Forest School Handbook of Policies and Procedures

Review cycle	1 / 2 / 3 years	
Approved/Adopted by	Full Governing Body / Executive Headteacher	**Date**: May 2026
Changes made in this review cycle		
Linked policies	Individualised Behaviour Plan Supporting Documents Attendance Policy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Anti-bullying Policy	
Signed	J. Procter	**Date**: May 2026
Position	Executive Headteacher	
Date of next Review	May 2027	

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Introduction

The following handbook contains information, policies and procedures that are related to Forest School sessions. The policy and procedures are in place to ensure that all persons involved with Forest School can do so safely.

Forest School at Framfield School has been designed to enrich and expand the current curriculum and experiences. Forest School experiences help to develop children's self-esteem, risk management, independence and personal skills alongside their learning.

At Framfield School we believe that all children should have regular access and experiences in the natural environment, where inspiration and challenges are connected to facilitate learning. Throughout all experiences at Framfield School our visions "Achievement for all, Learning together, Learning for life" are evident and the Forest School approach encompasses this.

Forest School practice and learning are embedded within school and children connect their skills through the use of 'growth mind-set'.

The impact of this for the children is the knowledge the children have gained from the Forest School experience.

The impact can be seen through skills learned, art and craft activities undertaken, observations and knowledge of the fruit, plants trees in relation to the seasons, the children's independence of self-care outside and the skills involved in learning how to play Forest School games.

Forest School also enables children in each school to access the 'Cultural Capital' of their own local environments.

What is Forest School and why do we do it?

Forest School is an inspirational process that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands- on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.

Forest School is the name of a specific ethos. Qualified practitioners carefully facilitate programmes which are uniquely tailored to the needs of the individuals within the group and have the fundamental aim of building participants' **self-esteem, confidence, independence and creativity.** The name does not refer to an actual place; it refers to the philosophy.

The principals of Forest School state that it is….

- a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.
- taking place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
- using a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.
- aiming to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
- offering learners, the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
- run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

At Forest School all participants (children and adults) are viewed as:

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

This ethos **creates learning communities where deep-level learning and progression** are the norm. The growing body of research points to numerous benefits to learner, educator, child and parent alike.

https://www.forestschoolassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/

Risk Benefit Analysis

Now for the **Risk Benefit Analysis**. The Risk Benefit Analysis is us considering the risk of undertaking an activity and then considering the benefits. And then this becomes evidence for the reasoning of why we choose to play in the woods…

We find that the activities we undertake provide such huge benefits to both children and adults, that we realise that we would be negligent if we did not give children the opportunity and play and therefore learn in the woods!

So here goes: What participants gain from Forest School

Some activities we might partake in… (Each activity can lead to a multitude of gains)	Gain (most activities lead to all of these gains)
Being outdoors in all weathers Navigating and Walking to the site Learning to care for our basic needs The opportunity to take and manage your own risks Climbing trees Using a swing Using a slack line Camp fires Collecting wood Using tools Making necklaces Sawing sticks Making charcoal Creating flower printed flags Creating out of clay and natural materials Exploring the flora and fauna Getting to know the space and boundaries Learning and singing songs Creating music and sounds Listening to stories Telling stories Performing	Physical Development and increased fitness, leading to more developed fine and gross motor skills and increased physical stamina Creative and imaginative development The development in Communication and Language skills leading to a more sophisticated use of both spoken and written language Problem solving Reasoning Numeracy Knowledge and understanding of Environment and the World Social and Emotional development Resilience by overcoming such challenges as the weather or sustained perseverance with a particular activity or challenge Becoming an expert Spatial awareness Improved motivation, focus and concentration, demonstrated by a keenness to engage and participate in explorative and play activities Engagement Fun and enjoyment Immersion in activities Improvement in Self Esteem and self confidence Improved relationships between teachers, learners and parents and carers by building collaborative working relationships in the woods

Forest School Code of Conduct

Our Forest School Code of Conduct at Framfield School

The Head of School and Governing body are responsible for promoting good behaviour and a booklet is given to new parents outlining the school's expectations and a parent/school partnership is entered into, with a signed agreement to work together in support of school ideals.

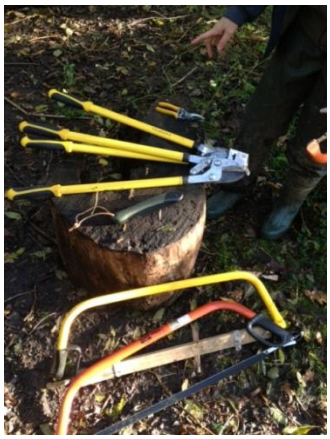
This means that, as a general rule, everyone will act with courtesy and consideration to others at all times, therefore, the children:-

- Always try your best, aim for excellence, take pride in your achievements
- Respect other people - keep words and actions positive so everyone enjoys school
- Listen well and follow instructions from staff
- Respect property - look after our school and everything in it
- Keep yourself and others safe

Our Forest School Code of Conduct builds upon these values and extends them through developing understanding and care for the environment and each other.

Boundaries Children are always made aware of how far they can explore before a session begins. If children explore hidden areas, an adult should also go into the cover, deep enough to be able to see the children. If you do lose sight of them, shout '1, 2, 3, where are you?' The child should reply '1, 2, 3 I'm here'. This has been introduced to them through a game and practised many times.	
	Picking up and using sticks Children can carry sticks shorter than their arm's length but ensure they think about how close they are to other children. Longer sticks can be dragged or carried with a child at both ends. Sticks must not be thrown and should only be used from the ground area. Adults can coppice sticks for specific activities.
Tree climbing Adult: child ratio must be 1:2. Check ground cover for sharp objects and check 'climbing trees' for loose and rotten branches. Children are allowed to explore to their own limits but must be reminded, that if they choose to climb up, they choose to climb down. Adults are rarely strong enough to lift a child down at an overhead stretch and children should be made aware of this. Adults should be near enough to catch if one, or support a child who should fall but far enough away to not be invasive.	

	Carrying & transporting materials The children should be encouraged to roll, lift, drag and pull materials, either by hand or using ropes. The safe way to lift, by bending your knees and keeping a straight back, should be modelled by all adults. Heavier objects can be rolled, dragged or carried by more people.
Eating and drinking Prevent children eating anything found in woods, such as berries or seeds. Keep reminding them about fingers and hands in mouths and noses. If we take drinks or snacks outside ensure children use running water and soap to clean their hands before eating their snack or drinking.	
	Mushrooms, Fungi, Berries Mushrooms, fungi and berries can form a large part of learning about the natural environment, food and growth. Within Pioneer Forest School sessions, the rule is that children do not eat or touch mushrooms, fungi or berries. However, adults can pick a selection and use these for looking at with magnifying glasses, creating spore prints and studying under microscopes.
Around the log circle A log circle will have a small shape of logs, or rope to demarcate with the 'fire' within, then a circle of seating logs approximately 1.5 metres from the 'fire'. There must be no walking within the fire circle area. Children are to be reminded of walking around the outside of the logs when moving around the area and anything being carried must be placed on the ground behind the seating. 'Red dragon' warning of walking inside, 'green dragon' well done for walking safely around the outside. We then step **over** the logs to sit down. We will use the table cloth analogy for safety around the fire and will always have an entry and exit area.	
	Leaving the site The site in the woodland must always be left as it was found. If artefacts are made using 'found' materials these may be taken off site. Shelters should normally be demolished and imported materials taken back to school at the end of each session.

Collecting wood Wood should be collected in many thicknesses – spaghetti, matchstick, pencil, thumb and thicker thickness. This is a great sorting activity and children should be given a chance to do it even if a fire is not to be lit!	
	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. Children will be taught how to safely light the fire and will do this on a 1:2 basis.
Tools Tools are all counted in and out and are kept in suitable containers in one designated spot. Each tool has its own safety procedures which children and staff will be aware of. Children must never be allowed to help themselves. Tools are given out for a purpose and all adults should model their correct use, storage and transportation at all times. Tools are used well away from other active children and only walking is permitted when carrying them.	

Framfield Woodland: Forest School Site

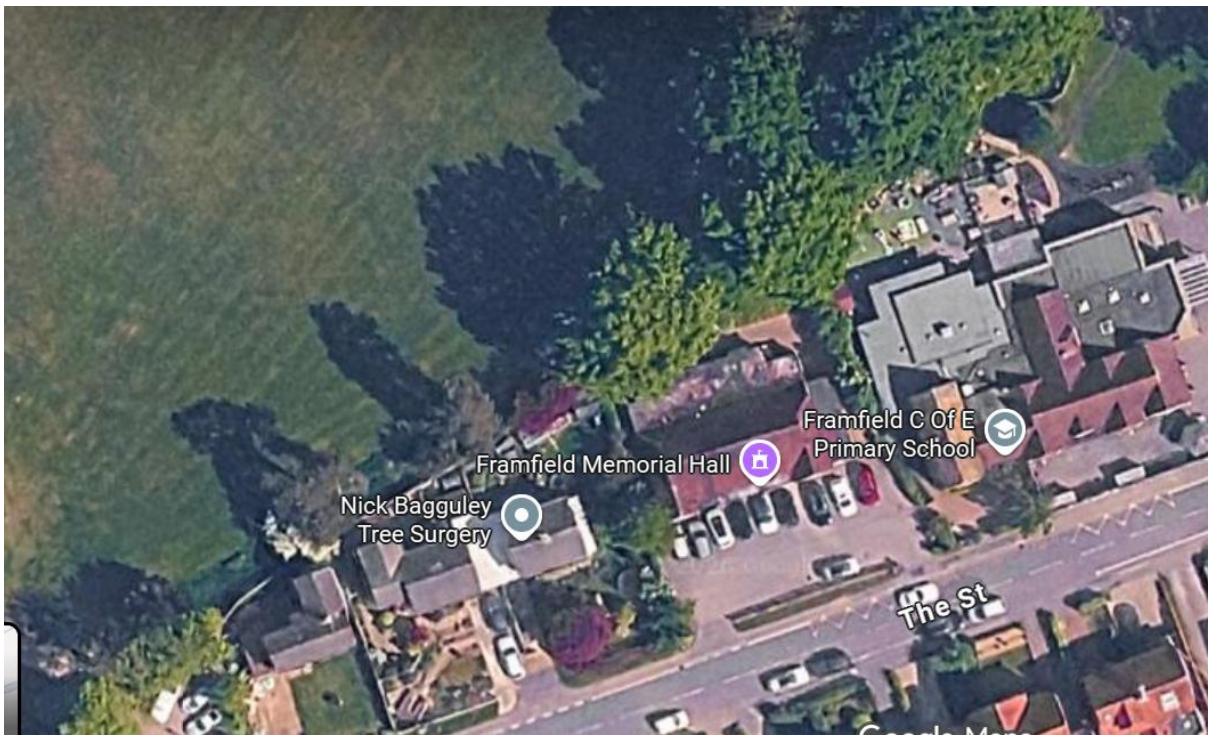
Site Location: The St, Framfield, Uckfield TN22 5NR

For school - https://what3words.com/hill.excavated.proper

For pond area- https://what3words.com/occupiers.reflector.magically

Framfield School utilises part of the school grounds for their Forest School Sessions. This is comprised of grass, and a variety of shrubs and trees, particularly along the school border.

The School also uses some woodland adjacent to the school site, accessible via a locked gate.



Sample Activities and ideas

Activities for Forest School are diverse and numerous and develop independent learners who are inspired to try out their own ideas, explore their own interests and to attempt new ideas whilst making links with their current knowledge, experiences and learning.

- Shelter building
- Fire lighting
- Tool use
- Studying wildlife
- Playing team and group games
- Sensory activities
- Tracking games

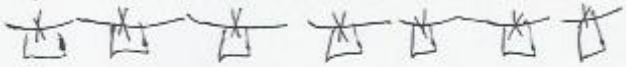
- Cooking on an open fire
- Rope and string work
- Art and sculpture work
- Woodland and traditional craft
- Developing stories and drama, and meeting imaginary characters

Leaf Whapping

You will need.....

- Hammers are best, but otherwise a fairly flat ended mallet, or wood craft fashioned beater.

- A flat board, plank or log
- Some plain cotton fabric, muslin or canvas in a light colour



- Interesting shaped leaves, or flowers for colour
- Optional, tea, boiled onion skins....any other natural or catering tent raid dyes.

.....you might want some pegs to peg up your creations.....

Go on a journey, search, amble or explore to select some leaves...any that you fancy, each leaf creates a different print. Try a few out, think pattern, colour, scale, whatever is just within reach?!

Place your leaves on the fabric on a flat base and fold the fabric over the top of your leaf arrangement.

Tap gently on top of the leaves until your leaves are squished onto the fabric to create a print.

You can then soak in cold tea water for 3-4 hours to act as a mordent to fix the design and dye it, or create your own dyes out of whatever you can source.

You could go small to create bunting, large to design a backdrop for a merrymoot stage, tall flags tied to hazel sticks, or t-shirts.....whatever there is or is needed.....enjoy....and think 'that is nature that is'.....

Forest School Session - Summer Term

Previous Learning

This is their very first introduction in our Forest School environment. Talk to children beforehand to share their ideas and experiences of environments they have explored outside. Behavioural expectations of the walk to the site. How to help to build positive relationships. Knowledge of the village and local environment. Developing observations and previous experiences and stories of the woodland environment. Learning to explore the space and feel safe with the group. Introduction to tools, resources activities following the children's interests.

Resources

First aid kit
Phone
Children's weather appropriate clothing, for sun, rain, temperature etc.
Camera, pen, list of children.
Tools in tool bag
Clay
Stories
Listening birds

At Meeting point:

Clothing and toilet prep and behaviour expectations.
Woodland whispers at the top of the track.
Tapping Sticks and 'The more we play together' song once in the woods.

Possible Activities:

- Learning boundaries, by tying ribbons around the boundaries, walking the bounds
- Toilet and handwashing, understanding basic needs
- Taking physical risks, climbing and balancing, discussing rules for using swings and slack lines
- Stories- Bugs in a blanket, Stanley's stick,
- Plant, tree and animal identification
- Fire safety and fire lighting
- Making charcoal
- Cooking on the fire- popcorn, hot drinks
- Use of tools, cutting rounds to make necklaces, peelers to peel hazel or holly to make wands
- Learning songs and music connected to the space and sessions
- Playing in the mud kitchen
- Listening out for and spotting birds
- Playing listening games trying to identify birds, using soft toy birds to support, bird id sheets

Ideas and what we actually did, from children's interests

(completed after session as reflection and planning for next session)

Safeguarding Children, Confidentiality and Forest School

(See Safeguarding Policy on website for more detail)

Framfield School recognises the importance of providing an ethos and environment within school that will help children to feel safe, secure and respected; encourage them to talk openly and enable them to feel confident that they will be listened to. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable children to have the best outcomes

Child protection is the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Our pupils' welfare is our paramount concern. The governing body will ensure that our school will safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and work together with other agencies to ensure that our school has robust arrangements to identify, assess and support those children who are suffering or likely to suffer harm.

Our school is a community and all those directly connected, staff members, governors, parents, families and pupils, have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure.

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside the school. All staff, but especially the DSL will consider the context within which such incidents and/or behaviours occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

Framfield School will endeavour to support the welfare and safety of <u>all</u> pupils through:

- Maintaining children's welfare as our paramount concern.
- Ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning.
- Ensuring that child protection is included in the curriculum to help children stay safe, recognise when they don't feel safe and identify who they might/can talk to.
- Providing suitable support and guidance so that students have a range of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulties.
- Raising the awareness of all staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse by ensuring all staff

are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the school's procedures and lines of communication.

- Supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- Providing an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident, and know how to, approach adults if they are in difficulties believing they will be effectively listened to.
- Ensuring all steps are taken to maintain site security and students' physical safety.
- Working with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations.
- Developing a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- Monitoring children and young people who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns; keeping confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals
- Developing and promoting effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Children's Social Care.
- Ensuring that all adults within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability.

Our school procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with East Sussex Local Safeguarding Board (LSCB) Procedures. All staff, parent helpers and volunteers will be made aware of procedures and will have enhanced checks from the Disclosure & Baring Service. Pupils will not be left unsupervised with a visitor or volunteer.

Adults working within Forest School need to appreciate that when children feel comfortable, content and when their instinct to trust and risk take is encouraged, they may disclose information which they might otherwise keep to themselves.

Any volunteer or member of staff who finds that a child is telling them something which concerns them should follow these simple steps:

- **Listen**, but ask NO leading questions. Remember that you must not promise to 'keep a secret'. The general rule is that adults should make it clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the beginning of the conversation.
- **Comfort** the child if appropriate.
- **Inform** the DSL in school as soon as possible, and make a written record of the concern.

Safeguarding leads contacts are on the Framfield website homepage:

https://pioneerfederation.co.uk/framfield

Detailed policies are found on the school's webpage under 'Our School'/ 'Policies'

Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Policy and Forest School
(See Framfield PREVENT policy for more detail)

In adhering to this policy, and the procedures therein, staff and visitors will contribute to Framfield School's delivery of the outcomes to all children.

This Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Policy is one element within our overall school arrangements to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of all Children in line with our statutory duties.

Our Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Policy also draws upon the guidance contained in:

- The "Pan Sussex Child Protection Procedures" https://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk/
- DfE Guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021";
- DCSF Resources "Learning Together to be Safe"
- "Prevent: Resources Guide", "Tackling Extremism in the UK"
- DfE's "Teaching Approaches that help Build Resilience to Extremism among Young People" and Peter Clarke's Report of July 2014.
- Prevent duty guidance 2021

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities school staff will be alert to:

- Disclosures by pupils of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of school, such as in their homes or community groups, especially where pupils have not actively sought these out.
- Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images
- Pupils accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance
- Partner schools, local authority services, and police reports of issues affecting pupils in other schools or settings
- Pupils voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives
- Use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence
- Intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious or, in line with our equalities policy, views based on, but not exclusive to, gender, disability, homophobia, race, colour or culture
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others Anti-Western or Anti-British views

Framfield School will closely follow any locally agreed procedure as set out by the Local Authority and/or the Local Safeguarding Children Board's agreed processes and criteria for safeguarding individuals vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation.

Vulnerable Pupils:
All staff and adults involved will be aware of vulnerable/SEND pupils and the strategies in place to ensure safety.

Confidentiality
Staff, volunteers and parents will all be made aware of confidentiality and data protection rules.

Toileting
Staff are aware that children will return to school to deal with toileting needs. Staff with a current DBS check should accompany children to the school building and then back to the activity site. Parents will be contacted if appropriate to support their child with a toileting incident.

Photos & Video
In line with the current school policy, permission will be requested for the use of photos and videos in school publications. Parent/Carers are aware that photos will be taken for evidence, observation and assessment. Where parents have refused permission for publication of photos in school newsletters or on the website, staff will aim to avoid photographing the child. All staff and volunteers will be made aware of children who are not allowed to be photographed.

Health and Safety Policy & Procedures

The Head of School and Governors of Framfield School believe that the health and safety of persons within the school is of paramount importance. It is our intention to prevent accidents and occupational ill health and where possible eliminate hazards in the workplace. The Head of School and Governors will ensure that others who are affected by our activities are not subjected to risks to their health and safety. This will include pupils, visitors, parents, volunteers and contractors.

This Forest School Handbook contains a range of policies, procedures and guidelines outlining how health and safety should be highlighted and implemented throughout preparation for and during Forest School Sessions. All those involved with Forest School sessions will read through this handbook and sign to say they understand all procedures.

Risk assessment guidelines and forms

Forest school practice and ethos encourages children to think about risk and how they can manage risks in their lives and environments, in order for this to happen in a safe way staff will ensure that risk assessments have been completed and regularly reviewed for:

- Area and site being used.
- Individual tools, such as knives, bow saws, loppers, secateurs.
- All planned activities
- Food preparation and cooking
- Fires and fire lighting
- Streams and rivers.
- Children, groups and the public
- Animals and woodland habitants.

All risk assessments will be completed by Forest School Leaders, using the East Sussex Risk assessment format (see appendices) and will be found in the Forest School file. A copy of the relevant risk assessments need to be taken to the woodland during sessions along with the emergency procedures and contact details documents (see essential and emergency bag section for full details) As part of the risk assessment process the Forest School leader will consider risk benefit analysis. We believe that alongside every activity that contains risk there is a wide range of benefits and this will be taken into consideration when planning and risk assessing experiences and activities.

Legislation Related to Policies and Procedures

• Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
• Children's Act 1989
• Liability Insurance
• The following laws and guidance –
    Disability Discrimination Act
    Race Relations Act
    Sex Discrimination Act
    DBS Checks
    Every Child Matters

First Aid, Incident & Accident Policy & Evacuation Procedure

Forest School leaders will have the appropriate training (refer to the Framfield First Aid Policy) and will ensure First Aid kits are re-stocked after use. These should be checked and restocked (as necessary) every 6 months.

In the event of an emergency, we ensure that all leaders in the Pioneer Federation are familiar with the appropriate emergency procedures. A trained First Aider must be present on site at all times. Most minor emergencies can be resolved by the leader removing the group from the potential threat and administering First Aid. However, if the event is of a more serious nature (caused by illness, injury or threat), the emergency services should be contacted using the following procedures:

1. Secure safety of the group by stopping all work/activities and promptly locate and call in the entire group, as agreed with the group in advance. If necessary, remove the group from any further threat or danger.
2. First Aider to administer to any casualties with the aid of an adult helper whilst still retaining the required supervision ratios for the rest of the group. Any change in the state of the casualty/casualties or if anything has been administered must all be recorded wherever possible.
3. Adult helper to contact emergency services. All staff to carry fully charged mobile phones at all times.
4. Away from the scene of the incident, the safety of the rest of the group will be maintained by the remaining staff and adults.
5. In the event of the next of kin having to be informed, this should be done by either the Executive Head, the Head of School or by another designated member of staff.
6. The school Leadership team should be informed about any incident as soon as
7. possible after the event.
8. All reports of incidents should be carried out as per the usual School accident report procedure.

Legislation

Any equipment involved in the incident/accident should be retained in an unaltered condition should it be required by the police.

Keep a carefully written record of the times, events and circumstances of the incident and take photographs if possible. Keep these records until the matter has finally been settled. Do not allow any of the group members to be interviewed unless there is an independent witness present.

Any incidents or near misses must be fully investigated by staff at the appropriate school and procedures to be reviewed accordingly.

Local Emergency Centres & Medical Centre

For emergency situations use:
Eastbourne DGH,
Kings Drive,
Eastbourne,
East Sussex, BN21 2UD

For non-emergency situations use:
Uckfield Community Hospital,
Framfield Road, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 5A

or

Queen Victoria Hospital (Burns speciality)
Holtye Road East Grinstead West Sussex RH19 3DZ.

or

Crowborough War Memorial Hospital
Southview Cl, Crowborough, East Sussex. TN6 1HB

or

Full A and E
Tonbridge Rd, Pembury,
Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. TN2 4QJ

Lost or Missing Person Procedure

While we want the children to enjoy all the freedom which Forest School activities provide, we must remain mindful of the fact that a woodland can be a very disorientating place to someone who is not used to such an environment. In order to avoid anyone going missing we need to take the following precautions:

1. A designated area where the Forest School activities will take place will be chosen. The boundaries within this area will be clearly marked. The Forest School leaders will ensure that all children and adults are familiar with the boundaries and know to stay within them at all times.
2. The children will be counted in at the beginning and at the end of each Forest School session. They will also be counted at various intervals during the session and especially after any activities where the children would be required to split up.
3. Children will be encouraged to communicate any concerns that they may have about the safety or whereabouts of another child.

In the event of a child going missing, the following action should be put into place:

1) The entire group will be called back to the meeting area and a headcount will be taken to establish the missing number. The time will be noted in the incident book.
2) Two adults will remain with the group whilst one other will go in search of the

missing group member, calling and whistling as appropriate. If the missing child is not found within 5 minutes, the police must be called on 999 and James Procter or Natalie Riley to be informed immediately. They will then contact the parents.

3) A description of what the missing child was wearing needs to be noted as well as any distinguishing features, any special educational or medical needs. These must then be passed on to the relevant emergency agencies.

Using and storing tools

The use of a range of different tools is an important part of Forest School activities as it helps the children to develop new skills, increase self-confidence and help with their fine motor skills development. Tools that may be used include potato peelers, bow saws, pruning saws, loppers, knives, drills and hatchets.

In our Forest School sessions we aim to ensure that the tools are used safely by ensuring that the following guidelines are adhered to:

1) The Forest School Leader will check the tools before each session to ensure that they are safe for use and only those which are in a safe condition shall be used.
2) Correct and safe use of sharp tools shall be demonstrated by the Forest School leader to all members of the group, adults and children alike.
3) Tools will be counted out before use and then counted in after use.
4) All children to be supervised closely whilst using tools until they are deemed competent to work with limited supervision.
5) Tools will be kept in a designated building which shall be kept locked at all times. No tools are to be left unattended outside when not in use.
6) Immediately after use, all protective guards, sheaves etc. shall be replaced on the tools.
7) Walking around with unprotected or open tools shall not be permitted.
8) Safe working distances and ratios shall be maintained at all times.
9) Suitable outdoor and protective clothing and footwear shall be worn at all times. Where any cutting or pruning is being done, gloves and helmets should be worn.

Guidance on Knife Use

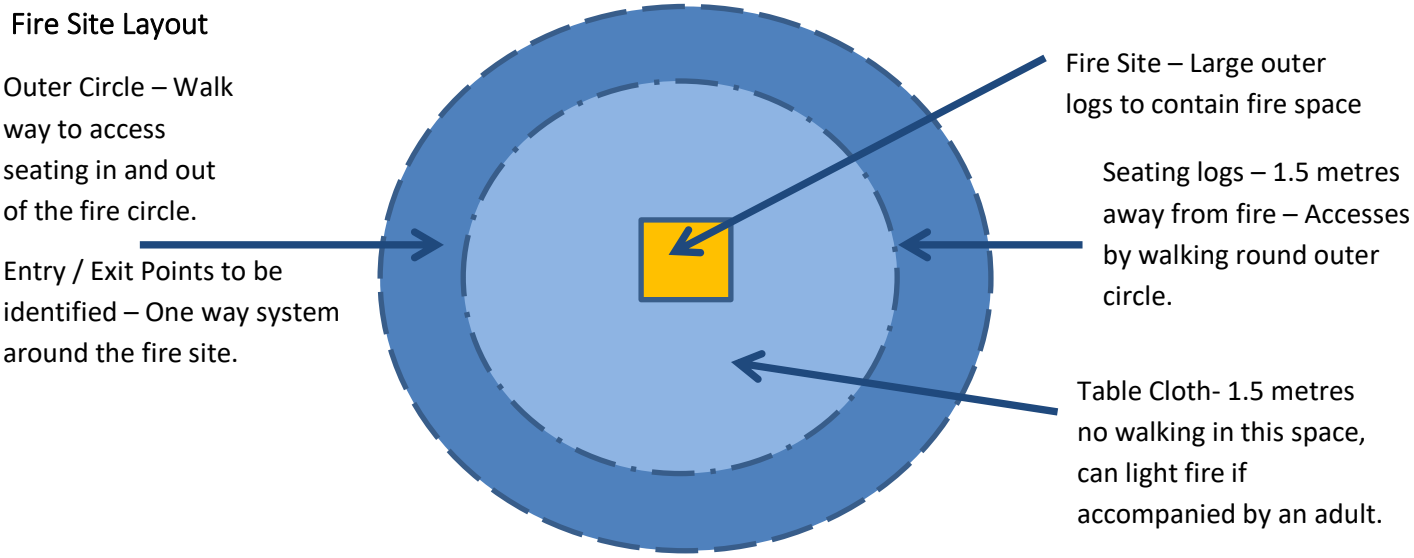
1) The children working with knives will work within a specifically designated zone.
2) Knives will always be carried with the sheath on.
3) Forest School leaders will demonstrate the safe passing around of sheaved knives to the children before each session.
4) When not in use, knives will always be sheaved.
5) Leaders to count knives out and back in.
6) Forest School leaders will demonstrate the safe use of knives before each session and this shall include grip and body position.
7) A responsible adult will always supervise knife activities.
8) When using knives, each person will sit well out of reach of others (blood bubble).

Fire Procedure

Fires and the use of kettles and other cooking utensils are an essential part of Forest Schools and we intend to ensure the safety of all who partake in these activities. The following guidelines must always be followed:

1) Children will be informed that only dead wood is to be burned to keep smoke inhalation to a minimum. If they are sitting in the way of smoke, children shall be encouraged to move to a smoke free area. Children will also be informed of the importance of dead wood as a habitat.
1) Framfield School will have a designated area for lighting fires and no fires are to be lit anywhere else.
2) Children will only be allowed to light fires using suitable materials and under the supervision of a Forest School leader.
3) All children will be made aware of how to behave around a fire site and how to keep themselves and others safe. This includes where to sit and how to move around a fire site when the fire is lit and a kettle or other cooking utensil is on.
4) A lit fire and all cooking activities will be supervised by an adult at all times.
5) Related safety equipment will be kept within close range of fires. These include heat proof gloves, a fire blanket, a burns kit and water.
6) The fire will be extinguished at the end of each session and the site will be left tidy and safe.
7) The children will use the 'table cloth' analogy for understanding how to move around the fire for safety and will be seated at least 1.5 metres away from the fire.

Fire Site Layout



Food Hygiene and Eating

Before handling or eating any food, children and adults will wash their hands with soap and water which will be provided at the site.

Food preparation may take place at the site and the Framfield School leaders will hold a current Food Hygiene certificate to ensure that all food is handled safely according to procedures.

Dogs and Members of the Public

Framfield School will be using areas of woodland for some of their activities which are open to the public. This will mean coming into contact with members of the public and their dogs.

If a child is known to be frightened of dogs, then everything should be done to make the child feel safe should a dog approach them.

Should a member of the public show unwanted attention to the group, the Forest School Leader should approach them to see if there is a problem. If the situation escalates then the Emergency and Serious Incident procedures will be put into place.

Hazardous Plants and Fungi

Any hazardous plants or fungi which are identified during the Risk Assessment of the Forest School site will be pointed out to the children and they will learn to identify them.
Children will be told that they are not to pick or eat anything unless an adult is present.
If a child should have a bad skin reaction after contact with the sap or hairs from a plant or should they ingest something which causes a reaction, then the Emergency and Serious Incident procedure will be put into place.

Biting and Stinging Insects

Prior to any Forest School activities, the Forest School leader should be aware if any of the group taking part in that session suffer from any allergic re-actions to insect bites or stings i.e. wasps or bees. The appropriate medical equipment should be in the First Aid bag. If there is an incident where a group member suffers a serious re-action and First Aid does not have an effect, then the Emergency and Serious Incident procedure will be put into place.

If ticks are known to exist in the proximity of the site, appropriate steps should be taken to avoid infestation. Children should be encouraged to wear appropriate clothing ie long sleeves and trousers. Children should be checked after the session to ensure that none have a tick on them. If a tick is found, a plaster should be put onto the tick and the next of kin should be informed so that the tick can be safely removed.

Information on the safe removal of ticks can be found on:
www.tickbitepreventionweek.org/tick-removal

Environmental Policy and Environmental Assessment

Our aim is for all those taking part in our activities to develop a strong sense of respect for their natural world. We aim for all to be involved in decision making regarding their environment and safety. During our activities we will follow certain guidelines which will minimise the impact on our environment.

We will limit the lighting of fires to minimise the collection of dead wood. When we do have fires we will only collect the minimal amount needed. It will be explained to the children that

dead wood is an important ecological part of woodlands and that it acts as habitat for many creatures.

Fires will be lit in a designated spot and the ash not allowed to be spread. Ash can change the soil chemistry which can lead to raised levels of PH, phosphorus and carbons which can be damaging to some plants. Other nutrients in the soil can be depleted.

Our Forest School leaders will always ensure that a fire has been fully extinguished after an activity.

The children of the Pioneer Schools will be made aware how food waste can attract animals to the site or even increase the number of certain species thus leading to adverse changes in the bio diversity of the area. Children will be made aware of how important it is to always clear away any food waste into the waste container/rubbish bag provided. This container/bag will be removed at the end of every session.

Activities such as tree climbing, shelter building and swings can cause damage to trees and only suitable trees should be used. These activities should be restricted to suitable trees that can tolerate this treatment.

Collecting natural materials can be damaging to plants. Some plants are more sensitive than others to losing their flowers or leaves. Children will be informed which plants can be picked and that they should always take samples from fallen plants. Picking of natural materials will be a limited activity.

Environmental sustainability is a core value throughout the Pioneer Federation.

Equipment and Forest School Emergency Bag

In addition to tools suited to the planned activities the Forest School leader will always take out an **emergency bag**.

The contents of the **emergency bag** will vary depending on the time of year and weather conditions. Contents of the bag may also vary as a result of risk assessments.

However, there are some essential items that should be carried on every session.

Essential Items:

- First Aid Kit provided by the class teacher (appropriate for number of people out during sessions and remoteness of site; kit to be regularly checked and restocked as necessary)
- Emergency procedures
- Medical information and emergency contact details of all in group (including adult helpers and leaders of sessions)
- Risk assessments
- Means of communication (mobile phone)
- Clean water
- Emergency whistle/bell

- Accident sheets, log of events and emergency card.
- Medication for individuals (if not appropriate for individual to look after their own medication – clearly labelled and staff trained to administer it and parental consent received)
- Appropriate clothing

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT: When having a fire

- Flame retardant Gauntlet gloves
- Fire Blanket
- Bucket of water
- Fire steel
- Vaseline
- Cotton wool
- Matches

Other Possible Items:
Wet wipes, hand gel, nappy sacks and toileting items, trowel, sun cream (parental permissions required); spare clothing; thermos of hot water; chocolate/sugary food; burns kit; fire blanket; torch; emergency fire kit; knife; emergency shelter.

Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Forest School

Framfield School is committed to the ethos that there should be equal opportunity for all. Our policies help to ensure that we promote the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

We ensure that all our children:

- feel secure and know that their contributions are valued;
- appreciate and value the differences they see in others;
- take responsibility for their own actions;
- are able to participate safely in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs;
- are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success;
- use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds;
- have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles;
- are set challenging targets that enable them to succeed;
- participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs.

Children and parents are encouraged to think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities, and to be aware that they are likely to take some of our mud home with them after a session at school.

We encourage a level of risk-taking, always under close adult supervision, and actively foster friendships and collaboration between all children and adults.

Forest School activities are always designed to produce success and enjoyment, even if this seems to be of a transitory nature. The forest environment is one to which we all have an entitlement and we strongly believe the happy experiences we have there will linger in the memory for years to come. Children with medical needs or disabilities will be helped so they can take as full a part as everyone else in Forest School sessions. Those with challenging behaviour are risk-assessed and may need one-to-one supervision, but their entitlement in Forest School remains the same.

Insurance

The school insurance covers activity/programmes but there are a few provisos:

The teaching staff must be fully trained and one of them must be trained to a level 3 Group Leader level for this activity. The school will complete a thorough risk assessment of the locations(s) within the wood that the group will be using, the activities themselves and any tools and equipment that will be used.

Insurance Company - Public Liability insurers currently are Travellers Insurance and the policy number is UCPOP3688019 and we have an indemnity limit of up to 40 million.

Responsibilities, Ratios and organisation (including parents helpers/volunteers)

- How ever many adults accompany Forest School sessions the person in charge is always the trained Forest School Leader

- The Forest School Leader has overall duty of care for the children in their charge, but all adults are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure children are safe.

- All adult helpers **must** sign and date a form to show they have read this handbook and appropriate risk assessments and understand and agree to comply with the general operating procedures for Forest School. Parent helpers/volunteers should never be left alone with tool or fire activities.

- The Forest School Leader or Assistant will always carry a First Aid kit, an Emergency bag and mobile phone.

- The Forest School Leader will ensure that the Emergency Bag contains:
    - essential survival equipment;
    - a contact list for each child undertaking the activities, and;
    - the School's telephone number.

- 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 be responsible for the pre visit check of the Forest School site before each Forest School session and will review the risk assessments before every trip to the site.

- General Ratios for Forest school Sessions are:
-

  Foundation stage 1:4
  Key Stage 1 1:5
  Key Stage 2 1:8

  These are guidance only however each adult will know and understand the needs of their groups, the activities that will be undertaking and their site. When tools are used the adult: child ratio will always be 1:1. There is only one exception to this – the use of potato peelers for stick whittling. The ratio here can be 1:2. The Forest Leader is responsible in training the children in how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately and informing other adults of correct procedures.

Adults Roles

Forest School Leader

- To ensure the safety of children and adults as they travel to and from the forest school site.
- Ensure the safety of children and adults whilst at the site.
- Provide clear guidance and expectations to adults and children.
- Carry out a safety check of the site prior to visiting.
- To assess the site on a quarterly basis.
- Carry out a safety sweep before each session

Support Staff

- Ensure the safety of children and adults as they travel to and from the forest school site.
- Partake in children's activities.

- Ask open ended questions rather than directing them to activities/ telling them what to do.
- Record observations.

Parent Helpers/volunteers

- Assist with carrying resources to and from site.
- Partake in children's activities.
- Ask open ended questions rather than directing them to activities/ telling them what to do.
- Record observations

Permission Letters

Child's name
○ I give permission for my child to attend the Forest School programme delivered by Forest School Leaders. ○ I understand that my child will need suitable clothing and footwear as advised. ○ I give permission for my child to receive medical attention from qualified school staff and/or medical staff in an emergency. (The school will normally act in *loco parentis* until a parent is able to attend).

○ I give my permission for photos to be taken during Forest School Sessions to be used in the (delete as appropriate) newsletter, website, school prospectus/ brochures.	
Any medical issues, insect allergies, concerns and information for Forest School team Please include any information about medication (inhalers, Epi pens etc) that need to go with the child.	
EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION Number: Name: Relationship: Name of Parent/Carer Signature of Parent/Carer	
Any other information or comments:	

Please let us know if any of this information changes over the year.

NB: No person will be permitted to go to Forest School without appropriate clothing that will protect them from extremes of heat or cold, keep them covered to reduce the likelihood of cuts and scrapes, that fits appropriately for comfort, and that meets any religious requirements.

Clothing

Children and parents are encouraged to think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities. We ask that all parents provide children with a set of clothing that can stay in school specifically for forest school.

This should include the following:

- Waterproof trousers
- Waterproof coat, with a hood.
- Long sleeved top – to prevent prickles and scratches from plants
- Full length trousers- to prevent prickles and scratches from plants
- Warm boots (wellies can be very cold during the winter)
- Warm Socks, and a spare pair

- Gloves and Woolly hat – Cold weather
- Sun hat: that fits well to ensure good visibility– sunny weather

Appendices

- Incident Log Sheet
- Forest School IMPACT evaluation
- Children's evaluation
- Staff evaluation
- Children's voice sticker proforma

Incident log sheet

Complete the form for every accident leading to injury, violent or aggressive incident, ill health, disease or near miss.

Incident of date and time:

Location:

Person injured or subject of aggression:

Was the incident:

□ a near miss
□ ill health/disease
□ an accident leading to injury
□ a violent or aggressive incident

What happened (describe below including the nature of any injury/illness):

Was anyone else involved (note names if so)?

Was anything damaged (e.g. vehicle)?

What action has been taken to prevent a recurrence?
Name of person completing form & signature

Forest School Impact Evaluation.

Class:

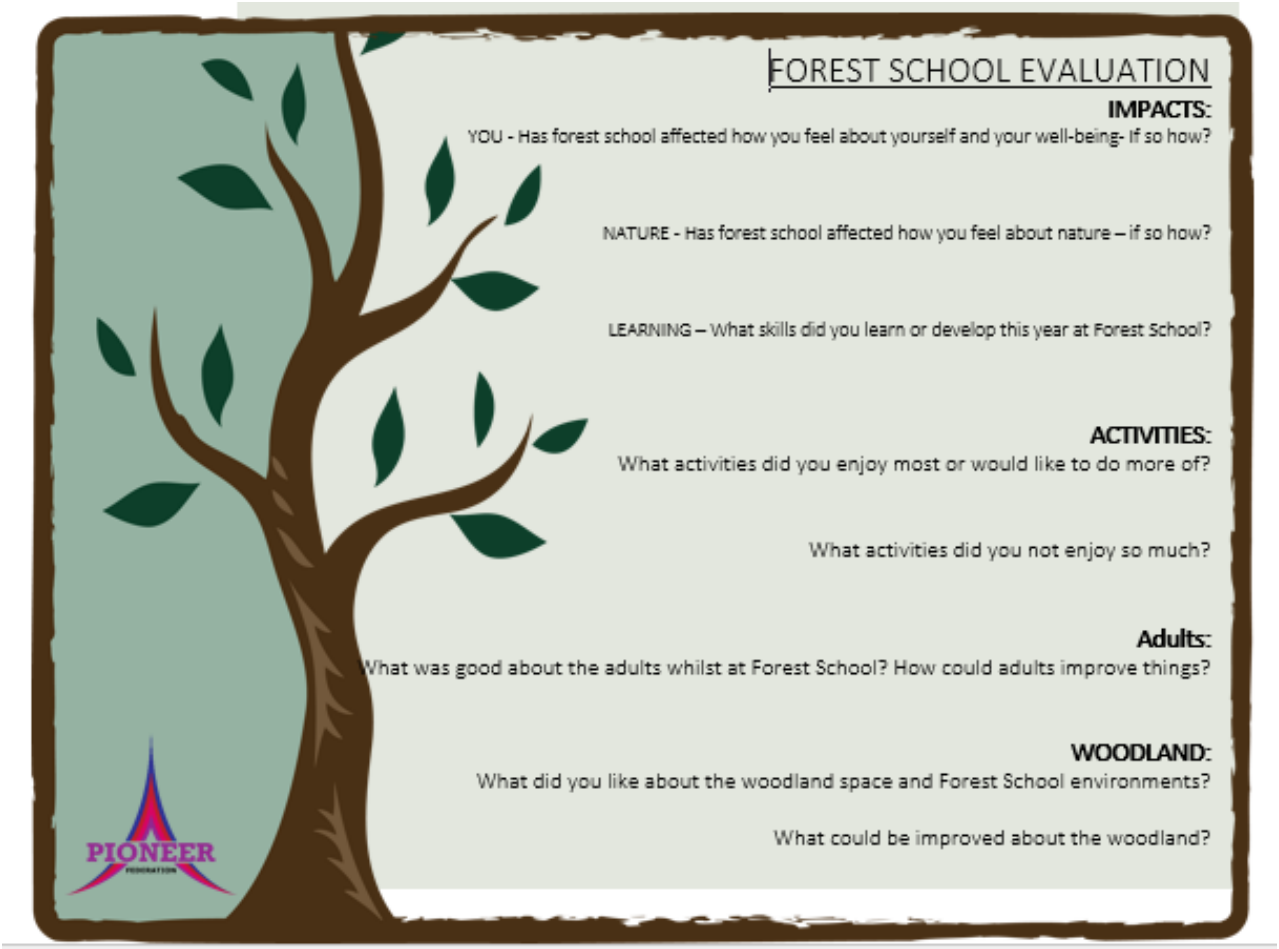
Highlight any areas which the Class or specific individuals could be impacted. This is so we can have a start point to measure development and impact of the sessions from. You could initial specific children by issues if needed. We will revisit this at the end of the year to discuss any impacts and use at a reference and support with Children and staff Forest School evaluations.

The world before Forest School – issues for individual I(The INTENT is to improve, nurture, support and develop these	These lead to desired outcomes and IMPACT by…..
Limited relationship with outdoors Passive learners (waiting to be led to answer) Unaware of needs of living things and how they connect Inappropriate dress Unaware of dangers (water, fire, plants)	Using all senses to facilitate the learning process Understanding the needs of living organisms Pattern of seasons – dressing appropriately Recognising hazards
A need to increase skills and knowledge Poor fine motor skills Gross motor skills not fully developed Lack of knowledge and experience Limited experience with the outdoors Limited language use of language Lack of focus	Hand-eye coordination Selecting appropriate tools and using with confidence Increasing gross motor skills and stamina Increase knowledge of local plants and animals More descriptive spoken language Focus and concentrate within a group Tactile and want to touch and experience
Lack of ownership/pride in local environment Limited experience of different environments Unaware of how they impact on environment	Raising awareness of the variety of their local environment Aware of impact upon the environment Leaving area as it was found or better
Need for increase in self-esteem and self confidence Waiting to be shown Expectation that adults will do things for them Led by own needs and motivations to the exclusions of others Poor self esteem, doesn't recognise own strengths or contributions	Discovering new things for themselves Taking on individual responsibility for the day Aware of and cooperating with rules (thing to remember) and expectations Recognise the value that they can bring to relationships Recognise their own strengths

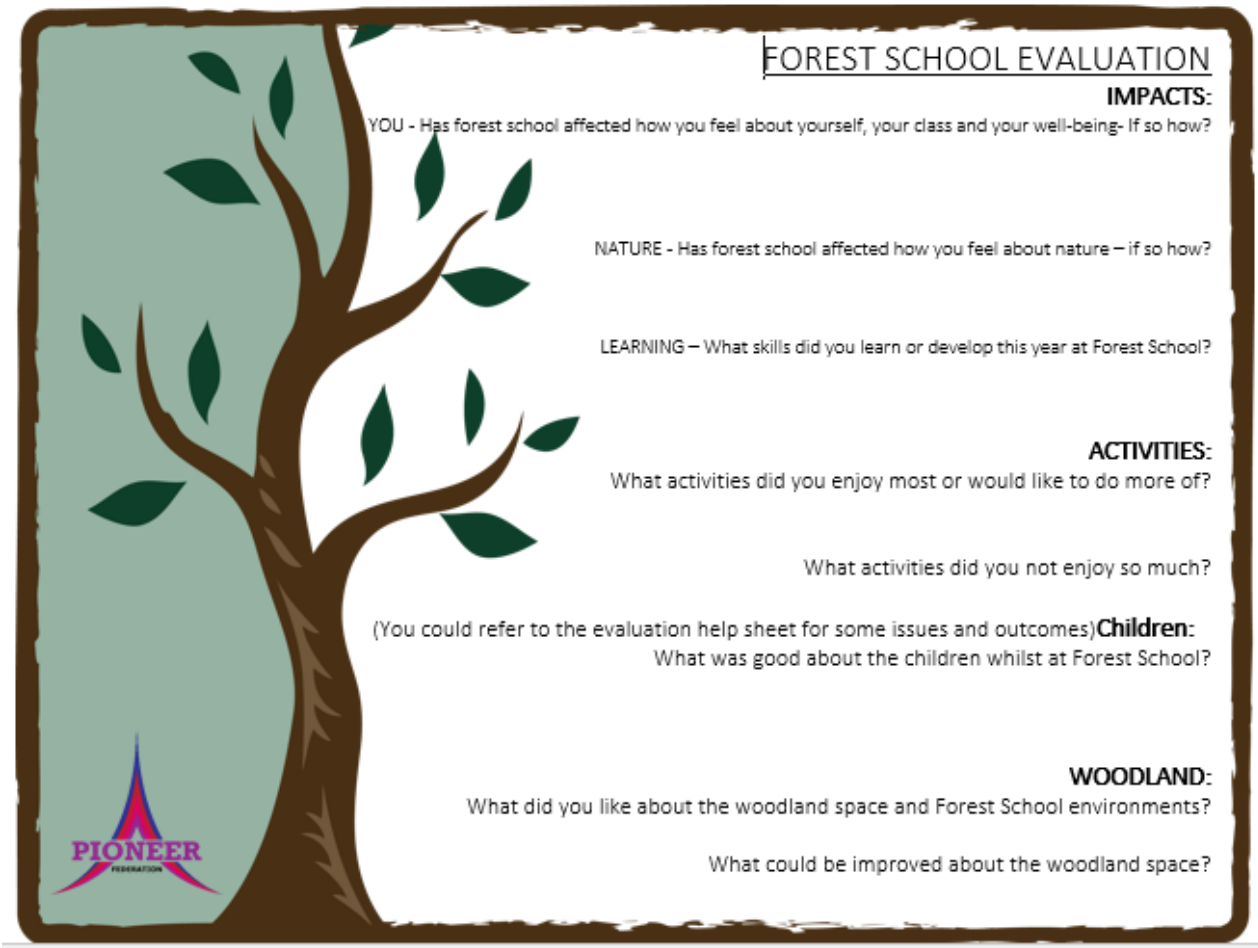
	Greater self belief Develop enterprising behaviour
Need to increase co-operative working and awareness of others Looking after themselves first Meeting their own needs Not listening and understanding Working on their own agenda	Sharing the load (carrying equipment) Sharing tools and materials Working together, helping each other to work as a group Active listening Negotiating Proactively helping Joining in with group activities and encouraging others to do so
Negative attitude towards learning Passive Reluctant to try new things Unable to problem solve Negative learnt responses Unable to complete tasks independently	Initiate own learning and play activities Being focussed and able to complete a task Looking more relaxed Happier attitude Enjoy and achieve
Motivation and concentration Lack interest in activities offered to them Avoid participation Difficulty following classroom instructions – avoidance	Eager to participate Inspired to explore Talk excitedly about forest school

New perspectives	Forming trusting relationships and friendships
Judge new opportunities negatively based on past experiences Poor relationships/experience with significant others Lack of trust Established reactive behaviour patterns Lack knowledge and understanding of a healthy life style	Improved behaviour Adults gain better understanding of children Children gain better understanding of adults Make more balanced choices about food

Children's Evaluation



Staff evaluation



Observation Stickers

Name	Date
Forest School	

I can talk about my views and experiences about being in nature at Forest School. #naturepremium