

# ALBURGH WITH DENTON PRIMARY ACADEMY

## FOREST SCHOOL POLICY

Adopted by the Governing Body: September 2023

Due for review: Autumn Term 2026

### ***Our School Vision:***

#### **“Mighty Oaks from Tiny Acorns Grow”**

Our Vision is based upon the parable of the mustard seed: “The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, that seed is the smallest of all seeds. But when it grows, it is one of the largest garden plants” [Matthew 13 V31-32] and this is underpinned by the common language of our core values: Hope, Forgiveness and Justice.

Our knowledge and skills will be rooted in Christian values as we grow and flourish from tiny seeds to big strong trees. Like the tree, we will provide help and support to others’. Delivering Forest school sessions to every child, following the 6 principles and its own ethos, supports us as a school in our vision to help and support others through dynamic and inspirational learning opportunities.

One of the Forest School principles; to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners lends itself directly to our vision and values and the learning behaviours we promote at Alburgh with Denton. This approach to child development and learning recognises the connection then of mind, body and spirit. Developing spirituality is about developing a person as a whole, developing their sense of worth and helping them to understand their place in the world. We want our values as a school to inspire our children how to act and be, providing time for reflection and to see spirituality in many ways, particularly through a sense of awe and wonder and showing care for nature and living things.

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### What is Forest School?

Taken from Norfolk County Council Website:

The Forest School Association (formed in 2012) defines it as:

“Forest School is an inspirational process that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self-esteem, through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees. Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education.”

In addition to the definition above there are **6 key principles** to ‘Forest School’ practice:

1. Forest School is a long- term process with frequent and regular sessions rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaption, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.
2. 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.
3. Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners
4. Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
5. Forest School is run by qualified Forest School Practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.
6. Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

### **A Brief History of Forest School in the UK**

Promoting learning outdoors is not new – for hundreds of years there have been practitioners, organisations and movements trying to encourage educations to take children outside and use nature for learning. However, the recent roots of ‘Forest School’ in the UK stems from Scandinavian early years (in other countries the ‘Early Years’ may last until a child is 7 or 8 years, rather than 5 years as it is here) practices. Most Early Years settings in Scandinavia have regular and free access to the outdoors throughout the year (some spend all their time outside).

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Forest School was introduced in the UK, in the mid 1990's, after a group of Early Years professionals from Bridgwater College, Somerset had visited a Danish Forest School. Children freely exploring their environment were seen to grow in confidence, take responsibility for their own learning and show a greater appreciation for the natural world in which they live. These practitioners were so impressed with this ethos/approach and its effect on children that they developed a 'Forest School' back at their own Children Centre and the College developed training for other

practitioners. Since then Forest School has been rapidly developing in the UK through practitioners wanting to train as leaders. It is used with all ages (including vulnerable adult groups and families), and works in various ways depending on the needs of the group, the site, and the background of the Forest School leader (Forest School leaders come from a range of backgrounds). It has been a grassroots movement, driven by practitioners who believe that the gentle ethos benefits children and young people.

In 2012 the UK Forest School community united to form the Forest School Association – the UK's lead organisation to promote quality Forest School for all.

### **Who will run Forest School sessions?**

Miss Kelly Francis is a trained as a qualified Level 3 Forest School Leader having also completed Level 1 Introduction to Forest School (awarded November 2011) as well as a Paediatric and an Outdoor First Aid qualification, which is renewed every 3 years.

### **Where will they take place?**

Our Forest School sessions will take place in a piece of woodland owned by Mr Andrew Denny and Mr Jimmy Denny on Church Road in Alburgh, just a short walk from the school.

### **1. Health & Safety at Forest School**

The Forest School Leader (Kelly Francis) has the overall responsibility for health and safety whilst at FS sessions and will follow all its usual school policies and procedures to fulfil our main priority to keep the children safe at all times. The Head teacher (Leigh Goodhew – Health and Safety Officer) also has responsibility to ensure that the FSL understands and adheres to school policies regarding health and safety.

The head teacher is responsible for ensuring that all health and safety procedures are followed. She will ensure that (taken from school policy):

- all members of staff understand and fulfil their responsibilities to ensure a safe learning environment
- staff are aware of their responsibilities and receive appropriate supervision, instruction and training

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- staff, pupils and others are encouraged to promote health and safety and know how to report any defects or hazards
- risk assessments are carried out for activities on and off the school site
- LA and DfE guidance is followed for all school trips and visits
- sufficient resources are allocated to meet health and safety priorities
- first aid facilities are fit for purpose
- a log is maintained of all activities relating to ensuring health and safety, including dealing with accidents and incidents.

Risk assessments will be carried out to identify hazards and evaluate the extent of the risk involved. At FS children will be supported, helped and encouraged to assess risks themselves and learn to understand the potential consequences of their actions.

The FSL (Kelly Francis) has a Paediatric First Aid qualification (valid until 14.10.24) as well as a Forest School Outdoor First Aid certificate (valid until 18.11.25) and will renew them when they expire. A First Aid kit will be carried by the FSL on each session as well as an Accident sheet to record any incidents and how they were dealt with and a list of the kit carried can be found attached. It is the FSL role to ensure that the first aid kit is kept fully stocked and replenished when needed.

Alburgh with Denton Primary Academy is covered by The Department for Education risk protection arrangement (RPA) membership for delivering their Forest School Programme offsite. A copy of the certificate of insurance is attached in the handbook. We are also covered by the landowners Public Liability Insurance for the sum of £10,000,000.

In the event of an emergency or first aid incident the following procedure will be followed:

- Ensure the rest of the group is safe and delegate responsibility to the other adults
- If necessary group the rest of the children up together in a safe area with the remaining adults
- The qualified first aider will then check the A-B-C, administer first aid if needed and if necessary call 999. (Grid Ref: TM27081 87149)  
(What3words: relished.scars.importers)
- The casualties medical forms will be to hand and a parent/carer called if appropriate
- Record full details of the incident back at school, including RIDDOR procedure if applicable
- Send home a letter to parents as normal
- If a child needs to go to hospital then the FSL will accompany them and the head teacher/or another member of staff will be phoned to come and meet the rest of the group and walk them back.

The FSL will carry an emergency bag with them to every FS session. This will include:

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- First aid kit – gloves, plasters, tweezers, scissors, triangular bandages, burn gel, cleansing medical wipes.
- Emergency procedures
- Medical and emergency contact details for all staff and children present
- Risk assessments
- Mobile phone – 07840 384 066
- Accident sheet
- Medication for individuals
- Whistle
- Hand sanitiser
- Toilet kit – trowel, loo roll, hand gel,

Emergency contact details can be found at the back of the handbook.

No one should talk to the media in the event of an accident or emergency.

In the event of an accident and emergency situation where a doctor/ambulance/medical team are required to attend or to be seen after, then the treatment is required by law to be reported via RIDDOR. It is reported online by the head teacher and logged onto lamCompliant, which is the reporting site used by St Benets MAT.

## **2. Risk Management**

The FSL is responsible for compiling risk assessments for different areas of the FS programme. These consist of:

- Site Risk Assessments - this should be carried out termly by the FS Leader
- Daily Risk Assessments - these should be carried out before every session by the FS Leader or another adult who has been trained at what to look out for. A tick sheet is used as a simple and effective way to carry out and record these checks. The daily risk assessment should involve checking the 4 different layers of the woodland and any risks associated with them - hanging wood, litter, new berries grown etc. It also has space on to write down any specific changes/areas of concern noticed in the area which may need to be checked additionally every week also and kept an eye on.
- Activity Risk assessments - these will be carried out before sessions with ideas in mind as to what may be used regularly and then added to as and when new ones are introduced. The FS Leader should carry this out with the support of other adults helping.
- Tools Risk assessments - this should be carried out yearly by the FS Leader with the support of other adult helpers.

To ensure children listen, understand and carry out activities and their free play safely, involving them in decision making processes may be used to support this. By giving them the chance to discuss safety on the site, towards and around others and when using tools etc gives them ownership of the rules which means they are more likely to co-operate. However it is important to give them time to question and understand reasoning's and rules for things and not go ahead with using certain things until you are confident they understand fully. Having open

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discussions about why we need rules will allow the whole group to air their views, listen to others and come to agreements hopefully, although they must be aware that the adults final decision is paramount due to health and safety.

### **3. Staff and Helpers at FS**

At Alburgh with Denton Primary School we will have a minimum of 2 school staff supporting the children at FS sessions. We will aim to take groups of 15 children or less at any one time to ensure high adult: child ratio is followed. This is not always possible.

During Forest School sessions we aim to have a minimum of 1:4 for Acorns, 1:5 for Seedlings aged children and 1:8 for Saplings and Oaks classes. The other adults will be made up of staff and parent helpers or other volunteers. Again, this is not always possible but careful judgement will be made on the risk assessment on the day.

When tools are being used the ratio will be on a 1:1/1:4 basis. When we light a fire children will be supervised by adults at all times.

Parent helpers and other volunteers will be expected to have read the schools safeguarding policy and information and to have up to date DBS proof and details will be kept by the school in the school office. Any staff helping will also have an up to date basic first aid in schools qualification.

Any adults helping on a FS session will be required to read the FS handbook to say they understand the policies and procedures they are expected to follow whilst at FS. Overall they will hand over any matters to the FSL and they will then be dealt with. All adults will be reminded of health and safety matters and what to do on a termly basis also.

### **4. Safe-guarding children**

If a child makes a disclosure to an adult whilst at FS the following procedure must be followed which comes from our schools safeguarding policy –

- Listen to the child but do not ask questions.
- Tell the child you can't keep what they tell you as a secret.
- Inform the child that you may need to tell another staff member back at school to ensure they are kept safe.
- Comfort the child if appropriate

There will be a notepad available to write down any information about a disclosure regarding safeguarding from a child whilst at FS. All adults will be made aware of this and also of what to do if a child speaks to them.

The purpose of Alburgh with Denton Primary Academies safeguarding policy is to ensure every child who is a registered pupil at our school is safe and protected from harm. This means we will always work to:

- Protect children and young people at our school from maltreatment;

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- Prevent impairment of our children's and young people's health or development;
- Ensure that children and young people at our school grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Undertake that role so as to enable children and young people at our school to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

### **5. Confidentiality**

The notepad this will be kept in the bag which only the adults have access to and will be carried by only the FSL. Confidentiality must be maintained and information relating to individual pupils/families shared with staff on a strictly need to know basis. If a child makes a disclosure to a parent helper/other volunteer they should try to discretely attract the attention of the FSL.

Once back at school, this will be logged on our electronic safeguarding system (CPOMS) and forwarded to the DSL (designated safeguarding lead).

### **6. FS Programme information/permission**

We aim to ensure that every child takes part in FS for at least 8 weeks during the school year. In order for this to happen we will gain permission from parents/carers to go offsite and take part in FS when they join the school. Details will be given to the parents beforehand as to what to expect and what activities their child will be taking part in. Parents will be asked to sign a form confirming:

- They understand the FS ethos and what their child be doing including tool use and lighting fires
- Their child medical and emergency contact details are up to date in school
- Their child has had a tetanus injection
- They understand toileting procedures
- Whether or not they give permission for their child to be photographed
- They will provide their child with appropriate clothing and footwear

Parents and carers will be given a letter about FS when their child starts at our school. This will outline the ethos and intentions of FS, where FS will take place and transporting methods, first aid procedures in place, what they will need to provide their children with for each session, toileting procedures whilst offsite, and a rough idea of activities they may undertake whilst at FS.

### **7. Transport**

Children will walk to our FS site which is only a short 5-10 minute walk from the school. We will turn right out of the school and walk to the end of school road, turn left onto Church Road and walk the short distance up to the woodland. We may also go to the site by walking through the footpath opposite the school which will then bring us out on Church Road, avoiding the junction

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Alburgh with Denton Primary Academy has a strong commitment to the added value of learning outside the classroom and beyond the school premises. It will seek to provide a broad & balanced range of Learning outside the Classroom opportunities for all its pupils.

Children will all be provided with a hi-vis jacket to wear whilst walking to and from the site. There are no paths so children will walk with a partner or in single file with adults spread out between the line.

### **8. Cancellation**

A Forest School session may be cancelled if:

- There was low staffing/adult help available due to illness (all reasonable efforts will be made to get other help in order not to have to cancel).
- The weather was extreme – windy and with tree branches blowing at 20mph with gusts of 30mph or more.
- There was reason due to findings from the daily risk assessment which couldn't be dealt with straight away and would cause a risk to the children and adults on site.
- An extremely cold and wet day where hypothermia is a real possibility.

### **9. Equal Opportunities**

Alburgh with Denton Primary Academy is committed to equal opportunities for all. FS is a fully inclusive programme and with all reasonable steps made, no child will be excluded from taking part and all will be treated equally. All children have a right to opportunities regardless of: physical and mental ability, age, gender, race and ethnic group, skin colour, religious beliefs or social background. If a child requires 1:1 assistance or any extra help or support then all efforts will be made to enable this to happen but their entitlement to join in remains the same (in some circumstances this adult would be additional to the ratios).

### **10. Behaviour**

Positive behaviour is promoted at Alburgh with Denton Primary Academy. At Alburgh with Denton Primary Academy we aim for all children:

- To adopt a healthy and active lifestyle
- To develop a sense of mutual tolerance and respect for the environment and other people
- To enjoy learning and to develop open and enquiring minds
- To provide a broad, dynamic, inspirational and fun curriculum, motivating all children to achieve high standards in their learning and well being
- To develop responsibility, interdependence, independence, self-esteem and personal, moral and spiritual values within a Christian ethos
- To be a friendly, open and caring school where all children are able to participate in all aspects of learning and feel confident to learn from their mistakes



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- To nurture aspirational learners, committed to lifelong learning and becoming active members of their community.

This will still apply completely to FS sessions but other ways we promote positive behaviour are that:

- Forest School is child led and initiated. One reason it promotes positive behaviour and learning so well is because of its routines. As the sessions are long term and every week ideally, boundaries can be set and stuck to successfully from the beginning and reinforced every time. Children need boundaries for security and safety and by having set routines at the beginning and end of each session, and set rules for working with specific equipment/tools they learn to work with them not against them. It is important, especially with older children, to involve them with decision making processes and ensure they all know the way unacceptable behaviours are dealt with.
- Short games/activities are usually played in FS sessions to bring everyone together and allow people to discuss things if they wish, tell others about their achievements or just listen. Even though it is ok to pass in any games, and never necessary to join in with anything specific, by getting the group together for these '5 minute' meetings it allows everyone to understand the need to listen and work co-operatively with or alongside others and to take on their views and opinions even if you don't agree/like them. By having these times together as a group they get the chance to learn from each other and understand what behaviours are acceptable in society, which in turn should enhance their learning.
- Positive behaviour should be modelled at FS. Some children won't be aware of seeing 'positive behaviours' consistently which may confuse and not encourage them to carry it out always. If it is modelled once you gain their trust and eventually become a 'significant other' to them they will hopefully start showing signs of positive behaviour and learning skills. Once they trust you and understand the behaviours you treat them with are the same ones they should treat you with, they will hopefully start becoming more accepting to your help in the sessions. Instead of struggling or getting frustrated at not wanting to ask for help, or feeling as though they are not succeeding, they may start to ask for adult help and support. Forest School lends itself to encouraging positive behaviour and learning so well due to its positive consistencies, time and repetitiveness.

At Alburgh with Denton Primary Academy bullying is not accepted and we aim to deal with any bullying matters as quickly as possible. At FS bullying will be dealt with in the same manner as any 'on site' incident. Below are some guidelines we follow as staff (taken from school anti-bullying policy):

- Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

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- We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying.
- This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must keep on letting people know.

### **11. Lost/Missing Children**

Children will always be made aware of their boundaries and of how far they can explore before each session begins.

Children will be made aware that if a whistle is blown 3 times then they are all to assemble around the FSL immediately. A head count will be made before leaving the school grounds, during the session, before leaving the woodland at the end of the session, and then once back at school again.

If a child is missing a whistle will be blown 3 times to gather the group up. Next an immediate search of the area will be carried out by the FSL whilst the rest of the group will be kept assembled together to ensure they are kept safe and under adult supervision. If the person is not found within 5 minutes the FSL will contact the Police on 999 to alert them and also the school office, who can then contact the parents/carers.

### **12. Toileting at FS**

Being outside and away from school means that we have no access to toilets. Children will be encouraged to go to the toilet before we leave and reminded that once we are outside there are no toilets. In the event that a child needs the toilet whilst at the woods we have toilet tissue and a spade to dispose of the waste in the ground. Children will be given a small trowel to dig a hole with in a more private area of the woodland and 'go' to the toilet. Earth is replaced afterwards with toilet tissue. If they need a wee they will be allowed to go on site in a more private area with adult support if necessary against or 'up' a tree. Hand washing afterwards will consist of hand sanitiser.

### **13. Food Hygiene at FS**

Whilst at FS children will be prevented and reminded not to eat anything they find on site, such as berries or seeds. They will also be reminded not to put their fingers in their mouths whilst outside.

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If food is to be cooked at FS, then the FSL are responsible for ensuring that the food has been transported, cooked and stored in a 'safe to eat' manner. Any raw meat will of course be kept away from cooked meat and other foods and all will be kept in suitable storage containers.

### **14. Tools, Fire and Activities at FS**

When planning ideas for activities and games at FS space available and resources we can use naturally will be considered as well as things we would need to take with us and what the impact on the woodland would be. Children should be set up to succeed at FS it will be ensured that they have the correct sized equipment and enough resources to be able to take part in activities and games successfully and safely.

Before considering the use of tools and fire at FS there will be a genuine and beneficial reason for using them. Tools and fire will not be introduced and used until the FSL feels comfortable that she and the children were both ready. Once introduced, it would be slow and steady and may only be with one child or whoever was interested and then on a 1:1/1:4 basis. Using tools and fire at FS can be very beneficial to the children and their learning but if it is forced upon them or used too often then it may encourage the children to behave differently causing risk to both them and the adults. Safe storage is critical to safety when using and carrying tools and fire equipment. If correct storage isn't adhered to and a safe working zone established which children understand about and know they mustn't help themselves to things without asking an adult then their safety can be put at risk. Tool operating procedures found towards the back of the handbook will be in place and followed to ensure safe storage, carrying and use of tools and fire beforehand.

It is important that children get the chance to use tools safely but FS is not a programme based around using tools so it is definitely not necessary or practical to use them initially or too regularly. A blunt tool is a lot more dangerous than a sharp one and so tools must be checked for signs of damage and sharpened regularly. Tools must be in your risk assessments before use, good training should be given to the children beforehand and modelling safe use will prove effective.

Before using tools at FS you need to ensure the area you are going to work must be safe. This means checking the ground is flat, clear and free from large objects and trip hazards as well as checking the layers of the woodland, most importantly the canopy. You will check there is no overhanging wood above the area and have risk assessed it beforehand.

The tools will be kept together in safe storage containers/bags and everyone should be fully aware that they must ask and be supervised when getting tools out to use. Before retrieving the tools you must ensure you have found a suitable 'safe working area' in which you will use the tool. It needs to be an area big enough so that no one can come into easy contact with you. You should leave enough space to imagine a big bubble called your 'blood bubble' surrounds you and leaves enough space for

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you to move your arms around from side to side with the length of the tools included without anyone being in the way. If you are supervising a child then they need to be aware of the rules and of their 'blood bubble' too. Whilst supervising you need to explain to them that you are going to stand behind and to the side of them where they are using the tool but outside their 'blood bubble' so you can safely watch and advise them as necessary.

Once finished using the tool and have cleaned it, it must be put back into the sheath before putting it back into the storage container. When putting it back it is very important to be aware of where you are walking so you do not walk too closely near someone else who may be using tools.

### Operating Procedures

<b>Fixed Blade Knife</b>	
Tool used for:	Fixed blade knives like 'scandi grind knives' or 'frost clippers' are relatively easy to use with guidance and supervision and are very good at removing bark and whittling sticks to make pegs etc as well as for carving wood.
Transporting to FS:	All knives should be kept in a secure metal container like an 'ammo' box. These are good because they are strong, sturdy, very safe for carrying and have a handle on which is noticeable to hear when being opened. All knives should be supervised and counted in and out of the box when in use.
Safety Checks: 	You need to do safety checks on all tools before any use of them. They need to be sharp as they will work a lot easier and are a lot safer than using a blunt tool. First you should check knife with a visual inspection - look along the blade and check there's no movement from the handle or in the blade. Next to check the blade is sharp slide your finger across the blade, not down! your finger should drag across. If is it not ok put electrical tape or mark it somehow to warn others that it is not safe to use.
PPE needed (and for whom):	None but safety footwear could be worn when using a knife as a precaution.
Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	Ensure there is a first aid box close by at all times and adult supervision.
Ratio Adult/Child	1:4
Safe Body Stance:	Check you have plenty of space around you and no one is in your 'blood bubble' before starting. When using a knife at FS you should sit in the 'Stable stance' position meaning you have 3 points of contact with the ground and are stable, safe and comfortable. Kneel down with one knee on the floor and the other raised up so your foot is stable on the ground. You then use this leg raised up to lean your stick onto and support with your arm not holding the knife. You may prefer to sit on a log when working with tools as it may be


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	more comfortable. To ensure that the femoral artery is protected when sitting and using tools, you should have either your legs together and work to the side, or legs apart with your elbows on your knees.
Safe Action:	Choose your stick and area before you get the tool. Make sure you have the correct size tool for the person and that their hair is tied back and gloves are removed before starting. Sitting or kneeling in the stable stance position work along the stick in the direction away from your body and point it towards the ground. Turn the stick rather than the tool. Once finished and cleaned put the knife back into the sheath immediately and then into the main storage container.
How to Clean:	Whilst outside and when finished using the tool, carefully wipe the blade along the stick used to remove any residue. When back indoors clean along the blade with an oily rag, ensuring all residue and any other materials are wiped off the blade carefully.
Storage:	Store once clean and dry in a sealed 'Ammo box' in a dry, safe and secure locked place.

<b>Bow saw</b>	
Tool used for:	Cutting through larger branches (up to about 6 inches in diameter). Make 'tree cookies' which can be used for a variety of things.
Transporting to FS:	Make sure they have a cover on them and the blades are face down in a bag. Keep in a safe tool area whilst not in use.
Safety Checks:	Remove from the bag and do a visual check to make sure there are no obvious signs of damage to the saw. Check the handle is secure and also the blade. Check the teeth of the blade are all there and are sharp by turning it upside down and looking carefully. Hold the saw down beside your body and check it is not bent.
	
PPE needed (and for whom):	None but safety footwear could be worn when using a bow-saw as a precaution.
Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	If someone is helping you ensure they have appropriate clothing and PPE on and that is isn't too noisy so you can communicate effectively.
Ratio Adult/Child	1:2
Safe Body Stance:	Check space around you and above and use in area with enough space to stand securely without obstacles. Do not cut on the ground, use an 'A-frame' if possible. Use your strongest hand to hold the saw and your other hand resting on the branch for support. Stand with the opposite foot to the arm used to saw with in front of you with the other foot slightly behind and make sure when sawing you are directly behind the saw and so able to look down

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	the blade clearly. Use support from others to hold the other end of the branch so not to bend the blade under force.
Safe Action:	Make sure you have the correct size tool for the person and their hair is tied back and no gloves on. Use gentle sawing action with cutting as pulling back and do not force the saw. Do 3 main saw strokes towards you to ground in the area first before sawing fluently and continuously until right through the wood. Ensure all people are clear of falling zone.
How to Clean:	Clean with a brush which has been oiled by using small strokes with the brush, brushing down away from the teeth of the blade instead of going along the blade. Check teeth whilst cleaning.
Storage:	Store once the blade is clean and dry in a safe dry place and in a sealed bag away from the reach of children.

<b>Axe</b>	
Tool used for:	An axe is used for pointing or to split wood or cut and trim small wood, thin branches and twigs. Useful for making mallets and A-frames at FS.
Transporting to FS:	Axes need to be carried in a suitable tool bag, ensuring all the axes have the sheaths on them at all times when not in use. Keep in a safe tool area whilst not in use, preferably with the axe blade buried into the far side of a log/block so that the handle is not sticking out.
Safety Checks:	<p>You need to do safety checks on all tools before any use of them. They need to be sharp as they will work a lot easier and are a lot safer than using a blunt tool.</p> <p>Start by giving the axe a good visual check. Check the wooden handle for cracks and do not use tool if it has. Check for signs of the head shifting, take the guard off the blade and twist to check its secure. Look at the top of the handle and examine that the wedge and pin are firmly in place and that there are no signs of moving or damage. Look carefully at the blade for chips and carefully check the sharpness of the blade by running your thumb over it, just as you would with a knife.</p>
PPE needed (and for whom):	Safety footwear could be worn when using an axe as a precaution.
Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	If someone is helping you ensure they have appropriate clothing and PPE on and that isn't too noisy so you can communicate effectively. Ensure there is a first aid box close by at all times and adult supervision.
Ratio Adult/Child	1:1
Safe Body Stance:	When using the axe you need to be in the safe body stance - with 3 points of contact to the ground as explained in 2/12. Ensure you have plenty of space around you (Blood Bubble) and that no one is in front or behind you. The safe areas are to the sides and keep a safe working distance from others. Have another person holding your branch for you at the opposite end and standing to the side of you. If you need to stand to use the axe then stand with your legs wide apart to avoid injury to the femoral artery.
Safe Action:	Make sure you have the correct size tool for the person and that their hair is tied back and no gloves on the tool hand. Once in a safe position start by making small chipper cuts at the end you are working on as this will break the


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	fibres up making it easier to work with. Chop on a flat stable block. and have your spare hand well away and underneath the wood. When cutting make sure the axe always goes straight down to cut and get the helper to turn the wood slowly as and when you tell them until you have finished.
How to Clean:	Use a cloth and oil to ensure all dirt and moisture is off the blade.
Storage:	Store once the blade and handle is clean and dry in a safe dry place and in a sealed bag away from the reach of children. Ensure the sheath is on the blade

<b>Loppers &amp; Secateurs</b>	
Tool used for:	Secateurs are used for cutting twigs and small branches, loppers are used for bigger branches.
Transporting to FS:	Loppers and Secateurs need to be carried in a suitable bag. Keep in a safe tool area whilst not in use, preferably leant up against a tree so they don't cause a trip hazard.
Safety Checks:	<p>You need to do safety checks on all tools before any use of them. They need to be sharp as they will work a lot easier and are a lot safer than using a blunt tool.</p> <p>Examine the handles and hinges and make sure there are no signs of cracking or rusting. To check the blade on secateurs, make sure it cannot close on you by slotting it over branch to test sharpness, then carefully drag your thumb across the blade and also visually examine the blade. Do the same for loppers but open them up fully and rest them down the front of your body from your shoulder with the blade facing up, then look down them and check the blade (see photo below). When doing this stand in a safe and sturdy stance with one leg slightly in front of the other.</p>
	
PPE needed (and for whom):	None but safety footwear and a hard hat could be worn when using these tools as a precaution, particularly if cutting directly from a tree.
Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	Ensure there is a first aid box close by at all times and adult supervision.
Ratio Adult/Child	Introduce 1:1 and up ratio as they improve and become more confident.
Safe Body Stance:	Stand with your legs wide apart or with one leg in front of the other to ensure a sturdy safe stance. No hands should be near the blades and blood bubble rules apply.
Safe Action:	Make sure you have the correct size tool for the person (use a smaller lopper for children) and that their hair is tied back and no gloves are on. Make sure the blade is up the correct way up so it looks like a smiley mouth and then carefully open the handles wide enough and place over branch then shut carefully in one smooth movement until the branch is cut off then close completely before lifting up. Keep spars long enough to ensure that you are not working near your feet.


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	For secateurs open the safety catch and use like scissors, using gloved hand to keep wood/vine/small branch sturdy
How to Clean:	Use a cloth and oil to ensure all dirt and moisture is off the blade.
Storage:	Store once the tools are clean and dry, in a safe dry place and in a sealed bag away from the reach of children.

<b>Mallet</b>	
Tool used for:	To provide a force to tools that split wood or to hammer wooden pegs into ground (for shelters/A-frames etc).
Transporting to FS:	In a tool bag.
Safety Checks:	Give a visual inspection first. Check there are no cracks on the tool and if so throw away immediately. Check the tool is sturdy and secure.
	
PPE needed (and for whom):	None needed.
Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	Ensure there is a first aid box close by at all times and adult supervision.
Ratio Adult/Child	1:1
Safe Body Stance:	Ensure you have plenty of space around you (Blood Bubble) and that no one is in front or behind you. The safe areas are to the sides and keep a safe working distance from others. Stand with your legs wide apart in a stable stance position.
Safe Action:	When carrying hold the handle of tool next to your leg with the head facing downwards. Use non-tool hand to hold the branch/wood securely and well away from the end you will be using the mallet on. Using small strong hits, bang the end of the wood until secure into position of how you want it to be.
How to Clean:	Remove any loose bits of wood. Wipe clean and dry.
Storage:	Store in a water proof and air tight container.

<b>Storm Kettle</b>	
Safety Precaution:	Make sure children are well away from the kettle and that it is always supervised by an adult. Never place the kettle on the fire unless the water chamber is full & do not allow the kettle to boil dry.
Safe Siting:	When planning to use a storm kettle you need to think carefully about where to site its use. Find an area of clear flat ground and check that there is no overhanging wood above. Make sure there is plenty of exiting space around and set up a safe area. Use larger pieces of wood to make a surround to place it inside. Make sure the cork is removed before use.





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Ratios:	Introduce 1:1 and up ratio as they improve and become more confident.
How to add fuel: 	Fill the base with combustible material such as newspaper, cotton wool and Vaseline and lots of very small tinder (matchstick size pieces of wood). Then light the fire in the base and place the kettle securely on the base. Make sure to face the hole into the wind for extra draught. Insert additional fuel (pencil size pieces of wood which should be collected beforehand) through the chimney (from the side, not directly above) continuously to ensure the fire continues. You can also add small twigs through the hole in side of the base and blow carefully into this hole if the fire starts to die down. It is very important that you collect enough firewood beforehand to keep the fire going until the water boils.
Instructions on how to safely lift kettle once boiled: 	Once the kettle is boiled it is important not a rush to quickly remove from the heat as this can cause accidents to happen. When safe to do so stand with the steam vent side going away from you and carefully lift the handle up, removing the kettle from its base. Do this by using 2 hands on each side of the handle and lift once the handle is 90o to the kettle. Ensure the handle is not lifted upright above the chimney as burns can easily happen then. Once carefully removed from the heat place on the ground outside the initial fire surround. Do not leave the kettle unsupervised.
Instructions on how to safely pour:	Once placed on the ground and you are ready to pour use one hand to hold the handle upright and the other hand to pull the cork on the chain to tilt the kettle in order to pour slowly, carefully and in a controlled manner. Do not touch the main kettle and ensure you have everything prepared beforehand.
How to extinguish:	To extinguish the Kelly kettle fire use a stick to carefully tip the remains of the burning wood out of the base onto the ground inside the fire surround. Ensure that the flames have all died off before doing this. Then spread out the remaining fuel and pour over plenty of water to cool it down. Check the heat is gone with the back of your hand hovering above and when you are happy it has cover with leaf litter or whatever was there before to leave no trace. Remove and scatter the larger pieces of wood used as the surround.

<b>Fire</b>	
Considerations before deciding to have a fire:	<p>a) Do you have a purpose for having a fire - they don't need to be every week. Fire information, rules and safety should be gradually introduced to the group until they all understand about the rules in the fire area.</p> <p>b) You must ensure you have land owners permission to light fires on their land. You should also make sure staff feel ready and have the expertise, and the children have enough knowledge to be ready to have a fire safely. Also ensure the area is safe with no aerial hazards.</p>
Safety regarding clothing and hair:	<p>a) Ensure all hair is tied back beforehand and remove gloves before fire lighting.</p> <p>b) Children and adults need to have trousers and long sleeved tops on all year round as well as warmer clothes and more layers on during the winter.</p>

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	They should have clothes on which are not too loose fitting meaning they may dangle over the heat.
Safe Sitting:	<p>a) It may be a good idea to role play before hand about the rules and safe procedures for being around a fire. Make sure children know to approach seats from behind, stepping over the logs to sit down and leaving the same way so as not to walk across or anywhere near the fire.</p> <p>b) Make sure the seating logs they are sitting on are a suitable distance away (at least 1.5m) from the fire and that they are pegged down so they cant move or roll towards the fire. Individual log seats work better though if you are able to have them.</p> <p>c) Make sure there are spaces between the logs/seats and plenty of escape routes in case of an emergency and that everyone is easily able to get far away from the outside of the seating area if necessary.</p>
Safe Management:	<p>a) Make sure the fire is positioned carefully so it cant spread and think about what you are lighting it on. Maybe have a fire pit/pan/bucket instead if safer or raise up your fire if you do have it on the ground. Clear all leaf litter form the area.</p> <p>b) Make sure you have all the materials ready at the side before starting. Ensure you have a full container of water ready at all times and keep matches in a sealed container. Build the fire slowly and allow one person to keep feeding it slowly under supervision.</p> <p>c) Never leave a fire unattended and make sure it is kept small so it is manageable and successful. Make sure you have emergency equipment available to you closely at all times.</p>
Safe Extinguishing:	<p>a) Let the fire die right down first which can take a little time and then spread out the fuel.</p> <p>b) Cover with plenty of water and then dig in the earth to scatter the ash and lower the heat. Remove all of the logs.</p> <p>c) Check it is cool by hovering the back of your hand over it. Make sure it is thoroughly put out before leaving and leave as you found it so without trace</p>

## **15. Daily Operating Procedure**

The following outlines a basic procedure for a FS session to run successfully

### **Before a session:**

- Risk assessments will be completed
- Staffing will be checked to be compliant to ratios
- Children will be registered
- Any equipment taken will be checked

### **During a session:**

- Regular head counts will be made
- Tools may be counted in and out if used

### **After a session:**

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- A head count will take place
- Tools will be checked and counted
- Evaluations from all adults involved will be discussed for next session

### **16. General Notes**

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

- throwing with force at anything not allowed.
- stones are not to be taken off site.

#### **Picking up and playing with sticks:**

- Children can carry sticks if they are shorter than their arm's length but need to think about others around them.
- Longer sticks must be dragged behind them or carried at either end by 2 children.
- Sticks must not be thrown or pulled off living trees.

#### **Tree Climbing:**

- Children must ask an adult to stand beside a tree if they wish to climb it.
- They must not climb higher than the adults allows.
- Adults must get a child to think about the tree they have picked to climb and safety issues surrounding it.

#### **Rope and String Use:**

- Children are to be encouraged to use ropes and string for connecting and transporting at FS.
- They mustn't tie up other children or around themselves.
- Adults may model knot tying.

#### **Carrying and transporting materials:**

- Children should be encouraged to roll, lift, drag and pull materials.
- Adults should demonstrate the safe way to lift materials by bending your knees and keeping a straight back.

#### **Eating and Drinking:**

- Children and adults must not eat or put anything in their mouth or any part of their body unless the FSL has given it to them and provided appropriate and safe food and/or drink.
- No one should bring food to the FS site apart from the FSL (unless for medical reasons, in which case the FSL should be fully aware).

#### **The seating area (log circle):**

- Children and adults must always enter from behind where they wish to sit and exit the circle at the same place.
- No one should walk through the middle of the seating area at any time.

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