance of taking care and protecting wildlife.	Monitor at each session – taking time to look at the habitats. This could be included with learner activities.	Designated areas for habitats. Encourage and teach children about how to engage with the areas in an appropriate manner.	Year 1 – establish sites for habitats. Year 2 and 3 – monitor and maintain.
Other							

8. Our Forest School Code of Conduct

Entering the Forest School area	Learners will be briefed before entering the area. We show respect for our surroundings and the flora and fauna within. We adhere to the Forest school expectations at all times.
Boundaries	We have a set area within the school grounds that is used for our Forest School sessions. At the beginning of our session children will be made aware of the boundaries and area we can learn in. Adults will move around the areas to ensure that they have sight of the children at all times. If you lose sight of a child shout ‘1, 2, 3, where are you?’ The children have been taught to respond ‘1, 2, 3, I am here’, or signal in other ways if non-verbal. This enables the leader to trace children who have strayed. Children who are known to need 1-1 support are given the support needed.
Lighting a fire	The Forest School leader will plan and be in control of fire lighting. All adults present at the session will be briefed before the activity begins. The leader will wear a high vis jacket during this time to ensure that the learners know who the responsible overseeing adult is. There will be

	an adult present at all times when the fire is lit. The fire will only be lit when all safety measures are in place. Fires will only be lit in our purpose build area.
Fire circle	The open fire will be lit in the centre of the fire circle. The seating for the fire circle is 2metres away from the fire square. All learners must ask for permission to enter the fire circle and receive a response from the leader before they are allowed to enter. Learners are not permitted to run near the fire circle. Only items can be bought into the fire circle by an adult. If the learners are require to leave the fire circle or need to change seating space – they must step out of the fire circle and walk around the outside of the seating. When the area is not in use , we still treat it as if a fire is lit.
Use of tools	There is a wide range of tools used at Forest School and require a range of Personal, Protective Equipment and correct use techniques (Please see specific Use of Tools policy for more details).
Digging	We discourage learners from digging large holes. During sessions learners have the opportunity to move soil carefully when looking for insects.
Tree climbing	A risk assessment will be carried out before the learners are allowed to climb. The area will be check for sharp objects and any possible dangers. The tree will also be checked for its suitability. Children are permitted to climb to a maximum of 1.5 metres. A staff member will be present at all times.
Carrying and transporting materials	During sessions children can move resources around the site. The learners are taught to move and handle different materials safely.
Toileting	We do not have any toileting facilities in the Forest School area. Learners will have the opportunity to use the facilities before we leave the school building. When on site, children can use the facilities in school if needed. The younger children will be escorted by an adult.
Leaving the site	We work according to the ethos that the FS site should be ‘left as it was found’. All natural materials harvested and transported will be put back where they were found. Artefacts that are made or found will be photographed and not removed from the FS site. Any equipment used will be taken back and stored at the Setting. All rubbish will be taken back to and disposed of at the Setting.

9. A typical Forest School session

Before we venture out into our Forest School area, we make sure we are prepared, all learners are dressed appropriately for the weather and that we have the resources that are needed for the session. As a group we will discuss the rules, expectations and routines.

We then walk to the Forest school area and gather at the fire area. This area is a central meeting place where the group can get together both at the start of the session to discuss activities that may be taking place, talk about what children have enjoyed at the last sessions and what they may be planning to do during the current session.

Many of the Forest School activities take place in the vicinity of the fire area. This includes art, games and woodwork. During the session the group will gather back together to have a drink and snack. This can include helping to build and make a fire at the base of

When learners are new to the Forest School sessions, time is spent getting to know and explore the surroundings and learning about the basic safety rules that are in place before taking part in more complex tasks and allowing more freedom to explore their own interests.

At the end of each sessions, all learners and staff work together to collect and put away all materials and tools that have been used. The natural resources are returned to where they were found.

10. Equipment for Forest School

The Forest School leader will always carry an emergency bag. The contents of this is dependant on elements such as the weather, the type of activities planned and the individual learner needs. This bag contains a range of essential items alongside any tools or equipment used for sessions.

Trolley for transportation	Sit mats –carpet tiles
Set of spare clothes	Firestriker / cotton wool / kindling
Spare clear plastic bags and bin liners	Squash, hot chocolate powder and biscuits
Wet wipes	Plastic beakers
Tarpaulins & tent pegs	Plastic plates
Penknife	Disposable gloves
Whistle for use in emergencies	String and rope
Sun cream (summer)	Face masks
Insect repellent (summer)	Pen and paper
Washing up bowl & antiseptic hand wash gel	Fire blanket and bucket
Kelly kettle and gloves	Facial tissues and kitchen towel
Drinking water in jerry can (this is filled with fresh water prior to each session).	Spare water in jerry can

Emergency procedure information

Mobile phone with emergency contact numbers – in school.	At a glance sheet - children’s medical information and medication for individuals
Staff handbook and emergency procedures in water-proof folder	Risk assessments
Map of forest school site with postcode and / or grid reference	Accident forms

First aid kit

First aid guidance booklet	Disposable gloves (latex free)
Sterile non-medicated dressings	Eye bandage
Triangular bandages	Eye wash
Cleansing wipes	Instant ice pack

Space blankets x 2	Burn cool x 4
Cling film	Safety pins

Activities equipment

Wood – ash, hazel, elder, willow	Beads
Wool, ribbon, string	Felt pens and charcoal
Scissors	Paint brushes
Wood glue	Masking tape
Cotton sheet	Pots for mixing natural dyes
Clay, wooden boards & modelling tools	Sieves
Stories	Activity bags
Pestle and mortar	Bug pots, spoons, paintbrushes, ID sheets

Tools

Tool bags and tool box	Knives x 5 in lockable box
Bow saws 12" x 3	Loppers x 4
Potato peelers x 20	Work gloves - adult's: 4 & children's: 10
Tent pegs (blunt ended) x 20	Rope – various sizes inc. poly prop.
Pruning saws x 1	Billhooks x 2

11. The Forest School Day

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Forest School is a child-centred inspirational learning process, that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term program that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting.

Responsibilities

Clothing

It is our responsibility to ensure that children are appropriately dressed for Forest School sessions. Any child not wearing appropriate clothing will not be able to participate.

We will provide a shelter from the elements either the wood structure on site or a high shelter made from tarpaulin. It is still important that all learners wear clothes that are warm and that are OK to get wet and muddy. This type of clothing also protects from cuts and scrapes. It must also meet any religious requirements.

Clothing list:

- warm trousers
- long-sleeved jumper
- fleece or t-shirt
- a vest or t-shirt underneath

- thick socks - thermal if possible or two pairs of thinner ones
- wellington boots
- waterproof coat with hood
- waterproof trousers
- gloves and wolly hat (cold weather)
- sun hat (warm weather)

Behaviour Management

Whist on site we follow the 1, 2, 3 Magic system for behaviour and immediate 3's have a consequence, are recorded and shared with parents at the end of the school day.

Safety and First Aid

The Forest School Leader (Amy Hoyer) is a qualified first aider and carries a recommended first aid kit. All activities are risk assessed prior to the session and staff continually monitor the safety of the group. An emergency plan is detailed further in this handbook in the unlikely event of a serious accident.

All staff and volunteers have undergone an appropriate selection process to assess their skills and suitability for working with children and have been subject to enhanced DBS.

Cancellation

Forest school sessions take place in most weather conditions. However high winds are extremely dangerous and sessions will not take place if this occurs. Sessions will where possible be moved to another suitable day.

12. Risk assessments

Food safety and cooking procedure

The Forest School Leader holds a food hygiene safety certificate.

We will provide hand washing facilities at each session and will ensure that all staff, volunteers and participants follow the Forest School food hygiene rules.

Forest School food hygiene rules

Everyone involved in Forest School should be involved in food safety and follow the food hygiene rules below. If you spot a problem, please point it out to the Forest School Leader.

When involved in food and drink preparation you should:

- Wash hands before and during cooking.
- Not handle food if they are ill with stomach problems, such as diarrhoea or vomiting.
- Cover sores and cuts with a waterproof dressing.
- Avoid handling food when possible, and instead use spoons, tongs or other suitable implements.
- Tie hair back.
- Keep food that is waiting to be cooked separate from food that is ready to be eaten.
- Use separate chopping boards for preparing different foods, especially raw and ready-to-eat food.
- Prepare food on a suitable surface, e.g. chopping board, cup, saucepan and not on the ground.
- Ensure food is cooked thoroughly before serving. Food should be cooked right through and piping hot in the middle.

- Not reheat food more than once.
- Keep utensils clean and regularly wash tea towels and cloths.
- Store food in clean plastic containers with non-leaking lids.
- Take all rubbish and food scraps away with them at the end of the session to avoid attracting vermin to the site.

Food allergies and special dietary requirements:

Participants are asked to state any food allergies and special dietary requirements they may have on their Parental Consent and Medical form. This information will be used to plan what food and drink to provide during sessions, ensuring that the food and drink provided is suitable for all.

13. Use of Tool policy and risk assessments

Learning to safely use appropriate tools are an important part of a child's development. They enable a child to fashion instruments for both practical usefulness and pleasure. Tools help children learn how natural materials feel and change and when used safely, help to develop coordination, dexterity and ingenuity. Only Level 3 Qualified Forest School Leaders will train children to use tools and will be responsible for the care and safety of all individuals when using tools, including implementing the safe tool use policy and procedure. 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.

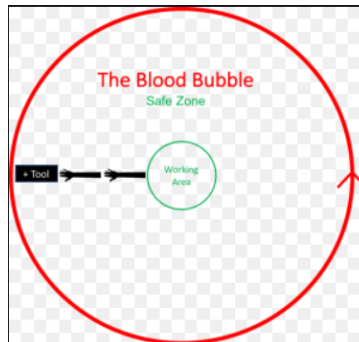
At Hardingstone Academy we will encourage the use of the following tools:

- Hammers
- wooden mallets
- potato peelers
- hand drill
- palm drill
- small hacksaws
- bowsaws
- loppers
- secateurs

The following guidelines are to be followed when using tools:

- Hand tools are to be maintained in good order by the Forest School Leader(s) and will be inspected before each session to ensure safety.
- Only tools that are in safe working order will be used.
- Children and adults will be taught how to handle tools properly and to treat them with respect.
- Individual tools will be introduced to children in a structured way, clearly showing how to use each tool safely.
- Whilst using hand tools the staff-to-child ratio is increased to a minimum of 1:2.
- Tools will be kept in a locked Forest School Tool Box and removed only by the Forest School Leader.
- All tools will be counted out at the beginning of the session.

- Tools will not be removed from the designated area. This area will not be included in 'free flow'. Children will be reminded not to run, walk around with, or point tools at others.
- Children will lose permission to use tools if the guidelines are not followed.
- All tools must be counted back into the tool bag at the end of the session.
- Staff and volunteers must receive training on the use of individual hand tools before being permitted to use them with children.
- Safe working distances will be maintained at all times. Children will be made aware of their personal space ('blood bubble') and of not entering other's space when using tools.



- Initial tool use will be monitored and inform a re-assessment of risk.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): All group members will wear suitable boots/shoes/gloves and outdoor clothing for the activity they take part in.

Tool specific procedures

Hammers and Mallets

- 1:3 adult to child ratio when using hammers.
- Items to be hammered should be on the ground or a firm surface, not held in the hands or on the body.
- Nails and stakes will only be dispensed by an adult in small quantities and with careful supervision.
- All nails and stakes will be accounted for and collected back in after use.

Drills

- 1:2 adult to child ratio when using drills.
- Items to be drilled should be on the ground or a firm surface, not held in the hands or on the body.

Peelers

- 1:2 adult to child ratio when using peelers.
- Peelers will be kept sharp as a blunt peeler is actually more likely to cause an accident.
- When using peelers or knives to whittle, this must be done at the side of and downwards of the body. Children will be carefully instructed on position and technique, and will need to demonstrate they have grasped this before they are given a peeler. • Children must stay in their 'blood bubble' for safe working distance. This means that they cannot reach or touch another person at full arms' stretch.

Saws

- 1:1 adult to child ratio when using saws, unless two children are using one bowsaw together, in that case 1:2.
- Gloves are to be worn when using any type of saw.
- Saws must have a blade guard in place when not in use.
- Blade guards to be removed and replaced only by the Forest School Leader.
- Wood being sawn must be supported on a saw horse or a natural sawing break – hands must be kept clear of blade.
- Children will be carefully instructed on position and technique, and will need to demonstrate they have grasped this before they are allowed to use a saw.

Loppers and Secateurs

- Use of loppers and secateurs must be supervised 1:1.
- Tools must be kept sharp as blunt loppers and secateurs actually pose a greater risk.
- Children must stay in their 'blood bubble' for safe working distance. This means that they cannot reach or touch another person at full arms' stretch.
- Secateurs must have a blade guard in place when not in use.
- Blade guards to be removed and replaced only by the Forest School Leader.
- Buy secateurs with safety catches.

Rope and String Use

- All string and rope use will be supervised by an adult.
- When hanging ropes are not in use they must be hooked up out of the reach of children.
- 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.
- Adult to check swing before use each session - daily site check.
- Replace rope/stick when worn.
- Rope swing use always supervised by an adult.
- Rope swing hung out of children's reach when not in use.
- Area around swing kept clear when rope swing is in use.
- Adults talk to children about safe use.

Tool Storage

- Tools will be kept in a locked Forest School Tool Box and removed only by the Forest School Leader
- All tools will be counted out at the beginning of the session.
- All tools must be counted back into the tool box at the end of the session.
- Tools will remain in the locked box even when in indoor/outdoor storage.
- The tool box should be waterproof to prevent rusting.

Tools should be checked regularly by the Forest School leader and maintained as required e.g. oiling, sharpening and so on. Maintaining tools properly reduces risk.

Tools risk assessment

	Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Existing Preventative Measures	Probability (P) 1 - 5	Severity (S) 1 - 5	Rating (PS) 1 - 25	New Preventative Measure	Who? When?	Benefits
1	Tool use	Injury	Staff, volunteers and learners	<p>Trained Forest school leader to deliver safe use of tools sessions to learners</p> <p>These sessions include descriptions of the tools, working parts and uses, safe carrying, safe passing, storage, when to use, safe working distances including the blood circle, use of personal protective e equipment</p> <p>Ratios adhered to for designated tools</p> <p>Tools to be maintained regularly</p> <p>Unsafe tools to be removed and disposed of in appropriate manner</p> <p>Locked storage box to be used and this to be stored in a locked designated storage space (Shed on playing field)</p> <p>Learners, staff and volunteers are aware of storage and are reminded to return tools after use</p> <p>Storage area to be kept tidy at all times</p> <p>Tool storage to be kept during sessions within an appropriate designated place away from throughfare to avoid trips</p> <p>Learners to be given information about tool maintenance during sessions</p> <p>Tool maintenance to be part of general practice</p> <p>Leader to check tools on a regular basis and ensure all tools are return and securely stored at the end of each session</p> <p>First aid kit available</p> <p>Leader to have relevant first aid qualification</p>	1	4	4	<p>Activities for tool use must be age and stage appropriate</p> <p>Leader must supervise all activities involving tools</p> <p>Leader to brief and model how to use tools safely</p> <p>Leader to supply appropriate personal, protective equipment for Learners</p>	<p>Leader to risk assess all activities regarding tools prior to use</p> <p>Leader to supervise at all times</p> <p>Leader to ensure all tools are counted back in at the end of the session and toll box is locked and placed in a locked area</p>	<p>Fine and gross motor skill development</p> <p>Risk assessing</p> <p>Partner working</p> <p>Communication skills</p> <p>Safety awareness</p>

2	Hammer – transporting, slipping of target, falling, hitting fingers	Injury – cuts, bruising, bangs	Staff, volunteers and learners	<p>Tool kept in designated toolbox when not in use.</p> <p>Regular and effective tool maintenance. No gloves worn on tool hand to prevent slipping. Glove to be worn on non-tool hand.</p> <p>These sessions include descriptions of the tools, working parts and uses, safe carrying, safe passing, storage, when to use, safe working distances including the blood circle, use of personal protective equipment</p> <p>Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate</p> <p>First aid kit carried at all times</p>	2	3	6	<p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to carry the tool.</p> <p>To ensure the learners have a full understanding of how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with themselves or any member of the group</p> <p>The learners should know that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported immediately to the Leader. The Leader will decommission the tool.</p> <p>Leader to supply appropriate personal, protective equipment for Learners</p>	<p>Leader to supervise at all times during activity</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of use and storage of the tool.</p> <p>Leader to ensure all tools are counted back in at the end of the session and toll box is locked and placed in a locked area</p>	<p>Fine and gross motor skills</p> <p>Risk assessing</p> <p>Spatial awareness</p>
3	Mallet - transporting, slipping of target, falling, hitting fingers	Injury, bangs	Staff, volunteers and learners	<p>Mallet kept in designated toolbox when not in use.</p> <p>Regular and effective tool maintenance. No gloves worn on tool hand to prevent slipping. Glove to be worn on non-tool hand.</p> <p>These sessions include descriptions of the tools, working parts and uses, safe carrying, safe passing, storage, when to use, safe working distances including the blood circle, use of personal protective equipment</p> <p>Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate</p> <p>First aid kit carried at all times</p>	2	3	6	<p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to carry the tool.</p> <p>To ensure the learners have a full understanding of how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with themselves or any member of the group</p> <p>The learners should know that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported immediately to the Leader. The Leader will decommission the tool.</p> <p>Leader to supply appropriate personal, protective equipment for Learners</p>	<p>Leader to supervise at all times during activity</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of use and storage of the tool.</p> <p>Leader to ensure all tools are counted back in at the end of the session and toll box is locked and placed in a locked area</p>	<p>Fine and gross motor skills</p> <p>Risk assessing</p> <p>Spatial awareness</p>
4	Drill – transportation, slipping when in use, breaking	Injury – cuts, wounds	Staff, volunteers and learners	<p>Tool kept in designated toolbox when not in use.</p> <p>Tool Maintenance. Drill bits kept sharp and useable. No gloves worn on tool hand to prevent slipping. Glove on other hand.</p> <p>These sessions include descriptions of the tools, working parts and uses, safe carrying, safe passing, storage, when to use, safe working distances including the blood circle, use of personal protective equipment</p> <p>Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate</p> <p>First aid kit carried at all times</p>	2	3	6	<p>To ensure the learners have a full understanding of how to carry the tool correctly in its designated holder</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with themselves or any member of the group</p> <p>The learners should know that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported immediately to the Leader. The Leader will decommission the tool.</p>	<p>Leader to supervise at all times during activity</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of use and storage of the tool.</p> <p>Leader to ensure all tools are counted back in at the end of the session and toll box is locked and placed in a locked area</p>	<p>Fine and gross motor skills</p> <p>Risk assessing</p> <p>Spatial awareness</p>
5	Wheelbarrow – injury, unbalanced	Back injury, falls,	Staff, volunteers and learners	<p>All barrows are kept in a safe position when not being used</p>	2	2	4	<p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to store the barrow correctly and remove storage safely</p>	<p>Leader to supervise at all times during activity</p>	<p>Gross motor skills</p> <p>Risk assessing</p>

	ed, flat wheel, breakages	trips, crushing		<p>Correct lifting position demonstrated</p> <p>Tool maintenance. Kept useable.</p> <p>Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate</p> <p>First aid kit carried at all times</p>				<p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to stand when raising the handles of the barrow and advise on the maximum weight with the barrow</p> <p>The learners should know that if a problem has occurred with the barrow it should be reported immediately to the Leader. The Leader will decommission the barrow</p>	To ensure learners have a full understanding of use and storage of the tool.	Spatial awareness
6	Secateurs – transportation, slipping when in use breaking	Injury, cuts, bangs	Staff, volunteers and learners	<p>All Secateurs kept in tool box when not being used</p> <p>Tool Maintenance. Kept sharp and useable. No gloves worn to prevent slipping</p> <p>Regular and effective maintenance of tools.</p> <p>These sessions include descriptions of the tools, working parts and uses, safe carrying, safe passing, storage, when to use, safe working distances including the blood circle, use of personal protective equipment</p> <p>Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate</p> <p>First aid kit carried at all times</p>	2	3	6	<p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to carry the tool correctly in its designated holder</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with themselves or any member of the group</p> <p>The learners should know that if a problem has occurred with the secateurs it should be reported immediately to the Leader. The Leader will decommission the secateurs</p>	<p>Leader to supervise at all times during activity</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of use and storage of the tool.</p> <p>Leader to ensure all tools are counted back in at the end of the session and toll box is locked and placed in a locked area</p>	<p>Gross motor skills</p> <p>Risk assessing</p> <p>Spatial awareness</p>
7	Loppers – transportation, slipping when using, bouncing off, blade snapping	Injury, cuts, bangs	Staff, volunteers and learners	<p>All loppers kept in tool box when not being used</p> <p>Tool Maintenance. Kept sharp and useable. No gloves worn to prevent slipping</p> <p>These sessions include descriptions of the tools, working parts and uses, safe carrying, safe passing, storage, when to use, safe working distances including the blood circle, use of personal protective equipment</p> <p>Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate</p> <p>First aid kit carried at all times</p>	2	3	6	<p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to carry the tool correctly.</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with themselves or any member of the group</p> <p>The learners should know that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported immediately to the Leader. The Leader will decommission the too</p>	<p>Leader to supervise at all times during activity</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of use and storage of the tool.</p> <p>Leader to ensure all tools are counted back in at the end of the session and toll box is locked and placed in a locked area</p>	<p>Gross motor skills</p> <p>Risk assessing</p> <p>Spatial awareness</p>

8	Bill hook – transportation, slipping when using, bouncing off, blade snapping	Injury – cuts	Staff, volunteers and learners	<p>All Bill hooks kept in sheaths when not being used. Billhook stored in a locked container until supervised use begins</p> <p>Tool Maintenance. Kept sharp and useable. No gloves worn to prevent slipping</p> <p>These sessions include descriptions of the tools, working parts and uses, safe carrying, safe passing, storage, when to use, safe working distances including the blood circle, use of personal protective e equipment</p> <p>Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate</p> <p>First aid kit carried at all times</p>	2	4	8	<p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to carry the tool correctly in its designated holder</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with themselves or any member of the group</p> <p>The learners should know that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported immediately to the Leader. The Leader will decommission the tool.</p>	<p>Leader to supervise at all times during activity</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of use and storage of the tool.</p> <p>Leader to ensure all tools are counted back in at the end of the session and toll box is locked and placed in a locked area</p>	<p>Gross motor skills</p> <p>Risk assessing</p> <p>Spatial awareness</p>
9	Sheath knife and pen knife – transportation, slipping when using, storage during the session, blade snapping	Injury – cuts	Staff, volunteers and learners	<p>All Pen Knives and sheath knives kept in sheaths when not being used. All knives kept in a locked container until supervised use begins</p> <p>Tool Maintenance. Kept sharp and useable. No gloves worn to prevent slipping</p> <p>Knives have tethers on them to hang in suitable position off the floor or stored in the tool box.</p> <p>These sessions include descriptions of the tools, working parts and uses, safe carrying, safe passing, storage, when to use, safe working distances including the blood circle, use of personal protective e equipment</p> <p>Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate</p> <p>First aid kit carried at all times</p>	2	3	6	<p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to carry the tool correctly in its designated holder</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with themselves or any member of the group</p> <p>Knives need to be in their sheath hanging from their tether or stored in the tool box</p> <p>The learners should know that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported immediately to the Leader. The Leader will decommission the tool.</p>	<p>Leader to supervise at all times during activity</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of use and storage of the tool.</p> <p>Leader to ensure all tools are counted back in at the end of the session and toll box is locked and placed in a locked area</p>	<p>Fine motor skills</p> <p>Risk assessing</p> <p>Spatial awareness</p>

10	Pruning saw – transportation, slipping when using, blade snapping, trapping hand	Injury – cuts	Staff, volunteers and learners	<p>All Pruning Saws kept in sheaths when not being used</p> <p>Tool Maintenance. Kept sharp and useable. Glove worn on the non-sawing hand</p> <p>These sessions include descriptions of the tools, working parts and uses, safe carrying, safe passing, storage, when to use, safe working distances including the blood circle, use of personal protective e equipment</p> <p>Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate</p> <p>First aid kit carried at all times</p>	2	4	8	<p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to carry the tool correctly in its designated holder</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with any member of the group</p> <p>The learners should know that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported immediately to the Leader. The Leader will decommission the tool.</p> <p>Use correct positioning of saw when in use</p>	<p>Leader to supervise at all times during activity</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of use and storage of the tool.</p> <p>Leader to ensure all tools are counted back in at the end of the session and toll box is locked and placed in a locked area</p>	<p>Gross motor skills</p> <p>Risk assessing</p> <p>Spatial awareness</p>
11	Bow saw – transportation, blade slipping when in use, blade snapping, trapping hand	Injury - cuts	Staff, volunteers and learners	<p>All Bow Saws kept in sheaths when not being used</p> <p>Tool maintenance keeps bow saw sharp and useable. Glove worn on the non-sawing hand</p> <p>Hand guards on tools.</p> <p>These sessions include descriptions of the tools, working parts and uses, safe carrying, safe passing, storage, when to use, safe working distances including the blood circle, use of personal protective e equipment</p> <p>Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate</p> <p>First aid kit carried at all times</p>	3	3	6	<p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to carry the tool correctly in its designated holder</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of how to position the tool correctly when using it so if a slip occurs it will not make contact with them or any member of the group</p> <p>The learners will be informed of how a blade should look and that if a problem has occurred with a tool it should be reported immediately to the Leader. The Leader will decommission the tool</p> <p>Correct position of saw when in use</p>	<p>Leader to supervise at all times during activity</p> <p>To ensure learners have a full understanding of use and storage of the tool.</p> <p>Leader to ensure all tools are counted back in at the end of the session and toll box is locked and placed in a locked area</p>	<p>Gross motor skills</p> <p>Risk assessing</p> <p>Spatial awareness</p>

Forest School site risk assessment

Site

	Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Existing Preventative Measures	Probability (P) 1-5	Severity (S) 1-5	Rating (PxS) 1-25	New Preventative Measure	Who? When?	Benefits
1	Broken fences or boundaries	Injury – cuts, crushing, entrapment, trips	Staff, volunteers and learners	School site boundaries are monitored by school site supervisor and maintained School site is surrounded by permanent metal fencing All problems are reported through the schools reporting system – emergencies are reported directly to the site supervisor	1	5	5	Leader to check all boundaries prior to sessions Leader must be aware of any potential boundary problems	Leader to liaise with the site supervisor regarding boundary issues Leader to check before sessions and monitor throughout	Risk assessing
2	Low branches – banging head, poking in eyes	Injury, bang to head, cuts, grazes, poked in eye	Staff, volunteers and learners	Warn the group to avoid branches on trees explain why they are hard to see especially those at eye height. Involve pupils with risk assessment procedures Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate First aid kit carried at all times	2	3	6	The Leader will clear the immediate area around the site during initial site development	Leader to ensure the learners are aware of danger	Risk assessing Spatial awareness
3	Dead trees and branches – impact, crushing, tipping, falling	Injury, crushing, cuts, broken bones, death	Staff, volunteers and learners	Tree survey has been carried out – all trees that have died have been removed from the ground. Timeline of possible work that may need to be carried out in the future is in place All trees are checked regularly and are monitored by the site supervisor and Leader Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate First aid kit carried at all times	2	5	10	Continued risk assessments	Leader to ensure the safety of the group and be aware of any dead trees or branches Dead branches to be removed	Risk assessing
4	Dogs – attack, faeces	Injury, cuts, puncture wounds, disease, death	Staff, volunteers and learners	School site is surrounded by metal fencing No access to the general public Designated member of staff to hold outdoor first aid certificate First aid kit carried at all times	1	5	5	Check site for dog faeces prior to sessions Learners moved to a safe area if a dog is encountered on site	Leader to deal with any dog faeces Leader to carry poo bags and antibacterial hand wipes at all times	Risk assessing Awareness of surroundings

5	Member of the public – interference, abduction	Verbal and physical abuse, panic attacks, abduction, injury	Staff, volunteers and learners	School site backs on to housing School site is surrounded by metal fencing Learners are briefed to keep clear of the fencing unless supervised during an activity Learners moved to a safe area if needed Leader and all staff carry a mobile phone	1	5	5	Leader to brief learners on interacting with members of the public Leader and staff to supervise group and monitor area at all times	Leader and staff to monitor throughout the session	N/A
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14. Fire Policy

Fire safety policy

Campfires form an important aspect of learning during Forest School session. Children experience and take part in activities such as singing, making and sharing food, sharing stories and listening together.

At Hardington Academy we believe that we have a responsibility to teach children about the how fire should be respected, the dangers associated, safety and responsibility and about the fire triangle – oxygen, fuel and heat) and how can safely build a successful small fire.

Hardington Academy ensures those participating will do so with as little risk to health as possible, within a safe manner and contained in a safe, secure environment. A risk assessment will always be carried out prior to a fire being lit.

Location:

- Only the purpose build area will be used for campfires – this is located in the fire pit area.
- We have an open fire area surrounded by fixed seating 2 metres from the fire pit.
- Forest school learners are allowed in this area only during Forest School sessions.
- The fire area is positioned in an area of the field away from all site exits. An adult will be present in the fire area at all times when the fire is lit. The school will ensure that no other children are present in the area during Forest School session. The school will always have notice of when the fire will be lit. There are always a minimum of 2 adults present at Forest School.
- Children may only enter the fire area when permission is granted. They must ask the adult in charge 'May I enter?'. Prior to sessions, all children will be taught how to enter, exit and move around the fire area.
- When access is granted, children must walk around the outside of the seating logs and wait for permission to step over. Once inside the area, the learners must sit ensuring legs are drawn in and not outstretched.
- Once the learners are seated around the fire, they must not move from their seat unless directed by the adult.
- Learners are taught to stand up and step over the seating to move out of the fire area. Learners will then walk around the outside of the seating to change spaces or leave the area. Learners must never cross the inner circle and running is not permitted.

- Long sleeves and trousers must be worn by all taking part in Forest Schools.
- Learners are not permitted to throw anything into the fire.
- Learners will be given advice on the appropriate way to deal with smoke: turn head to one side, placing their hand across their face, to close their eyes and count to 30 – they can ask an adult or a peer to count for them.
- If there is a clear wind direction then seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.

FIRES WILL NOT BE LIT IN STRONG WINDS

Safety and responsibility

1. Lighting and keeping fires burning 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 a fire square.
2. Storm kettles are only used on a stone slab and any woodchip or leaf litter must be brushed away before use.
3. No flammable liquids or plastics are to be used on the fire.
4. If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision.
5. Water must always be to hand during campfire sessions.
6. At the end of the session, the fire must be extinguished with water until all smoke and steam has ceased.
7. The bowl will be filled with water (this will drain through the holes at the bottom) and the lid placed over it.
8. These items will be essential whenever a fire is lit:



- Fire blanket
- Heatproof gloves or gauntlets
- Clean emergency water supply
- Burns first aid kit.

Fire Risk Assessment (see separate risk assessment)

- The FS leader may teach a Year 5/6 child 1:1 how to build a small fire.
- Fires are lit using tinder of various kinds, fire steels or matches.
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- No plastics are to be burnt.
- If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision.

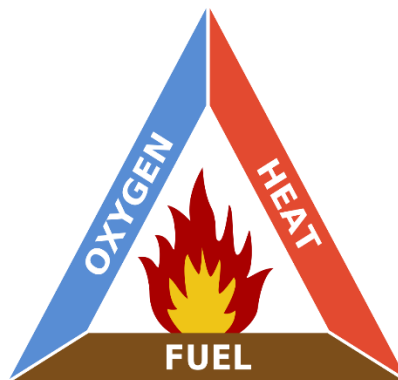
- Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire.
- The hand should never go over the fire.

Extinguishing fires

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
- FS leader should ensure that any large remains of wood are separated from one another.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.

Education about fire and fire lighting (notes for adults at FS sessions)

For a fire we need fuel, fire and oxygen – the fire triangle



- Children will collect tinder (dry grasses, very dry leaves, birch bark from the floor, very fine twigs, pine needles or open pine cones) to make an apple sized tinder bundle.
- They collect their kindling. FS leader will also have alternative tinder if wet. Small twigs are best as it's the thickness not the length that counts! They will be separated into piles of different sizes - very fine twigs (a few mm diameter, size of a toothpick), slightly larger twigs (diameter of a pencil), and bigger twigs (approx diameter of adult thumb).
- FS leader will explain that those that make a nice snapping sound when you break them are drier, and good for firelighting, whereas if they bend, then they're not very dry and not good for firelighting. Bone dry wood and small twigs make less smoke, and standing dead wood is better than wood from the ground.
- FS leader will also have fuel: a few larger diameter pieces of dry wood, own supply of charcoal, dry sticks or small split logs.

Starting the fire

- A few slightly larger pieces of wood will be put in the base of the firepit to create a dry platform and keep the tinder off the floor.
- Tinder will be lit with a spark from fire striker (fire steel or matches). The finest tinder will then go on, e.g. paper thin bark, pine needles, dry grass, dry (dead) nettles, hay, super thin twigs.
- Gradually add larger sized tinder and kindling. As one piece lights, add another - too much too soon can suffocate the fire of oxygen and put it out.

- We will explain the purpose of a particular fire. For example, the above method is best for getting a fire started, 'grid fires' are good for cooking (a criss cross piece of metal over it, so that pans and kettles can be heated on a flat surface). Long fires are long burning and are good for keeping us warm overnight but we will not be using these at Hardingstone Academy as we have no need to. Fires will be built with the session length in mind and with an aim for them to extinguish naturally by the end of the session.

Storm Kettles

- These are used to heat water for hot drinks.
- The bung must be removed before use.
- The storm Kettle will be placed on a concrete slab when in use.
- When lit, do not stand directly above the kettle.
- To put the fire out – pour water into the base to extinguish.

Fire including cooking										
	Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Existing Preventative Measures	Probability (P) 1	Severity (S) 1 -	Rating (PXS) 1 - 25	New Preventative Measure	Who? When?	Benefits
1	Woodland fire	Injury, burns, smoke inhalation, death	Staff, volunteers and learners	Whistle to blown repeatedly to alert the group Take a head count then all persons move to the fire assembly point Alert SLT in school School to follow own procedures and contact the emergency services Leader to carry emergency first aid kit and hold a full and relevant first aid qualification	1	5	5	Leader to brief staff and volunteers and learners on fire procedures, evacuation and meeting points	Leader Staff Volunteers Beginning of session	Following procedures
2	Fire / cooking - burns from hot water / food – setting alight to surrounding area and vegetation, slipping/ tripping onto the fire once alight	Injury, burns, scalds, smoke inhalation, death	Staff, volunteers and learners	Only the purpose build area will be used for campfires – this is located in the fire pit area. We have an open fire area surrounded by fixed seating 2 metres from the fire pit. Forest school learners are allowed in this area only during Forest School sessions. The fire area is positioned in an area of the field away from all site exits. An adult will be present in the fire area at all times when the fire is lit. The school will ensure that no other children are present in the area during Forest School session. The school will always have notice of when the fire will be lit. There are always a minimum of 2 adults present at Forest School. Learners may only enter the fire area when permission is granted. They must ask the adult in charge 'May I enter?'. Prior to sessions, all learners will be taught how to enter, exit and move around the fire area. When access is granted, children must walk around the outside of the seating logs and wait for permission to step over. Once inside the area, the learners must sit ensuring legs are drawn in and not outstretched.	2	5	10	Leader to brief staff and volunteers and learners on fire procedures, evacuation and meeting points Lighting and keeping fires burning 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 a fire square. Storm kettles are only used on a stone slab and any woodchip or leaf litter must be brushed away before use. No flammable liquids or plastics are to be used on the fire. If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this	Leader – throughout the activity Staff Volunteers and learners Beginning of session	Learning about the fire triangle Respect for fire Managing safety and risk Group work when collecting wood Identification of trees for suitable fire wood

			<p>Once the learners are seated around the fire, they must not move from their seat unless directed by the adult.</p> <p>Learners are taught to stand up and step over the seating to move out of the fire area. Learners will then walk around the outside of the seating to change spaces or leave the area. Learners must never cross the inner circle and running is not permitted.</p> <p>Long sleeves and trousers must be worn by all taking part in Forest Schools.</p> <p>Learners are not permitted to throw anything into the fire.</p> <p>Learners will be given advice on the appropriate way to deal with smoke: turn head to one side, placing their hand across their face, to close their eyes and count to 30 – they can ask an adult or a peer to count for them.</p> <p>If there is a clear wind direction then seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.</p> <p>The FS leader may teach a Year 5/6 child 1:1 how to build a small fire.</p> <p>Fires are lit using tinder of various kinds, fire steels or matches.</p> <p>No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.</p> <p>No plastics are to be burnt.</p> <p>If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision.</p> <p>Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire.</p> <p>The hand should never go over the fire.</p> <p>Extinguishing fires All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.</p> <p>Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.</p> <p>Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.</p> <p>FS leader should ensure that any large remains of wood are separated from one another.</p> <p>At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.</p> <p>Learners will be told of the dangers of eating food directly from the fire</p> <p>Hot drinks will not be given until at a suitable drinking temperature – cold water can be used to cool down drinks</p> <p>Leader to have relevant first aid qualification</p> <p>First aid kit available</p>			<p>must be done with one to one adult supervision.</p> <p>Water must always be to hand during campfire sessions.</p> <p>At the end of the session, the fire must be extinguished with water until all smoke and steam has ceased.</p> <p>The bowl will be filled with water (this will drain through the holes at the bottom) and the lid placed over it.</p> <p>These items will be essential whenever a fire is lit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire blanket • Heatproof gloves or gauntlets • Clean emergency water supply • Burns first aid kit. 		
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Monitoring of policy

This policy will be reviewed annually but may also be influenced earlier by new research and government guidelines.

15. Health and Safety Policies & Procedures

Hardingstone Academy sets out clear statements of intent regarding the Whole School's approach to the health and safety of its children, staff and visitors to the School and the School Site.

Provided below is a list of additional points and measures which relate directly to our Forest School sessions.

There is always a high Leader and staff to participant ratio at Forest School. This means that participants can safely experience activities like climbing trees, walking across logs blindfolded, lighting (controlled) fires and using knives that are usually considered too risky in other situations. It also means that Leaders are able to give individuals one-to-one attention when needed, and to lead small group work.

All activities are thoroughly risk assessed before the start of each session and Leaders continue to monitor the safety of the group as activities evolve. There is always a trained first aider present at each session and a written emergency plan to follow.

Participants are also involved in completing their own risk assessments throughout the sessions. This gives them ownership of the process and helps them to be aware of, and calculate, the risks involved in each activity. They are asked to state what risks and hazards they should be aware of and what steps they can take to reduce or mitigate them. For example, they are given flags to mark hazards like brambles and hidden ditches.

DAILY PROCEDURES

The Forest School Leader has a duty of care to ensure that all staff and learners are safe during the sessions. The Leader will risk assess the site before every session and carry out a range of checks before, during and after the session.

Pre-visit checks

- Check the area for and remove all visible litter and faeces.
- Check the site risk assessment and amend where necessary.
- Check for trip hazards and remove where possible.
- Remove any loose overhanging vegetation.
- Ensure risk assessments are completed for all activities.
- Erect shelter(s).
- Set up Forest School circle.
- Set up hand washing station.
- Check that the forest school rucksack contains all necessary items (see section on *Forest School equipment*), including all emergency procedure information, a stocked and in date first aid kit, fire blanket and dated fresh water.
- Check you have all the materials and resources needed for the activities you have planned.
- Check that all tools you are planning to use are in good working order.

- Check that your phone is in working order and is fully charged.

At the start of the session

- Take register and head count.
- Remind children about physical boundaries (use visual cues when needed) and that they must stay within these. In the first sessions, and at the beginning of each session play a game to reinforce this.
- Remind children how they should behave and how to stay safe on site (see site risk assessment).
- Explain the need for, and principles of, fire safety.

Throughout the session

- Be vigilant.
- Remind children of how to stay safe by highlighting potential hazards (see individual *activity risk assessments*), reminding them of the boundaries and asking that they make an adult aware of any possible hazards that they spot.
- Carry out regular head counts.
- Take photos and make observations of individual children.
- Use de-escalating techniques whenever possible when dealing with behavioural issues and the 1, 2, 3 Magic method of behaviour management.

At the end of the session

- Carry out a final head count and escort the group back to the school.
- Count and pack up all equipment.
- Count and pack up all resources.
- Place all tool back into locked storage area.
- Clear fire area and make safe. Remove ash and cover over the site of fire.
- Evaluate the session.

Adult Roles & Responsibilities

- The Trained and Named Forest School Leader is always the person in charge of Forest school sessions.
- The Forest School Leader has overall duty of care for the children in their charge. However all adults involved in the Forest School session are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe.
- All adult helpers MUST sign and date a form to show that they have read and understood this handbook and the risk assessments appropriate to the session in which they are helping. They must sign and date the form stating that they comply with the general operating procedures for Forest School (code of conduct).
- The Forest School Leader or Assistant will always carry and take a first aid kit into the forest at every session.
- The Forest School Leader or Assistant will always carry an Emergency Bag into the forest for every session.

- The Forest School Leader will ensure that the Emergency Bag contains:
 1. Essential survival equipment
 2. A register of all children attending the session
 3. The School's telephone number (and location details for the emergency services)
 4. The Forest School Leader will always carry a mobile phone and will ensure that there is easy access to a land line if the group is out of range.
 5. In the event of an emergency, The Forest Leader will ensure that the School contacts the emergency services. If contact with the school is lost the Leader will contact the emergency services.
 6. The Forest School Leader will review the risk assessments before every trip into the School's Forest Site.
 7. When tools are used the adult child ratio will be 1:1 (There is one exception to this – when using peelers for whittling the ratio can be 1:2).
 8. The Forest School leader is responsible for the maintenance and checking of all tools and equipment to be used at Forest school, prior to their use.
 9. The Forest Leader is responsible in training the children in how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately.
 10. The Forest leader will be responsible for the pre visit check of the Forest School site prior to a Forest School session.

Emergency procedure

1. Locate all group participants and call back in the agreed manner (this is set at the beginning). Stop (where safe to do so) all activities. Withdraw the group to a safe space away from possible harm.
2. Where casualties are present, the first aider must attend with an adult helper where possible to do so to continue to adhere to adult to learner ratios. As a minimum – 1 first aider must be present on site at all times. A record of all first aid administered will be kept. This also includes any changes that may occur to the state of the casualty and if anything is administered.
3. School management will be informed of any major incident as soon as possible.
4. Where necessary the emergency services are to be contacted. Mobile phones are carried by all staff. The school will also be contacted, and a member of the site team will be waiting to greet the emergency service vehicle. Address to be given: Hardingstone Academy, Martins Lane, NN4 6DJ.
5. The rest of the group will be escorted into the main school building.
6. The head of school or a designated member of school will inform the next of kin as soon as possible in line with the schools operating policy.
7. The incident will be reported in line with the schools operating policy and any partner agencies informed.

All policies and risk assessments will be review and the incident noted.

Missing person procedure

The following procedure should be followed by the Forest School Leader responsible for a group in the event of any person (adult or child) going missing from the Forest School group.

- Carry out 1, 2, 3 routine. This signals that everyone should move to the Forest School circle.
- Conduct a head count to check that all other members of the group are present.
- Have two members of staff or volunteers stay with the group at the Forest School circle and await further instructions.

- Send the remaining staff and volunteers to search the immediate area for an agreed length of time (e.g. 10 minutes). Arrange for them to return to the agreed meeting place at an agreed time.
- Ensure that each of the searchers has a mobile phone with sufficient credit and battery life. Searchers should stay within an area they know and be aware of their own safety.
- If the missing person is not found in the agreed length of time, everyone should walk to the school. Here the rest of the group can wait in safety and comfort.
- Alert school staff to the fact that there is a missing person.
- Organise a second search party. Any staff member who knows the site can be recruited to help this second search. Searchers should work in pairs with at least one carrying a mobile phone with sufficient credit and battery life. Arrange for them to search for a specified length of time (e.g. 20 minutes) and return to reception at an agreed time.

If the missing person is not found by this second search, then with SLT consent, contact the police. The decision may be made to do this while the second search is in progress depending on circumstances.

At this point, a decision will need to be made regarding the rest of the group, in consultation with the SLT. It is likely that once they have changed out of their waterproofs, it will be best for the children to return to normal lessons.

Areas for search:

- All outside playgrounds, field and areas.
- The school car park
- Toilets within school
- All classrooms and cloakrooms in school

After the incident is over, complete a full report using the Incident Report Form.

Fire procedure

- In the event of a fire that cannot be put out quickly and safely by the Forest School Leaders, blow repeated long whistles to alert the group.
- Gather everyone together, conduct a head count and evacuate area to a safe location – Playground meeting point in case of fire.
- Alert SLT where the school will then contact the emergency services

Campfire procedure

Hardingstone Academy Forest School provides opportunities for children to get closer to nature and the outdoors through a variety of activities, which include learning about fire safety and how to make fires through the use of Kelly kettles. Children may also get the opportunity to light their own fires on wooden blocks or in small metal containers. This will only take place under strict supervision, with a one to one adult to child ratio.

All Forest School Leaders are skilled and practiced in fire-building and management. Kelly kettles and small fires only will be used and lit in the centre of the Forest School circle.

All Forest School activities are rigorously risk assessed. Sessions are planned in such a way as to introduce higher risk activities to children over a period of time. This allows Leaders to get to know the children in the

group and for the children to learn how to behave responsibly and to build knowledge and understanding of the activity.

Boundary setting

In the first Forest School session, both physical and behavioural boundaries are agreed with the children. At each subsequent session, these boundaries are revisited and reinforced.

Developing routines – Sessions 1 and 2

- When they arrive at the Forest School site, children are shown how to sit round the Forest School circle (step over sit mats/tree stumps and sit down).
- The need for, and principles of, fire safety are explained. This will include the rule that when kelly kettles or a fire are being used in the centre of the circle, only one child at a time is permitted to approach the kelly kettle or fire, on instruction from the Forest School Leader.
- The children are shown how to move around the circle (step out of circle and walk around outside).
- For young children (Foundation and KS1), a game is then played to reinforce this – Leaders call out different statements that will relate to certain children in the group. E.g. “Everyone who has brown hair step outside and move around the circle” and so on.

In subsequent sessions, children will be asked to recall how they should behave at the Forest School circle. Depending on the behaviour and ability of the group, the use of kelly kettles and/or lit fires will usually be introduced in much later sessions.

Forest School Leaders’ daily campfire and use of kelly kettle and camp fire procedures

To ensure that everyone stays safe on site and that risk is managed effectively, Forest School Leaders will follow a daily campfire and kelly kettle procedure.

Forest School Leaders will:

- Keep igniters in a safe location.
- Ensure there is a supply of water/soil/sand to douse the fire.
- Always carry a fire blanket.
- Carry out a pre-visit site check and risk assess the site and the activity.
- Be prepared to abandon the activity in the event of unforeseen circumstances rendering the activity unsafe and have another activity on standby.
- Alert the fire brigade in advance if necessary to avoid false alarm and misidentification of Forest School fires as being uncontrolled.
- Douse fires at completion and check them after 30 minutes to ensure that they have not spread.

When lighting fires, Forest School Leaders will:

- Not wear loose clothing, tie long hair back and ensure that children have their hair tied back and also have no loose clothing.
- Wear gloves.
- Allow only one child at a time to help with fire construction / approach the fire.
- Try to keep away from the smoke.
- Put out the fire with water when finished.

When using kelly kettles, Forest School Leaders will:

- Only light a fire in the tray of the kelly kettle in the centre of the Forest School circle.
- Kneel on one knee for ease of moving backwards.
- Never place the kettle on the fire without containing water.
- Only fill the kettle with water when cool.
- Place the tray of the kettle on a flat surface.
- Remove the cork before putting the kettle on the fire.
- Keep the spout on the opposite side to themselves and others.
- Remove the kettle from fire when the water starts to boil.
- Remove the kettle from the fire with the handle held vertically, using the chain to support it in an upright position.

Toilet and shelter facilities at Forest School

Toilet facilities

There are no toilets on the Forest School site. Children are advised to use the toilets in school before the start of the session. If children need to use the toilets during the session then they will go back to the school in pairs. The younger learners will be accompanied by a member of staff.

Shelter at the Forest School site

In the case of adverse weather conditions there is a permanent shelter on the Forest School site. We will also provide a tarpaulin shelter, to provide shade during the summer months and to protect from rain, wind and snow in the winter months.

Litter and Waste Water Procedure.

During the sessions there is a small amount of waste created. All waste and litter will be collected and disposed of appropriately.

- The Forest School Leader will provide waste containers.
- All waste produced or found on site during the Forest School session will be placed within the waste containers
- At the end of the Forest School session the Forest School Leader will remove the waste containers for appropriate recycling/disposal.

A small amount of waste water is created at Forest School, from hand washing and washing up. Solid debris is removed from the water for disposal in the waste containers. The waste water is then disposed in the woodland over a wide an area as possible, so it will evaporate quicker.

16. Safeguarding Children, Confidentiality and Forest School

All staff follow Hardingstone Academy Safeguarding and Confidentiality Procedures – see **Appendix A** for full policy. Any volunteers or visitors to the site are made aware of the procedures.

Discuss procedures – taking forms out etc – see risk assessment – everyones responsibility – does the school have a statement on this?

17. Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Forest School

At Hardingstone Academy we are committed to giving each child every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual children or groups of children. We aim to provide all our children with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement.

We will:

- Ensure equality of access for all children
- Employ a range of styles, including collaborative learning, so that children can value working together
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education
- Take account of the performance of all children when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- Make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of children.

Our teachers ensure that our children:

- feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- appreciate and value the differences in others
- take responsibility for their own actions
- participate safely, in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs
- are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success
- use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, learning styles and linguistic needs, without stereotyping
- have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- have challenging targets that enable them to succeed
- are encouraged to participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs.

Forest School does mean Forest School FOR ALL. We encourage a level of risk-taking, always under close adult supervision, and actively foster friendships and collaboration between all children and adults. Forest School activities are always designed to produce success and enjoyment, even when this appears to be of a transitory nature. The Forest environment is an environment to which we are all entitled and we strongly believe that the experiences we will have there will linger in the memory for years to come. Children with medical needs or disabilities will be helped so that they can take part fully in each Forest School session.

Those children with challenging behaviour will be risk assessed and may need one to one supervision, but their entitlement to participate in Forest School remains the same.

18. Risk Assessment Guidelines

A **SITE** risk assessment is undertaken each week and a **DAILY** risk assessment and check is made prior to every Forest School session at our Forest site.

In addition, an **ACTIVITY** risk assessment will be established prior to any activity that may require it. These will include: whittling, cutting wood, shelter building, fire lighting and cooking on an open fire, and palm drilling.

Specific additional risk assessments will be undertaken for children whose medical condition or whose behaviour requires them.

The risk assessment process is detailed below:

- We look for potential hazards.
- We decide who might be at risk of harm.
- We think about how harm may occur and the worst outcome that we could face.
- We evaluate the current level of risk.
- We decide on a course of action or set of precautions that will be put in place to minimise the potential risk.
- We then re-evaluate the level of risk once our course of action and precautions have been put in place.
- We create a risk assessment and collate them in the Forest School file.
- We inform all adults with accompanying the group and require them to sign each relevant risk assessment to show that they have read and understood the assessments
- We regularly monitor and review each risk assessment, half termly and as an action is needed.

19. Poor Weather Procedures

Forest School can not run in weather conditions that pose a danger to the health and safety of the learners and staff. This includes high winds, during thunder storms, or during periods of extreme cold. We will use the BBC weather online forecast to make judgments about the expected conditions.

The Forest School Leader will make the decision to continue with Forest school or postpone due to bad weather.

When it is wet we have access to a shelter on site.

20. Designated Person Responsibilities

Forest School Leader: Amy Hoyer

First Aider 1: Amy Hoyer

Additional First Aiders in the school include: All staff in school hold either paediatric first aid or a general first aid certificate.

Designated Safeguarding Lead/ deputy: Zoe McIntyre, Julie Stevens, Gill Glenn

21. Insurance Requirements

Hardingstone Academy

Martins Lane

Hardingstone

Northampton

NN4 6DJ

office@hardingstone.emat.uk

The school holds full insurance for Forest School activities to take place within the school grounds.

22. Letter To Parents:

Forest School at Hardingstone Academy

Dear Parents,

We are now in a position to run a Forest School within the school grounds. It is planned that all children should have a 'Forest School experience' during their time at Hardingstone Academy.

The location will be at the bottom of the school field. Our Forest School leader is Amy Hoye. Please read the following important information, fill in the Parent School Agreement and return it to the school office.

Information about Forest School

Forest School is run by a trained Leader and aims to build up children's skills, abilities and confidence week by week through practical hands-on activities in the outdoors. It gives them the chance to explore, learn and discover at their own pace in a safe and supportive space.

Forest School uses natural resources to stimulate imagination, creativity and investigation.

Activities can include:

- Woodwork using tools, e.g. making musical instruments, jewellery, decorative items ☒ Natural art
- Fire lighting
- Using knots and lashings
- Shelter building
- Bug hunts

There are many benefits to Forest School. For example, it can:

- Develop physical abilities and help participants to stay active and healthy.
- Heighten self-awareness and improve emotional and social skills.
- Promote co-operative and group working.
- Encourage children to take care of themselves and others.
- Foster care, appreciation and respect for wildlife and wild places. ☒ Broaden knowledge and understanding of the natural world.

Safety at Forest School

There is always a high adult to participant ratio at Forest School. All activities are thoroughly risk assessed before the start of each session and Leaders continue to monitor the safety of the group as activities progress. There is always a trained first aider present at each session and a written emergency plan to follow.

Who will be running the Forest School sessions?

Sessions will be overseen by Forest School leader Amy Hoye. They will be assisted by Hardingsotne Academy staff.

What your child needs to wear for Forest School

The Forest School sessions will take place entirely outside in the wood whatever the weather. We will provide a shelter from the elements, but it is still important that your child wears clothes that are waterproof and warm and that are OK to get wet and muddy. Your child should wear:

- Waterproof coat
- Waterproof trousers (if they own a pair)
- Wellington boots (or sturdy walking boots)
- Comfortable long trousers
- Comfortable, warm long sleeved top or fleece / Long sleeved T-shirt.
- Thick socks if the weather's cold - thermal if possible or two pairs of thinner ones
- Gloves and hat (cold weather)
- Sun hat and sun cream (warm weather)

School Parent Agreement

The School	The Family	The child
We will aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to :-	I/we will aim to work in partnership with the school and its staff to:-	I will aim to follow the rules of the forest:-
provide high quality teaching & learning through a broad and balanced curriculum	respond promptly to school correspondence	I will be gentle
value each child as an individual	ensure that my child is equipped appropriately for Forest School	I will be kind
understand that each child has their own learning style	let the school know about any concerns and problems which might affect my child's behaviour or progress	I will try my best
encourage each child to achieve their personal best in all areas	support the school policies and their rules for promoting good behaviour.	I will be honest
provide opportunities for children to learn and practice new skills		I will listen to others
encourage collaborative learning		I will look after living things
encourage children to take risks in their own learning		
provide a high ratio of adults to children		
ensure all adults working with our children are fit to do so		
Signed: _____ Dated: _____	Signed: _____ Dated: _____	Signed: _____ Dated: _____

23. Helper Agreement

I _____(volunteer at Forest School)

have read and understood all that is stated in this handbook and had the opportunity to have any questions answered about its contents or my role.

I understand that the Forest Leader is in charge of the activities within the session, and have read the relevant risk assessment for the activities to take place during my session. I have provided my medical and emergency details to Hardingstone Academy and notified the Forest School leader of any relevant information.

Signed _____ Dated _____