

# WELCOME TO 'THE WILDERNESS' FOREST SCHOOL

## Handbook 2022 - 2023



Brougham Street Nursery School,  
Brougham Street,  
Skipton,  
BD23 2ES



The Wilderness,  
Otley Road,  
Skipton,  
North Yorkshire  
BD23 2JR

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# Forest School Ethos

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The value of outdoor learning has been recognised at least since the 17th Century. John Ammos Comenius (1592-1670) emphasised that learning through sensory stimulation, particularly in nature was more beneficial than following a set of instructions in a classroom.

In 1993, a group of nursery practitioners from Bridgewater College, Somerset went to Denmark to see an example of their outdoor nurseries. They came home enthused with what they had seen and 'Forest School' was born.

The six key principles of Forest School were agreed in 2002 (Cree and McCree, 2013):

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

# 'The Wilderness' Forest School

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Forest School takes place in approx. three-week blocks, with sessions lasting up to two hours. A small group of children take part in the programme, accompanied by a minimum of two staff members. The children's skills, and confidence will be built on week by week, the teacher acting as a facilitator, rather than a director of learning. At Forest School, the EYFS is delivered holistically, with the children at the centre of their learning, supporting the development of the whole child. If time permits, children will be invited to return to Forest School later in the academic year. If a child is absent from their planned session, another child will have the opportunity to take their place.

## Activities within Forest School

- Natural art
- Den building
- Animal tracking
- Nature walks
- Climbing and balancing
- Woodwork using tools
- Creating bug hotels and bird feeders
- Fire lighting
- Using knots
- Team games

## Benefits of Forest School

Forest school is situated among contemporary movements in education and child development

# Staff Who Support Forest School

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## **Forest School Leader: Alison Stewart (Class Teacher)**

Achieved the Level 3 Certificate for Forest School Leaders (CERTA) qualification in March 2020.

Paediatric Emergency First Aid (2 day)

## **Nursery School Practitioners who may support Forest School**

Ann Almack (2 day Paediatric Emergency First Aid)

Beccy Robinson (2 day Paediatric Emergency First Aid)

Lorraine Caswell (2 day Paediatric Emergency First Aid)

Katie Spencer (2 day Paediatric Emergency First Aid)

Pauline Pickles (2 day Paediatric Emergency First Aid)

Bev Wain (2 day Paediatric Emergency First Aid)

Fiona Cox (2 day Paediatric Emergency First Aid)

Afreen Altaf (2 day Paediatric Emergency First Aid)

Tracey Ormerod (2 day Paediatric Emergency First Aid)

Amanda Bibey (2 day Paediatric Emergency First Aid)

Forest School is carried out with an adult to child ratio of at least 1:4 , but additional adult support is provided where appropriate for children who have disability or SEN needs.

# 'The Wilderness'

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Brougham Street's Nursery School takes place in 'The Wilderness', which is a former garden of Ermysted's Grammar School. When it was first created in the 18th Century, it was surrounded by green fields, quite unlike the built up area which surrounds it today. In 1998, Skipton's Civic Society raised almost £30,000 as a Millennium project to purchase the garden as it had become a dumping ground for the nearby pub. In August 2000, the garden was formally handed over to the town. In 2008, 'The Friends of the Wilderness Group' was formed to care for and maintain the area.

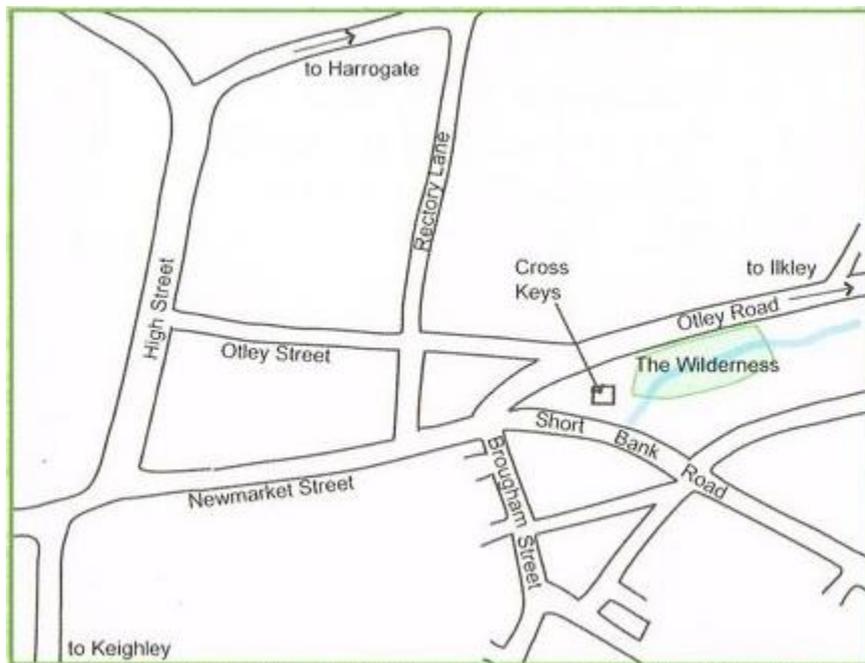


Figure 1. Location of 'The Wilderness, Skipton (Skipton Town Council, 2016a).

'The Wilderness' is a beautiful, tranquil space with a wide range of natural habitats making, a perfect learning environment. Lots of wildlife from majestic kingfishers to tiny European bullfish. The beck which runs through the Wilderness adds an extra special dimension to the learning environment, providing a place to explore the aquatic natural environment, as well as a place to experiment with the water itself.

'The Wilderness' is also home to a number of mature canopy trees including: Sycamore, ash, elm, lime and horse chestnut. The presence of these trees enhances the natural environment, resulting a higher level of biodiversity, making for lots of interesting bug hunts. They also provide great places to build dens!

# Code of Conduct

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## Entering the Woodland

We will enter the Woodland respectfully and know that when at Forest School specific expectations are in place. We will explore, investigate, learn and play in a manner that will not damage our Woodland environment. We understand that we share our Forest School with plants and animals and that when we are in our Forest School we are sharing the environment with them.

## Boundaries

Before each session begins children are made aware of how far that they can explore. We do have lots of fun beneath the trees. If children move to explore hidden areas an adult should also move into the cover deep enough to be able to see the children but allowing the children the freedom to explore independently. If you lose sight of a child shout '1, 2, 3, where are you?' The children have been taught to respond '1, 2, 3, I am here', or signal in other ways if non-verbal. This enables the leader to trace children who have strayed. Children who are known to need 1-1 support are given the support needed.

## Lighting a fire

When lighting a fire the Forest School leader will take control of the operation and all accompanying adults will be briefed before we start. A lit fire will not be left unattended at any point. A fire may not be lit until it has been confirmed to all that our fire safety equipment is in place. Open fires will be built within a fire circle.

## At the Fire Circle

An open fire may be lit and a fire circle established with a 1m radius from the fire. No one may enter the fire circle perimeter unless invited to do so by an adult. There is no running past the fire circle. No items must be carried and placed within the fire circle unless by an adult. If you wish to move around the fire to a new stool you must step out of the circle and walk around the outside of the log circle. Even when the fire is unlit we will treat it as if it is lit.

## **Using Tools**

All tools have their own clear code of conduct for correct use which will include consideration of specific personal protective equipment, correct use of a specific body posture, and consideration of the appropriate types of activity that each tool may be used for. Picking up and playing with sticks Children can carry sticks shorter than their arm's length but are encouraged to think about how close they are to other children. Longer sticks may be dragged or carried with the help of another person when each person is at either end. Sticks must not be thrown. Sticks must not be pulled from living trees.

## **Picking up and playing with stones**

Stones may be picked up and transported. All staff should be aware of PICA issues and monitor these children carefully. Children often like to make patterns and pictures with them. Stones may not be thrown. They may be dropped but thought must be given to whether it is safe to do so, i.e. what is beneath where I am dropping it?

## **Digging**

Digging large holes is not encouraged. Children may carefully move soil to look for insects and their habitats using fingers or small sticks found within the forest but deep holes should not be made.

## **Collecting wood**

Wood is collected for fire lighting purposes. It is collected in four thicknesses – matchstick sized, pencil sized, thumb sized and wrist sized. This is a good mathematical activity involving sorting and matching. Sticks may be collected for creating pictures and patterns but should be collected sparingly so as not to disrupt creature habitats. Sticks should not be removed from the site and there are resources available within school in the Forest School area for activities where natural resources cannot be found on the site.

## **Eating and Drinking**

Nil by mouth policy (No lick, no pick) for anything found in the area, unless this activity has been specifically planned for during the session. Children must be reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses. When having drinks and snacks children will use wipes & water to clean their hands before consumption.

## **Rope and String Use**

We encourage the collection and transportation of materials. We do not allow children to tie up each other. If a child has a good idea and wants to tie up something, for example a tarp or a swing, an adult should help them as needed, modelling appropriate knot tying and modelling how to talk through ideas and decisions.

## **Carrying and Transporting Materials**

Children are encouraged to roll, lift, drag and to pull materials, either by using their hands or by using ropes. We encourage safe lifting by bending our knees and keeping our back straight. Safe lifting should always be modelled by adults. Heavier objects should be rolled, lifted or carried by more people working together. (Safe lifting risk assessment)

## **Leaving the Site**

We work according to the ethos 'leave no trace' that we were in the wood as much as is reasonably possible. Shelters should be taken down, imported materials need to be removed. All equipment is carefully counted out and back in again, especially when using tools and tent pegs. Very occasionally large items may be left between sessions. All rubbish will always be removed. If artefacts have been found or made these may be taken off the site with the consent of an adult.

## **Tree Climbing**

An adult must be present when children climb trees in the Forest School. The ground cover should be checked for 'sharp objects' and the tree marked as suitable for climbing. A visual check must be made for loose and rotten branches. Children are permitted to explore to their own limits or to a maximum height of 1.5m. Adults should be near enough to catch if a child should fall but far enough away to not be invasive to the children's exploration.

# Typical Session

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A typical Forest School session will last up to two hours. It takes ~15 minutes to walk to 'The Wilderness' from Nursery School. On sunny days, wearing long-sleeved top and long leggings/trousers will help to protect the children against ticks and sunburn. Please also make sure that all children's clothes are labelled.

Children will be asked to go to the toilet prior to leaving nursery. 'The Wilderness' is a ten-minute walk away, children will walk in pairs with a staff member at the front and one at the rear. When we arrive at 'The Wilderness' we will have a welcome session in the benched area. We will talk about how we behave in 'The Wilderness' respecting the environment, not 'licking what we pick' and having fun. We will then split into two staff member led groups and complete a site risk assessment. We will then gather together to share ideas for what we should do during the session, possibly building on an interest from the previous week. We will then begin our activities. We will set boundaries which gives the children the freedom to explore, whilst ensuring that the adults can see them at all times.

Children taking part in Forest School will also be encouraged to minimise their impact on the site. This will include:

- Finding out about the different animals and plants that live in and amongst the trees
- Learning to respect animals' homes
- Careful observation of live animals
- Leaving lying deadwood in place

Towards the end of the session, all participants will help staff to pack away the tools and materials they have been using and help return the wonderful to the state in which they found it. We will then gather together to share snack and take a moment to reflect on what we have done, sharing what we have enjoyed or how we feel. As per a typical nursery session, photographs will be taken and shared via Tapestry, to document the children's learning journeys.

# Equipment for Forest School

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The Forest Leader will always take with them a first aid kit, register (with medical and contact information), accident forms and mobile phone.

## Items which can be used in Forest School Sessions include:

Trolley for transportation	Tarpaulins
Set of spare clothes	Firestriker/matches, Kindling
Bin liners	Hot chocolate and snack
Wet wipes	Plastic cups and plates
Tent pegs	Penknife
Whistle for use in emergencies	String and rope
Insect repellent	Pen and paper
Washing up bowl and antiseptic hand wash gel	Fire blanket and bucket
Fire gloves and gardening gloves	Facial tissues and kitchen towel
Drinking water	Disposable gloves
Suncream	

## Tools

Tool box	Knives in lockable box
Bow saw	Loppers
Secateurs	Work gloves
Billhook	Torch

## Activities Equipment

Wool, string	Beads
Scissors	Wood glue
Cotton sheet	Pestle and mortar
Paint brushes	Charcoal
Sieves	Bug ID sheets
Bug pots	Spoons

# Responsibilities

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## Clothing

If your child is taking part in Forest School, please dress them in old clothes which are appropriate for the weather conditions. If it is cold, it is best to wear several thinner layers which will trap air, and provide layers of insulation. Please also supply hats and gloves. Stringing the gloves through the arms of the coat is ideal, as it prevents them from being dropped. All you need is a long piece of string (twine, ribbon, yarn) that you match to the length of your kid's wingspan. Tie the string to both mittens (you may need to make a small hole and a knot, but it is worth it in the long run). Then run one mitten and the string through both sleeves of the coat. The mittens will then just hang out the bottom of the sleeves.

We will provide waterproofs and do have wellies available, but if children have their own waterproofs and/or wellies we would welcome them being worn. Any children not wearing appropriate clothing will not be able to participate.

## Safety and First Aid

The Forest School Leader (Alison Stewart) is a qualified first aider and carries a recommended first aid kit. Activities are thoroughly risk assessed and staff continuously monitor the safety of the group as the session progresses.

All staff are suitably qualified and have undergone a selection process to assess their skills and suitability for working with children and hold an enhanced DBS.

## Cancellation

- The aim is for Forest School sessions to take place whatever the weather. However, if the conditions are deemed dangerous e.g. there are high winds, thunderstorms, or extremes in temperature, Forest School will not take place.
- Forest School will only go ahead if there are a minimum of two staff members including the Forest School Leader.

# Insurance

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The Children Act 2004 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 place a number of legal obligations on Brougham Street Nursery School. The Nursery School's insurance provides appropriate cover for Forest School under this legislation, as we are a Local Authority maintained Nursery School, the LA have been informed as well and approval given.

# Policies

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## Forest Site Policy

On arrival the group will be split in two, each led by a staff member. A visual check of the site will be made. 'The Wilderness' is very popular with dog walkers, there is therefore a risk of excreta in the woods. Staff will remove any found during the visual check. If a child steps in Excreta, adults will scrape away as much as possible using a stick/leaves. If any comes into contact with children's hands it will be washed away and hands treated with antibacterial products.

- If the site is deemed unsafe for any reason the staff will gather the group together and complete a head count.
- Equipment will be gathered if safe to do so.
- Led by staff, the group will leave by the nearest exit.
- The Forest School Leader will contact the nursery and if safe return.
- In the event of a fire the Emergency services will be alerted.
- The Forest School Group will stay together.

## **Tool Use Policy**

Children will not be using tools until the children are ready in every way; emotionally and physically. All tools are initially modelled by the Forest School Leader to children and adults. All Adults participating must receive basic training on the safe use of tools before being allowed to use them with children. A 'Tool talk' is recited prior to using a specific tool. Through safe modelling of tools, in initial 1:1 ratios, children and adults are taught how to check a tool before using as a matter of routine. If they notice a tool is unsafe in any way to use they are taught to use the fragile tape to highlight a tool is unsafe. If they are unable to do this then they are taught to advise an adult so they can mark off the tool as unsafe. Children and adults are taught that if they see a tool marked with fragile tape then they are not to use the tool because it is unsafe to do so.

## **General**

- Keep tools in good, clean order.
- Check tools are safe to use before the start of each session.
- Carry out regular tool maintenance (cleaning and oiling).
- Do not use tools with damaged blades or handles or with loose bolts or fixings.
- When transporting tools do not carry more than can be held securely.
- A blunt blade is more dangerous than a sharp one.
- Count tools in and out.

## **Food and Eating Policy**

Children at Forest Schools are taught a strict NO eating rule, unless it is a specific activity led by an adult to prepare and cook food. Initially, when children are ready they will participate in simple cooking on the fire activities which may include; toasting marshmallows/waffles and cooking damper bread.

There is always a staff member present with food hygiene training, when food is being handled and prepared.

### **Food Preparation, transport and storage:**

- Hands will be washed thoroughly and any cuts/grazes covered in the correct manner (blue plaster or ideally gloves) before handling and preparing food.
- Any food needing preparation will be prepared in the school kitchen e.g. bread dough.
- Food will be stored in clean containers and transported in a cool bag to and from the site, with any clean utensils and cooking pans required. The box will remain closed in between use with food covered in bags or boxes; to avoid attracting flies and other insects.
- Raw meats will be stored separately to any other foods.
- All 'use by' dates will be checked on foods before eating.
- Water for cooking will be provided in cleaned sealed storage.

### **Handling, cooking and eating Food:**

- Soapy water or hand sanitizer will be available for children to wash their hands before handling food or utensils.
- Children are taught how to cook food safely following the activity risk assessment and fire policy. All food will be checked by an adult to ensure it is fully cooked before eating.
- Children will be asked to sit still around the fire circle or to move to a designated eating area from the fire to keep numbers to a minimum near the fire circle.

### **Clearing away and cleaning up:**

- ALL food not eaten or cooked will be placed in black bin bags and disposed of in the school bin at the end of the session by one of the adults. The area is checked to ensure there no food traces to avoid vermin being attracted to the area.  
  
ALL utensils and pans will be placed in the cool box and carried away after the session and cleaned in hot soapy water by one of the adults and stored away correctly.

## **Toileting Policy**

There are no toilets in 'The Wilderness'. Children attending Forest School Sessions will be informed in advance that this is the case and will be encouraged to use the toilet before leaving nursery school. If the children need to go to the toilet in the woodland we will have a travel potty. If we have enough helpers to release one staff member it could be possible to take a child back to the nursery. After toileting the child/staff must wash their hands with water or use antibacterial gel.

## Poor Weather Policy

### Tree Climbing Policy

Within the Forest School area there are a limited number of mature trees which are suitable for children to climb. Before allowing children to climb, trees should be checked for loose or rotten branches, as well as the ground surrounding the tree for hazards/sharp objects and then removed.

- Adult to child ratio 1:4
- Only one child climbing a tree at any one time.
- Tree climbing is NOT allowed in high winds or wet conditions.
- Children are ONLY allowed to climb up to 1.5 metres in height
- Adults should note that tree climbing should be carried out with extra caution when children are wearing wellies.

# Risk Assessments

## Site Risk Assessment

### Woodland Visit Risk Assessment

ACTIVITY	Woodland Visit
VENUE	The Wilderness
HAZARDS	CONTROL MEASURES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Falling trees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Avoid woods in very strong winds (+ Force 6), do not push on standing dead trees
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Falling dead branches	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check for and avoid hanging branches and any with significant splits or cracks, particularly in breezy conditions (+ Force 4)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Branch face whip	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hold branches for person behind or leave a big gap
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poke in the eye	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Warn of eye level branches
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slippery logs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Step over logs not on them
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> wasp/bee sting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Avoid obvious nests and carry appropriate medication
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poisoning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Only eat items specified by group leader. "If you pick it, don't lick it".
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slipping in the water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water to only be crossed or accessed under adult supervision.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dogs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If a dog approaches, stand still, do not run.
SAFETY EQUIPMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First aid kit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mobile phone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fire blanket
VENUE SPECIFIC RISKS AND ADDITIONAL NOTES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wilderness Beck passes through the length of 'The Wilderness' <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> It is a community area which means that other people maybe in the area <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The area is bordered by main roads, however there are gates which will be checked prior to the session starting

(Adapted from North Yorkshire Outdoor Learning Service, 2019)

## Woodland Activities Benefit/Risk Assessment

ACTIVITY	Woodland Activities	
VENUE	The Wilderness	
HAZARDS	CONTROL MEASURES	RISK BENEFIT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shelter collapse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use suitable, robust materials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pupil briefing and staff supervision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children improve teamwork and have a sense of completion. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improves sharing and motor skills.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Injury during shelter construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brief students on safe ways of cutting/breaking wood for shelter construction. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brief students on how to hammer in pegs safely. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff supervision.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children have the opportunity to explore the woodland and construct dens.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knife cuts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that knives are in good usable condition i.e. sharp and in sheath. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brief pupils on knife safety and safe usage. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make appropriate judgement on the suitability of pupils to use knives. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that pupils have an adequate workspace. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Close supervision, with a number limit (max. 4/adult). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all knives are collected at the end of the session.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children have the opportunity to learn a skills. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development of motor skills. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop trust and understanding of how to work safely.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Saw cuts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the saws are in a good usable condition. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brief children on saw safety and safe usage. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that pupils have an adequate workspace. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Close supervision, with a number limit (max. 4/adult). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all saws are collected at the end of the session.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children have the opportunity to learn a skill. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development of motor skills. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop trust and understanding of how to work safely.

HAZARDS	CONTROL MEASURES	RISK BENEFIT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brief pupils about fire safety during every session.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Group management.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep fires small.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Have means to extinguish the fire i.e. fire extinguisher, bucket of water/sand.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't light fires where they can spread or get out of control.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Any rock may shatter when heated. If possible avoid lighting fires on rock or concrete.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use a fire circle so that children don't get too close to the fire.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep other fuel and combustibles away from lit fires.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that fires are completely extinguished when session is finished.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children have the opportunity to learn a new skill.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> They have a new communal space where things can be shared.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children have increased self esteem and resilience by keeping a fire going and cooking on it.</li> </ul>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Burns/Scalds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brief pupils about the dangers of handling pots and hot liquids.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that pupils don't get too close to lit fires.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use long sticks if cooking.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Careful group management; minimise movement around lit fires.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Follow manufacturers guidelines if using a Kelly Kettle.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff trained in the correct use of Kelly Kettles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children are taught how to cook on the fire.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increased resilience and self esteem.</li> </ul>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Falling branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brief pupils on safe ways to collect wood.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inspect trees used for collection, in particular check for large dead branches which could fall.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't stand under branches when collecting them for wood.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aware of the risks if it is windy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children get to enjoy the woodland environment.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhances all of the senses.</li> </ul>

HAZARDS	CONTROL MEASURES	RISK BENEFIT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poisonous/Irritant Plants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make children aware of what poisonous/irritant plants there are in the woodland. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mantra of 'If you pick it don't lick it'. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Close supervision of what children are eating, especially SEND	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children learn that some plants benefit us, whilst others can be poisonous.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slips and Falls	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Talk to pupils about the safe areas to collect materials. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make children aware that wet leaves/mud is slippy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children have a place to explore. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The uneven ground will improve their balance and walking. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increases self confidence.
EQUIPMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knives, saw, fire steel and flints.	
ADDITIONAL NOTES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> It is recommend that staff are thoroughly trained and familiarise with safety and talking to children about the use of these sharp told. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This activity can be used as an enhancement to other activities or as an activity in its own right.	

(Adapted from North Yorkshire Outdoor Learning Service, 2019)

## Specific Activities Risk Assessments

### Conkers Risk Assessment

ACTIVITY	Conkers
VENUE	The Wilderness
HAZARDS	CONTROL MEASURES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Puncture injuries from hand drill/tent peg (to make hole)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strict supervision of conker drilling <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use only blunt ended pegs onto a firm but soft surface e.g. grass.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face/eye injuries from swinging conkers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Instruct players to hold strings at arm's length. Attacker on sort string, and defender with a long string.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hand/arm injuries from swinging conkers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The occasional knuckle rap or minor bruise is inevitable and acceptable but avoid wild swings.
ADDITIONAL NOTES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equipment: Bag of conkers, tent pegs, hand drills, string. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fresh conkers in autumn are relatively soft but will harden the longer they are left. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Best done outside because of messy debris.

(Adapted from North Yorkshire Outdoor Learning Service, 2019)

## Fire Lighting Risk Assessment

ACTIVITY	Fire Lighting
VENUE	The Wilderness
HAZARDS	CONTROL MEASURES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Burns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equipment and group management through the activity
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Misuse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manage group behaviour around open fire and while adding fuel.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Out of control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fire pit used and water available.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unstable fire on stump	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make sure when fire built on stump that it is stable and fire is not made too big.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change of flame direction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make sure that the group are seated far enough away so that the flames cannot reach them (2m).
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leaning over fire	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All to approach the fire in the 'respect position'
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cuts when collecting branches	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correct use of tools if used (follow instructions given). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Group instructed to the correct type of branches to collect for burning.
SAFETY EQUIPMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Burns gel and bandages available from staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spade/Shovel for fire pit

(Adapted from North Yorkshire Outdoor Learning Service, 2019)

## Kelly Kettles Risk Assessment

ACTIVITY	Kelly Kettles
VENUE	The Wilderness
HAZARDS	CONTROL MEASURES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poisoning by firelighter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep firelighters well away from mouth, eyes and food.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Burns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Set up kettle on a flat non-flammable surface e.g. paving stone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On lighting keep match or lighter level with or above fingers. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wear flame proof glove when putting kindling down the chimney. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fan flames, don't blow <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't handle hot kettle or tray.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scalds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wear heat proof gloves when lifting kettle or base. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All people should be at least 1 metre from the fire. Either stood or kneeling in the respect position. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cups should be placed on the ground when pouring hot water into them.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Setting fire to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Have containers of extinguishing water to hand.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Explosion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Remove cork before heating.
SAFETY EQUIPMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional first aid i.e. burns pack
VENUE SPECIFIC RISKS AND ADDITIONAL NOTES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beware of Kelly kettle fires on peat <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beware of Kelly kettle fires when ground is very dry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beware of Kelly kettle fires on sloping ground

(Adapted from North Yorkshire Outdoor Learning Service, 2019)

## Cooking on an Open Fire Risk Assessment

ACTIVITY	Cooking on an open fire
VENUE	The Wilderness
HAZARDS	CONTROL MEASURES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Burns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use heat proof gloves and appropriate utensils. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determine exactly how many people are allowed to cook at the fire at once. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allocate one person to be in charge of the fire.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Misuse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manage group behaviour around open fire and while adding fuel
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Out of control	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water/sand/fire blanket available.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cooking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use appropriate utensils to put items in or on the fire. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure oil doesn't get too hot in pans. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use green or soaked wood to use as skewers. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Warn others when using sharp cooking implements.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change of flame direction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make sure that group are seated far enough away so flames cannot reach or harm the group.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leaning over fire	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All to approach fire in the respect position.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cuts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correct use of tools if used, group instructed on the correct type of branches to collect for burning.
SAFETY EQUIPMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Burns gel and bandages available from staff. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spade/shovel for fire pit. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bucket of water. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heat proof gloves.
VENUE SPECIFIC RISKS AND ADDITIONAL NOTES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult to fill water bucket from Wilderness Beck

(Adapted from North Yorkshire Outdoor Learning Service, 2019)

## Shelter Building Risk Assessment

ACTIVITY	Shelter Building
VENUE	The Wilderness
HAZARDS	CONTROL MEASURES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children briefed on tree hazards
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manual Handling	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safety briefing - Avoidance of lifting heavy weight
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collapse of Shelter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Instruction on testing shelter for stability
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slip/Trip	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appropriate footwear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children briefed not to run
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objects falling from heights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do usual check of working environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Remove any loose branches
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Getting lost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Set clear boundaries
SAFETY EQUIPMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No specialist equipment needed
VENUE SPECIFIC RISKS AND ADDITIONAL NOTES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weather forecast including wind strength and direction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appropriate clothing and footwear (long sleeves and long trousers if there is a risk of contact with nettles, brambles or barbed wire etc) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use of groups where appropriate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students need clear boundaries.

(Adapted from North Yorkshire Outdoor Learning Service, 2019)

## Tree Climb Risk Assessment

ACTIVITY	Tree Climb
VENUE	The Wilderness
HAZARDS	CONTROL MEASURES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slippery ground	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure good solid ground to belay from.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anchors for belay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Choose good solid trees to climb (alive) back up if needed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tangles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supervise and discuss route choice.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Falling debris	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> During set up, inspect for wind blow and hung up branches.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excessive wind	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consider stopping activity if wind speeds exceed force 4.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Misuse of equipment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correct instruction and group monitoring.
SAFETY EQUIPMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Long sleeved t-shirt and trousers to protect against scratches.
ADDITIONAL NOTES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Awareness of tree environment and tree branch strengths.

(Adapted from North Yorkshire Outdoor Learning Service, 2019)

## COVID-19 Risk Assessment

ACTIVITY	Forest School
VENUE	The Wilderness
HAZARDS	CONTROL MEASURES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Covid-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children with temperature and/or new continuous cough must not attend. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equipment that children share or that encourages close contact will be regularly disinfected <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide suitable hand cleaning equipment. Encourage children to follow NHS recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds prior to setting off to Forest School and on return. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Put used tissues in a bin and hand sanitise. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do not touch eyes, nose or mouth if hands are not clean.
SAFETY EQUIPMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitiser
ADDITIONAL NOTES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If a child develops symptoms during Forest school. All children will return to the setting

## References

North Yorkshire Outdoor Learning Service (2019) Forest School Leader. Open Awards Level 3 Handbook.

# Letter to Parents/Carers

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

•

Children in their preschool year are invited to take part in our established Forest School which takes place in 'The Wilderness', Skipton. The sessions will be run by Co-Head Alison Stewart who is an accredited Forest School's Leader (Level 3). Please read the following important information and complete this Parent/Carer Agreement (<https://forms.office.com/r/V8u53967GB>) prior to your child starting Forest School

## **Information about Forest School**

- Forest School is run by Alison Stewart (Co-Head)
- Forest school aims to build up children's skills, abilities and confidence week by week. Through practical hands-on activities in the outdoors. It gives them the chance to explore, learn and discover at their own pace in a safe and supportive space.
- Forest School uses natural resources to stimulate imagination, creativity and investigation. Activities can include:
  - Woodwork using tools, e.g. making musical instruments, jewellery, decorative items
  - Natural art
  - Fire lighting
  - Using knots and lashings
  - Den building
  - Nature trails

## **Benefits to taking part in Forest School.**

It can:

- Develop physical abilities and help participants to stay active and healthy.
- Heighten self-awareness and improve emotional and social skills.
- Promote co-operative and group working.
- Encourage children to take care of themselves and others.
- Foster care, appreciation and respect for wildlife and wild places.
- Broaden knowledge and understanding of the natural world.

### **Safety at Forest School**

There is always a high adult to participant ratio at Forest School. All activities are thoroughly risk assessed before the start of each session and Leaders continue to monitor the safety of the group as activities progress. There is always a trained first aider present at each session.

### **Who will be running the Forest School sessions?**

Sessions will be overseen by our qualified Forest School's leader Alison Stewart. She will be assisted by Brougham Street Nursery School staff.

### **How many sessions will my child access?**

We aim for each child to access at least two, three week blocks of Forest School during their preschool academic year. This means that all children will experience 'the Wilderness' during two different seasons. If a child misses a session due to absence another will take their place.

### **When does Forest School take place?**

Forest School takes place on different days during the academic year, this is to ensure that all children will get an opportunity to take part, as at some point it will run on a day that they are in the setting.

### **Clothing**

The Forest School sessions will take place entirely outside in the wood whatever the weather. It is important that your child wears labelled clothes that are warm and that are OK to get wet and muddy. We will provide waterproof clothing and wellingtons, however if your child has their own wellingtons, these would be appreciated.

Your child should wear

- Comfortable long trousers.
- Comfortable, warm long sleeved top or fleece.
- Long sleeved T-shirt and jumper.
- Thick socks if the weather's cold - thermal if possible or two pairs of thinner ones.
- Hat and gloves if the weather is cold.
- Sun hat if it is sunny.

# Parent/Carer Agreement

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Please complete online <https://forms.office.com/r/V8u53967GB>

Brougham Street Nursery School will aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to:

- Provide high quality teaching and learning through a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Value each child as an individual.
- Understand that each child has their own learning style.
- Encourage each child to achieve their personal best in all areas.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn and practice new skills.
- Encourage collaborative learning.
- Encourage children to take risks in their own learning.
- Provide a high ratio of adults to children.
- Ensure all adults working our children are fit to do so

Signed : Michael Pettavel & Alison Stewart Date: September 2022

The Family

I/we will aim to work in partnership with the school and its staff to:

- Ensure that my child will attend nursery school regularly and on time.
- Ensure that my child is equipped appropriately for Forest School.
- Let my child's Key Person or Class Teacher know about any concerns and problems which might affect my child's behaviour or progress.
- Support my child in opportunities for learning at home.
- Attend parent consultations and discussions about my child's progress and school life.
- Support the Nursery School policies.
- Respond promptly to school correspondence including interacting with Tapestry posts.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_