

Contents:

Introduction & Background	2
Health & Safety	4
Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure	5
Lost or Missing Person Procedure	6
Tool Use Procedure & Hand Tool Safety Policy	8
Fire Procedure & Fire Safety Policy	10
Safeguarding Policy	17
Equal Opportunities	20
Behaviour Policy	21
Learning & Development	23
Communication Strategy	24
Session Routines	25
Terms & Conditions	26
Appendices	
1. First Aid Equipment List	27
2. Forest School Kit List	27
3. Clothing Policy	29
4. Environmental Policy & Environmental Impact Assessment	30
5. Emergency Action Plan	32
6. Risk Assessments	
Forest School Site	
Play	
Open Fire	
Tools & Equipment Use	
7. Certificates	
Level 3 Forest School Leader	
Forest School Outdoor First Aid (16hr)	
Paediatric First Aid (12hr)	
Food Hygiene	

Introduction & Background

Brown Bear Forest School handbook contains information, policies and procedures relating to the running of Forest School sessions in a safe and enjoyable way. It was developed by Debbie Stimpson, Level 3 Forest School Practitioner.

The Handbook is to be read by all staff, volunteers and freelancers working for or with Brown Bear Forest School prior to participation. The Handbook is subject to annual review and to immediate review if an incident indicates the need for this.

Ethos

Brown Bear Forest School believes everybody should have regular, long-term access to a woodland or natural environment which provides them with inspirational and challenging outdoor learning opportunities. Forest School offers a learner centred approach, where participants can learn through self-directed play and exploration. Participants will be given the opportunity to develop their curiosity, confidence, self-esteem, creativity, empathy, communication skills, knowledge of the natural environment and the ability to assess risk.

What is a Forest School?

The Forest School Association define Forest School as “an inspirational process that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences, preferably in a woodland or natural environment with trees”.

Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education.

At Forest School all participants are viewed as:

- equal, unique and valuable
- competent to explore and discover
- entitled to experience appropriate risk and challenge
- entitled to choose, and to initiate and drive their own learning and development
- entitled to experience regular success
- entitled to develop positive relationships with themselves and other people
- entitled to develop a strong, positive relationship with their natural world.

This learner-centred approach interweaves with the ever-changing moods and marvels, potential and challenges of the natural world through the seasons to fill every Forest School session and programme with discovery and difference. Yet each programme does also share a common set of principles, aimed at ensuring that all learners experience the cumulative and lasting benefits that quality Forest School offers.

Principles of Forest School

- Forest School is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.
- Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

- Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.
- Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
- Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
- Forest School is run by qualified Forest School Practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice

Activities

Forest School activities depend on the ability and experience of participants and may include:

- Woodland management and nature exploration
- Building dens and other structures
- Fires and cooking
- Games and invitations for imaginative play
- Natural crafts
- Using tools, such as knives and saws
- Scavenger hunts and adventure
- Seasonal celebrations.

Health & Safety

Health & Safety Policy

Forest School programmes may include activities that are considered higher risk than usual for participants. It is the general approach of Brown Bear Forest School to consider not only the risks of each activity but the potential benefits too. However, Brown Bear Forest School seeks to minimise risk by following appropriate procedures for more risky activities, such as tool use and fires, and by carrying out risk assessment covering key hazards that participants may come into contact with during a session.

Legislation

Brown Bear Forest School fully accepts its legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The purpose of this act is to promote, stimulate and encourage high standards of health and safety at work. It protects not only all people at work, but also the health and safety of the general public who may be affected by the work activities.

Staff & Training

Brown Bear Forest School adult leaders are professionals with relevant qualifications and experience and have undertaken current DBS (CRB) checks. At least one member of the on-site team will hold an up to date first aid qualification. We will also aim to provide adequate training and support to ensure all staff, volunteers and freelancers are confident and competent when following the policies and procedures we have set out in this Handbook.

Risk / Benefit Analyses

We believe that, while there are risks that must be considered, there are also a wide range of potential benefits that can be gained by those involved. We also recognise that taking risks is an important part of learning and developing and we want to provide a safe and supportive environment in which participants can learn about risks, challenges and personal safety. Consequently, we will use a risk/benefit analysis in our assessment of our sites and activities.

On Site Risk Assessment Procedure

Forest School sites must be safe and easily accessible, so whenever possible we will visit and assess sites before activities take place. During our assessment we will seek to identify significant hazards and take action or precautions to reduce the risk to a safe level.

We will make agreements with landowners and explore specific site issues if necessary. Whilst doing this we will identify any hazards and implement the necessary controls, check for mobile phone coverage and access in case of emergency, and assess toilet facilities. We will ensure all Brown Bear Forest School staff and partners are provided with a copy of the risk assessment prior to an activity.

When and where possible, we will carry out a last check of a site prior to the arrival of a group. Changing weather conditions and visitors to the site can create new challenges, such as fallen branches and litter. These will need to be assessed and may alter previously arranged activities. Where checks are not possible prior to groups' arrival a site sweep and assessment will be made with the group upon their arrival.

There are five steps to risk assessment:

1. Look for the hazards, such as windblown trees or litter
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
4. Record the findings
5. Review the assessment and revise if necessary

Activity Risk Assessment Procedure

An activity risk assessment will be carried out prior to any activity that may require it. The risk assessment process is as follows:

1. Look for potential hazards
2. Decide who might be at harm
3. Think about how harm may occur and the worst outcome that could happen
4. Evaluate current level of risk
5. Decide on a course of action or set of precautions that will be put in place to minimise the potential risk
6. Re-evaluate the level of risk once our course of action and precautions have been put in place
7. Create a risk assessment
8. Inform all adults working within the sessions
9. Regularly monitor and review each risk assessment, half termly and as action is needed

Brown Bear Forest School will carry out specific additional risk assessments for children whose medical condition or whose behaviour requires them.

Shared Information & Responsibility

The majority of site based activities undertaken by Brown Bear Forest School are carried out in partnership with schools and other organisations. In these situations the sharing of responsibility with respect to group safety and risk/benefit analysis will be agreed in advance. Any special knowledge of the group - for example a participant may have a particular fear of dogs or a food allergy - can be useful when planning activities as we aim to make every session as beneficial to participants as possible. Partner organisations and schools must provide information on behaviours that may present risk to individuals and/or the group and, if necessary, a separate risk assessment prepared.

Insurance

Brown Bear Forest School and its staff are insured by Birnbeck Insurance.

Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure

Emergencies are never wanted, but they are a possibility, and so we at Brown Bear Forest School ensure that all adults attending a session are familiar with appropriate emergency procedures. All staff would have been briefed prior to a programme commencing to establish roles in the event of an emergency or serious incident.

Emergency Action Plan for Old Buckenham Community Primary School can be found in the Appendices, page 32.

Most emergencies can be resolved on-the-spot by the leader removing the group from potential threat and providing first aid. However, in the event of a serious incident, which could arise as a result of an injury, illness or threat, emergency services should be contacted and the following procedures followed:

1. Secure safety of whole group from further danger. Stop all work/activities if safe. Call in and locate group promptly as agreed with group in advance. If possible, remove whole group from any further danger or threat of danger.
2. First Aider to attend to any casualties with adult helper and with regard for maintenance of required supervision ratios for the rest of the party. At least one first aider must be on site at all times. A record of changes in casualties' state and anything administered to them to be made if possible.
3. Emergency services contacted as necessary, ideally by an adult helper. Charged mobile phones are carried by staff. Despatch a designated adult to meet emergency vehicle at the entrance where possible/necessary.
4. Safety of the rest of group will be maintained by the remaining staff and adults away from the scene of the incident.
5. Informing next of kin should be carried out as soon as practicable after the incident by Brown Bear Forest School.
6. Brown Bear Forest School must inform managers of partner organisations of any major incident as soon as possible. Following this as soon as is possible the landowner of the site should also be informed.
7. Incident report and/or first aid book should be filled in on site if possible and then logged at Brown Bear Forest School (some visiting group staff may fill out their own incident report form) – see first aid kit for report form. This should be filled in whenever the emergency plan is used even if no one was harmed and it was just a near miss.

Legislation

Ensure that all equipment involved in an accident or incident is retained in an unaltered condition in case it is required by the police.

Do not focus on who is at fault. In all cases keep a careful written record i.e. a log, of all facts, events, times and circumstances and retain this record until all matters are finally settled. If possible take photographs.

Do not allow anyone to interview any party member without an independent witness being present.

An incident report or entry in the first aid book must be completed, signed and dated as soon as possible, if not done so on site.

Incidents leading to admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours or resulting in an injury preventing a person working for three or more days afterwards need to be registered with RIDDOR within 24 hours Tel 0845 3009923 (HSE - Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm).

First aid kits must be restocked after use and a stock check carried out every 6 months. Any incident or near miss must be subsequently investigated by staff team to review existing controls and procedures. See Appendix 1

Lost or Missing Person Procedure

Unknown woods can be disorientating, especially if a participant is unused to this kind of environment. Many woodland sites are not surrounded by walls or fences, and whilst we appreciate this sense of freedom can be beneficial to all, there is also the possibility that a participant may get lost.

There are a number of ways we can prevent this:

- We encourage all our participants to take an interest in their surroundings so as to help find their bearings. Ultimately we would like to inspire all who are able to become responsible for their own safety with respect to staying close to the rest of the group.
- Boundaries will be chosen, clearly marked and made known to the group, Going outside the boundaries will require all of the group to go, or a sub group, with at least one leader – allowing at least two leaders to stay with the remainder of the group.
- The group will be counted in and checked at start and end of a session, then at other relevant points in the session – particularly after activities that include members splitting up.
- Good communication with the group will encourage collective responsibility for each other's safety – leaders are always approachable and should be made aware if there are any concerns as to a participant's whereabouts.

In the event of leaders fearing that a member of the group has gone missing:

1. All the group will be immediately called back in, by prearranged call or whistle, and counted and missing member determined. The time will be noted.
2. The Group Leader must ensure the safety of remaining pupils. At least two adults must stay with them at all times.
3. One or more adults should immediately start searching for the missing group member – calling and whistling as appropriate.
4. If the missing group member is not found within 5 minutes, the group Leader must contact police by telephoning 999 (this will result in the emergency plan coming in to action).

Leaders must recall and write down a description of what the missing person was wearing and any distinguishing features. Any information on their last known location and time should be noted. Also if they have any special medical or learning needs then these need to be noted down. All information then must be passed to police or other agencies.

Tools, Fires & Activity Guidance

Tool Use Procedure

Using a range of tools will be necessary in many site based activities and is an important part of our work as it enables participants to develop new practical skills that help develop self-confidence. Brown Bear Forest School aims to ensure that all people participating in sessions with tools do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible. Tools that may be used include potato peelers, bow saws, pruning saws, loppers, knives, drills and hatchets. The following guidelines are to be followed when using tools:

- The forest school leader will check all tools are fit for continued use before the session
- Only tools that are in safe working order shall be supplied for use
- Correct and safe use of sharp tools will be demonstrated to all staff and participants
- Tools should be counted when handed out and counted back in again when finished
- All groups are to be supervised closely by competent leaders until deemed competent to work with limited supervision
- Tools should be kept in a designated safe area when not in use - none should be left unattended outside this area
- All knives will be closed/ sheaved immediately after use
- Saw guards will be replaced immediately after use
- Walking around with open/ unmasked tools will not be permitted
- Safe working distances and suitable ratios must be maintained at all times

All group members will wear suitable boots/shoes and outdoor clothing for the activity they take part in. Where any cutting or felling is taking place, helmets should be worn, and gloves provided for handling brash etc.

Guidance on Knife Use

- Designate a specific zone for those using knives
- Always carry knife with sheath firmly on
- Always pass knife with sheath firmly on and in demonstrated manner
- Always keep knife in sheath when not in use
- Leader to count knives out & back in
- Ensure participants have had demonstration before use (& leader is confident of participant's ability) including grip and body position
- Knife work is always supervised by a responsible adult
- Each person to sit well out of reach of others (blood bubble)

Hand Tool Safety Policy

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

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

This will be achieved by following these guidelines:

- Staff to child will vary depending on the tool in use. The ratios will vary from 1:1 to 1:4.
- Tools will be kept in the preschool tool bag and only removed by the Forest School leaders, staff or volunteers.
- Adult and child sized gloves will be available and are to be used when appropriate. Penknives must be opened and closed by Forest School leaders, staff or volunteers
- Running with tools is prohibited
- Pointing with tools is prohibited
- Children will lose permission to use tools if the guidelines are not followed.
- Bill hooks should not be swung or used with gloved hands, and will only be used under the guidance of Forest School Leaders.
- Bow saws. Children may be taught how to use a bow saw with 1:1 supervision, or with a 'buddy' helping in a 'push-pull' fashion. Adults must always supervise closely and should place their hand (gloved) between the child's hand and that of the saw blade. The safest method of use is to brace the wood through the bow saw itself. The saw blade must be covered when not in use. When being carried the bow saw blade (in its' cover) should be pointing downwards, and to the back. When not in use (shed storage) blades should be loosen off by an adult must have a blade guard on them when not in use. Blade guards to be removed and put back only by Forest School staff, or volunteers.
- Wood being sawn must be supported on a saw horse or a natural sawing break - hands must be kept away from the blade. Adults and children must be given instruction and demonstration on the appropriate and safe position with which to saw.
- When using peelers and penknives to whittle a ratio of 1 adult to 2 children will be observed. This tool must be used seated on a log with elbows placed upon knees and using the tool in a downward motion to one side of the legs. A 'blood bubble' space must be determined ensuring a safe distance away from others. If someone wished to pass through the bubble they must verbally ask and work must stop whilst they pass, Safe, very temporary, storage is to store the blade end of the peeler in the soil. When carrying peelers participants must walk with them held down by their side. Once a child is deemed to be competent by the forest leader they may be allowed to use a fixed blade knife to whittle. The same rules as above still apply. When carrying a knife return it to its sheath. Tools must be returned to the storage container when no longer in use.
- Palm Drills / Bit and Brace – for making holes
The item to be drilled should be placed and held (by the adult) securely on a firm flat surface. Working in a safe space being aware of others moving around, children will be reminded think 'blood bubble'. These tools must be carried by a person's side, face down whilst walking at all times.
- All tools must be counted back into the tool box at the end of the session
- Volunteer helpers must receive basic training on the use of individual hand tools before being allowed to use them with children.

Fire Procedure

Fires and the use of storm kettles are an important part of Forest School and other sessions. Brown Bear Forest School aims to ensure that all people participating in sessions with fires and/or storm kettles will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible. Fires will only be used where it is appropriate to do so and where there has been an agreement with the site owner prior to the session.

- Leaders will explain to participants the importance of using only dead wood for fires and also of the importance of dead wood as a habitat
- Smoke inhalation will be reduced by burning dead wood. Those in smoky areas will be encouraged to move to less smoky areas
- Fires will only be lit in suitable defined spaces or in a fire wok
- Participants will only be allowed to light fires under direct supervision of a trained leader using suitable materials and equipment
- All participants will be given clear guidelines about how to behave and move around the area when the fire or kettle is lit
- A lit fire will be supervised by an adult at all times, as will all cooking activities
- Related safety equipment, including heat-proof gloves, a fire blanket, a burns kit and water will be kept within close range of fires
- All fires should be fully extinguished and all traces removed at the end of a session, except where the landowner has agreed that a designated fire pit may be used repeatedly

Fire Safety Policy

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

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

Location

- Only previously agreed areas will be used for the campfire.
- The campfire area will be enclosed by logs or large stones – these need to be igneous rocks (as sedimentary and some metamorphic (like flint) explode when heated - to prevent the spread of fire.
- The storm (Kelly) kettle will only be used on flat ground and any woodchip or leaf litter must be brushed away before use.

Positioning of Children and Adults

- Fire areas are surrounded by logs at least 1.5 metres from the fire pit. The logs represent the campfire boundary.
- Once lit an adult will remain by the fire at all times.
- When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area without permission.
- Seating on tarps will be organised around the outside of the fire boundary. Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.
- Long sleeves and trousers must always be worn.
- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire. With one to one adult help children may carefully place fuel for the fire on the edge of the fire. We will ensure that the ratio of children to adults is at least 1:4 outside the fire boundary area.
- Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the children: they are advised to turn their head to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes and count to 30 (or ask an adult/peer to count for them)
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.
- If wind direction is variable, the leader should rearrange the seating if at all possible.

Type of Fire

- Criss-cross fires are used to provide a large amount of heat and light and are medium burning. This type of fire is good for cooking by grilling or roasting as it creates a bed of embers.
- Tipi shaped fires burn quick and give off light.
- Star or hunters fires are very fuel efficient and are good for boiling things, e.g. a kettle.
- Long Log fires use lots of fuel and are mainly used as fires to sleep by.

Cooking

- If food is to be cooked at Forest School the Forest School leaders are responsible for ensuring that the food has been transported, cooked and stored in a 'safe to eat' manner.
- A member of Brown Bear Forest School staff with a Food Hygiene Certificate must be present at sessions where food is being prepared and/or cooked.

Safety and Responsibility

- Only adults are permitted to light fires. This will usually be the one of the Forest School Leaders.
- Fires are lit using fire lighting blocks, newspaper and matches or a Swedish fire stick.
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- No plastics are to be burnt.
- If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision.
- Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire.

Extinguishing

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

Storm (Kelly) Kettles

- Only Forest School Leaders are to light the fire in the fire pan.
- The Kelly kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground.
- Children can feed the fire with one to one supervision but they must have been shown how to do so safely. Stick held at the end and dropped in from the side; hand should never be placed over the top of the kettle.
- Fuel should burn itself out, but if it doesn't it must be extinguished with water (see above) The Kelly kettle will be removed from the fire pan by one of the Forest School leaders. To do this safely they will lift the kettle using the sides of the metal handle, pouring will then be controlled by using one hand on the top of the handle and the other on the chain.
- The Kelly kettle should never be heated with the cork in.

Food Hygiene & Eating

All participants on activities will be encouraged to wash their hands with water and soap, which will be provided, before eating food.

During some sessions, we may cook items such as popcorn, damper bread or marshmallows over the fire. At least one member of Brown Bear Forest School staff will hold a current Food Hygiene Certificate and will ensure that safe procedures are undertaken accordingly.

General Session Safety & Group Guidance

Session Safety Resources Whenever outdoor activity sessions are run there will always be the need for key items to meet the health and safety requirements of leading a group outdoors. The type, location & remoteness of the site, time of year and the group will have a significant impact on what resources are needed to run a safe and enjoyable session. A list is provided in Appendix 2 - this is not an exhaustive list but provides key points to consider when planning sessions.

Weather & Clothing

Clothing advice will be given to participants and their parents/carers prior to the visit e.g.

Winter: waterproofs/coats, fleece/jumper, hats and gloves

Summer: waterproofs, fleece, sun hat, long sleeved tops and trousers

Footwear: wellies or strong/sturdy (ideally waterproof) outdoor shoes and warm woollen or manmade fibre socks (not cotton).

Where possible, we will keep spare sets of waterproofs in case of a participant arriving without adequate protection.

See Appendix 2

Toileting

For sites without toilet facilities, the following procedures have been proven to work effectively and to comply with current child protection recommendations.

- Encourage everyone to use the toilet before coming on site.
- We will identify a suitable location away from the work area in advance of the session. A screen can be used to provide privacy and a toileting bag placed at this location.
- The group should be introduced to wild toileting - participants encouraged to use a trowel to bury faeces and tissue if necessary - and any queries or uncertainties to be dealt with. At all times the emphasis needs to be on discretion and encouraging participants to do as much as possible independently.
- If a guardian/carer/parent who knows a participant is not available to help with their toileting, then ensure that they are supported by two CRB checked members of staff.
- Hand washing facilities should be available but if this is not possible wet wipes and cleaning gel can be used. All wet wipes should be placed in bags and disposed of off-site.

Toileting kits contain:

- Toilet paper
- Wet wipes and cleaning gel
- Nappy bags
- Small trowel
- Tarps to make a modesty screen
- Spare pants and jogging bottoms if younger children

Dogs & Members of the Public

Some sites will be open to the public and so there may well be other people out enjoying the woods. Most people will be happy to pass by the Forest School group without hindering activities, but there is the possibility of unwanted attention from a passer-by. In this event a leader will step in and assure the member of public that if they wish to raise any issues, then they should contact Brown Bear Forest School at a time convenient to both parties. If the situation escalates to a dangerous level staff will use a mobile phone to call the police and use the Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure.

Some participants may be unused to or even afraid of dogs. If this is known to be the case for any particular participants please inform any/all leader(s) prior to arrival on site. If a dog appears the fearful participant can be joined by at least one member of staff. If a dog approaches the group and appears to likely to cause trouble all participants will be advised not to run or act excitably - ideally keep arms by their sides, voices low and stay as still as possible. A leader will speak to the owner. Signs will be mounted on footpaths close to the Forest School area asking dog-owners to keep dogs under control and for cyclists to be aware that children are playing in the area.

Hazardous Plants & Fungi

Part of the risk assessment will be to identify any particularly hazardous plants and point them out to the group so that all members are aware of the dangers. The sap or hairs from some plants can cause rashes and blistering when in contact with skin, or after the skin is then exposed to sunlight. Most rashes are caused by stinging nettles, though giant hogweed may also be a problem. Both of these plants are easily distinguishable and if either is seen growing on site all members of the group will be taught how to distinguish and avoid coming into contact with it.

Serious poisoning from ingestion of leaves, berries or mushrooms rarely occurs, even when curious children are involved. However, ingesting even small amounts of some species can cause nausea, vomiting, and stomach cramps; and large amounts are potentially fatal. Consequently, we disallow all participants from foraging and eating anything that has not been agreed safe by a Forest School leader.

If a member of the group is exposed to a hazardous plant or fungi, so that they have a reaction a leader must be informed and appropriate First Aid given. If the nature of the reaction is more serious the Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure must be followed.

Biting & Stinging Insects

Insect bites and stings can be common, particularly in spring and summer, and usually cause only minor irritation. In rare cases, people can have a serious allergic reaction to a bite or sting that requires immediate medical treatment - if this is the case then a leader will refer directly to the Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure.

If there is prior knowledge to suggest that a participant will have an allergic reaction if bitten, then Brown Bear Forest School must be informed before any activities take place on site.

If ticks are known to exist in proximity to a site then all participants need to check or be checked for ticks as soon as possible following any activity on site. Where a tick is found on a participant, a plaster should be placed over it and parents/carers informed at the end of the session so that they can remove it safely. Information on safe removal of ticks can be found at www.tickbitepreventionweek.org/tick-removal

Safe Lifting

Forest School activities can be physically demanding for participants and staff, for example when handling heavy objects, so it is wise to be aware of best practise. One of the greatest causes of back injury is lifting or handling objects incorrectly. Here are some tips:

- Think and plan where and how you are going to move an object before you lift
- Keep the load close to your waist and the heaviest side of the load next to your body
- Adopt a stable position with feet apart and one leg slightly forward if possible
- Ensure a good hold on the load, hug it close to your body if possible
- Avoid bending your back, only bend at your hips or knees if possible
- Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways especially if bending at the back
- Keep your head up and look ahead, not down at the load once it is held securely
- Move smoothly
- Know your limits - don't lift or handle more than you can easily manage without help
- Put the load down if you need to adjust it
- Where possible, use ropes to drag objects such as trees

Lone working

When preparing for a session, it may be necessary for one person to visit a site alone. In these circumstances, anyone carrying out the work should inform a member of Brown Bears Forest School staff before departing and ensure that each have the mobile and home/work telephone numbers of the other. The lone worker should leave details of where they will be working and at what times. Contact should be made when the lone worker leaves the site. If the lone worker changes location they should inform the designated Brown Bear Forest School staff member of the change.

If no contact has been made by the lone worker at the agreed end of working time, then the designated staff member should attempt to contact them. If they are unable to contact the lone worker, then they should try their home number and inform Brown Bear Forest School.

If no contact has been made in 24 hours, the designated staff member should contact the police.

Group walking

When the group goes for a walk the following procedures will be followed:

- The destination will be communicated to all adults present.
- Children will be counted at the beginning and end of the walk, and at any necessary points in between, such as after a rest or play stop.
- Walking on roads will be avoided, but where necessary will be in single file, with an adult at the front and the rear, and remaining adults interspersed between children.
- For longer walks and those which venture beyond the Forest School site, the route and projected timings will be communicated so somebody who is not with the group, and arrangements made for a check-in system between that person and the group leader.

Administering medicines and sun cream

Permission will be sought from a parent or guardian to give their child sting or bite treatments, antiseptic cream and sun cream. These permissions will be included in the consent form. Guardians will also be asked to provide details of allergies or relevant illnesses and to supply medicines where necessary (such as an epi-pen or asthma inhaler). Where a guardian does not give permission for medicines and creams to be applied, their wishes will be adhered to by the Forest School Staff.

Reporting: incidents and accidents

Any accidents that involve injury will be recorded into a first aid book. Major injuries that constitute 'reportable injuries' will be reported to the Health and Safety Executive via RIDDOR. Parents will be notified of injuries in keeping with the 'Emergency and Major Incidents' policy.

'Incidents', which include major behavioural incidents and any major negative occurrence that is not an accident, will also be recorded by the Forest School leader in an Incident Report.

Consent

Parents/guardians will be asked to fill in a registration form before their child begins a forest school programme with Brown Bear Forest School. The completed consent form will give relevant medical details of the child, consent for the child to take part in the forest school activities and permissions to administer medicines and creams and to admit the child to hospital for emergency treatment.

The form also provides emergency contact details and optional permission to take and use photographs of the child for promotional purposes and reports.

The forest school leader will keep copy of this form with him or her at all sessions attended by the child.

Safeguarding Policy

It is the responsibility of Brown Bear Forest School to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults whilst in our care. We are committed to creating an environment which is safe from abuse and any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with.

Brown Bears Forest School's Safeguarding Policy focuses on:

- Minimising the risk of abuse taking place through good planning and best practice
- Empowering those it works with to stay safe and speak out
- Taking appropriate action when any allegations arise

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or by failing to protect a child from harm. The following are some signs often associated with particular types of child abuse and neglect. These types of abuse are more often found in combination than alone.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be also caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts, or non-contact activities such as showing children pornographic materials, sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. Neglect can involve a failure to:
 - provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
 - protect a child from physical and emotional harm
 - ensure adequate supervision
 - allow access to medical treatment.

If abuse is suspected or disclosed

When a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will:

- Reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to talk to them
- Listen to the child but not question them
- Give reassurance that the staff member will take action
- Record the incident as soon as possible (see below).

If a member of staff witnesses or suspects abuse, they will record the incident straightaway. If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, we will encourage them to contact Social Care directly. If they will not do so, we will explain that Brown Bear Forest School is obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly.

Logging an incident

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure will be recorded as soon as possible after the event. The record should include:

- Date of the disclosure or of the incident causing concern
- Date and time at which the record was made
- Name and date of birth of the child involved
- A factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, it is essential to use the child's own words.
- Name, signature and job title of the person making the record.

The record will be given to the Forest School Leader who will decide whether they need to contact Social Care or make a referral. If other staff feel that the incident has not been adequately followed up, they may call Social Care themselves.

Allegations against staff

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff:

- The allegation will be recorded in the Incident Book. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
- The allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and to Ofsted. The LADO will advise if other agencies (eg police) should be informed, and the Club will act upon the advice. **LADO – 01603 223473**
- Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending full investigation of the allegation.

Promoting awareness among staff

Brown Bear Forest School will promote awareness of child abuse issues throughout its staff training and will ensure that:

- The School's designated CPO has relevant experience and receives appropriate training
- Safe recruitment practices are followed for all staff
- All staff have a copy of the Safeguarding Children policy, understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse or neglect
- All staff are aware of their statutory requirements with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse
- Staff are familiar with the 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused' flowchart
- Staff are familiar with the Safeguarding File which is kept with the Safeguarding Policy.

Contact numbers

Social Care: 0344 800 8014

NSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board): 0344 800 8014

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

Police: Emergency 999. Non-emergency 101

NSPCC helpline can be used for children 08088 005000

Care Quality Commission for vulnerable adults 03000 616161.

Brown Bear Forest School will follow guidance provided by partner organisations and local authorities.

Staff & Assistants

All staff will have enhanced checks from the Disclosure & Baring Service, dated within 5 years and at the current home address. Brown Bear Forest School will not work with people with unsuitable DBS certificates. All volunteers and visitors will be vetted by gathering: references / employment history / record of qualification / or because we will have had prior personal knowledge of the person. If the visitor has a DBS certificate relevant to working with children or vulnerable adults, this will be checked by Brown Bear Forest School. Participants will not be left unsupervised with a visitor or volunteer where no DBS certificate has been seen.

Ratios

The following minimum adult ratios will ensure appropriate support and supervision of vulnerable groups at all times:

For children

Foundation Stage: 1 adult: 4 children

Key Stage 1: 1 adult: 6 children

Key Stage 2: 1 adult: 10 children

These ratios are for guidance only for groups of children and suitable levels of support should be determined in advance depending on the types of activity and needs of the group.

For vulnerable adults

For groups of vulnerable adults, suitable levels of support should be agreed in advance with staff/carers.

In all cases a minimum of two staff should be present – i.e. leader from Brown Bear Forest School and staff supporting their group. Brown Bear Forest School will provide project leadership and co-ordination and will act in a supporting role in terms of welfare of the group to staff supporting their groups.

Toileting

Where possible only the group's supporting staff or the child's/adult's parents may assist children with toileting.

Photos & Video

Permission will be requested via consent forms for Brown Bear Forest School staff to take photographs of participants for monitoring and evaluation purposes and suitable use in publications for leaflets/materials/website. Where permission is refused, we will aim to avoid photographing and videoing that child and blur out faces. Forms of child abuse and neglect.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Brown Bear Forest School is committed to equal opportunity for all and we wish to provide an environment in which people feel equally valued. Our policies help to ensure that we promote the individuality of all, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

When planning a visit, information is requested from schools/groups about any participants with access or medical requirements so they can be fully included in the programme. We will adapt activities to ensure that everyone can participate and, where possible, we will keep spare sets of waterproof clothing to ensure that bad weather is not a barrier to taking part.

Brown Bear Forest School aims 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 leaders 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 or 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 ask that both parents and children think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities, and to be aware that they are likely to take home muddy and wet clothes after a Forest School session.

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 outdoor environment is an environment to which we are all entitled and Brown Bear Forest School strongly believes 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.

Behaviour Policy

Everyone, including Brown Bear Forest School staff, volunteers and participants, have a responsibility to protect their own and other group members' health, safety and well-being. They should inform Brown Bear Forest School staff if anybody's actions are likely to jeopardise the safety or comfort of others.

We aim to promote:

- Self-esteem
- Self-awareness of personal abilities and limitations
- Respect and care for oneself, other people and the natural environment
- Co-operation and non-violent communication

Forest School Agreement and Ground Rules

In the course of the first session, an agreement will be sought between the staff and all participants for the conduct of the group. This will include items such as respecting oneself, each other and the environment and listening carefully to instructions when they are given. The group will be encouraged to contribute items to the agreement before it is 'sealed'. Ground rules are firmer, non-negotiable rules, such as 'no violence' and will be explained along with the consequences of breaking them.

Physical Intervention

In accordance with the law, and our values, Brown Bear Forest School does not use, or threaten to use, corporal punishment and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that corporal punishment is not administered by any person who is in contact with them. However, where necessary, physical intervention may be used in order to avert immediate danger to any person (including the child). Any occasion where physical intervention is used will be recorded in an Incident Report and parents/carers will be informed on the same day as the incident.

Behaviour expectations for leaders, assistants and visitors

- Be a positive role model for participants, particularly with regards to respecting each person and the environment
- Encourage and reinforce caring and nurturing behaviour
- Be vigilant with regards to common sense safety
- Facilitate from an egalitarian and liberal approach, avoiding unnecessary rigidity or petty rules
- Avoid coercive or manipulative behaviour management, or that based on personal negative messages, as we feel these damage morale, motivation and self-esteem and are counterproductive to the ethos and objectives of forest school.

Encouraging Positive Behaviour

We want to allow the greatest potential for each participant's forest school experience to be transformational and therefore wish to welcome each participant from an open and unbiased viewpoint with regards to their behaviour and abilities. Whilst recognising that it is useful to have previous information about participants' needs, we believe that no child is inherently 'naughty' and hope that the greater freedoms offered by a forest school environment will allow for a more flexible interpretation of positive engagement.

We will work with each group to develop a clear set of boundaries and guidelines. Each participant will have the opportunity to voice their own feelings. Talking about how they wish to be treated and listening to the feelings of others is important as it will allow the group to work together, understand one another and ultimately become more supportive and cooperative. It will also contribute to making the forest school a safe and enjoyable space.

De-escalation

If a situation arises in which participants are behaving in a way that threatens the safety of the group, the forest school leader will ensure that the following steps are taken:

1. Recount the facts of the incident as observed, in simple language and without judgement, and if possible mutually agree on these. Remind the participants involved of any guidelines they have not followed.
2. Listen to the involved party or parties, if necessary gently separate them from the group for this. Ask about how they feel about the incident, empathise with them to help them to express themselves and take responsibility for their feelings. Ask them to imagine how they think their behaviour has affected everyone else.
3. Talk with them to establish what their needs in the situation were and to understand how they were not being met. Discuss what their needs might be now and encourage them to consider the needs of everyone else present.
4. Help them to express any requests they might have clearly and in positive language. These can be requests of themselves, others, situations or of the environment.
5. Encourage discussion of new strategies, so that if a similar situation arises the participant(s) feel able to communicate their needs without resorting to negative behaviours.

Recording & Reporting

In all cases the forest school leader will complete an incident report form, and where necessary inform parents/carers.

Where relevant, any significant issues or incidents will be discussed with parents or carers in a private conversation, when the participant is not present.

Learning and Development

The contemporary forest school movement was brought to the UK from Scandinavia in the 1990s but it is predated by many British traditions, such as the Woodcraft Folk, Scouting and Guiding. It draws inspiration from these traditions, along with various educational philosophies, including Rousseau, Froebel, Steiner and Montessori.

Our Ethos

Brown Bear Forest School would like our forest school programme to foster self-esteem, independence, emotional, resilience, co-operation, personal responsibility, autonomy and motivation, as well as a deeply personal knowledge, respect and care for our environment. The approach of Brown Bear Forest School is learner-led, play-centred, holistic and experiential. When taking part in our forest school programme a participant is engaging with nature in wild spaces in an exploratory, sensory and physical way.

We believe it's important to create, where possible, a long-term relationship between a location and a group of participants - giving all participants a chance to get a feel for how an environment changes over time.

Participants will be encouraged to take constructive risks in order to develop skills, good judgment and to learn and develop through managing their own and others' risks. In planning activities we consider not only the risks but also the potential benefits for the learner.

Roles & Responsibilities

All staff members involved in the forest school programmes are conscious that it is an exploratory experience for the group. They allow the group to play and learn as independently as possible, often without demonstrating or suggesting. If invited to provide support then they do, but otherwise merely observe, allowing the experience to be learner-directed.

It is the role of the forest school leader(s) to take a lead in planning, delivering and evaluating the forest school programme. They also take primary responsibility in ensuring that policies and procedures, rules and guidelines are adhered to. Volunteers and other adults may help with these responsibilities where they wish to and are able and/or qualified to.

Evaluation

Evaluation forms will be completed after each session and a reflective report is compiled after each programme of sessions.

Communication Strategy

This communication strategy explains how participants, parents, those involved with delivering the forest school programme and other stakeholders are kept informed with the delivery and outcomes.

Participants' contact person (Class Teacher)

Brown Bear Forest School will meet with the Class Teacher to discuss the needs of their class during a forest school programme. The following will be discussed and agreed:

- Length of forest school programme, i.e. 10 weeks and start date.
- Day, time and length of each session, i.e. weekly, morning or afternoon, 1.5 to 2 hours
- Groupings. Essential where larger classes are present.
To assist with dividing the class into groups, we will ask the Class Teacher to complete a holistic indicator assessment.
- Date and time to meet with parents/carers
- Date and time to meet with class.
- Date and time to review forest school programme.

The group's contact person, usually the Class Teacher, will be asked to provide medical and behavioural information about each participant and confirm that they understand the programme and the handbook. Brown Bear Forest School will request that all those leading or supporting sessions read our Handbook before their group's sessions begin.

Participants

Participants will be asked to evaluate the programme through verbal feedback, videos, writings and drawings. These will be opportunities for them to express how they feel the programme is going and to engage with the process of developing the future sessions. Participants will be encouraged to compile a 'Forest School Journey' style diary.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers of each participant will be given an opportunity to attend a 'meeting' to discuss 'things they will need to know before their child goes to 'Forest School'. An abbreviated copy of the handbook (A Parent / Carers Guide to Brown Bear Forest School) will be distributed to all parents / carers and they will be asked to complete and return all relevant consent forms.

Feedback

Verbal feedback will be sought from the contact person/Class Teacher on a regular basis, and will be asked to complete an end-of programme evaluation form. Parents will receive information about the outcomes of the sessions through photos, a display or newsletter.

Assistants & Volunteers

All adults present at the forest school must sign a form to confirm that they have read, understood and agree to comply with the Brown Bear Forest School Handbook before the start of the programme or session they will take part in.

Assistants and volunteers will be informed of the plan for each session in advance. They will be asked to provide feedback on how each session went verbally or written, as preferred.

Other Interested Groups

Following an evaluation of the sessions a case study or report will often be produced and this will be shared with others, such as other schools, forest school leaders, etc.

Session Routines

Equipment

Mobile Phone
Pro forma consent forms
Risk-benefit analysis
Emergency procedure

First Aid Kit
First Aid Book
Incident Log
Fresh Water/water carrier
Hand washing kit
Toileting kit
Spare clothing
Emergency bivi-bag

Tools & fire lighting kit
Fire blanket
Personal protective equipment

Setting Up

1. Carry out a session risk assessment of site and advise/act accordingly
2. Collect necessary equipment and restock first aid where necessary
3. Meet and register group
4. Check phone signal

Session Opening

1. Introductions of any new faces
2. Make the group aware of new hazards or medical considerations
3. Check that they are all wearing suitable clothing and footwear
4. Take the group to the location
5. Form an opening circle
6. Describe or walk the boundaries for the session
7. Engage children in the development of rules and guidelines for the session
8. Describe the session's activities

During the Session

- Visually check all equipment before use
- Check on pastoral needs of group
- Conduct a head count, as needed
- Ensure appropriate personal protective clothing is worn

Closing the Session

1. Extinguish any fires properly
2. Count any tools used into their bag
3. Remove structures
4. Check for litter etc.
5. Collect the equipment
6. Form a closing circle
7. Conduct some type of evaluation with the group (questions, talking stick or drawing)
8. Walk group back to meeting point
9. Bid farewell to the group
10. Thoroughly check equipment
11. Complete the appropriate evaluation forms

Terms and Conditions

What to Bring

“There is no such thing as bad weather, just unsuitable clothing.” This is almost true; strong winds are probably the one real exception. We aim to go out in all seasons, so for each we need participants to dress appropriately. Our sessions are relatively active, but in winter spending hours outside can mean getting very cold if a participant isn't wearing several layers, warm socks, a hat, gloves, scarf, etc. It's also advisable always to wear long trousers and sturdy boots or wellies in all weathers in the woods.

Brown Bear Forest School cannot take responsibility for any personal property that is lost or damaged during sessions, and therefore we recommend that any mobile phones or valuable items are not brought to the sessions.

Feedback and Concerns

We encourage all participants and carers/parents to give us regular feedback about their experience and also to talk to us about anything that is causing consternation. Feedback and concerns can be expressed verbally, in person or by telephone, or in writing by email. We will always endeavour to be as open, honest and as straightforward as possible with carers/parents with regard to any issue; maintaining a two way flow of information can lead to resolutions before problems arise or escalate. All communications regarding formal feedback or concerns will be logged and records kept. In the event of a concern being about our practice, we will investigate this and feedback our conclusions with 28 days.

Cancellation and Postponement

In the case of extreme weather where the conditions are deemed dangerous such as in high winds, during thunder storms, or periods of extreme cold, and no suitable alternative venue being available Brown Bear Forest School staff may need to cancel sessions at short notice. Where possible, these will be rescheduled.

Where sessions are carried out on school grounds, alternative indoor accommodation will be sort where possible and the programme will be adapted accordingly to reflect this. In the event of this occurring at Old Buckenham Community Primary School the mobile classroom close to the forest school site will be used.

In the case of Brown Bear Forest School staff ill-health, which will impact on adult: child ratios, every effort will be made to seek replacement staff or to reschedule. Where this is not possible a refund will be offered.

Where groups cancel their attendance less than a week in advance of a session/sessions the session will be rescheduled if possible. Where it is not possible to reschedule, the group is liable to be charged for the sessions missed.

First Aid Equipment List for Forest School

- Sterile Wipes x 5
- Plasters of various sizes
- Conforming Bandages x 3
- Non adhesive square bandages x 3
- Scissors
- Surgical tape
- Hand gel
- Disposable gloves x 5
- Safety pins x 5
- Eye dressings x 2
- Aspirin x 4 (for adults)
- Water bottle (labelled when last filled)
- Hypo allergenic sun cream
- Bite and sting relief spray
- Children's specific medication and details
- Emergency First Aid Manual

Kit Bag List for Forest School

- Shelter
- Wooden Mallet
- Register
- Accident book
- Plans
- Risk assessments
- Plans, Session timings and kit lists in poly pockets
- Water Container filled the morning of Forest School
- Preschool phone and one other mobile (on different network).
- Risk Assessments.
- Contact details of all parents and emergency contact information for all at Forest school.
- Hand wash gel
- Trowel and spade
- Camera
- Wet wipes x 2
- Tissues
- Loo Roll
- Secateurs
- Boundary ropes
- Sisal String (10m)
- Bungees
- Children's Hi Viz Jackets
- Kelly Kettle
- Flammable material for kettle and fire including cotton wool, old man's beard.
- Water proof matches, fire sticks
- Big tarp
- Light weight tarp
- Small camouflage tarp
- Snack and drink requirements.
- Fire Safety blanket

- J cloths
- Teaspoons
- Cups
- Hot Choc

Additional Forest School items for some sessions

- Stump
- Wax crayons
- Wool
- Group lists
- Session plan
- Snack

These lists are seasonally influenced and will need to be adjusted accordingly.

Clothing Policy

To ensure that the children are sufficiently protected from the weather and the forest environment we require children to be wearing appropriate clothing and footwear. Clothing will get muddy so old home clothes are required.

We require children to have long sleeves and long trousers in both winter and summer. This is particularly important in the summer to protect from tick bites, sun burn, stinging nettles and thorns.

Winter Clothing

The general rule is to wear lots of layers which keep in the heat and can be removed if needed.

Children require:

- Warm hat
- Gloves NB not mittens
- Vest
- Long sleeved t-shirt/shirt
- Jumper/fleece
- Waterproof coat
- Waterproof trousers
- Wellies with warm socks/walking boots
- Thermal underwear

Summer Clothing

- Sun hat
- Sun cream applied before session
- Light long sleeved top
- Light long trousers
- Wellies or enclosed shoes/boots (no sandals)

Forest School leaders and staff will ensure all the children are appropriately dressed before leaving for our Forest School Locations.

Environmental Policy & Environmental Impact Assessment

Brown Bear Forest School aims for all our participants and staff to engender a high level of respect for the natural world and encourage all to be involved in decisions about their environment and safety.

We aim to ensure that, where possible, Brown Bear Forest School purchases products that have been assessed for having a lower impact on the environment. By operating in a way that minimises waste, optimises recycling and promotes the reuse of materials we hope to demonstrate and encourage a wider respect for the environment, as well as an understanding that all produce and waste is linked to the health of our planet as a whole.

On site activities such as fires will follow practices that minimise impact on wildlife through being mindful of what is burnt and how any residues are disposed of. Before leaving a site we will ensure that litter is collected and disposed of suitably.

Minimising Impacts

Activity	Impact	Mitigation
Collecting Wood	Dead wood is important to any woodland ecology as it has a multitude of uses, from homes for mini beasts to beds for fungi, so a lack of it is bad for any woodland habitat.	Limit the frequency of fires and evaluate the amount of dry, dead wood before having a fire. Collect only the minimum amount required for any given fire. Reserve specific areas for dead wood conservation.
Fires	Changes in soil chemistry can lead to increases in PH levels, carbon, phosphorous, etc. which can be harmful to some plants, whilst other essential nutrients may be depleted. Fire can travel underground to roots even after appearing to be extinguished.	Designate fixed locations for fires on parts of the site that aren't particularly ecologically interesting or unique. If possible, dispose of ash into patches of nettles. Ensure that all fires are extinguished fully before leaving a site. Where needed, use a fire wok to contain fire.
Cooking	Food waste may attract animals to the site or increase numbers of certain species, potentially leading to adverse changes in biodiversity.	Inform participants of these impacts and provide a container (to be taken away) or an ecologically sound place for food disposal.
Tree Climbing, Shelter Building & Swings	Damage to trees.	Restrict these activities to suitable trees that will tolerate them.
Collecting Natural Materials	Damage to plants – some plants are more sensitive to losing their	Inform groups as to which types of plants are best to pick, if any. Ensure leaves

	leaves or flowers than others and different seasons affect this too.	or flowers are taken from fallen parts where possible. Limit the frequency of this type of activity. Leave plants unpicked whenever picking is not necessary.
Toilet Use	Wet wipes contain plastic. Human waste entering waterways	Burying faeces and tissues ensures they biodegrade. Either buy biodegradable ones, refrain from using them, or dispose of them in a bag to be taken away. Designated toileting area will be at least 20 metres from a waterway.

Sustainable procurement

Brown Bear Forest School holds environmental sustainability as a core value. We understand that the choices we make as buyers and consumers is a large part of our footprint and therefore strive to take this into account in our purchases. As far as possible we will buy items which are produced: as locally as possible; organically; from sustainable or renewable sources; ethically, with regards to environment, and workers' and animal welfare; and with minimum packaging.

Emergency Action Plan

A copy of this EAP (Emergency Action Plan) is kept in the top compartment of the red emergency bag at all times.

In the event of an emergency and a child needs to be taken to hospital a member of (TA) would direct the emergency services to the casualty. Debbie Stimpson, as ITC First Aider, would attend to the casualty until the Emergency Services arrive. The casualty would be accompanied to hospital by a member of school staff. The Class Teacher or Forest School Assistant (Katharine Stimpson) would oversee the rest of the group are counted and prepared to return to school.

The school office would be informed after dialling the Emergency Services and assistance to return back to school requested if necessary. The adult accompanying the casualty would return to school once the child was in the care of their parents/carers.

In the event of an adult needing emergency attention it must be judged whether they need to be accompanied or support may be required. Decisions taken must ensure the safety of the children within the group and accompanying adults.

In the event of the Forest School Leader needing emergency assistance it would expected for the Class Teacher or Katharine Stimpson to return the children to school and another adult would stay with the casualty.

Accident and incident forms would be completed back at school.

Minor injuries would be treated as they would within school and recorded and reported to parents and carers in line with school policy.

Emergency Services 999

Norfolk & Norwich Hospital 01603 286286

OBCPS Office 01953 860380

**Old Buckenham Community Primary School
Abbey Road
Old Buckenham
Attleborough
Norfolk
NR17 1RH**