

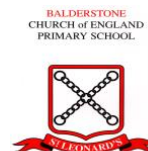


Balderstone's Wildlife Wilderness Forest School Handbook



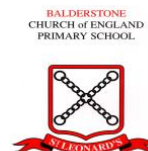
Balderstone St Leonard's
Primary School

March 2019 (Reviewed October 2025)



Contents

Forest School Ethos	4
Forest School Rules	5
Countryside Code.....	6
Session Routines and Procedures.....	7
Essential Equipment	9
Clothing Requirements	9
Roles and Responsibilities	10
Forest School Leader	10
Forest School Helpers	10
Notes for Forest School Helpers	11
Emergency Contact Details.....	12
Emergency Procedures	13
Missing child	13
Injury involving a child	13
Injury involving a member of staff.....	14
Injury involving the Forest School leader	14
Poisoning.....	14
Fire procedure	15
Bomb threat/Evacuation	15
Lockdown in school.....	15
Out of control animal.....	16
Health and Safety – Procedures and Guidance	17
Accident Reporting	17
Risk Management	18
Public Liability Insurance	18
Risk Assessments	19
Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Forest School Site.....	19
Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Forest School Site – Brook Area	24
Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Mud Kitchen.....	28
Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Fire Lighting.....	32
Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Environmental Art	36
Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Mini Beast Hunting.....	39



Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Use of Gardening Tools and Equipment	44
Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Den Building	48
Guidance for the Safe Use of Fires	52
Safeguarding and Child Protection	53
Online Safety Policy and Social Media Policy	53
Behaviour for Learning Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy	53
Data Protection Policy	54
Equalities Policy	54
Health and Hygiene Procedures and Guidance	55
Food Hygiene	55
Toileting Arrangements	55
Hand Washing	55
Disposal of Litter	56
Lone Working	56
Conservation Procedures and Guidance	57
Ecological Impact Assessment	58
Management Plan for the Sustainability of the Forest School Area	60
Adverse Weather Conditions Policy	62
Cancellation Procedure.....	62
Forest School Helpers and Volunteers Consent Form	63
Appendix	64
Confirmation of Cover - Public Liability Insurance	65
Forest School Session Plan.....	66
Site Sweep.....	67
Bump to the Head letter	68



Forest School Ethos

“Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.”

(<https://www.forestschoollassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/>)

Forest School is an approach to learning where the learner engages in a range of activities in the outdoor, woodland area. Forest School promotes the holistic development of the learner so that they may build their resilience and confidence becoming more independent and creative in their learning.

The 6 principles for Forest School were agreed by the Forest School community in November 2011.

The 6 Principles of Forest School

- ❖ Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.
- ❖ Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
- ❖ Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
- ❖ Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
- ❖ Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.
- ❖ Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning

(<https://www.forestschoollassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/>)



Forest School Rules

- Always listen.
- Always walk carefully.
- Use quiet voices.
- If you hear a whistle, stop what you are doing and listen to the adult.
- Stay in the seating circle when in the Forest School area
- Don't eat anything that you find.
- Don't put your hands in your mouth.
- Wash your hands after being outside and before eating.
- Don't touch something if you don't know what it is. Ask an adult.
- Only go down the brook steps with an adult
- If you see an animal, remain quiet and move slowly.

Within Forest School, our children will know the rules and boundaries in order to keep themselves safe. They need to learn to take appropriate risks in order to be able to explore the outdoor area and engage in all experiences including independent play. This will be developed over time with opportunities given that are appropriate for the development of the individual learner.

During the first Forest School session, the children will be introduced to the rules and will have the opportunity to discuss these as a group in order to enhance understanding of the risks within the outdoor environment.



Countryside Code

Respect, Protect and Enjoy

Respect other people

- ❖ Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors.
- ❖ Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths.

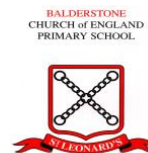
Protect the natural environment

- ❖ Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home.

Enjoy the outdoors

- ❖ Plan ahead and be prepared
- ❖ Follow advice and local signs.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/the-countryside-code>)



Session Routines and Procedures

A typical Forest School session will follow the following structure although changes may be made due to the learners becoming engaged in particular activities or unforeseen events.

- ❖ Greeting – Head count of children, moving to Forest School site, gathering together, reminder of rules and an introduction to the session.
- ❖ Activity time – Adult led games and activities that can be developed alongside child-initiated play.
- ❖ Time to pause – Gather together and discuss experiences, if needed wash hands and have a snack.
- ❖ Discovery time – Independent time for child-initiated play.
- ❖ Circle time – Gather together in the fire circle to reflect through games, stories and discussions.

The ratio of adults to children for Forest School sessions is 1:4 for EYFS, 1:8 for Key Stage 1 and 2. There will always be 2 adults with the children in the Forest School area.

Before a Forest School Session

- ❖ Inform the office that you are using the Forest School area and details of the children and adults that will be with you.
- ❖ Make sure the adults have mobile phones for emergency use and they are switched on.
- ❖ Conduct a site sweep of the area and obtain a weather forecast. Make a decision if the session needs to be cancelled or changed in any way.
- ❖ Collect and prepare all essential equipment using checklist.
- ❖ Collect and prepare all equipment needed for planned activities. Collect outside shed on field for the learners to help transport to Forest School site.
- ❖ Make sure all Forest School helpers have read and understood risk assessments and emergency procedures and the Forest School handbook.
- ❖ All Forest School helpers to be briefed on the plan for the session and aware that it is important for them to make observations on the learners.

Preparing for the Forest School session with the children

- ❖ A headcount will be taken and the children registered.
- ❖ Children will have the opportunity to go to the toilet.
- ❖ Children to put on appropriate clothes and footwear depending on the weather, see clothing requirements.
- ❖ Children will walk down to the field area, collect any equipment needed from outside the shed then walk to the Forest School site.



During the Forest School session

- ❖ The Forest School leader and all helpers will continue to make ongoing risk assessments and will take precautions or change plans if it is deemed necessary.
- ❖ Regular headcounts will be made and, if the children need to be gathered together the “Sticky Feet” procedure will be used. All children participating will be familiar with this game.
- ❖ If a child needs to go to the toilet, the children will return to the field area by the gate to the playground and will take part in a group game whilst the Forest School helper escorts the child to the school building. The Forest School helper will stay outside in sight of the group while the child goes inside to the toilet. When the child returns, the helper and child return to the group and the session continues.

After the Forest School session

- ❖ The group will gather together for circle time.
- ❖ Directions will be given in order to collect and transport equipment and leave the site as we found it.
- ❖ No litter will be left on the school field or Forest School area. All litter will be taken back to school.
- ❖ The group will walk together back to the school building and will remove boots and any muddy outer layers before entering the building.
- ❖ Children will immediately wash their hands and then return to class.



Essential Equipment

It is essential that on any trip to the Forest School area the following equipment is taken with the leader:

- Mobile phone
- First Aid kit
- Spare hats and gloves
- Blanket
- Emergency foil blanket
- Energy bars and food
- Contact information
- Waterproof coat
- Throwline

If fire lighting activities are planned the following items must also be taken:

- Burns kit
- Fire blanket
- Water bucket
- Supply of water

Clothing Requirements

All adults and children should be wearing appropriate clothing for the weather forecast. The Forest School leader must check the forecast prior to the session and check all participants are suitably dressed. All children are entitled to take part in Forest School and therefore the school has some suitable clothing for children to use if they do not have the required items.

In all weather:

- Trainers, walking shoes or wellies (wellies are essential if entering the brook)

The following are weather dependent:

- Warm clothing including gloves
- Waterproof coat if rain is forecast
- Warm hat or sun hat depending on the weather

When entering the brook:

- Wellies
- Long trousers and waterproof trousers in colder weather
- Waterproof coats



Roles and Responsibilities

Forest School Leader

It is the Forest School Leader's responsibility to:

- ❖ Keep all learners safe and follow the safeguarding policy.
- ❖ Ensure all risk assessments and emergency procedures are reviewed regularly and any changes made.
- ❖ Follow precautions set out within the risk assessments and emergency procedures when necessary.
- ❖ Ensure their First Aid qualification is up to date and the First Aid kit, along with any additional medication for the relevant children, is on site at all times.
- ❖ Ensure the Safety Bag and a mobile phone are on site during the sessions.
- ❖ Ensure all Forest School helpers are aware of their roles and have read the risk assessments and emergency procedures.
- ❖ Manage the Forest School setting and regularly check the site to make sure it is safe for use.
- ❖ Conduct site sweeps before Forest School sessions and make the decision to cancel the session if necessary.
- ❖ Make children aware of the Forest School rules.
- ❖ Ensure children are dressed appropriately for the weather.
- ❖ Plan the sessions with access to activities for all learners.
- ❖ Ensure all equipment is in a good state of repair and ready for the session including PPE.
- ❖ Observe and take part in ongoing risk assessments during the session and to take steps to manage risks as they occur.
- ❖ Make observations of the children's activities during the session and evaluate their learning ready to plan for the next session.
- ❖ Ensure all children wash hands after the session or before eating a snack.

Forest School Helpers

It is the Forest School helpers' responsibility to:

- ❖ Keep all learners safe and follow the safeguarding policy.
- ❖ Read the Balderstone Forest School handbook including all emergency procedures and risk assessments and sign and date the form to confirm you have done this.
- ❖ Follow the Forest School Leaders' lead.
- ❖ Work safely, using your own initiative, to ensure your safety at all times.
- ❖ Observe and take part in ongoing risk assessments during the session and to take steps to manage risks as they occur.



- ❖ Make the Forest School Leader aware of any issues or concerns as they arise or, if it is not an emergency, after the session.
- ❖ Alert the Forest School Leader of any accident or injury.
- ❖ Know where the Safety Bag is when on site and the contents of the bag including the First Aid kit.
- ❖ Know the location of a mobile phone.
- ❖ Follow the Forest School rules and be a positive role model for the learners.
- ❖ Read the session plan prior to the Forest School session and support and encourage the children in their learning.
- ❖ Make observations of the children's activities during the session and feedback observations to the Forest School leader to help in planning the next session.
- ❖ Attend to the fire only with the permission of the Forest School Leader or in an emergency to extinguish it.

Notes for Forest School Helpers

Forest School sessions are run with high ratios of adults to children in order to enable the learners a high quality of learning as well as the opportunity to take supported risks that are appropriate to the child and the learning environment. The sessions are child led where, through some guided activities, the learner develops their skills then has time to explore and discover the outdoor environment.

All adults must take an active role in the sessions, by supporting the learners and guiding their problem-solving skills but not showing them how things should be done. It is important that you make observations during the sessions, either written or feeding back to the Forest School leader through discussion after the session in order to inform planning. As you will take an active role, you will get muddy and wet. You must wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

It is essential that you read the Balderstone Forest School handbook and sign the form to confirm that you have done this before you support a session.



Emergency Contact Details

In an emergency, call 999 immediately.

The following information is on a card in the Forest School safety bag:

Balderstone Primary School
Commons Lane,
Balderstone,
Blackburn,
Lancashire
BB2 7LL

Tel 01254 769150

Emergency contacts

Head: 07922 058729

Bursar: 07501 017688

Forest School area – gate from the field at the back of school leading to the brook.

GPS coordinates: 53° 47' 5.158" N 2° 33' 43.25" W
Lat 53.78 Long -2.56



Emergency Procedures

A red card will be in the emergency bag at all times. If the office needs to be alerted and mobile phone contact is not possible, a child will be sent to the nearest member of staff with the red card. All staff will be aware that they need to respond to the emergency situation.

Missing child

1. Remain calm. Make other adults in the group aware. Note time.
2. Make a visual sweep of the area including the brook and the slopes leading down to the brook area.
3. Gather children together and conduct a head count. Ask children if they know where the missing child might be.
4. Alert school office and head as soon as possible by phone and ask for assistance to conduct a wider search of the grounds as well as the school building (particularly toilets, cloakroom). Follow up any responses from the other children in the group.
5. Remove group from forest school area and keep occupied on the field supervised by at least 2 members of staff.
6. Make a wider search of the area including churchyard and along the brook.
7. Follow school procedure. Alert parents and police.
8. Once incident is over, make a written record of what happened.
9. Review and update policies and procedures.

Injury involving a child

1. Assess the situation for danger to yourself, the child and the other children.
2. Take other children to a safe site with supervision. If possible, move group from the brook site to the field area. If fire is lit, extinguish immediately. Gather children together and conduct a head count.
3. Alert school office by phone and ask for assistance.
4. Alert First Aider (Forest School leader) - approach the casualty
5. Look for signs of response – Alert Voice Pain
6. If unresponsive, someone to phone 999 or contact office to phone immediately.
7. Administer emergency First Aid/CPR if necessary.
8. Where possible stay with casualty until the emergency services arrive. If leaving casualty, leave in safe airway position.
9. Notify emergency services of any medical issues
10. Inform senior management as soon as possible.
11. Record and report incident as soon as possible.
12. Review and update policies and procedures.



Injury involving a member of staff

Follow the above procedure “Injury involving a child” with the following amendment:

2. Alert school office as soon as possible and ask for assistance to supervise children.

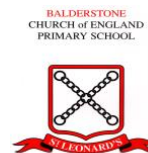
Injury involving the Forest School leader

Prior to Forest School session, ensure all adults are briefed and aware of procedures in handbook. Make sure all staff are aware of the emergency bag and the location of the First Aid Kit and mobile phones.

1. Adult to assess the situation for danger to themselves, the Forest School Leader and the other children.
2. Gather the children together in a safe place they are already aware of. If in the brook area, sitting in the circle. If fire is lit, extinguish immediately. If on the field, sitting on the benches by the shed.
3. With the children in sight, alert school office by phone and ask for assistance, member of staff to supervise children and a first aider.
4. Alert another First Aider - approach the casualty
5. Look for signs of response – Alert Voice Pain
6. If unresponsive, phone 999 or contact office to phone.
7. Administer emergency First Aid/CPR if necessary.
8. Where possible stay with casualty until the emergency services arrive. If leaving casualty, leave in safe airway position.
9. Notify emergency services of any medical issues
10. Inform senior management as soon as possible.
11. Record and report incident as soon as possible.
12. Review and update policies and procedures.

Poisoning

1. Assess the situation for danger to yourself, the child and the other children.
2. Phone 999 immediately.
3. Alert school office by phone and ask for assistance.
4. Alert First Aider (Forest School leader) - approach the casualty.
5. Follow procedure for “Injury involving a child” above.
6. Do not induce vomiting unless it is evident that the casualty is suffering from mushroom poisoning.
7. Watch for signs of anaphylaxis shock. If signs are present and child has a prescribed EpiPen, administer EpiPen.
8. If poison has been absorbed through skin e.g. plant toxins, first brush off a dry poison and then irrigate wet and dry poisons with water.
9. Gather as much information as possible to give to emergency services.



Fire procedure

1. Adult to assess the situation for danger to themselves, children and other adults.
2. If fire is small and containable, move all children and staff away from the area and use the fire blanket or water from fire bucket to extinguish the fire.
3. If fire has spread and is larger and uncontrollable, call 999 immediately.
4. Move all children and staff away from the area to a safe place, if possible, move to the field area, gather children together and conduct a head count.
5. If unable to evacuate to the field, move the children to the brook area and conduct a head count. Be ready to evacuate area by crossing the brook and moving through the woods.
6. Alert school office by phone.
7. Continue to keep contact with school office and informing them of the group's location.
8. Direct emergency services to the site of the fire.
9. Record and report incident as soon as possible.
10. Review and update policies and procedures.

If the fire alarm is raised within the school building, a member of staff will notify the Forest School group as soon as it is safe to do so. The Forest School site is away from the school building and therefore the group will not be in immediate danger. The group will then follow the instructions from an adult and move to the assembly point in the playground.

Bomb threat/Evacuation

1. The Forest School group will be notified by a member of staff as soon as it is safe to do so, in person or by mobile phone.
2. Evacuate the Forest School site and assemble in the school playground with the rest of the school. If fire is lit, extinguish immediately.
3. School procedures will then be followed.

Lockdown in school

1. The Forest School group will be alerted by a member of staff immediately by mobile phone.
2. Gather the children immediately in a designated area and conduct a head count.
If in the Forest School area, gather in the seating circle.
If on the school field, gather by the far gate in the right-hand corner of the field.
3. Make the children aware that is essential they keep quiet. Turn all mobile phones on to silent.
4. If possible, make contact with emergency services and follow advice given.
5. Stay as a group wherever possible



6. Escape routes - From the field, through the gate and into the lane behind church.
 - From the Forest School site, across the brook and through the woods to Bowfields Lane.
7. If possible, keep emergency services or others informed of your location.
8. Record action taken during incident as soon as possible.
9. Review and update policies and procedures.

Out of control animal

1. Gather the Forest School group together and stay calm. Explain to the children importance of using quiet voices and moving slowly.
2. Alert office as soon as possible using mobile phone.
3. Move group slowly away from animal. If in the brook area, try to move the group onto the field. If a larger animal is on the field such as a horse or cow, group could be moved for safety into the brook area or onto the playground, closing the gate behind them.
4. When moving across the field, try to stay close to the hedge with an adult between the children and the animal.
5. If possible, move children inside a building.
6. Wait for help to arrive.
7. Record action taken during incident as soon as possible.
8. Review and update policies and procedures.



Health and Safety – Procedures and Guidance

Balderstone School's Health and Safety policy is followed within the Forest School setting. This is based on the requirements of Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated Health and Safety and other Legislation.

Risk assessments have been carried out on the Forest School site and also for the activities that the children will take part in. These will be reviewed annually and amended when necessary. Emergency procedures have also been written.

All Forest School leaders, helpers and volunteers will have read and understood the risk assessments as well as the other procedures within this handbook.

Appropriate PPE will be provided for the activities taking place, see risk assessments and procedures for the individual activities.

Appropriate First Aid arrangements will be in place including:

- A First Aid kit on site at all times
- A trained Outdoor First Aider leading the Forest School sessions.
- A means of contact between the Forest School site and the school office through mobile phones whenever the site is being used.

Accident Reporting

As part of the school's Health and Safety policy, there is a recognised system in place to deal with the reporting, recording and investigation of incidents and accidents as well as a recognised system for reporting work related injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences under the RIDDOR Regulations.

All accidents or injuries that occur in the Forest School setting will be recorded as soon as possible in the accident book that is kept in the Safety Bag. These records will be transferred to the school reporting system after the session and parents will be informed by a copy of the accident slip. In the case of a bump to the head, a bump to the head letter or email will be sent home and class teachers and other staff that are in contact with the child will be informed. All accidents recorded are collated and reported to full governors. For major accidents, including ones that require a trip to the hospital, a RIDDOR form will be completed online by the head teacher.

Any near misses will be recorded on risk assessments which will then be revised in light of the incident that took place.



Risk Management

Within the Forest School setting, it is important that the children take supported risks in order to take part in exciting activities. Through this approach, they are taught how to manage risk for themselves.

Risk assessments have been carried out on the Forest School site as well as for the activities that the children will be taking part in. These will be reviewed annually and amended when necessary. During every Forest School session, the leader, helpers and volunteers take part in ongoing risk assessments and take measures to ensure the safety of the participants and the adults, as far as reasonably practicable.

A safety sweep will take place before each Forest School session to identify any hazards and document any steps taken to reduce risk. This will be completed by the Forest School Leader and shared with other adults as necessary. A copy of the form for the Site Sweep is available in the appendix.

Public Liability Insurance

Evidence of cover through our Public Liability Insurance is available in the Appendix.



Risk Assessments

Balderstone Primary School – Balderstone Wildlife Wilderness

Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Forest School Site

ACTIVITY ASSESSED Forest School Site – not including brook (see additional risk assessment)		ASSESSED BY	Sian Riddell	APPROVED BY	Teaching staff	
ACTIVITY LOCATION Balderstone Primary School – Access from school field		ASSESSMENT DATE	24 th October 2018 Reassessed Oct 2019 Oct 2020, Oct 2022, Oct 2023, Oct 2024, Oct 2025	APPROVAL DATE	12 th November 2018	
HAZARD	Who's at risk and how?	Risk Level Without Precautions	PRECAUTIONS To reduce the risk level		Who will do them?	When Before, during or After?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extreme Weather Windy or very wet weather 	Forest School's participants and leaders Cold and wet. (Hypothermia)	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency kit available at all times Qualified first aider on site during sessions Mobile phone with adult in charge Make sure all participants are dressed appropriately including footwear. Brief participants on need for care when walking around site. Extra warm and waterproof clothing available. Visible check on branches and overhanging trees during site sweep. 		Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before and during
						Low



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme heat/sunshine 	<p>Slippery underfoot. Danger of falling branches</p> <p>Heat stroke Heat exhaustion Sun burn Hyperthermia</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the weather is too severe on-site sweep, cancel session or, if possible, move to field area • Make sure shade and drinking water is available • Educate learners in the importance of wearing sunscreen and sun hats. • Encourage everyone to take regular breaks and if need be shorten the session. • Limit physical activities to prevent overheating. 			
<p>Uneven ground</p>	<p>Forest School's participants and leaders.</p> <p>Slips, trips and falls.</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure all participants and helpers have appropriate footwear. (Particularly be aware of girls' slip on shoes) • Brief participants on need to walk at all times and to be aware of the different ground surfaces and levels. • Make participants aware of wooden edges on steps if slippery when wet. • First aid kit to be available at all times. • Site sweep to be carried out prior to session. • Ensure all leaders and participants remain within seating area and pathways. • Be aware of anyone with mobility issues, help maybe needed to access site. 	<p>Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff</p>	<p>Before and during</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Edges and drops</p>	<p>Forest school's</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure participants and leaders to remain in seating area or on walkways at all times. • Children and leaders to be aware of boundaries. 	<p>Forest School Leader/</p>	<p>Before and during</p>	<p>Medium</p>



	participants and leaders Falls and slips Drowning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundaries to be clearly marked with log piles. • Site sweep to be carried out prior to session, check boundaries are obvious. • First aid kit to be available at all times. 	Teaching staff		
Vegetation - overhanging branches, brambles and nettles.	Forest school's participants and leaders. Risk of injury including cuts, rashes and stings.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform site sweep prior to session. • Remove any dangerous vegetation or branches. • Ensure participants are aware of their surroundings. • First aid kit on site. • Ensure participants and leaders remain in seating area or on walkways at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before and during	Low
Digestion of or reaction to berries, nuts or fungi.	Forest school's participants and leaders. Poisoning or rashes.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure children are aware of their surroundings and the dangers of touching and eating berries, nuts and fungi. • Wash hands after session or prior to eating on site. • Any medication for particular children to be available at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before, during and after	Low
Large, heavy logs for seating	Forest school's participants and leaders.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check all logs are firmly secured and free from any sharp edges in site sweep. • Only move logs when needed. • Brief all participants on how to move logs. • Make sure others are aware when logs are being moved. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before and during	Low



	Injury due to heavy objects or sharp areas.					
Animal and their faeces	<p>Forest school's participants and leaders.</p> <p>Fear after sudden encounter with animals. Injury or infection.</p> <p>Bites from insects</p>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site sweep prior to session to check for faeces. Remove any safely. • Children and leaders to wash hands after session and prior to eating on site. • Ensure learners notify leaders of anything found and do not touch litter or unknown objects. • Participants and leaders to be aware of animal tracks. • If an animal appears, for example a deer, children to know how to react: Move slowly and away from animal trails. Not to make any loud or sudden noises. • Monitor midges and insects in the area. If it's too difficult to participate in activities there, move to field area. • If a child needs midge repellent, they must apply it themselves. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before, during and after	Low
Litter and sharp objects	<p>Forest school's participants and leaders.</p> <p>Injury and infection</p>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site sweep prior to session to check for litter. Remove any safely. • Ensure learners notify leaders of anything found and do not touch litter or unknown objects. • First aid kit available at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before, during	Low



Missing child Children leaving the site	Forest School participants Unknown location, accident, abduction	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children to be educated in the rules and boundaries of the Forest School site. • Maintain minimum ratios at all times 1:4 EYFS, 1:8 KS1 and 2 for Forest School sessions. • Children to be aware of the procedures to bring group together, “Sticky Feet” and whistle signals. • All children to be aware of Stranger Danger message and discuss what they would do in different scenarios. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low
---	--	-----	--	--	-----------------------------------	-----

Risk: Benefits

1. Experience of outdoor setting
2. Introduce learners to risk
3. Building confidence and self-esteem in a different environment
4. Learning new skills
5. Team building and developing social skills
6. Developing motor skills
7. Building resilience and stamina
8. Sharing experiences with others in the school community
9. Becoming more aware of the outdoor environment around the school site
10. Becoming more independent in their learning

Review Date: October 2026



Balderstone Primary School – Balderstone Wildlife Wilderness

Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Forest School Site – Brook Area

ACTIVITY ASSESSED Forest School Site – Brook area			ASSESSED BY Sian Riddell	APPROVED BY Teaching staff		
ACTIVITY LOCATION Balderstone Primary School – Access from school field			ASSESSMENT DATE 24 th October 2018 Reviewed Oct 2019 Oct 2020, Oct 2022, Oct 2023, Oct 2024, Oct 2025	APPROVAL DATE 12 th November 2018		
HAZARD	Who's at risk and how?	Risk Level Without Precautions	PRECAUTIONS To reduce the risk level INCLUDING FOREST SCHOOL SITE RISK ASSESSMENT	Who will do them?	When Before, During or After?	Risk Level with Precautions
Wet weather	Forest School's participants and leaders Slippery underfoot. Rising water or flooding causing drowning	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency kit including first aid kit available at all times • Qualified first aider on site during sessions • Mobile phone with adult in charge 	Forest School Leader/ Assisting staff	Before and during	Medium



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all participants stay standing in the brook at all times. 			
Uneven ground	<p>Forest School's participants and leaders.</p> <p>Slips, trips and falls.</p> <p>Risk of drowning</p>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site sweep to be carried out prior to session. • Any unsteady logs or rocks to be secured, removed or cordoned off. • Make sure all participants and helpers have appropriate footwear. • Brief participants on need to move carefully at all times. • Make participants aware of different ground surfaces, depths and levels: mud near the brook, wooden edges on steps, roots in the ground, slippery rocks and logs. 	Forest School Leader/ Assisting staff	Before and during	Medium
Deep areas within the brook	<p>Forest school's participants and leaders</p> <p>Drowning.</p>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site sweep to be carried out prior to session and any deep areas to be out of bounds and, if need be, cordoned off. • Check weather forecast and if water levels rise, vacate area. • Children and leaders to be aware of boundaries. • Appropriate footwear (welly boots) to be worn by all in the brook area. 	Forest School Leader/ Assisting staff	Before and during	Medium
Moving logs and other debris within brook.	<p>Forest school's participants and leaders.</p> <p>Falls, slips and trips.</p> <p>Drowning</p> <p>Cuts from</p>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform site sweep prior to session. • Remove any moving branches or debris from the brook. • Remove any litter safely. • Ensure participants are aware of their surroundings and know the boundaries. • Ensure learners notify leaders of anything found and do not touch litter or unknown objects. 	Forest School Leader/ Assisting staff	Before and during	Medium



	sharp objects					
Steep banks	Forest school's participants and leaders. Falling branches or objects	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site sweep prior to session, check for unstable/broken branches or debris on opposite bank. • Remove any unstable or broken branches/debris. • If any potential hazard is out of reach, cancel the session and seek advice. • Ensure children are aware of their surroundings. • Adults and children to remain vigilant at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Assisting staff	Before and during	Medium
Dirty water	Forest school's participants and leaders. Infection or stomach upset.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site sweep prior to session to check for faeces. Remove any safely. • Children and leaders to wash hands after session and prior to eating on site. • Ensure children know not to drink the water in the brook. • Ensure learners notify leaders of anything found and do not touch litter or unknown objects. • Participants and leaders to be aware of animal tracks. • If an animal appears, for example a deer, children to know how to react: Move slowly and away from animal trails. Not to make any loud or sudden noises. 	Forest School Leader/ Assisting staff	Before, during and after	Low



Risk: Benefits

1. Experience of outdoor setting
2. Introduce learners to risk
3. Building confidence and self-esteem in a different environment
4. Learning new skills
5. Team building and developing social skills
6. Developing motor skills
7. Building resilience and stamina
8. Sharing experiences with others in the school community
9. Becoming more aware of the outdoor environment around the school site
10. Becoming more independent in their learning

Review Date: October 2026



Balderstone Primary School – Balderstone Wildlife Wilderness

Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Mud Kitchen

ACTIVITY ASSESSED Mud kitchen			ASSESSED BY Sian Riddell	APPROVED BY Teaching staff		
ACTIVITY LOCATION Balderstone Primary School – on school field			ASSESSMENT DATE 11 th November 2018 Reviewed Oct 2019 Oct 2020 Oct 2022 Oct 2023 Oct 2024 Oct 2025	APPROVAL DATE 12 th November 2018		
HAZARD	Who's at risk and how?	Risk Level Without Precautions	PRECAUTIONS To reduce the risk level	Who will do them?	When Before, During or After?	Risk Level with Precautions
Wet and cold weather	Children and leaders Cold and wet Slippery underfoot	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure all participants are dressed appropriately including footwear. • Extra warm and waterproof clothing available if needed • Make children aware of the need to stay warm and dry and help them to recognize when they need to take time to warm up and dry off. • Brief participants on need to walk carefully in mud kitchen area, especially in wet conditions. Have a brush to hand to keep wooden floor clear of debris. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before and during	Low
Doors, cupboards and the removable sink	Children and leaders	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure all participants are aware of the dangers of trapping fingers, hands or feet in doors. 	Forest School Leader/	Before, during and after	Low



	Trapping of fingers, injury and children getting trapped		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief children on safety rules including not climbing into cupboard or sink areas or climbing through windows and onto kitchen. First aid kit to be available at all times. Check all cupboards and sink area are left secure. 	Teaching staff		
Animals and their faeces	Children and leaders Injury or infection. Fear after sudden encounter with animals.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check prior to session to check for faeces and any signs of animals. Remove any faeces safely. Children and leaders to wash hands after session and prior to eating on site. Ensure learners notify leaders of anything found and do not touch litter or unknown objects. If an animal appears, for example a deer, children to know how to react: Move slowly and not to make any loud or sudden noises. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before, during and after	Low
Damaged parts to the mud kitchen	Children and leaders Injury, splinters or trip hazard	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check prior to session to check for any damage to the mud kitchen area including the roof. If damage could cause risk of injury, cancel session. Ensure children notify leaders of any damaged areas. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before, during and after	Low



Digestion of or reaction to berries, nuts, or mud	Children and leaders Poisoning and rashes	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure children are aware that the mud kitchen is for play and that nothing should be eaten. • Ensure children are aware of their surroundings and the dangers of touching and eating berries, nuts and mud. • Wash hands after session or prior to eating on site. • Any medication for particular children to be available at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before, during and after	Low
Litter and sharp objects	Children and leaders Injury and infection	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site sweep prior to session to check for litter. Remove any safely. • Ensure learners notify leaders of anything found and do not touch litter or unknown objects. • First aid kit available at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before and during	Low
Roof of mud kitchen	Children and leaders Bump/ cuts to heads	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If older/taller children are using mud kitchen, ensure they are aware of the height of the roof. • Check for any damaged parts • First aid kit available at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before, during and after	Low
Edges of surfaced area	Children and leaders Trip hazard	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure children are aware of the edge of the wooden floor area and the step onto the bark surface. • Ensure children are wearing sensible footwear. • First aid kit available at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff	Before, and during	Low



Risk: Benefits

1. Experience of outdoor setting
2. Introduce learners to risk
3. Building confidence and self-esteem in a different environment
4. Learning new skills
5. Team building and developing social skills
6. Developing motor skills
7. Building resilience and stamina
8. Sharing experiences with others in the school community
9. Becoming more aware of the outdoor environment around the school site
10. Becoming more independent in their learning

Review Date: October 2026



Balderstone Primary School – Balderstone Wildlife Wilderness

Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Fire Lighting

ACTIVITY ASSESSED Fire Lighting – lighting a temporary fire using a fire pit.			ASSESSED BY Sian Riddell	APPROVED BY Head teacher			
ACTIVITY LOCATION Balderstone Primary School – access from school field			ASSESSMENT DATE 11 th January 2019 Reviewed Oct 2019 Oct 2020 Oct 2022 Oct 2023 Oct 2024 Oct 2025	APPROVAL DATE March 2019			
HAZARD	Who's at risk and how?	Risk Level Without Precautions	PRECAUTIONS To reduce the risk level		Who will do them?	When Before, During or After?	Risk Level with Precautions
Burns and sparks	Children and staff. The environment Burning or igniting a fire	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire blanket, burns kit and filled water bucket to be within reach in the seating area at all times. • Demarcate fire area within the seating area. Place the fire pit within the 1m square and only those attending to the fire come within the 2m square, either kneeling or in the respect position (crouching). Make children aware of these areas. • Children not to enter the fire circle unless invited to kneel/crouch by the fire. • Within the fire circle, ratios adults to children will be 1:2 EYFS and 1:3 KS1/2 		Forest School Leader, staff and children	Before, during and after	Medium



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire lighting always takes place with a Forest School trained adult. • Light fire away from the body and off centre. • Never leave fire unattended. • Keep resources within reach. • To blow the fire, always be at least 2 hand widths away. • Wear gauntlets when dealing with the lit fire. • Be aware of what is being burnt and make sure no flammable liquids are present. • Make sure the fire is completely extinguished after use and disperse cold ashes. • Extinguish fire from the outside in with the water once the embers are cool. 			
Slips and trips within the fire area.	Children and staff. Burns and injury	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove all obstacles within the seating area. • Make children aware of any logs marking out the fire area and fire pit. • No walking within the fire area. • Also see site risk assessment. 	Forest School Leader, staff and children	Before, during and after	Medium
Smoke inhalation	Children and staff. Injury or problems breathing.	Medium High for asthmatics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe wind direction before lighting and move seating if needed. • For asthmatics, medication must be within reach at all times and there is an option not to participate. • If smoke blows towards children or adults, move those at risk. 	Forest School Leader, staff and children	Before, during and after	Low Medium for asthmatics



	Asthma attack			who self-medicate.		
Splinters and cuts	Children and staff. Injury and infection	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform children about safety when handling wood and which wood is best to collect. • Avoid brambles, pre-cut wood and any other sharp or prickly growth. 	Forest School leader, staff and children	Before, during and after	Low
Damage to the environment	Children and staff. The environment Destruction of habitats.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check seating area for overhanging/suspended branches, tree roots and other plant growth that could cause a danger. • Check weather forecast and be aware of weather conditions on site before lighting a fire. If too windy, stormy or too dry, do not light a fire. • Extinguish the fire completely and distribute ashes – if need be, remove ashes from the Forest School area to the hedge around the field. • Adopt the leave no trace policy. 	Forest School leader, staff and children	Before, during and after	Low



Risk: Benefits

1. Positive experience of outdoor setting
2. Introduce learners to risk
3. Building confidence and self-esteem in a different environment
4. Learning new skills
5. Team building and developing social skills
6. Developing motor skills
7. Building resilience and stamina
8. Sharing experiences with others in the school community
9. Becoming more aware of the outdoor environment around the school site
10. Becoming more independent in their learning

Review Date: October 2026



Balderstone Primary School – Balderstone Wildlife Wilderness

Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Environmental Art

ACTIVITY ASSESSED Environmental Art			ASSESSED BY Sian Riddell	APPROVED BY Head Teacher		
ACTIVITY LOCATION Balderstone Primary School			ASSESSMENT DATE January 2019 Reviewed Oct 2019 Oct 2020 Oct 2022 Oct 2023 Oct 2024 Oct 2025	APPROVAL DATE March 2019		
HAZARD	Who's at risk and how?	Risk Level Without Precautions	PRECAUTIONS To reduce the risk level	Who will do them?	When Before, During or After?	Risk Level with Precautions
Digestion of or reaction to berries, nuts or fungi. Dirty hands	Children and staff. Poisoning or rashes.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children aware that they should not put hands in or near mouth when outside and the reasons why. Children and leaders to wash hands after session and prior to eating on site. Any prescribed medication such as EpiPen's will be with the child at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low
Brambles and nettles Sharp sticks, branches and	Children and staff. Risk of injury including cuts,	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform site sweep prior to session. Ensure participants are aware of their surroundings and can identify nettles and brambles. Avoid brambles, pre-cut wood and any other sharp or prickly growth. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before and during.	Low



other vegetation	splinters rashes and stings.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark out of bounds any areas with a large number of nettles or brambles. • First aid kit on site. • Any prescribed medication such as EpiPens and inhalers will be with the child at all times. 			
Damage to the environment	The environment Destruction of habitats.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make children aware of the need to protect the environment and leave it as we found it including not picking wild flowers/breaking branches from trees etc. • Make sure any disturbance to the environment is minimal and rocks/logs are returned to their original positions. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low
Animal and their faeces	Children and staff. Injury or infection.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site sweep prior to session to check for faeces. Remove any safely. • Children and leaders to wash hands after session and prior to eating on site. • Ensure learners notify leaders of anything found and do not touch litter or unknown objects. • 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low
Litter and sharp objects	Children and staff. Injury or infection	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site sweep prior to session to check for litter. Remove any safely. • Ensure learners notify leaders of anything found and do not touch litter or unknown objects. • First aid kit available at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before and during	Low



Risk: Benefits

1. Positive experience of outdoor setting
2. Becoming more aware of the outdoor environment around the school site
3. Building confidence and self-esteem in a different environment
4. Learning new skills
5. Team building and developing social skills
6. Developing motor skills
7. Building resilience and stamina
8. Sharing experiences with others in the school community
9. Becoming more independent in their learning
10. Introduce learners to risk

Review Date: October 2026



Balderstone Primary School – Balderstone Wildlife Wilderness

Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Mini Beast Hunting

ACTIVITY ASSESSED Mini beast hunting			ASSESSED BY Sian Riddell	APPROVED BY Head Teacher			
ACTIVITY LOCATION Balderstone Primary School			ASSESSMENT DATE January 2019 Reviewed Oct 2019 Oct 2020 Oct 2022 Oct 2023 Oct 2024 Oct 2025	APPROVAL DATE March 2019			
HAZARD	Who's at risk and how?	Risk Level Without Precautions	PRECAUTIONS To reduce the risk level		Who will do them?	When Before, During or After?	Risk Level with Precautions
Bees, wasps and other mini beast	Children and staff. Risks of injury, including stings and physical reactions.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make children aware of mini beast that could potentially cause them harm e.g. Bees and wasps. • Site sweep to check for the presence of bees or wasp, e.g. Nests/swarms • Children aware that if they are not sure, don't touch. • First aid kit on site • Any prescribed medication such as EpiPens and inhalers will be with the child at all times. 		Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low



Dirty hands/ digestion of or reaction to berries, nuts or fungi.	Children and staff Poisoning or rashes.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children aware that they should not put hands in or near mouth when outside and the reasons why. Children and leaders to wash hands after session and prior to eating on site. Any prescribed medication such as EpiPens will be with the child at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low
Lifting and moving heavy objects	Children and staff. Injury due to heavy objects.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief all participants on how to move logs or other heavy objects. Only move logs when need to, e.g. To look under them for bugs. Make sure the large object is secure and will not roll back before investigating in the area. Make sure others are aware when large items are being moved. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low
Damage to the environment	The environment Destruction of habitats.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make children aware of the need to protect the environment and leave it as we found it including not picking wild flowers/breaking branches from trees etc. Make sure all minibeast are returned to their original habitats after the session. Make sure any disturbance to the environment is minimal and rocks/logs are returned to their original positions. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low
Animal and their faeces	Children and staff. Injury or infection.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site sweep prior to session to check for faeces. Remove any safely. Children and leaders to wash hands after session and prior to eating on site. Ensure learners notify leaders of anything found and do not touch litter or unknown objects. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants and leaders to be aware of animal tracks. • If an animal appears, for example a deer, children to know how to react: Move slowly and away from animal trails. Not to make any loud or sudden noises. 			
Litter and sharp objects	Children and staff. Injury or infection.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site sweep prior to session to check for litter. Remove any safely. • Ensure learners notify leaders of anything found and do not touch litter or unknown objects. • First aid kit available at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before and during	Low
Brambles and nettles	Children and staff. Risk of injury including cuts, rashes and stings.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform site sweep prior to session. • Ensure participants are aware of their surroundings and can identify nettles and brambles. • Mark out of bounds any areas with a large number of nettles or brambles. • First aid kit on site. • Any prescribed medication such as EpiPens and inhalers will be with the child at all times. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before and during	Low



Risk: Benefits

1. Positive experience of outdoor setting
2. Becoming more independent in their learning
3. Becoming more aware of the outdoor environment around school and the animals and the habitats that can be found there.
4. Building confidence and self-esteem in a different environment
5. Team building and developing social skills
6. Developing motor skills
7. Building resilience and stamina
8. Sharing experiences with others in the school community
9. Giving them time to investigate and look closely at the world around them.
10. Introduce learners to risk

Review Date: October 2026





Balderstone Primary School – Balderstone Wildlife Wilderness

Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Use of Gardening Tools and Equipment

ACTIVITY ASSESSED Use of Gardening tools			ASSESSED BY Sian Riddell	APPROVED BY Head teacher		
ACTIVITY LOCATION Balderstone Primary School			ASSESSMENT DATE March 2019 Reviewed Oct 2019 Oct 2020 Oct 2022 Oct 2023 Oct 2024 Oct 2025	APPROVAL DATE March 2019		
HAZARD	Who's at risk and how?	Risk Level Without Precautions	PRECAUTIONS To reduce the risk level Including tools such as spades, trowels, forks and rakes. First aid kit always on site	Who will do them?	When Before, During or After?	Risk Level with Precautions
Carrying of tools	Children and staff. Injury such as cuts and bruises.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make children aware that tools can be dangerous and are not play items. • Discuss different parts of the tool with the children so they understand the risks. • Ensure small tools, such as trowels and forks, are carried in boxes with a lid. • Do not overload the box. • Ensure secateurs are carried in a secure lidded box and if moved around site are carried appropriately. • If carrying a spade, children and adults to carry them upright with the blade downwards to the side of their body. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the tools are too heavy for the child, adult to carry the tool. • Only one large item to be carried at a time. • If more than one needs to be transported, an adult to use the wheelbarrow, blades of spades to be inside the barrow. 			
Correct use of spades and other tools including secateurs	Children and staff Risk of injury to back or other muscles, cuts and bruises.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children to be shown how to use tools prior to independent use. • When using large spades, children and adults to bend knees when digging. • Ensure children and adults know not to dig too deeply or move too much material. • When hand tools such as trowels are being used, children and adults should bend down in order to use them. • When not in use but on site, spades should be upright with the blade in the ground, visible for all to see, close to the user. • Trowels and forks etc. should kept in a tray near the users. • Secateurs to be used with 1:1 support. • Discuss thickness of twig that is being cut, make sure it is appropriate and where to place hands and body position. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low
Prolonged use of tools	Children and staff Risk of injury to back and other muscles.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children to be educated in the correct use of tools. • Limit the amount of time the tools are used • Encourage regular breaks and movement 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before and during	Low



Inappropriate use of tools	Children and staff Risk of injury to back or other muscles, cuts and bruises.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children to be educated in the correct use of tools, see above. • Children to understand why this is important and the consequences of inappropriate use. • In the case of inappropriate use, remove the tool from the child as soon as possible and return to storage. Discuss the incident with the child. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low
Tool storage	Children and staff. Injury such as cuts and bruises.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief all on tool storage. • Trowels and hand forks to be kept in a lidded box in gardening storage area in churchyard. • Spades to be kept in garden storage area in churchyard or in shed on field. • Spades to be kept upright and moved carefully from storage by an adult. • Secateurs to be kept in locked box in school in staff cupboard, not accessible to children. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before and after	Low



Risk: Benefits

1. Positive experience of outdoor setting
2. Becoming more independent in their learning
3. Becoming more aware of the outdoor environment around school and the animals and the habitats that can be found there.
4. Building confidence and self-esteem in a different environment
5. Team building and developing social skills
6. Developing motor skills
7. Building resilience and stamina
8. Sharing experiences with others in the school community
9. Giving them time to investigate and look closely at the world around them.
10. Introduce learners to risk

Review Date: October 2026



Balderstone Primary School – Balderstone Wildlife Wilderness

Risk Assessment Benefit Record - Activity: Den Building

ACTIVITY ASSESSED Den Building			ASSESSED BY Sian Riddell	APPROVED BY Head teacher		
ACTIVITY LOCATION Balderstone Primary School			ASSESSMENT DATE Sept 2020 Reviewed Oct 2022 Oct 2023 Oct 24 Oct 2025	APPROVAL DATE Sept 2020		
HAZARD	Who's at risk and how?	Risk Level Without Precautions	PRECAUTIONS To reduce the risk level First aid kit always on site	Who will do them?	When Before, During or After?	Risk Level with Precautions
Carrying long and heavy objects including sticks, poles and logs	Children and staff. Injury such as cuts and bruises or poked by sticks. Splinters	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children to know how to carry sticks, poles and logs sensibly. Carry shorter sticks and poles including willow whips vertically, "like a soldier". If an object is longer than you carry with a partner. Carry below waist height. Don't run while carrying sticks. Make sure the large objects are secure and will not roll when placed for den building. Make sure others are aware when large or long items are being moved. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low



	Injury to back from lifting.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure children are aware of others around them especially when den building as a team. • Children to be aware of risk of branches or poles sticking out especially with sharp ends. Avoid this at head height. • Encourage moving slowly and carefully around dens and looking carefully at environment. 			
Damage to environment	The environment Destruction of habitats	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make children aware of the need to protect the environment and leave it as we found it including not breaking branches from trees etc. • Make sure any disturbance to the environment is minimal and rocks/logs are returned to their original positions. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Low
Uneven or slippery ground	Children and staff Risk of tripping or falling.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Sweep to be carried out before activity. • Children to be aware of the area they have chosen for their den. Make children aware of the best ground surface for den making. • Make participants aware of any muddy or uneven patches at the beginning of the session. • All participants to wear appropriate footwear. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before and during	Low
Use of ropes and string	Children, staff and wildlife Risk of injury due to trips, knots becoming loose and	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants to be aware of risks when using ropes and string. • Children to be aware of others around them and the importance of communicating. • Children to be aware of the importance of looking carefully as they move around on the field especially within den building areas. • Knots to be taught as part of Forest School to encourage the use of secure and appropriate knots. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Medium



	loops catching on clothing or body.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults to check knots are secure if unsure when observing children. Make children aware that loops should not be left hanging at any level. Once activity is over all ropes and string to be removed from site. 			
<p>Extreme weather</p> <p>Rain and wind</p> <p>Sun and heat</p>	<p>Children and staff.</p> <p>Slippery ground</p> <p>Rain collecting on tarps</p> <p>Wind whipping tarps</p> <p>Den areas becoming extremely hot</p>	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children to be dressed appropriately according to the weather. Make all participants aware of muddy/slippery areas. Make children aware of how rain collects on tarps through activities and games. If wind too strong, remove tarps from use. Children to know the importance of communication when working with a group. Participants to be aware of how to safely use tarps in windy conditions. If weather extremely hot/sunny, make participants aware of signs of overheating and what to do. Water bottles available to all participants 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before and after	Low
Collapsing of den	Children and staff	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children to learn the importance of checking security of structures before moving inside. Be aware in windy or wet weather of any weight such as rain or movement that could cause a structure to collapse. 	Forest School Leader/ Teaching staff and children	Before, during and after	Medium

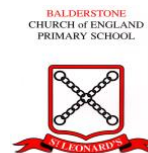


			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large den building to be closely monitored. If too large and unstable intervention by Forest school leader or teaching staff. • Structures to be carefully dismantled after use and ground cleared. 			
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Risk: Benefits

1. Positive experience of outdoor setting
2. Becoming more independent in their learning
3. Becoming more aware of the outdoor environment around school and the animals and the habitats that can be found there.
4. Building confidence and self-esteem in a different environment
5. Team building and developing social skills
6. Developing motor skills
7. Building resilience and stamina
8. Sharing experiences with others in the school community
9. Giving them time to investigate and look closely at the world around them.
10. Introduce learners to risk

Review Date: October 2026



Guidance for the Safe Use of Fires

All risk assessments must be read and understood by the adults participating in the session. All other Forest School procedures must also be adhered to.

Prior to fire lighting

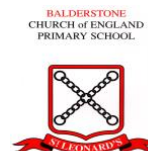
- ❖ Fire lighting always takes place with a Forest School trained adult.
- ❖ Prior to the session check the weather forecast, if the forecast is too windy or dry do not light a fire. Be aware if it is or has been wet, wood will be damp from the ground and the fire may not light easily. This can result in a lot of smoke unless using dried sticks.
- ❖ Be aware of the wind direction within the Forest School area. This may be different from the field area due to its location.
- ❖ Conduct a site sweep of the Forest School area.
- ❖ Remove any overhanging branches, vegetation or trip hazards from the seating area.
- ❖ Mark out a square 2m by 2m (use the seating circle), where only the person/persons tending the fire may be, either kneeling or in the respect position (crouching).
- ❖ Mark out a square 1m by 1m where the fire pit will be placed.
- ❖ Ensure the fire blanket, burns kit and water bucket filled with water are in the seating area.
- ❖ Place the fire pit within the 1m square and ensure gauntlets are ready for use.
- ❖ Children to be aware of the Fire lighting rules, see below.

During fire lighting

- ❖ The fire will never be left unattended
- ❖ Within the fire circle, ratios adults to children will be 1:2 EYFS and 1:3 KS1/2
- ❖ Children will remain seated in the seating circle whilst the fire is lit and will only walk around the circle (outside the 2m square) when asked to do so.
- ❖ Children will enter the 2m square/fire circle and only tend to the fire when asked to do so by the Forest School Leader, keeping to the ratio above.

After fire lighting

- ❖ Fire will be extinguished completely after the session. When extinguishing, stop feeding the fire, spread out the ashes to cool them down. Once completely cool, gently pour water over the ashes.
- ❖ Remove cooled ashes from the fire pit and distribute them in different areas of undergrowth so as not to affect the soil.
- ❖ Remove all equipment from the site
- ❖ Remove the logs that mark out the areas from the seating circle.



Safeguarding and Child Protection

Balderstone School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is followed in the Forest School setting. All staff and volunteers are aware of the policy and training is completed in line with the policy requirements.

If there are any concerns, these should be acted on immediately and reported to the DSL or Deputy as early information sharing is vital in keeping children safe.

All staff and volunteers are DBS checked by Balderstone School. Details are available at the school office.

Online Safety Policy and Social Media Policy

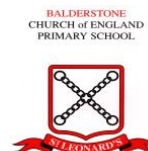
Balderstone School's Online Safety policy and Social Media policy are followed in the Forest School setting. All staff and volunteers are aware of these policies.

During a Forest School session staff will have access to a mobile phone. This will be for communication with the office or senior leadership team and only used in an emergency.

Behaviour for Learning Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy

Within Forest School, Balderstone School's Behaviour for Learning policy and Anti-Bullying policy are followed. This means there is a consistency in our approach to behaviour and the children know the rules and expectations in the Forest School session. All children and staff are aware of the rewards and sanctions that are in place within school.

During a Forest School session, if a child is demonstrating disruptive behaviour and is not responding to the sanctions that are put in place or is putting themselves or others at risk, the child will be removed from the setting. This will take place either by the group returning to school in order to for the child to be returned to another member of staff or members of staff to be called for, by mobile phone, to come and escort the child back to the school building. Incidents such as these are rare at Balderstone School.



Data Protection Policy

Balderstone School's Data protection policy is followed within the Forest School setting.

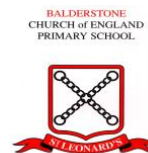
"Our school aims to ensure that all personal data collected about staff, pupils, parents, governors, visitors and other individuals is collected, stored and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the expected provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) as set out in the Data Protection Bill.

This policy applies to all personal data, regardless of whether it is in paper or electronic format." (Balderstone St Leonard's C of E Primary School, Data Protection policy)

Equalities Policy

Within Forest School we follow the Balderstone School Single Equalities policy which ensures that there is equal opportunity available to all members of the school community. As well as treating everybody equally, this includes understanding and tackling the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for members of our community, whilst also celebrating and valuing the achievements and strengths of all.

"At Balderstone St Leonard's CE Primary School, equality is a key principle for treating all people fairly and creating a society in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential - irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination." (Balderstone St Leonard's Primary School Single Equalities Policy)



Health and Hygiene Procedures and Guidance

Food Hygiene

When food is being prepared, cooked or served in the Forest School area, the Forest School leader will be present. The Forest School Leader has completed the Level 2 Food Hygiene qualification.

It is important to educate the children in food hygiene and make them aware of hygiene issues in the outdoors and the consequences of poor hygiene.

All food will be transported to the site in sealed packaging and will remain in the packaging until it is required. All equipment and utensils will be kept in clean sealed boxes and will only be removed when needed. Between use, the boxes and packaging will be resealed. If food needs to be kept cold, a cool bag with ice packs will be used and the temperature monitored.

All food, equipment and utensils will be kept off the site floor. Everyone involved in preparation, cooking or eating the food will wash their hands with soap and hot water before coming into contact with the food. All food will be heated or cooked thoroughly before it is consumed. This will be checked by an adult.

No trace of food or the packaging will be left on site. Dirty equipment and utensils will be returned to school where it will be washed and stored in a clean box.

Toileting Arrangements

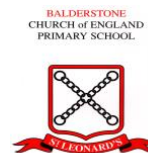
There are no toilet facilities on the Forest School site. The nearest toilets are the KS2 toilets in the main school building. All children will have the opportunity to go to the toilet before the beginning of a Forest School session will be encouraged to do so.

If a child needs to go to the toilet during the session, the children will return to the field area by the gate to the playground and will take part in a group game whilst the Forest School helper escorts the child to the school building. The Forest School helper will stay outside in sight of the group while the child goes inside to the toilet. When the child returns, the helper and child return to the group and the session will continue.

Hand Washing

As part of the introductory session to the Forest School programme and at the beginning of all sessions, all children will have discussed and be aware of the importance of washing hands after a session outside or before eating food. Children will be reminded not to put their hands near their mouths whilst outside in the school grounds. A discussion will take place about the reasons why so that the children have an understanding of the importance of hygiene.

At the end of the Forest School session, all children will be reminded to wash their hands thoroughly. If food is being consumed during a session, hot water will be provided for the children to wash their hands on site.



Disposable of Litter

Our Forest School sessions produce very little waste products. Wherever possible, we will recycle the waste produced.

In order to conserve our environment and prevent the spread of vermin in the area, all litter will be collected after a Forest School session and taken back to school to be disposed of. The nearest bin is located inside school.

At times, a small amount of waste water is produced from washing hands. Any solid material will be removed and taken back to school to be disposed of. Waste water will then be poured away in the undergrowth, distributed in different areas so as not to affect the plants and wildlife.

Lone Working

During a Forest School session there will always be 2 adults accompanying the children.

There may be times however, such as conducting the site sweep, when an adult will be alone in the Forest School area. The following precautions must be taken:

- ❖ The adult must inform the school office that they are going down to the area and they must let the office know when they return.
- ❖ A mobile phone must accompany the adult
- ❖ The adult must only go into the brook for the site sweep if it is safe to do so.
- ❖ If large objects need moving, the adult must return to school and ask for assistance.
- ❖ At all times, the adult must be vigilant and assess for risks.
- ❖ Adult must inform the office when they return.



Conservation Procedures and Guidance

Our Forest School and field area are a natural resource that we value greatly. It is important that the children and adults who use this space respect the environment and take a pride in the beauty of their surroundings.

It is vital for the sustainability of the area that the Forest School site and the field are left with no trace of the activities that have taken place. This includes

- ❖ disposing of ashes responsibly after a fire
- ❖ removal of litter
- ❖ filling in any holes that have been dug
- ❖ staying in designated areas
- ❖ allowing the brook to flow freely
- ❖ returning any branches to the undergrowth
- ❖ returning all equipment to the appropriate areas

As a school, we will positively promote the creation and sustainability of habitats for the abundance of wildlife that we see on our school grounds. We will manage the field and brook area, seeking advice and help from professionals when needed, in order to safeguard the beauty of the area so that it may be enjoyed by generations to come.



Balderstone Primary School – Balderstone’s Wildlife Wilderness

Ecological Impact Assessment

Within Balderstone’s Wildlife Wilderness, we aim to instil in all who participate a sense of stewardship to respect, care for and preserve the environment for others to enjoy. At all times, we will be aware of the impact the activities will have on the site and the flora and fauna within it.

LOCATION Balderstone Primary School		ASSESSMENT DATE April 2019 Reviewed Oct 2022 Oct 2023 Oct 2024 Oct 2025	ASSESSED BY Sian Riddell
Activity	Impact	Action	
Walking around site Footfall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disturbing habitats Stopping plants from growing Eroding soil Noise and use of the site to scare wildlife away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To access the site, paths will be used Remain in seating circle within Forest School area as much as possible. Monitor areas for signs of damage and mark them out of bounds to allow regrowth. Children encouraged to use quieter voices on site 	
Bug hunting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving of logs, rocks, mud etc. disturb minibeast and other animals Disturbing habitats Removal of dead wood and other materials used for habitats Mini beast being removed from habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate all participants in the importance of maintaining habitats big and small for animals. Logs and rocks to be replaced after looking underneath wherever possible. Monitoring habitats for signs of damage, mark them out of bounds if need to regenerate. Building new habitats, e.g. log piles. Educating children in returning mini beast to where they found them and the reasons why. 	
Use of brook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footfall Eroding sides of brook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children to stay within brook and not to move up the banks except for the area designated by the adults. 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbing wildlife and plants • Damming flow of water • Paddling in brock and moving logs, branches etc. disturbing aquatic animals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate children to move around brook carefully and the importance of keeping the flow of water moving. • Model use of pond dipping equipment and how to use trays especially returning water to the brook.
Fires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbance of wildlife including smoke disturbing birds nesting • Risk of fire spreading • Remains of fire changing the soil when discarded • Visual remains of a fire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site sweep to include looking for nesting birds when fire lighting in a session. • Risk assessment for fire lighting to be adhered to • No visual remains to be left after fire. • Remains of fire to be widely distributed in undergrowth
Food and snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter to cause harm to wildlife and visually spoil the site • Remains of food to encourage pests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No litter to be left on field or Forest school site. • Collect litter and use bins in school. • No food to be left on site, all waste to be returned to school.
Collecting natural materials e.g. wood for fires, environmental art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage to plants • Lack of diversity of plants, e.g. wildflowers • Disturbance of habitats, e.g. dead wood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate children in how to decide what to collect, including in assessing the spread of the plant. • Monitor habitats and if need be, mark areas out of bounds if need time to regenerate.
Willow structures and crafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willow spreading and becoming out of control in areas. • Lack of growth through over harvesting • Disturbing habitats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor use of willow and the effects in the areas • Allow willow to regrow, prune every autumn by a professional

Review Date: October 2025



Management Plan for the Sustainability of the Forest School Area

Ongoing Maintenance and Management

To keep paths and seating circle clear.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut back any growth that begins to invade paths and seating circle area. • Trim back brambles and any nettles that may cause hazards close to paths and seating circle. • Check there is enough wood chippings in seating circle especially at the edges.
To keep invasive species under control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To pull up and remove as much Himalayan balsam as possible. • To let the balsam, dry out and not to compost it • Educate the children in identifying and dealing with the balsam
To check safety of trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make visual checks of trees in Forest School area and on field to look for signs of damage or decay. • Carry out a tree survey every 3 years. • If needed seek advice from a professional tree surgeon.
To encourage biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strim nature area grass on field in September in order to stimulate different species of wildflower • Plant more native wildflower seeds in the area on the field. • Construct log piles for wildlife on field and in Forest School area • To continue working with the Ribble Rivers Trust on projects such as “Trout in the Classroom” and the Wildlife Trust, using their knowledge and expertise to monitor the health of the brook and our school grounds.
To sustain a reliable source of willow for structures and craft projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willow to be trimmed each autumn by a professional



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any willow structures to be added to in order to maintain shape and safety
<p>To keep brook flowing to maintain health of the wildlife in this habitat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove any large logs/debris that blocks the brook. • Remove excess mud from the bottom of the brook. • Use logs and willow fencing to shore up the banks of the brook allowing vegetation to grow to prevent erosion. • In autumn continue to clear leaves and twigs/branches from the brook
<p>To plant trees to encourage biodiversity and more woodland for Forest School use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to plant trees and/or hedgerows to encourage biodiversity. • Children to help in planting which will also further develop knowledge of tree identification. • In the future, construct a den building area using natural resources. • To create planters within the field and playground area to promote biodiversity and allow children hands on experience of gardening.



Adverse Weather Conditions Policy

In our Forest School, we respect the environment around us including the many different weather conditions that we experience in the North West of England. It is our intention that the children experience the outdoors in a range of weather conditions in order to enhance their experiences.

Leading up to and immediately before a Forest School session, it is essential that the Forest School leader is aware of the weather forecast. It is important to continue to check for any sudden changes in the forecast. If the Forest School leader deems the weather conditions to be unsafe, the outdoor session will be cancelled. This may be due to high winds, very cold temperatures, icy conditions that mean it is unsafe underfoot, extreme heat, thunderstorms or other weather-related circumstances. If the session is cancelled, the children will either continue to take part in class activities or take part in a session inside run by the Forest School leader.

During a Forest School session, it is vital that both the children and adults are dressed appropriately, both suitable clothing and footwear in order to appreciate the outdoors. This is the responsibility of the Forest School leader to ensure all participants are dressed appropriately.

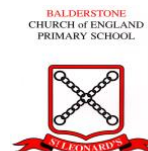
During the session, the Forest School leader and helpers must stay vigilant to the needs of the children and look for signs of discomfort from extreme cold, heat or if they are uncomfortably wet. If a child is not happy, it is essential that steps should be taken to look after the child's wellbeing. These may include adding warmer clothing, seeking shade or returning to school to change out of damp clothes or footwear. If a child needs to return to school, it may be that the Forest School session will need to be curtailed or paused whilst the Forest School helper accompanies the child back to the building.

Cancellation Procedure

If a Forest School session has to be cancelled for any reason, the children will remain in school and either continue to take part in class activities or take part in a session inside run by the Forest School leader.



Appendix



Confirmation of Cover - Public Liability Insurance

From: Davis, Catherine [mailto:Catherine.Davis@lancashire.gov.uk]
Sent: 28 November 2018 11:10 AM
To: 11071, bursar
Subject: RE: Query

Hi Angela

As long as the people taking the classes are fully competent, the activities are age appropriate for the children and risk assessments have been done, the Public Liability Insurance will provide cover should it be necessary.

Please find attached a copy of our Newsletter covering this topic.

Kind Regards
Catherine

Catherine Davis
Insurance Assistant
Insurance Team

Tel: 01772 534801

3rd Floor Christ Church Precinct, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ

From: 11071, bursar [mailto:bursar@balderstone.lancs.sch.uk]
Sent: 27 November 2018 17:42
To: FIN Risk and Insurance <RDF.RiskandInsurance@lancashire.gov.uk>
Subject: Query
Importance: High

Good Afternoon,

We buy into Lot3 with LCC and I have been asked to check that we are covered for Forest Schools, can you please advise?

Thank you

Angela Johnstone
Business Manager
Balderstone St Leonards CE Primary School
01254 769150



Forest School Session Plan

Balderstone Primary School		Forest School Session Plan	
Activity:		Date:	
		Time:	
Plan: <u>Objectives</u>	<p>Preparation time. Before leaving school, introduce rules for walking to site. Check all have been to the toilet and are suitably dressed.</p> <p><u>Greeting</u> -</p> <p><u>Activity</u> -</p> <p><u>Time to pause</u> -</p> <p><u>Discovery Time</u></p> <p><u>Circle time</u> Seating circle – feedback. What did they like? What would they like to do next session? How do they feel? Walk back to school/ boots off at door/wash hands.</p>		
Extended Task:		Simplified Task:	
Resources /tools/equipment required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Essential kit</u> – Safety bag with First Aid kit/ mobile phone • Rule cards • Seating mats • • • 		Health and safety: Risk assessments Forest Schools site	
		Accidents reported:	



Site Sweep

Site Sweep

A safety sweep will take place before each Forest School session to identify any hazards and document any steps taken to reduce risk. This will be completed by the Forest School Leader and shared with other adults as necessary.

Date:	Location:	Forest School Leader:
Hazard Checklist:	Checked (Tick)	Action taken, if any:
Fallen Branches Wet, muddy and/or slippery areas Litter Water quality Boundary Weather effects Seating Circle Emergency Kit Equipment Ready Other hazards identified:		



Bump to the Head letter

Balderstone St Leonards CE Primary School

Commons Lane, Balderstone Blackburn BB2 7LL
Tel 01254 769150

Head Teacher Mrs J Banks

Dear Parent,

Your child, has had an accident at school today.

He/she received a bump to the head at and has been well for the rest of the school day. However, it is important that you watch for any signs or symptoms in your child which indicate a more serious injury.

PLEASE WATCH FOR:

Drowsiness that is unexpected.

Vomiting more than once.

Any signs of blood or watery fluid coming from the nose or ears.

Any complaint of headache.

Any complaints of 'seeing double' or 'blurred eye-sight'.

IF ANY OF THESE SIGNS DEVELOP, THEN YOU SHOULD CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR FOR FURTHER ADVICE.

.....
Head Teacher

.....
Date

BUMP TO THE HEAD LETTER

This is to certify that a 'Bump to Head Letter' has been given to the parent/guardian

of:

Signed..... Date