

Kingsmoor Lower School Forest School Handbook

To be taken into woodland area
during Forest School sessions

Forest School Handbook
Contents

1.	The Forest School ethos	
2.	What happens at Forest School	
3.	Forest School staff	
4.	The Forest School site	
5.	Location of woodland site	
6.	Our Forest School <i>Code of Conduct</i>	
7.	Forest School Activities	
8.	A typical Forest School session	
9.	Equipment for Forest School	
10.	The Forest School day	
11.	Essential equipment: Other possible equipment Clothing First Aid Kit When having a fire	
12.	Using and storing tools	
13.	Risk Assessments Food safety and cooking procedure Forest School food hygiene rules Safe use of tools Forest School site risk assessment	
14.	Fire Policy Aim Method Monitoring of policy Kelly Kettle	

15.	Health and Safety policies and procedures Daily procedures Pre-visit checks At the start of the session Throughout the session At the end of the session What to wear when taking part in Forest School throughout the seasons Adult roles and responsibilities Ambulance procedure Missing person procedure Emergency fire procedure Fire lighting procedure Developing routines – introductory sessions Forest School Leaders' fire and use of Kelly kettle/fire procedures Toilet and shelter facilities at Forest School Litter and Waste Water procedure	
16.	Safeguarding children, confidentiality and Forest School Our aims	
17.	Equal opportunities, inclusion and Forest School	
18.	Risk assessment guidelines	
19.	Poor weather procedures	
20.	Designated Person responsibilities	
21.	Helper Agreement	

1. The Forest School Ethos

Through Forest School and other environmentally-based initiatives, children attending Kingsmoor Lower School are able to develop a life-long love and understanding of the natural environment, whilst developing the core purposes of the Forest School ethos, namely, development of self-esteem, confidence and social skills. Through carefully planned activities, children from all year groups at the school take part in blocks of Forest School sessions per year which enable children to excel in all areas of their personal, academic and spiritual development.

The philosophy which underpins the Forest School movement is to encourage and inspire individuals of any age from 3 years upwards, and any groups, through mastery of small, achievable tasks in a woodland environment, to grow in confidence and independence so that they are able to develop a sense of self-worth. Children will acquire new skills as they are ready for them so that activities can maintain a degree of challenge and excitement, whilst remaining safe and controlled.

Created by Chloe Smith

Reviewed and updated by Sam Riley May 2023

Forest School encourages children to:

- Build confidence in decision making and evaluating risk
- Develop physical abilities and help participants to stay active and healthy
- Promote cooperative and group working
- Improve their concentration skills
- Develop social and communication skills
- Develop practical skills
- Foster care, appreciation and respect for wildlife and wild places
- Broaden knowledge and understanding of the natural world
- Explore connections between humans, wildlife and the earth
- Regularly experience achievement and success
- Reflect on learning and experiences
- Improve physical motor skills
- Work through practical problems and challenges
- Encourage participants to take care of themselves and others
- Use tools to create, build or manage
- Learn how to manage failures, be motivated and persevere to complete their goals
- Explore the world through all the senses available to them

2. What happens at Forest School:

Groups of children will take part in Forest School sessions in half-termly blocks; sessions will last an hour and a half each. The sessions involve practical hands-on activities which aim to build up participants' skills, abilities and confidence week by week.

All sessions are designed and led by our trained staff, with the help and direction of our Forest School Leader. A key focus of Forest School strongly encourages participant-led learning, so as time progresses learners are given more freedom and responsibility to explore their interests and therefore initiate and direct their own learning.

Forest School activities can include:

- Shelter building
- Natural art
- Using knots and lashings
- Fire lighting
- Bug hunts
- Fauna identification and investigation
- Climbing and balancing
- Woodwork using tools, e.g. making musical instruments or photo frames.
- Creating bug hotels and bird feeders
- Collecting, identifying and sorting natural materials such as leaves
- Team games

Most activities are curriculum-linked and span a number of subjects, including Maths, English, Design & Technology, Science, Music and Art. Forest School sits wonderfully in the topic based skills curriculum that we follow in school.

3. Forest School staff

Our Forest School is organised and run by Sam Riley who is working towards her Level 3 Qualification for Forest School Leaders. All staff and volunteers have undergone an appropriate selection process to assess their skills and suitability for working with children and have been subject to enhanced DBS checks. All sessions are staffed by a qualified first aider and all staff have access to a recommended first aid kit.

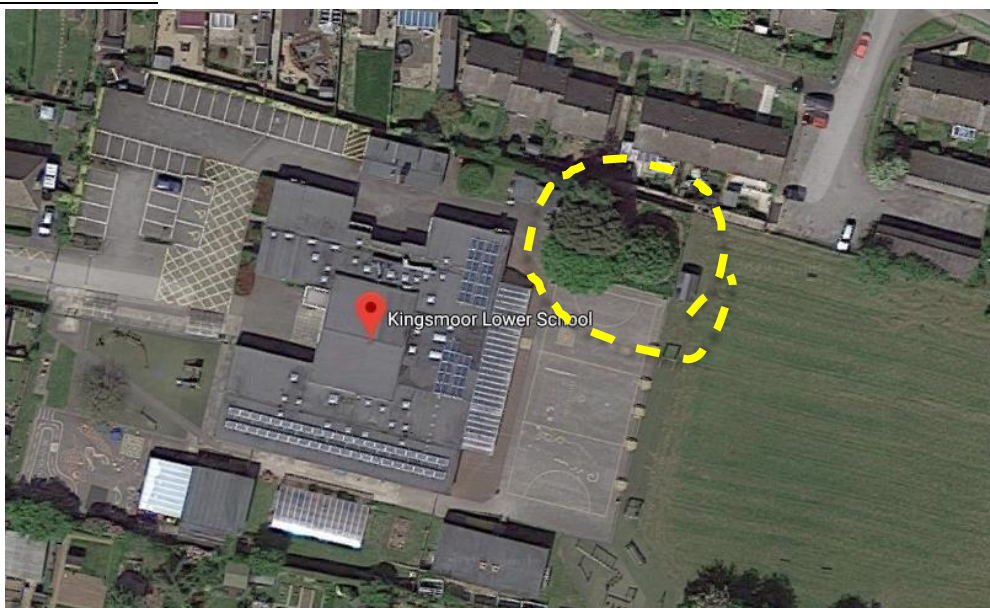
4. The Forest School site

Our Forest School takes place within our own school field. It is made up of mixed deciduous trees: silver birch and oak. Please see the full flora and fauna identification document for full details of the species on site.

As part of our woodland management plan, the Forest School area has been developed to include a wider variety of plants to encourage a range of wildlife to the area, including butterflies, hedgehogs and frogs. Saplings were recently planted and we will soon be acquiring some hedgerow saplings to be planted along the fence barriers.

The site is within our school grounds and is not accessible to the public; only the rear fence backs onto a private alleyway for a few houses.

5. Location of Woodland Site



6. Our Forest School Code of Conduct

Entering the woodland

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

Lighting a fire

When lighting a fire the Forest School Leader will take control of the operation all accompanying adults will be briefed before we start. A lit fire will never be left unattended at any point. A fire may not be lit until it has been confirmed to all that our fire safety equipment is in place. Open fires will be built within a fire square.

At the fire circle

An open fire will be lit within a fire square or stone circle. No one may enter the fire circle perimeter unless invited to do so by an adult. There is no running past the fire circle. No items must be carried and placed within the fire circle unless by an adult. If you wish to move around the fire to a new stool you must step out of the circle and walk around the outside to your selected seat. Even when the fire is unlit, it will be treated as though it is lit to ensure good practice.

Using tools

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

Picking up and playing with sticks

Children can carry sticks shorter than their arm's length, but are encouraged to think about how close they are to other children. Longer sticks may be dragged or carried with the help of another person, one person at each end. Sticks must not be pulled from living trees.

Picking up and playing with stones

Stones may be picked up and transported. Children often like to make patterns and pictures with them. Stones may not be thrown. They may be dropped but thought must be given to where this happens, i.e. what is beneath where I am dropping this stone?

Digging

Digging large holes is not encouraged. Children may carefully move soil to look for insects and their habitats using fingers (in gloves where appropriate) or, small sticks which have been found in the woodland. However deep holes must not be made.

Collecting wood

Wood is collected for fire lighting purposes. It is collected in four thicknesses - matchstick, pencil, thumb and wrist sized pieces. This is a good mathematical activity involving sorting and matching. Sticks may be collected for creating pictures and patterns but should be collected sparingly so as not to disrupt creature habitats. Sticks should not be removed from the site and there will be other materials available within the school area for activities where natural resources cannot be found around our Forest School.

Eating and drinking

Nil by mouth policy (NO LICK, NO PICK) for anything found in the area, unless this activity has been specifically planned for during the session. Children must be reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses. When having drinks or snacks children will use wipes and water to clean their hands before consumption. We recognise that children can have allergies to wipes and therefore will be encouraged to clean hands in the standard way performed in school generally.

Rope and string use

We encourage the collection and transportation of materials. We do not allow children to tie-up each other. If a child has a good idea and wants to tie something up, for example a tarp or a swing, an adult should help them as needed, modelling appropriate knot tying and modelling how to talk through ideas and decisions.

Carrying and transporting materials

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

Toileting

Children are invited to use the toilets before we leave the school buildings. Children will be allowed to return to the classroom hut on the playground, with an accompanying adult.

Leaving the site

We work according to the ethos 'leave no trace' that we were in the woods or on the field, as much as is reasonably possible. Shelters should be taken down, imported materials removed and stored. All equipment is carefully counted out and back in again, especially when using any tools and tent pegs. Very occasionally large items may be left between sessions. All rubbish will ALWAYS be removed. If artefacts have been found or made (session creations), these may be taken off the site with the consent of an adult.

Tree climbing

An adult must be present when children climb trees in the Forest School. The ground cover should be checked for 'sharp objects' and the tree marked as suitable for climbing that session. A visual check must be made for loose or rotten branches. Children are permitted to explore to their own limits or to a maximum height of 1.5m. Children will be guided by the rule "climb no higher than I can reach" (with arms stretched upwards) from the supervising adult. Adults should be near enough to catch if a child should fall but far enough away to not be invasive to the children's exploration.

7. Forest School Activities

Activities for Forest Schools are diverse and numerous but it should be reminded that we are trying to create independent learners who are inspired to try out their own ideas, explore their own interests and to attempt new ideas.

Some activities might include:

- Shelter building
- Fire lighting
- Tool use
- Studying wildlife
- Playing team and group games
- Sensory activities
- Tracking games
- Cooking on an open fire
- Using Kelly Kettle
- Rope and string work
- Art and sculpture work
- Woodland and traditional craft
- Developing stories and drama, and meeting imaginary characters
- Physical movement activities

8. A typical Forest School session

Each Forest School session follows a simple routine. The session starts with participants getting ready to go outside by putting on the appropriate clothing, including waterproofs and wellington boots. We go through rules and routines whilst still in class and children help gather resources we need to take out with us.

The group then walks to the Forest School area. Sessions are started off with the 'sticky feet' position where the FS leader will remind the children of the rules in FS including the call back tool talks or fire safety talks given as necessary, depending on the activities on offer during the session. A group game will be played and then the activities are introduced. Just before the end of the session, children are encouraged to help tidy up to ensure our rule of "leave no trace" is enforced before we play a calming game and have reflection time to talk about what we have done during the session and share anything that we achieved or discovered with the group. This time may sometimes involve a hot drink or snack.

Early sessions involve participants getting to know the site and learning basic safety rules. They then move on to more complex and detailed tasks, where they are given more free time for 'personalised and independent' learning, although an adult will always be near enough to assist or encourage.

9. Equipment for Forest School

Fire striker/cotton wool/kindling	Sit mats/carpet tiles
Set of spare clothes	Pen and paper
Spare clear plastic bags and bin liners	Squash, hot chocolate powder and biscuits
Wet wipes	Reusable plastic beakers, plates and cutlery
Tarpaulins & tent pegs	String and rope
Disposable gloves	Facial tissues and kitchen towel
Whistle for use in emergencies	Fire blanket and bucket
Kelly kettle and gloves	Spare water in a bottle
Drinking water in bottles	Washing up bowl and antiseptic hand gel

Emergency Procedure information

Mobile phone with emergency contact numbers - in school	At a glance sheet - children's medical and contact information
Staff handbook and emergency procedures in water-proof folder	Risk assessments

First Aid Kit

First Aid guidance booklet	Disposable gloves (latex free)
Sterile non-medicated dressings	Safety pins

Triangular bandages	Eye bandage
Cleansing wipes	Eye wash
Space blankets x 2	Instant ice pack
Cling film	Burn cool x 4

Activities equipment

Wood - ash, hazel, elder, willow	Bug pots, spoons, paintbrushes, ID sheets and cotton sheet
Wool, ribbon, string	Felt pens and pencils
Scissors	Paint brushes
Pestle and mortar	Masking tape and double-sided sticky tape
Sieves	Pots, jars and containers for the mud kitchen area and potion making
Pipe cleaners	

Tools

Tool bags and tool box	Billhook x1
Bow saws (12") x2	Loppers x4
Potato peelers x10	Work gloves: adult size x4; child size x10
Tent pegs (blunt ended) x20	Rope - various sizes
Secateurs x1	Mallet x1

11. The Forest School day**Clothing**

We will provide shelter from the elements (tree sheltered areas plus tarpaulin used when needed) plus full waterproof clothing, but it is still important that pupils wear clothes that are warm and that parents/carers don't mind getting wet and muddy.

During Forest School Activities, all members of the group must abide by the following Clothing Policy:

- Appropriate footwear to be worn at all times. Ideally, these will be Wellington boots or walking boots.
- Long trousers will always be worn at Forest School. This is to protect the person from scratches from brambles, thorns and holly, nettle stings, insect bites, insect stings and from burning by the sun.
- Long sleeves will always be worn at Forest School. This is to protect the person from scratches from brambles, thorns and holly, nettle stings, insect bites, insect stings and from burning by the sun.

Created by Chloe Smith

Reviewed and updated by Sam Riley May 2023

- Appropriate waterproofs will be supplied for children by the school at all Forest School sessions. Parents may order their children their own set of waterproofs if desired but these should be suitable for the woodland environment.
- In colder weather, children are to be responsible for wearing warm clothing underneath their waterproofs.
- In cold weather, children should wear hats and gloves, although gloves will need to be removed for some tool work.

We work on the saying that ***“there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing”***, but staff must be aware of how children in their class react to different weathers and how this may affect their individual needs and any sensory issues.

Safety and First Aid

The Forest School Leader, Sam Riley, is a qualified First Aider and carries a recommended First Aid kit. Activities are thoroughly risk assessed and staff continuously monitor the safety of the group as activities and tasks progress. Emergency procedures are in place, which will be followed in the unlikely event of an accident.

Staff to pupil ratio in Forest School sessions will be a minimum of 1 adult to 8 children, often less than this with additional volunteers.

Cancellation

Forest School sessions usually take place outdoors whatever the weather. In the event of extreme weather conditions, the session may need to be cancelled, although this will be a last resort.

First Aid Kit

- Latex free disposable gloves
- Bandages
- Burns gel
- Burn dressing
- Dressings
- Eye wash
- Scissors
- Cotton wool
- Antiseptic wipes
- Medication for individual children
- Sterile water
- Cling film
- Disposal sacks for medical waste
- Bites and stings cream/spray (parental permission required)

When having a fire:

- Flame retardant gauntlet gloves
- Fire blanket
- Bucket of water
- Fire steel

- Cotton wool
- Matches

12. Using and storing tools

All tools are counted out and counted back in, at the beginning and end of each session in which they are used. When not in use in the woodland area they are kept secured away in a locked area. Before each tool is to be used it is checked for damage to ensure that it is in good working order.

Each tool type is kept in their own suitable containers, many of which are also lockable. Children must never be allowed to help themselves and will always have adult supervision when collecting, transporting and using tools.

Tools are only used for specific purpose. All adults should model correct and safe tool use, storage and transportation at all times. When using a tool, they are used well away from others in the group (an arm's length and the tool length) and ensuring that others are aware that a tool is in use. Only walking is permitted when transporting a tool. Tool Talks take place with children prior to using them in a session.

13. Risk assessments

Food safety and cooking procedure

Food and drink preparation and sitting together whilst eating and drinking are important parts of Forest School.

We will provide hand washing facilities at each session where food and/or drink is prepared and will ensure that all staff volunteers and participants follow the Forest School food hygiene rules.

Forest School food hygiene rules

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

When involved in food and drink preparation you should:

- Wash hands before and during cooking.
- Cover sores and cuts with a waterproof dressing.
- Avoid handling food when possible, and instead use spoons, tongs or other suitable implements.
- Tie longer hair back.
- Keep food that is waiting to be cooked separate from food that is ready to be eaten.
- Use separate chopping boards for preparing different foods, especially raw and ready-to-eat food.
- Prepare food on a suitable surface, e.g. chopping board, cup and saucepan, and not on the ground.
- Ensure that food is cooked thoroughly before serving. Food should be cooked right through and piping hot in the middle.
- Not reheat food more than once.
- Keep utensils clean and wash tea towels and cloths after each cooking session.
- Store food in clean plastic containers with non-leaking lids.
- Take all rubbish and food scraps away at the end of each session to school bins, to avoid attracting vermin to the site.

Food allergies and special dietary requirements:

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

Safe use of tools

General

- Keep tools in good, clean order
- Check tools are safe to use before the start of each session
- Carry out tool maintenance (cleaning and oiling) once every term
- Do not use tools with damaged blades, handles or with loose bolts or fixings
- When transporting tools do not carry more than can be held securely
- A blunt blade is more dangerous than a sharp one
- Count tools in and out

Bow Saws – used for cutting wood with a diameter greater than a 2 pence piece

- Wear a glove on the non-sawing (helping) hand, not the hand using the tool
- Use the saw to the side of you and not in front
- Keep your non-sawing hand away from the blade when sawing
- Saw with easy relaxed strokes, using the full length of the blade. Let the blade do the work – don't force it, especially if it sticks
- Carry the saw with the frame at your side, with the blade facing down, like carrying a handbag
- Ensure the item to be cut is firmly held
- When using with children, Leader and child to kneel on floor, with Leader on one side of the saw and the child on the other, both in the 'respect position'. The Leader guides the saw and the child follows.

Billhooks – used for cleaving wood

- Never wear a glove on the hand holding the tool – it makes the handle hard to grip safely
- Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work. Stop anyone if comes too close
- Hold the Billhook away from your body and cut away from yourself
- Stop if you get tired

Loppers – used for cutting wood with a diameter smaller than a 2 pence piece

- Always carry with blades closed (and locked if applicable)
- When not in use leave with blades close (and locked if applicable)
- Do not exceed the cutting capacity of the tool
- Use away from your body and keep hand not holding tool away from blades
- Children only use when sitting or kneeling

Knives – used to whittle small sticks, peel bark and cut string

- Never wear a glove on the hand holding the tool – it makes the handle hard to grip safely. Wear a safety glove on your other 'helper' hand
- Keep a safe distances from other people and be aware of those around you while you work. Stop if anyone comes too close

- Hold the knife away from your body and cut away from yourself

Potato Peelers – used to peel bark

- Rest the wood you are peeling on the ground, or on a bench and NOT on your leg
- Hold the potato peeler away from your body and peel away from yourself towards the ground
- Glove to be worn on the helping hand (not the hand holding the tool)
- Keep the hand not holding the tool away from sharp end of potato peeler
- Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work
- Children only to use when sitting or kneeling – remind them not to move around when using the peeler

Tent Pegs – used to hollow out Elder piths

- Rest the wood you are working with on the ground or on a bench and not on your leg
- Poke out the piths away from your body, towards the ground not towards you
- Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work
- Children only to use tent pegs when sitting or kneeling, remind them not to move around when using the tent pegs

Forest School risk assessment

14. Fire Policy

As part of the Forest School experience it is desirable to have an open fire at times within the woodland to allow the children to enhance their learning and development with some risky activities. Encounters with risk help children to manage their coping strategies and discover and explore the world through real experiences. This policy sets out the guidelines to follow to ensure safe practice is a thread throughout the activity.

Aim

To use fire safely as part of the Forest School experience.

Method

Fires must only be lit after a risk assessment has been carried out and they must only be within the fire circle area. This includes the use of Kelly Kettles. There must always be a trained adult present within the fire circle when a fire is lit or hot embers remain, never leave a fire unattended.

Prior to the fire pit being built the soil or bedrock must be assessed to avoid a fire being lit on a flammable surface such as peat. The fire should be surrounded by a 1.5 metre square of double logs to provide a good barrier to the fire in case of a learner losing balance. Fires should not be lit close to overhanging branches or on a really windy day.

There must be an adequate supply of water close to the fire pit to ensure that there is enough water available to extinguish the fire if it gets out of control. A fire blanket must be brought to the woodland to wrap around someone if their clothes become alight. Fire proof gauntlets should be kept at the fire area to allow adults to pick up hot items.

Before visiting the area the children should have had the opportunity to ask questions and be given information about fire safety. When at the fire circle the rules should be demonstrated for the children to see. There should be no more than 2 people, adults and children, within the fire circle next to the fire at any one time. The best

position for cooking is on one knee (the respect position) so you can move backwards easily and remain stable. Long hair should be tied back, tassels and ties tucked away and scarves removed.

Kelly Kettle

The Forest School Leader may use the Kelly Kettle to heat water. Never leave the bung in whilst heating water. This is only to be in place during storage so as to keep the chamber clear from forest debris or insects and minibeads. Once the fire is going in the Kelly Kettle base, carefully add the chimney top to it by holding the handle parallel to the ground, supported on each side by your hands.

When lit, do not stand directly over, or look straight down the chimney. Never blow into the top. When pouring out the water support the base by holding the bung chain in one hand and the handle with the other. To put the fire out, pour the remaining fire fuel on the ground, and use a stick to spread the fire fuel around so the fire can disperse. Use the bucket of water to pour over the fire fuel to ensure it is out. Forest School Leader to use palm of hand to hover over the used fire fuel to check for any hot points to ensure the fire is completely put out. When not in use all tools will be securely locked away in the tool shed. Tools should be checked and cleaned before they are put away. Half termly the Forest Leader will ensure that tool is thoroughly cleaned and oiled. Wear and tear will be monitored daily.

15. Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

Kingsmoor Lower School has policies in place which covers the school's procedures and obligations regarding the health and safety of its children, staff and visitors to the school site. All accidents will be recorded in accordance to the school's usual accident recording procedure, in the correct file depending on which Key Stage is in the Forest School session.

Additional Health and Safety considerations for our Forest School sessions are detailed below:

There is always a high adult to child ratio during Forest School sessions. The high number of adults means that pupils can safely experience activities like climbing trees, walking across logs blindfolded, lighting (controlled) fires and using tools. It also means that adults are able to give individuals one-to-one attention when needed, and are able to lead small group work.

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

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

Daily procedures

To ensure the safety of children and adults attending Forest School sessions, the Forest School Leader will conduct a site check prior to the session beginning, to assess any health and safety issues present.

Pre-visit checks

- Run through the site risk assessment and amend/update as necessary. Remove all visible litter and faeces.
- Remove obvious trip hazards and mark off areas as out-of-bounds if necessary.
- Cut any overhanging vegetation.

- Ensure risk assessments are completed for all activities.
- Set up hand washing station.
- Check that the Forest School box contains all the necessary items (see section of Forest School equipment), including all emergency procedure information, a stocked and in-date first aid kit, fire blanket and fresh water.
- Check that you have all the materials and resources needed for the activities planned.
- Check that the mobile phone is in working order and is fully charged.
- Ensure that all children and staff are wearing suitable clothing prior to leaving to get to the woodland area.

At the start of the session

- Take register and count all pupils present.
- Remind children how they should behave and how to stay safe on site (see site Risk Assessment).
- Explain the need for and the principles of 'Fire Safety' in sessions involving fire.
- Carry out the appropriate Tool Talks in sessions using tools.

Throughout the session

- Be vigilant.
- Remind children of how to stay safe by highlighting potential hazards (see individual activity risk assessments) and asking that they make an adult aware of any possible hazards they spot.
- Carry out regular head counts at the start of activities.
- Use de-escalating techniques and follow the school's behaviour policy whenever possible when dealing with behavioural issues.
- Observe children in their activities, recording using notes and photos.

At end of the session

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

Adult roles and responsibilities

- The trained and named Forest School Leader, Sam Riley, is always the person in charge of Forest School sessions.
- The Forest School Leader has overall duty of care for the children in their charge. However, all adults involved in the Forest School session are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe.
- All adult helpers must sign and date a form to show that they have read and understood this handbook and the risk assessments appropriate to the session in which they are helping. They must sign and date the form stating that they comply with the general operating procedures for Forest School (code of conduct).
- The Forest School Leader, or their delegated assistant, will always carry and take a First Aid kit into the forest/woodland at every session.
- The Forest School Leader, or their delegated assistant, will always carry the contact list for each child undertaking the activities.
- The Forest School Leader will always carry a mobile phone and ensure that there is easy access to a land line if the group is out of range.

- In the event of an emergency, the Forest School Leader will ensure that the school contacts the emergency services. If contact with the school is lost the Leader will contact the emergency services.
- The Forest School Leader will review the risk assessments before every trip into the school's woodland area.
- When tools are used the adult child ratio will be 1:1.
- There is one exception to this, when using potato peelers for whittling, the ratio can be 1:2.
- The Forest School Leader is responsible in training the children how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately.
- The Forest School Leader will be responsible for the pre-visit check of the Forest School site prior to a Forest School session.

Ambulance Procedure

Call the emergency service you require on 999 from a land line or 112 from a mobile. Notify a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Location of the nearest working land line (if the mobile is not working or there is no signal) is situated in the school office.

Give as much information as possible about the patient and their location

- Who has been injured
- What their injuries are
- If they have any known medical conditions
- Where on the site the patient is
- The directions to the site and the patient
- Arrange for someone to stand in the car park, by the side gates for access straight to the woodland area
- Don't hang up until you are told to do so by the call taker
- Try and stay calm

Missing Person Procedure

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

- Carry out 1, 2, 3 routine. This signals that everyone should move to the Forest School circle.
- Conduct a head count to check that all members of the group are present.
- Have two members of staff or volunteers stay with the group at the Forest School circle and await further instructions.
- Send the remaining staff and volunteers to search the immediate area for an agreed length of time (e.g. 10 minutes). Arrange for them to return to the agreed meeting place at an agreed time.
- Ensure that each of the searchers has a mobile phone with sufficient credit and battery life. Searchers should stay within an area they know and be aware of their own safety.
- If the missing person is not found in the agreed length of time, everyone should walk to the school. Here the rest of the group can wait in safety and comfort.
- Alert school staff to the fact that there is a missing person.
- Organise a second search party. Any staff member who knows the site can be recruited to help this second search. Searchers should work in pairs with at least one carrying a mobile phone with sufficient credit and battery life. Arrange for them to search for a specified length of time (e.g. 20 minutes) and return to reception at an agreed time.

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

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

Areas for search:

- All outside fields and areas
- The school car park
- Toilets within school
- All classrooms and cloakrooms within school

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

Emergency Fire Procedure

In the event of a fire that cannot be put out quickly and safely by the Forest School Leaders, blow repeated long whistles to alert the group.

In case of fire, gather everyone together, conduct a head count and evacuate that area to a safe location – in the large playground assembly point.

Alert SLT and instruct one person to call the fire brigade and give directions to the site – access via the side gate from the car park.

Arrange for an adult (SLT preferably) to stand at the entrance to the school to direct emergency services.

Fire Lighting Procedure

Our Forest School sessions will provide opportunities for children to get closer to nature and the outdoors through a variety of activities, which include learning about fire safety and how to make fires through the use of Kelly Kettles and cooking. Children may also get the opportunity to light their own fires on wooden blocks or in small metal containers. This will only take place under strict supervision, with a 1:1 adult to child ratio.

The Forest School Leader is trained and practiced in fire building and management. Kelly Kettles and small fires will only be used and lit in the centre of the Forest School circle.

All Forest School activities are rigorously risk assessed. Sessions are planned in such a way to introduce higher risk activities to children over a period of time. This allows Leaders to get to know the children in the group and for the children to learn how to behave responsibly and to build knowledge and understanding of the activity.

Developing routines – Introductory sessions

- When they arrive at the Forest School site, children are shown how to sit round the Forest School circle (step from behind to sit on benches/tree stumps)
- The need for, and principles of, fire safety are explained. This will include the rule that when Kelly Kettles or a fire are being used in the centre of the circle, only one child at a time is permitted to approach the Kelly Kettle or fire, only when invited to do so by the Forest School Leader.
- The children are shown how to move around the circle (step out of circle and walk round the outside).

For young children (Foundation and Key Stage 1) a game is then played to reinforce this – Leaders call out different statements that will relate to certain children in the group. E.g. “Everyone who has brown hair step outside and move around the circle” and so on.

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

Forest School Leaders' Kelly Kettle and fire procedures

To ensure that everyone stays safe on site and that risk is managed effectively, Forest School Leaders will follow a fire and Kelly Kettle procedure.

Forest School Leaders will:

- Keep igniters in a safe location
- Ensure that there is a supply of water/soil/sand to douse the fire
- Always carry a fire blanket
- Ascertain the location and size of the fire to be built and plan accordingly including fuel stocks.
- Carry out a pre-visit site check and risk assess the site and the activity.
- Be prepared to abandon the activity in the event of unforeseen circumstances rendering the activity unsafe and have another activity on standby.
- Alert the fire brigade in advance if necessary to avoid false alarm and misidentification of Forest School fires as being uncontrolled.
- Douse fires at completion and check them using palm of hand to check for hot spots.

When lighting fires, Forest School Leaders will:

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

When using Kelly Kettles, Forest School Leaders will:

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

Toilet and shelter facilities at Forest School

Toilet facilities

Children attending Forest School sessions who need to use the toilets in the outdoor hut classroom, accompanied by an assisting adult. They will be prompted to go to the toilet before leaving to go to the woodland area.

Shelter at Forest School site

In the case of inclement weather, a shelter from the elements will always be provided at the Forest School site. This will consist of one or two tarpaulins securely fixed, which will provide shade during the summer months and protection from the wind, rain and snow during the winter.

Litter and Waste Water Procedure

All waste/litter created by Forest School, and any waste/litter will be collected for appropriate disposal.

- The Forest School Leader will provide waste containers (i.e. bin liners)
- All waste produced or found on site during the session will be removed by the Forest School Leader and, where appropriate the children, and disposed of/recycled appropriately.
- A small amount of waste water is created at Forest School, from hand washing and washing up. Solid debris is removed from the water for disposal in the waste containers. The waste water is then disposed of into the woodland over a wide and varied area, so it evaporates more quickly.

16. Safeguarding Children, Confidentiality and Forest School

Please see the attached school Safeguarding Policy, which is strictly followed by all adults attending Forest School sessions, including parent volunteers.

17. Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Forest School

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

We will:

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

We encourage a level of risk-taking, always under close adult supervision and, actively foster friendships and collaboration between all children and adults. Children with medical needs or disabilities will be appropriately supported for their individual needs, so that they can fully participate in all sessions. 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 if it is possible to accommodate.

18. Risk Assessment Guidelines

A site risk assessment and check is made prior to every Forest School session in our woodland area.

In addition, specific activity risk assessments will be carried out prior to any activity that may require it. These will include: whittling; cutting wood; shelter building; fire lighting and cooking on an open fire.

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

Full risk assessments, plus the risk-benefit for all Forest School activities can be found within the school's Forest School file.

19. Poor Weather Procedures

We will not go to Forest School if the conditions are deemed dangerous such as in high winds, during thunder storms, or during periods of extreme cold. We will use the BBC weather online forecast to make judgments about the expected conditions.

The Forest School Leader will make the decision to continue with Forest School or postpone due to bad weather. When it is wet a shelter will be built immediately by a trained adult so that there is a sheltered area available from the start of the session. If the weather is particularly wet or cold, the session may be shortened or partly carried out indoors.

20. Designated Person Responsibilities

Forest School Leader: Sam Riley

First Aider 1: Sam Riley

First Aider 2: All Staff

Additional First Aiders in the school include: All staff are first aid trained.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Jessica Suffling

Child Protection/Welfare Officer: Caroline

Jenkins

21. Forest School Helper Agreement

I,,

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

I understand that the Forest School Leader is in charge of the activities within the session and have read the relevant risk assessment for the activities to take place during my session. My medical and emergency details are stated below.

Medical conditions:

Emergency Contact:

Signed: Date: