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Declaration of Review Date

Written: October 2025

Due to be reviewed and updated: September 2026

Signed

Signatures of Additional Adults

Date	Name	Handbook Read (please sign)

Declaration that the handbook has been read by all supporting adults with a regular role at Forest School.

I have read and agree to the policies and procedures in this Forest School Handbook. I will have full access to the handbook and will follow its guidelines at all times during the Forest school sessions.

Date	Name	Signature

Key criteria and principles of a Forest school

The Long-Term Principle

Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

The Nature Principle

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.

The Risk Principle

Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment.

The Holistic Learning Principle

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

The Leadership Principle

Forest School is run by qualified Practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional Practice.

The Community Principle

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

Our forest school vision statement

“We are each unique but together we flourish”

Our Forest school sessions will take place in a dedicated woodland every Friday afternoon between 1-3pm, each class will receive a 6 weekly group session at Forest school, rotating between the year groups throughout the school year. This ensures that each year group experiences forest school in all of the seasons and can observe the changes in nature.

Activities will be planned dependent on age and interests, considering each unique child in the group and the group dynamic as a whole.

We have a ‘Big Project’ for each class, ranging from building shelters to creating homes for wildlife and preserving the beauty of the fascinating woodland around us.

There are opportunities for children to independently explore with curiosity, where they can take risks and learn from their experiences, gaining confidence through mastering practical skills and achieving goals in a supportive environment, fostering social, emotional, and physical growth.

Observations will be made throughout the sessions and reviews will frequently happen amongst forest school staff.

Ecological Impact Statement

All Forest School activities are conducted in a way that protects the forest school site and minimise disturbance to plants, animals, and habitats. Forest school staff will promote environmental awareness and sustainability to the children participating in the session. Regular site assessments will take place and activities will be adapted to reflect seasonal and ecological changes.

Principles of Ecological Practice

1. **Respect for Nature:**
All participants are taught to value the natural environment and understand that their actions have an impact on the ecosystem.
2. **Leave No Trace:**
Activities are planned and delivered following the ‘Leave No Trace’ ethos — all waste is removed, and the site is left as it was found, or better.
3. **Sustainable Resource Use:**
Natural materials are used sparingly and sustainably. Only deadwood or fallen branches are collected for activities such as tool use or campfires. Living materials are not removed or damaged without good ecological reason.
4. **Protection of Wildlife:**
Wildlife habitats are respected and preserved. Disturbance to animals and nesting sites is avoided. Participants are taught to observe wildlife quietly and from a distance.
5. **Seasonal Awareness:**
Activities are adapted to suit the seasons, ensuring that fragile habitats (e.g. spring flowers or nesting areas) are protected at sensitive times of the year.
6. **Habitat Enhancement:**
Where possible, Forest School activities contribute positively to the local ecology through actions such as litter removal, habitat building (e.g., bug hotels, log piles), and tree planting.
7. **Education and Advocacy:**
Forest School promotes ecological literacy. Children and adults learn about ecosystems, food chains, soil health, and biodiversity through experiential learning.

Our site

Our sessions take place in a beautiful woodland a short walk from the school. There are a variety of trees as well as an ancient oak tree which provides shade, shelter and encourages an appreciation for the incredible nature surrounding us. Frequent interaction with nature fosters a sense of respect and responsibility for the natural world.

long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.



Roles and responsibilities of the forest school staff

Forest school leader:

The Forest school leader will plan and deliver nature-based activities to foster children's connection with the natural world, while promoting the key criteria and principles of the Forest school. They will promote child led opportunities to explore and create, enabling the children to develop skills like problem solving, resilience and teamwork.

The forest school leader will prepare the site and continuously risk assess the woodland area and activities, ensuring all safety measures are in place and that the site, resources and tools are maintained and used safely.

They are responsible for leading campfire skills and take primary responsibility in ensuring that policies and procedures, rules and guidelines are adhered to.

The Forest school leader holds a qualification to deliver Forest school, is first aid trained, DBS checked, a trained ELSA and works within the school during the week so can frequently liaise with school staff, parents and children to meet the individual child's needs as well as align with the school's ethos, policies and procedures.

Forest school assistants:

We have the same forest school assistant every week for consistency and familiarity with the children. Our forest school assistant is DBS checked, first aid trained and volunteers within the school during the week so is well known within the school and Bolney community.

The forest school will also be supported by the teaching assistant for the class who is participating in the session and when Willow class (reception) are experiencing forest school, the class teacher will join us too. All teaching assistants are first aid trained.

The forest school assistant's responsibilities include supervising the children, supporting the planning and delivering of activities and ensuring the health and safety of the children. They will adhere to all health and safety policies and procedures and act as a positive role model to support the children's development.

They are aware of the Forest school principles and are dedicated to maintaining them.

Visitor policy

Occasionally a visitor may join us in forest school, this may be as a parent helper, a guest speaker, an artist or someone who is skilled in bush crafts.

In the first instance the visitor will receive an email checklist of what to wear, any risk assessments they need to be aware of, any safety issues, a copy of the forest school handbook, where the site and nearest toilets are and an explanation that personal phones are not to be used on site.

Prior to their arrival the children will be made aware of the visitor and the purpose of their visit.

On the day of the visit, if the visitor isn't DBS checked they will require to be shadowed by forest school staff, they will be given a visitor's lanyard and a brief induction to the site and staff.

The visitor will be introduced to the group and again the reason for their visit explained.

Sometimes we may receive unannounced visitors near or on our site. This could include dog walkers or other people walking the grounds. In this instance the children will be informed to remain quiet and calm, do not approach animals or people who are not involved with the forest school session and wait for them to pass. Forest school staff will ensure that all children are visible and if not will assemble the children back to base camp or the camp fire.

Staff to learner ratios

The following minimum adult ratios will ensure appropriate support and supervision of the groups at all times; the groups can vary in size but do not exceed 16 children.

Willow (KS1)	4 adults: 16 children
Beech (KS1)	3 adults: 16 children
Holly (KS2)	3 adults: 16 children
Silver Birch (KS2)	2 adults: 16 children

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

If a child requires 1:1 support then additional staff will be present to provide this.

In all cases a minimum of two staff including the Forest School Leader plus another adult should be present at all times.

All staff have read the handbook and are aware of the policies and procedures as well as the forest school ethos.

Forest school staff have access to a walkie talkie that are also in all the rooms of the school and so can ask for additional support from school staff at any point if required.

Child/vulnerable adult protection

All school staff supporting the Forest school session and the forest school leader have received safeguarding training which is updated annually.

Staff can identify and respond to suspected abuse, as well as know how to handle allegations against staff or children.

This involves both risk assessment for the environment and activities, and providing a secure environment where children feel safe to explore and take supported risks.

All staff and volunteers working with children have a DBS check and if we have visitors or parental support then they will be shadowed by a member of Forest school staff.

There is a clear process for staff to report concerns, including keeping accurate, written records of any conversations or incidents. These records must be stored securely and shared with the designated safeguarding lead who is responsible for managing concerns and liaising with relevant agencies, such as social services, if necessary or the police if a child is in immediate danger.

The guidelines are as followed;

Make an accurate record (which may be used in any subsequent judicial proceedings) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the occurrence.

Include everything that has happened, including details of:

- Dates and times of observations
- Dates and times of any discussions in which they were involved
- Any injuries
- Explanations given by the child / adult
- What action was taken
- Any actual words or phrases used by the child

In this school the DSL is Emma Lofthouse.

The Deputy DSL are Sarah Cheney and Zoe Belton

‘Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone’s** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred.

This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child.’

Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory guidance for schools colleges (KCSiE)

An online version of the school’s child protection policy is available here;

<https://www.bolneyschool.org.uk/web/policies/223493>

PREVENT

The purpose of PREVENT is to stop individuals from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism by offering support to those at risk of radicalisation with early intervention.

All forest school staff have received PREVENT training within the school which is updated annually.

The schools PREVENT policy can be found here;

<https://www.bolneyschool.org.uk/web/policies/223493>

More information can also be found here;

<https://act.campaign.gov.uk>

Reporting:

If a member of staff is concerned about someone's vulnerability to radicalisation, they can speak to the DSL, Emma Lofthouse or the deputy DSL's, Sarah Cheney and Zoe Belton.

Data protection and data handling

On the 25th May 2018 the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) became applicable and the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) was updated by the new Data Protection Act 2018 giving effect to its provisions.

This Policy sets out the manner in which personal data of staff, students and other individuals are processed fairly and lawfully.

The school collects and uses personal information about staff, students, parents or carers and other individuals who come into contact with the Forest School. This information is gathered in order to enable it to provide education and other associated functions. In addition, there may be a legal requirement to collect and use information to ensure that the Forest school complies with its statutory obligations.

The school is a data controller and must therefore comply with the Data Protection Principles in the processing of personal data, including the way in which the data is obtained, stored, used, disclosed and destroyed. The school must be able to demonstrate compliance. Failure to comply with the principles exposes the school and staff to civil and criminal claims and possible financial penalties.

Details of the School's purpose for holding and processing data can be viewed on the data protection register:

<https://ico.org.uk/esdwebpages/search>

The school's registration number is Z6544921. This registration is renewed annually and updated as and when necessary. Zoe Belton is the school's Data Protection Officer.

All Forest school staff are trained on the data protection requirements as part of their induction.

All staff have read the Acceptable IT use Policy.

The school advises students whose personal data is held, the purposes for which it is processed and who it will be shared with. This is referred to as a "Privacy Notice" and is available on the school website.

Photographs, Additional Personal Data and Consents

Where the Forest School seeks consents for processing personal data such as photographs it will ensure that appropriate written consents are obtained. Those consent forms will provide details of how the consent can be withdrawn.

Where the personal data involves a child under 16 years written consent will be required from the adult with parental responsibility.

The school full data protection and data handling policy can be found here;

<https://www.bolneyschool.org.uk/web/policies/223493>

Anti bullying policy

In our Forest school we believe that all pupils and staff have the right to learn, discover and play in a supportive, caring and safe environment. We have a clear policy on the promotion of good behaviour (please see the Behaviour Policy) and use this in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying Policy to ensure that our Forest school environment is free from threat, harassment, discrimination or any type of bullying behaviour.

Our Definition of Bullying

Bullying is hurtful, unkind or threatening behaviour: physical or emotional, which is deliberate and repeated. Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group of people.

We want to ensure that pupils feel able to share their worries, including their experiences of bullying.

Reporting Bullying

If a pupil, parent, member of forest school staff or volunteer reports a case of possible bullying they will be taken seriously and every effort will be made to discover the facts. Whether bullying has been witnessed, or reported, we will speak to the involved parties and record the concerns on CPOMS.

There will be an emphasis on finding solutions and other members of staff within the school may be involved in the fact-finding process.

If the investigations reveal an incident of bullying, a member of forest school staff will report it to the headteacher as soon as possible. At this point, the headteacher will speak with the pupils involved and to the parents, if the class teacher hasn't already done so. A plan to support all involved parties will then be agreed, following the 'Steps to Safety' document.

Forest school staff, who work within the school, will be able to monitor and add to records on CPOMS. All cases of bullying will be monitored by class teachers and the headteacher. Pupils reporting bullying should be reassured that they have done the correct thing by telling someone.

All Forest school staff take all forms of bullying seriously, and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. If they witness an act of possible or actual bullying, they will intervene, do all they can to support the person who is being bullied and deal with the issue immediately. They will support all children in the forest school session and establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying from occurring.

The schools anti bullying policy can be found here:

<https://www.bolneyschool.org.uk/web/policies/223493>

Confidentiality

The Forest School Leader will maintain all paperwork and registers relevant to Forest School, a copy of which will be found in the school office.

All confidential paperwork will be stored in the school office and computer files containing information will be stored securely. Any pastoral or Safeguarding matters will be reported to the DSL.

Access to records or information must be restricted to individuals who have a legitimate professional need to view them.

Staff must not use confidential or personal information about a child or their family for personal gain or for the benefit of others, including partners, friends, relatives, or external organisations. It must not be discussed casually or shared outside of professional contexts, except on a strict need-to-know basis.

Wherever possible, and when the child's identity is not essential to the purpose of the discussion or report, information should be anonymised to protect privacy and dignity.

Forest school Staff may have access to confidential information concerning children and their families. Such information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality at all times and will only be shared in certain circumstances when it is legally permissible and in the best interests of the child.

Instances in which this may apply include:

- Where disclosure is required to prevent the commission of a crime or to take appropriate action in relation to an offence that may have occurred;
- Where it is necessary to prevent physical or emotional harm to a child or an adult;
- Where the potential risks associated with not sharing the information outweigh those of disclosure;
- Where there is evidence that a child is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm;
- Where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child may be suffering, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm;
- Where disclosure is required to prevent significant harm to children or adults, including for the purposes of preventing, detecting, or prosecuting serious crime.

The school's confidentiality and safeguarding policy can be found here;

<https://www.bolneyschool.org.uk/web/safeguarding/223494>

Disclosure/Accusation policy

Dealing with concerns and allegations against staff

If a concern is raised about the practice or behaviour of a member of forest school staff or volunteer, this information will be immediately recorded and passed to the headteacher Emma Lofthouse. The headteacher will make an assessment to determine if the matter is a 'low level concern' or an 'allegation'. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted for all allegations and the relevant guidance will be followed.

If the allegation is against the headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will contact the LADO or Chair of Governors directly.

Dealing with children abusing children

If a concern is raised that a child under 18 is abusing another child under 18, the 'Child on Child Abuse' guidance will be followed.

Policy review

As a school, we review this policy at least annually in line with DfE, WSSCP and WSCC requirements and other relevant statutory guidance.

A flowchart for child protection procedures is available here (page 15)

<https://www.bolneyschool.org.uk/web/safeguarding/223494>

Lost or missing child

In case a lost or missing child, the forest school leader is to blow the whistle and gather the children around the base camp or firepit. The register will then be taken and an activity or game will begin to amuse the children. Other forest school staff will immediately begin a site search and if not discovered will radio through to the school to assist.

A note must be taken of;

- The time of disappearance.
- What they were wearing.
- Where we last saw them.
- Establish the scenario, did they talk about going home or exploring the woodlands?
- Who were they with prior to disappearing? Did they mention anything to them?
- Which direction did they go?

Spare adult will be sent to any dangerous points eg roads.

Consult back to the schools lost or missing child policy.

See here:

<https://www.bolneyschool.org.uk/web/safeguarding/223494>

Once the child is found record and register it as a serious accident. Children will be made aware of the forest school boundaries prior to each session, they will also be made aware if they wander off or feel lost they will remain where they are and shout 'COOEY', the forest school staff will call this back until they are safely located.

Social media

At Bolney primary school and our forest school we do not allow parent to share videos or photos of other people's children on social media. If photos are to be shared, they must ensure they are of only their child. Phones, electronic tablets and other devices are not allowed by visitors on the forest school site and must remain in bags.

Where the Forest School seeks consents for processing personal data such as photographs it will ensure that appropriate written consents are obtained. Those consent forms will provide details of how the consent can be withdrawn.

Where the personal data involves a child under 16 years written consent will be required from the adult with parental responsibility.

The school full data protection and data handling policy can be found here;

<https://www.bolneyschool.org.uk/web/policies/223493>

Behaviour management policy

We expect Students to: -

- Walk to our woodland site and wait for the briefing before beginning to explore.
- Wear appropriate clothing as set out in the clothing policy
- Be a respectful member of forest school and do not disrupt the learning/creativity of others.
- Give others space if they ask for it.
- Listen attentively to instructions so you remain safe, understand what you are going to do, why and how.
- Understand and follow the guidelines for using tools and fire safety.
- Listen to others' ideas and work co-operatively, sharing and taking turns.
- Care for the woodlands and resources, respecting other people's property.
- Consider the needs of all the other people in the group.
- Comply with the no phone/technology rules and leave valuables at home or securely at school site.

What is unacceptable behaviour?

- Emotional – being deliberately unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, intimidation
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, hitting with sticks, throwing objects at one another or any use of violence.
- Verbal – name calling, malicious sarcasm, spreading rumours, malicious teasing. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical / social disability, or personality, etc.
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Damage to property, wildlife or theft – taking personal property or coercing a pupil to hand over property to them

Process of managing unacceptable behaviour

Staff are trained in using the PACE model to de-escalate situations and this should be used in the first instance unless there is risk of the child or others being hurt. Staff will always attempt to defuse situations before they escalate e.g. by distraction. If the child continues to disrupt the session they may be asked to temporarily leave the site and will be escorted back into school to regulate before rejoining the session, this is for their safety and the safety of others.

Where a child has specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, a positive handling plan, including assessment of risk, should be drawn up and agreed by all parties.

The school's behaviour management policy can be found here;

<https://www.bolneyschool.org.uk/web/policies/223493>

Incident and accident procedures

- All staff must follow the school's guidelines and must read and understand the risk assessments prior to the session.
- The Forest School Leader and the forest school assistant hold a current Outdoor First Aid qualification.
- All staff must be aware of any medical needs or health conditions of the children attending.
- All Parents/carers provide written consent upon admission for the administration of first aid, medication, and emergency procedures.

Essential Equipment for Every Session

The following items must be available at all Forest School sessions:

- A fully stocked First Aid Kit with ice packs
- A charged mobile phone
- An Emergency Access Plan and site map
- A fire bucket and fire blanket
- Children's inhalers or emergency medication (e.g epi pens)
- A charged two-way radio linked with the school.

Major injuries procedures

In the event of an accident or emergency, the Forest School Leader should:

1. Administer first aid where possible.
2. Ask a forest school assistant to inform the school office via the radio, who will then contact parents/carers and arrange extra support on site if required.
3. Contact emergency services immediately and provide the following details:
 - Who has been injured
 - The nature of their injuries
 - Any known medical conditions
 - The exact location of the casualty on site
 - Directions to the site and patient

The 'what three words' location for our forest school site is:
outgoing.edge.cocoons

4. Establish a contact point for emergency services by arranging for a staff member to meet them at the designated area (The cricket pavilion).
 - Do not end the call until instructed to do so by the operator.
5. Allocate staff responsibilities to ensure:
 - The safety and supervision of remaining children
 - Support for any distressed pupils
 - Arrangements to return to school
6. Accompany casualties to hospital, taking any relevant medication.
7. Complete Accident/Incident Report Forms as soon as possible.

General Guidance

- Remain calm and reassuring throughout the incident.
- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all participants.

RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations)

Purpose

RIDDOR requires employers, including schools, to report and record certain serious workplace incidents, occupational diseases, and dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Reportable Incidents

The school must report to the HSE any of the following occurring during Forest School

Fatalities and Major Injuries

- Death of an employee, pupil, or other person as a result of a work-related accident.
- Specified serious injuries to staff or pupils, such as:
 - Fractures (other than to fingers, thumbs, or toes)
 - Amputations
 - Serious burns or scalds
 - Loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
 - Any injury leading to hospital treatment (for pupils) or over 7 days' absence from work (for staff).

Dangerous Occurrences

- "Near misses" that could have caused serious injury, such as:
 - Structural collapse (e.g., tree fall on activity area)
 - Fire or explosion
 - Equipment failure that poses serious risk.

Who Reports

- The Headteacher, Emma Lofthouse, is responsible for submitting RIDDOR reports.
- The Forest School Leader must immediately inform the Headteacher or school office of any incident that may fall under RIDDOR.

Minor injuries

Procedure for Minor Incidents

- All minor incidents or non-emergency situations will be managed by the Forest School Leader in accordance with school policy and first aid procedures.

Procedure for Minor Accidents or Illness

- If a pupil experiences a minor accident or becomes unwell, the Leader or another designated member of forest school staff will contact the School Office immediately via the two-way radio.
- If required, the Leader or another staff member will return the pupil to school if the illness or injury is minor.
- A member of staff will remain with the child until they have recovered and are able to rejoin the session or a parent or carer arrives.
- All incidents and accidents must be recorded promptly in accordance with reporting procedures.

The school's health and safety policies are available here;

<https://www.bolneyschool.org.uk/web/policies/223493>

Evacuation Procedure

Evacuation Signal

- In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation, the Forest School Leader will blow the Forest School whistle 3 times to signal to all participants to stop activities immediately.

Assembly and Register

- On hearing the evacuation signal (3 blows on a whistle), all children must line up calmly and promptly at the designated assembly point, by the cricket pavilion.
- The Forest School Leader will take the register to ensure all pupils, staff, volunteers, and visitors are accounted for.

Evacuation Process

- The group will evacuate the site via the safest available route, returning to the main school site where possible.
- If it is unsafe to return to school, the group will proceed to the schools designated assembly point on the playing field.
- Once at the safe location, the register and headcount will be repeated to confirm all persons are present.

Contacting Emergency Services

- The Forest School Leader or the School Office will contact emergency services immediately and provide clear information about:
- The nature of the emergency
- The location of the Forest School site
- Any missing or injured persons
- Full location details for the Forest School site are recorded and readily available for emergency use.

The 'what three words' location for our forest school site is:

outgoing.edge.cocoons

Post-Incident Actions

- Following an evacuation, the incident must be recorded, and the evacuation procedure reviewed to identify any improvements needed.

COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)

Forest School activities generally use natural, low-risk materials, certain substances such as cleaning products or craft materials may pose health risks if not handled appropriately.

- To identify and assess any hazardous substances used or encountered during Forest School sessions.
- To ensure safe storage, handling, use, and disposal of such substances.
- To reduce exposure to hazardous substances to the lowest reasonably practicable level.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the necessary training and information to work safely.
- To comply fully with current COSHH legislation and health and safety guidance.

Potential hazardous substances that may be used or encountered at Forest School include:

- Cleaning and disinfecting products (used for tools, equipment, or first aid areas)
- Craft materials such as glues, paints, or dyes (if used)
- Insect repellents, hand sanitisers, or first aid chemicals (e.g., antiseptic wipes)

COSHH Risk Assessment

Substance	Potential hazards	Who might be exposed and how	Precautions and control measures to reduce risk	Storage, handling, and disposal arrangements	Actions to be taken in case of accidental exposure
Soya wax firelighter	Could be ingested. Flammable and may cause burns or fire hazards	Children, scooping out too much, accidentally getting it on clothing	1:1 ratio while igniting fires. Follow fire safety guidelines.	Store in sealed, labelled containers, kept in lockable box. Keep away ignition sources. Use the smallest quantity needed. Always follow your Fire Safety Policy	Remove any contaminated clothing. Clear up any spillages. Report as an incident. Inform parent/carer
Antibacterial wipes	Irritant to skin or eyes.	Children, using tools while still damp from the wipes	Tools should be cleaned and dried prior to the session beginning.	Antibacterial wipes should be kept in locked box on site and only used by adults. Dispose in school bin.	Wash area thoroughly. Observe for skin reaction. Inform parents/carer. Make a note in accident book.
First aid substances	Allergic reactions. Eye or skin	Children During administration of first aid.	Check for allergies before use. Follow manufacturer instructions. Store	Store first aid supplies in the first aid bag out of children's reach.	Make parent/carer aware. Notify school. Make a note in the accident book.

Antiseptic creams or sprays. Alcohol wipes Plasters with latex (potential allergen)	irritation if misused		in the first aid kit, labelled and secured	First aid only to be administered by a trained member of staff.	Administer antihistamine if necessary and consent given.
Sunscreen or insect repellent	Allergic reactions. Eye or skin irritation if misused	Children	Parent/carer to provide in a labelled container.	Children to put it on themselves if provided by their parent/carer.	Make parent/carer aware. Notify school. Make a note in the accident book. Administer antihistamine if necessary and consent given.
Wood glue or PVA	Some glues may contain solvents. May be irritants or flammable	Everyone During craft activities.	Choose non-toxic, child-safe materials Supervise all use. Avoid aerosols and strong solvents	Store safely in locked tool box. To be used with adult supervision in a designated crafting area.	Remove contaminated clothing. Make parent/carer aware. Clear any spillages.
Paints or dyes	Oils may be irritants or flammable	Everyone During craft activities.	Choose non-toxic, child safe materials. Natural dyes. Supervise all use. Avoid aerosols.	To be used with adult supervision in a designated crafting area.	Remove contaminated clothing. Make parent/carer aware. Clear any spillages.

Control Measures

To reduce risks associated with hazardous substances:

Substances will be substituted with safer alternatives wherever possible.

Quantities used will be kept to a minimum.

Children will not handle hazardous substances unless deemed safe and supervised directly by staff.

Handwashing will be enforced after using any materials or handling natural items.

Insurance

Risk management partners ltd Insurance

Policy Number: Y083462QBE

Name of Policy Holder: Bolney C of E primary/West sussex county council

Date of commencement: 29th September 2025

Date of Expiry: 28th September 2026

First aid

We are committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all children, staff, volunteers, and visitors. We recognise the importance of providing adequate and appropriate first aid provision, equipment, and facilities at all times. All reasonable and practical steps will be taken to meet our duty of care and to respond effectively to any incident requiring first aid.

All forest school staff hold a current Paediatric First Aid Certificate. This qualification will be renewed every three years in accordance with statutory requirements.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Establish and implement effective procedures for managing incidents that require first aid, ensuring prompt and appropriate care for all site users.
- Take all reasonable steps to maintain and promote the health, safety, and welfare of everyone on the forest school site.
- Ensure that suitable first aid arrangements are in place for all off-site visits and outdoor learning sessions.
- Promote and maintain safe working practices among staff, pupils, and volunteers.
- Ensure that all medicines are securely stored and administered only in accordance with parental instructions and school policy.

The school's First aid policy is available here;

<https://www.bolneyschool.org.uk/web/policies/223493>

Risk Management Statement

Forest school offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and themselves.

Risk-taking is a vital part of children's development and learning. The purpose of risk management within Forest School is to balance potential benefits with potential hazards, ensuring that activities are conducted as safely as possible while allowing children to experience many important life skills.

Risk benefits

Being able to judge hazards themselves	Excitement
Resilience	Self-confidence/belief
Engagement in learning	Physical abilities
Skills	Pride in achievements
The ability to follow instructions	Feel like they can take risks

The Forest school leader will ensure that:

- All activities are conducted in a safe and controlled manner and are supervised.
- All staff are appropriately trained and aware of their responsibilities.
- All staff will discuss the safety precautions with children before using tools or fire.
- Tools and fire lighting will be conducted as a 1:1 activity.
- The site and journey to the site is risk assessed.
- Children's welfare and wellbeing are always the highest priority.
- Risk assessments are completed, communicated, and reviewed regularly.

Risk Management Strategies

A risk assessment will be completed by the forest school leader before all Forest School sessions, visits, and activities. The site will be inspected before each session to ensure the area is clear of hazards such as glass, animal waste, uneven ground, overhead loose branches and other potential dangers.

All staff will read and follow the safety procedures, safety briefings will happen prior to the session beginning, making everyone aware of the potential risks and the measures in place.

All staff are aware of and trained in emergency and evacuation procedures. The children will practise the evacuation drill and be aware of the '3 blows on the whistle' rule where everyone evacuates the site calmly and promptly assembles by the cricket pavilion where the register will be taken by the forest school leader. The first aid kit, mobile phone, and emergency access plan will be available at every session in a designated area. As will the water buckets and fire blanket. All incidents, accidents and near misses will be shared, recorded and reviewed.

Appropriate adult-to-child ratios will be maintained and staff will ensure the children are aware of the forest school boundaries so they are always within sight and sound of an adult.

The risk assessment will include;

- The site environment (e.g., terrain, weather, flora, fauna).
- Tools and equipment used.
- Activities planned (e.g., fire lighting, tool use, climbing).
- Pupil needs (including medical, behavioural, or additional support requirements).
-

Risk assessments and management strategies will be reviewed annually or after any incident or site change.

Feedback from staff and pupils will be used to continually improve safety and learning experiences.

Forest School Risk Assessment

Bolney forest school	Location; Woodlands by the playing field	Date; ongoing
Name; Rachel Booty	Organisation; Bolney C of E Primary school	
Assessment undertaken;	Signed;	Date;

Hazard	Potential Risk	Who May Be Affected	Control Measures
Animal burrows and holes	Risk of tripping or falling, leading to injury	Everyone	Avoid areas with visible animal burrows. Fill in small holes prior to each session.
Animal waste or dead animals	Risk of contamination or distress	Everyone	Conduct a site check before sessions and safely remove any hazardous waste or animal remains.
Low-hanging or broken branches	Risk of impact injuries	Everyone	Carry out a site inspection before each session. Remove or cut down any dead or broken branches.
Brambles, thorns, nettles	Cuts, stings, splinters, or skin irritation	Everyone	Identify and mark or cordon off hazardous plants. Inform children about which plants sting or scratch.
Broken glass or litter	Cuts or exposure to contaminated waste	Everyone	Perform a thorough site sweep before sessions to remove any waste materials or sharp objects.
Fungi	Risk of ingestion or skin irritation	Everyone	Reinforce the “no pick, no taste” rule. Section off areas with large or unknown fungi if necessary.
Weather extremes	Hypothermia, heat exhaustion, dehydration	Everyone	Sessions will be cancelled in extreme weather. Provide shade, wet-weather protection, and access to drinking water.
Tool use	Cuts or injuries from knives, saws, peelers, or axes	Everyone	Follow Forest School tool-use guidelines. Staff must be trained and supervise all tool use 1:1 at the designated workstation.
Tree climbing	Falls or abrasions	Children	Climbing permitted only on trees with marked safe branches. Children must not climb above the ribbon markers. Ensure sturdy footwear is worn.
Fire use	Burns from campfires, cooking, or fire steels	Everyone	Follow Forest School fire-safety guidelines. The leader will supervise the fire at all times. Keep a fire blanket and water nearby.

Separation or lost child	Child leaving site boundaries unnoticed	Children	Clearly define and explain boundaries to all children. Follow the lost/missing child procedure if necessary.
Uneven or slippery ground	Trips or falls	Everyone	The site is generally level; any uneven or hazardous areas will be fenced off or avoided.
Wildlife bites or stings	Insect or animal bites causing injury or allergic reaction	Everyone	Teach children not to disturb wildlife. Staff must approve insect handling. First aid kit to be readily available.
Dog walkers or unknown visitors	Dogs may frighten or injure children; risk of stranger interaction	Everyone	The Forest School site is securely fenced. High staff ratios ensure constant supervision and monitoring of public access.
Ticks	Bites	Everyone	Encourage participants to wear long sleeves, long trousers tucked into socks, and closed footwear. Check high risk tick areas prior to the session beginning.

Tick management policy

The purpose of this policy is to protect all participants from the risks associated with tick bites during Forest School sessions. Ticks can transmit infections such as Lyme disease; therefore, awareness, prevention, and prompt action are essential. A site risk assessment will take place prior to the start of each session, noting high-risk tick areas (long grass, leaf litter, dense shrubs). All participants are encouraged to wear long sleeves, long trousers tucked into socks, and closed footwear. Paths will be kept clear and children are asked to avoid prolonged contact with dense vegetation.

Tick checks

- At the end of each session, staff remind all participants to check for ticks.
- Tick-prone areas include: behind ears, hairline, underarms, groin, backs of knees, and waistline.
- Parents/carers are advised to perform a thorough tick check at home the same day.

Tick Removal Procedure

If a tick is found and the parent/carers have given consent for removal;

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers or a tick removal tool to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible.
2. Pull upwards steadily without twisting.
3. Clean the bite area and hands with antiseptic or soap and water.
4. Record the incident in the accident log.
5. Notify parents/carers immediately.
6. Advise parents to monitor the bite area for signs of infection or rash and to seek medical advice if symptoms develop.

Symptoms to Watch For

After a tick bite, participants should seek medical advice if they develop:

- A circular or spreading rash (often resembling a bull's-eye).
- Flu-like symptoms, such as fever, fatigue, or muscle pain.
- Any unusual reaction at the bite site.
- Parents will be provided with information sheets on tick awareness and removal.

Extreme or bad weather policy

Our Forest School promotes an all-weather, all-seasons approach to outdoor learning. There may be occasions when it is unsafe or impractical for sessions to proceed due to adverse or extreme weather conditions and they will be cancelled.

Weather Assessment

- Weather conditions will be reviewed on the morning of each planned session using the Met Office. The Forest School Leader will determine whether the session can proceed safely.
- If a session proceeds, it is on the condition that participants are appropriately dressed for the weather and the relevant risk assessments have been completed.
- The Forest School Leader may suspend or terminate a session at any time if changing conditions present safety concerns.

High Wind

- Sessions will be cancelled when wind gusts exceed 30 mph or when a yellow or higher weather warning for wind is issued by the Met Office.
- The risk of falling branches or debris will be continuously assessed on site.

Lightning and Thunder

- Sessions will be cancelled if lightning or thunder is observed nearby.
- If lightning or thunder occurs during a session, the activity will cease immediately, and participants will evacuate the site following the designated safety procedure.
- All relevant Met Office warnings will be followed.

Heavy Rain, Snow, and Extreme Cold

- Extreme cold is defined as temperatures below 0°C. Sessions will be cancelled under such conditions.
- Heavy rain or amber weather warnings for rain, flooding, or other hazardous conditions will result in the session being cancelled.
- If rain does not pose a safety risk, sessions may continue provided children are equipped with suitable waterproof clothing.
- The session can continue in snowy conditions depending on the children having suitable clothing and the absence of Met Office amber warnings.

Extreme Heat

- Extreme heat is defined as temperatures of 30°C or above.
- Shade, hydration, and regular rest breaks will be prioritised during hot weather below this threshold.

Toileting policy

Children are encouraged to use the toilet facilities within the school prior to the session beginning, however if they need to use the toilet during the session they will be escorted into the school by a member of forest school staff. If forest school staff are engaged in an activity with other children the member of staff will use the radio to ask for a member of school staff to come to the site and escort the child into school. The child will be escorted back to site after using the facilities.

Clothing policy

The children are required to wear differing clothes dependent on the seasons.

Summer – 2 layers on top (t-shirt & thin jumper), legs covered, hats and sunblock

Autumn – 3 layers on top (t-shirt, jumper & light weight jacket), legs covered.

Winter – 4 layers on top (vest, t-shirt, jumper & warm jacket), legs covered, hats and gloves

- Arms and legs should be covered at all times to avoid tick bites, scratches and stings.
- Appropriate footwear such as strong boots, children will not be permitted to climb trees in wellington boots and will not be able to participate in the session if they are wearing crocs or sandals.
- Natural fibres such as cotton or wool are desirable and less likely to melt if exposed to sparks.
- Hair should be tied up if below shoulder length.
- No loose clothing, toggles or cords to be worn or they will not be able to participate with the camp fire.
- The clothes need to be durable and suitable to get wet or muddy.
- A waterproof jacket must be provided in wet conditions

Inappropriate clothing may result in a participant being unable to join certain activities for safety reasons.

Food and Drink Policy

Food and drink are an important part of ensuring that all participants remain healthy, hydrated, and energised during sessions. We recognise the importance of promoting healthy eating, good hygiene practices, and environmental awareness while ensuring all activities involving food are carried out safely.

Children will be able to access fresh water throughout the session, in hot weather lollies can be provided and in the colder months we will prepare hot drinks (served warm) Hot drinks and food preparation is planned as part of a supervised Forest School activity.

All food is nut-free, in line with the school's allergy policy, dietary needs and allergies are identified and managed appropriately. Any food used in activities will be fresh, safe, and stored appropriately, considering weather and hygiene conditions.

Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own hydration and food preparation where appropriate.

Environmental impact will be minimised by reducing waste and promoting sustainable practices.

Handwashing facilities or sanitising stations will be provided at every session.

Hands must be cleaned before and after handling food, eating, or using the toilet.

Cooking and Campfire Food

- Any cooking activity (e.g., toasting, boiling water, or simple campfire recipes) will be conducted under the direct supervision of the Forest School Leader.
- All campfire cooking will follow the Forest School Fire Safety guidelines.
- Children will be reminded not to consume any wild plants, berries, or fungi.
- Hands must be washed or sanitised before and after eating or food preparation.
- All food waste will be disposed of responsibly, ensuring no litter or food scraps are left on site.

Allergies and Dietary Requirements

The Forest School Leader will maintain an up-to-date record of all relevant medical and dietary information, including any allergies or intolerances.

Alternative ingredients or adjustments will be made to ensure inclusion and safety for all participants.

All staff are trained in recognising and responding to allergic reactions, including the use of prescribed medication such as auto-injectors (EpiPens).

Communication Strategy for all stakeholders

We are aware of the importance of keeping stakeholders engaged and confident in our approach to outdoor learning. Our key stakeholders include:

- The children participating in Forest School sessions
- Parents and carers
- School staff and leadership
- Forest School Leaders and assistants
- Volunteers and visiting practitioners
- External partners (e.g., local authorities, community organisations, landowners, health and safety officers)

Stakeholders will be informed of relevant updates or changes as soon as possible. Communication methods will consider accessibility needs, language preferences, and digital access. Personal information will be handled according to data protection regulations (GDPR).

Parents and carers

Parents and Carers will receive updates and photos of forest school themes and activities via the school's newsletter and by using the forest school web page on the school's website.

Other essential information will be available here such as suitable clothing, safety guidelines and the forest school handbook. This will allow parents to learn more about the benefits of forest school and the forest school philosophy.

Parents and carers are also encouraged to get involved with the forest school by volunteering their time to improve and maintain the site as well as donating items. There is a school WhatsApp group set up to accommodate this.

Children

Children will have the opportunity to express ideas, share experiences, and reflect on their learning during circle time and throughout the sessions. We encourage the children to create their own experiences or activities and try to accommodate them wherever possible. There will be clear, age-appropriate communication about boundaries, risks, and expectations before each session.

Staff and Volunteers

Staff and volunteers will have regular discussions about planning, risk assessment updates, and health and safety considerations. The school supports all staff to develop skills and understanding of Forest School principles.

School staff and leadership

A 'handover' will take place between the class teacher and the forest school leader prior to each session, any circumstances that the forest school staff need to be aware of will be communicated then. This could include any accidents or incidents, friendship issues or concerns.

At the end of each session the Forest school leader will inform the class teacher of any events, accidents or incidents that have occurred and they will report to parents if needed.

Forest school staff will access 'CPOMS' to add any relevant behavioural activity for school staff to access.

Termly meetings will take place between the Forest school leader and the school leadership to discuss the previous sessions and upcoming themes and activities, as well as any concerns, updates to the forest school handbook or required resources list.

Fire safety guidelines

Fire can be a valuable and memorable part of the Forest School experience when managed safely and responsibly. Children can experience awe and wonder when sitting around a fire and a real connection to nature.

The Forest school leader will follow clear safety procedures for lighting, maintaining, and extinguishing fires. All participants must understand and follow Forest School fire safety rules.

Fire Management Principles

1. Supervision

- The qualified Forest School Leader is responsible for all fires and must be present at all times.
- Fires are never left unattended.
- A trained adult will supervise any activity involving the fire circle, cooking, or tool use.

2. Location

- Fires are only lit in the designated fire area approved through the site risk assessment.
- The fire area will be clear of low-hanging branches, dry vegetation, or flammable materials.
- A minimum 1.5 metre safety zone is maintained around the fire pit, marked clearly with ropes, logs, or stones.
- Fires are lit in a contained fire bowl to protect the ground and soil structure.

3. Weather Conditions

- Fires will not be lit in high winds (gusts over 30mph) or during extremely dry periods when there is a wildfire risk.
- If weather conditions change and safety is compromised, the fire will be extinguished immediately.

4. Preparation and Equipment

- A fire blanket, bucket of water and a gauntlet must be available beside the fire at all times.
- Only natural kindling (sticks, twigs, dry leaves) are used.
- Participants will use long-handled tools when cooking or tending the fire.
- Appropriate clothing is required: long sleeves, tied-back hair, no hanging toogles and no loose or synthetic fabrics.

Fire Circle Rules

All participants are reminded of the following rules before approaching the fire circle:

1. The fire area is entered and exited from a designated point.
2. Participants walk, never run, within the fire circle.
3. No one may enter the fire circle without adult supervision or invitation.
4. No objects (sticks, leaves, or rubbish) are thrown into the fire.
5. Sitting logs or benches form a clear boundary; children remain seated unless called forward.
6. Cooking utensils or equipment are handled only when instructed.

Lighting and Maintaining the Fire

- The Forest School Leader (or a trained assistant under supervision) lights the fire using a fire steel
- Children may assist in preparing kindling and firewood as part of a supervised activity.
- Fire size and intensity are kept under control at all times.

Cooking and Food Safety

- Cooking over an open fire is conducted only when appropriate risk assessments are in place.
- Food hygiene procedures are followed, and all utensils are cleaned after use.
- Children may toast simple items (e.g., marshmallows, bread) using long skewers under 1:1 supervision.
- Only the forest school leader will handle the camping kettle.
- A gauntlet must be used when handling the camping kettle

Extinguishing the Fire

- Fires are extinguished completely at the end of every session.
- The fire is doused with water, stirred, and checked until no steam, smoke, or embers remain.
- The fire site is inspected before leaving to ensure it is cold and safe.
- Ash and debris are disposed of responsibly once cooled into an ash bin.

First Aid and Emergency Procedures

- A First Aid Kit must always be on site and accessible.
- All staff must be aware of burn treatment procedures (cool the burn under running water for at least 20 minutes, cover loosely with sterile dressing, and seek medical advice).
- In case of uncontrolled fire:
 1. Evacuate the area immediately.
 2. Account for all children and staff.
 3. Contact emergency services (999).
 4. Only trained staff may attempt to control or extinguish a spreading fire using equipment if it is safe to do so.

Environmental Responsibility

- Use only bought in wood or safe fallen deadwood for fires, never cut live trees or plants – these can be toxic or spit.
- Avoid leaving scorch marks on the ground by using a raised fire pit.
- Remove all litter, food waste, and debris after the fire is out.
- Educate children on the ecological effects of fire and the importance of sustainable woodland management.

Review and Monitoring

- The Fire Safety Guidelines will be reviewed annually or following any incident, change in procedure, or site condition.
- A risk assessment is completed at each session before lighting a fire.
- Feedback from staff and participants is used to continually improve fire safety practice.

