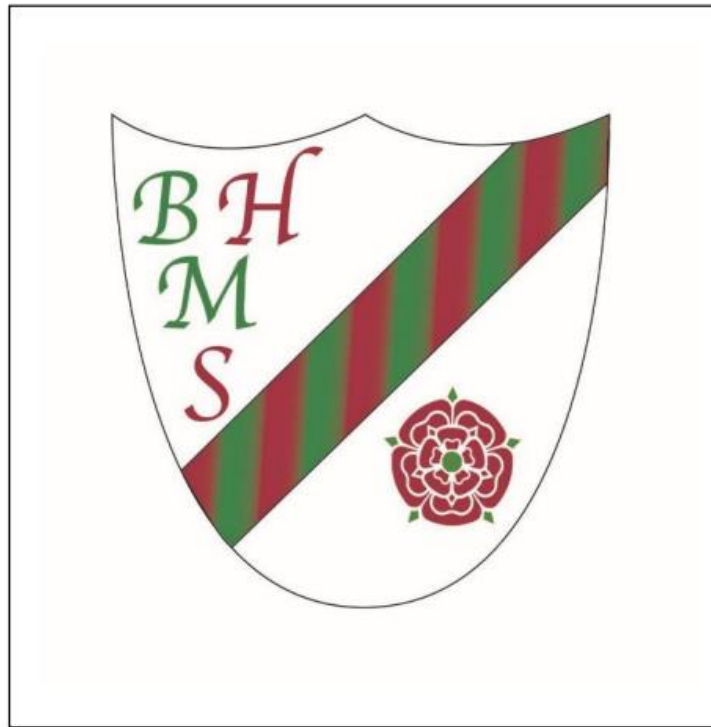


Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School Forest School Handbook



Written by:	G Taylor / V Hailwood
Reviewed by:	L Draper
Date Agreed:	Autumn 2024
Date reviewed	
Next Review Date:	Autumn 2025

Version Control

Date	Author	Version	Section	Reason for Change
April 2024	V Hailwood G Taylor	1	BHM	New Policy
Sept 2024	G Taylor	2	BHM	Updated Risk Assessments

This policy is written in accordance with and should be read in line with:

Positive Behaviour Policy

Health and Safety Policy

First Aid Policy

Medicines Policy

Whole school Food Policy

Fire Evacuation Procedure

Shelter (Lockdown) Procedure

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Policy

Manual Handling Policy

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Missing Child Policy

Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy

Contents

Mission Statement

Vision

Safeguarding Statement

Values

Principles

Play

Aims

Responsibilities

Considerations

- Environmental
- Equality and Inclusion
- Health and Safety

Procedures

- Accident and Emergencies
- Extreme Weather
- Toileting
- Use of Tools
- Fire

Policy Addendums

- Behaviour
- First Aid
- Manual Handling
- COSHH
- Food
- Safeguarding
- Anti-Bullying
- Missing Child
- GDPR

Insurance

Stakeholders

Appendices

1. Risk Benefit Assessments

- Open fires
- Open fire cooking
- Collecting natural materials
- Den building
- Ropes
- Site
- Tools
- Weather

2. Daily Site Check

3. Parental Consent Template

4. Land Owners' Agreement

5. EYFS Parental Consent Letter: Toileting.

Mission Statement

Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School strives to provide a caring environment in which every individual can achieve his or her full potential.

To achieve this, we wish to create a happy secure and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school, which is conducive to learning and high standards, and is based on Christian values.

Vision



Safeguarding Statement

At Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School, we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

We work to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in the Safeguarding Policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors.

Values: TRUST

The Forest School values at Bedford Hall are:

Time - forest school is long term and takes place throughout the year to see changes over time.

Risk – children will take appropriate supported risks.

Unite with nature – to support the nature connection and develop an understanding of the natural world around them

Spirituality – to take time to look at the wonder and awe of the world around us to help our wellbeing

Teamwork – to support each other and work together to look after our forest and the wider area

Forest School Association (FSA) Principles:

- **Long term principle-** Forest School is a long term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment. Planning, adapting, observing and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.
- **Nature principle-** Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of the relationship between the learner and the natural world.
- **Holistic learning principle-** Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved: fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners
- **Risk Principle-** Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks, appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
- **Leadership Principle-** Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.
- **Community Principle-** Forest School use a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

Play

Forest School is based on the importance of play as stated in **Article 31 of the UN Convention says that all children have the right to play.**

In Forest School, we allow children to freely explore and play, exposing them to opportunities to utilise different characteristics of play without confining them to one aspect. Play opportunities and experiences allow children to take risks, explore, work as a team, use their imaginations and develop resilience. This promotes holistic development and growth for all involved. Play is an important part of a child's development: it is how children learn to interact; express themselves; build up strength and coordination; gain resilience; and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Without exploratory play, children can be at a disadvantage.

Aims

- To provide children with opportunities to explore the natural environment and reconnect with nature, helping them to develop an understanding of our role within the environment to ensure we protect it for future generations.
- Take time to explore the different seasons and how they change using all our senses to experience this and notice what effects this has on the flora and fauna throughout the year.
- To learn to respect and care for their own local environment, understanding their part in the eco system
- To abide by rules and set standards of behaviour; to work cooperatively in groups; and to respect each other developing a sense of belonging and community
- To develop children's self-esteem, self-confidence and wellbeing through the setting of small, achievable tasks
- To consider factors which contribute to the welfare of all living things in their natural habitats

Responsibilities

The Forest School Lead will:

- Hold a **Level 3 Practitioners qualification** for them to lead Forest School sessions along with an up to date **outdoor first aid** qualification.
- Ensure site and child safety through site, fire and tool checks, and a written record kept.
- Lead the sessions
- Check weather conditions
- Ensure expectations are given and adhered to
- Carry out regular head counts
- Activities with specific risks will be modelled before taking place
- Ensure that all tools are counted back in, and that all equipment is stored safely at end of session.
- Ensure site is secure and that 'no trace' has been left.
- Administer first aid as required
- Report any damages/hazards to appropriate staff member
- Report any disclosures following the school's policy and procedure

Teacher or Teaching Assistants will:

- Ensure they have read Forest School Handbook and have signed to say they have done so.
- Support in behaviour management
- Support children in risk taking
- Provide first aid if appropriate
- Share any pertinent information regarding the class, e.g. medical needs, dietary requirements, EHCP, APDR
- Be involved in the activities and support the facilitation of the Forest School ethos.
- Report any disclosures following the school's policy and procedure

Parents/carers children will:

- Sign consent form to allow child to access forest school throughout the school year, during which they will be taking appropriate supported risk (see appendix consent letter)
- Ensure they have full equipment to take part safely. (see appendix kit list)
- Ensure that the child understands they must follow the forest school ethos and keep safe, look after each other and the environment.
- Understand that there is a zero tolerance when using tools and fire to ensure that safety is key, children may be made to stop activities till the forest school lead deems it safe for them to access.

Environmental Considerations

Forest School has environmental awareness and ecological impact at the heart of its ethos. Best practice will be modelled by adults - showing children that the world in which we live in should be cared for and respected. We will be mindful of the impact on the site. This will include footfall, fire debris, damage to trees and plants, and general wear and tear. To minimise this impact, we aim to:

- Maintain the forest that is already in place
- Plant new hedgerow and trees to increase biodiversity
- Create an area for encouraging insects
- Build sustainable food sources and habitats for wildlife, including bug hotels, small ponds, nesting boxes
- Reduce bog areas through planting
- Coppicing of trees when necessary
- Look at other areas on the site for future development to lessen impact on the one site.
- Use environmentally friendly products and recyclable materials where possible

Equality and Inclusion Considerations

Forest School enables all to participate through an equitable and holistic approach. It encourages all participants to respond at their own level, ability and confidence scale. We are committed to:

- Adapt sessions in response to the guidance and approaches on EHCP or APDR plans for children on the SEND register;
- Discuss any short term needs with teachers and TAs prior to sessions to ensure adaptations are made which will maximise participation;
- Provide a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
- Include and value the contribution of all children and adults, following our school principles of equality and diversity;
- make inclusion a thread which runs through all the activities of Forest School

Health and Safety Considerations

The Forest School programme will support children and adults to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will promote early risk management strategies to ensure children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and others. Detailed risk assessments for: the collecting of natural materials, the Forest School site, group management, fire and outdoor cooking and individual risk assessment of all tools to be used must be available prior to any Forest School session. The forest school leader will carry out a daily risk assessment prior to any session. (See [Appendix 2.](#))

Risk assessments will be reviewed and adapted regularly. Continual risk assessments will be made as the need arises.

Risk can be minimised, but not completely removed, and occasional bumps and bruises will occur. Whilst following the risk assessments and policies there needs to be a balance between risk and the benefit of the activity. Application of common sense will ensure that all children are safe while participating in Forest School.

Risk Benefit Analysis

The benefits of forest school activities are:

- Developing confidence
- Social skills
- Language and communication
- Motivation and concentration
- Physical skills
- Knowledge and Understanding
- New perspectives

Benefits of being in nature:

- Stress relief and overall wellbeing
- Connection to nature

Benefits of using tools and fire:

- Learning how to recognise and manage risk
- Improved fine and gross motor skills
- Learn to ensure their own and other safety by following safety procedures
- Sense of achievement
- Teamwork and communication skills

Forest School gives other adults working with the children the opportunity to witness how they respond in a different environment. It also enhances and leads to development within other curriculum areas as the skills are transferrable.

Commonly used risk assessments can be viewed in [Appendix 1](#)

Procedure for Accidents and Emergencies

Staff must be prepared for an emergency situation, at any time. Any staff working in the Forest School area, either alone or with children, must have the following readily available, to fulfil their role in an emergency:

- A communication device: school mobile phone.
- Fully stocked First Aid Kit and First Aid Accident Reporting Book
- Fully stocked Fire First Aid Kit including fire blanket
- Bleed Kit
- Fully Stocked Fire Safety Equipment. e.g. fire gloves, fire first aid equipment, separate metal buckets containing water and soil.
- List of any medical conditions for any persons on site, with any medicines that may be required.
- Master key for entry to gates and school building

In event of fire.

- Children to be evacuated to the evacuation point on KS2 Playground
- School alerted, and fire services called.

In a lockdown situation.

- The site to be secured by locking the gate
- Children and staff to go furthest point away from gate, hidden by trees and remain silent.
- Staff to register children, alert senior leaders and await further instruction/password.
- If lockdown is due to an air pollution incident, children to be taken to the nearest school access point (Y6 conservatory doors) to enter the building, and then follow school procedure.

In the event of a **minor injury/illness** on site the following procedure will be carried out.

- Child/adult to be assessed by the first aider
- Treatment/medicine given and child to be monitored if required for the remainder of the session
- Log incident in first aid book
- Inform class teacher so the child can be monitored after the session and parent informed at home time
- Contact SLT to request a child is collected due to illness
- Phone office to let parent know if it is a bump to the head and a mark is present as per school policy
- First aid kit to be restocked

In the event of **serious injury/illness** on site the following procedure will be carried out.

- Situation to be quickly assessed by first aider
- Treatment to be started/given and help sent for using school phone,
- SLT informed and ambulance/defib requested if required.
- Parent/carer contacted to collect/meet at hospital
- Other children removed from area and returned to class with teacher/TA
- After the incident has been dealt with it should be reported, under the RIDDOR Regulations, using Smartlog to record all staff accidents and serious pupil accidents (resulting in child attending hospital or requiring an investigation).
- First aid kit to be restocked

In any emergency situation, a member of the senior leadership team will determine whether it be safer that all children and adults return to the school building and await further instruction.

Procedure for Extreme Weather

Weather to be monitored prior to session using the Met Office App and recorded on site checklist.

Forest School sessions will only be cancelled in the event of:

- Wind gusts of 35mph (miles per hour) or above
- Thunderstorms
- School closure due to adverse weather conditions

Procedure for Toileting

Before every session, children will be required to use the toilet facilities in school and reminded that there are no toilets in the forest.

In the event of a child needing the toilet whilst we are all in the forest area the following will happen.

Two members of staff;

- All tool work to be stopped and tools put away
- Fire to be put out
- All children to be taken to the nearest suitable toilets (upper key stage 2 or nursery) so that the child can access the toilet.
- Allow any others to use the toilets whilst there
- Return to the forest area to continue session or return to class.

More than two members of staff:

- All staff to be made aware so appropriate activities can be stopped to monitor remaining children safely.
- One member of staff to take child to the nearest suitable toilet (upper key stage 2 or nursery) so that the child can access the toilet.
- All staff to be made aware of their return so activities can continue.

In the event of a child accidentally wetting/soiling themselves whilst at the forest school area, we will return them to school (according to the adult ratios above) to allow them to change themselves or supported to be changed if in EYFS. Once the child has been changed then they can return to the forest school session if there is time.

Children that are in the early stages of toilet training within EYFS will be given access to a potty that will be privatized for their use should they need it during the forest school session, due to them not having the capacity to hold themselves to get to the toilet in school. This will require parental permission via a completed consent form ([See appendix 5](#)) to allow them to use the facility whilst in the forest school.

All usage will be safely disposed of, and the potty cleaned.

Procedure for use of tools

Safe use of tools are an important part of Forest School. Each tool should have an individual risk assessment to be adhered to when in the forest sessions. The following should be adhered to for all tools.

- All tools must be used under the supervision of the Forest School Leader
- Tools must only be used within a designated safe tool space 'the Tool pit' area – this will be a roped off area at thigh height to the learners, with a single-entry point.
- Garden tools can be used out of the tool pit area whilst maintaining the safe tool use procedure under the guidance of the forest school lead.
- Learners will be shown how to use each tool before they may begin to use the tools independently under the supervision of the Forest School Leader
- Condition of tools being used will be checked by Forest School Leader before session commences. Any tools in need of maintenance or damaged must not be used
- Tools to be counted out at the beginning and end of the session to ensure none are missing
- Tools will be stored in a locked tool store when not in use
- Tools to be used by one person at a time, at the required two arms and a tools length away from another person unless they are partnered with a 'helper' where tool use allows, i.e. bow saw bill hook.
- All adult helpers will be informed in advance of a tool session, so they are aware of the session and the nature of the crafting activity.
- Where needed, instructions will be demonstrated and give verbally and will be given again, or at any time at the request of the learner or if it is felt necessary by the Forest Lead.
- A first aid kit will be easily accessible, and everyone will know the location of this. The Forest School Leaders will be a trained in outdoor first aider and at least one other adult to be first aid trained
- A risk assessment will be carried out for each tool and staff will need to read and sign them along with policies for the Forest School session.
- Learners who do not demonstrate safe use of a tool will first be reminded of how the tool should be used safely, with a demonstration if required. If they continue to fail to follow the safe use instructions, they this will result in the learner's tool session ending and them being moved to other activities within the forest area. The tool may be revisited for the learner when the Forest School Leader feels it is appropriate.

Procedure for Fire

Fire use is an important part of Forest School.

Before lighting a fire, the following procedure to access the fire circle should be in place with the children to ensure their safety within the fire circle:

- In single file, follow the path around the outside of the circle to a log seat
- Stand behind the log
- Step through gap between logs and sit on log. Always remain seated unless instructed by Forest lead
- Stand up and turn around and step back through the gap (if a long log is being used to sit on, children to move along the log until reaching end and moving through gap)
- In single file, follow the path around outside of circle to exit fire circle area
- Children to not cross, run or step into the circle at any time unless working with forest lead at fire.

The fire must only be lit after a risk assessment has been carried out by Forest School Lead, including ensuring the circle is debris free and there are no overhanging branches. If used, tarps/canopy must be at a suitable distance from fire. The Forest School Lead or responsible adult must stay with the fire until it is safely out. Fire debris, that is thoroughly extinguished, to be removed from fire pit and put in designated fire waste area.

Fire safety equipment to be on site, e.g. fire gloves, fire first aid equipment, separate metal buckets containing water and soil. Fire flames to never reach above knee height. Extra care should be taken in the summer months when there could be extra dry, flammable materials available.

Fire lighting with children will be carried out on a 1:1 or 1:2 basis within a set, safe area. Fire lighting will be contained within a meter square and a small wok will be used if the children are transporting it to the main fire, under Forest School Leader supervision. Children and adults making fire must have three points of contact with the floor at all times. Long hair to be tied up at all times, and any loose, dangling clothing to be removed or tucked inside safely when near the fire.

Policy Addendums

Behaviour

At Forest School we operate within the Positive Behaviour Policy of Bedford Hall Methodist School.

We follow the school rule of 'Do All You Can' within the Forest School expectations that are set out clearly to the children alongside the Forest school vision of TRUST.

The expectations are:

1. Take care of the forest area, each other and yourself, leaving no trace.
2. Remain aware of risks/hazards, taking opportunities to self-evaluate situations and seeking help from Forest School Lead as needed.
3. Always stay within the forest area whilst ensuring expectations around the fire pit and tool area are kept to.

First Aid

Forest School will have their own Accident Reporting First Aid Book. All first aid incidents will be reported following the school policy.

Forest School Lead to have Outdoor First Aid Certification.

A member of staff to have First Aid Certification.

Manual Handling

When children or adults are moving branches or logs during activities they must follow manual handling procedures, e.g. use legs to lift with, or encourage use of two person lifting. Demonstration of staff lifting to be modelled before activity.

When moving equipment to the Forest School site, use appropriate resources e.g. wheel barrow or cart. Lift any heavy equipment with a partner.

COSHH

Anything brought onto the Forest School site, needs to be in original packaging and if appropriate a COSHH sheet should be included. This includes hand sanitiser, soaps, washing up liquid and anti-bacterial cleaners.

Food

We are a nut free school, and this will be adhered to. Forest School leads will hold Food Safety and Hygiene certificate level 3. Dietary requirements and any allergies will be recorded and taken into account.

A separate area for food preparation will be set up, if required. Ensure cross contamination is reduced as much as possible. All adults and children will wash hands prior to food preparation and eating. Cleaning of resources to be carried out with hot water and soap.

Risk assessments for any tools being used for food preparation to be carried out and all adults to read relevant other risk assessments. Food waste is to be bagged and disposed of away from site.

Safeguarding

All adults working with or on behalf of children in Forest School sessions have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Parents are asked to provide children with the appropriate clothing to access Forest School. Disadvantaged and vulnerable children may be provided with equipment, if necessary. Wet weather clothing and wellies are available for the nursery children.

There will be a drinking water station and separate hand washing station to access during the session. Snacks will be provided if appropriate.

Staff will be aware of children with specific welfare needs and ensure support is in place if required. Children will be made aware that the Forest School area is a safe place. An adult from the children's class will be available to provide a familiar face if required. Where a child has a 1:1 Teaching Assistant, they will accompany the child during the session.

DBS

All staff and volunteers in school need to hold a valid DBS certificate in order to work with the children. The school office holds these certificates. Any visitors to school, will be asked for DBS information if appropriate, required to sign in and wear a visitor lanyard at all times. They will also be required to stay with a member of staff.

Staff ratios, roles and responsibilities

For nursery 2 year old – staff to child ratio is 1:5

For nursery 3 year old – Staff to child ratio is 1:8, (unless class teacher is present then ratio is 1:13)

For school children Reception – Year 6. Staff to child ration is 1:30. However, within Forest School we would require a minimum of 2 adults per session, regardless of number of children.

Disclosure/Accusation

If a child makes a disclosure during a Forest School session, staff will adhere to the procedures set out in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Anti-bullying

At Forest School we believe that everyone has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Only when this is the case will everyone be able to flourish and succeed. Bullying of any sort prevents this happening and prevents equality of opportunity. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent this happening. Where bullying persists, targeted intervention will be given to both the perpetrator/s and the victim/s.

Missing Child

Forest School Lead will:

- Register the children
- Note number of children attending session and carry out regular head counts
- Ensure all staff at session are aware of number of children present

If a child is missing, time is of the essence and prompt action must be taken, the following procedures will take place:

- All other children to be returned to normal classroom
- All staff to be informed of missing child
- SLT to be notified with details of when and where the child was last seen.
- Staff to conduct thorough check of site and surrounding area.
- If child is not found after all checks have been carried out, SLT will contact police and the child's parents/carers.
- Staff to continue to look for child, whilst maintaining a normal routine for the rest of the children.

The incident must be uploaded to CPOMs and Smartlog. Procedures will be reviewed after such an event, and any policies to be updated due to this. If police or Social Services are involved, OFSTED will need to be informed.

GDPR

Parents will be asked to sign a form consenting to use of images and observations to be used within the school site, marketing purposes and on social media. Parents have the right to opt out of these, in this event any photographs taken will either not contain those children or their faces will be blurred out in any used pictures.

Insurance

As part of the Epworth Education Trust, Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School holds the appropriate insurance to carry out Forest School sessions.

The RPA will provide cover for the forest school activities. The Employers Liability section will provide an indemnity to the school if the school is legally liable to pay damages or compensation to a school employee if they are injured in the course of this activity. The public liability section of the RPA will provide an indemnity to the school if the school is legally liable to pay damages or compensation to a third party, if the third party is injured or third-party property is damaged in the course of this activity. Pupils and non-school pupils would be deemed third parties.

The RPA will only provide an indemnity to the school, if the school for example is using another organisation in the provision of this activity that organisation will need to have in place third party public liability insurance and you would need to obtain permission, if you've not done so already, to use non-school areas to carry out the forest school activities.

Risk Assessments will need to be undertaken, recorded and adhered to.

Further clarification can be provided by calling the RPA cover Helpdesk on 0117 9769361.

Stakeholders

Landowner/Manager

The land is owned by Wigan Council and is leased to the school long-term. The school has given permission for a Forest School to take place on its land (see [Landowner's agreement](#)).

Management Team

Epworth Trust, CEO – Julie-Ann Hewitt

Epworth Trust, COO – Jo Buckley

Bedford Hall Methodist School, Headteacher – Lisa Draper

Chair of Governors – Kevin Meredith

Operations Lead – Jackie Latu-Andrews

Site Manager – Andy Holdsworth

Forest School Leads – Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor

Neighbours

School is surrounded by a housing estate which backs onto the school field and Forest School area.

Participants

Bedford Hall Methodist School pupils and staff.

These range from our 2-year-old nursery to Year 6 children.

Staff/governor sessions may occur.

Inter-Trust activities may occur.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be informed, and consent gained before children can participate in Forest School sessions.

Staff

Forest School Leads will lead all sessions.

Staff to accompany their classes, as required.

Staff may be asked to participate in a staff Forest School session as part of their CPD.

1:1 staff to accompany their children to Forest School sessions.

Volunteers

All volunteers will need to sign in at the school office and be issued with the correct lanyard. They would need to read the Forest School handbook and be familiar with accompanying policies. All visitors will be required to sign in and wear a visitor lanyard at all times. They will also be required to stay with a member of staff.

Any other interested partners.

Not at present.

1. Appendices
2. Risk Benefit Assessments

Open Fire

Bedford Hall Methodist School Risk Assessment

Title	Open Fires	Date of Assessment	8/4/24
Site	Bedford Hall Methodist School	Location	Forest School Site
Risk Assessor	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor	Assisted by	
Non-Employees Involved		People at Risk	Pupils/staff
Task Description	Fire lighting and Circle time activities		
Risk Rating	High		
Review Date	8/4/25	Reviewer	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor
Risk Benefits	Forest school experience, community, communication, risk management, connection to nature, social skills, wellbeing, physical skills, resilience, teamwork, awareness of safety for self and others, respect for environment.		
Hazard	Fire		
Risk of Harm	Burns, scalds, smoke inhalation, fatality		
Existing Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure policies have been read • Fire pit rules adhered to by everyone and modelled each session • Safety circle 2 m radius from fire. • Discuss dangers of fire and safe practises regarding fire. • Expectation of walking within fire circle • Walk around outside of fire circle • No crossing the fire circle • No trip hazards around fire circle • Fire pit area to be free of debris • Fire circle to be monitored at all times by a staff member • Fire gloves, two metal buckets, one containing water and one soil, and fire safety kit and fire first aid kit to be accessible to the fire pit. • All equipment to be safety checked before use. • Approaching fire and using fire pit, people need to use three points of contact children modelled and supported by a Forest School Lead. • Teach drop and roll technique for clothing fires • Fire gloves to be used when using fire pit. • Overhanging branches to be removed from fire pit area • Canopy to be high enough from fire pit • Canopy to be ventilated to prevent smoke inhalation • Provide space for children to move if wind blows smoke towards them. 		
New Risk Rating after control measures		Low/medium	

Open Fire Cooking

Bedford Hall Methodist School Risk Assessment

Title	Open Fire Cooking	Date of Assessment	8/4/24
Site	Bedford Hall Methodist School	Location	Forest School Site
Risk Assessor	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor	Assisted by	
Non-Employees Involved		People at Risk	Pupils/staff
Task Description	Cooking on open fire		
Risk Rating	High		
Review Date	8/4/25	Reviewer	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor
Risk Benefits	Forest school experience, community, communication, risk management, connection to nature, social skills, wellbeing, physical skills, resilience, teamwork, awareness of safety for self and others, respect for environment.		
Hazard	Fire, cooking equipment, hot food/drinks, contamination, slips/trips		
Risk of Harm	Burns, scalds, poisoning, cuts		
Existing Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure policies have been read – Food Hygiene certificated persons only • See Open Fire Risk assessment – fire safety and first aid equipment • Make sure drinks/food have sufficiently cooled before giving to children • Kettles only to be used by adults • Cooking appliances to be safety checked before use • Cooking preparation areas to be kept clean and separate from fire area • Fire pit and circle to be kept tidy and no trip hazards • Model teaching children what to do if a stick, used for skewer, catches fire, e.g. drop in fire, leave and move back. • Plates provided to cool food on. • Ensure food is completely cooked. • Hand washing before preparing and eating • No raw foods to be used on site • PPE to be worn as appropriate • Demonstrate use of cooking equipment, e.g. knives • Correct storage of knives, blade down and in a closed container. • Staff to oversee use of knives • Staff to monitor use of kitchen equipment • Pans and kettles not to be overfilled with liquids • Staff to continually monitor fire • Be vigilant when walking around fire area • Site and equipment to be assessed before use • Medical conditions – food allergies to be made aware to staff • Dietary requirements to be made aware to staff. 		
New Risk Rating after control measures	Low/medium		

Collecting Natural Materials

Bedford Hall Methodist School Risk Assessment

Title	Collecting Natural Materials	Date of Assessment	8/4/24
Site	Bedford Hall Methodist School	Location	Forest School Site
Risk Assessor	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor	Assisted by	
Non-Employees Involved		People at Risk	Pupils/staff
Task Description	Collecting sticks, logs, etc to make dens, shelters, crafts, etc.		
Risk Rating	High		
Review Date	8/4/25	Reviewer	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor
Risk Benefits	Forest school experience, community, communication, risk management, connection to nature, social skills, wellbeing, physical skills, resilience, teamwork, awareness of safety for self and others, respect for environment.		
Hazard	Injury from selecting and carrying, injury from falling logs, branches, trip hazards		
Risk of Harm	Splinters, plant stings/thorns, bites from insects, bumps and bruises, pulled muscles, breakages of limbs, poking in eye		
Existing Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure policies have been read – Manual handling • Model lifting branches/logs • Model lifting with a partner • Identifying plants around the areas to reduce risk of stings and thorns • Spatial awareness discussion in order to protect them and others. • Discussions about taking from tops of piles, not pull from bottom. • Only take branches from floor, not from living trees. • Observe logs and sticks before collecting to reduce risk of splinters • Instruct children on safe ways to transport logs and branches. • Be vigilant when moving around site for any trip hazards • Be vigilant for head/eye height branches and twigs • Daily site assessment to be carried out and recorded • Weather conditions to be checked and monitored • To tidy up and leave no trace at end of session • No picking of flowers/berries/mushrooms/fungi 		
New Risk Rating after control measures	Low/medium		

Den Building

Bedford Hall Methodist School Risk Assessment

Title	Den Building	Date of Assessment	8/4/24
Site	Bedford Hall Methodist School	Location	Forest School Site
Risk Assessor	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor	Assisted by	
Non-Employees Involved		People at Risk	Pupils/staff
Task Description	Collecting sticks, logs, etc to make dens, shelters, crafts, etc.		
Risk Rating	High		
Review Date	8/4/25	Reviewer	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor
Risk Benefits	Forest school experience, community, communication, risk management, connection to nature, social skills, wellbeing, physical skills, resilience, teamwork, awareness of safety for self and others, respect for environment.		
Hazard	Injury from selecting and carrying, injury from falling logs, branches, trip hazards, injury from completed den falling, rope burns, trip over ropes, slipping on tarps, use of mallet		
Risk of Harm	Splinters, plant stings/thorns, bites from insects, bumps and bruises, pulled muscles, breakages of limbs, poking in eye, rope burn,		
Existing Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure policies have been read – Manual handling • Model lifting branches/logs and lifting with a partner • Identifying plants around the areas to reduce risk of stings and thorns • Spatial awareness discussion in order to protect them and others. • Discussions about taking from tops of piles, not pull from bottom. • Only take branches from floor, not from living trees. • Observe logs and sticks before collecting to reduce risk of splinters • Instruct children on safe ways to transport logs and branches. • Be vigilant when moving around site for any trip hazards • Be vigilant for head/eye height branches and twigs • Daily site assessment to be carried out and recorded • Weather conditions to be checked and monitored • To tidy up and leave no trace at end of session • Demonstrate how to use ropes safely • Demonstrate safe ways to create dens and test for safety • Rope management, e.g. putting back in bag, creating 'octopus', taking up small space out of others way • Tarps not to be left on floor • Model use of mallet with tent pegs • Teach knots • Rope to be monitored while in use to prevent any misuse. 		
New Risk Rating after control measures		Low/medium	

Ropes

Bedford Hall Methodist School Risk Assessment

Title	Ropes	Date of Assessment	8/4/24
Site	Bedford Hall Methodist School	Location	Forest School Site
Risk Assessor	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor	Assisted by	
Non-Employees Involved		People at Risk	Pupils/staff
Task Description	Use of knots, creating dens and crafts, sectioning areas, rope swings, climbing, shelters		
Risk Rating	High		
Review Date	8/4/25	Reviewer	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor
Risk Benefits	Forest school experience, community, communication, risk management, connection to nature, social skills, wellbeing, physical skills, resilience, teamwork, awareness of safety for self and others, respect for environment.		
Hazard	Choking, rope burns, trips, entanglement		
Risk of Harm	Choking, strangulation, broken limbs, bruising, rope burn,		
Existing Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be vigilant when moving around site for any trip hazards • Be vigilant for ropes used as boundaries • Boundaries to be child thigh height • Daily site assessment to be carried out and recorded • Weather conditions to be checked and monitored • To tidy up and leave no trace at end of session • Demonstrate how to use ropes safely, not wrapping around hand/wrist • Rope management, e.g. putting back in bag, creating 'octopus', taking up small space out of others way • Teach knots • Ensure rope checked for damage and monitored • Ensure ropes are tied appropriately for swings, children made aware of the risks to self assess • Rope to be monitored in its use and appropriate interventions put in place for any misuse. 		
New Risk Rating after control measures		Low/medium	

Site (Site daily check list see Appendix 2)

Bedford Hall Methodist School Risk Assessment

Title	Site	Date of Assessment	8/4/24
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Site	Bedford Hall Methodist School	Location	Forest School Site
Risk Assessor	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor	Assisted by	
Non-Employees Involved		People at Risk	Pupils/staff
Task Description	Use for Forest School Activities		
Risk Rating	High		
Review Date	8/4/25	Reviewer	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor
Risk Benefits	Forest school experience, community, communication, risk management, connection to nature, social skills, wellbeing, physical skills, resilience, teamwork, awareness of safety for self and others, respect for environment.		
Hazard	Trips, slips, uneven surface, falling trees/branches, stings, thorns, faeces, mud, water, log piles, poisonous plants, dead animals, eating of animals/insects, litter and glass, rocks and concrete		
Risk of Harm	Broken limbs, bumps, bruises, cuts, stings, splinters, sprains, poisoning, drowning, infection, death, crushing, falls from climbing		
Existing Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be vigilant when moving around site for any trip hazards, rocks stumps, concrete • Be vigilant for ropes used as boundaries • Boundaries to be child thigh height • Daily site assessment to be carried out and recorded • Weather conditions to be checked and monitored • To tidy up and leave no trace at end of session • Discussion on not eating anything from the forest • Safe movement around forest floor, • Self- risk assess for climbing and other activities • Hand washing and not putting fingers in mouth to be carried out regularly • Animal faeces to be removed and disposed of safely • Dead animals to be removed and disposed of safely • Any dead branches or fallen trees/branches to be removed and made safe • Plant keys and discussion on plants that will sting • Plant keys and discussion on poisonous plants • Any plants that are identified as dangerous to be researched and information kept on how to deal with poisonings • Children to be made aware of surface water and any areas with deeper water. Children to be shown these areas and how to use safely. • On site assessment, remove any rubbish, litter, glass, etc, and dispose of carefully, if children find glass or sharp objects, they must inform staff to then remove safely and dispose of off site • Warn children not to eat anything they find. • Respect nature • Check site boundaries are secure • Children to be made aware of areas with concrete or stumps so they can take care around these. 		
New Risk Rating after control measures		Low/medium	

Tools

Bedford Hall Methodist School Risk Assessment

Title	Tools	Date of Assessment	8/4/24
Site	Bedford Hall Methodist School	Location	Forest School Site
Risk Assessor	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor	Assisted by	
Non-Employees Involved		People at Risk	Pupils/staff
Task Description	Use for Forest School Activities, e.g. craft		
Risk Rating	High		
Review Date	8/4/25	Reviewer	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor
Risk Benefits	Forest school experience, community, communication, risk management, connection to nature, social skills, wellbeing, physical skills, resilience, teamwork, awareness of safety for self and others, respect for environment.		
Hazard	Cuts, dust inhalation, vibration, sprains, strains, ejected materials, faulty blades and tools		
Risk of Harm	Cuts, breathing problems – asthma, hand, arm vibration syndrome, eye damage, lacerations, puncture wounds, broken bones, amputation		
Existing Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be vigilant when moving around site for any trip hazards • Be vigilant for ropes used as boundaries • Boundaries to be child thigh height • Daily site assessment to be carried out and recorded • Weather conditions to be checked and monitored • Ensure hair and clothing that dangles are tied back • Tools inspected before and after use • Children to be monitored at all times when using equipment • Tools talks to be carried out before use • Modelled use of tools carried out • Appropriate behaviour to be expected at all times when using tools • Tools are the correct fit for the use • Set up and maintain tool pit area • Respect position for using tools, 3 points of contact • Space needs to be monitored to ensure correct distance for tool use • Staff ratios in tool pit area. 1:1 for beginners, 1:2 for intermediate, 1:3 for advanced after sufficient training • Tools to be maintained regularly • Tool pit rules to be adhered to • Tools put away safely, e.g. guards fitted • Return to tool store and lock away • Individual tool how to use guides, and correct PPE can be found in practical skills handbook – all staff to read • Tools to be counted in and out • All protection equipment to meet British EN standards • Gloves to be worn on helper hand • Eye protection to be worn as necessary • If an individual child shows non-compliance in tool pit area, they will be shown how to use safely, if still not complying they will be redirected to another area in the forest. 		
New Risk Rating after control measures		Low/medium	

Weather

Bedford Hall Methodist School Risk Assessment

Title	Weather	Date of Assessment	8/4/24
Site	Bedford Hall Methodist School	Location	Forest School Site
Risk Assessor	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor	Assisted by	
Non-Employees Involved		People at Risk	Pupils/staff
Task Description	Use for Forest School Activities, e.g. craft		
Risk Rating	High		
Review Date	8/4/25	Reviewer	Vicky Hailwood & Gayle Taylor
Risk Benefits	Forest school experience, community, communication, risk management, connection to nature, social skills, wellbeing, physical skills, resilience, teamwork, awareness of safety for self and others, respect for environment.		
Hazard	Falling debris, slippery surfaces, mud, lying water, sunstroke, sunburn, hyperthermia, frost bite, lightning strikes, strong wind gusts		
Risk of Harm	Bumps, bruises, broken limbs, death, crushing, drowning, dehydration, blisters, chapping		
Existing Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-site check carried out • Met office app consulted for wind speeds and thunderstorms • Any fallen debris to be cleared • Children made aware of any potential slip hazards • Children to self-risk assess • Provide water to drink • Parents to provide and apply sunscreen • Shelters to protect from weather, e.g. tarps • Fire pit available to warm children • Suitable clothing/footwear to participate in Forest School – parents to provide • First Aid equipment to be available on site • First Aid procedures to be followed • Site closed if wind gust of 35 or over, and if there are thunderstorms • Adverse weather conditions may result in school closure • If weather conditions become untenable, then remove children to school • Warn children to avoid dangerous areas • Allow children to have the opportunity to experience different weather conditions 		
New Risk Rating after control measures	Low/medium		

Appendix 2 - Daily Site Check

Bedford Hall Forest School Pre-Session Site check



Date:	Session: AM/PM	Wind speed:	
Weather conditions:			
Full site checks to be completed by forest Leader before each session to ensure the session can go ahead in a safe environment. Each of the following will be checked and any hazards removed.			
Mark Yes if Hazard Present and NO if none present add comment if any action needed.			
Checked:	✓	Yes NO	Comments:
Boundary fence		Y N	
Litter		Y N	
Animal Faeces		Y N	
Fallen branches/trees		Y N	
Dead animals		Y N	
Fire circle logs		Y N	
Fire pit stones		Y N	
Paths		Y N	
Trip hazards		Y N	
Log piles (bug area, compost)		Y N	
Nettles/brambles		Y N	
Surface water		Y N	
Mud		Y N	
Damage		Y N	
Other		Y N	
Session Equipment in use today, set up and checked:			
First aid kit		Y N	
Fire pit safety kit first aid/burn kit		Y N	
Tarps erected		Y N	
Tool pit set up (tools being used)		Y N	
Tool check (number of tools out)		Y N	
Hand washing area set up		Y N	
Drinking water set up		Y N	
Food prep area set up		Y N	
Mud Kitchen		Y N	
Den building		Y N	
Crafts		Y N	
Small world		Y N	
Identification books/apps		Y N	
Knots and ropes kit		Y N	
Relaxation/mindfulness area		Y N	
Other		Y N	
End of session checks:			
Tools checked (number of tools)			
Kits packed away		Y N	
Site clear and no trace left		Y N	
First aid kits restocked		Y N	
Damaged equipment removed		Y N	
Replacement equipment order made		Y N	
Other		Y N	
Comments:			
Check completed by:		Signed:	



Appendix 3 – Parent consent letter template

Dear Parent/ carer

Your child has expressed an interest in attending a six-session forest school course that will take place in our newly prepared forest school area with Mrs Hailwood and Mrs G Taylor. The sessions will be a trial run with a small group of children that will help establish our area. They will be helping to come up with ideas of what they would like to do within the forest learning environment, and this will help us develop our forest school and see what resources we will need moving forward.

The six sessions will take place during the school day and will be for 2 hours each. The sessions will go ahead whatever the weather conditions are, even during heavy rain, with the only exception being strong gusts of wind. They will need to bring with them the following equipment for every session to change into at school to allow them to participate:

- Wellies
- Waterproof coat and pants
- Hat
- Old comfortable clothes (tracksuit, long sleeved t-shirt)
- Plastic bag (for muddy things to go home in).

The children have been told they need to be prepared to catch up on any key learning missed and must be committed to attend for every session. Key learning may be delivered during assembly times or a small part of lunchtime. Your child has been shortlisted for this opportunity due to having attendance at or above national average, and therefore we feel that with targeted catch-up sessions, they will not fall behind with their education as a result of this opportunity.

The sessions are booked in for following dates:

1. Monday 22nd April
2. Thursday 25th April
3. Monday 29th April
4. Thursday 2nd May
5. Friday 10th May
6. Thursday 23rd May

This is an exciting opportunity for the children to be involved with. During the sessions, the children will be challenged to take appropriate managed risks while completing different activities such as den building, bug hunting, fire lighting and using tools. They will get muddy but hopefully have lots of fun too.

Please complete and return the consent form, immediately after the Easter break, for your child to be put forward for this exciting opportunity. Unfortunately, there are limited spaces and if your child isn't successful this time, there will be other opportunities for them to access the forest school in the future.

Kind regards,

I consent to my child, _____, attending all six Forest School sessions.

I will provide the necessary clothing my child needs for each session so they can access the forest school,

signed _____ print _____

date _____

Appendix 4: Land Owners' Agreement

A Land Owners' Agreement is not required as the Forest School will take place on school premises only.



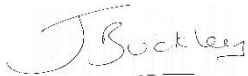
Mrs Lisa Draper

Headteacher.

Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School

Tel: 01942 672614

Email: headteacher@bhm.epworthtrust.org.uk



Joanne Buckley

Chief Operations Officer

Epworth Education Trust

Tel: 01942 777706

Email: operations@epworthtrust.org.uk

Appendix 5: EYFS Parental Consent Letter: Toileting.

Dear Parent / Carer

During the school week your child will be accessing our forest area, which is situated on the far side of the school playing field. As the forest area has no toilet facilities, we are aware that some of our younger pupils may not have time between feeling the sensation of needing the toilet and safely walking the distance back to the school building. To prevent any accidents occurring on the way back to the school to use facilities, we have set up a potty area within the forest. This is completely shielded from above and the sides to ensure privacy from overlooking houses or other children. We feel this area can help to support children with their toilet training and reduce any toileting accidents whilst exploring the forest environment.

As your child is currently toilet training/ newly toilet trained we would, with your permission, allow them to access this facility, providing a potty for them to use should they need to. We will ensure this area maintains the child's privacy whilst toileting. Please note, this option is only available in the early stages of toilet training and the preference would always be to return to school if the child can manage. Wastage will be discarded appropriately and potties sanitised thoroughly between use.

Please complete the form below to say If you are happy for your child to use this facility or if you would prefer us to try to return them to the school toilets.

Kind regards,

Forest School Leaders.

I am happy for my child, _____, to use the potty area within forest school.

I do not want my child, _____, to use the potty area within forest school.

Signed _____ Parent/ Carer

Date_____