

BOTTESFORD SCHOOLS FEDERATION



FOREST SCHOOL HANDBOOK

Contents

● Introduction	3
● Mission Statement	3
● What is Forest School?	4
● Principles of Forest School	5
● Staff	8
● Roles of a Forest School leader	9
● What does a level 3 Forest School Leader Qualification mean?	10
● Forest School site	11
● Forest School activities	12
● Codes of Conduct	13
● Equipment list	17
● Standard tool safety talks	18
● Managing risk	19
● Policies and Procedures	21
● Health and Safety	22
● Behaviour	23
● Safeguarding	24
● First Aid	25
● Food Hygiene	26
● Communications	27
● Communication strategy	28
● Clothing	29
● Weather	29
● Emergency Action Plan	30
● Risk assessments	

Introduction

Our Vision for Forest School

We believe the natural environment is an essential classroom. Our Forest School vision is to provide regular, child-centred outdoor learning experiences that stimulate curiosity, creativity and resilience. Through challenge and supported risk-taking, pupils lead their own learning, developing independence, emotional wellbeing and strong social skills that transfer into the classroom and beyond.

The Forest School Educational Approach

Forest School at Bottesford is:

- **Child-centred:** Pupils' interests drive learning priorities; adults observe, question and scaffold rather than dictate.
- **Regular and progressive:** termly sessions allow skills to deepen, risk to be managed and confidence to grow across the academic year.
- **Safely challenging:** Activities include managed risk-taking that develops resilience and problem-solving while following rigorous safeguarding protocols.
- **Holistic:** Sessions explicitly support physical wellbeing, mental health, social skills and academic learning (e.g., measurement in maths, descriptive writing in English, scientific enquiry).
- **Inclusive:** Activities are adapted to ensure pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils access and benefit from the same opportunities.

How the approach links to our RISE values:

- **Respect:** Pupils learn environmental stewardship and respectful collaboration.
- **Integrity:** Honest reflection on decisions and safety underpins all practice.
- **Strive:** Incremental challenge fosters persistence and progress.
- **Empowered:** Regular leadership roles and choices create agency.

Our Forest School is based on the junior site. It is accessed by infant and junior pupil's each week.

What is Forest School?

Our aim is to set up a Forest School within the grounds of Bottesford Junior School that shall be up and running to provide Forest School sessions after school and during school day to fit in with topic work therefore supporting the National Curriculum.

The Forest School will be running each week at set sessions for the infant and junior children.

The need for a Forest School is to give those children, who often struggle within a classroom environment and would benefit hugely from a different ethos and learning environment. It is essential within the community and aims to give these children a fresh approach to refocus and build self-confidence and belief in their own abilities, as well as involve the pupils' parents.

The school is currently adapting an area of woodland and gardening space which has that proved to be ideal for setting up a Forest School.

A Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education, it is an inspirational process that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands on learning experiences in woodlands.

The Forest School is only to be ran by qualified practitioners who have acquired a Level 3 Forest School qualification and the relevant first aid qualification

The Forest School will target children who are found to be struggling in the traditional classroom environment and will enable those who have a natural skill set in other areas to really shine.

Our class teachers will identify children who have in one way or another not been achieving their full potential within the classroom and in day- to -day school life with issues such as:

- Low self-confidence / self esteem
- Disruptive behaviour
- Attention difficulties
- Weight and health issues
- Poor social skills – struggles to work in a team
- Learning difficulties

They shall offer them a place within the forest school environment with an aim to:

INCREASE CONFIDENCE – giving the children the freedom, time and space to learn and demonstrate independence.

INCREASE SOCIAL SKILLS – create awareness of the consequences of their actions on peers through team activities such as sharing tools and participating in play. Those who often take control in class will learn to allow others to become more involved.

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION – through team work, creativity and planning as a group and as a leader as well as encouraging language development prompted by enhanced sensory experiences.

INCREASE MOTIVATION AND CONCENTRATION – by exposing the children to woodland areas has been proven to fascinate and engage children leading to a keenness to participate and the ability to concentrate over longer periods of time.

IMPROVE PHYSICAL SKILLS – many children have become accustomed to spending their free time on various devices and lack basic physical fitness so working outside amongst sometimes

challenging and unpredictable environments through all weathers will develop physical stamina and flexibility but also the tasks undertaken develop gross and fine motor skills.

INCREASE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING – the children will develop an interest in the natural surroundings and develop a healthy respect for the environment. Assessing risk for themselves in this setting will pave the way the child makes decisions through life.

The Forest School also gives teachers a new understanding of the children, as they can observe them in a different setting, and the children will take their experiences home and talk to family and friends leading to families visiting woodlands and engaging with more outdoor activities.

Forest School at Bottesford Schools Federation forms part of outdoor learning and supports other parts of the school curriculum, including Numeracy, Literacy, Design Technology, Science, Music and Art. It is particularly suited to children who are struggling to fulfil their potential in a traditional classroom setting.

By transferring these skills back into the classroom, Forest School will help children to become more confident, self- motivated learners, enabling them to improve their academic achievements and fulfil their potential.

Principles of Forest School

These principles were first articulated by the Forest School Community in 2002. They were reviewed in 2011 and sent out for a 5-month consultation to Forest School networks and practitioners in all UK nations. They were published on the Institute for Outdoor Learning Forest School SIG page in Feb 2012, and in the minutes of the GB trainers' network.

The Forest School ethos has six principles, which were agreed by the UK Forest School community in 2011.

Principle 1: 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.

- Forest School takes place regularly, ideally at least every other week, with the same group of learners, over an extended period of time, if practicable encompassing the seasons.
- A Forest School programme has a structure which is based on the observations and collaborative work between learners and practitioners. This structure should clearly demonstrate progression of learning.
- The initial sessions of any programme establish physical and behavioural boundaries as well as making initial observations on which to base future programme development.

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.

- Whilst woodland is the ideal environment for Forest School, many other sites, some with only a few trees, are able to support good Forest School practice.
- The woodland is ideally suited to match the needs of the programme and the learners, providing them with the space and environment in which to explore and discover.
- A Forest School programme constantly monitors its ecological impact and works within a sustainable site management plan agreed between the landowner/ manager, the forest school practitioner and the learners.
- Forest School aims to foster a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences in order to develop long-term, environmentally sustainable attitudes and practices in staff, learners and the wider community.
- Forest School uses natural resources for inspiration, to enable ideas and to encourage intrinsic motivation.

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

- Where appropriate, the Forest School leader will aim to link experiences at Forest School to home, work and /or school education
- Forest School programmes aim to develop, where appropriate, the physical, social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of the learner.

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

- Forest School opportunities are designed to build on an individual's innate motivation, positive attitudes and/or interests.
- Forest School uses tools and fires only where deemed appropriate to the learners, and dependent on completion of a baseline risk assessment.
- Any Forest School experience follows a Risk–Benefit process managed jointly by the practitioner and learner that is tailored to the developmental stage of the learner.

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

- Forest School is led by qualified Forest School practitioners, who are required to hold a minimum of an accredited Level 3 Forest School qualification. Find more information on Forest School qualifications [here](#).
- There is a high ratio of practitioner/adults to learners.
- Practitioners and adults regularly helping at Forest School are subject to relevant checks into their suitability to have prolonged contact with children, young people and vulnerable people.
- Practitioners need to hold an up-to-date first aid qualification, which includes paediatric (if appropriate) and outdoor elements.
- Forest School is backed by relevant working documents, which contain all the policies and procedures required for running Forest School and which establish the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.
- The Forest School leader is a reflective practitioner and sees themselves, therefore, as a learner too.

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

- A learner-centred pedagogical approach is employed by Forest School that is responsive to the needs and interests of learners.
- The Practitioner models the pedagogy, which they promote during their programmes through careful planning, appropriate dialogue and relationship building.
- Play and choice are an integral part of the Forest School learning process, and play is recognised as vital to learning and development at Forest School.
- Forest School provides a stimulus for all learning preferences and dispositions.
- Reflective practice is a feature of each session to ensure learners and practitioners can understand their achievements, develop emotional intelligence and plan for the future.
- Practitioner observation is an important element of Forest School pedagogy. Observations feed into 'scaffolding' and tailoring experiences to learning and development at Forest School.

Staff

Lisa Robinson

- Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF)
- Forest School First Aid and Paediatric First Aid
- Teaching Assistant
- Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate

Debby Cavany

- Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF)
- First Aid at Work
- Teaching Assistant
- Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate

Gareth Preston

- Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF)
- Caretaker/Groundsman
- Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate

Gabby Proctor

- Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF)
- Paediatric First Aid
- Teaching Assistant
- Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate

Roles within the Forest School Setting

Forest School Leader

The role of the Forest School Leader is to boost and develop children's self-esteem, self-belief and confidence by suggesting small, manageable tasks and ensure that they have time and freedom to learn at their own pace without pressure.

They will model appropriate behaviour at all times and encourage children to develop a greater awareness of their own and other's emotional needs.

In addition, the leader will be responsible for liaising with all interested parties, completing health and safety and risk assessments, following policies and procedures, administering any first aid and maintaining the first aid kit, counting equipment in and out and maintaining tools.

Leaders will always take into consideration the specific needs of a particular group or individual and will ensure that every child is respected as an individual, that bullying is not tolerated and that the rules and guidelines are followed. In the event of an emergency, they will direct the group to safety.

Forest School Leaders will promote the Forest School ethos at all times and aim to increase the awareness in all the participants about the importance of respecting each other and the environment.

Forest School Leader will also be responsible for:

- Undertake risk–benefit analyses and implement risk management systems.
- Ensure appropriate welfare requirements are in place for the group (clothing/shelter, hand washing, drink & food, toilets).
- Communicate with all stakeholders, including landowners, other staff, parents, management, participants, local community etc.
- Ensure appropriate ratios are maintained at their Forest School and provide clear guidance and induction processes for helpers supporting their Forest School programme, to ensure a consistent approach.
- Share planning and evaluations of sessions recorded with relevant staff.
- Record observations of individual learners learning processes and share with other relevant staff.
- Reflect on their own practice; undertake continued professional development and network with other local Forest School practitioners.
- Undertake a baseline ecological survey of the Forest School site, establish environmental impact monitoring systems and create a simple management plan for the site for the duration of the programme.
- Implement the management and maintenance of the Forest School area. This may be negotiated with the landowner.
- Ensure that equipment, tools and outdoor clothing are fit for purpose and appropriately stored and implement maintenance schedules.

(Natural Choice Group, 2015)

Parent Helpers

Parent helpers are there in a more supervisory role. To ensure children are on task and working safely. They will be required to take a back seat and observe and promote positive working attitudes and encourage and motivate participants in a positive and helpful manner.

Forest School Assistant

The role of the assistant is to help the leader working with a group. The assistant is not able to run a group but will help children within a group with their tasks as well as motivate the children's learning and look to increase their self-esteem and emotional intelligence. They will model appropriate behaviour at all times and encourage children to develop a greater awareness of their own and other's emotional needs. They have knowledge of the Forest School ethos and will look to promote this at all times and try to embed this and the appreciation of the outdoor world and environmental issues and protection during the sessions.

What does a Level 3 Forest School Leader Qualification mean?

The course is an immersive and inspiring programme of study which requires substantial input from both the trainee and where appropriate commitment and support from their settings. Completion - approx. 9 months.

Taught sessions:

- 5 days (consecutive) initial training
- 2 day combined Outdoor and Paediatric First Aid course
 - Forest School First Aid (16 hours)
 - The course is 16 hours and is in keeping with the requirements of other outdoor national governing bodies
 - This course prepares candidates to deal with incidents in the outdoors and in remote settings. (By definition remote is more than 30 min from assistance)
 - Emphasis will be made with dealing with both adults and children
- 5 days (consecutive) final assessment and consolidation sessions

Candidate's own study (with guidance):

- Develop and produce a staff handbook
- Develop and produce a woodland management plan
- Plan, deliver and evaluate a 6 session Forest School pilot programme
- Be observed delivering a Forest School Session
- Submit completed workbooks for the 5 units below

Units of study:

- Delivery of a Forest School Programme
- Forest School Programmes and the woodland environment
- Learning and Development at a Forest School Programme
- Planning a Forest School Programme
- Practical Skills for a Forest School Programme
(*Natural Choice Group, 2015*)

The Forest School Site

During 2017 the junior school invested a substantial amount of money to develop the outdoor area in the school grounds so that it includes an area for Forest School, a school garden and an outdoor classroom. The Forest School site contains a mixture of deciduous trees and future plans are to plant further trees and manage the site to promote species diversity.



Forest School Site

Forest School Activities

The Forest School ethos promotes a child led learning and allows the child to explore, design, create, test, re-assess and problem solve their own ideas and theories about a multitude of different experiences through a cognitive process. This utilises the natural world and gives them the time and freedom to explore.

A Forest School Leader will be on hand to guide, question and suggest ideas and starting points to get them on the way with a number of practical and hands on activities such as:

- Fire building and lighting
- Open fire cooking
- Den and shelter building
- Knots
- Decorative art
- Rope challenges
- Bridge building
- Tool making
- Nature and wildlife exploration
- Using tools
- Scientific studies
- Making Woodland artefacts
- Identifying plants and animals
- Team games
- Kelly Kettles
- Camp building
- Learning traditional crafts
- Tracking games
- Story telling and drama
- Studying wildlife

Code of Conduct

Entering the Forest School Site

All children and staff must enter the Forest School Site through either of the 2 designated entrances. Which entrance will be dependent on and change annually to allow regrowth and regeneration of natural habitats.

The children will be educated on the importance of trying to not disturb the natural habitats of our local wildlife and respect the area at all times. They will be made aware of the damage they can cause on the environment and that we share this environment with all the creatures and plants within our woods.



Restrictions/Boundary

The Forest School site covers an area of woodland and garden and is surrounded by a man-made fence boundary. The children will be made aware that during Forest School activities they are not permitted to leave this area without permission from a Forest School Leader. They will also be made aware that our bog area is out of bounds unless supervised by a Forest School Leader.

Collecting Wood

Wood may be gathered for fires, tool making, decorations and shelter building amongst many other activities. It is vital that the children are made aware that only dead wood is allowed to be gathered. At no time should anything be removed from a living tree without the Forest School Leader's permission. We have a large stack of donated branches and logs that we can use to avoid this. When carrying wood, the children should always wear protective gloves and ensure that the stick is pointing downwards so as not to injure another child. When moving large logs or branches for shelter building children must work safely in pairs using safe methods the Forest School Leader has demonstrated.





Working with tools

Before any child is allowed to handle any tools, they must first have been given a Tool Safety Talk and then delivered this talk back to either their group or the Forest School Leader. (See Standard Safety Tool Talk page.)

Each tool has its own specific code of conduct and each child will be trained on the correct safe way to use each tool and is supervised whilst learning to use. Only when the Forest School Leader is satisfied that the correct procedures are being followed then they can work alone/in pairs and be supervised from a distance.

Any misuse or inappropriate behaviour when using any tool will result in immediate confiscation and possible removal from the task and (depending on severity) the Forest School.

Fire Pit Site

When building a fire pit site, the following must be considered:

- Remove overhanging branches
- Ensure distance of at least 2 metres from fire to seating
- Clear entry and exit points and all participants aware
- Clear exits behind seating in case of emergency
- No entrance to fire area beyond seating without permission
- Bucket of clean water on hand for burns or extinguishing fire in emergency.
- Clear the area for trip hazards
- Ensure fire does not get too large for purpose
- Always ensure fire is fully out before leaving the site
- When extinguishing, spread the fire out and either does or smother.
- Use gloves when feeding a fire
- Use the respect position
- Always ensure long hair is tied back.





Fires

Fires are an important and fantastic aspect of Forest School, but certain rules and procedures must be adhered to before any fire can be started.

The Forest School Leader must ensure that all fire safety and first aid equipment is on hand before any fire can be started.

All participants must be versed in the correct protocols around a campfire such as the 'respect' position when working around a fire, not crossing a fire pit and taking extra care and awareness of others around the fire.

A permanent fire must only ever be started in a fire pit always.

A lit fire must not be left unattended at any time.

Food Hygiene

Nil by mouth policy for all things found in the forest (no pick, no lick) unless specific task such as bramble picking (supervised by Forest School Leader).

All food to be consumed at the Forest School to be stored in airtight containers and all packaging to be disposed of properly into designated bin bags and bag taken back into the school for correct disposal.

When cooking food, Forest School Leader to supervise and ensure all food cooked correctly before consumption. Each Forest School Leader is to hold a minimum of a Food Hygiene level 2 certificate.



Climbing trees

The Forest School Leader is to assess the suitability of each tree before climbing can commence and they will demonstrate a safe climbing technique.

The leader will check prior to each session that the surrounding ground area hasn't any objects protruding from soil.

Tree to be assessed to ensure any climbing will not disturb any wildlife

Children are not to climb above shoulder height for safety reasons.

Hygiene and Toileting

Bottesford Forest School is situated at the junior site is situated within the school grounds meaning there will always be access to the school toilet facilities. A handle has been added to the nearest school door to ensure access can be gained from outside. This can be seen from the main Forest School area.

If any child needs to use the toilet, they must first let an adult know and then they can go straight to the school toilet and return straight away. Often the junior children prefer to visit the toilet in pairs school. The infant children will be supervised.

Hand washing will be compulsory before handling any food, therefore to avoid cross contamination we will avoid using a bowl of water that several people may use. Instead of this we will use either the tippy tap by the main fire site, the outside tap by the cabin or water and antibacterial hand wipes.

Hand wipes are to be biodegradable and disposed of correctly.



Leaving the site

The site needs to be left exactly as it was found.

All fires are to be safely extinguished, shelters are to be dismantled, all rubbish to be bagged and disposed of correctly once back in the school.

All children need to adhere to the same procedures when leaving the site as when entering the site to minimise damage to the wildlife and habitats.

Storing tools

When tools are not in use they are stored in a toolbox, which is kept in a locked storage container. Tools are counted out at the beginning of each session and counted back in at the end. Before each tool is used, the Forest School Leader must check that it is in good working order and has no damage.

Collecting stones

Stones may be picked up and carried for Forest School activities such as for making patterns or pictures. They must not be thrown.

Equipment List

The Forest School leader will always have an emergency bag with them containing the following essential equipment:

- First Aid Kit (see first aid policy)
- Communication Devices (mobile phone or radios)
- Clean Water
- Emergency Life Blanket
- Medication for individuals (if not appropriate for the individual to carry the medication for themselves it should be clearly labelled – staff must have been trained to administer it and parental consent must have been received) – including inhalers and EPI Pens.
- Appropriate Clothing
- Bucket
- Risk Assessments – Emergency Procedures

The following will be held in the school office when working on the school forest site:

- Medical information for each individual and Emergency contact details for every member of the group
- Junior accident forms – Junior first aid room
- Infant accident reporting – via Ipad
- Sharps box and gloves – Junior first aid room

Forest school leader will have a radio with them to contact members of staff in school if an emergency.

In addition to this, participants at the Forest School will use a number of different tools and equipment to enable them to get a true feel of bush craft. These tools will, amongst others, include:

- Sheath Knife
- Bow Saw
- Loppers
- Hand Drills
- Rope and String
- Bill Hook
- Mallets
- Digging Implements (Trowels, Forks, and Spades etc.)
- Tarpaulins
- Tents
- Work Gloves
- Fire Strikers / Tinder
- Kelly Kettles
- Outdoor Cooking Implements (Dutch Oven, BBQ Grill & Tongs etc.)
- Various Wildlife Viewing and Identification Equipment (Binoculars, Magnifiers etc.)

Standard Tool Safety Talks

Before any pupil is allowed to independently use any tool, they need to demonstrate this and learn the safety rules and correct handling of each tool and using procedures for that tool. Each tool will require the user to learn a safety talk specific to that tool and then 'teach' this talk back to their peers and Forest School Leader.

Name *This is a*

Describe *This is the handle, this is the cutting edge*

Its correct use *I use this tool for.....*

Walking *I walk with the like this (demonstrate)*

Not using *When I am not using I place thelike this.....*

Safe working distance *I use the tool 2 arm's length and a tool length away from anybody else except my partner '**The Blood Bubble**'*

Putting away *When I have finished using the tool I put it back in the designated place*

NO GLOVES ON TOOLS - GLOVE ON NON-SAWING/WHITTLING HAND (HELPING HAND)

KNIFE

- Move away from my body
- Do not rest stick on leg
- Ensure stick pointing downwards

BOW SAW

- Person holding handle leads
- Cross hands until blade is securely in wood
- Communicate – "to me – to you"

BILL HOOK

- Person holding bill hook to lead
- Communicate using 1,2,3 system
- 1 – hit gently
- 2- hit medium
- 3- hit hard
- Example – "3 at 2" = 3 hits at medium strength

Only when the Forest School Leader is satisfied that the correct procedures are being adhered to, they can work and be supervised from a distance.

Any misuse or inappropriate behaviour when using any tool will result in immediate confiscation and possible removal from the task and, depending on severity, the Forest School session.

Managing Risk

Forest Schools promote adventure and self-discovery within an outdoor setting. To fully appreciate all that it has to offer the children are given the opportunity to explore, play and investigate in woodland and natural environments.

With this freedom comes some amount of risk, from the natural setting as well as the tasks that the children will be safely taught and trusted to complete. This may involve using sharp tools, climbing trees and many other outdoor activities.

Each activity will have been risk assessed and age appropriate and all the children will be given extensive instruction on safe playing/working practices.

The Forest School approach manages risk by encouraging children to take responsibility for their environment and considering what is safe or not safe around them.

Children at Bottesford Forest School are continually supported by the Forest School Leaders and the environment is always safety swept before children even begin Forest School sessions. Risks are minimised and those which the children identify, will almost always, have already been identified by an adult, and are likely to be of very low impact such as holly leaves or a small animal hole.

The Forest School approach encourages children to risk manage their own learning by becoming familiar with the safety aspects of woodland learning. All children will be required to walk around the boundaries of their Forest site and recognise what they must be careful of and not touch.

Children are also taught the Forest School rules and boundaries, whereby they must stay within the boundaries, not pick anything or put anything in their mouths (no pick no lick) and look after their Forest School environment. Children learn to discuss different weather conditions and how this can affect the forest at various times of year. For example: in winter time, paths may become icy, or there maybe new animal holes in the Forest which they need to be careful of when exploring.

Children are very good at assessing risks and danger and will be quick to point out the areas of risk within their environment. Children quickly learn to assess risks and share these with others in the group. This develops self-confidence as the children share important information about their Forest School with others. They recognise changes in the environment and become more aware of how to manage risks.

There are stringent risk assessments to follow that are developed and carried out by the Forest School Leaders to ensure all participants children, adults, learner or teachers can fully enjoy their Forest School experience safe in the knowledge that all reasonable risks have been assessed and dealt with.

There is always an element of risk in the activities at Forest School. To minimise this, the Forest School Leader will carry out risk assessments for the site and each of the activities that the children take part in. The Forest School Leader has an overall responsibility for safety but everyone is responsible in keeping themselves and others safe. An important part of Forest School is to teach the children about risk and allow them to manage their own risk taking.

The Forest School Leader will;

- Carry out a site risk assessment prior to the start of each session
- Complete a risk/benefit assessment for every activity to be undertaken at Forest School

- Ensure that all staff have read the site and activity risk assessments prior to each session
- Ensure that all staff and children are aware of the codes of conduct
- Ensure that all staff and children are aware of the emergency procedures for the Forest School site
- Involve staff and children in risk assessments, as part of learning
- Be responsible for teaching children the skills to keep themselves safe, especially when using tools or fire
- Ensure that a nil by mouth policy is used in all Forest School sessions, apart from food that is cooked as part of an activity
- Ensure that consent forms are completed with contact details and medical or dietary requirements
- Ensure consent forms are completed with contact details and medical or dietary requirements

Forest School Policies

Bottesford Forest School will follow the current policies in place at the school.

Obviously, some of the activities carried out within the Forest School vary quite considerably from everyday life at the school; therefore, the following additional policies have been adapted to suit the Forest School. Bottesford Forest School will adhere to the school policies as well as the additional adapted policies.

These policies are:

- Health and Safety
- Behaviour
- Safeguarding
- First Aid
- Food Hygiene
- Communications
- Communication strategy
- Clothing
- Weather
- Emergency Action Plan

Health and Safety Policy

Bottesford Schools Federation Health and Safety Policy sets out clear statements of intent regarding the Whole School's approach to the health and safety of its children, staff and visitors to the School and the School Site. Provided below is a list of additional points and measures which relate directly to our Forest School sessions.

1. The trained and named Forest School Leader is always the person in charge of Forest School sessions.
2. The Forest School Leader has overall duty of care for the children in their charge. However, all adults involved in the Forest School session are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe.
3. The Forest School Leader or Assistant will always carry and take a first aid kit into the forest at every session.
4. The Forest School Leader or Assistant will always carry a contact list for each child undertaking the activities.
5. The Forest School Leader will always carry a mobile phone and walkie talkie and will ensure that there is easy access to a land line if the group is out of range.
6. In the event of an emergency, The Forest Leader will ensure that the School contacts the emergency services. If contact with the school is lost the Leader will contact the emergency services.
7. The Forest School Leader will review the risk assessments before every trip into the School's Forest Site.
8. The Forest School leader is responsible for the maintenance and checking of all tools and equipment to be used at Forest school, prior to their use.
9. The Forest School Leader is responsible for training the children in how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately.
10. The Forest School Leader will be responsible for the pre-visit check of the Forest School site prior to a Forest School session.

Behaviour Policy

Bottesford School's Federation Behaviour Policy sets out the whole School's approach to pupil behaviour. Provided below is a list of additional points and measures which relate directly to our Forest School sessions.

The Policy Aims to:

1. Build self-esteem, independence, motivation to learn whilst always maintaining a safe environment
2. Promote awareness, respect and care for other individuals and for the natural environment
3. Reinforce collaborative behaviour
4. Develop awareness of acceptable and responsible behaviour in an outdoor environment

In order to achieve these aims, standards of behaviour must be sustained and reinforced as a continuum of expectations within conventional school time.

The Forest School's discipline system is based on a set of values shared amongst all members of the Forest School community.

Our values are that:

- We treat each other with respect.
- We respect our environment.
- We respect our property and the property of others.
- We work to the best of our ability and allow others to do the same.
- We are kind, caring and helpful to each other.
- We respect other people.

These rules positively define acceptable standards of behaviour. Within this structure we define the following behaviour traits as being unacceptable:

- Swearing, name calling, mimicry, cheekiness, insolence, rudeness, arguing in an unreasoned way, temper outbursts, fighting
- (play or otherwise), gangs, bullying, spitting, lying, theft, damage to property,
- dropping of litter, deliberate injury to another child, unauthorised leaving of the Forest school premises, indecent exposure.

The Forest School Leader will;

- Follow the School's Behaviour Policy
- Create a positive environment which encourages and reinforces caring, nurturing and acceptable behaviour towards one another, the environment and equipment
- Promote effective relationships in which all are accepted, valued and treated equally
- Be mindful of the need to maintain safety at all times
- Establish clearly defined standards of behaviour
- Provide a positive role model for all children
- Place the needs of children at the centre of Forest School activities to maximise individual success and raise self esteem

Safeguarding Policy

Bottesford School's Federation Safeguarding Policy sets out the federations approach to Safeguarding.

According to 'Working Together' there are two key principles that underpin safeguarding:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- A Child – Centred Approach

The definition of safeguarding children that schools work to is:

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

Bottesford Forest School and Bottesford School Federation fully recognises its' responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the health and well-being of all the children in its care.

We therefore strive to:

- Ensure we practice safer recruitment in compliance with the 'LSCB Standards for Safer Recruitment' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- Raise awareness of safeguarding issues and equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe
- Implement the North Lincolnshire LSCB procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- Support children who have been abused in accordance with the North Lincolnshire's LSCB procedures
- Establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training in compliance with the LSCB Training Strategy
- Ensure Early Help Process is completed to support children [the Early Help Strategy can be accessed at www.northlincs.gov.uk/LSCB]

We are aware that because of the day-to-day contact with the children, Forest School staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of harm. We, therefore, work hard to: -

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- We lay emphasis on a positive approach to discipline and recognise that children should be treated fairly and consistently.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried

For matters of an intimate nature, staff are informed to deal with a child with utmost sensitivity and always to seek guidance from the Executive Head Teacher or Deputy Headteachers. In almost all situations the parents will be asked to come into school immediately so that they are part of the

decision-making process for such matters. In rare circumstances the appropriate emergency service will be contacted as a matter of urgency before the parent.

First Aid Policy

First Aid treatment is given by adequately trained school staff.

It is the responsibility of the Forest school leader to ensure that at least one First Aid kit is on site – First Aid kits to include:

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT: First Aid Kit

Latex Gloves

Bandages

Plasters

Burns Gel

Burn Dressing

Dressings

Eyewash

Scissors

Cotton Wool

Antiseptic Wipes

Mouth Guards (for CPR)

When a child is poorly, or has suffered an accident in the Forest School there is a protocol for Forest School staff to follow:

- A person trained in first aid is consulted
- The incident is logged as per school first aid procedure
- For head injuries parents/carers are informed
- If there is any doubt at all a parent/carer is contacted
- In the case of serious accidents / injuries, emergency ambulance services will be called.

For matters of an intimate nature, staff are informed to deal with a child with utmost sensitivity and always to seek guidance from the Executive Head Teacher or Deputy Headteachers. In almost all situations the parents will be asked to come into school immediately so that they are part of the decision-making process for such matters. In rare circumstances the appropriate emergency service will be contacted as a matter of urgency before the parent.

Food Hygiene

The Forest School Leaders have a Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate but all participants should be aware of food safety and hygiene. When involved in the preparation of food or drink you should;

- Wash hands before and after cooking
- Anyone whom is ill with vomiting or diarrhoea should not handle food
- Cuts and sores should be covered with a waterproof plaster
- Minimise the handling of food and use implements where possible
- Tie long hair back
- Keep cooked and uncooked food separate
- Use separate chopping boards for preparing different food, especially cooked and raw food
- Make sure that food is cooked thoroughly and is piping hot in the middle
- Keep utensils clean and store them off the ground when outside
- Store food in airtight containers at the correct temperature
- Cooked food will not be re-heated
- Remove all rubbish and food waste at the end of each session

Food allergies and dietary requirements

Any allergies or dietary requirements will be on Arbor. The Forest School Leader will ensure that the food and drinks are suitable for all.

Communication Policy

The communication policy aims to ensure participants, leaders, parents and teachers are kept informed of delivery and outcomes of the Forest School sessions.

- Clear communication is essential for the smooth running of Forest School. Children and adults need to listen carefully to rules, boundaries and instructions, linked to safety procedures and activities. There will always be time for questions or comments from children and adults.
- All adults attending will have confirmed that they have read a copy of the Forest School Handbook.
- All adults attending will have read a copy of the Emergency Action Plan.
- Any staff or volunteers attending Forest School must meet prior to leaving school to review ratios, health and safety and risk assessment for the day.
- If any adult cannot attend the session, they must give as much notice as possible and preferably 24 hours. If a replacement cannot be found the session will need to be cancelled due to inadequate ratios of child to adult.
- The Forest School Leader will have a mobile phone and walkie talkie for emergency use.
- Parents will receive general information letters before sessions begin, a permission slip and details of clothing needed and timings.
- The Forest School Leaders will be available to speak to parents for an informal chat before or after sessions.
- Basic session information will be shared with children and staff prior to the visit; rules will be discussed and practised in the classroom setting.
- Parents/carers of each participant will be asked to complete a consent form.

Contact Numbers

Any accidents or incidents will be reported to parents and the school office at the earliest opportunity.

Communication Strategy

Communication strategies are important within any setting but in a Forest School it is, and it's added risks I believe to be in the necessity. With a communication strategy in place, it clearly shows how we can exchange information regarding our Forest School sessions with those involved.

School - Workplace

All staff, including the Executive Headteacher has access to the lesson plans, handbook and risk assessments on the google drive to ensure everyone is aware of what is being taught on the property. The Executive Headteacher will share this information with the governors and any visitors to the school he sees fit.

The school office is also kept in the loop will be contactable during sessions by a mobile phone or radios.

Any colleagues or visitors to the Forest School site will also be in receipt of the session plan and the procedures that are in place.

The Forest School handbook and risk assessments can be found on our website and on the google drive.

Verbal and written feedback is also given back to the class teachers on any observation of a child we feel will help within the classroom such as things that a pupil has excelled at or struggled with. Also, we would communicate any child safeguarding and child protection concerns to the safeguarding officer as it becomes apparent. This could be as the children are prone to opening up to others while in a more relaxed environment.

Parents

Prior to starting a program of sessions, the parent or carer of each participant is required to complete a consent form. All parents will be emailed dates and times of each session their child is to attend. This communication will also give details of the clothing their child is required to be equipped with for each and every session.

Extra consent is required when pupils are to be taken away from the school site for trips.

Forest School Leaders

Each Forest School leader will correspond with other Forest School leaders by email or on google drive and share all session plans in advance to ensure all; even if they're taking no part in that particular session. This is advised as if a session was to overrun or fire/smoke is seen they are aware what is happening on the site. Also, they have some equipment out of the store that they can see is required for an impending session later in the day. Verbal conversations take place regularly also, this keeps us all informed and relevant.

Clothing

All Forest School sessions are to be held on the school forest site outdoors, children will be required to come to school in appropriate clothing for the Forest School sessions. This will protect them from the extremes of heat and cold and keep them covered to reduce the likelihood of cuts and scrapes. Without appropriate clothing, children will not be able to attend.

Because of the nature of the environment we will be working in, children with only short sleeved tops or short trousers will not be able to attend. Suitable clothing would be:

- Long Sleeved Top
- Long Trousers
- Suitable Footwear E.g. Walking Boots / Trainers or Wellington Boots (good socks!)
- Waterproof Jacket / Waterproof Trousers

- Change of clothes E.g. jogging pants, tee shirt, socks, trainers.
- Dependent on weather: Warm hat / maybe even suntan cream!!
- Please only attend in old clothing which will get dirty and smoky.

Poor Weather

The nature of Forest Schools is to let the participants experience nature in all its forms and in general the Forest School policy to weather is that there is no such thing as bad weather just bad clothing!

This in mind if the weather is deemed too dangerous to work in the Forest School site for example very high winds (gusts over 35mph)/storm or extreme temperatures – low (5c and below for the whole day), then the children will not be permitted to enter the wooded area for fear of falling trees or inability to use tools safely.

If heavy rain is forecast for the session, it will be rearranged, or time will be reduced.

On the initial consent (via Arbor) the parents are required to complete prior to a pupil attending their first session the clothing requirements will be clearly stated and making the parents aware that the sessions will run through the 4 seasons and in various weather conditions

Staff should be aware of how children react to different weather conditions and how this may affect their behaviour.

Emergency Action Plan

Emergencies are never wanted, but they are a possibility, and so we at Bottesford Forest School ensure that all leaders are familiar with appropriate emergency procedures. Most emergencies can be resolved on-the-spot by the leader removing the group from potential threats and providing first aid. However, in the event of a serious incident, which could arise as a result of an injury, illness or threat, emergency services should be contacted, and the following procedures followed:

- Secure safety of the whole group from further danger. Stop all work/activities if safe. Call in and locate the group promptly as agreed with the group in advance. If possible, remove the whole group from any further danger or threat of danger.
- First Aider to attend to any casualties with adult helper and with regard for maintenance of required supervision ratios for the rest of the party. At least one first aider must be on site at all times. A record of changes in casualties' state and anything administered to them to be made if possible.
- Emergency services contacted as necessary, ideally by an adult helper. Charged mobile phones are carried by staff. Despatch a designated adult to meet an emergency vehicle at the entrance of Bottesford School where possible/necessary.
- Safety of the rest of group will be maintained by the remaining staff and adults away from the scene of the incident.
- Informing next of kin should be carried out as soon as practicable after the incident by or by the designated member of staff according to the health and safety policy.
- Bottesford Forest School first should be logged on Arbor.

Bottesford Forest School RISK ASSESSMENT

Potential Severity Rating (PSR)

If the hazard were to result in injury or harm, what would be the result of that injury or harm?

PSR	Severity	Guidance
4	Major	Death to one or more people, permanent or life changing disability
3	High	Chronic or terminal occupational disease, physical assault, damage to property, significant financial loss, dangerous occurrence
2	Medium	Significant injury, temporary disability, unconsciousness, acute or short term occupational disease, threat to personal safety, loss of or damage to property
1	Low	Minor injury and harm, intimidation, mild to moderate anxiety, near miss

Probable Likelihood Rating (PLR) – the likelihood that the hazard will result in injury or harm.

PLR	Likelihood	Guidance
4	Highly likely	Serious failure in or absence of management controls
3	Frequently or Regular	Lack of control or insufficient controls in place
2	Occasional	Lapses could occur if not adequately managed
1	Remotely Possible	Lapses could occur in exceptional circumstances

Risk Rating Number (RRN) –

the Risk Rating Number derived from the calculation shown below is used to prioritise the observed risks

PSR X PLR = RRN		
Risk Rating	Score	Priority
RRN	1 – 4	Low
RRN	5 – 9	Medium
RRN	10 – 16	High

Please see separate document for further information.

