

Lanchester EP Primary School



Forest School Handbook



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What is Forest School?

The Forest School approach to learning is based on a fundamental respect for children. It places them at the centre of their own learning and provides a range of activities in which they can make their own decisions, solve problems and reflect on what they have learnt.

Forest School seeks to develop children's social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and communication skills by providing them with real-life experiences and challenges in an outdoor natural setting. Through taking part in Forest School children will have increased confidence, independence, resilience and self-esteem.

Forest School leaders are facilitators and therefore encourage the children to direct their own learning and take risks. Leaders ensure children are safe and supported in doing this but give children time and space to problem solve and realise their own strengths, weaknesses and abilities.

The Forest School ethos believes in children's right to play and encourages a child's natural curiosity to explore the world around them. It also seeks to help children to engage creatively with their peers and experience a healthy range of emotions.



Forest School Rules.

During the first Forest School Session children are involved in setting a set of rules and guidelines that ensure the safety of all of those taking part.

1. Care for Nature and the Surroundings.
2. Walk around the site.
3. Stop and listen when the whistle blows.
4. Do not put anything in your mouth.
5. Wash your hands before eating and at the end of a Forest School Session.
6. Do not throw anything.
7. Ask an adult before you use any tools.
8. Always follow the tool rules.
9. Follow the fire pit rules.
10. Have Fun !



Forest School Team:



Gordon Innes

Forest School Leader



Sharon Davis

Forest School Leader



Laura Peters

Forest School Leader



Helen McGilvray

Forest Bathing Practitioner



Health and Safety

At Lanchester EP Primary School, the Health and Safety of the children, staff and visitors is our main concern. The following policies contained in this handbook are in addition to the main school policies and do not replace them.

Forest School is held on the School premises and is attended by children from the School. Forest School Leaders are responsible for the safe running of Forest School and has a duty of care for the children.

Risk Assessment

Before the site is used for a Forest School session a risk assessment will be carried out by the Forest School leader. During this risk assessment the Forest School leader will walk the site and identify any changes to the site or hazards which could cause harm. These will be made safe by removing the hazards or marking off any unsafe areas. The Forest School leader will also make a decision regarding appropriate PPE.

When planning Forest School activities any hazards or risks associated with that activity should be considered. Spontaneous activities during a session will be assessed by the Forest School leader and reasonable steps taken to ensure the activity is safe.



First Aid

The First Aid kit is in the blue pouch and is stored in the Forest shed. Forest leaders and First Aid trained members of staff are permitted to access the first aid kit.

When FS session include fire a burns kit and a container of water are stored just outside the fire circle.

Doors to the school are left open to ensure there is full access to any medication if required.

First Aid Kit Contains

Instant ice Packs
A range of plasters
Triangular Bandages
Wound dressings
Gloves
Micropore tape
CPR faceshield
Gauze
Eyepads
Scissors
Antiseptic Wipes

Burns Kit Contains

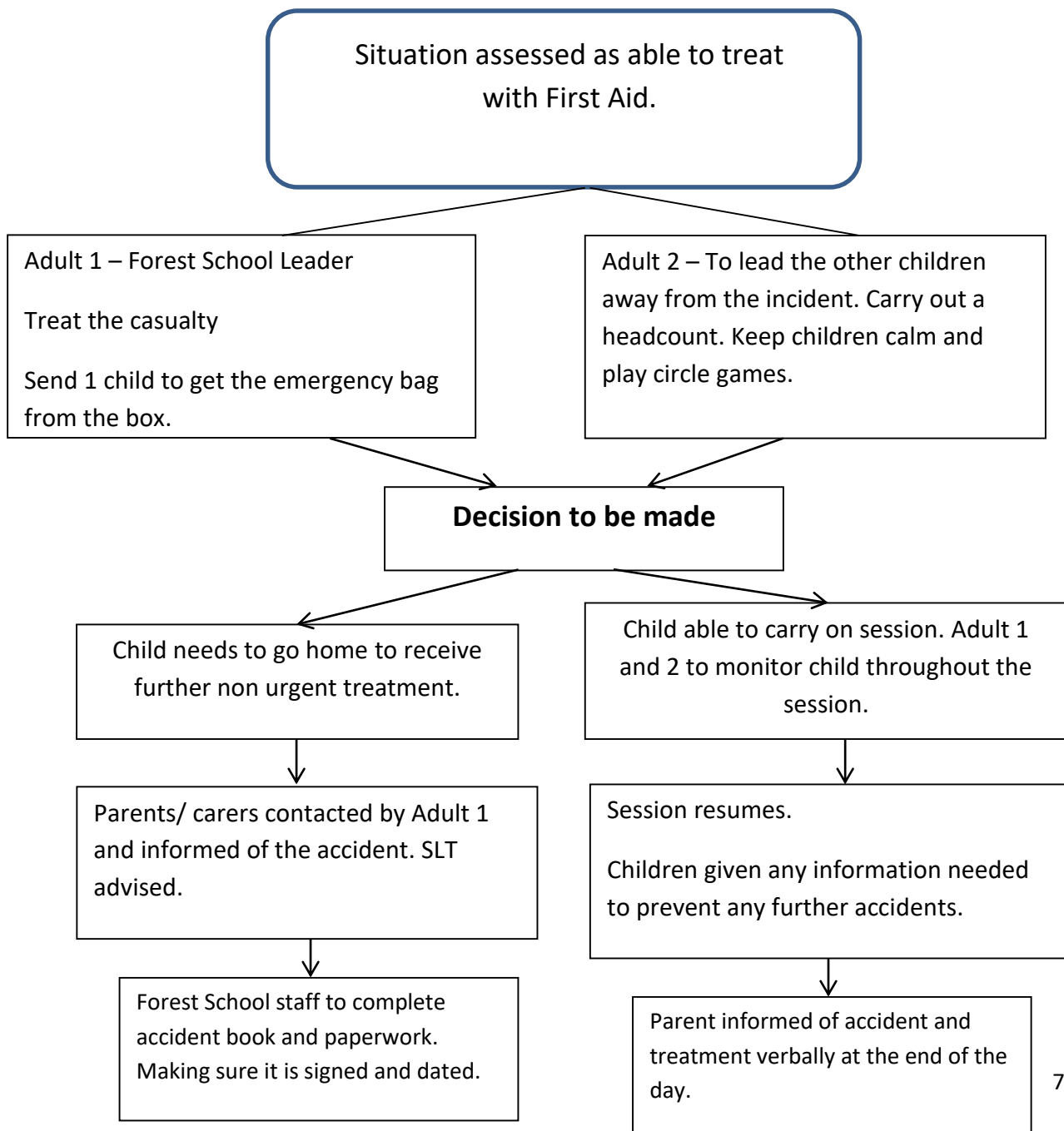
Gloves
Sterile Dressings
Micropore tape
Scissors
Burns Dressings
Burnblot Sachet



Emergency Action Plan

In the event of an emergency;

- Emergency whistle blown.
- Children must put down all tools and wait for further instructions.
- Forest School leader to assess situation and remove any hazards.
- School office contacted for additional support.

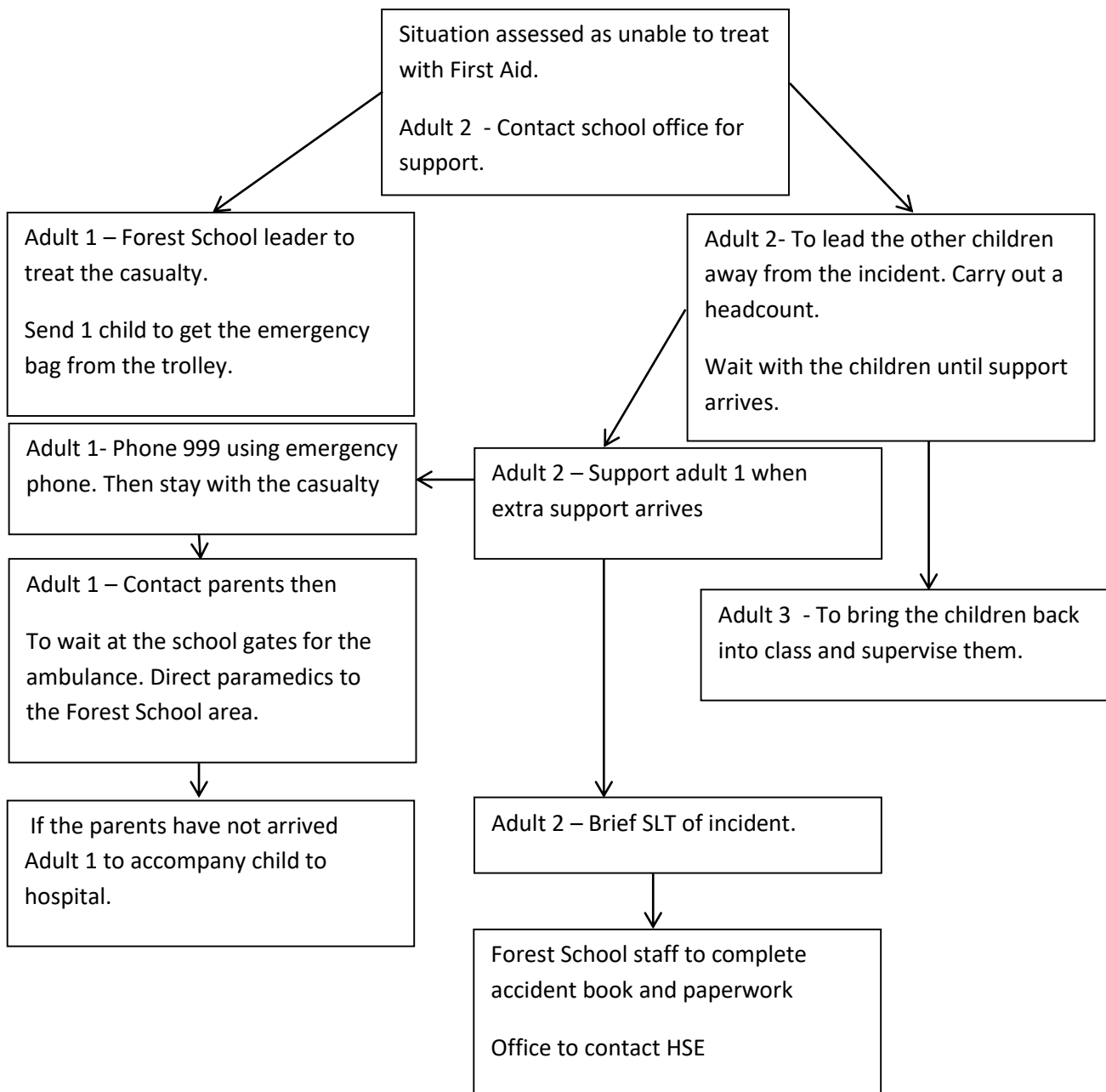




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Normal Operating Procedures

1. Before each session the Forest School leader will carry out a site sweep to Risk Assess the area and ensure it is safe.
2. Children will be encouraged to visit the toilet before the session starts.
3. The Forest School leader will ensure the children are changed into the appropriate clothing for the weather.
4. Children walk sensibly out to the either the fire circle or the nature area.
5. Children are encouraged to help transport resources safely to the session.
6. During the session children will be encouraged to direct their own learning based around the activities provided.
7. During snack time children will have the opportunity to reflect and share their experiences.
8. At the end of the session the children will help tidy away resources and equipment.
9. Tools will be counted back in by the Forest School leader.
10. If a campfire has been lit it will be extinguished properly.
11. Children will wash their hands when they come back into school.



Health and Hygiene Policy

Health and Hygiene

- Children are taught not to put anything found on the forest school site in their mouths.
- Before snack time children will use hand sanitiser to clean their hands.
- Hand wash, wipes, gloves and paper towels to be carried in the Forest School crate.
- After visiting the toilet the children must wash their hands.
- At the end of the Forest School session children must wash their hands.
- Forest School staff have their Basic Food Hygiene and cook using best practise procedures.

Toileting

- Children will be encouraged to go to the toilet before the session.
- There is a toilet area in the forest and a potty available for EYFS children.
- If children would prefer not to go to the toilet outside,
- EYFS and KS1 will be escorted to the KS2 toilets by a member of staff. They will notify the Forest School leader.
- KS2 children will use the KS2 toilets if necessary during the session. The children will escort themselves to the toilet if they are able.



Waste Disposal Policy

As a Forest School we want to ensure that we have no detrimental effect on the environment through our activities. To achieve this we will follow the subsequent procedures.

Regularly review with the group the importance of protecting the environment and our responsibility to keep it clean.

Food

- Any food waste is to be collected, put into a bin bag and removed from the site by the Forest School leader at the end of the session.

Litter

- Litter is to be collected, put into a bin bag and removed from the site by the Forest School leader at the end of the session.

Water

- Any uncontaminated waste water can be used to put out the camp fire.
- Any contaminated water should be collected in a container and disposed of safely back at school.

At the end of every session a thorough sweep of the site will be undertaken to ensure no litter or waste is left behind



Fire Policy

Fires will only be lit a Forest School leader following this policy.

- Fire only to be lit in appropriate weather.
- A fire should only be lit in the designated fire pit.
- All trip hazards should be removed from the Fire Circle by the Forest School leader at the start of every session.
- All long hair to be tied back before entering the fire circle.
- No-one is to enter the exclusion zone made from logs around the fire pit.
- A Fire Safety kit including burns kit, water and fire gloves will be kept next to the fire circle at all times.
- A first aid kit will be available at all times.
- The ratio should be 1:1 when students are tending the fire and 1:3 when cooking.
- Children should be kneeling in the respect position when they are cooking or tending the fire.
- People moving around the fire site must walk and not run.
- There must always be 2 members of staff present when a fire is lit.
- The fire must be extinguished by the Forest School leader.
- The Forest School leader must ensure the fire pit is completely cooled before leaving the site.



Tree Climbing Policy

On our Forest School site there are several trees which are suitable for climbing.

Before Climbing;

- Forest School leader will check for rotten or fallen branches.
- All hazards removed from the base of the tree

Tree Climbing

- One Child to climb a tree at any one time.
- Adult child ratio 1:1
- Tree climbing is only allowed in dry conditions where the wind is light.
- Children only allowed to climb up to 2 metres high.



Clothing Policy

To protect the health and safety of children the Forest School leader has the right to exclude any child they think is inappropriately dressed for Forest School activities.

The School has a limited selection of waterproof, warm clothing and wellies which children can borrow.

Suggested outfits for Forest School session:

Winter:

T-Shirt

Long sleeved top

Fleece or Thick jumper.

Waterproof Jacket

Trousers

Waterproof Trousers

Thick Socks

Wellies or Boots

Hat, scarf and gloves.

Summer:

Long sleeved top

Sun hat

Waterproof jacket

Light trousers

Waterproof trousers

Socks, Wellies or trainers



Tool Handling Policy

Children will not be using tools until they are ready physically and emotionally. Specific tool policies are detailed below.

Loppers	
Purpose	Cutting wood - less than two pence piece
Safety Checks	Before each use; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open loppers to check no cracks or damage to the blade or handles. - Check they can open and close easily. - Check sharpness of blade.
PPE	None
Safe Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No gloves. - Long hair tied back. - Use two arm's length and a tool away from others. -
Storage	Clean, dry tools in box in locked shed.
Maintenance	Clean with oily rag.

Bow saw	
Purpose	Sawing wood for various purpose
Safety Checks	Before each use; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check handle for wear, damage, bends or cracks. - Check teeth of blades for damage.
PPE	None
Safe Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children in respect position. - Wear glove on helping hand. - Use saw on the outside of the body. - Child holding handle to lead.
Storage	Clean, dry tool bag in locked shed.
Maintenance	Clean using a paintbrush.



Billhook	
Purpose	Splitting Wood
Safety Checks	Before Each use; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual inspection of blade and handle checking for splits and cracks. - No movement in head or handle. -
PPE	None
Safe Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No gloves - Children in respect position - Child holding Billhook to have eye contact and give instructions to partner. -
Storage	Clean, dry tool bag in locked shed.
Maintenance	Regular Sharpening



Environmental Impact Assessment

At Forest School children and staff are encouraged to have a high level of respect for the natural world and all be involved in making good decisions about their environment.

Our aim is to have a low impact on the environment by operating in a way that minimises waste and promotes recycling and the reuse of materials.

Activity	Impact	Mitigation
Collecting Wood	Dead wood is an important habitat for minibeasts. A lack of dead wood could damage a woodland ecology.	Collect only minimum amount required. Reserve specific areas for dead wood conservation.
Fires	Change in soil chemistry	Fixed location for the fire. Ensure the fire is extinguished fully before leaving the site.
Cooking	Food waste may attract animals to the site. Litter may damage environment.	Take all leftover food and litter back to school.
Tree Climbing	Damage to trees Damage to soil and plants around the tree.	Restrict these activities.
Shelter Building	Damage to trees. Damage to plants	Restrict these activities to allow plants to recover.
Collecting Natural Materials	Damage to plants	Ensure only fallen leaves or flowers are collected.



Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy

Lanchester EP Primary School is committed to equal opportunities for all. We aim to provide an environment where people feel equally valued and promote the individuality of all, irrespective of age, disability, gender or background.

All children can participate fully in Forest Sessions regardless of their individual needs whether they are physical, behavioural, emotional, social or educational.

We aim to ensure that all children who take part feel safe and secure and that their contribution is valued.