



Woolpit Primary Academy
NURTURE • RESILIENCE • INSPIRATION • RESPECT

Woolpit Primary

School

Forest School

Handbook

Statement of Ownership

This handbook has been created by Rebecca Brotherton.

This document will be reviewed and updated according to any changes that have to be made. These may be changes to the actual Forest School site or how the sessions may be run. Information about school policies are taken directly from Woolpit Primary School and all relevant policies can be found on the school website.

<https://www.woolpitprimary.net/policies>

The next review for our Forest School Handbook will be September 2026. However, if any changes occur before this time, this document will be updated and relevant amendments will be made. All staff will be asked to read the handbook again and signatory evidence will be obtained.

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Welcome to Woolpit Primary School's Forest School

At the heart of Forest School is the freedom to learn through play, giving young people time to be curious and inspired by nature. Dr Stuart Brown, the founder of the National Institute for play stated, 'Play builds the human and it is a human instinct from the very beginning to play.'

The offering of Forest School within Woolpit Primary Academy supports the vision of the school values of nurture, respect, resilience and inspiration. In the forest school environment these values support children to:

- Be successful and ambitious learners who are resilient in face of a challenge
- Enjoy learning and love coming to school
- Feel safe and know they are cared about
- Take pride in where they live and their community
- Develop curiosity
- Build on relationships and understand that everyone's views are valued
- Develop skills to support lifelong learning

The Forest School principles at Woolpit Primary School

1. The Long-Term Principle:

Forest School involves regular, long-term engagement in natural environments for sustained development, not just one-off events.

At Woolpit children enjoy sessions on a weekly basis for a 6-week period throughout the seasons of the year. Planning for these sessions is carried out through observation, reviewing and adapting play activities to provide progression in learning and building on previous experiences.

2. The Nature Principle:

Learning happens in a woodland or the natural environment of the school field, fostering a strong connection to nature.

Learning happens in our on-site Forest School and large school playing field. We aim to foster a love and respect for the natural world. We wish to develop a sense of ownership and belonging to our school's natural environment. Through the management of the site, the children will learn and develop an understanding of the nature cycle and respect the wonders in the natural world.

3. The Risk Principle:

Learners are encouraged to take supported, appropriate risks, building resilience and decision-making skills, rather than being risk-averse.

In a safe and supportive environment, the children will have the opportunity to build resilience by taking risks and solving problems, through conversation and encouragement. This may mean trying again and again with support and the adapting of plans to allow children to build their self-esteem through their accomplishments.

4. The Holistic Learning Principle:

It promotes the growth of the whole person - socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively.

We want to grow the whole child through the development of skills linked to empathy, social communication, gross and fine motor skills, independence and resilience, problem solving and being creative and reflective.

5. **The Leadership Principle:**

Sessions are run by qualified Forest School practitioners who guide and facilitate, rather than dictate.

The Forest School sessions are run by a level 3 qualified Forest School Leader, who is paediatric first aid trained. All adults will have up to date DBS certificates. Adults are facilitators within Forest School, through observations and questioning, adults can support and coach young people providing them with the tools to develop their play.

6. **The Community Principle:**

It's a learner-centred, child-led approach that builds a community where children develop confidence, independence, and problem-solving skills.

A Forest School community will be built within Woolpit Primary School which ensures all learners and adults are showing the school values through the opportunities that Forest School provides. This will develop young people who are happy to take risks, are able to communicate their emotions and needs, can show tolerance and acceptance of others and develop a love of nature and the outdoors.

Our Sessions

Forest school focuses on routines which allow the children to quickly understand expectations and build self-confidence through the safety of the environment. Each session runs to a similar format with ideas and games planned. However, due to the nature of forest school being child led, sessions may naturally evolve.

The routine is as follows:

- Daily assessment of site
- Meet and greet children and welcome them to the woods
- Log circle welcome story, introductions of each other's forest school name, set boundaries for the session, health and safety to be aware of for safe play in the woods. Explain the "wolf call" which is to bring everyone back to circle time when heard.
- Introduce ideas and activities available for the session
- free play and games
- circle time/talking stick/reflection/goodbye story/things to think about
- walk back into school

Our Site

The school has a specifically designated Forest School site. This is part of the large enclosed playing field, which is surrounded by mature hedging- including hazel, brambles and wild roses. Around the edge of the field are birch trees, oak, wild cherry, elder and willow trees. The field provides many opportunities for animal identification, tree, berry and nuts identification and a source of wood for crafting and group playing.

The Forest School site itself consists of a range of mature trees, a designated seating area and fire circle. There are small open spaces, allowing children to create dens, as well as designated areas for crafting, a mud kitchen and a small wood shed. The Forest School shares a shed with equipment for playtime games.



Code of Conduct

The code of conduct is to be maintained and followed by all young people and adults accessing the Forest School site. The code of conduct is revisited and assessed through the risk assessment and risk benefit assessment (Appendix 1).

Entering the site:

Children will walk with an adult to the site from their classroom. They will wait at the site gate to ensure the Forest School Leader is present and ready. They will leave their water bottles opposite the gate and then come and sit in the log circle.

Boundaries:

The site has a fence around the perimeter. The children are able to use the bigger site of the school field. They need to let an adult know, so one adult can be within the fenced area and another supporting on the field. The fences act as the boundary unless the children are shown otherwise.

Toileting:

We will encourage the children to use the bathroom before entering the site. However, they are able to access the loos during the session, in exactly the same way they would at playtime: letting an adult know they need to go and then entering the school either through the EYFS door or through the door they came out of.

The log circle and fire circle:

The log circle is our base camp, but also where the fire pit is. Due to this, the children will be taught the rules regarding entering the circle as good practice. They will be taught to walk around the outside of the circle to find their place on a log (green dragon). During time spent at the log circle, the children will be taught to be respectful of others and a talking stick will be used to ensure children listen to others.

Carrying Large items:

Children will be taught the appropriate way to carry large objects/branches. Children will drag, roll, pull objects ensuring they keep their backs straight and where

necessary knees bent. If the branch is bigger in width than their arm it must be dragged or use 2 people to carry it at each end.

Picking natural items:

Children may gather natural items being respectful of how and the amount they take. Adults will be on hand to ensure these items are not harmful.

Fungi and Berries

No pick, no lick! policy will be used for fungi and berries. However, children will be taught through sessions to identify these within the setting, as set out in the ecological report carried out.



Clothing

It is important that all participants at Forest School wear appropriate clothing to ensure they can get the most enjoyment out of time spent in the woodland. The diagram suggests suitable clothing for a range of different weathers. However, parents and children will be regularly reminded about the need for long layers and appropriate covered shoes to allow children to climb trees, prevent insect bites and possible ticks.

(Sourced from Natural Learning, via the Suffolk Wildlife Trust).

See Appendix 1 for extreme weather risk

assessment.

Using Tools

Children will be taught how to use a range of tools appropriately. Depending on the age this may be on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. Tools will be kept in particular

zones within the site. A risk benefit assessment is carried out and is outlined in Appendix 1.

Ropes, knots and string:

Children will be taught how to use ropes for a selection of knots. Ropes need to be used appropriately for den making and balancing. Ropes will need to be collected together at the end of a session and either dried or wrapped up. String will be used for crafting activities, but at the end of a session must be cleared away. Ropes and string are not to be used to tie each other up.

Digging:

Children will be able to use small spades to dig. They will be taught that the soil is a habitat for many creatures and to take care. Children will be encouraged to dig in certain areas to ensure the safety of other children. Anything they find or remove will need to be replaced at the end of the session.

Tree Climbing:

Tree climbing provides children with the opportunity to take risks. However, it is important that they adhere to certain rules for safety. Children should be wearing long trousers and appropriate shoes. They can climb to a height which allows the Forest School leader to reach them with their arms out stretched. Adults will supervise the climbing. The Forest School lead will be responsible to check trees for suitability: no rotten branches, sharp branches or debris around the base.

Sticks and Stones:

Children can use sticks to play with. They are not allowed to point sticks directly at another child. Children are not allowed to pick up stones to throw.

Eating and drinking:

Children will bring their water bottles. A list of allergies will be adhered to and an updated record will be kept with the folder for the daily site assessment. Before any food is eaten, children will be expected to wash their hands in the closest bathroom with adult supervision.

Leaving the site:

At the end of the session, children will be expected to leave the site as they found it (apart from dens they have built). After the closing circle where we will reflect on the session, the children will line up by the gate to leave the site. As they leave, they will collect their water bottles. Before going into school, they will be expected to remove their wellingtons.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mrs Brotherton (Mrs Robin) is our Forest School leader and she is supported by a range of teaching assistants from the different classes which use the site.

All adults supporting the young people are paediatric first aid trained.

The responsibilities of the Forest School Leader:

- Carrying out all risk assessments, site, activity and individual.
- Assess weather conditions before each session.
- Ensure all volunteers and support staff are adequately informed.
- Hold a valid outdoor first aid certificate and DBS check.
- Ensure all procedures are adhered to.
- Inform parents of Forest School programme.
- Review and update policies and procedures regularly.
- Record all accidents and incidents.
- Report any concerns
- Ensure all kit is well maintained and stored securely.
- Plan and lead sessions.
- Ensure all activities are within the capabilities of the group.
- Hold the space modelling appropriate behaviour and manage behaviour

Volunteers and support staff:

- Read Hand book and all policy and procedure documents

- Hold a current DBS certificate
- To provide their own suitable outdoor clothing and footwear
- Share any concerns with the forest school leader and use the school's safeguarding recording system
- To take an active role in Forest School activities
- To assist Forest School leader in teaching and maintaining their own and others health and safety
- To make themselves aware of safety issues, such as whereabouts of first aid kit
- To assist the Forest School leader in ensuring all equipment meets safety standards, report any concerns of the equipment immediately

Children:

- To take responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety of others
- To listen and follow all safety information
- To actively participate in setting safety agreements and adhere to them
- To bring appropriate clothing and footwear to Forest School

Equipment We Use

The site has a designated first aid and burns kit. As part of the fire circle, a bucket, cup, fire gloves and fire blanket are used.

- Bow Saws including spare blades and guards
- Secateurs
- Loppers
- Knives
- Hand drill
- Hacksaws including spare blades
- Palm drill
- Scissors

- Hammer
- Mallet
- Gloves for tool use adults and children
- Ropes, Para cord, String, Wool
- Tent pegs
- Tarps
- Material strips and squares
- Fire Lighting kit (gloves, tinder, char cloth etc)
- Fire steels

Shave knife

- Burns kit
- 2 buckets of water and a cup

Forest School handbook additions

- Fire container (if no fire pit available or weather is unsuitable to use) •
- Grill
- Popcorn popper
 - Kettle and cups
 - Cooking pot and utensils
 - chopping boards
 - Washing up equipment
 - Water containers
 - Hand wipes and sanitiser gel

Tool Use

A range of tools will be used within forest school to develop new skills and self-confidence. There are many tasks, builds and crafts that require the use of a tool as well as woodland management and safety. All of which the children will be taking an active role in during their time at forest school. Children and adults will be instructed on the correct and proper use of each tool as it is introduced in order to use the tool safely with minimal risk of injury. The use of tools is outlined in the risk benefit assessment in Appendix 1.

Tools used within forest school:

- Peelers, bow saw, pruning saw, secateurs, loppers, palm drills, small fixed blade knife, hammer, mallet axe

Tools are stored safely with blade guards, corks and sheaths and out of reach of children when not in use.

They are well maintained and cared for after each use. Any broken or damaged tools are removed immediately and replaced or repaired.

Tools are counted in and out when used within a session and recorded in a maintenance log book.

Blood Bubble

Before introducing a tool, a safe area is identified. Solid ground around the working area with no trip or slips hazards. The user must be responsible for no-one entering their area when using the tool by creating a blood bubble. This is the circle all the way around you which is the length of your outstretched arm with tool in hand. When tools are being used

everyone is made aware of what a blood bubble is and that they are not to enter into one. This language and knowledge give us safety awareness and responsibility to manage our risks well.

Tool Guidelines for Staff and Helpers

Check each tool for nicks in the blades, rust or broken moving parts before removing it from the tool store. Do this with the child preparing to use the tool so they know how to ensure they are starting with a well working cared for tool.

Palm Drill

- In your safe clear working area, always thinking blood bubble
- Remove protective cork
- Place item securely on a flat surface
- Work slowly and safely using pressure as you push down
- Cork back on drill and return to tool store

Bow Saw

- In your safe clear working area, always thinking blood bubble
- Remove protective blade guard
- Always wear a glove on the non-working hand to highlight the need to keep it safe
- Secure the wood to be cut, ask a friend or two to help hold the wood down firmly.
- "Get into the groove" before sawing motion starts.
 - Draw blade back in one long motion, ensuring the whole length of the blade is used, lift and replace the bottom of the blade back down on the wood, repeat 3 times to create a groove in which to guide the blade better when sawing, stops it jumping.
- Saw the wood by pulling the whole length of the blade towards you and then pushing the whole length of the blade away, back and forth in a nice steady rhythm
 - Clean with cleaning brush and oil at the end of use and replace the blade guard
- Ratio 1:1

Fixed Blade Knife 3" in length (10-year-olds plus)

- In your safe clear working area, always thinking blood bubble
- Sitting on your knees or seated on a sturdy seat.
- Always work the knife away from your body. Think if this knife slips what will it hit?
- Holding the handle firmly using a clenched fist.
- Remove the sheath only when you are ready to begin and immediately when you need to stop or have finished
- Ratio 1:1

Secateurs

- Ensure they are locked in closed position and pointing down when moving around
- For cutting of wood up to 5p piece in diameter
- Ensure you are holding the right way up with the cutting blade at the bottom

- Keep your free hand well away from where you are cutting
- Return to the tool store, wipe the blades clean at the end of use and leave in the locked position

Loppers

- Carry with the blades pointing to the ground and tucked under your arm close to the body
- For cutting wood up to 2p piece in diameter
- Work with a friend to help secure the wood you are cutting. Be mindful of what will fall and ensure the area is clear of others and safe
- Return to the tool store wipe the blades clean at the end of use and leave in the closed position

Peelers

- In your safe clear working area, always thinking blood bubble
- Hold by the handle with a secure grip
- Be mindful of the hand that is holding the item and work by pushing down and away from your body
- Stop and carefully remove any items that get stuck in the peeler
- Return to the tool store when finished

Wear a glove on the hand that is not holding the tool for all above tools. This helps to highlight the awareness that this is the hand that could get hurt.

"If this tool slips, what will it hit?' Ask yourself this every time when preparing to use a tool and during. Helps to manage all the risks well and is a great habit for safe tool use.

Accident and Emergency

First Aid

The Forest School leader is a qualified Paediatric First Aider and will assess and administer first aid if needed. A first Aid kit is part of the Forest School Leaders kit and is with them with every session. They are regularly checked for stock and well maintained..

In the event of an incident or accident the forest school leader is responsible for all first aid and adopting the correct emergency procedure.

Any minor first aid will be given by the first aider and a report filled out and the parents informed of the injury and action taken.

Emergency Procedure

The Forest School Leader will follow this order of action in the event of a serious incident:

This is implemented if the site needs to be evacuated for any reason. Such as if weather conditions become dangerous, anyone gets attacked or injured or there is a lost participant.

- **Safeguard the group**

Ensure that you and your group are safe, warm and sheltered. Stabilise the situation as far as possible and delegate supervision roles if necessary. Evacuate the group from any hazardous areas.

- **Send for help**

If possible, send for help from other instructors, members of staff or volunteers. If necessary, get somebody to call the emergency services. For general illness contact the school office, they will then contact parents if necessary.

Where appropriate, use mobile phone to call the school office for support. (01359 240625).

- **Give emergency first aid**

If necessary, give first aid to any casualties and treat injuries until emergency services arrive. Consider delegating emergency aid to a qualified assistant if available.

- **Transfer any casualty into medical care**

Arrange for any casualties to be accompanied to hospital if possible. Ensure that any

relevant personal medical details are sent with them to hospital.

- **Contact parents/guardians**

Casualty's parents must be alerted. It may be necessary to contact all parents in order to avoid panic and provide support for all those within the group.

- **Escalate**

Report to your manager, leader at the venue or head of school.

- **Record and report**

Ensure that an accident report form is completed. It may be useful to write a report detailing exactly what happened to whom, where and when. Notify the venue of any accident and complete any paperwork they require.

- **Alert other staff**

Other staff members can give practical and emotional support and advice where needed as well as ensuring that all group members are sufficiently well cared for following any sort of incident.

Fire/Evacuation Procedure

Forest School leaders undertake fire awareness training as part of their qualification. In the event of a fire or another emergency situation the safety of participants is paramount and the Forest School Leader will initiate any or all of these actions depending on the seriousness of the incident.

The Forest School leader must establish emergency evacuation points and explain to the group where they are and how to get to them at the start of the session.

On Discovering a fire:

Safeguard the group

Send for help

Give emergency first aid (if required)

- Sound the alarm using the nearest fire alarm point if applicable.
- If outside shout "FIRE, FIRE, FIRE"
- Gather the group and take them to the evacuation point (the school field)
- Dial 999 and give the operator the location of the fire at the venue with the address and contact number
- Tackle the fire with the appropriate extinguisher situated just inside the door- IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO • Complete a head count and take a register to ensure all the participants are accounted for
- Report to Head of School and Managers.

On Hearing the alarm

The alarm; either the fire alarm of the school or a shout of "FIRE, FIRE, FIRE"

- Stop the session and take the group to the nearest evacuation point (school field)
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings
- Complete a head count and take a register to ensure all the participants are accounted for.

Lost Child Procedure

All Children attending Forest School will be registered and head counted before leaving the classroom. They are counted by the Forest School Leader on arrival to the forest school site during the session and before they head back into class. Boundaries are agreed and marked by the children at the beginning of each session. A wolf call is used to gather children around the log circle. All children and adults are expected back by the third call. Children are counted.

A game called '1,2,3, where are you?' is played with the group from the start to establish routine and encourage expectation of how to respond when this call is given. Children will stop and shout loudly 1,2,3 here I am!

Children are observed the whole time during the session and the Leader will have an awareness of each participant and their activity during the session.

In the event of a suspected lost or missing child:

- Wolf call is used three times
- 1 adult will use 1,2,3 where are you? In and around the site
- The Forest School Leader will remain with the group around the log circle until the missing child is located
- If the child is not found within five minutes, the head of school is informed and the emergency procedure will be adopted

Policies Linked to Forest School

The Forest School is embedded as part of Woolpit Primary School and adhere to the school policies, which can be found at:

<https://www.woolpitprimary.net/policies>

Safeguarding (including Prevent): https://b29a6d58-2da2-4a18-9685-e7451bba19e7.filesusr.com/ugd/29c785_d1961064c9a94e6082e3f64663146900.pdf

Behaviour: https://www.woolpitprimary.net/_files/ugd/055724_a59404e9578a4cb2842d08341446aa79.pdf

Anti-bullying:

https://www.woolpitprimary.net/_files/ugd/055724_2a223839549546b088a2159ab0186899.pdf

Allergies:

https://www.woolpitprimary.net/_files/ugd/055724_bdaab2de0e2c4f219b9a05105ab38a4d.pdf

Peer on peer abuse: https://b29a6d58-2da2-4a18-9685-e7451bba19e7.filesusr.com/ugd/29c785_54c4849e631b40768b796635e3de40d5.pdf

Equality: https://b29a6d58-2da2-4a18-9685-e7451bba19e7.filesusr.com/ugd/29c785_f65057fbdbe64c7aa7b44d9240bd6b9a.pdf

Behaviour and values within Forest School

Within our forest school the values of nurture, resilience, respect and inspiration are at the heart of all we do together. The forest school leader will promote and model kindness, respect and care throughout each session. We listen to each other, talk and act kindly and show respect to each other and the environment we are in. This includes showing kindness, respect and care to all the animals, creepy crawlies and plant life too.

At the very beginning of the first forest school session children will be welcomed into the woods and a discussion on our values will be held. The introduction of circle time enables this discussion to take place where the forest school leader can promote that forest school is a safe place for us all to be heard and respected. As well as respecting the environment we are all in, we want to leave the forest as we found it.

Agreements are made with the children as to what they believe our school values look like in the forest setting.. This enables the children to have ownership and responsibility over their behaviour and their voice is heard as to what is expected and acceptable from everyone.

Boundaries are set out on the first session so the children know where they can safely go and the "wolf Call" introduced so they know that is the signal to return to the circle.

It is important to build relationships and nurture a sense of community during the sessions, so we talk about a forest school name when introducing ourselves.

The children think of something in nature that starts with the same letter as their preferred first name. As do all the staff and volunteers within the group.

As we go through the sessions and introduce new activities such as fire and tool use further agreements with the children will be made in the same way to ensure the health and safety and appropriate behaviour of the group.

The forest school leader will always model and promote kind, caring and respectful behaviour throughout the sessions and acknowledge others that do so too.

Any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with immediately. De-escalate the situation, allow the child space away from the rest of the group to reflect and compose themselves. One to one listen and discuss behaviour with them in line with the school's behaviour policy.

It is the leader's responsibility to deal with any dangerous behaviour appropriately. It may be necessary to stop activities to ensure the safety of the group. In the event of continuous dangerous behaviour the session will be terminated and the group will return to

school. Children will only be excluded from forest school when behaviour is so poor it is deemed unsafe for all other participants. Any decisions taken will be very carefully considered alongside the proven benefits of forest school.

Forest School Play Policy

Commitment in the Forest

At Woolpit Primary Academy we are committed to providing children with the opportunity to play within the Forest School environment. When planning activities we will always ensure we refer back to our knowledge of play and the benefits for our children.

Rationale for play within the Forest

We believe that all children need opportunities to play that allows them to explore, manipulate, experience, question and affect their environment. We believe play provision should be welcoming and accessible to every child and through our Forest School offering we provide this.

What is Play?

Play is a self-chosen, intrinsically motivated activity for enjoyment, crucial for development, involving exploration, learning, and social skill-building. It is characterised by choice, imagination, and flexibility. Play doesn't rely on outcomes or goal setting and it may be repetitive. It's how children (and adults) make sense of the world, develop confidence, process emotions, and build resilience, ranging from games and sports to creative activities and unstructured fun.

Benefits of Play

- Play develops a child's self-esteem through the ability to make their own choices, allowing them time to develop these with the support of others, taking risks they otherwise might avoid
- Play allows children to explore their own physical needs- improving gross and fine motor skills
- It can support the development of relationships and the understanding of others through chosen social interactions with different groups and individuals
- It allows children to reflect and problem solve, knowing there is no correct answer but just the opportunity to extend, refine and change
- Play instils an openness and understanding of learning, allowing children to push their own boundaries in their own time

- Play develops communication skills through the need to be mindful of others, communicating their own needs but accepting others have different needs and opinions
- Allowing children reflective time to address their emotions in an unpressured environment

We develop our knowledge of our children's interests and play through observation, which impacts our future planning.

Planning and Observation

When conducting and planning Forest School sessions it is vital to take a step back and observe the children.

The observations of children achieve a number of functions:

- provides a baseline of their skills
- to identify where their next steps may be
- informs your planning for the next session
- helps you develop as a practitioner- often with the children's imagination providing the lead to plan next steps

As adults we are facilitators within Forest School, facilitating all aspects of the benefits of play.

It is important that:

- We provide a safe environment
- We allow the children to take the lead
- We question in a way that makes them think without taking over
- We provide quiet support- watching and listening but not interfering
- We provide the parts and tools they wish to use for their play activities
- We provide good quality equipment which is looked after and maintained.

Health and Safety

Forest school programmes may include activities that are considered higher risk than usual for children. Our approach is to consider not only the risks of each activity but the potential benefits too.

The forest school leader will minimise risks by following procedures for risky activities, such as tool use and fires. Risk assessments are also carried out covering key hazards that children may come into contact with during sessions.

The sessions build each week as the group gets to know the area and their confidence builds in being in the natural space with each other. Higher risk activities are introduced when respectful behaviours and boundaries are well established. Children are encouraged and supported in recognising and managing risk for themselves.

It is the forest school leader's responsibility to ensure there is suitable adult supervision for forest school to be delivered in the best possible way. Adult/Child ratio should be 1:6 for general activities and 1:1 for higher risk activities like tool use.

All risks are assessed as part of the site and risk benefit assessment found in Appendix 1.

Fires and campfire cooking

Fire building in Forest School offers significant benefits such as: boosted confidence, resilience, teamwork, and practical skills and self-awareness. Fire building is always carried out with an adult present and follows a strict protocol. A risk benefit assessment will always be carried out.

The building and using of a fire needs a purpose. This could be:

- Cooking
- Making charcoal
- To keep warm
- Heating water

Fires should not be lit when:

- There are high winds
- The ground is extremely dry
- When there is no reason to build a fire
- Not on peat soil
- Not in an area of SSSI

Children will be taught the rules of walking around and within a fire circle when a fire is lit.

A bucket of water and a cup should be placed in proximity to the fire pit, with a pair of fire gloves and a fire blanket.

Dragons:

Green dragon- walking around the outside of the circle to avoid the fire

Amber Dragon- have a reason to be in the fire circle, such as cooking or attending to the fire

Red Dragon- should not be in the fire circle as no reason to be there

Children lighting fires

- All long hair must be tied back and any dangling bits tucked away or removed.
- If children are lighting tinder, they must position themselves in an easy manner to stand up without tripping backwards- the respect position, with one leg bent and the other kneeling
- Consideration should be given to the type of fire striker used and whether natural tinder can be used
- If children are transporting the lit tinder in a shell, they must wear a glove and hold the tinder in the shell with a small stick. When entering the circle, they need to ensure they shout amber dragon.

Extinguishing of a fire

All fires need to be fully extinguished and the ground area must be left as found.

- Let the fire burn down or pour the water from the bucket onto the fire.
- If necessary, separate the logs
- Smother the logs with soil or sand when definitely extinguished

Cooking on a fire

All of the above apply when cooking. However, other considerations need to be taken into account.

Cooking and hygiene rules

- Hand washing- children should wash their hands in warm soapy water before handling food and eating
- All food must be contained in a sealable container
- All allergies must be adhered to
- All utensils must be cleaned after using
- Meat is not to be cooked
- Food must be thoroughly cooked

All risks are assessed as part of the site and risk benefit assessment found in Appendix 1.

Den Building

Den building in Forest School offers benefits such as: boosting creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork as children use natural materials to build shelters, developing physical skills (motor skills, coordination) and self-esteem (independence, resilience, sense of self) through hands-on, self-directed play in nature, enhancing communication and connection with the environment.

Dens can be built using natural resources or tarps, guide ropes and tent pegs. The appropriate setting for a den should be considered- are there low hanging branches, is it windy, is there the chance of a branch snapping? A risk benefit assessment will be carried out.

As previously stated, children will be taught how to manage and carry logs and branches when creating natural dens. Support in the form of questioning will be provided by adults to ensure the safe placing of branches as well as the removal.

When using manmade materials, children will use a range of knots to tie ropes and guide ropes. It is important that once the den is no longer needed the materials are dry before putting away.

All risks are assessed as part of the site and risk benefit assessment found in Appendix 1.

Environmental Impact

Forest school has the environment at the heart of its ethos. Whenever possible, and appropriate, environmentally friendly products and recyclable materials are used.

Environmentally good practice is modelled by all adults, showing the children that the world in which we live must be cared for by us. Children will be involved in regular site

checks, recycling of waste, monitoring of the compost area and will always consider how we have found and will leave the site.

Landowners' agreement

We do not require a landowner's agreement as our Forest School sessions take place within the school grounds.

Woodland management

As a school we are committed to the successful management of our woodland.

We will:

- Nurture the habitats of creatures that live in our woodland and create new habitats to encourage other wildlife in.
- Coppice and trim back branches and bushes when required.
- Conduct plant and animal surveys.
- Use tools appropriately.
- Encourage a 'caring for the woodland' ethos which the children will carry forward to friends and family.

Wherever possible, the children are involved in our woodland management processes.

Insurance

Our Forest School site has the appropriate insurance as part of the school's own insurance.

Communication Strategy

Use of Photographs at Forest School

Parents/carers at Woolpit Primary School have given their consent for photographs to be taken. There are only very few children who are not to be photographed. The Forest School Leaders will inform all adults who these children are. Within the Forest School kit bag, is a school iPad and this is available for all staff to use so that they can actively take photos of the children enjoying the woodland in the moment. These photos will then be checked by the Forest School leader at the end of the sessions and uploaded to the school online platform to share with parents.

Visitor Protocol

Volunteer Policy and Procedures

A volunteer is anyone who without being paid or expecting to be paid helps out under the direction of Forest School at Woolpit Primary School Forest school sessions. Volunteers are recruited to enhance the capacity of the Forest School staff team but are not a substitute to paid fully qualified staff. Volunteers are appointed for specific duties for a specific period of time on behalf of Forest School and are covered under our existing insurance policy. Volunteers will be expected at all times to perform their duties in accordance with the procedures of Forest School at Woolpit. A volunteer will be directly accountable to a named staff member who will ensure the volunteer is fully briefed on the activities they will be undertaking and the wider safety and participant protection policies Forest School at Woolpit.

Risk Benefit Assessments at Forest School

Risk Benefit management is an essential part of Forest School. All Forest School staff have a duty of care towards the children they are with. Not only are all adults

responsible for keeping children safe, but they must also allow children to take some risk for themselves. During Forest School Sessions, it is important that children are allowed to manage their own risk, for example: when using sharp tools or climbing trees. However, risk assessments must be in place for these activities and all parties made aware of them. Forest School Risk Benefit assessments will be carried out before each session depending on what activity the group may wish to do. Before every session, a daily check will be made to ensure the area is deemed safe. As well as this, any activity that requires a dynamic risk assessment, such as tree climbing, will be carried out 'in the moment', just before that activity takes place. A dynamic Risk Assessment is carried out by the Forest School leader only. The risk assessment process is as follows:

- look for hazards.
- decide who may be harmed and how this injury may occur.
- evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or if more should be done.
- record any of our findings.
- review our assessments and revise them if necessary.
- inform all adults who accompany us

inform children of the risks