



ASPIRE ACHIEVE THRIVE



Shardlow Primary School Shardlow Primary School



Forest School Risk Assessment booklet.

The following Forest School Risk Assessment includes:

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Subject of risk assessment:	ow Primary School Forest School		
Brief description of activity, location, feature, activity and equipment used.	Any activity (play, learning, training and meeting) that staff undertake with children or adults that uses a public or private copse, woodland (formal and informal) or forest including natural and commercial plantation. Woodland locations are varied – broadleaved and evergreen, dense woodland and open with varied terrain below. Equipment used is related to the specific activity, for which there is a specific Risk Benefit Assessment.		
Job title and name of person making assessment	Rebecca Peach Kelly Nicolson	Signature of person making assessment	
Date of Assessment	29 April 2024	Review Date	1 st January 2025
Name of senior manager:	Kylie Magner	Signature of senior manager:	
Risk Management Statement We recognise that all risks cannot be reduced to nil, therefore this risk assessment prioritises the significant risks. Significant risks are those which pose risk of serious injury, chronic injury, disability or death, or risks that are overly common in interrupting our staff and clients normal work. For all activities staff will dynamically assesses risks and put in place control measures and record as required. Concerns, changes in risk management practice or minor injuries that are seen by staff to be significant should be reported to the Head Teacher.			



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Activity or feature:	The activity being undertaken is outlined in the relevant specific Risk Benefit Assessment that will work in conjunction with this Parkland Risk Benefit Assessment. Typical activities include: Free play, allowing children to play around the woodland, under supervision of adults, although not always within site. Training and learning opportunities, with children and adults undertaking field study, science, numeracy and literacy activities, creating art work and general studying. Travelling (walking, running, cycling, scootering) through an area. Planting trees, hedges or plants, simple maintenance of trees, hedges and plants, paths and surfaces.
How will participants benefit?	Fresh air, relaxation, physical, mental and social health and wellbeing improvements. Enhanced knowledge of subject which forms the focus of the session; the location the group is in and a stimulus for creativity and problem solving. Communication and social interaction between adults and children. Connection with nature / the natural world. Using local or different environments to support learning. Enjoyment and fun. Shelter from weather. Increased privacy.
Who will be at risk?	Staff Participants
Possible hazards and risks:	Slips, trips and falls resulting in injury, especially if the terrain is challenging for the group (adult and child). Impacts and collisions between group members playing games (free and structured) that lead to significant injury. Running into, bumping or falling on objects that will injure, including rocks, tree branches and trunks as well as man made sharp edges. Dangerous litter being handled, stepped on or fallen on, leading to injury or harm. Becoming lost, running away, isolated or being abducted, leading to harm or fear. Inclement weather (such as high wind, snow and ice) leading to increased possibility for injury or harm, or unusual injury (such as flying objects or falling trees). Ingestion of toxins or poisons from flora and fauna. Depending on location, proximity to moving vehicles on roads, car parks or in park when crossing road from school.



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Precautions and control measures to reduce the risk severity or likelihood:	Awareness of the terrain and equipment in situ, and groups competencies to move safely around the area. Caution where overhanging trees and branches are above heads. All to be identified in visual inspection of site on arrival. A method of gathering the group and checking numbers, relevant to age of group and area being used. Staff to be aware of members of public interacting with group, and to challenge or intervene if needed. Participants and leaders clear about the limits of how far they can travel from a 'base'. Games and activities are to be relevant to the group, and any physical games (free or structured) to be monitored appropriate to the group. Area restricted in light of extra risks (waters edge and vehicles particularly). Caution and group briefing over hazard posed by branches (running into, cuts, impalements etc, particularly of head or eyes). Dead or growing branches on trees, and branches on the ground. Highlight dangers of litter, and group advised 'Don't know? Don't touch.' Staff to be aware of current and forecast weather, and judgement made as to the effect on the location. Particular care should be taken in high wind, or around some species of tree (Beech and Scots pine) or plantations. Hand washing facilities provided (wipes, gel etc) First aid kit carried and staff trained to use, awareness of emergency access routes and locations of additional assistance.
Precedents or comparisons:	Forest Schools is an established and popular learning tool and location. Forestry Commission encourage school trips and learning to woodlands, and provides a wide variety of resources and tools for play and learning. Woodland is a popular recreation venue, with many individuals and families using woodland for walks, cycling and recreation. Many schools have woodland areas within grounds, and they are used daily in all weathers, by all ages.
Judgement:	Overall, woodland offers a significant increase in the number of minor hazards and the risks posed.



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Subject of risk assessment:	Playing with rope		
Brief description of activity, location, feature, activity and equipment used.	Rope swings (set up by staff or participants) Rope bridges (set up by staff or participants, including slack lines, postman's walk and similar). Rope play, including holding up dens and structures or helping climb steep slopes. Typically this is in woodland (school playground or public access), although it may also be using constructed equipment such as in a play park.		
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Activity or
feature:

Pictures as example.

Temporary rope swings set up by staff or participants, using ropes supplied by , and temporary seats from knots, branches or sections of timber.



Rope bridges (set up by staff or participants, including slack lines, postman's walk and similar), using ropes supplied by .



Rope play, including holding up dens and structures or helping climb steep slopes.



Hammocks are typically attached to trees or posts, close to the floor. They may be temporary or permanent, net or fabric.





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How will participants benefit?	Learning to make risk judgements and manage risk for themselves. Balance, co-ordination and general physical literacy will be developed by constructing and then using simple rope activities. Group working and social skills will be developed by participants, including turn taking and socially supporting each other. Learn about materials (strength, flexibility, knot tying etc) and tree types (strength, flexibility and rooting) Engagement with natural environment. Builds resilience and then confidence through success and challenge. Fun, achievement and physical enjoyment of the activity.
Who will be at risk?	staff Participants
Possible hazards and risks:	The rope or seat may snap or knot fail, dropping person(s) to the ground from too high, leading to significant injury. The branch or tree may snap, bend or uproot, dropping the person(s) on to the ground from too high leading to significant injury. The tree or branch may also fall on the person(s) when this occurs as well, leading to significant injury or death. Hammocks may also fail – either knots coming undone, or damage to the ropes or material ripping. They can also tip up violently, dropping occupants to the floor. Both these leading to significant injury if the fall is from height, or onto sharp or hard objects, or is very sudden/violent. Falls to the floor, onto sharp, hard or protruding items that leads to significant injury. Other participants or public could collide with swinging Participant. Swinging participant could collide with tree(s), leading to serious injury if hard enough. Participants may walk into attached ropes, leading to injury through contact with rope or sudden trip or upending. Participants could hang from the rope in a way that injures them seriously – damage to limb by wrapping rope around, or strangulation of neck.
Precautions and control measures to reduce the risk severity or likelihood:	Rope swings: - Will be constructed by staff and Participants, with the staff member undertaking a Dynamic Risk Assessment of the tree, the rope and attachment (knot) and immediate surroundings such as floor and obstacles. - The staff member will test any new obstacle first - Participants feet on rope swings will be under the head height of the Participants at maximum swing/elevation. - Good group briefing and management by staff, including teaching to step off not fall off and vigilance for others entering swing area or overly zealous swinging.



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- Vigilance and zero tolerance of wrapping the rope around any part of the body.

Rope bridges, including slack line:

- Will be constructed by staff and Participants, with the staff member undertaking a Dynamic Risk Assessment of the trees, the ropes and attachments (knots) and immediate surroundings such as floor and obstacles.
- The rope bridges will be lower than the height of the Participants heads, and typically will be much lower around ankle to hip height.
- Ropes will be tight enough to prevent wrapping around body parts, even in the event of a fall.
- Good group briefing and management by staff, including teaching to step off not fall off and vigilance for others getting too close or walking through area.

Ropes to support climbing

- Will be constructed by staff and participants, with the staff member undertaking a Dynamic Risk Assessment of the trees, the ropes and attachments (knots) and immediate surroundings such as floor and obstacles (particularly at bottom of a slope).
- Particular care to be taken if the ropes are loose ended and vigilance to prevent rope being wrapped around any part of the body.

Ropes & hammocks

- Hammocks will be no higher than the group's average height or the height from which the staff member is happy for them to fall (whichever is the lower).
- Hammocks should be placed off paths and above ground that has been checked for sharp, hard or awkward objects to fall on.
- Knots used should be good enough to hold or ease slowly (no-knot knot for example).

In all situations staff will match group competence (not confidence) with the level of difficulty and risk that any rope play poses, particularly with regard fall height and swing speeds.

At no point will participants be helped by staff or other participants onto such equipment, further limiting heights. Small, natural materials may be used as steps on, but not ladders or above head height of the participants.

Any ropes used for such play will be visually inspected by staff for damage before use, using common sense. All ropes used specifically for climbing, rope swings, slack lines or similar should be of known source (not retired ropes from elsewhere).

Any area a participant could conceivably fall should be cleared of hazards that could lead to significant injury.



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	staff should be aware of and use for guidance – • Forestry Commission guidance on “Rope Swings, dens, tree houses and fire” • Tree Swings – a Guide to Good Practice. London Play, Natural England, Monkey Do. All staff leading sessions will hold a relevant emergency first aid qualification, appropriate to the training being led, and carry a first aid kit.
Precedents or comparisons:	Many examples of children and adults creating their own rope swings, in simple and challenging locations. Forestry Commission guidance on “Rope Swings, dens, tree houses and fire” Tree Swings – a Guide to Good Practice. London Play, Natural England, Monkey Do. This document is clear about managing implementation, and can be used by staff as guidance. Scout and Boys Brigade and Girlguiding movements have a long history of using ropes with children and young people as rope swings, bridges and to support structures and dens. has used rope swings in schools and with young children in woods with great success and no accidents. Many playgrounds for children incorporate swings, balance beams or ropes, permanent hammocks and climbing support with ropes.
Judgement:	The use of simple, low rope play as outlined above presents low hazards if undertaken carefully and Dynamically Risk Assessed. Good management of the area (floor and adjacent) will remove most injury mechanisms. Particular care to prevent ropes wrapping around participants should be exercised. The use of ropes is a valuable and enjoyable experience that should provide to many participants.



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Subject of risk assessment:	Fires and cooking		
Brief description of activity, location, feature, activity and equipment used.	Lighting, maintaining and putting out of small, contained fires. All our fires are contained – that is in some form of (purpose built or re-purposed) container or fireplace. Cooking of simple meals and heating of water (for drinks, cleaning and science experiments). This is undertaken with adult and child groups, in school grounds, beaches, local green spaces and woodland. School children and Staff are engaged with all aspects of the fire, from collection of tinder and fuel, to preparation, ignition, maintaining and putting out of fire. School staff and Staff are engaged with all aspects of the food cooking, from preparation to heating/cooking, serving and eating.		
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Activity or feature:	Carrying of resources such as fire pit(s), fire woks, Kelly kettles, fuel, large logs or branches. Collecting of fuel and tinder (gathering natural materials or from purchased source). Preparation of fuel and tinder by snapping, splitting, chopping and sawing down to smaller sizes. Carrying of flammable materials (natural and imported/purchased) and sources of ignition such as flint & steel or lighter. Igniting fire with tinder (natural and imported/purchased), building of fire to size and heat able to cook on, maintaining of flame, ashes or heat through adding fuel, slowing fire through damping with natural (earth or sand) materials. Putting fire out and clearing up of spent fuel and fire pits, Kelly kettles etc. Preparing of food including pouring, mixing, chopping, slicing and cleaning. Cooking of the food over hot fire or ashes including heating, frying, baking and boiling. Eating of the food (both cooked and uncooked) that has been prepared. Clearing up items used in food preparation such as cutlery, kitchen knives, bowls, cups, plates and waste food.
How will participants benefit?	Enjoyment, excitement and spiritual reflection. In managing a fire, participants will learn risk management, responsibility and organisation. They will develop a deep connection to nature by participating in one of the most primitive experiences. In using fire as a (cooking) tool, children learn to respect it and use it wisely. Participants will learn simple science lessons (fire triangle) including the suitability of materials to ignite and keep a fire going, how to balance the right amount of oxygen and heat loss. Individuals will also learn about simple food preparation, meals and food types. They will also learn food hygiene basics, in a challenging practical environment. Putting a fire out, clearing up and taking items away will teach environmental responsibility and personal respect. In preparing, cooking and eating simple foods on an open fire groups will connect with food production, and enjoy social time. For many, the simple meals will also show variety of food types available, and signpost healthy food choices.
Who will be at risk?	Staff. Group members, adult and child.
Any local factors that may affect risks or controls:	Must be aware of local weather at time of workshop including windspeed.
Possible hazards and risks:	Burns from the sparks or items placed on the fire or recently removed from the fire (e.g. saucepans or sticks). Group member falling into fire. Group member leaning on fire container for any reason, causing it to tip. Scalds from boiling water and fats used in cooking, following a spill or steam escape.



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	Some stones are explosive in nature when heated, and flint or similar should not be used as a fire base or exposed to heat. Uncontrollable spread of fire. Toxins or poisons contained in scavenged food or rubbed off onto consumed food; illness from dirty water or unclean containers. Food poisoning or illness from poorly prepared food. Allergic reactions to foods / ingredients. Cuts from knife use when preparing food. Smoke inhalation could trigger asthma or similar conditions or could contain toxins from recycled or poorly dried wood.
Precautions and control measures to reduce the risk severity or likelihood:	Good group control and suitable activities (i.e. not running around) are the foundation of our fire safety. Consider the right group size and adult to child ratio. Hair, long clothing or hats should be kept away from flames, especially when tending a fire. Tie hair up, tuck in dangly strings. Fires should be in containers, restricting sizes of fire, and allowing stable placing of pans and cooking implements. Careful choice of container in size, stability and overall suitability. Areas around fires should be marked and restricted as an exclusion area, according to age and number in group. Seating should be the normal posture around a fire, unless working on or with it, in which case a 'safe position' for working can be adopted, again suitable to the groups. Implements, such as sticks will be used where appropriate to group to keep further back from fire when cooking or heating. Do not allow individuals to stay constantly within the smoke direction – move as needed due to wind or smoke direction. Only use untreated wood, avoiding excessive use of any recycled wood. Fires should always be put out before leaving the site, and sufficient water should be carried or available in the event of having to put a fire out suddenly. Staff should be confident that the fire has not spread to ground, and sand, rocks or logs may be used to space containers off the floor if needed on peaty or rooted soils. Hot cooking items should be kept within the marked fire area. Cooking fats should be used with care. Hot water should be poured carefully, with hands kept away from cups or other containers. Bungs or whistles should not be used with any Kelly/Ghillie/Storm kettles, or any other vessel used for heating water. A set of gloves (or similar) will be carried with fire resources to facilitate lifting hot items.



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	Great awareness of atmospheric and environmental conditions, such as dry summer, high winds or peat based soils, and choosing when not to have a fire. Use of sand base, rocks or similar to be considered. Local weather or advisory warnings or similar will always be adhered to. Staff to apply food hygiene controls in line with Food Standards Agency guidance and good practice outdoors. This will include: • awareness of allergies for all group and staff; provisions made for allergies; • hand and personal hygiene of a good standard; • clean implements and containers, • working on mats or tarpaulins below containers or chopping boards to prevent contamination; • clear working areas with no walking through, covering food before, during and after cooking when not being consumed; • avoidance of foods that 'spoil' before cooking. This means that we will not cook meats unless dried and preserved, • ensuring dairy products are fresh and consideration given to preserving them on hot days. • All foods will be in-date and stored appropriately to prevent spoiling or contamination, both long term and when outside. • Simple clean up measures to prevent re-use of implements or bowls where needed • Good washing up technique, likely back in a kitchen or using dishwasher. Food preparation also involves use of knives and/or sharp sticks, both sharp and cutlery. All implements will be managed well, with a limited number available and good storage so that knives or firelighting items are not left lying around. Staff will make judgements as to the competence of the group cooking and employ suitable group management or reduced tasks as appropriate. All Staff leading sessions or courses will hold a relevant emergency first aid qualification, appropriate to the training being led, and carry a first aid kit.
Precedents or comparisons:	The Forest School Association has good protocols and proven history of using fire with a wide variety of groups, including pre-school. It also asserts qualifications are not needed. The Play Safety Forum highlights that fire is a play tool and learning tool, in their publication 'Managing Risk in Play Provision'. Education Scotland highlights fire as a suitable context for learning many things, and they have advice and videos on the subject. GfL and have for many years used fire in schools, rural and urban settings with children as a learning tool.



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Judgement:

Fire does have some challenges, due to small incidents having potentially unacceptable consequences. However, good group management and vigilance can reduce the likelihood of these risks to an acceptable level.
Cooking on an open fire requires good skills and responsibility and can be a life-long memory and skill.
The positive benefits outweigh the serious risks, considering reduced likelihood.



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Subject of risk assessment:	Use of tools		
Brief description of activity, location, feature, activity and equipment used.	Bladed tools such as knives, scissors, axes, loppers, saws, potato peelers, wallpaper strippers, de-barking tools or secateurs. Hammering tools such as mallets, hammers and sledge hammers. Use of power drills and screwdrivers. Use of handcraft or DIY tools such as screwdrivers and spanners. Clamping tools such as workbenches, ratchet straps and clamps. Digging tools such as spades, forks, hole digger, breaking bar. Ladders, stepladders or stepping stools.		
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Activity or feature:	Hammering pegs into the ground. Peeling bark, cutting, sawing, whittling and snipping twigs or small branches. Cutting and mixing food. Chopping, sawing or snapping wood. Digging of soil and rubble, removal and moving of rubble in buckets, bags or wheelbarrows. Drilling small holes in wood with power tool and hand tool Hammering nails into wood and screwing into wood. Moving, transporting, supporting and connecting the various parts and finished products made. This includes bird boxes, raised beds, small plant containers or similar. It does not include structural or required safety related items such as handrails that are left permanently. Installing of bird boxes, using ladder to access up to a height of 2.5m for children or 5m for staff.
How will participants benefit?	Developing Hand/eye co ordination and skills with tools. Handling sharp tools responsibly, and using them in a practical and positive way. Learning responsibility for yourself and tools, including risk assessing and making good decisions. Seeing knives as tools, not weapons. Self esteem and confidence will grow though taking park in using tools that require trust and responsibility. Being able to build objects or make tools. Understand natural resources and materials.
Who will be at risk?	Staff Participants (children and adults)
Possible hazards and risks:	Bladed tools – cuts through skin, penetrating injuries, minor amputations (fingers and toes). Particularly when working on hard materials, knotted wood and fine (small) objects such as twig ends. Increased hazard of cuts or penetrations to torso or where major blood vessels are. Being struck by heavy and hard object (all hammers, provided and scavenged). Dropping items on feet, hands or other body parts that injure through blunt trauma or sharp edge. Particularly being struck on head or face with any tool, through movement including that of others, recoil or slipping in use. Crush injuries from heavy objects or clamping. Power tools moving suddenly, leading to cuts or incisions. Falls from ladders or height, leading to injury.
Precautions and control measures to reduce the risk severity or likelihood:	Good management and judgement of competence, particularly regarding behaviour, age and attitude. Restricted access to tools and monitoring of use. No tools left lying around on session – either they are being used, or stored. Good storage of tools – in boxes or bags or other when being used for a session. Group briefing, demonstration and instruction as needed, particularly keeping behind the cutting edge. Monitoring of use by participants. Safe working area and working space. Children under 6 only use sharp tools on a child/adult ratio of 1:1. Briefing of splinter risk and not running fingers down wood edges. Ladders always installed and 'footed' by staff, pupils to work at a maximum height of 2.5m or staff at 5m. Heavy loads, or repeated carrying of moderate loads to be restricted in line with good manual handling practice. Using more hands or lower weights, use of wheelbarrows or similar to restrict loading on persons, particularly children and young people.



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	First aid kit carried and first aider present. Good hand washing and hygiene standards enforced by staff, especially if taking a break, consuming food or finishing activity. Tools should also be clean and rust free to prevent bacteria build up. Gloves to be worn when judged appropriate. All staff leading sessions will hold a relevant emergency first aid qualification, appropriate to the training being led, and carry a first aid kit.
Precedents or comparisons:	Managing Risk in Play Provision encourages responsible tool use in play. Forest Schools encourage and manage tool use in outdoor settings with a variety of groups. In school workshops and technical subjects have allowed tool use for many decades. Cooking and everyday tasks involve tool use, including blades and striking objects.
Judgement:	The severity of the risks is quite high, but good group management and systems will reduce the likelihood of severe injury. Using tools is a lifelong skill that most adults use daily. It is also proven that using hazardous objects as tools can reduce their use as weapons. In light of this, tool use is an important learning experience for all ages.



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Subject of risk assessment:	Gardening and Tree planting		
Brief description of activity, location, feature, activity and equipment used.	Adult facilitated tree or shrub planting sessions in school grounds or local green spaces. Adult facilitated gardening sessions. Adult facilitated conservation activities such as weed or shrub clearance. For more advanced tool use, please see specific RBA.		
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Activity or feature:	Digging in soil, moving soil, replacing soil, with spades and trowels. Using wheelbarrows or carts to move soil. Raking and hoeing soil and weeds. Cutting weeds, plants, grass with hand tools (not powered). Cutting wood and twigs using hand tools (not powered). Planting seeds. Harvesting ripe fruit and vegetables. Hammering in stakes and uprights such as canes. Watering plants and feeding with natural materials.
How will participants benefit?	Physical activity. Collaborative activity, learning to work together. Social interaction between children and between adults and children. Knowledge about nature, seasons, plant care and understanding of natural cycles such as water, nitrogen, hydrogen etc. Attachment to nature, including understanding food production and environmental issues. Feeling of emotional and physical wellbeing. Learning to experience and manage risks within real contexts.
Who will be at risk?	Staff Participants (adult and children)
Any local factors that may affect risks or controls:	Group competence, local school or authority rules.
Possible hazards and risks:	Injuries from tool use, including bruising through being hit accidentally. Cuts from blades or sharp edge of spades etc Cuts, incisions, penetrations and minor amputations from using scissor tools such as loppers and secateurs. Slips, trips and falls leading to significant injury. Lifting heavy weights / awkward objects such as trees, and wheelbarrows. Cold and hot weather injuries, including sunburn and hypothermia. Ingestion of dirt, spores or faecal matter through poor hygiene, leading to infection or upset. Ingestion of inedible seeds or fruit, leading to indigestion or upset.
Precautions and control measures to reduce the risk severity or likelihood:	Good group briefing and control to ensure calm use of tools. Use of gloves where required, to reduce contact with plant sap, stings or abrasions when weeding or lifting. Awareness and briefing of dangers of certain tools – not reaching in holes being dug; keeping fingers away from scissor tools; care when swinging tools such as hammers or spades, ball of foot on spades (not sole) etc. Good clothing, suitable to the weather. Tools kept neat and not lying around to be trodden on or tripped over. Provision of hand washing facilities and no food eaten before hands are all cleaned. All tools washed as well, to prevent spread of disease and rust. All staff leading sessions will hold a relevant emergency first aid qualification, appropriate to the training being led, and carry a first aid kit.



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Precedents or comparisons:	Growing food and planting trees or plants is part of human life. and many other others have planted trees, shrubs and gardens with all ages of children for many years. The Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland and the National Curriculum in England both require understanding and experience of planting and growing edible plants. Many organisations, such as John Muir Trust, encourage conservation of natural places, and work with children and adolescents to do this regularly.
Judgement:	Overall, planting and growing plants, shrubs and trees is a satisfying activity that engages children and young people with nature. The risks, during a well managed session, are usually of low consequence, and the few higher consequence hazards can be managed through good hygiene afterwards should any concerns be raised during the session.



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Subject of risk assessment:	Tree Climbing		
Brief description of activity, location, feature, activity and equipment used.	Climbing of trees with participants (adults and children) Climbing of obstacles such as logs, boulders, walls, fences, gates, shrubs etc.		
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Cherrydown Primary School

Activity or feature:	Climbing tree in woodland, forests, parks and playgrounds. Climbing a variety of obstacles such as walls, boulders and logs. 
How will participants benefit?	Learning to make risk judgements and manage risk. Balance, co-ordination, strength and general physical literacy will be developed. Developing confidence through awareness of physical capabilities. Group working and social skills will be developed by participants, including turn taking and socially supporting each other verbally. Learn about tree types and properties (strength, flexibility and rooting) Engagement with natural environment. Builds resilience and then confidence through success and challenge. Fun, achievement and physical enjoyment of the activity.
Who will be at risk?	Staff Participants (Adult and children)
Any local factors that may affect risks or controls:	Group competence, local school or authority rules. Weather conditions, particularly cold and ice, assessment made 'on the ground'.
Possible hazards and risks:	Falls to ground or onto objects, resulting in serious injury either through contact with tree on the way down or impact with the ground. Strangulation from the rope. Becoming 'hung up' by feet or limbs, leading to injury. Participants falling on each other or being kicked accidentally while below climbing activity.



ASPIRE ACHIEVE THRIVE

Chewell Primary School

Precautions and control measures to reduce the risk severity or likelihood:	Careful selection of climbing site and area by staff. This will be informed by tree type and condition, ground conditions. For non-tree climbing, this will be informed by construction, ground type and fall hazards. A dynamic risk assessment by the staff on the day. Smaller trees will be selected, reducing possibility of excessive height being gained. Beech trees will not be used. Staff members will check branches or trees as weight bearing before a group starts. The ground around the climbing area should be clear of hazards such as sharp edges and objects, significant differences in surface (e.g. an edge from concrete to grass) should also be regarded with caution. staff may move objects as required. Good group briefing and control from staff, supervision of tree climbing by responsible adult at all times, although with group competence this may become more subtle. Ground rules used at all times are: • Participants only climb what they choose to do, with no external physical support (e.g. from adult or ladder) or peer pressure. • Participants only climb what they can down-climb. • Participants will not be helped down, only spotted for falls. • Participants will usually only climb to a distance of their own height from the ground. With the provision of a suitable surface (e.g. woodchip, pine needles, gravel or soft earth without objects) and judgement the climbing height may be increased to twice the height of the participant, or the height of the staff member (whichever is less). Notice of current and forecast conditions will be taken, with a view on how wind will affect the site. All staff leading sessions will hold a relevant emergency first aid qualification, appropriate to the training being led, and carry a first aid kit.
Precedents or comparisons:	Association of Play Industries – Provision of Impact Absorbing Surfaces guidance has been incorporated into our Risk Benefit Assessment. Rope Swings, Tree Houses and Dens – Forestry Commission is clear about fall heights when climbing or swinging, up to 2m, and the ground conditions judgements.
Judgement:	Tree climbing is an enjoyable, memorable, confidence building activity that can develop physical literacy and risk management skills in all ages. The risks posed are manageable when related to the competence of the group, simple ground rules, and an staff member who makes good judgement and has good group management. Tree climbing should be used with all ages as part of 's work.



ASPIRE ACHIEVE THRIVE



Shardlow Primary School

Location: Shardlow Primary School				Name: Rebecca Peach/Kelly Nicolson	Date: April 2024
Description of site activity: Woodland Play activities, den building,					
Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Existing preventative measures	New preventative measures	
Exploring the site	Bruises and grazes from trips or falls, eye level branches	All participants	Awareness talks. Site management – removal of eye level branches	Continue to share safety information with users. Carry equipment to remove any obstructions	
Waste, fox/cat poo, general rubbish	Ingestion, cuts scratches	All Forest School participants	Daily risk assessments by FSL		
Nettles, brambles	Stings and scratches	All Forest School Participants	Making participants aware of their surrounds and not to touch nettles or brambles without safety equipment (gloves) reinforce the need for correct clothing . Pull nettles from “base camp” area regularly. Children encouraged to avoid areas with high density of nettles and brambles.		
Crossing main road outside school	Cars – crossing patrol during FS sessions	All participants of Forest School	High adult:child ratio. Children taught how to cross safely and always with an adult. Hi-vis vests		
Bees and wasps	Stings	All participants of Forest School	Teaching children how to behave around bees and wasps to reduce the likelihood of being stung		
Ropes and swings	Possible rope burns Bumps, bruises, falls	The children using the equipment	Only rope swings constructed by staff to be used – thus ensuring safety.	Site inspection on arrival to ensure a suitable tree branch is used. Rope is checked for fraying or damage before each use	
Blindfold Games	Bumps, trips, falls, head injuries, cuts, bruises, disorientation on grazes, panic	The child who is blindfold	Safety instructions will be given to the group prior to the activity. No child will be forced to wear a blindfold – an option of just closing eyes or covering hands with face and not peeking.	Inspection of site on arrival to ensure no trip hazards are in the way	
Collecting Natural Materials	Lifting injuries, strains, slips, trips, falls, poisoning, cuts, grazes, thorns,	The child/children that are collecting	Safety instructions given prior to the activity. Children shown how to lift safely Children supervised throughout the activity with an adult present/nearby Site regularly inspected for knowledge of poisonous plants. Children made aware what they can and can't collect		



ASPIRE ACHIEVE THRIVE

Shardlow Primary School

	splinters, stings,			
Climbing trees or on structure s at site (being “off the ground”)	Slips, trips, bumps, falls, impact, head injuries, strains, entanglement, disturbance of wasps, bees or birds	The children that are climbing on a structure	Weather check in line with weather risk assessment below. Safety check of structure to be used for climbing – ensure it is not wet and slippery and is not rotten. FS Leader to select a safe tree for climbing All climbing activities to be closely supervised Safe climbing to be demonstrated or guided Rest periods Visual assessment for any animal life Participants will not climb wearing loose clothing, or articles that could become entangled in the branches	
Tools – Use of Billhook	wounds	Person using billhook and those close by	Ensure all users are aware of the “tool talk” and follow billhook policy for proper use. no glove to be worn on the hand using the tool but glove worn on the other hand tools to be counted in and out each session one to one supervision used in designated area only a reminder to other FS children to stay clear of tools	
Bow Saw Falling branches	Cuts and wounds	Person using bow saw and those nearby	Ensure all users are aware of the “tool talk” Follow Bow Saw Policy for proper use no glove to be worn on the hand using the tool but glove worn on the other hand tools to be counted in and out each session one to one supervision used in designated area only a reminder to other FS children to stay clear of tools	
Knives	Wounds – cuts	Person using the knife and those nearby	Ensure all users are aware of the Knife “tool talk” Follow the knife policy for proper use no glove to be worn on the hand using the tool but glove worn on the other hand tools to be counted in and out each session one to one supervision used in designated area only a reminder to other FS children to stay clear of tools	
Mallet/Hammer	Bumps/Grazes	Person using the mallet and those nearby	Inform person using the mallet of “tool talk” Follow the Mallet policy for proper use no glove needed tools to be counted in and out each session one to one supervision used in designated area only a reminder to other FS children to stay clear of tools	
Lost or missing children			Clear rules about boundaries and staying with an adult. High adult:child ratio	
Den building	Being hit by sticks or stones. Cuts, bruises. Head/eye injury	Those involved in den building or close by.	Dens will only be built on ground level using natural materials found on site. No tool use involved	Site inspection on arrival to check for any new hazards .



ASPIRE ACHIEVE THRIVE

Shardlow Primary School

Weather Cold weather such as Snow or Low temperat ures	Ice – slips and falls Snow – slips and falls, being hit by snowballs Low temperatur es – children being too cold/hypot hermic	Children and adults not dressed sufficiently for the weather	Ensure everyone attending is dressed for the weather. Send parents reminders prior to session and check weather forecast regularly.	Ensure children are appropriately dressed. Provide some spare hats, scarves, gloves and socks. Site inspection on arrival. Decision whether to proceed with FS if snow is falling to be made on the day.
Rain	Getting wet and cold Flooding of site (unlikely)	Children or adults not dressed sufficiently for the weather	Ensure everyone is dressed for the weather. Keep up to date with weather forecasts.	
Thunders torms	Lightning strike – could strike a tall tree in the woods	Everyone attending pre school	Awareness of weather forecast and likelihood of thunderstorms or of a thunderstorm getting closer.	Daily risk assessment to ensure FS leader is aware of weather forecast. FS will be cancelled in the event of a thunderstorm with lightning bolts visible.
Sunshine -	Sun stroke Exhaustion Thirst sunburn	Ensure children wear sunscreen, sun hats and bring water bottles	Focus play in a shaded part of the woodland which will keep temperatures down. Keep up to date with weather forecasts	Daily risk assessment to ensure Children are dressed for the weather
Fire and heat (we are unlikely to have permissio n from Land- owner to have fire as other FS users are not permitted)	Burning of skin and clothes Smoke inhalation Irritation to eyes and throat	Children around the fire pit	Children will be given a safety brief before entering the fire pit area. No walking between the seats and fire allowed. When at the fire everyone to adopt the safe sitting pose - on one knee to remain stable. Maximum of 4 people at fire (incl. adults). Fire is supervised at all times while alight or hot embers remain, to ensure children do not have unsupervised access. Children will be given rules and safety advice and dangers of fire prior to visiting the fire. All staff attending FS are Paediatric First Aid Trained and FS Leader is FS First Aid Trained. first aid box will be available. Fire proof gloves within easy reach. Fire will be in a soil pit surrounded by stones to prevent the fire escaping the area. Fire area will be away from buildings. The fire will not be under overhanging trees which may catch alight. A good supply of water will be available to put out flames and dampen heat. A fire blanket will be available. Embers will be dampened off with water and cooled and spread around with a spade The position of the fire will be away from buildings and wind direction will be constantly assessed. Children advised to move safely out of smoke direction. Dry suitable wood used to prevent excess smoke. Use clear goggles if needed.	



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Shardlow Primary School