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## Statement of Ownership

This has been amended in July 2022 for Kedington Primary School by Nichola Runswick who is now the Forest School Leader. Nichola is a qualified Level 3 Forest School Leader and LSA for the Unity Trust. (This handbook was originally created by Rebecca Dodman Autumn 2020)

Reviewed and Amended ~ Summer Term 2022

Review Date ~ Summer Term 2023

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Signed by Nichola Runswick

## Signing Page

Please sign below to show that you have read and understood the contents of the handbook.

Name	Position	Signature	Date

## Our Vision and Values

At Kedington Primary Academy our visions and values are at the core of everything we do in and out of the classroom. They underpin our teaching and learning; providing a safe and happy environment in which they can learn and thrive. We strive to provide our children with the tools they will need to achieve academic success, a life-long love of learning and become responsible, respectful and tolerant citizens of the future, whom understand and appreciate the world in which we live.

Our inclusive approach to education is at the heart of all that we do and we know how important it is to ensure that every child is valued.

We strive to ensure all children receive an enriching curriculum and a range of experiences, enhanced by outdoor learning opportunities through Forest Schools. Our three key drivers are:

1. APPRECIATING, UNDERSTANDING AND CELEBRATING DIVERSITY
2. UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATING THE WORLD THEY LIVE IN, BOTH LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY
3. BEING RESILIENT LEARNERS WHO EMBRACE CHALLENGE AND ARE NOT AFRAID TO FAIL

## Our Forest School Ethos

At Kedington Forest School we create opportunities for children to immerse themselves in our safe wildlife area. We inspire learners to develop their personal, social and emotional skills; through taking risks, making choices and initiating hands on learning experiences; enabling children to create long term memories, to become successful learners and ***grow as unique individuals.***

Our Forest School programme is offered to every class throughout the school year. The sessions take place once per week for each current group within the Wildlife Area within the school grounds; enabling learners to develop relationships with the woodland and the natural world. Each Forest School session encompasses the child-centred, learner-led approach that is responsive to the needs and interests of the individuals. Role play and child-initiated activities are an integral part of the Forest School process. Observations and reflective practice feature in each session to ensure

achievements are celebrated. Planned activities and learning experiences are tailored to the needs and development of each unique individual.

The long-term Forest School programme is designed to build on their emotional intelligence: to inspire motivation and confidence to take risks and ownership of their learning and build positive attitudes and relationships with others and the natural world in which they grow.

Our Forest School motto: **'We take care of ourselves, our friends and everything (in the forest)'**

## **What is forest school?**

Forest school supports children's' holistic development in a natural environment. Forest school connects children to the environment, enabling exploration and adventure at each child's own pace. Play and exploration is primarily child led and the forest school leader will carefully select and supports invitations to play which will spark and follow children's interests. Our Forest School Leader holds an accredited and recognised forest school leader qualification and they will lead the session.

Forest School takes place over a period of time and in all weathers (subject to daily risk assessment) in the woodland. Kedington Primary Academy will use the 'Wildlife wooded area' at the bottom of the playing field on the school site.

## **Forest School principals are:**

- Forest School is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visit; 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 is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

Forest School allows children to grow and discover their abilities at their own pace, without fear of criticism or failure. Children can work with others in a team, play together and independently. They will be encouraged to explore, problem solve, think and question (at their own pace).

### **Forest School session's support learning:**

- Boundless opportunities: for children to engage in imaginative play, trying something new in the outdoor environment.
- Limitless opportunities to explore and discover the natural world.
- Hands-on, real-world learning, physical learning, stimulation all the senses.
- Regular sessions allow for the practice and consolidation of new skills alongside the child choice to continue to explore actions until satisfied
- The natural environment is ideal for problem solving with new materials and resources, allowing for better understanding and ways of doing things.
- Children are free to choose ways of doing things and make their own conclusions without pre-ordained outcomes.

### **Weather**

The children will experience warm, cold and wet weather throughout the year, but no child will be harmed by it.

Children are asked to wear clothing appropriate to the weather conditions, including wellington boots. Children must always wear long trousers and long sleeves even in warmer weather, and it is preferable to have extra layers that can easily be removed if needed. Hats, scarves and gloves are also important, even if it isn't freezing cold. It is better to be warm and remove layers. It is important to note the forest is often a few degrees cooler due to the canopy coverage.

We will not go to Forest School if the conditions are deemed dangerous such as in high winds, during thunderstorms, or during periods of extreme cold. We will use the Met weather 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. During any session should weather conditions change so as to make the woodland unsafe, the whole group will evacuate back to the school. This

would happen with a change in weather conditions or if a suitable staffing ratio could not be maintained for any reason.

## **Mud**

The wood will be muddy in places, even in the height of Summer. We expect the children to get muddy and we ask that suitable clothing is provided and adults also lead by example in their clothing. Getting muddy and exploring mud is often a great sensory and fun experience for children, we kindly ask parents to be supportive in this and not make the child feel bad because they get mucky.

Information about suitable clothing will be sent out to the parents prior to the first session.

## **Plants**

The woodland will be checked regularly for poisonous flora, this will 'Red Flagged' by the Forest School Leader and children will be made aware of these. Children will be instructed not to eat any of the plants, pick plants or lick items or place hands in their mouths. Children will be advised, that the forest has nettles that can sting (where nettles are located and how to recognise them) and to be aware that some plants and trees can be prickly such as brambles or hawthorn trees.

## **Hazardous Trees**

Kedington Primary Academy looks after the maintenance of the school grounds. If a tree is considered hazardous during the daily check the forest leader may not run the session or will prohibit entrance to the affected area. The school will carry out remedial work directly or with the help of a suitable arborist.

## **Tools and Fires**

Later in the year the forest school sessions will involve using tools such as potato peelers for whittling, saws, palm drills and loppers.

Tools will only be used by children when supervised one to one by the forest school leader, whilst other adults work with the rest of the group. No tools will be kept by the children and will be secured by the adults when not in use.

A small fire for cooking might be introduced in later sessions. If a fire is lit, it will be in a designated area, children do not enter the fire circle unless invited and specifically supervised to do so by the forest school leader.

Children will only be involved in using tools and fire if judged appropriate by the leaders, and when the children are competent and confident working in the wood.

These activities will follow strict Risk Assessment Procedures.

### **Tetanus**

Tetanus bacteria can enter the body through cuts scrapes, and splits to skin. If a child sustains a cut to their skin during the session, it will be cleaned and covered to avoid infection. This will be recorded in the accident form and parents or carers will be informed of this upon collection.

Tetanus is a standard immunisation for children during routine vaccinations prior to school entrance age (Source: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations> on 22.02.2019). All children and adults will be welcome to attend forest school regardless of vaccination status but should any cuts or scrapes or splits to skin occur then parents will be advised.

See Tetanus/cuts risk assessment

### **Ticks**

Ticks are creatures that live in long grass, they can attach themselves to bare skin and sometimes transmit Lyme Disease. Covering up properly is an obvious way of easily protecting ourselves from them. The forest site is based within a fenced area so there is a greatly reduced risk of deer being present on the school site.

Further information available in 'Advanced Tick Information sheet'.

## Health and Safety

At Forest School we strive for children to be confident in taking and managing their own risks, while in a safe woodland environment. Health and Safety underpins our ethos throughout Forest School. We consider all the potential risks of our site, the activities and the needs of individual children before each session.

The Forest School Leader is responsible for the Daily Site Check and Risk Assessments. This involves identifying hazards, associated risks and implementing control actions for each area of the site. Each Forest School activity will be thoughtfully risk assessed; taking account of the hazards, but also the benefits the children will gain from participating in the activity. Activity Assessments, Risk Assessments and Risk Benefit assessments are shared with staff. Children are taught how to use specific tools using any associated tool procedures.

We also adhere to the Health and Safety Policy of the Unity Schools Partnership.

The policy statement identifies: The Health, Safety and Wellbeing of all the people who work or learn at our schools is of fundamental importance. Unity Schools Partnership is committed to providing a safe, secure and healthy working environment for everyone. The Board of trustees have overall responsibility for protecting the Health and Safety of all children, members of staff and visitors.

Under the overall direction of the Board of Trustees Unity Schools Partnership will:

- Provide suitable and sufficient information, training and supervision, as is required to ensure the Health and Safety of employees, our school children, their parents and anyone else that may be affected by our activities;
- Provide safe premises and places of work that are well maintained, have safe access and egress for all and are without risk to health;
- Ensure there is adequate resources available for the Trust and Schools to manage Health, Safety and Wellbeing in line with legislative requirements;
- Control the activities of others who are not in our employment to ensure they are carried out in a safe manor;
- Inform employees of their duty to ensure that they work in a safe manner and that they ensure their acts and omissions do not cause harm to others;
- Implement Health and Safety arrangements and procedures across the Trust to ensure that risks associated with any work activities are suitably controlled;
- Form a Trust wide Health and Safety Committee to ensure that the management of Health, Safety and Wellbeing is imbedded at Trust and Local Levels;
- Ensure that all external activities and school's excursions are managed in a safe manor and any identified risks are adequately controlled.

The Health and Safety Policy can found [health-and-safety-policy-sept-2020-kpa.pdf \(kedingtonprimary.co.uk\)](https://www.kedingtonprimary.co.uk/health-and-safety-policy-sept-2020-kpa.pdf)

## **Forest School Staff**

All Forest School sessions will be led by a Level 3 Qualified Forest School Leader. This is currently Nichola Runswick and she also holds a current paediatric first aid certificate. Other members of staff will support the sessions by roles and responsibilities agreed at the beginning of each session, with necessary activity guidance, tool procedures and risk benefit assessments and daily site check information.

All staff have been DBS checked and have read and understood the contents of this handbook before supporting any Forest School session.

All staff have regular Health and Safety, and Safeguarding updates as required by the academy. Any additional helpers must adhere to the contents of this handbook and the policies referenced. They must also sign to say they have read and understood the contents.

### **Ratios**

The ratio of adults (minimum) to children is Reception 1:8 and Years One to Five 1:15 and Year Six 1:15

There must be qualified Forest School Leader on site at all times and if ratios cannot be met then the session will be cancelled or postponed.

## **Managing Risk at Forest School**

Forest School occurs within a natural environment and changing environment. Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves therefore not all risk is eliminated but risks are carefully assessed and managed.

The Forest School Leader performs a daily site check assessment of the site prior to children arriving. Children are registered in their class teacher before getting ready for forest school. The daily site check ensures the session can go ahead safely. Information from the daily site risk assessment is shared with any adults

accompanying children. Example of 'Daily site risk check' is at the end of the document.

Activities are risk assessed for both children and adults attending (see attached). The Forest School Leader will be dynamically risk assessed as throughout the session by the forest school leader.

Kedington Primary aims to develop children's self-esteem, independence and motivation to learn in a safe environment. In order that these aims can be met, the Forest School Leader will:

- Consistently apply the 5-step approach to risk assessment for all Forest School activities:
  - Look out for hazards
  - Decide who may be harmed and how
  - Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing controls are adequate or whether more should be done
  - Record findings, including daily amendments to standing risk assessments based on site visits and observations
  - Review assessments on a regular basis (or if circumstances change, which may affect the rigour of the assessment) and revise if necessary
- Carry out site risk assessments on each site where the activities will take place on a seasonal basis
- Daily pre-visit checks will be carried out by the Forest School Leader on sites to be used prior to a day's activities, as near to the start of the activity as is reasonably practicable. The findings will be recorded on a 'Daily Site Check' form.
- Complete an activity Risk/benefit assessment for activities to be undertaken at Forest School.
- Ensure all staff and any volunteer helpers have read the relevant Site and Activity risk assessments prior to the session.
- Stop activities, if in the opinion of the Forest School Leader, weather conditions such as high winds or the threat of electrical storms make practice unsafe.
- Inform staff, volunteers and children of potential hazards and methods of working in order to minimise their risk further

- Involve staff, volunteers and children in risk assessment, as appropriate, as part of learning.
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers and children are aware of the emergency procedures for the Forest School site.
- Be responsible for teaching children adequate skills in order to keep themselves safe, particularly in relation to the use of hand tools and fire.
- Ensure children and adults will have access to drinking water during sessions.
- Ensure a nil-by-mouth policy is adopted in all Forest School sessions – except for food cooked as part of a fully risk assessed Forest School activity.

For Forest School sessions to run efficiently and effectively in a way that is safe for all, it is paramount that Risk Assessments and Risk Benefit Assessments are completed and reviewed as necessary (seasonally or if changes occur which impact Kedington Forest School).

We encourage all participants, where possible, to be involved in the process of identifying and assessing possible risks and to promote the health and safety of all staff and children, therefore managing and reducing risk and harm.

The Forest School Leader will create and review, Risk Assessments, Activity Risk Assessment and Risk Benefit Assessments. The Forest School leader will undertake a 'Daily Site Check' and ensure it safe for sessions to go ahead or make any adjustments such 'red flagging' areas that cannot be used. Any potential risks will be recorded by a staff member of the Forest School team and highlighted to all those involved in the session before the activities begin.

Children are taught and shown how to use any tools safety in line with tool procedures and activity boundaries and safe practice are explained/demonstrated to children. In the instance that a child-initiated activity does not have a relevant assessment, the Forest School leader under take 'dynamic risk assessment' during the session.

All Pupils are responsibility for Health and Safety:

- Complying with school rules and procedures alongside any instruction given in an emergency
- Take reasonable care of themselves and others

- Co-operating with the Forest School Leader and any other staff/volunteer on site
- Using equipment in the way they have been instructed including any personal protective equipment
- Dressing appropriately for weather conditions and safety
- Abiding by all safety instructions when a fire is lite
- Reporting to the Forest School Leader or other member of staff anything they think could be harmful or dangerous on site

*All participants are involved in risk assessment and responsible for risk management.*

### First Aid

There is always at least one member of staff with current certificated first aid training present each forest school session. A First Aid Kit containing the following items will be kept in the Forest School bag at all times. This will enable efficient and effective administration of First Aid when required. There is also a 'burns' first aid kit for available each session.

- Plasters of different sizes
- Bandages
- Triangular bandages
- Burns dressings
- Face shields
- Sterile pads
- Eye pads
- Sterile water
- Cling film
- Safety pins
- Tape and Micropore
- Tough cut shears
- Cold pack
- Foil blanket
- Whistle
- Burns Kit
- Non-latex gloves
- Hand wipes/gel

### Medication and Medical Needs

Should a child require medication during a Forest School session, the required medication will be brought to the site where a member of staff will administer and log the medication given; as stated in the child's care plan or administering medication permission form. Any medication will be collected from class with any needed paperwork and kept in Forest School emergency bag. Information regarding individuals' medical needs will be shared with all adults.

## Inhalers

We will ensure that children who are asthmatic have their inhaler for each Forest School session. They will be collected before leaving the building and stored in a separate clear box which will be placed by the emergency bag. Inhalers will be administered in line with the academy's policy and always under the supervision of a member of staff.

## Emergency and Incident Procedure

In the case of an emergency or incident it is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to assess the situation as a minor or major incident, then instruct the appropriate procedure and allocate roles to the staff team.

### First Aid accident/incident

1. Child/adult assessed by a trained first aider.
2. Treat as required.
3. Complete Accident/Incident Log Book.
4. Inform parents/carers as required

### Major accident/incident

Whistle is blown and children gather by the nearest adult and wait further instruction.

1. Forest School Leader will attend casualty, while one other member of staff will take care of the rest of the group and return to the school building/away from the incident. If a third member of staff is present they will also assist the casualty; monitoring and recording.
2. Assess the situation and is the emergency services are required?
  - The Forest School Leader will call the emergency services if necessary, followed by a phone call to School (office/Headteacher).
  - If anyone sustains an *injury or illness that cannot be treated by a first aiders but does not require the emergency services*, the injured person's emergency contact will be contacted so that they can be collected taken to a doctor, hospital or home as appropriate. Office/Headteacher will be informed.

3. Affected parents/carers are notified and a full account of the incident is given.
4. The Incident Log Book is completed.
5. Review policies/procedures with Forest School Leader and Headteacher.

### Emergency Contact Numbers:

Ambulance, Fire Brigade, Police - 999  
School Office – 01440 702787

### Requesting attendance by Emergency Services:

Dial 999 from emergency mobile phone and be ready to give the following information:

School Postcode – CB9 7QZ

School Address - Kedington Primary School, Church Walk, Kedington, Haverhill, Suffolk

School Telephone number – 01440 702787

### Recording and reporting Accidents/Incidents

All incidents must be reported immediately to the Forest School Leader and recorded in the Incident/Accident Log Book. The incident should be recorded on site as soon as it has occurred. The Incident book is kept within the emergency bag. All incidents, should it be required, will be followed up with staff and parents. For Major incidents reports must be investigated further with the Headteacher to review policies and procedures. Incidents leading to hospitalisation for more than 24 hours or resulting in an injury preventing a person from working for three or more days afterwards, must be reported with RIDDOR online or telephone 0345 3009923.

### Emergency Bag

The emergency bag will be available during every Forest School session. It will be placed/hung at a central point for all children and staff to see. It will be checked prior to each session to ensure it contains all the following items:

- First Aid Kit, including Burns Kit
- Survival bag
- Fire blanket
- Torch
- Small tarpaulin
- Hand wash gel
- Baby wipes
- Emergency action plan and script
- Mobile phone (for emergency use only)

- Tissues/paper towels
- Fresh bottle of water

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## Lost or Missing Person Procedure

During our Forest School sessions, the children's safety is paramount. Therefore at the beginning of each session the children will be registered, rules explained and safety procedures (including boundaries) will be discussed. Throughout the session at points when the whole groups gathers together, the children will be accounted for. Staff will be made aware of the children within the group and any individual needs the children may have. If a member of staff believes a child is missing, there will be a 'Crow Call' or 'Whistle Blown' to call the children back to circle, Children will be counted and the register called to make sure no other child has also gone astray. If the child has not be found we will follow the academy's protocol.

### Protocol if a child is lost or missing

- The Forest School Leader will carry out a thorough search of the outside area.
- Staff keep calm and sit in a circle with the other children playing static games so the children don't become anxious or worried (a register will be taken to ensure everyone else is accounted for)
- Doors and gates (fences) are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby the child could have wandered out.
- Radio call to check if any other member of staff has seen the missing child.
- The Forest School Leader will talk to staff to establish when & where the child was last seen and record this. They will then speak to the Headteacher.
- One member of staff is asked to search the vicinity.
- If the child is not found after 15 minutes the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.
- The rest of the group will return into the school with at least one member of staff
- The Chair of Governors will be contacted by the Headteacher and carry out the investigation following the procedures in the academy's Missing Child Policy.

### Crow-call

Crow-call will be demonstrated by the Forest School Leader to the children attending, when the 'Crow-call' is sounded the children must return to the log circle. This will be practiced during initial sessions and regularly used.

## 1-2-3 Where Are You?

Younger children learn a game called 1-2-3 Where Are You? (similar to hide and seek) at the beginning of session one. The children are asked to hide and then on the call of '1-2-3 Where Are You?' they respond '1-2-3 I'm here'. The adult then calls '1-2-3 come back now' and the children respond '1-2-3 I'm coming', while walking to the agreed central point.

## Boundaries

The boundaries are also established at the beginning of session one. The boundary can be marked with rope or flags for the younger children, as a visual reminder, or until the trust between the children and staff has been established. The children are involved in the risk management process, to ensure they remain safe in the agreed boundaries. If a child needs to leave the established safe area, they must ask a member of staff.

## Toileting procedures

Before each Forest School session all children will be encouraged to use the toilet facilities within the school building.

**Reception children:** If a child needs to use the toilet during the session, a member of staff will ask if any other child needs to also visit the toilet. If only one child needs to go, the child will be encouraged to wait until two children (at least two children to one adult for Safeguarding). The member of staff will leave the boundary when 2-4 children need to use the bathroom. The children will walk to the school building where they will use the classroom toilet facilities. When every child with the small group has been they will be head counted and leave the building to return to the wildlife area. The adult will remain outside the cubical and the door must not be locked. If a child requires assistance, the door will be left open and the adult will wear latex gloves and follow the school intimate care policy.

**Year One to Six:** If a child needs to visit the toilet they must speak to an adult who will instruct them leave the boundary in pairs and return to their classroom toilet facilities. Each child must use their own cubical, wash their hands and then return on the same route together back to the wildlife area and inform the adult they have returned. If a child requires assistance the School Safeguarding procedures are followed.

## Parental Consent

Prior to starting Forest School, an information leaflet and parent permission and consent letter will be sent home to parents of children who have been selected to participate in the Forest School programme. The letter will detail the activities the children will experience and identify the tools the children will use. Parental consent must be obtained for each child to participate in Forest School sessions and activities. The permission slips will be disposed of following GDPR guidelines.

### Photography

Photographs may be taken for observational, assessment and marketing purposes during Forest School sessions; to be used in school or on the academy's website. Children will not be identified by name in the photos, unless prior consent is given by the child's parents/carers. A collection of Forest School photos may also be displayed in the school or in a scrap book for staff, children and visitors to see.

Forest School volunteer helpers are not permitted to take photos of any children during a Forest School session.

In conjunction with the general consent form, parents/carers will have also completed the academy's photo permission form. If photo consent is not granted, the child/children will be managed accordingly during the shot or their face will be distorted.

## Tools

At Forest School we use a variety of tools to develop the children's skills and enhance their experiences. A guide to the tools used at Forest School can be found below and further guidance for each tool can be found in the 'tool procedure'. The tool procedure must be adhered to at all times to ensure all children and adults remain safe.

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 a 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 (remind children of the blood bubble) and ensuring that others are aware that a tool is in use. Only walking is permitted when transporting a tool.

Before any tool is used children and adults must wear appropriate clothing and if required (see individual tool procedure) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Long hair must be tied back and staff lanyards tucked inside clothing. Tools will be counted at the beginning of the session and again at the end. Tools must be used within the designated 'safe tool' area under adult supervision.

### Tool Transportation and Maintenance

All tools will be transported to and from the Forest School site in a lockable, heavy-duty bag/box or locked in the Forest School Shed. The key's will be the responsibility of the Forest School Leader. The Forest School Leader is also responsible for maintaining the tools after each session. This includes; cleaning, sharpening and a safety check.

Safety issues must be reported immediately to the Forest School Leader.

### A guide to the tools used at Forest School

All tools are counted out and back in at the beginning and end of each session in which they are used. When not in use in the Forest they are kept secured away in a locked box/locked shed. Before each tool is to be used it will be checked for damage

and working order. Each tool type is kept in their own suitable containers, many of which are also lockable.

Tools should be checked and cleaned before they are put away. Half termly the Forest Leader will ensure that each tool is thoroughly cleaned and oiled. Wear and tear will be monitored daily.

### Safe Use of Tools

- 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).
- Do not use tools with damaged blades or 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 at the start and end of the session

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

- Wear a glove on the non-sawing hand, not on the tool hand.
- 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 with the frame at your side with the blade facing down, like carrying a bag.
- Keep the blade covered when not in use and especially when transporting.
- 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 saw and the child on the other, both observing the blood bubble. The Leader guides the saw and the child follows.
- **Adult to child ratio 1:1 during demonstration progressing to 1:3 for children in year 4 and above**

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

- Always carry with blades closed (and locked if applicable). Carry by your side facing down, for Loppers carry under your arm with blade locked and facing forward.
- When not in use leave with blades closed (and locked if applicable).
- Do not exceed the cutting capacity of the tool.
- Use away from your body and keep the hand not holding tool away from blades.
- Children only to use when sitting or kneeling and a blood bubble distance.

### **Fixed Blade 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 'non-working' hand.
- Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work. Stop if anyone comes too close (remember that blood bubble distance).
- Hold the knife away from your body and cut away from yourself.
- Always carry with sheath on, by the handle with blade facing down beside you.
- When passing, hold the knife by the sheath so the person receiving the tool can take the handle.
- **Adult to child ratio 1:1 during demonstration and 1:1 for reception/Year 1, progressing to 1:3 for children in year 4 and above**

### **Vegetable 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.
- Keep the hand not holding the tool away from the sharp end of potato peeler.
- Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work (remember that blood bubble).
- Children only to use when sitting or kneeling – remind them not to move around when using the peeler.
- **Adult to child ratio 1:4 Reception children and 1:8 for children in Year 3-6**

### **Tent Pegs** – used to hollow out elder piths and secure 'red flags'/ropes

- Safe tool use will be demonstrated by the Forest School Leader to the whole group.
- When using to hollow out elder rest the wood you are working with on a secure/hard surface. Poke out the piths away from your body towards the ground.
- Red Flags shown to children
- Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you.
- Do not run around with tent pegs in your hands.
- To be stored in a bag/box with the mallets and rope.
- **Adult to child ration 1:4 Pre-School children, 1:8 for children in year 3/4.**

**Hand Drills** - Used to drill holes for wood crafts.

- Safe tool use will be demonstrated by the Forest School Leader on a 1:1 basis.
- Rest the item to be drilled on a hard/flat surface and use a clamp to secure the wood (if required).
- The tool must be held with the dominant hand on the tool of the wheel, and the non-dominant with glove and away from the drill bit
- Stand or kneel in the respect position, with a safe distance from others.
- To be carried by your side and returned to the lockable box when not being used.
- **Adult to child ratio 1:1 for Reception, 1:4 for children in year 3+.**

**Mallet** - Used to apply force to tent pegs and tools and it can also be used for printing crafts.

- Safe tool use will be demonstrated by the Forest School Leader to the whole group.
- To be used at a safe distance (at least a tool and two arm's length)
- Kept in tool bag and used under supervision.
- **Adult to child ratio 1:1 for Reception, 1:4 for children in year 3+.**

## Fire at Forest School

As part of the Forest school ethos it is desirable to have an open fire to allow the children to take risks in order to *develop their personal and social life skills*. The experience of making, lighting and cooking on a fire creates opportunities for children

to immerse themselves in the natural environment through real-life, hands-on experiences.

This section identifies the importance of fire safety hazards and the procedures adults and children will adhere to; to ensure fire is used safely, posing minimal risk to health and safety.

### The purpose of open fires at Forest School

Open fires are created at Forest School for the purposes of light, cooking and heating water. There are also social and emotional benefits from gathering around a fire.

Fires can only be made when a risk benefit assessment has been carried out and the benefits outweigh the possible risks a fire imposes. The fire procedure needs to be carefully planned and resourced. We would hope that during the Forest School programme that all children would experience and observe a fire being made, lit and used safely.

### Location

Open fires are only permitted within the fire circle, which is an area with an approximate diameter of 5m. The fire pit in the centre is marked with a double log barrier and is approximately 1m<sup>2</sup>. The outer circle of logs are stable for sitting on and gaps between the logs mark exit/escape routes.

The fire circle at Kedington Forest School has been thoughtfully established on a flat surface of mud, located in the wildlife area (overhanging trees will be monitored, as this could pose a risk). The site was chosen to take account of the nearby buildings and residents.

### Method

- The Forest School Leader will be responsible for lighting and maintaining the fire.
- There must be a large bucket of water containing 10 litres of water and a pouring vessel, close to the fire pit.
- A fire blanket must be next to the fire circle, so it is visible and easily accessible.
- The burns kit is kept in the Forest School emergency bag.
- Fires are lit using a flint and steel, together with tinder (straw/bark shavings), cotton wool (fairy blankets!) and firelighters (if required!). Matches may be used if the flint and steel is unsuccessful.
- Once lit and the hot embers remain, the fire must never be left unattended.
- Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, into the side of the fire. If children are permitted to add fuel to the fire, they must be invited into the fire circle and supervised by an adult (1:1).
- Fire proof gauntlets are kept at the fire circle to allow adults to pick up hot items.

- Children will be encouraged to avoid sitting in the line of smoke and asked to turn their heads to one side during a change in wind direction.
- The exit points of the fire circle will be identified and children will be instructed to walk around the outside of the circle and NOT across it.

### Kelly Kettles

- The Forest leader may use a Kelly kettle to heat water. It is to only be used within the fire circle and must be placed on flat ground, clear of debris.
- The bung must be removed 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 mini-beasts. Newer models might have a vented stopper – check before use and if in doubt leave it out!*
- Sticks and tinder are laid in the bottom of the fire pan and the fire is light via the air holes using a match by the Forest School Leader. The Kettle is placed on top, small amount of tinder is feed the fire via the chimney.
- Kneeling in the respect position the Forest Leader will light the fire using a flint and steel.
- When the fire has successful lit, the kettle/chimney is placed on top.
- When lit, do not stand directly over or look straight down the chimney into the kettle.
- When the water is heated, take care to lift the kettle off the fire pan. Pour out the water holding the bung chain in one hand and the handle with the other. To put the fire out, pour a small amount of water into the fire pan.
- Empty any unused water out of the kettle and allow it cool before packing it away.

### Cooking with Skewers

- The children may have the opportunity to toast marshmallows/apple or cook damper bread on a skewer over the open fire.
- For this activity the adult: child ratio is 1:4.
- The children must enter the fire circle with precaution, following the Risk Benefit Assessment for 'Cooking with skewers'. They should kneel in the respect position and use a stick at least an arm's length. If they need to leave the fire circle they walk behind their peer and other adults and remain in the outer circle and follow instructions.
- If they skewer becomes inflamed and could cause harm, it is dropped and the Forest School Leader/Assistant will ensure it is distinguished appropriately.

## Campfire Cooking and Food Hygiene Procedure

Campfire cooking is one of the most exciting and important elements of Forest Schools. Children love preparing food and being responsible for cooking on an open fire. They take pleasure in sitting together whilst enjoying the food they have prepared and cooked. At Kedington Forest School we aim to offer children the opportunity to cook on a campfire safely and hygienically at least once during their Forest School programme, as the rich learning experience enables children to develop their life skills. An example of the food/drink that they will prepare/cook includes:

- Hot chocolate
- Toasted marshmallows/apple
- Damper bread/toast
- Soup

Food hygiene and safety at Kedington Forest School is paramount, and this is reflected in our Food Hygiene Procedure. All adults and children follow our Food Hygiene Rules listed below. If anyone is concerned about food hygiene and safety, they must speak to the Forest School Leader, who is responsible for food preparation and cooking.

### Food Hygiene Rules at Forest School

- Hair must be tied back, and equipment must be clean and safe to use, to avoid contamination.
- Check the cooking area is clear of debris and tree pollution (use food nets and covering if concerned).
- All adults and children must wash their hands in the hand washing facilities provided; at the beginning and regularly throughout the session.
- If an adult or child has been poorly (such as diarrhoea or vomiting), they must not prepare or handle any food
- Sores and cuts must be covered with a blue waterproof dressing.
- When handling food use spoons, tongs or other suitable implements.
- Keep meat and dairy products refrigerated until they are required.
- Use separate chopping boards for preparing different foods, especially raw and ready-to-eat food.
- Prepare food on a suitable surface, e.g. chopping board, cup, saucepan and not on the ground.
- Keep food that is waiting to be cooked separate from food that is ready to be eaten.
- Store left over food in clean plastic containers with non-leaking lids.

- The Forest School Leader will test the food before being consumed to ensure it is cooked thoroughly and of an appropriate temperature before serving. They will warn the children that it may still be HOT!
- All rubbish and food scraps will be disposed of at the end of the session to avoid attracting vermin. The site should show no trace of your presence.

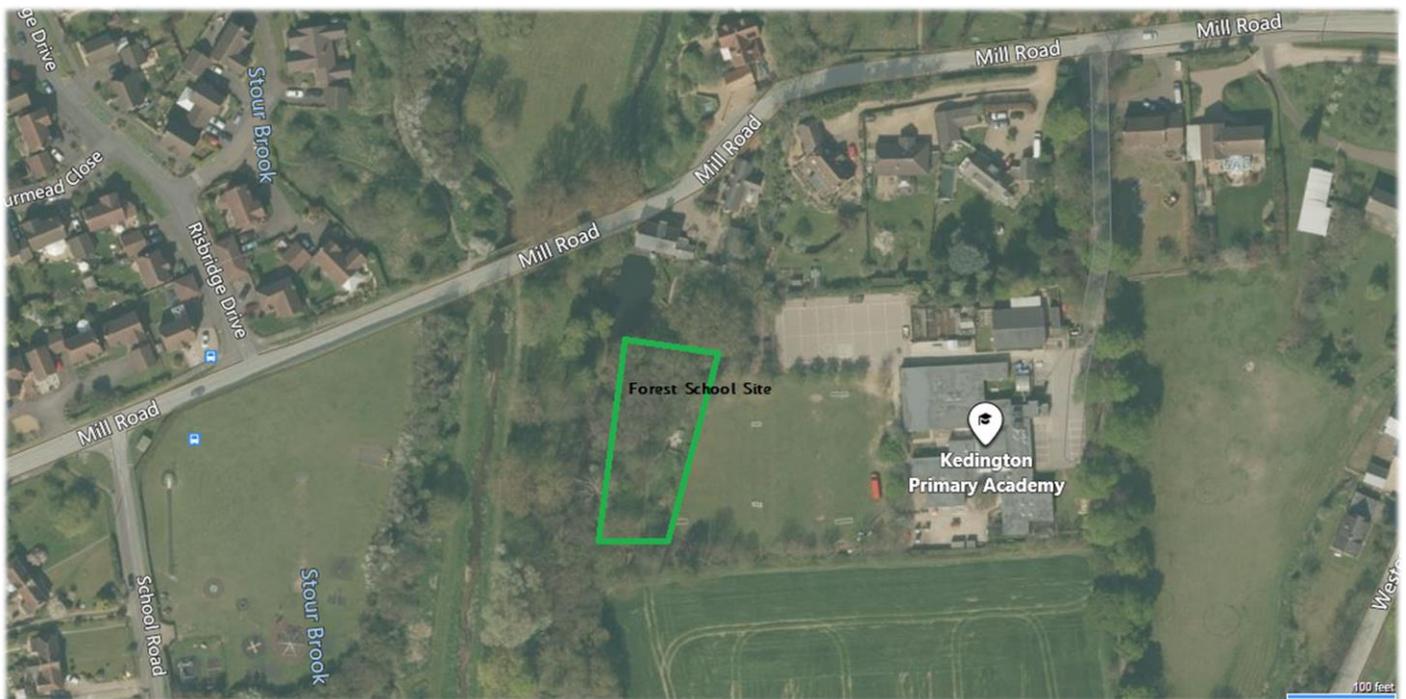
### Food allergies and special dietary requirements

Before the programme commences parents/carers are asked to state any food allergies and special dietary requirements their child may have on their Parental Consent and Medical form. This information will be used to plan what food and drink will be provided during our sessions, to ensure all dietary needs are met.

## Transport to and from the site

We are very fortunate that Kedington Forest School is situated in the grounds of Kedington Primary Academy. Therefore, the children do not need to leave the school grounds to access the site.

Most of our Forest School activities will take place in the wildlife area, as shown on the map below. Access can be gained from the school field. Children and adults will use either entrance or gateway to access the site, respecting the natural environment.



## Cancellation Procedure

In the event of severe weather, insufficient adult/child ratios or significant health and safety risk resulting from the daily site check, Forest School sessions may have to be cancelled.

The Forest School Leader will make an informed decision whether to cancel or adapt the session in liaison with the Headteacher. Staff will be advised when they arrive at school and will be redeployed, as required. Parents and volunteers will be notified of the change in circumstances, as soon as the decision has been made; in person, by telephone or via email.

### Severe weather

Local forecasts and the Met Office Weather App will be used to monitor the weather in the area. In the event of high winds (force 4 increasing to force 5 or more), Forest School will be cancelled due to safety reasons. Where there is the risk of an electrical storm, Forest School will also be cancelled.

### Insufficient adult/child ratio

At Kedington Forest School there must always be two members of school staff present at each session. At least one member must be Level 3 Forest School and first aid trained. If the ratio of 1 adult to 12 Year One children or 1 adult to 8 Reception children cannot be achieved Forest School will be cancelled. If the Forest School Leader is absent the session will also be cancelled.

### Daily Site Checks

Before each session commences a thorough Daily Site Check is completed. Should any hazards be identified which deem to be or a significant risk i.e. unstable fallen trees, broken branches or limbs of trees the Forest School Leader will endeavour to rectify/reduce the risk. If this is not possible then The Forest School Leader will make an informed decision to cancel the session.

## Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment

It is very important that both children and adults are dressed appropriately for each Forest School session, in order for them to enjoy the experience and opportunities it provides. The clothing identified below, will protect them from the elements and risk of harm. The two lists state the clothes that must be labelled, worn and/or brought with each child to every session. There will be a selection of spare clothing and additional gloves and hats in the Forest School clothing bag.

### Winter Clothing

- Waterproof coat
- Waterproof trousers
- Wellington boots
- Warm hat, scarf and gloves
- Warm trousers
- Long-sleeved jumper or fleece
- Long-sleeved top
- Vest and/or t-shirt
- Thick socks - thermal if possible or two pairs of cotton socks

### Summer

- Waterproof coat and waterproof trousers in bag
- Walking boots, trainers or wellington boots (sandals are not suitable)
- Sun hat
- Sunscreen
- Long-sleeved top or light shirt (to protect shoulders and arms from the sun and insects)
- Light trousers (shorts/skirts are not suitable)

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When using particular tools and open fire at Forest Schools it is particularly important that the following PPE should be adhered to:

- Fire ~ fire gauntlets should be worn when feeding, adding/removing items from the fire and while extinguishing the fire.
- Peelers, Fixed blade knives, bow saws, froes, hand drills, and secateurs ~ gloves should be worn on the non-dominant/non-working hand at all times.
- Tree coppicing ~ protective hard hats must be worn.

## Daily Operating Procedure

It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to perform the following procedures before, during and after each Forest School session.

### Before each Forest School session

- Visit the wildlife area to complete the Daily Site Check and amend/update the Site Risk Assessment, as necessary.
- Remove trip hazards (if possible) and mark off areas that are out-of-bounds, if appropriate.
- Cut any overhanging vegetation from paths and gateways.
- Ensure risk assessments are completed for all activities.
- Ensure Forest School/Fire circle is safe/clear from faeces and meets requirements.
- Set up hand washing station (if required)
- Check that the Forest School Emergency Bag and contains all the items.
- Check you have all the tools/resources needed for the session activities.
- Check that all tools you are planning to use are in good working order.
- Check that your phone is fully charged.
- Check the weather forecast.
- Check staff ratio/presence.

### At the start of the session

- Take register and check all children and adults have suitable clothing and footwear.
- Gather the tools and carry them safely to the site.
- Tell/show the children the physical boundaries.
- Remind children how they should behave and how to stay safe on site.

### Throughout the session

- Remind the children to stay safe by highlighting potential hazards (see individual Risk Benefit Assessments), reinforcing the boundaries and asking adults to make the leader aware of any possible hazards.
- Staff to lead/support and review activities, adapting if necessary.
- Carry out regular head counts to ensure all children are accounted for.
- Reinforce high expectations of behaviour at all times.
- All staff take photos and make observations to assess learning; to ensure subsequent sessions are tailored to the needs and development of the children.

### At the end of the session

- Count the children and walk the group back to the school building.

- Ensure all children wash their hands thoroughly.
- Pack up all equipment/resources. Count and safety check tools. Lock bags/boxes.
- Clear the site (including fire pit) and there are no signs that we have been there!
- Record and report any first aid, behaviour or safeguarding incidents.
- Evaluate and reflect on the session, the activities and the learning development.

## Safeguarding Children at Forest School

At Kedington Forest School the welfare of all the children in our care is paramount. We create opportunities for children to immerse themselves in our safe woodland environment where staff can protect and support children to be safe and prevent them from harm. Safeguarding is the responsibility of every adult at Forest School.

### Safeguarding

Kedington Primary School is dedicated to safeguarding all children. All staff have received safeguarding training and follow the school Safeguarding policy, staff code of conduct, and is aware of the school child protection procedures. All staff have read relevant parts of KCSIE 2022.

If you are concerned about the welfare or safety of a child, or a child makes a disclosure to you; you must raise your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in line with the schools' Child Protection & Safeguarding and Whistleblowing Policies.

Staff must complete CPOMS for Safeguarding concerns or follow whistle blowing procedures if required. All observations will be objective, describing circumstances without comment or interpretation. In case of disclosure, the exact words spoken should be recorded as accurately as possible.

If the concern is regarding a child this must be reported to the DSL or alternative DSL if they are not present. If you are concerned about a member of staff/adult volunteer at Forest School, you must raise your concerns with the appropriate named DSL. See safeguarding team posters.

All staff at Kedington Forest School hold a valid DBS certificate. Adult volunteers that help for more than three sessions will require a DBS check. A register of all DBS checked adults from Kedington Primary Academy can be found on the Single Central Record, held confidentially by the Senior Administrative Assistant, Sandy Duers.

## Complaints Procedure

We are committed to following clear procedures should a complaint be made concerning Kedington Forest School provision. If you are unhappy about anything during a Forest School session, please speak to Nichola Runswick (Forest School Leader) or the class teacher in the first instance, who will try to address the issue immediately. If you feel you cannot do this, please contact the headteacher, as soon as possible. If you feel the issue has not been resolved, please refer to the school's Complaints Policy.

## Confidentiality Procedure

Kedington Forest School staff and volunteers will sometimes come into contact with confidential information (registers, registration/medical forms, observations and learning records). We respect the confidentiality of children, their families, staff and volunteers by upholding our associated School's Confidentiality policy with confidence and professionalism. Any personal data and medical information will be kept in a file marked 'CONFIDENTIAL' in the Forest School Leader's emergency bag.

All policies referred to above can be found at <https://www.kedingtonprimary.co.uk/policies> and <https://www.unitysp.co.uk/policies/>

## Equality within Forest School

Kedington Forest School is committed to providing a welcoming and safe woodland environment where every child and adult is valued and respected. We aim to promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference. We feel that it is important for the children to value and respect others and their natural environment. This is supported by inspirational role models in a nurturing learning environment with opportunities for all children to interact and explore rich and diverse resources and experiences.

At Kedington Forest School we recognise that each child has a variety of abilities and we believe that every child should participate to the best of their ability. Children identified as having a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) will require effective inclusion within Forest School sessions and may require additional resources and support to enable them to access the activities and experiences. Pupils with exceptional needs will be welcome to participate in Forest School after a consultation with parents/carers and staff. We believe with adequate provision we can meet the needs of these children and they too will develop their personal, social and emotional skills.

## Behaviour Procedures

At Kedington Forest School we promote positive behaviour and consistently uphold high standards and expectations throughout each session. Engaging activities and learning experiences are tailored to the needs and development of each unique individual. The sessions motivate children to make the right choices and develop their confidence to endure safely-managed risks. They are inspired to take ownership of their learning and build positive attitudes and relationships with others and the natural around them. Therefore, we strongly believe children will make the right choices, stay safe and respect each other and the wildlife area.

We aim to:

- Build self-esteem, independence, motivation and learning in a safe environment
- Reinforce collaborative behaviour
- Model appropriate behaviour throughout every session
- Promote awareness, respect and care for others
- Have a consistent approach to expectations both inside and outside of school
- Develop an awareness of acceptable behaviour in an outdoor environment
- Develop both children's and adults' pride in their achievements

To do this, the **Forest School Leader will:**

- Create a positive environment to encourage caring, nurturing and acceptable behaviour to all i.e. one another, the environment and the equipment we will be using.
- Be mindful of the need to maintain safety at all times
- Establish clearly defined standards of expected behaviour
- Place the needs of the children, including their preferred learning styles, behavioural needs and school curriculum to maximise individual success and raise self esteem
- Provide a positive role model for children and volunteers
- Promote effective relationships in which all are accepted, valued and treated equally.

At Forest School we follow the Restorative Approach:

- RESPECT – for everyone by listening to others and appreciating the world around you
- RESPONSIBILITY - taking responsibility for your own actions
- REPAIR – developing skills within Forest School so that every child has the necessary skillset to identify solutions that repair harm and ensure behaviours are not repeated.

If a child 'breaks the boundaries' and does not RESPECT others or the environment they will:

1. Be reminded to be RESPONSIBLE
2. Be asked to 'miss time' and 'make up time' later on to REPAIR the issue.

At Forest School we create an environment that is safe for everyone. If a child does not adhere to the safety rules and is deemed to be at risk of harm to themselves or others, they will be asked to leave the session and return to the school building where consequences will be given in line with the schools Behaviour Policy.