

Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School

FOREST SCHOOL HANDBOOK



"The best classroom
and the richest
cupboard is roofed
only by the sky."
Margaret McMillan



Statement of Ownership

This handbook was created by Mrs Lisa Death.

This document will be reviewed and updated according to any changes that have to be made. These may be changes to the actual Forest School site or how the sessions may be run.

Information about school policies are taken directly from Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School and all relevant polices can be found on the school website.


<https://www.hintleshamchattishamschool.com/policies>

The next review for our Forest School Handbook will be January 2023. However, if any changes occur before this time, this document will be updated and relevant amendments will be made.

All staff will be asked to read the handbook again and signatory evidence will be obtained.



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Welcome to Forest School at Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School.

Forest School means many things to many people. The Forest School Association defines it as “an inspirational learning process that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term program that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting.” (Forest School Association 2022). It is a magical, specialised learning approach that has the learner at the centre, whatever their age.

At our Forest School the learners are all seen as equal, unique and valuable, which is central to our ethos at Hintlesham and Chattisham.

"Jesus is the light of the world-we are the gems that reflect his light as we learn."

Our classes represent precious jewels, every individual sparkling gem, child and adult, has amazing potential. All are valued, and valuable, as God's children: His special treasure. Our Christian values are embedded in the smoothing and polishing process, as we learn together to be the best we can be.

Forest School promotes child-initiated learning at its best. It creates a world where children are believed to be competent to choose and drive their own learning and development at a pace which is appropriate and meaningful to them. They are able to explore freely and discover awe and wander whilst learning how to manage appropriate risks and challenge-something that is vital in their decision-making.

The adults are here to support the children, guide if asked, look out for dangers and most importantly celebrate all learning that takes place. This creates a positive atmosphere of support where the children learn to become independent in their physical skills and mental thought processes. They learn to trust their own ideas, believe in their capabilities and recognise

their own needs. Our children understand that support comes from trusted adults and friends alike as they are nurtured to develop positive relationships with themselves and other people.

At our Forest School, everyone is equal. It is a safe place where they can be themselves or lose themselves and leave day to day stresses behind. Central to all of this is the environment. Children experience the seasons, the wonders of nature, the highs, the lows, life and death. This enables them to build a strong, positive relationship with their natural world helping them to make sense of the wider world.

The Forest School Principles at Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School

Principle 1: Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular weekly sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit.

Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School. At Hintlesham and Chattisham we will enjoy sessions:

- on a weekly basis throughout the seasons of the year,
- planned through an on-going cycle of observing, reviewing and adapting play activities to provide progression in learning and building on previous experiences.
- based on collaboration, discussion and reflection between the facilitators (teachers and other adults) and the children.

Principle 2: Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

At Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School we will learn:

- in our on-site Forest School.
- to consider, discuss and minimise the environmental impact of our activities at the site.
- to foster our love and respect of the natural world,
- to develop a sense of ownership of and belonging to our Forest School site.
- about our natural environment through developing our site with a sustainable site management plan and following sustainable approaches to its management.

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

At Hintlesham and Chattisham we will provide opportunities for our children through play to develop their:

- social and communication skills,
- creative and thinking skills,
- physical gross and fine motor skills,
- independence and resilience,
- problem-solving skills and
- emotional intelligence and wellbeing.

Principle 4: Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Our Forest School enables children to:

- take managed risks in a supportive environment,
- learn from their mistakes and therefore develop their confidence.
- take part in discussions of risk-benefit in order to develop their ability to manage their own risks.
- take part in higher risk activities, appropriate to their developmental stage such as, tree climbing, tool use, fire-lighting, etc. and only when prompted by the children.

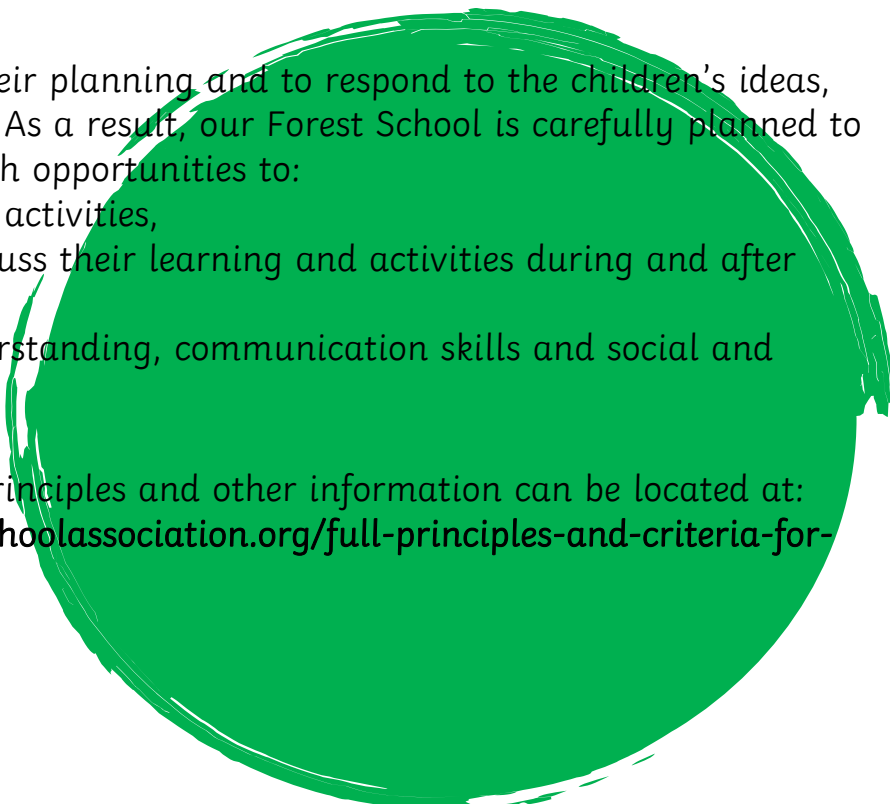
Principle 5: Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

Forest School sessions at Hintlesham and Chattisham will always:

- be led by a Forest School level 3 qualified practitioner with current pediatric outdoor first aid qualification.
- be run by Forest School Leaders who view themselves as facilitators and mentors who are continuing to learn.
- have a high ratio of facilitators (adults) to learners, including regular DBS-checked helpers in order to safeguard all participants.
- have clearly stated staff and volunteer roles and responsibilities in our Forest School policy documents.

Principle 6: Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

Forest School leaders will use close observation and dialogue with the



children to guide their planning and to respond to the children's ideas, needs and interests. As a result, our Forest School is carefully planned to provide children with opportunities to:

- choose play-based activities,
- reflect on and discuss their learning and activities during and after sessions,
- develop their understanding, communication skills and social and emotional skills.

The Forest School Principles and other information can be located at:
<http://www.forestschoollassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-goodpractice/>

What to expect

Forest School at Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School Vision Statement.

We believe everybody should have regular, long-term access to a woodland or natural environment which provides them with inspirational and challenging outdoor learning opportunities. My Forest School will offer a learner-centred approach, where participants can learn through self-directed play and exploration.

Our Forest School will encourage all learners:

- To grow alongside nature.
- To bravely face new challenges with confidence.
- To show resilience when faced with difficulties.
- To show independence when developing their own interests and abilities.
- To experiment and discover by attempting “real” hands-on activities.
- To enjoy calm times to reflect, think and just be themselves.
- To value themselves, each other and their environment.

At Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School, we offer a broad and balanced curriculum to develop the whole child. Forest School will offer the same broad range of experiences designed to develop the whole child; physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually and morally.

Daily Routine Before the session

Forest School leader or assistant leader records Daily Site Risk Assessment.
Forest School leader briefs the team on the session plan based on what the children were engaged in the previous week.

Team members prepare any equipment and materials.

The leader or assistant prepares the risk assessments for each planned activity if they are not covered by the general risk assessments.

During the session

All adults follow the lead of the children.

All adults will continually reassess risks and take action to reduce or remove risk when necessary.

At the end of the session

Everyone gathers together at base camp to reflect on the session and to discuss what they would like to do the following week.

After the session

Team members collect equipment and store it away safely.

Team members leave the woodland as they found it.

The Forest School leader or assistant checks the tools to ensure that no items are missing.

The Forest School leader completes an evaluation form for the session, along with any observational records.

The Forest School leader drafts the plan for the following week's session with a note of the roles and responsibilities of team members.

We aim to challenge and support the children to become independent and resilient learners who enjoy trying out their ideas, working together with their peers to solve problems and conquer challenges.

Some of the challenges might include:

Shelter building

Fire lighting

Planting and harvesting

Carving and whittling

Rope swings/rope walkways/hammocks

Looking after wildlife

Group games

Looking closely at wildlife

Pond dipping

Physical challenges

Rope and string work

Traditional woodland craft

Telling and listening to stories

Using tools

Forest art

Den building

Sculpture with natural materials

Building bird boxes

Drama

Cooking

Learning knots

Building bug homes

Bug hunting

Team games

Free play

Where to find us

Currently, all of our Forest School activities will be held within the school grounds in our newly transformed 'Wild Woods'.



The Wild Woods

Forest School Code of Conduct

Our code of conduct is relevant to all participants, adults and children and is framed to create a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Boundaries

During their first Forest School session children will learn where the physical boundaries for activities are and any no-go zones. Each group will work together to generate some agreements for safe and happy learning and children will understand that they are expected to follow them. This will include an agreed call back signal to enable speedy return to base camp if needed or wanted by the Forest School Leader.

Entering the Forest School site

At Forest School we learn to respect the world around us. We will ask to enter the 'Wild Woods' by calling "Wild Woods, Wild Woods, please may we come in?" We will then listen for a response from the woodland (a bird call, leaves falling/rustling). Once we enter the site we will be aware that we share the space with plants, birds and animals and that we need to work in a way that will not damage or harm anything.

Toileting

Children will be encouraged to use the toilets before a session starts. They may use the school toilets at any point if they need to just as they do during outside PE lessons. EYFS children will be accompanied by a member of staff.



Wild Woods area

Side entrance to access toilets

Base Camp (including fire circle)

For everyone's safety, no one is allowed to walk or run inside base camp even if there is no fire lit. We use log stools to mark out our circle and to sit on. If anyone wants to move around the circle or change places, they must step out of the circle and walk around the outside.

Collecting natural materials

Natural materials are collected for art, sculpture and woodland craft. Children are encouraged to look for the materials themselves but leaders will supervise to check that nothing harmful is gathered.

Carrying larger materials

Children will be taught how to lift, roll, drag or pull heavier materials safely using hands or ropes, keeping a straight back and bending the knees. Team work is encouraged.

Digging

When investigating the environment, children may carefully move logs or stones to look for insects, taking care not to harm the creatures or destroy their habitat. They can dig under the soil using their fingers and small sticks. The children can use small spades in the designated digging area. All holes that have been dug must be filled in before leaving the site at the end of the session. Opportunities for digging deep holes are provided during planting activities.

Using tools

Children will be taught the correct way to use tools at Forest school. This will include the use of safety equipment, like gloves or goggles, posture and awareness of others around them. Some tools will have a marked zone for their use. All tool use will be under strict adult supervision.

Tree climbing

Climbing trees is a good opportunity for children to learn to manage their own risks. They will be shown how to climb safely, checking the ground below for sharp objects, looking for a safe path of ascent and descent, numbers in the same tree and which trees are suitable for climbing. Children are permitted to reach their own limits to a maximum of 1m. Adults will supervise tree climbing activities and ensure that children are

wearing appropriate clothes and shoes. The Forest School leader will assess the trees to check for rotten or broken branches.

Sticks and stones

Throwing sticks and stones is not permitted at Forest School. Children may pick up sticks shorter than their arm to carry them pointed down to activities. Longer sticks must be dragged behind them. Stones can be dropped but children must check what is underneath before dropping them.

String, ropes and knots

Children will learn a useful selection of knots for different uses. Adults will supervise activities where ropes are tied to trees for tarps or shelters. Safety tapes will be used if ropes are considered to be in dangerous locations. Children are also shown how to use ropes and string to move or carry materials.

Eating and Drinking

Children will be encouraged to bring their water bottles with them. A 'tippy tap' station will be provided for hand washing before eating or drinking any snacks during Forest School. Food allergies will be noted as part of the risk assessment.

Leaving the site

At the end of each session there will be a short time of reflection before the participants leave the Wild Woods. All personal belongings must be taken away, any craft created can be taken home, and the site must be left 'just as we found it'.



Our equipment

The Forest School leader will organise an Emergency Bag and a Kit Bag for every session. The contents for each bag may vary depending on the group, activity, time of year and weather conditions.

Essential items that should be included in the Emergency Bag are:

- ✓ First Aid Kits (regularly checked and restocked as necessary)
- ✓ Burns kit (when fire lighting)
- ✓ Emergency procedures list
- ✓ Medical details for all participants
- ✓ Walkie talkie
- ✓ Accident sheets
- ✓ Emergency whistle
- ✓ Drinking water

Other items which may be included in the Kit Bag could include:

- ✓ Wet wipes, hand gel
- ✓ Spare clothing
- ✓ Flask of hot water
- ✓ Hot chocolate sachets
- ✓ Chocolate or sugary food
- ✓ Roll mat and blanket
- ✓ Bivi bag or emergency shelter
- ✓ Torch

The Forest School leader will organise the equipment and tools needed for each session.



Using and storing tools

Using a range of tools in Forest School helps children to develop physical skills and teaches them how to manage risks safely. Tools will not be used at every session and they will only be used for particular purposes requested by the children and appropriate to the age and level of skill of the child.

Tools used will include: • Peelers • Secateurs/loppers • Bow saw • Palm drill • Mallet/hammer

The Forest School leader will ensure that tools are stored, maintained and transported safely. Tools will be kept packed away until needed.

Tool Rules

Before and after a session the leader will check:

- Are tools in good, working order? Tools will be checked for damage and durability.
- How many? Tools will be counted out and counted back in.
- Are the tools secure? Tools will be kept in suitable containers; Peelers, secateurs and bow saw in a locked tool box and drills in a small container.

When tools are being used:

- The Forest School leader will give a safety talk before tools are used.
- Children must never help themselves to the tools.
- All tool use, carrying and collecting will be under adult supervision.
- Children must walk when carrying tools.
- All participants need to be aware tools are in use.
- A safety zone must be established around each user, at least one arm's length between users.
- All tools used under adult supervision.
- Ratios depend on age but 1:1 for EYFS and KS1



Accident and Emergency First Aid

The Forest School Leader is first aid trained, pediatric first aid trained and holds the Forest School First Aid Certificate which covers outdoor first aid and emergencies.

The Forest School Leader carries an Emergency Bag to all activities which includes an outdoor First Aid Kit and Burns Kit (when fire lighting).

Forest School Staff and Responsibilities



Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School Forest School is planned and led by Mrs. Lisa Death (Mrs. Leaf)

She is supported by Cecelia Polley (Mrs. Polley the Parrot), Mrs. Hambling (Mrs. Hambling Hedgehog) and Mrs. Louise White (Mrs Ladybird).

Sessions may also be supported by other Hintlesham and Chattisham staff members or local volunteers.

POLICIES

As Forest School at Hintlesham and Chattisham operates as an integral part of the Primary School it is subject to the policies of the school which can be found in full here:

<https://www.hintleshamchattishamschool.com/policies>

• Behaviour

“Respect Yourself, Respect Others and Respect the Woods”

At Forest School we aim to create a positive environment where children are encouraged to:

- Develop an awareness of acceptable and responsible behaviour towards one another and the outdoor environment.
- Promote respect, team work and positive relationships.
- Work within the boundaries set by themselves.
- Develop pride in their achievements and try their best.
- Listen carefully.

Adults will:

- Provide a positive role model for all children at all times.
- Provide time for children to discuss issues or concerns and engage them in setting agreements.
- Set small 'ACHIEVABLE' tasks which do not set participants up to fail.
- Take into consideration children's preferred learning styles when planning Forest School sessions.
- Be mindful of the need to maintain safety at all times.
- Be consistent with behaviour management.

At Forest School, our behaviour policy is mirrored in exactly the same it would be as if at school (See Behaviour Policy). We are passionate about the importance of positive reinforcement and praise when dealing with all types of behaviour in children. At Forest school, all learners are encouraged to follow our agreements and are frequently praised for modelling the right choices.

Forest School Agreements and safety rules

All facilitators at Hintlesham and Chattisham take a positive approach to behaviour and aim to enable children to make the best choices for their own well-being. Children are active in determining the behaviour that is acceptable. In the course of the first session, agreements will be made between the staff and all participants for the conduct of the group. This will include items such as respecting oneself, each other and the environment and listening carefully to instructions when they are given. The group will be encouraged to contribute ideas to the agreement before it is 'sealed'.

Safety rules are firmer non- negotiable rules which will be explained along with the consequences of breaking them.


- Boundaries: All children to stay within the Wild Woods boundary marked with bunting
- Tools: All children to ask an adult before using a tool. All staff must be trained in the use of tools before assisting a child/young person. Once trained, the staff members must remind child/ren to sign tools out and in and ask them to re-cap on the correct use of the tools before taking them to the tool area.

Please inform another member of staff immediately if you witness a behaviour that challenges you or anyone else on site. This could include:

- Children putting themselves or others at risk
- Low level bullying
- Inappropriate language or jokes, references to criminal behaviour or explicit sexual language or behaviour.



• Play



Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons. (Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group, Cardiff 2005)

All children and young people need the freedom and time to play. Play in schools should not be a luxury, it is a necessity. The Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group state “the impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and it is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities” (2005). Play can be fun or serious. Through play children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter. By playing, children learn and develop as individuals, and as members of the community. Play is at the centre of our Forest School ethos and subsequently will be at the forefront of everything we do within our sessions.

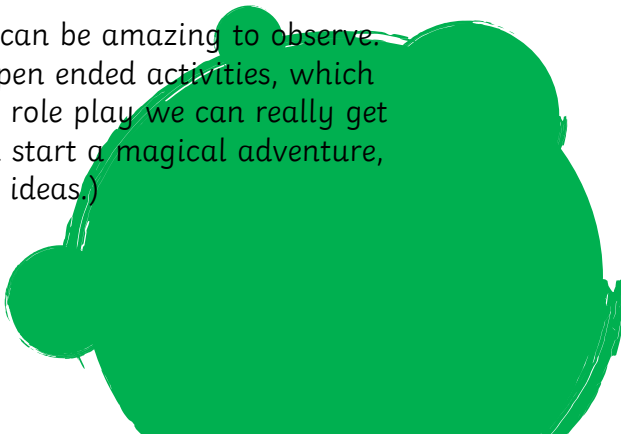
In regards to Forest School, our play policy states:

Forest School

Forest school sessions offer the chance to take learning out of the classroom and into the great outdoors. Children are given an opportunity to learn in a new way and within a new environment. Forest school introduces a whole new dimension to teaching and learning, with new experiences for both the children and teachers.

Forest schools promotes the opportunity to develop skills to manage risks and attempt new challenges they would not face in a classroom, such as tree climbing, building fires and den making. This adds a sense of excitement and adventure for the children, who are free to play, explore and manipulate the environment around them using all of their senses. Play will be encouraged, fostered and nurtured in our Forest School Setting.

This will be achieved by:

- allowing free time/play in the woods-the outcome can be amazing to observe.
 - facilitating play through the activities we plan. (Open ended activities, which allow children a choice are ideal for play. Through role play we can really get the children buzzing, e.g. dress up as a wizard and start a magical adventure, this will help lead the children into their own play ideas.)
- 

- facilitating play through our choice of resources. (We think carefully about the resources we provide and we ensure our resources could/should provide opportunities to engage children with different learning styles e.g. provide musical instruments, hands on materials, writing tools).
- playing games. We may lead games to begin with e.g. playing games like hide and seek or owl eyes in a predefined area, find the tree you felt, etc. When children build confidence we can leave them to lead/create their own games.
- taking a step back and watching. Whilst watching, we may engage in play ourselves, setting an example for our children.
- Thinking carefully about the environment we are providing and how it can be adapted to maximise the possibilities of children's play. Sometimes we may build things before the group arrives to facilitate play (eg. A pirate ship out of crates or a dinosaur out of branches).

The full play policy can be found by following the link:
<https://www.hintleshamchattishamschool.com/policies>

Advice on how not to interrupt the flow of the play cycle...

The role of the facilitator is to observe, engaging but not interfering with the children's learning. The challenge for the facilitator is to know when to intervene and how, and this is where Forest School training, experience and reflective practice becomes central. Safety is paramount, but managed risks are an essential part of a child's learning.

- If I watch the children play, I can discover their interests.
- By observing children, I can assess their developmental levels.
- I look to see what strategies children use to attain their goals.
- Observing children helps me know what skills the children need to practice.
- When I observe children at play, I learn a lot about their personalities.

We can learn...

- Their interests and preferences
- Their levels of cognitive and social development
- Their strategies for creating desired effects
- Their skills and accomplishments
- Their personalities and temperaments

“Decades of research has shown that play is crucial to physical, intellectual, and social-emotional development at all ages. This is especially true of the purest form of play: the unstructured, self-motivated, imaginative, independent kind, where children initiate their own games and even invent their own rules.” Dr. David Elkind

So What Can We Do About This With Our Children?

As adults and guardians of these young 'learning sponges', it is our job as a 'learning ally' to –

- offer a safe learning environment
- let them follow their own play urges
- support them without interrupting
- watch and wait as they discover, invent and explore



- **Planning and Observation**

When conducting and planning a Forest School it is vital to take a step back and observe the children. The observations of children achieve a number of functions,

- it gives you a baseline of their skills
- it lets you identify where their next steps may be
- it informs your planning for the next session
- it helps you learn as a practitioner

Qualified Forest School Leaders will be responsible for observation and assessment at Forest School along with accompanying teachers or teaching assistants.

- Observations will be noted on paper, and photos can be taken with the EYFS iPad only.
- Observations will be shared between staff and volunteers and recorded by the end of each session to inform possible lines of enquiry for the next session.
- Photos will be used to prompt discussion and reflection with children in the classroom.



• Environmental

Environmental Impact

Forest school has the environment at the heart of its ethos. Whenever possible, and appropriate, environmentally friendly products and recyclable materials are used. Environmentally good practice is modelled by all adults, showing the children that the world in which we live must be cared for by us. Children will be involved in regular site checks, recycling of waste, monitoring of the compost area and will always consider how we have found and will leave the site.

Landowners agreement

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

Woodland management

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

We will:

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

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

A 3-year management plan for the sustainable use of our Forest School site Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School 2022-2025

Long term vision:

To ensure the site is sustainable.

To ensure the impact of Forest Schools is minimal and the regeneration is maximised.

To ensure that everyone is involved, including children, in the management of the woods.

Area/Factor...	Location...	Current situation...	Desired situation...	What needs to be done and who will be involved...	How will EYFS and KS1 support this...	How will KS2 support this...
Base camp and log circle	Located in the centre of the Wild Woods	A range of log slices within the woodland that can be moved around by the children at playtimes	Log circle to become a permanent feature of base camp-may need pegging?	Base camp to become more of a permanent feature of the Wild Woods.	Remind children not to move the logs at playtimes and lunchtimes-give EYFS and KS1 children a sense of ownership over base camp	Help EYFS and KS1 to reset the log circle before going back into school if they have been disturbed
Trees and hedgerows	Mixture of native broadleaved and non-native coniferous tree in the woodland	High and established canopy layer	Plant new trees at edge of woodland Create a new hedgerow	Access free trees and decide on type of trees to add Decide on best location and plant-children to assist and help protect them	Find out about free trees and decide on species Plant a new hedgerow Look to plant new trees which are used regularly eg. willow and hazel	Review and replant if necessary
Dead wood	Throughout the site.	Scattered throughout the site.	Stacked for use as firewood or used to create insect habitats.	Provide piles of deadwood for children to use for play. Encourage children to make a separate deadwood area and leave it alone!	Decide on area and create pile of rotting wood/leaf pile. Make sure all children/adults are aware. Monitor piles each visit. Check canopy for hanging deadwood. Continue to add to pile and monitor bug life.	Monitor piles each visit. Continue to add to pile and monitor bug life. Children know not to use piles designated as insect habitats. Check canopy for hanging deadwood.
Wildlife-birds and insects	In canopy layer and on ground layer	Nesting birds found in trees Lots of worms but not many other insects found regularly.	Encourage smaller birds to nest-consider nesting boxes Create bug areas to encourage a	Add nesting boxes to quieter areas. Create hedgerow to encourage smaller birds in.	Create and leave log/leaf pile Decide on location of bird boxes Put up bird feeders	Monitor the impact and add additional features if required

			more diverse insect life	Create rotting log pile and leaf pile	Manage the compost heap	
Planting flowers/creating a wildlife area	New area next to woodland	Long grass cut regularly	Leave grass to grow long. Plant wild flowers to encourage butterflies. Leave nettles and brambles in this area	Remind grounds people not to cut/trim area Plant butterfly friendly plants and flowers	Monitor grass length Plant flowers and plants Monitor the wild area as to what insects and butterflies have been attracted	Monitor the wild area as to what insects and butterflies have been attracted
Brambles and nettles	Located around the woods in different areas	Brambles and nettles in a few areas and around the edge of the woodland.	Pathways clear of nettles and brambles. Leave alone in new wild area.	Involve children in monitoring condition of path on visits.	Children to identify if a path needs clearing.	Children identify if a path needs clearing and assist in cutting it back.
Tool area	Tools are mainly used around the log circle	Children use tools on 1:1 basis around base camp area	Establish a sawing area and a safe tool horse	Create a safe area near to base camp Create a sawing stand/log Risk benefit assessment	Create tool use area	Maintain and review
Games and activities-tree climbing, rope swing, hammocks, rope walk, throwing games	Various areas around the woodland	Different trees used for different activities	Establish an area of the woodland that is used for games and activities	Choose suitable area with the children for games and activities Make sure all parties are aware Risk benefit assessment	Establish areas for activity	Review and change areas/trees used if necessary

Equal Opportunities

Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School is committed to the idea that there should be equal opportunity for all. Our policy helps to ensure that we promote the individuality of our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

https://www.hintleshamchattishamschool.com/_files/ugd/148e85_27d707431af74d518aa794f893cf5183.pdf

Provided below is a list of additional points and measure which relate directly to our Forest School sessions:

- We will ensure equality of access for all children. This might include carrying out additional risk assessments for children with challenging behaviour or disability or planning for an additional adult to be present.
- We will employ a range of styles, including collaborative learning, so that children can value working together.
- We will seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education.
- We will take account of the performance of all children when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets.
- We will make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of children.
- We will 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 for all.

Anti-bullying

Forest School sessions take place as part of the school day and as such any incidents of bullying will be referred to appropriate school management and dealt with accordingly in line with school policy which can be seen in the anti-bullying policy by clicking on the link.

https://www.hintleshamchattishamschool.com/_files/ugd/148e85_eb6e70fe74974853b4e4c7ba4d130a4.pdf

Prevent

Working with young people, we are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. We encourage our pupils to be inquisitive learners who are open to new experiences and are tolerant of others. Our values support the development of pupils as reflective learners within a safe, respectful and tolerant learning environment. This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection
- Safeguarding
- Whistleblowing
- Equal opportunities
- Anti-bullying

All of which can be found here:

<https://www.hintleshamchattishamschool.com/policies>

• Health and Safety

At Forest School, children can learn a great deal from their mistakes (even painful ones) and learn to enjoy risky play activities and challenges.

Learning to respect risk and danger through play will help them to cope with risks and hazards later in life. They will learn how far they can go before they feel unsafe, they will learn to understand their limits, they will gain the confidence to be able to say “No thank you, that’s enough for me,” without feeling pressurised by their peers.

The safety of all participants is very important to us.

All of the ‘risky’ activities we offer have been assessed to minimise the dangers. These risk assessments are included in this handbook.

All adults participating in Forest School are required to read all of the risk assessments and protocols. We regularly review and update the risk assessments as required.

A site risk assessment is carried out before each session to look for natural or foreign hazards in the environment.

Individual risk assessments will be made for children whose medical condition or whose behaviour require it.

Forest School Safety Briefing

We always do a health and safety briefing at the beginning of our Forest School sessions to highlight any hazards and remind the children of our safety rules.

Emergency Procedure

- ✚ What do you do if you hear the Forest School Leader blow the whistle 3 times? (Walk to the giant tree trunk and line up).

Roped off Areas

- ✚ Stay outside of the roped off areas, they may be unsafe or for tool use.

Looking after Plants and Trees.

- ✚ Do be careful of young trees, which are newly planted.
- ✚ Do remember that the flowers, leaves, berries are there for the wildlife.

Looking after Minibeasts and Animals

- ✚ If you lift up a log or leaf pile to find insects, please replace it very gently.
- ✚ Do enjoy looking at the creatures in their environment but avoid picking them up.

Playing with Sticks or Logs

- ✚ Remember to hold sticks low (below the hip) and always pointing down.
- ✚ Remember to drag large logs along the ground to move them.

Climbing tree stumps, Ropes and Structures

- ✚ Do climb tree stumps one at a time.
- ✚ If you swing on a rope, do always check for other people first.
- ✚ Do look out for dens and ropes to avoid injury.

The Health and Safety Policy for Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School, sets out a clear statement of the schools' approach to the health and safety of the children, staff and visitors, whilst at the school. This policy can be found by clicking on the link:

https://www.hintleshamchattishamschool.com/_files/ugd/148e85_352bdc70f0f64cb598229bbe49bee56a.pdf

The following list is additional measures relating directly to our Forest School setting and its regular sessions:

- Every Forest School session will be run by a fully first-aid trained Forest School Leader (there will be additional adults who are also First Aid

trained; however the Forest School Leader will be the one to administer first aid if needed).

- The Forest School Leader has overall duty of care for the children in her charge, but all adults are required to take every reasonable step to ensure children are safe.
- All Forest School helpers must read this handbook and appropriate risk assessments and understand/ comply with the general operating procedures for Forest Schools. These adults cannot join Forest School unless they have read and signed the handbook.
- The Forest School Leader or Forest School Helper will carry a well-stocked first aid kit and Emergency bag.

The emergency bag will contain:

Forest School Emergency Kit

First Aid kit

Emergency procedures

Medical information

Risk assessments

Walkie talkie

Clean water

Accident sheets

Wet wipes

Spare clothing

Accident and Emergency Procedure

This procedure is displayed prominently on a laminated sheet on our shed door.

Please familiarise yourself with this.

The Forest School leader will always carry a walkie talkie so she has direct communication with the school office.

In the event of an accident or emergency

- A whistle will be blown as a signal to stop what you are doing.
- Gather with a member of staff in the school playground
- If you are the only adult, ask for calm and wait for instructions.

The Forest School leader will assess the situation and the nature and extent of the accident or injury.

The leader will make sure other members of the group are safe from danger and adequately supervised.

- If someone is injured one adult must stay with them.
- One adult goes for treatment and if needed will call the emergency services.
- Other adults stay with the rest of the group away from the site of the accident.

A team member will keep parents and other interested parties informed of the situation.

Emergency Contact Numbers Ambulance/Fire Brigade = 111 Requesting attendance by emergency services: Dial 111 and ask for ambulance or fire brigade.

Be ready with the following information SCHOOL post code – IP3 3NH, Hintlesham

Recording and reviewing All accidents must be recorded in the incident report form and filed in the accident log. A RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) record will be created. Following an accident, the safety officer will review all relevant risk assessments and take action as necessary.

The Forest School leader will review all risk assessments before every session and also carry out a daily risk assessment prior to the children entering the site. This is paramount to ensure that each time the site is visited it is safe and ready for the children.

The Forest School Leader may undertake a dynamic risk assessment during

a session. This will be recorded on the dynamic risk assessment record sheet and stored with other records back at school.

Risk Assessment/Procedures for tools must be read by all adults prior to the Forest School Session. Whilst using tools the Adult/child ratio will be always be 1:1.

Risk Benefit Assessments at Forest School

Risk Benefit management is an essential part of Forest School. All Forest School staff have a duty of care towards the children they are with. Not only are all adults responsible for keeping children safe, but they must also allow children to take some risk for themselves. During Forest School Sessions, it is vital that children are allowed to manage their own risk, for example, when using sharp tools or climbing trees. However, risk assessments must be in place for these activities and all parties made aware of them. Forest School Risk Benefit assessments will be carried out before each session depending on what activity the group may wish to do. They will be reviewed annually. Before every session, a daily check will be made to ensure the area is deemed safe. In addition to this, any activity that requires a dynamic risk assessment, such as tree climbing, will be carried out 'in the moment', just before that activity takes place. A dynamic Risk Assessment is carried out by the Forest School leader only. The risk assessment process is as follows:

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

Designated person responsible: Mrs Lisa Death

Sharp Tools Policy

Participants will only be involved in using sharp tools when the Forest School Leader deems that they are confident and competent at working in the woods. When tools such as peelers and small saws are used the younger participants will always be appropriately supervised (1:1). Proper

instructions will have been given and safety issues discussed prior to the use of any tools. Where appropriate, participants will use safety and protective gear such as gloves etc.

Assessments of weather conditions and Suitable Clothing

“There is no such thing as poor weather, only poor clothing.”

In most cases the above statement is true and at our sessions we try to ensure everyone is suitably kitted out to enjoy the weather for the duration of the afternoon. An assessment will be taken prior to a session and if the weather is too extreme the session will be cancelled. Extreme weather can include unexpected hot or cold temperatures but the one that concerns us greatly is high winds due to the increased risk of falling branches or trees. The weather forecast should be checked prior to each session to help decide on whether extreme weather is likely. **INDICATORS FOR UNSUITABLE CONDITIONS FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN/ADULTS IN WOODLANDS** These are guidelines only – each situation will be unique, and decisions must be made accordingly to ensure the safety of all.

Beaufort Scale	Description	Wind speeds & land signs	Comments
0-3	Calm to gentle breeze <1-10 knots 0-19 kph 0-12mph	Light flags extended Leaves in constant gentle motion	Ideal conditions
4	Moderate breeze 11-16 knots 20-28 kph 12.1-17.9 mph	Most flags extended full Small branches move Dust and loose paper may be raised	Generally fine for Forest school session to continue
5	Fresh breeze 17-21 knots 29-38 kph 18-23.6 mph	Small trees sway Tops of all trees sway in noticeable motion Crested wavelets form on inland waters	OK to continue provided site has been thoroughly checked for lodged branches and dead trees/branches but be prepared to move off site quickly if wind increases
6	Strong breeze 22 – 27 knots 38 – 49 kph 23.6 – 30.9 mph	Large branches in motion Whistling heard in wires Umbrellas used with difficulty	Cancel session or find alternative site to deliver session out of the woodlands Move quickly off site if out in woodland already
7	Near gale 28 – 33 knots 50 – 61 kph 31 – 38 mph	Whole trees in motion Inconvenience felt when walking against wind	Cancel session

If the weather deteriorates suddenly during a session, the adults will decide whether it is safe to stay in the Wild Woods or return the participants to the classroom.

Clothing advice will be given to participants and their parents/carers prior to the sessions commencing.

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

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

Footwear: wellies or strong/sturdy (ideally waterproof)

We will provide all children with a waterproof suit.

Hazardous Plants & Fungi

Part of the risk assessment will be to identify any particularly hazardous plants and point them out to the group so that all members are aware of the dangers. The sap or hairs from some plants can cause rashes and blistering when in contact with skin, or after the skin is then exposed to sunlight.

Most rashes are caused by stinging nettles, though giant hogweed may also be a problem. Both of these plants are easily distinguishable and if either is seen growing on site all members of the group will be taught how to distinguish and avoid coming into contact with it.

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

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

Biting & Stinging Insects

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

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

• Safeguarding

Designated safeguarding lead: Mrs Debbie Jackson

Alternative designated safeguarding lead: Mr. Nick Kricka and
Mrs. Sally Gooderham

Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School recognises its responsibilities for Safeguarding and for confidentiality. We understand that effective Safeguarding and Child Protection work requires sound procedures, excellent multi-agency cooperation and a workforce that is confident in responding to child protection situations quickly and efficiently.

Disclosure

If a child/young person approaches you with a disclosure (uncovering or revealing private and sensitive information) it is important that you follow these guidelines:

- Tell a member of staff that you have been approached by a child/young person who would like to talk to you and the staff member will advise or support you from there.
- Make sure that you sit where you can be seen by that member of staff at all times.

All staff are trained in how to respond to a child that discloses sensitive information.

The basic principles are:

- Reassure the young person that they were right to tell you and that you take them seriously.
- Let the young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what might happen.
- Immediately report the matter to a member of staff or the designated safeguarding leaders.

Verbal reporting

If you suspect child abuse, tell your designated safeguard leader and Forest School leader. Your concerns could be significant and must be addressed by

the appropriate person.

Written reporting

You will be asked to write a description of the conversation. You will need to be as specific as possible, preferably quoting what was said.

Appropriate Responses to Disclosure:

Do not examine or interrogate the child

Do not ask leading questions - allow the child to tell their own story

Take seriously what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound)

Keep calm Look at the child directly

Be honest

Let them know you may need to tell someone – don't promise confidentiality

Never make false promises

Reassure them they are not to blame for the abuse

Be aware that the child may have been threatened

Never push for information – listen and reflect back to them what they have said so they know you have heard

Ask questions for clarification only; avoid asking leading questions that suggest a particular answer

Show that you accept what the child says

Helpful things to say:

"I am glad you have told me"

"It's not your fault"

"I will help you"

Inappropriate responses:

"Why didn't you tell anyone before?"

"I can't believe it"

"Are you sure this is true?"

"I am shocked!"

"Don't tell anyone else"

A full copy our Safeguarding Policy can be found by clicking on the following link:

https://www.hintleshamchattishamschool.com/files/ugd/148e85_3ac6b94bf6e74f148bad02fb8d5bd669.pdf

Lost or Missing Person Procedure at Forest School

At the beginning of every session, all children and staff are made aware of the Forest School Boundary. This safety procedure is carried out through a whole group activity, where we 'beat the bounds' together. All children are instructed to stay within eye sight of adults and the red safety bag at all times. The children are also informed that if they ever hear a sharp whistle blown three times, they come back immediately as this is an absolute emergency. In the event of a suspected lost or missing person, the whistle blowing system will be followed and all children will be counted and the time noted. After that, a five-minute interval is immediately timed by Forest School Leader. The helpers and other staff will remain with the group and the leader will search the area. The School Office will be informed immediately by walkie talkie and the rest of the school will be searched. It is not possible for children to leave the school site.

Use of Photographs at Forest School

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

Volunteer Policy and Procedures

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

informed of the need to carry out DBS checks before posts can be confirmed. Where volunteers are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information. We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and police checks for volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at forest school or has access to the children. Volunteers do not work unsupervised.

GDPR and Confidentiality Policy

We take data security and confidentiality very seriously at Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School. This not only ensures that we comply with GDPR and other Data Protection regulations but means that all children, adults and parents/carers using our services can be confident that any confidential information shared will be respected. The personal information Forest School at Hintlesham and Chattisham holds will be that which is provided for the school. This includes emergency contact details, medical details, photographic permissions, first aid permissions and any special requirements needs such as medical, allergy, learning difficulty or physical impairment.

Communication Strategy

Excellent communication is at the heart of a well-run Forest School.

- There will be a presentation and/or an opportunity for an informal chat for all parents prior to the start of Forest School Sessions at Hintlesham and Chattisham CofE Primary School, outlining the ethos, principles and routines of Forest School.

This information will also be available on the school website.

- Our Forest School Handbook will be shared with staff, governors and parents and will be accessible to all via the school website.

- Prior to each Forest School session, there will always be a meeting with all volunteers to check ratios, share the plan for the session, daily risk assessments and any other health and safety issues.

- All children and adults need a clear understanding of all safety rules in order for the sessions to be successful and enjoyable for all. Therefore, prior to each Forest School Session there will be reminders for all adults and children of the agreed safety rules for Forest School sessions.

Participants

Participants will be asked to evaluate the sessions through verbal feedback, videos, writing and drawings. These will be opportunities for them to express how they feel about being part of Forest School and to engage with the process of developing the future sessions.

Parents

Parents will experience their children's Forest School sessions via:

- Written letters sent out from school containing essential information (including parent leaflet).
- Follow up reminders to parents via school text and email system.
- regular updates about what we have done and achieved in our sessions on Tapestry and the school website.

<https://www.hintleshamchattishamschool.com/wild-woods>

- Parents will be invited to join a session once every half term.



Risk Assessments

Risk assessments will be reviewed yearly and will include:

- A site risk assessment
- Risk benefit assessments for climbing trees
- Risk benefit assessments for tool use
- Risk benefit assessments for fire
- Risk benefit assessments will be written for specific activities
- Individual risk assessments for specific children will be written as required
- Dynamic risk assessments will occur during the sessions if necessary in response to changing situations.
- Children and adults will form agreements about safe conduct.