Exceed Learning Partnership
• EVERY CHILD • EVERY CHANCE • EVERY DAY •

EVA Forest School Policy Handbook

PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY:	**MISS R PIZZEY**
APPROVED: MRS E CLARK	**ROLE: EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL**
SIGNED: E. Clark	
TO BE REVIEWED: MAY 2027	**MAY 2025**



Setting Name:

Edlington Victoria Academy Forest School

Forest School Practitioners:

Rachel Pizzey and Toni Hendren

Contents

	Page
1. Forest School Policy	4
2. Mental Health and Wellbeing	6
3. Learning and Development	7
4. Normal Operating Procedures	9
5. Safeguarding Policy	10
6. Behaviour and Rewards Policy	11
7. Accident and Emergency Policy	16
8. SEND Policy	17
9. Clothing Policy	19
10. Food and Drink Policy	20
11. Emergency Action Plan and Prevention Procedure	21
12. First Aid Policy	25
13. Environmental Policy and Environmental Impact Assessment	26
14. Equality and Diversity Policy	27
15. Fire Evacuation Procedure	28
16. Fire Safety Policy	29
17. Use of Fire Policy	31
18. Hand Tool Safety Policy	32
19. Tool Safety and Tool Operating Procedure	33
20. Using and Storing Tools	38
21. Health and Safety Policy	39
22. Safe Lifting	42
23. Toileting Procedure	43
24. Policy Amendment Sheet	44
25. Acknowledgement Receipt	45

Version	*Revision Date*	*Revised by*	*Section Revised*
2	5.3.23	TH and RP	Adding Toni Hendren as a Forest School Leader. Updated the fire exit procedure, due to having a new exit to the sports court (MUGA).
3	1.5.24	RP	Where is Forest School (new gate) Janine Safeguarding lead
4	25.5.25	RP	EC is now Executive Principal

Edlington Victoria Academy Forest School Policy

What is Forest School?

Forest School is an outdoor, child-led learning process that focusses on the holistic development of children. It respects the development of the whole child; spiritually, physically, communicatively, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. Children learn and develop through play, exploration, communication, and supported risks in natural settings such as wild gardens and woodland. Trained Forest School Leaders observe children at play, support where necessary, and provide opportunities and experiences that help children develop skills and qualities essential for happy, healthy development into adulthood. At times, these experiences come with a level of risk, however they are crucial for building confidence and sound judgment as children venture into the real world.

What are our aims at EVA Forest School?

Our forest school programme is designed to support children at Edlington Victoria Academy. Although links can and may be made to the curriculum, forest school is not curriculum-based learning, therefore this is not the primary focus of our programme at EVA Forest School. EVA Forest School allows children to step away from the four walls of the classroom and experience the freedom of the natural world. Children will be given time and space to explore the outdoor environment in their own way and at their own pace. They will be free to play, build, explore, enquire, rest, and ponder, in ways that are unique to each child.

At EVA, our Forest School programme takes six-weeks with one group of children attending a 90-minute session each week. Over time, this relaxed, no-pressure, exploratory environment will allow children to develop a multitude of important qualities that will benefit them greatly as they grow into adulthood, including self-esteem, self-confidence, resilience, positive communication, the ability to form healthy relationships, empathy, respect, mindfulness, the ability to make sound-judgements, and the ability to reflect on their actions, thoughts, and feelings.

As Forest School Leaders, we will observe, support, and facilitate the needs of each child. We will tailor each programme to the needs of the individual children that attend and provide experiences and opportunities that will allow each child to achieve at a level suitable for them.

What types of things will we be doing?

Our Forest School encourages and inspires children through hands-on experiences. This will include but not be confined to:

- Den building
- Shelter making
- Fire lighting
- Tool use
- Team games
- Crafting with natural materials

Children will spend quality time outside in all weathers. They will experience the different elements of the varying British seasons and observe changes to the natural environment. This in turn will stimulate:

- Creative thinking
- Problem solving
- Skill development

The environment that we aim to create will provide children with opportunities to:

- Develop self-esteem

- Build self-confidence
- Promote teamwork and problem-solving
- Create positive relationships with a range of people
- Foster independence and self-reliance
- Develop communication and language skills
- Promote resilience and determination
- Develop an awareness of their own and others' emotional needs
- Discover calmness and inner

peace Where is EVA Forest School based?

Edlington Forest School is located at the far side of the playing field, beyond the boundary fence, and directly behind the Multi Use Games Area. It has its own entrance that is signposted and only accessible from the school field or the Multi Use Games Area. The site is secure with no unauthorized access from the public or vehicles. The site is within easy access of the main school building, but far enough away to create the natural space of a peaceful woodland.

What else will children do and learn?

Forest school promotes environmental awareness and encourages sustainability.

- Children will be taught about respect and responsibility for the world around them and the impact they can have on this.
- Where possible, the use of reclaimed, recycled, and sustainable resources will be used to maintain and develop the Forest School site.
- The site will be maintained to ensure the survival of all native flora and fauna. Before new flora is introduced, it will be fully researched to ensure that it will not pose a threat to native flora.
- We will promote and instil respect by removing all litter and debris we take into the woodland, and carry out regularly monitoring to remove other refuse which has made its way onto the site
- Brambles and nettles will be removed from the main pathways but will be allowed to grow in other areas of the site to accommodate the needs of small animals in the area
- Dead and fallen branches will be removed, cut down, and stored in an allocated space to be used for exploration and firewood
- When possible, large stones and logs will be left alone to avoid disturbing hibernating creatures
- There will be areas created where wood is allowed to rot to encourage insects to thrive
- Wildflowers will be allowed to grow within the site, and children will be encouraged to enjoy them.
- The hedgerow around the edge of the site will be used by the children for exploration, but also maintained to encourage small wildlife to visit there

Equality and Diversity

Inclusion is a thread that runs through all our Forest School activities regardless of a child's ability, disability, gender, race, or culture. Every child will be included in activities, and reasonable adjustments will be made to make Forest School inclusive for all.

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Mental Health Policy

One of the main aims of EVA Forest School is to support mental health and wellbeing for all pupils and their families by being a safe and supportive environment for all. We also aim to support the mental health and wellbeing of all staff and governors. The emotional availability of adults in the Forest School combined with the relaxed atmosphere, aims to give pupils and families the opportunity and confidence to speak about how they are feeling and have their voice heard.

Aims

- To promote the positive wellbeing and mental health of all people on the Forest School site.
- To make staff aware of early warning signs and changes to behaviour that may indicate that someone needs extra support with their mental health.
- To make staff aware of when and how they can access further support for anyone whose mental health concerns them and to signpost to this.
- To develop resilience in all so that members of Forest School have the tools to overcome challenges without it impacting on their mental health to an extreme level.

If a member of staff is concerned about a student, family or staff member's mental health they should speak to the Forest School leader discreetly. If the Forest School Leader is concerned that the child is in danger the schools Child Protection procedures will be adhered to.
If someone presents with a high risk medical issue the Emergency Services will be contacted.

Individual Care Plan

The school will draw up individual care plan for pupils identified as having a diagnosed mental health issue or pupils that are receiving support from CaMHs or other organisations. Plans will be shared with the Forest School Leaders.

Warning Signs

If staff notice that a pupil is experiencing problems with their mental health or wellbeing, they will notify class teachers and add the sign that they have observed to CPOMs.
Possible signs (NSPCC)

- *Covering up and wearing long sleeves, even in warm weather*
- *Unexplained cuts and bruises*
- *Blood stains on clothing*
- *Not enjoying the things that they usually would.*
- *Becoming withdrawn and not wanting to spend time with friends.*
- *Experiencing low self esteem*
- *Being tearful and upset regularly*
- *Changes in eating or sleeping habits*
- *Feeling nervous or on edge*
- *Suffering panic attacks*
- *Abusing drugs or alcohol*
- *Absences or lateness*
- *Decrease in academic achievement*

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Learning and Development Policy

Forest School was brought to the UK from Scandinavia in the 1990's but it also includes the main principles of many British traditions such as Guiding and Scouting. The theories behind Forest School have come from respected theorists such as Froebel, Piaget, Steiner, Isaacs and Montessori.

Our Ethos

The aim of Forest School at Edlington Victoria Academy is to support the holistic development of all children and adults involved in the programme. Forest School will encourage children to engage with nature and the outdoors with all their senses in an exploratory way. It will promote the development of:

- Self-esteem
- Resilience
- Emotional intelligence
- Independence
- Collaboration
- Autonomy
- Motivation
- Respect
- Care for the environment
- Managing their own and others risk taking, related to good judgement

For all aspects involving risk above the normal school day a risk/benefit assessment will be carried out. Risk taking is essential to support the children to build in confidence and resilience.

The programme is designed to be run over six to twelve weeks. During this period, children will grow and develop with the environment and within themselves.

Roles and Responsibilities

Forest School sessions will be carried out by qualified Level 3 forest school practitioners. Forest School leaders will have the overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of each session.
The leaders will:

- Risk assess each session with a pre-visit site check and continuous safety monitoring
- Plan for each session and adapt for different needs
- Ensure that on site rules are followed
- Ensure necessary equipment is taken into the woodland
- Supervise the use of tools, cleaning and storing
- Ensure that appropriate first aid provision is available, and administer when necessary
- Supervise fire use, following 'Fire Procedures' set out in this document
- Organise emergency procedures if and when required
- Ensure that school staff, students and volunteers understand their role at Forest School
- Ensure the site is left as it was found after every session
- Ensure that all supporting adults have read and signed the Forest School Policy. Prior to attending a session

Other school staff, students, and volunteers will:

- Display a positive attitude toward the Forest School ethos
- Model good practice throughout the session
- Carry out delegated roles and responsibilities as directed by the forest school leader
- Extend children's learning where appropriate by asking extended questions,
- Support children to manage their own risks,
- Remind children of the rules and boundaries of Forest School

- Be aware of the dangers within Forest School
- Monitor levels of safety at all times

Normal Operating Procedures

Daily operating procedures

Before we go:

- Check the weather, Forest School will be cancelled in adverse weather conditions. See adverse weather policy.
- Check the children are appropriately dressed and offer waterproofs wellies, gloves and hats/sun hats as deemed appropriate.
- Equipment check: well-maintained and in good working order.
- Emergency contacts and first aid kit.
- Risk assessments completed.
- Complete opening checklist.
- Be aware of any individual risk assessments, additional needs and supporting

documentation During the session:

- Dynamic risk assessments.
- Regular headcounts.
- Designated staff to high-risk areas.
- Discuss safety with the children.

- All tools to remain in toolboxes until a trained leader is ready to supervise the

learning. After the session:

- Register taken.
- Equipment checklist completed.
- Toolboxes stored locked with padlocks.
- Clear site and leave as it was found.
- Maintain equipment.
- Evaluation of session.
- Complete closing checklist.
- Debrief of the session to relevant staff members of the setting.

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Safeguarding Policy

It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leaders to ensure that pupils and adults are safe throughout the sessions. We will create an environment which is safe from abuse and any suspicion of abuse will be reported to school and dealt with following the schools Safeguarding Policy. We will minimise the risk of abuse through careful planning and best practice. We will empower adults involved to speak out if they suspect abuse and we will take appropriate action in relation to any allegations made.

All staff will have enhanced checks from the Disclosure & Baring Service, dated within 5 years and at the current home address. Only people with suitable records in relation to this will be permitted to work or volunteer on the Forest School site. Any volunteers will be vetted as per the schools usually procedures for having volunteers in school. Volunteers will not be left unsupervised with children.

Ratios

The following minimum adult ratios will be adhered to:

Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1: 1 adult: 8 children

Key Stage 2: 1 adult: 10 children

The Forest School Leader will be responsible for making the decision as to whether higher ratios are required to support the sessions in relation to the needs of the group or the experiences on offer in a particular session.

Toileting:

Only staff employed by the school may assist children with toileting. Pupils will be walked back into school to use the year ¾ toilets nearest to the Forest School Area.

Photos & Video Permission

Forest School Leaders will check the school photo permissions of all members of the group. Parents will be made aware that staff will take photographs for monitoring and evaluation purpose and occasionally to assist in building the profile of Forest School on corridor displays and school social media accounts. Pupils who do not have permission will not be photographed. If a pupil has consent for photographs but not social media permission their face will be blurred in any shared photographs.

Disclosures, Recording & Reporting

Any disclosures will be dealt with following the School Safeguarding Policy. Concerns will be reported to Janine Bingham, school safeguarding leader or in Janine's absence, Emily Clark/Ellie Dowse (Deputy Safeguarding Leader). All disclosures will be responded to sensitively and children will be reassured that we will try to help.

- All concerns will be acted upon straight away following the school policy and best practice for recording and reporting.
- The safety of the rest of the group will be secured before taking further action if required.
- If a crime has taken place the leader will call 999 and report this to the Police.
- If an allegation is made against another adult, the adult will leave the school site and not return until the claim has been fully investigated.

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Behaviour and Rewards Policy

Rationale

At Edlington Victoria Academy Forest School we embrace the rights of all members within our community to learn and play in a safe, supportive, and stimulating environment. All members of our community are fully committed to work together to establish a positive ethos and promote effective learning within an environment where all children and young people can stay safe, enjoy, and achieve, be healthy, make a positive contribution and achieve future wellbeing. We acknowledge that knowing and understanding children, their differences and similarities must remain at the heart of our behaviour practices. All members of our community are supported to acknowledge and respect cultural, emotional, social, and spiritual differences. Children are treated sensitively within an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance. All members of our community must always aim to be good role models. During Forest School sessions we are seeking to develop positive attitudes and raise the self-esteem of all children.

Forest School Rules:

- Do not walk through the fire circle.
- Do not open the gate.
- No picking and licking.
- Show respect to each other.
- Return to the circle if you hear the whistle.

In the Forest School sessions, we expect children will demonstrate these by:

- being respectful to everyone
- keeping the area tidy
- sharing and using materials sensibly and returning them to the appropriate place
- following the Forest School rules
- not distracting others from learning
- being part of a team
- being a role-model to other children
- being kind and friendly
- sharing

Responsibilities of Staff

All staff are expected to model our Forest School ethos in their interactions with children and with other staff. We know that self-image is formed largely by how children feel they are perceived by adults and children with significance in their lives. All staff are expected to treat each other, and the children with respect. By doing this, a calm environment is created, a place where children can feel safe, learning takes place and good behaviour is promoted.

Overview of Rewards and Consequences

We aim to develop an ethos where there is a healthy balance between rewards and logical consequences with both being clearly understood by all children and staff. Children should learn to expect fair and consistent consequences for inappropriate behaviours. At the beginning of each session staff discuss the rules with the children. The emphasis of this policy is on positive praise, which should be given wherever possible for both learning and behaviour. All systems may be varied as part of a behaviour plan to consider individual circumstances.

Rewards

All members of staff will always recognise and celebrate appropriate behaviour and achievements through informal praise.

Forest school sessions

Forest School sessions are not classed as privileges. However, if a child repeatedly chooses not to follow the Forest School rules and their behaviour will present an unacceptable risk to themselves or others, we may not always be able to allow them to take part in a session. This decision will be made by the Forest School Leader along with the Principal.

Consequences

The procedures outlined in the following section are to help deal effectively with inappropriate behaviour. All staff are responsible for maintaining the high standards of behaviour in Forest School. If a child exhibits inappropriate behaviour, staff should initially speak to the child (see below) It may be necessary to employ several sanctions to maintain positive pupil-staff relationships, and to ensure a safe and positive learning environment. As with matters relating to reward, consistency is vital and should be appropriate to each individual situation.

Support

Restorative Practice Questioning Technique – at all stages we encourage children to talk through an issue that has caused conflict leading to children with support developing possible solutions and strategies.

- What has happened?
- Who has been affected?
- How can we help everyone involved to come to a solution?
- How can everyone do things differently in the future?

Incident forms need to be completed in the case of a severe behaviour incident on school format.

Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- biting, spitting, hitting and kicking
- foul language and swearing
- making unkind remarks or Racist/Homophobic comments.
- damaging property
- answering back, rudeness or aggression to adults
- stealing
- forming gangs and bullying

Use of reasonable force

Where necessary restraint may be used in line with the section below on the use of reasonable force.

Physical contact with pupils

Forest School Policy recognises that it is not illegal for staff to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact with a pupil is proper and necessary. Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary include:

- Holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when walking together to Forest School;
- When comforting a distressed pupil;
- When a pupil is being congratulated or praised;
- To demonstrate how to use a tool;
- To demonstrate climbing techniques;
- To give first aid;
- Use of reasonable force, to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

Reasonable Force

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils. Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom. Restraint means to hold back a pupil physically. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention. School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil. All Forest School Leaders have a legal power to use reasonable force.

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. The following list provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can be used:

- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts others in a session;
- to prevent a pupil leaving the Forest School area where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- to prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight;
- to restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

All staff will receive Safeguarding training so they are clear on how best to deal with an incident. All incidents of restraint should be logged on CPOMS (under the restraint category) and a restraint incident form should be completed. Force may not be used as a punishment as this is unlawful.

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, the Principal and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following "prohibited items":

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules. Pupils with Special Educational Needs have the right to be treated no less favourably than their peers, and staff have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure they are.

Monitoring Incidents / Reviewing Procedures

The Pastoral and Behaviour Leaders will monitor and evaluate all CPOMS entries relating to the use of reasonable force, along with the need for/impact of any training. Records will be made available during Ofsted inspections and to the Local Authority upon request. Incidents of restrictive physical intervention will be monitored termly by the Governing Body.

Parental Involvement

When and how do we involve parents?

The Forest School will share its expected standards of behaviour which both the children and their parents. This will ensure that everyone is working towards the same standards and fully understands them.

Working with Other agencies

As part of the Forest School's inclusive ethos we will make every attempt to work with other agencies to safeguard the welfare of a child from an early stage and ensure that a child receives as much support as possible. The Forest School believes that often behaviour results from social and emotional issues and therefore other agencies are needed to stop the escalation of these issues. Full use will be made of such agencies as Educational Welfare, Social Services, Health Services, CAHMS, Family Support Worker (Children's Centre) and the Educational Psychological Service when appropriate.

Sharing of Information

The school will keep up to date records of a child and share information in accordance with its safeguarding policies and information sharing guidance. All conversations regarding a child with a multi-agency team will be recorded on CPOMS.

Care of Forest School premises and sites:

Everyone in the Forest School is responsible for the care of the premises. Children and staff are encouraged to feel a sense of ownership for the environment.
To achieve this:

- The storage sheds will be kept clean and tidy.
- The grounds will be kept clear of litter or debris from sessions.
- The plants/trees will be well maintained where appropriate.

Equal Opportunities & Disability Discrimination

All children will be treated equally and fairly within the Forest school and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Forest School endeavours to make reasonable adjustments in relation to children's needs to ensure that all children are treated fairly in line with this policy – this may include improving physical environment or improving the accessibility of information to disabled pupils and their parents/carers. Staff ensure children know all issues of discrimination and prejudice including the use of derogatory language will be addressed by staff.

Monitoring of behaviour in Forest School

Behaviour is monitored by Forest School leaders on a session-to-session basis, so that trends of behaviour are noticed and supported straight away.

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Accident and Emergency Policy

Prior to the session

- All staff and children will be told what to do in case of an emergency.

During an emergency

- A whistle will be blown and everyone must stop and look to the leader.
- The Leader will then tell the children and adults where to gather.
- Children and adults must gather quickly and quietly.
- The Forest School Leader will assess the situation.
- The Forest School Leader will ensure all members of the group are safe from danger and adequately supervised.
- First Aid will be given.
- An incident report will be filled out.
- Parents/careers will be informed of the injury.
- If it is a bump to the head the schools letter will also be sent home.

In case of injury

- If anyone sustains an injury that needs further treatment than first aid on site, if possible, they will be taken back into school to receive more First Aid, or to be collected by a parent/career.
- If the injury sustained is serious enough to require medical attention, 999 will be called from the Forest School Leaders mobile phone and the school will be notified.
- School will then inform the parent.
- The rest of the group will return to school.
- One member of staff will ensure the gate is open to the playground.
- One member of staff will meet the Emergency Services at the main school entrance and direct them to the Forest School site.
- If the injured child is taken to hospital, a member of staff will go with them and school will update the parents.

Emergency Contact Numbers

Ambulance: 999 Edlington Victoria Academy – 01709 862175

Requesting attendance by Emergency Services

- Dial 999 and ask for an ambulance.
- Be ready with the following information:
  1. Telephone number (07800865626 (RP) /07519490369 (TH))
  2. Details of your location Site: Edlington Victoria Academy, Edlington, Doncaster, DN12 1BN Tel: 07800865626
     What Three Words: plankton.super.aware
     Air Ambulance grid reference locator: SK 53727 99275
  3. A brief description of the problem (E.g. How many people are injured? What injuries do they have? How high have they fallen from?)
  4. Tell them that the crew will be met at the entrance to the main school building.

5. Speak clearly and slowly and be ready to repeat the information if asked.
Nearest landing site for air ambulance: The school field beside the Forest School area.

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SEND Policy

We ensure that all pupils can take part in Forest School sessions, regardless of their needs. Forest School has an inclusive ethos and we strive to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential by providing appropriate support and resources for all. This Policy will complement the whole school policy which can be found on the schools website: https://www.edlingtonvictoria.co.uk/media/documents/2022-01-Exceed-SEND-Policy-Info-Report---EVA-Sept-22.pdf

Aims

We will continually strive to achieve the academy's aims in Forest School through the unique experience that Forest School offers to our children.

- We will learn social skills that encourage agreeable interactions between peers as well as adults.
- We will treat everyone in an equal manner, irrespective of gender, race, class or disability.
- We will develop personal and moral values that are respectful of others, leading to their appreciation and toleration of other religions and other ways of life.
- We will be in a safe as possible environment, in keeping with Health and Safety Regulations that are in the interests of all whom work in the academy.
- We recognise that pupils learn at different rates and that there are many factors affecting holistic development.

Objectives:

- to work in partnership with families and others involved in the care of children.
- to promote children's self-esteem and emotional health and well-being and help them to form and maintain meaningful relationships based on respect for themselves and others
- to sustain a "whole child, whole academy" approach to the co-ordination and provision of support for special educational needs
- to deploy effective support staff whilst acknowledging that additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching
- to provide differentiated and personalised learning opportunities building on each child's strengths and interests
- to identify needs, particularly of vulnerable and disadvantaged children, at the earliest opportunity, meet their needs, and review their progress regularly
- to focus on individual progress across a wide range of outcomes as the main indicator of success
- To work always in the best interests of the child.

SEN Definition

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

Disability

We have an inclusive Forest School ethos and will make all reasonable adjustments so that pupils with a disability are included in all areas.

Medical condition

Some children that may take part in Forest School have medical conditions that require care and support to enable full access to the Forest School sessions. Some children with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case the academy will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Some may also have special educational needs (SEN) and may have a Statement, or EHCP which brings together health and social care needs, as well as their special educational provision. At Edlington Victoria Academy, all pupils with medical needs are given a medical plan. This will be shared with Forest School Leaders prior to the pupils/s joining the group.

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Clothing Policy

"There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing."
-Ranulph Fiennes

Due to the outdoor nature of Forest School, children will be outdoors in all (but the most extreme) weather conditions. Throughout the sessions, children will be encouraged to use their whole body to explore the natural environment. It is vital that children are protected from the elements so that the aims of Forest School can still be realised despite adverse weather conditions.

We will supply all pupils with waterproof coats, trousers, and wellington boots to protect school uniform and shoes. We are also able to provide warm hats and gloves for cold weather and sun hats for warm weather. In warmer weather pupils should bring a change of clothes, that can get wet and muddy, as they may choose not to wear the waterproof coats and trousers. We recommend long sleeves and trousers to protect from sunburn, insect bites and plant stings or thorns.

In cold weather please send your child with:

- Layers.
- Long sleeve t-shirts/shirt
- Jumper/fleece
- Warm socks
- Gloves
- Hats
- Wellies

In warm weather please send your child with:

- Sun hat
- Sun cream (applied before session)
- Light long-sleeved top
- Light long trousers
- Enclosed shoes/boots

Forest School practitioners and staff will ensure all children are dressed appropriately before leaving the school building. Children are encouraged to dress and undress themselves and to take responsibility for where they leave any removed clothing.

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Food and Drink Policy

It is important to note that as we raise awareness of the woodland environment children's interest in edible fruits and berries found in the Forest School area will increase.

In Forest School session we operate a no picking and no eating rule and talk to the children about the dangers of eating unknown fruit and berries and the possible consequences. We aim to teach the children that not all fruits and berries are edible and therefore we should not pick and eat fruits or berries either within the Forest School area or out in any other woodland area.

Pupils will be encouraged to bring water bottles to Forest School sessions. All other food and drink will be supplied by the school. Forest School Leaders will be aware of any allergies, intolerances or cultural preferences with regards to food and drink and take responsibility for any food or drink offered.

Food and drink safety

- Hot drinks will be made in Kelly Kettles supervised closely by Forest School Leaders.
- All products will be purchased from reputable sources.
- All food used will be retained in the original packaging so that labels can be checked against any allergies etc.

Food preparation

- All food preparation and serving surfaces must be cleaned beforehand with warm soapy water.
- Cuts and sores must be covered with gloves or plasters.
- Dates on food and drink will be checked prior to use.

Food waste and litter

Food waste will be disposed of in a bin sack in the black bin. It will then be taken into school and disposed of correctly. Children will learn about the dangers of leaving litter and food debris outside.

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Emergency Action Plan and Prevention Procedures

Prior to the start of the session all staff and children will be informed of the procedure for if there is an emergency. If the whistle is blown, all children and staff must immediately return to the fire circle. All staff and children must also be safe while the emergency is dealt with.

Emergency Procedure

In the event of an emergency the following will happen:

- Emergency whistle blown
- Children advised to put tools and equipment down by adults in surrounding areas
- Pupils and adults to return to the fire circle
- Forest school leader to assess situation and remove any hazards
- Once any hazards have been removed, the leader will deal with the incident and if necessary contact the school and emergency services

Emergency Contact information

School Address:
Edlington Victoria Academy
Victoria Road
Edlington
Doncaster
South
Yorkshire
DN12 1BN

Telephone: 01709 862175
Emergency services: 112
What Three Words: plankton.super.aware

Air Ambulance grid reference locator: SK 53727 99275

Staffing

During Forest School sessions there will always be at least 2 members of staff. A minimum of one of the members of staff will always be a qualified Forest School Leader.

Essential Items

The Forest School Leader will ensure that they have the following essential items in Forest School during evert session;

- First Aid kit
- Burns First Aid Kit
- Bucket of water
- Mobile phone
- Drinks and food
- Any individual risk assessments.

Lost child Procedure

The safety of all children attending the Forest School sessions is of utmost importance.

Before leaving the school site a register will be taken and a head count performed. Head counts will continue to be undertaken throughout the session. A head count will be taken when the session is ending, and pupils are leaving the site and then a final headcount will be undertaken when back in the school building.

It is unlikely that a child will become lost. However, if a head count indicates that a child is missing the following procedure will be adhered to:

- The head count will be repeated to remove any counting error.

If it is then ascertained that a child is definitely missing the following procedure will be adhered to

- The whistle will blow.
- Everyone on site will return to the fire circle.
- The register will be used to find out which child is missing.
- The child's name will be called.
- One member of staff will remain with the group in the fire circle while the other adult searches the area.

If the child cannot be found within 2 minutes the group will return to school (leaving one adult with a phone in the area) and the school Lost Child Policy will be applied. Parents and the Police will be called. Staff will follow the directions of the Police.

We aim to prevent children becoming lost by:

- Teaching the children about the dangers of leaving the group
- Informing the children that they cannot go through the gate without an adult
- Having good adult: child ratios

Once the child is found:

- On the same day a risk assessment will be carried out
- On the same day statements will be taken from practitioners
- An emergency meeting with be held to go through the policy and risk assessment
- Staff will be informed of any changes put in place to minimize future risks.

<u>First Aid Procedure</u>

- At least one adult on site will be First Aid trained.
- All Forest School leaders and supporting adults will be aware of any medical conditions of the children, and medical aids such as inhalers and epi pens will be taken into the Forest School site during sessions.
- Medical aids will be stored safely in a designated area in the outdoor shelter, and all adults will be made aware of this.
- A fully equipped, first aid kit will be present at all sessions, and audited weekly by a Forest School leader using the 'audit checklist' (kept in the first aid box and in the Forest School resource room)
- In the event of minor injuries occurring, first aid will be carried out and recorded in the accident book located alongside the Forest School first aid kit.
- Parents will be contacted about injuries and the appropriate accident report forms will be completed in line with the school First Aid policy.
- Whilst one Forest School leader is dealing with a first aid incident, the other Forest School leader will ensure the safety of all children within the group by advising other adults of the situation and asking them to monitor the other children.
- In the event of major injuries occurring, the Forest School leader will assess the need to evacuate children from the area. If necessary, children will be taken back into school by a Forest School leader or supporting adult.

Intruders

The Forest School area is in a fenced space so intruders should not be able to enter the area, however, it is likely that an intruder could approach the fence from the Trans Pennine Trail. If an intruder did enter area or approach the fence, the children and adults would be gathered in a safe area and the Forest School Leader would decide whether they needed to contact the school and the Police. If the Leader felt it was safe to do

so they could greet the intruder and ask them why they are in the area. They should not approach the intruder. The leader should remain calm and keep the intruder away from the children.

Weather

It is recognised that severe weather conditions, such as snow, extreme winds, flooding, or extreme heat may impact on whether Forest School sessions can be held. This policy gives guidelines and clarifies expectations on the weather conditions that we would deem too extreme to hold a Forest School session.

At Edlington Victoria Forest School we believe children should experience learning in the outdoor environment in all weather conditions, however we understand that it is our responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and adults. It is the Forest School Leaders decision to cancel a session.

Preparation

Forest School Leaders will check the weather forecast on the Met Office app prior to all sessions. We will aim to give 24 hours' notice if a session cannot go ahead, however we may need to cancel on the day, if there is a sudden weather change. There will be enough wellingtons and waterproof suits, gloves, and hats for all pupils taking part in the session. Drinking water will be available throughout the session.

Ensuring Site Safety

In the event of extreme weather conditions, the Forest School Leaders will ensure the Forest School area is safe to access by clearing pathways and applying grit/sand as required. They will carry out a risk assessment to check that the weather has not caused any damage that would be dangerous to staff and pupils in the Forest School area. Any dangers will be dealt with by the leaders before the session can take place.

High winds

High winds can be dangerous in the Forest School area due to the risk of falling branches and damage to shelters. Forest School Leaders will monitor the forecast and site carefully to ensure that it is safe. Forest School sessions will not be able to go ahead if the winds are gusting too quickly.

Electrical storms

Electrical storms can be dangerous in the Forest School area due to only have a small indoor shelter with no windows and due to the risk of shock from lightning (both direct and indirect through tree roots.) If lightning strikes within a 35km radius of Forest School, we seek shelter inside school for 30 minutes after the last thunder clap.

Snow and ice

Forest School may have to close due to snow and ice, or sessions may need to be cut short if the temperature drops too low. Icy conditions can be dangerous and will be monitored closely by Forest School Leaders. Pupils need to be appropriately dressed for sessions to take place in low temperatures.

Heat

If the temperature measures too high, it may be deemed unsafe for pupils to remain outside for the full length of their session. In the unlikely event this happens, the Forest School Leader may make the decision to cut the session short. On warm days' pupils will receive a text message on the morning of the session, asking them to wear sun cream. Pupils will be provided with a sun hat and fresh drinking water. Children will be reminded to stay in shaded areas, such as under the trees or in the shelter. Resources will not be placed to entice children into unshaded areas.

Lockdown Procedure

If the Forest School Leader is alerted to a local concern or threat all children and adults should return to school, if possible. If this is not possible the Forest School lockable shelter could be used to hide inside. Children and adults must stay there until notified that it is safe to leave by the school Senior Leadership

Team.

If behaviour is causing children to be unsafe the leader will blow the whistle and call 'Lockdown' and all tools will be locked away and fire will be extinguished immediately. The group will be gathered and then a decision on whether to return to the school building will be made.

Absconding Individual

If a child is seen opening the gate to leave the Forest School area or climbing up the fence to abscond, their name is to be called followed by STOP. If you feel the child will run if you approach, ask them to turn and return to the log circle. If the child continues to attempt to leave, blow the whistle and regroup the rest of the children at the log circle. If the child absconds over the fence telephone school immediately and ask them to send two members of staff to follow the child and contact the Police. Adults in Forest School cannot be expected to scale the fence. Practitioners are not to follow the individual into anywhere they feel unsafe or threatened. Give the Police your location using the What Three Words app for accuracy, see above.

Date written: May 2025 Review: May 2027

First Aid Policy

Forest School Leaders hold an up-to-date qualification in First Aid. One also holds a qualification in Paediatric First Aid and the other one holds a qualification in Outdoor First Aid.

- The First Aid kit will always be in the Forest School Area.
- The First Aid Kit will be checked weekly and refilled as appropriate.
- If a minor injury is sustained the leaders will treat the injury and fill in the relevant accident form.
- The Burns Kit will always be in the Forest School Area.

If a serious injury occurs medical assistance will be called.

Date written: May 2025 Review: May 2027

Environmental Policy and Environmental Impact Assessment

Forest School always intends to develop a respect for the natural environment and to encourage the children to think about the Forest School area and how we can make the area as environmentally friendly as possible and contribute to the health and longevity of our planet.

Aims:

- To minimise any waste
- To recycle whenever possible
- To reuse materials whenever possible
- To only burn materials that will have minimal impact on the environment
- To ensure all waste, including from the fire, is disposed of after each session.
- To collect any litter and dispose of it in the school bins.

Foraging and picking flowers is governed by three pieces of legislation: The Theft Act 1968, The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and The Countryside Rights of Way Act 2004.

Fruit, flowers, foliage, and fungi can be used for personal consumption if they are growing wild, but it is illegal to uproot any plant without the landowner's permission. Although rare or endangered plants like bluebells and snowdrops are protected by law and children will be taught that they cannot pick them.

Minimising impact

Collecting wood: Deadwood is vital to the health of woodlands and plays a huge part in nutrient recycling. It also acts as a carbon storage system to prevent global warming. It makes the woodland soil sustainable and is a microhabitat for hundreds of wildlife species. We will only have fires to provide heat and for cooking and before we light a fire we will consider the amount of dry wood in the area, as this is limited on our site. In most cases, we will get wood from another site or purchase wood from a sustainable source.

Fire: We are aware that fires alter the chemistry within the soil which can cause harm to some plants and animals. We are also aware that fire not only has impact on surface level but can travel underground to roots, even after the fire appears to be distinguished. Therefore, whenever possible, fires will only be lit in the fire pit or in the Kelly Kettles. Ashes will be disposed of in the nettles. All fires will be fully extinguished before leaving the site.

Cooking: We are aware that food waste may attract animals to the site, which could over time alter the biodiversity of the area. We will ensure that all food is disposed of in the Forest School bin that is then taken back into school to be disposed of with the food waste.

Compost Heap: We will have a compost heap in the corner of the Forest School and encourage pupils to add suitable food waste to promote natural decomposition. The rich soil product created will then be used for gardening purposes.

Tree Climbing, Building and Swings: We are aware that these activities can cause damage to trees. Suitable trees will be identified for these experiences. We have added in a climbing structure to the Forest School area as we are aware that the climbing opportunities are minimal.

Date written: May 2024 Review: May 2025

Equality and Diversity

Aims:
Edlington Victoria Forest School is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognizes that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights and enhance the way we work. We aim to be inclusive and value diversity and ensure that all staff are aware that it is everyone's responsibility to celebrate and value differences. We aim to take action to eliminate discrimination.

The legal framework for this policy is based on:

- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 2004
- Care Standards Act 2002
- Childcare Act 2006
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The General Protection Data Regulations Act

2018 We will:

- Recognise that everyone is unique and respect their differences.
- Ensure that all activities are accessible and inclusive of all children, including children with Special Educational Needs. Specialist equipment will be sourced if necessary.
- Plan times when children can discuss and share what makes them unique and put a positive focus on this.
- Not permit any forms of discrimination-either direct or indirect and any such behaviours will be challenged at an appropriate time and in an appropriate place.
- Ensure that if any staff member feels they have been discriminated against they know the procedure to make a complaint following the school's grievance procedure.
- Promote respect for all and avoid stereotypical ideas.
- Promote principles of fairness and justice for all.
- Be welcoming and show respectful awareness to any major events in children's lives.

Date written: May 2025 Review: May 2027

Fire Evacuation Procedures

Campfires are a highlight of forest school and will only be used once the children have been introduced to safety procedures and the forest school leader is confident that they can participate with as little risk as possible to their health and safety. Children will be taught to respect fire and will also be taught the procedure for if a fire gets out of control.

Procedure:

- If a fire becomes out of control the Forest School Leader will blow the whistle.
- All adults and children on site will exit the site through the safest entrance/exit gate, main entrance leading to school or gate at the back leading to the sports court (MUGA).
- If both the gates get blocked by the fire pupils will stand as far from the fire as possible and the Emergency Services will be called immediately and informed.
- All adults and children will assemble near the school building and a head count will take place. If anyone is deemed missing the Forest School Leader will go back to the area, if safe to do so, and find the missing the child or adult.
- Forest School Leaders will only try to put out small fires if there is no risk to themselves and they are using the proper equipment.
- The Forest School lead will identify someone, if necessary, to ring 999.
- No-one will re-enter the site until we have been informed it is safe to do so.

Date written: May 2025 Review: May 2027

Fire Safety Policy

At Edlington Victoria Forest School, we recognise both the benefits and dangers that fire can bring. This fire policy is shared with all children and adults before a fire is lit so that everyone is aware of the procedure, should there be a fire that is out of control. We aim for all children and adults participating in sessions with fire to do so as safely and as a lower risk as possible.

Location of fire:

- On the Forest School site, a movable fire pit will be used in the middle of a designated fire circle.
- Kelly Kettles will be used on a flat surface and the ground will be swept for leaf litter or woodchips beforehand.

Positioning of children and adults:

- Designated fire areas are in the middle of the fire circle and in the open shelter.
- Ratio of 1:1 adult to one fire
- Children must sit on logs or fixed seats at 1.5 meters from the fire pit
- Children must walk around the outside of the seating logs and step over them to sit down
- Children will be taught how to change seats by standing, stepping over the log, and then walking around the outside of the seating area. They must never cross the inner area.
- If in the open shelter, children will be assisted by adults to move around the area.
- Children will only move into the fire circle area if they are invited by a Forest School Leader.
- If there is a clear wind direction, sitting in the line of smoke is to be avoided
- When dealing with smoke from the campfire, children will be advised to turn their head to one side, or shield their face with their hands while looking in the opposite direction

Fire safety rules:

- 5 litres of water must be present in the red fire bucket, next to the fire circle, before the fire is lit
- Children will be invited by the Forest School Leader to add fuel to the fire.
- Children cannot throw anything on to the fire and will be made fully aware of this and the potential dangers.
- Gloves must always be worn by adults and children when lighting and feeding a fire
- Hands should never go over the fire
- Only Forest School leaders are permitted to light fires, unless children or adults are under supervision of the leader
- Fires are lit using cotton wool and a fire striker, natural firelighters may also be used
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires
- No plastics are to be burnt
- Sticks and twigs must be placed, from the side, onto the fire, and not thrown in

Cooking:

- Forest School Leaders have responsibility for transporting and storing food and ensuring that it is cooked and safe to eat
- All food must be sourced from a reputable source and be in the original packaging so that the date and ingredients can be checked for any allergens.
- Forest School Leader hold a basic Food Hygiene Qualification

Extinguishing:

- 5 litres of water should always be to hand around the campfire.
- Fire gloves must be worn when extinguishing a fire.
- At the end of the session the fire must be doused with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has seized.

- Any remnants of the fire must be dispersed. This must only be done when it has totally cooled, preferably the following day. It should be finally scattered through the woodland to enable natural decomposition.

Kelly kettle:

- The Kelly kettle must be placed on flat clear ground
- Children must wear a fire glove when attempting to light and feed the Kelly kettle
- Children must only light the fire in the fire pan when they are under the direct supervision of the forest school leader/s
- Children can feed the fire with adult supervision, but they must have been shown how to do so safely
- Kelly kettles should never be boiled with the cork in
- Kettles should only be removed from the fire by an adult wearing fire safety gloves
- Only adults will put the kettle on and take the kettle off the fire bowl
- Fuel should burn itself out but if it does not it must be extinguished with water

Date written: May 2025 Review: May 2027

Use of Fire Policy

During in each Forest School group fire will be used to enhance the learning experience and provide an element of risk. Fire will only be used once Forest School Leaders feel confident that the children are ready for this and will follow the Fire Rules as set out in the previous policy.

Aims

- To use fire safely as part of the learning experience
- To allow children to apply and demonstrate their knowledge of fire safety

Method

- Any fires will only be lit following a risk assessment, within the fire circle, and under the direct supervision of the Forest School Leader. There will always be a Forest School Leader in the fire circle while ever a fire is lit, or the embers remain hot. Fires will never be left unattended.
- 5 liters of water will always be available close to the fire pit to ensure there is enough water available to extinguish the fire if it gets out of control. A fire blanket will be available to wrap around anyone that catches alight. Fireproof gloves should be kept at the fire area to allow adults to pick up hot items.
- Before a fire is lit children and adults will be made aware of the fire policies and be given the opportunity to ask questions to clarify their thinking
- All rules will be demonstrated so that the children can see 'how to' and 'how not to'.
- There will be a maximum of 8 children at the fire circle at any one time and these children will be selected by the Forest School Leader.
- The best position for cooking is on one knee so you can move backwards easily and remain stable.
- Long hair should be tied back, and scarves removed, tassels on clothing must also be tucked in.

Date written: May 2025 Review: May 2027

Hand Tool Safety Policy

Edlington Victoria Forest School recognise the role that tools can play in enhancing the learning and development experience outdoors. We also recognise the value in the development of physical skills and self-confidence in relation to small hand tools. Tools are a highlight of forest school and will only be used once the children have been introduced to safety procedures and the Forest School Leader is confident that they can participate with as little risk as possible to their health and safety and follow the rules for tool safety below.

Forest School Practitioners are aware of the Knife Act 1997 and ensure this legislation is shared with other adults. The act states that:
"It is illegal to carry any sharp or bladed instrument in a public place (with the exception of a folding pocketknife, which has a blade that is less than 7.62 cm (3 inches)) without lawful authority or reasonable excuse."

This includes the following laws:
Section 139 (A) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988
The Knives Act 1977
The Offensive Weapons Act 1996
The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006

The following tools may be used during forest school sessions:

- Bow saw
- Hand saw
- Bill Hook
- Palm drill
- Hand drill
- Carpenters Brace
- Mora knife
- Secateurs
- Loppers
- Mallets

Tool safety

- All tool use and safe positioning will be modelled to children prior to them using the tools and they will be taught how to treat them with respect
- Tools will be used with adult supervision
- The forest school leader is responsible for overseeing safe use and maintenance of all tools
- All tools will be sharp and rust free
- Knives must be opened and closed by adults
- A list of items stored in the toolbox is attached to the box. This is used as a checklist to ensure that all items are returned safely at the end of each session
- A designated area will be marked out for when tools are in use
- Running with tools is not permitted
- Children will be shown how to safely carry tools around the site
- Bow saws will have a blade guard to be on when not in use
- Guards will be removed and put back on by adults
- Bill hooks will not be swung or used with gloved hands
- Children will be taught how to handle and use tools safely
- Children will be provided with gloves to protect their hands when using certain tools
- The toolbox will be kept in a locked cupboard on the school premises, when not in use at forest school sessions

- Activity risk assessments will be completed for all activities involving the use of tools

- Woods been sawn must be supported on the floor or with a stable log
- Whittling must be done seated and away from the body

Date written: May 2025 Review: May 2027

Tool Safety and Tool Operating Procedure

Forest School practitioners are responsible for the safe usage and maintenance of all tools.

Tool protocol

- Tools are checked and counted at the beginning and end of each session
- Appropriate closed shoes should be worm
- Too training will take place before use
- All tool use will be supervised by an adult

Billhook	
Use	Splitting wood
Checks	Ensure the wooden handle is not cracked. Ensure the head has not shifted. Take off the guard and twist to check for security. Check that the wedge, pin and rivet are in place. Examine the blade for chips, fractures and sharpness.
How to	The first person should hold the bill hook with one hand firmly on the handle and pinch the hook with the other. The blade should be placed at the top of the log to be split. The second person will use a mallet to strike the top of the bill hook and drive the blade into the wood. Give the holder a soft, medium and hard hit first so that they can decide which they would like. Have a blood bubble.
Travel	Carry the billhook down by your side with the blade facing forwards
Exchange	Put the tool down for the next user to pick up appropriately.
Place down	On the floor, on top of its sheath. Hook and blade facing inwards.
Gloves	No gloves
Maintenance	Use oil or wax on the handle. Spray with lubricant spray and remove all residue.
Cleaning	Dry the blade with a cloth.
Storage	In a sheath.

Bow saw and hand saw	
Use	Bow saw: Cutting wood thicker than 2 pence piece. Hand saw: Cutting wood thinner than 2 pence piece.
Checks	Ensure the handle is not cracked. Take off the guard and twist to check for security. Check that the wedge, pin and rivet are in place. Examine the blade for chips, fractures and sharpness.
How to	**Bow saw**: Sit to the side of the bow saw.

	Two people cross over arms through the bow saw. Saw like this until it is in the groove and then one person can remove their arm. Push and pull forwards and backwards. Always have a blood bubble around the bow saw. **Hand saw:** Sit to the side of the hand saw. One person to mark with the saw where they would like to make a cut and then push and pull forwards and backwards. Have a blood bubble around the hand saw.
Travel	Carry the bow saw down by your side with the teeth pointing downwards and the guard in place. Carry the hand saw facing downwards.
Exchange	Put the tool down for the next user to pick up appropriately.
Place down	On the floor, on top of saw cover. Blade facing inwards.
Gloves	No gloves on tool but wear a glove on non-sawing hand.
Maintenance/Cleaning	Dry the blade with a cloth. Change the blade when necessary. Lubricate the blade with lubricant spray.
Storage	In a saw cover.

Palm drill	
Use	To drill holes in or through thin pieces of wood.
Checks	Check handle and drill bit are in good condition.
How to	Hold object in the palm of your hand and turn the palm drill to create a hole. Have a blood bubble around the palm drill.
Travel	Hold down by your side with drill bit facing down.
Exchange	Put the tool down for the next user to pick up appropriately.
Place down	In tool box.
Gloves	No gloves on tool but wear a glove on non-working hand.
Maintenance/Cleaning	Wipe off any residue. Replace when any part of the tool becomes worn.
Storage	In a tool box but ensure the drill bit is not facing up.

Hand drill	
Use	To drill holes in or through pieces of wood.
Checks	Check tool and drill bit are in good condition.
How to	Secure the object on the ground and turn the hand drill to create a hole. Have a blood bubble around the hand drill.
Travel	Hold down by your side with drill bit facing down.

Exchange	Put the tool down for the next user to pick up appropriately.
Place down	In tool box.
Gloves	No gloves on tool but wear a glove on non-working hand.

Maintenance/Cleaning	Wipe off any residue. Replace when any part of the tool becomes worn.
Storage	In a tool box but ensure the drill bit is not facing up.

Carpenters brace	
Use	To drill larger diameter holes in or through pieces of wood.
Checks	Check tool and drill bit are in good condition.
How to	Secure the object on the ground and turn the chuck to create a hole. Have a blood bubble around the carpenters brace.
Travel	Hold down by your side with drill bit facing down.
Exchange	Put the tool down for the next user to pick up appropriately.
Place down	In tool box.
Gloves	No gloves on tool but wear a glove on non-working hand.
Maintenance/Cleaning	Wipe off any residue. Replace when any part of the tool becomes worn.
Storage	In a tool box but ensure the drill bit is not facing up.

Mora knife	
Use	To shave away a piece of wood.
Checks	Ensure the handle is not cracked and is securely attached to the blade. Examine the blade for chips, fractures, rust and sharpness. Examine the sheath for cracks.
How to	Hold in dominant hand and pull away from body. Have a blood bubble. Use to the side, rather than over the leg.
Travel	Carry in a sheath down by your side with blade facing down.
Exchange	Put the tool down for the next user to pick up appropriately.
Place down	Back in the tool box.
Gloves	Wear gloves for cleaning and sharpening.
Maintenance/Cleaning	Clean with a cloth and remove all residue. Lubricate the blade with lubricant spray. Sharpen using a water stone.

Storage	In a sheath.

Loppers and secateurs	
Use	To cut wood smaller than a 2 pence piece
Checks	Ensure the nut is secure. Check the handles for crack and signs of damage. Use your body as a bar when checking the blades.
How to	Open the blades, using the handles, and put them around the wood to be cut. Close the handles to cut the wood. Do not use with extended arms. Have a blood bubble. Keep a firm grip on the handles so that they don't rotate.
Travel	Carry down by your side with blades facing down.
Exchange	Put the tool down for the next user to pick up appropriately.
Place down	Back in the tool box.
Gloves	No gloves
Maintenance/Cleaning	Clean with a cloth and remove all residue. Lubricate the blade with lubricant spray. Sharpen using a water stone.
Storage	In a sheath.

Mallet	
Use	To drive tools into wood.
Checks	Ensure the handle is not cracked and is securely attached to the mallet head.
How to	Hold in dominant hand and keep legs well back. Have a blood bubble. Use to the side, rather than over the leg.
Travel	Carry down by your side with head facing down.
Exchange	Put the tool down for the next user to pick up appropriately.
Place down	Back in the tool box.
Gloves	No gloves
Maintenance/Cleaning	Clean with a cloth and remove all residue.
Storage	In a tool box

Date written: May 2025 Review: May 2027

Using and Storing Tools

To ensure safety on site the following procedures must be followed:

- All tools must be counted in and out
- Tools will be stored in a locked toolbox, when not in use
- Each tool must be checked for damage before it is used.
- Each tool should be kept in its own designated container
- Forest School Leaders will always supervise access to tools
- Tools will only be used for the specific purposes, as detailed in the previous policy
- A blood bubble should be created around all tools being used
- All group members need to be aware when tools are in use
- Children should be walking when transporting a tool.
- Appropriate PPE should be worn with tools.

Date written: May 2025 Review: May 2027

Health and Safety Policy

The health and safety of all adults and children accessing the Forest School area is always paramount and this policy will ensure all necessary steps are taken to make the experience as safe as necessary.

Legal Framework

We follow all relevant legislation and associated guidance relating to health and safety including:

- The regulations of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and any other legislation such as Control of Substance Hazardous to Health Regulation (COSHH).
- Any guidance provided by Public Health England, the local health protection unit, and the local authority environmental health department, fire authority or the Health and Safety Executive.
- Follow government guidelines relating to Covid 19 including social distancing and PPE.

Aims and Objectives

- Establish and maintain a safe as necessary environment throughout the site.
- Establish and maintain safe as necessary working practices.
- Ensure the provision of sufficient information, instruction, and supervision to enable all people on site to contribute to their own health and safety.
- Forest School Leaders will have access to training.
- Maintain a site with clear entry and exit routes.
- Formulate effective procedures for use of fire and other emergencies and for evacuating the site.
- Maintain a safe working environment for pregnant workers or for workers who have recently given birth, including undertaking appropriate risk assessments as per the school's procedures.
- Maintain a safe environment for those with special educational needs and disabilities and ensure all areas of site are accessible (wherever practical).
- Encourage all staff, visitors, and parents to report any unsafe working practices or areas to ensure immediate response.

We believe the risks in the Forest School are low and we will maintain a 'safe as necessary' protection for children, staff and parents. The provision will:

- Ensure the entrance and exit from the site are always kept clear.
- Risk assess the site
- Ensure that all staff, visitors, parents, and children are aware of the fire procedures.
- Have the appropriate fire control equipment, as specified in the fire policy, which is checked regularly to make sure it is in working order.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the procedure to follow in case of accidents for staff, visitors and children and report to RIDDOR when/if required.
- Encourage children to manage risks safely.
- Prohibit certain foods that may relate to children's allergies.
- Familiarise all staff and visitors with the position of the first aid boxes and ensure all know who the appointed first aiders are.
- Provide appropriate stocked first aid boxes and check their contents regularly.
- Ensure all children are supervised sufficiently.
- Ensure no student or volunteer is left unsupervised at any time.

Health and Safety Arrangements

- All children will wash their hands before leaving school for the Forest School session.

- Any additional needs, including ones related to behaviour, will be shared with Forest School Leaders prior to the session. Individual risk assessments will be completed.
- All staff are responsible for general health and safety on site and must be aware of the related policies and procedures.
- Risk assessments will be conducted.
- Individual risk assessments for individuals should be used for individuals who may pose a risk.
- Risk assessments should be reviewed at regular intervals and when arrangements change.
- Equipment and site should be checked thoroughly by staff before children access them or the area. These checks will be recorded by the staff member responsible. Unsafe areas will be made safe/removed from the area.
- We will adhere to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulation (COSHH) to ensure all children, staff, parents, and visitors are safe in relation to any chemicals we may use on the premises.
- All staff and students will receive appropriate training in the areas of health and safety which will include risk assessments, manual handling, and fire safety.
- We will use benefit risk assessments for activities and resources for children.
- We have a clear accident and first aid policy to follow in the case of any person on site suffering injury from an accident or incident.
- We have a clear fire safety policy and procedure which supports the prevention of fire and the safe evacuation of all persons on the site.
- We review accident and incident records to identify any patterns/hazardous areas.
- The end of session checklist to be completed by the Forest School Practitioners before leaving the site.

Site

It is the responsibility of the Forest School Practitioners to ensure that it is always maintained.

- All cleaning materials are safely always stored and out of reach of children.

Equipment

All equipment is:

- Checked regularly to ensure it is safe to use.
- Checked to ensure in full working order. Any broken equipment is repaired to the original standard if possible and the item will be stored away until this can be done. If it is not possible to repair the item, then it will be disposed of by the caretaker in the correct way.

Responsibilities

- Responsibility for health and safety on the site is that of the Forest School Leaders and the school staff.
- Whenever a member of staff notices a health and safety problem which they are not able to rectify they must immediately report it to the appropriate person. Parents and visitors are requested to report any concerns they may have to the senior member of staff in the area.

Poor Weather arrangements

- The Forest School leader is responsible for checking the weather forecast for the day of a Forest School session.
- All children will be required to wear appropriate clothing before leaving the main school building.
- All supporting adults will be required to wear appropriate clothing before leaving the school building.
- Forest school leaders will provide all children with waterproof suits, wellington boots,

winter/sunhats, and gloves, depending on the weather.

Edlington Forest School follows the ethos of *'There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing!'* However, there are some occasions where it may not be safe or practical to go ahead with a planned session due to extreme weather:

- High winds
- Extreme temperature
- Extreme cold of below 0 degrees

We will ensure children are appropriately dressed, sessions will be made shorter, and activities planned will keep
children moving or in the shade accordingly.

Occasionally, the session may be cancelled or rescheduled due to unsuitable weather.

Sun Protection

We must protect the children from the dangers of the sun. We will work with the school staff team to help support and accomplish this through a variety of ways:

- Parents/carers will be asked to provide sun cream and sun hats-sun hats will be available from Forest School. These should both be applied before the children attend the site.
- Activities should be set up where possible in the shade and children should be encouraged to use shaded areas for their games.
- Children should wear long sleeved tops and trousers to protect their skin.

Date written: May 2025 Review: May 2027

Safe Lifting Policy

It is important to be aware of the correct way to lift heavy objects that may be find in the Forest School Area. The following guidance will be adhered to:

- Examine the item that you are about to move and check if it is too heavy to move.
- Decide how many people are required to move the load.
- Choose a safe route to take with the object.
- Put your feet shoulder width apart. Keep your back straight and tighten your abdominal muscles. Bend your knees and squat down to the floor and look straight ahead.
- Ensure you have a good grasp of the load with both hands.
- Keep the item close to your body and use your leg muscles to stand up and lift the load from the floor.
- Use slow and smooth movements and keep your shoulders in line with your hips.
- To drop the load squat down using only leg muscles, keep your back straight, and set the item down gently.
- Use ropes to drag heavy objects, such as trees.
- Do any heavy lifting before the children come to site if possible and if not ensure the area is clear.
- Encourage the children to use the 'walking the dog' technique to move large branches around the site.

Date written: May 2025 Review: May 2027

Toileting Policy

- Children will be encouraged to use the school toilets before the session starts.
- If children need the toilet during the session, they will be allowed to return into school and use the lower key stage 2 toilets with adult supervision.
- Children with special needs, including behavioural needs, who have an allocated teaching assistant, will be escorted to and from the toilets by their assistant.

Date written: May 2025 Review: May 2027

Policy Amendment Sheet

Any amendments to the original policy should be identified on the Policy amendment sheet.

Policy Number	Policy name	Amendments
V2	EVA Forest School Handbook	05/03/2023 Adding Toni Hendren as a Forest School Leader. Updated the fire exit procedure, due to having a new exit to the sports court (MUGA).
V3	EVA Forest School Handbook	1/05/24 Editing Safeguarding lead Editing 2 gates.
V4	EVA FOREST SCHOOL HANDBOOK	25.05.25 Editing EC as Executive Principal Adding ED as Safeguarding Deputy

Receipt of Handbook

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Edlington Victoria Academy Handbook. I understand that it is my continuing responsibility to read and know its content and I am signing to document that I have read and understood the contents. This is to include any amendments that have been made to accommodate the school site.

School name: Edlington Victoria Academy Forest School

School address: Edlington Victoria Academy, Victoria Road, Edlington, Doncaster, South Yorkshire,

DN12 1BN

Signature of School Practitioner:

Signature of any supporting school staff:

1.