

Forest School Handbook



Forest School Handbook developed by Miss Killian (Forest School Leader): September 2022 – February 2023

Forest School Handbook received by Governors: March 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Taylor".

Chair of Governors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mr M Grogan".

Headteacher

Forest School Handbook shared with staff and shared on the school website: March 2023

'Never settle for less than your best'

FOREST SCHOOL HANDBOOK

Our school motto

Never settle for less than your best.

Our Vision

Following in the footsteps of Jesus, each member of our community will flourish as resilient, respectful and adaptable individuals prepared for life's journey. Along the way we will encourage and inspire each other to continue growing as beacons of light in our own lives and the wider world.

Our Mission Statement

St. George's Central seeks to provide quality education rooted in the Christian faith, serving the spiritual, moral, and educational needs of the community of which it is part.



'Never settle for less than your best'

Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' John 8:12

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Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2022) 'Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools'
- DfE (2020) 'SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years'

This handbook operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Educational Visits and School Trips Policy
- Forest School Activities Risk Assessment
- Equality Information and Objectives Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

A full version of each policy can be found on our school website: <https://www.saintgeorgescentral.wigan.sch.uk/policies.html>



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Forest School location

Forest School at St Georges Central CE Primary School and Nursery is located behind the school field. It is surrounded by four boundary fences with one entrance via the school field. It is suitable for allowing pupils to explore the natural world and build their confidence in an outdoor environment.

The location will be surveyed weekly by the Forest School Leader or the Site Manager to ensure it is safe for pupils to use.

Staff will communicate clearly to pupils the areas they are permitted to explore and issue frequent reminders, where necessary.



Forest School site history

The Forest School development is boundaried by a public pathway that was once a significant part of the local mineral railway line network.

The coppicing that took place from the 1970's onward, to the north of this pathway and the east of Common Lane, and almost as far as Shakerley Hall Farm and the Old Farmer's Homestead, was part of a wider project to clean up the area after deep pit mining was finished.

Open cast mining took place, surface coal was 'mined' and the two major 'slag heaps' or 'spoil heaps' to the north and west were cleared, grassed and sheep were introduced.

To the east of Common Lane, opposite the allotments and beyond the mineral line and current public footpath was a privately owned tar works. At present there is no known information about this enterprise, but our school governor Mr Iain Hodcroft and the Tyldesley history society are in the process of researching this further.

(Information taken from discussions with Mr Iain Hodcroft, school governor, November 2022)

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Forest School Rules

- Look after our forest and the environment.
- Be kind to the wildlife.
- No pick, no lick, no kick!
- Stay inside the boundary fences.
- Return to basecamp when you hear the Forest School leader shout our call and response base/camp.
- Be kind and look after your friends.

Public liability insurance

Copies of our public liability insurance can be obtained from our School Business Manager.

Environmental impact assessment

“Our task must be to widen our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”

(Albert Einstein)

Our Forest School leader is very committed to encouraging all pupils, staff and volunteers to work as a team in surveying & monitoring our Forest School site. We are passionate about ensuring our site developments help the diverse species and local wildlife populations that may enter the Forest School. We hope to learn where our flora thrives and where our fauna friends live.

Flora can be defined as the plant life present in our Forest School.			
			
Fauna can be defined as the animals present in our Forest School.			
			

Ecological impact assessment (January 2023)

Activity	Considerations	Impact	Mitigation
Outdoor games	Consistent use of areas inside and outside the fire circle.	Compaction of soil. The disturbance of young and delicate wildflowers.	The base of the fire circle has been picked through observation from the Forest School Leader during the six months prior to developing the site. This is an area with the least biodiversity. Area usage will be rotated according to seasonal observations.
Fire lighting & camp fire.	Consistent use of the permanent camp fire site. Consistent use of temporary fire site.	Compaction of soil. Risk of fire when site not in use.	The base of the fire circle and temporary fire site has been picked through observation from the Forest School Leader during the six months prior to developing the site. This is an area with the least biodiversity. Area usage will be rotated according to seasonal observations.
Tree climbing	Consistent use of same area of trees.	Risk of damage to trees.	Trees to be regularly surveyed by the Forest School Leader. Children encouraged to climb mature trees only.

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Three-year sustainable land management plan

<p align="center">Year 1 2022-2023</p>	<p align="center">Year 2 2023-2024</p>	<p align="center">Year 3 2024-2025</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure boundary fences. • Install gate between woodland and school field. • Invite Proland gardeners to give Forest initial clearance of rubbish, deadwood, hawthorn, blackthorn and bramble. Establish a provisional fire circle area. • Arrange for the LancsWT ground maintenance consultant to visit site to offer quote and advice in regards to a fire circle, seating area, all weather canopy and path. • Establish one tool area using logs from felled trees. • Save as much natural debris and logs as possible during the initial clearance to be used for developing the Forest School. • Order tools and resources to start Forest School sessions with all year groups. • Contact Wigan council for donations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order a wood shed and begin to build up wood to dry out over 12 months and future proof our Forest School • Order a tools and resources shed to reduce amount being transported by pupils and staff from EYFS. • Encourage the children to develop the Forest School site sections 1 and 2 and plan in the moment around their interests. • Ensure all cohorts attend Forest School for 6 regular sessions. • Build up parent/carer volunteers. • Invite Proland gardeners for two yearly visits to maintain weeds and fell over hanging trees. • Maintain path to and around the fire circle. • Develop progression of skills document for shelters, dens, tools, fires and cooking for all years. • Develop outdoor learning progression of skills. • Develop vocabulary progression document for all years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop section 3 of the forest school site into a woodland that could be used for several purposes.

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A typical Forest School Session and procedure

Routine and procedures

Procedures to be carried out before each session:

The Forest School leader will:

- Complete a site sweep of the site before each session to check for any litter, glass, animal faeces, etc. Any such items should be collected using litter picks, gloves and placed into the onsite bin.
- Train all pupils, staff and volunteers during their time at Forest School to complete a site sweep and to recognise that hazards may be different for all age groups.

Procedures to be carried out during each session:

- Children and adults to wear PPE as required.
- Apply sun screen as necessary.
- Pupils to support the Forest School leader to transport tools and resources to base camp.
- Walk to base camp, discussing things to be seen on the way.
- Discuss any safety issues of the day.
- Sit down; discuss rules, base camp call and response and any safety issues again as they arise.
- It is advisable to walk the boundary for at least the first session, possible more dependent on the age and Forest School experience of the children.

Procedures to be carried out at the end of each session:

- Invite the children to reflect on their visit using the reflection stick, allow the children to choose to give feedback
- Record ideas for possible in the moment follow up planning.
- Encourage pupils to clear everything away and transport all tools and resources back to the school site. Any removable tools or resources should be taken out of Forest School to reduce the risk of public damage to the area.

Essential Equipment List

The following can be found in the Forest School back pack. This should be checked by the Forest School Leader at the beginning and at the end of each session:

- Outdoor First Aid kit
- Orange burns kit
- Forest School handbook
- Medical information of all pupils and adults in the group
- Risk benefit assessments
- Walkie talkie and/or mobile phone
- Bottle of clean water
- Accident report book
- Individual medication (if required)
- Emergency foil blanket
- Wet wipes
- Rubbish bags to collect any rubbish found or acquired during time in session.
- Torch
- Whistle

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Clothing requirements for Forest School Sessions

"There's no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing."

Alan Wainwright

The Forest School leader will communicate clothing requirements to parents/carers at the earliest opportunity. This will be no later than one week prior to the commencement of the six Forest School sessions. Class teachers will support in facilitating this.

Clothing requirements are subject to change and weather dependent but may include the following:

- Long sleeved t-shirt or PE jacket/hoody over PE t-shirt
- Outdoor PE trousers or thick tracksuit bottoms
- Waterproof trousers and waterproof coat with a hood
- Wellington boots and thick socks
- During summer months, a sunhat
- During winter months, extra layers, e.g. fleece jacket, leggings, gloves
- Spare clothes
- Rigger gardening gloves

Children will bring their clothes in a named bag to minimise the risk of misplacing or losing items. In order to make Forest School accessible to all children, the school will ensure spare clothing in multiple sizes are available. Clothing and footwear appropriate to the Forest School environment, activity and weather will be worn at all times.

Children will be unable to take part in Forest School activities if they do not have the appropriate clothing and the school is unable to provide its own. These children will access Forest School sessions once clothing arrangements have been put in place. Clothing will be worn to suit the season and the weather.

Parents/carers will be asked to provide sun lotion and insect repellent for children where necessary, and the school will keep a spare supply of sun lotion and insect repellent to be provided when required. In all seasons it is advised to cover up arms and legs to avoid the risk of bug bites, scratches, cuts etc.

Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring the Forest School leader is trained to level 3 in Forest School and regularly accesses CPD to main and update skills or knowledge.
- Ensuring staff adhere to the relevant policies and that pupils are aware of their responsibilities.
- Liaising with the location's landowner or the site manager to ensure that staff and pupils are aware of any potential hazards.
- Ensuring that Forest School Activities Risk Benefit Assessments are up to date and conducted to identify, evaluate, and manage the specific risks associated with the Forest School, its location and the activities planned.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for monitoring and reporting incidents associated with the Forest School.
- Ensuring that parents/carers are informed with sufficient notice about planned Forest School activities and any requirements, e.g. clothing and equipment needs.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of this policy on an annual basis and communicating any changes to staff, parents/carers and children.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring there is a current Forest School Statement and Progression of skills in Forest School teaching.
- To ensure sufficient time and resources are devoted to Forest School to enable the school to offer and deliver a quality and broader Forest School experiences.

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The School Business Manager is responsible for:

- Arranging the procurement of any equipment or clothing required for the Forest School.
- Ensuring value for money when arranging the procurement of equipment or clothing for the Forest School.
- Ensuring that the school's public liability insurance covers the Forest School and all planned activities.
- Ensuring they fully understand the Forest School handbook and associated risk assessments.

The Forest School leader is responsible for:

- Conducting a detailed health and safety check before Forest School activities.
- Adhering at all times to the Forest School Activities Risk Assessment.
- Carrying a fully stocked first-aid kit during all Forest School sessions.
- Holding an up-to-date Outdoors First Aid certificate and leading first aid arrangements.
- Inspecting equipment and tools before use to ensure they are safe for use, and that damaged or defective items are not used.
- Keeping and maintaining an incident log to record any incidents that occur during Forest School activities.
- Planning and delivering Forest School sessions, in collaboration with the Headteacher, that are engaging, informative and develop pupils' skills and appreciation of the environment.
- Liaising with the SENDCO, where necessary, to ensure the Forest School is inclusive for pupils with SEND and reasonable adjustments are made to ensure additional needs are accommodated.
- Carrying out regular training, supporting staff to understand the Forest School Ethos, principles and risk benefit assessments.
- Ensuring staff understand the need for a high adult to child ratio when undertaking Forest School sessions.

The SENDCO is responsible for:

- Assessing additional individual needs of children with SEND prior to Forest School activities and promoting measures to ensure pupils with SEND can participate safely.
- Ensuring the SEND Policy is adhered to at all times during Forest School activities.
- Ensuring that the provision put in place for pupils with SEND is monitored for effectiveness throughout the duration of the Forest School activities.
- Ensuring parents of SEND children understand the Forest School ethos and principles.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Ensuring the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is adhered to at all times during Forest School activities.
- Consulting the Forest School leader on measures necessary to ensure pupils are safeguarded adequately during activities.

All teachers, teaching assistants, school staff members and volunteers are responsible for:

- Sharing the ethos and principles of Forest School with their children.
- Liaising with the Forest School Leader/SENDCO to ensure additional provision is available for pupils with SEND as required.
- Using vocabulary associated with Forest School that will support site health and safety e.g. Fire code word: LAVA.
- Adhering to this policy at all times during Forest School activities.
- Ensuring that pupils are always accounted for and supervised.
- Reporting any concerns and incidents to the Forest School leader and asking for guidance as appropriate.
- Reporting any safeguarding incidents to the DSL and asking for guidance as appropriate.
- Reporting concerns regarding the provision for pupils with SEND to the SENCO.
- Ensuring that pupils are always respectful to each other, staff and the natural environment.
- Managing pupils in line with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy when necessary.

Forest School volunteers

Volunteers are welcome, to be a part of our Forest School sessions and their contribution is valued and appreciated. Volunteers enables us to share our ethos more widely as well as increasing our group knowledge and skills and keeping the adult to child ratios high. Volunteers are usually parents, carers or other relatives of the children attending, but we would welcome anyone within our local and school community who has an interest in helping or learning more about Forest School.

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The Forest School leader will:

- Ensure all volunteers have received a Forest School induction and understand the ethos.
- Ensure new volunteers are introduced to the staff and the pupils attending the session.
- Provide volunteers with information about where important items and documents are kept.
- Familiarise the volunteer with procedures for managing confidential information.
- Provide details of the tasks and daily routines to be completed.

The volunteer will:

- Familiarise themselves with the Forest School environment.
- Read and sign the Benefit-Risk- Assessments for all activities taking place during the session they are attending.
- Read the Forest School handbook.

Medical and emergency contact details

Children's medical details can be obtained from the school office at all times, at least one week in advance parents/carers are to complete a permission form and outline any new medical information. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure the school office have up to date information on their child at all times. It is the responsibility of volunteers and additional adults to inform the Forest School leader of any personal medical concerns. Volunteers are to sign in at the school office and provide an emergency contact number on arrival.

Emergency procedures

In the case of a medical emergency (i.e. serious injury, poisoning or illness). The Forest School leader is trained in Forest School first aid and paediatrics and at least one additional trained first-aider will be present during all Forest School activities.

The Forest School leader will create and explain to staff and pupils the procedures to be followed in the event of an incident, e.g. the area where all children are to gather in order to be easily supervised.

The Forest School leader will carry a fully stocked outdoor first-aid kit at all times during Forest School sessions. All incidents, injuries and illnesses will be managed in line with the First Aid Policy.

Staff accompanying a class will be required to carry the first aid box of medications and they will be aware of any allergies children may have, e.g. an adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) as part of the first aid kit.

The Forest School leader will carry a mobile phone and school radio to be able to contact the school office staff in the event of an incident occurring at Forest School or within the school site.

In the event of a missing child, staff will gather all children together at base camp and conduct a head count. One adult will supervise leading the class back to their base classroom and remaining staff will conduct a search of the area and call the missing child's name.

If the missing child is not found after **5 minutes**, the Headteacher will be contacted immediately and informed of all necessary details; the Headteacher will contact the parents and police if the child is not located on the school site.

In the event of a serious injury to the Forest School Leader, staff will provide immediate assistance and a trained first aider will remain with the leader until the situation is resolved.

In the event of a serious injury to the Forest School Assistant, staff will provide immediate assistance and a trained first aider will remain with the injured person until the situation is resolved.

The Forest School leader will assess injuries and decide if further medical attention is needed, the emergency services will be contacted immediately where necessary.

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Supervision

Staff and volunteers will supervise pupils at a ratio of 1:4 in EYFS or 1:5 in KS1 or KS2, this is at the discretion of the Forest School leader when tools or fires are to be used. It is dependent on a high ratio of additional adult volunteers, but must be adhered to when tools or fires are to be used. Head counts will be conducted regularly to prevent the risk of pupils going missing or leaving the sight of staff and volunteers. In the event of a pupil going missing, staff will have due regard for section 16 of this policy. Supervising staff and volunteers will be adequately trained to ensure they can safely assist pupils during Forest School activities. Supervising staff will be informed of any hazards present by the Forest School leader and ensure mitigating measures are in place and adhered to by pupils.

Lockdown procedure

In addition to the school lockdown procedure, should a situation occur during a Forest School session then the assisting adult and volunteers must return the children to the nearest year group classroom if it is safe to do so. The Forest School leader must remain in contact at all times with the School Business Manager and close down the site as quickly as possible and access the school building via the nearest classroom of the visiting year group. Tools and resources are to be left in the Forest School to be removed when it is safe to do so.

Fire procedure

Fires will only be lit in designated areas surrounded by a safe zone under the direction of the Forest School leader. A suitably trained member of staff who is equipped to manage fire safety is on site at all times when fire is being taught about or is present.

Lighting fires

The fire will only be lit once it is confirmed that all safety equipment, e.g. a red water bucket, is in place. The fire will be supervised by the Forest School leader at all times and should never be left unattended when in use.

The fire will be created using safe fire-lighting equipment with no accelerants used. Safe means of extinguishing the fire, e.g. a red water bucket, will be located nearby in the event of an emergency.

Cooking at a campfire

The Forest School leader will consider what food can be cooked and eaten by pupils using the fire, with any allergies of staff and pupils considered in addition to other dietary requirements. The forest school leader will ensure that food is transported and stored safely, e.g. ensuring meat is chilled.

Food that is to be eaten by pupils will be inspected by a member of staff to ensure it is fit for consumption, e.g. it is thoroughly cooked. The Forest School leader will work closely with the school kitchen staff to ensure correct outdoor food hygiene procedures are followed.

Extinguishing fires

Safe means of extinguishing the fire, e.g. a red water bucket, will be located nearby in the event of an emergency. A fire blanket will be available at all times. The Forest School leader will ensure the fire is extinguished safely before the session ends. The fire will be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased. Whenever possible, all fuels will be burnt off to ash.

Fire safety

Fire areas will be surrounded by logs at least 1.5 metres from the fire pit. The logs represent the campfire boundary. Seating will be organised around the outside of the fire boundary. Once seated around the campfire, staff will ensure that pupils remain seated until directed to move.

Pupils and adults are not permitted to cross the fire circle even when the fire is not in use. Movement must always be around the outside of the fire circle. If any adult or pupil crosses the fire circle, then the code word 'lava' may be shouted by any persons to warn that the area is hot and the fire may spread.

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When the campfire is in use, pupils will not be permitted to access the area without permission. Activities taking place near to the fire involving pupils, e.g. cooking, are supervised at a ratio of 1:2 in EYFS and KS1 or KS2.

If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke will be avoided. If wind direction is variable, staff will rearrange seating where possible. Pupils will be advised on how to handle fire smoke in an appropriate way, e.g. by turning their head to one side, covering their face and closing their eyes. Asthma sufferers will be seated in positions well away from the line of smoke. It is at the discretion of the Forest School leader as to whether persons with Asthma should be present when a fire is lit.

The Forest School leader should ensure that any large remains of wood, especially when using a long log fire, are separated from one another. Participants working with the fire will ensure that long hair is tied back and loose clothing is fastened and secured. Appropriate arrangements will be made for pupils with SEND within their Personal Education Plan on how to approach and deal with campfires.

Health and Safety procedures and guidance

The school website sets out clear statements of intent regarding the whole school's approach to the health and safety of its children, staff and visitors to the school and the school Site. Provided below is a list of additional points and measures which relate directly to our Forest School sessions.

There is always a high adult to participant ratio at Forest School. The high number of adults means that participants can safely experience activities like climbing trees, walking across logs blindfolded, lighting (controlled) fires and using bush craft knives that are usually considered too risky in other situations. It also means that the Forest School Leader is able to give individuals one-to-one attention when needed, and to lead small group work. All activities are thoroughly risk assessed before the start of each session and the Forest School leader will continue to monitor the safety of the group as activities evolve.

There is always a trained first aider present at each session and a written emergency plan to follow. Participants are also involved in completing their own risk assessments throughout the sessions. This gives them ownership of the process and to helps them to be aware of, and calculate, the risks involved in each activity. They are asked to state what risks and hazards they should be aware of and what steps they can take to reduce or mitigate them. For example, they are given laminated hazard cards to mark hazards like brambles and hidden ditches.

Daily procedures

To ensure the safety of children and adults attending Forest School sessions, there are certain checks that need to be made before, during and at the end of each session. It is the Forest School Leader's responsibility to ensure that all checks have been completed. This daily health and safety checklist provides a reminder of all daily procedures. This must be used each day.

Risk Assessments and Risk Management

Forest School site risk: benefits assessment

A site sweep risk assessment is undertaken at the start of every session at our Forest site. In addition, an activity risk: benefits assessment will be established prior to any activity that may require it. These will include: whittling, cutting wood, shelter building, fire lighting and cooking on an open fire, and palm drilling. Specific additional risk assessments will be undertaken for children whose medical condition or whose behaviour requires them with the support of the school SENCO or School Business Manager.

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The risk assessment process is detailed below:

- We look for potential hazards.
- We decide who might be at risk of harm.
- We think about how harm may occur and the worst outcome that we could face.
- We evaluate the current level of risk.
- We decide on a course of action or set of precautions that will be put in place to minimise the potential risk.
- We then re-evaluate the level of risk once our course of action and precautions have been put in place.
- We create a risk assessment and collate them in the Forest School file.
- We inform all adults accompanying the group, requiring them to sign each relevant risk assessment to show that they have read and understood the assessments
- We regularly monitor and review each risk assessment and action is taken when required.

Risk: Benefits assessment

This risk assessment is to be reviewed every half term as and when the seasons change throughout the year.

Significant Hazards and Risks	Level	Control/Actions	Risk Benefits
Exploring the site. Uneven ground, branches and trees roots on the ground. Branches and shrubs at eye level.	Medium	Children well supervised, awareness talks and reminders. There will always be at least 2 members of staff both first aid trained with a first aid kit and mobile phone. High adult to child ratios.	Promoting physical development and awareness of the difference in surroundings. Encouraging children to be self-aware and support their peers.
Bites and stings from bees / wasps and stinging nettles.	Low	Warn not to catch bees / wasps and be aware of stinging nettles. Long trousers and closed footwear to be worn. Nettles to be cleared.	Opportunity to study how different insects move around. Displaying a positive approach to insects rather than being frightened of them.
Allergies or children’s existing conditions.	Low	All staff to be aware of any known allergies or existing conditions and be aware of treatment required.	Promote knowledge and independence in identifying and avoiding allergens.
Mushrooms and fungi.	Low	Ensure children do not eat anything they find and keep their hands out of their mouths and wash them thoroughly after the session. Obvious mushrooms to be cleared away.	Promote knowledge and independence in identifying and avoiding mushrooms and fungi. Identify similarities to foods bought and eaten.
Poisonous Plants	Low	Site to be inspected prior to sessions, staff to be aware of poisonous plants and children not to pick anything that’s living and growing, keep fingers out of their mouths.	Promote knowledge and independence in identifying and avoiding poisonous plants. Understanding the natural world and what they must not touch.
Building dens or other activities using sticks and branches – risk of sharp objects.	Low	Children to be aware of dangers and carry or hold sticks carefully being aware of others around them. Injuries or accidents to be dealt with accordingly	Opportunity to work as a team safely, to problem solve and scaffold each other. Opportunities to develop motor skills, practice knots and develop social skills.
Animal droppings	Low	Children to be made aware not to touch or pick up any animal droppings. Hands to be cleaned and anti-bacterial gel to be used.	To help children to identify animals from their droppings and other traits. To understand the importance of hygiene.
Falling branches	Low	Site checked regularly to ensure no fallen or dangerous branches.	Children to learn to risk assess for themselves.

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Significant Hazards and Risks	Level	Control/Actions	Risk Benefits
Using string or twine	Low	Children to be instructed how to use string to make dens and tie sticks together. Close supervision.	Practicing knots and learning new skills involving following instructions. Encourages creativity
Sharp branches and thorns	Medium	Children to be aware, any cuts or injuries to be dealt with on site. Larger cuts / more serious injuries to be dealt with in school. In the event of severe injuries 999 to be called.	Children to be self-aware, identify dangers and scaffold peers. Encourages self confidence in a new and sensory environment.
Small tools Potato peelers, bush craft knives, scissors, secateurs, mallet.	High	Safety talk given and repeated. Close supervision at the discretion of the Forest School Leader. Strict use of bush craft knives on a 1:1 basis under very close supervision within the tool area. Gloves to be used on the hand not holding the tool. Only trained Forest School Leader to use tools with children and fire lighting.	Building confidence and gaining new experiences.
Larger tools Sheaf Knife, loppers, bow saw and Billhook.	High	Safety talk given and repeated prior to use of tools. Strict use of tools on a 1:1 basis under very close supervision within the tool area. Gloves to be used on the hand not holding the tool. Only trained Forest School Leader to use tools with children and fire lighting. The school business manager is to be informed before the start of the session that pupil tool use will take place.	Supporting communication skills: listening, understanding and learning new vocabulary. Hand and eye coordination, learning new skills. Risk taking and managing behaviour and frustration.
Fire lighting & camp-fire.	High	Safety talk given prior to lighting each fire with reminder of rules for the fire circle, children asked to say / repeat the rules to ensure they have understood them. Fire circle laid out with clear boundaries, children only go in the fire circle when invited by the Forest School leader on a 1:1 basis. Water is always available at the side of the fire and sticks etc to be collected before the fire is lit. Gloves used when needed. Children to sit on logs/planks while the fire is lit. Only trained Forest School Leader to light fires with children. The school business manager is to be informed before the start of the session that a fire will take place.	Development of awareness and respect of fire. Working as a team and building trusting relationships and self-confidence. Children learn to be aware of danger and risk take as well as learning how to light and maintain a fire safely. Gaining new experiences that empower them to use their initiative and enjoy the natural environment. Supports mathematical development, sizes and sorting.
Cooking food	High	As fire lighting and camp fire. Any food cooked will be under close supervision with the adult cooking the food and ensuring it is cooled before the children eat it. The school business manager is to be informed before the start of the session that cooking on a fire will take place.	See lighting and camp fire. Children learn about cooking and being independent as well as learning life skills. Encourages creativity.

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Food safety and cooking procedure

Food and drink preparation and sitting together whilst eating and drinking are important parts of Forest School.

This procedure has been devised using advice in Preventing Food Poisoning – Good Hygiene at Home published by the Food Standards Agency and 10 Ways to Prevent Food Poisoning on the NHS Choices website.

We will provide hand washing facilities at each session where food and/or drink is prepared and will ensure that all staff, volunteers and participants follow the Forest School food hygiene rules.

Forest School food hygiene rules

The Forest School leader had completed a Level 2 Outdoor Food Hygiene course. All staff involved in Forest School have completed an online basic level 2 food hygiene course and should follow the food hygiene rules below.

When involved in food and drink preparation you should:

- Wash hands before and during cooking.
- Do not handle food if they are ill with stomach problems, such as diarrhoea or vomiting.
- Cover sores and cuts with a waterproof dressing.
- Avoid handling food when possible, and instead use spoons, tongs or other suitable implements.
- Tie hair back.
- Keep food that is waiting to be cooked separate from food that is ready to be eaten.
- Use separate chopping boards for preparing different foods, especially raw and ready-to-eat food.
- Prepare food on a suitable surface, e.g. chopping board, cup, saucepan and not on the ground.
- Ensure food is cooked thoroughly before serving. Food should be cooked right through and piping hot in the middle
- Not reheat food more than once.
- Keep utensils clean and regularly wash tea towels and cloths.
- Store food in clean plastic containers with non-leaking lids.
- Take all rubbish and food scraps away with them at the end of the session to avoid attracting vermin to the site.

Food allergies and special dietary requirements: Participants are asked to state any food allergies and special dietary requirements they may have on the permission form.

This information will be used to plan what food and drink to provide during sessions, ensuring that the food and drink provided is suitable for all.

Safe use of tools and tool talks

General

- Keep tools in good, clean order.
- Check tools are safe to use before the start of each session
- Carry out tool maintenance (cleaning and oiling) once a week.
- Do not use tools with damaged blades or handles or with loose bolts or fixings.
- When transporting tools do not carry more than can be held securely.
- A blunt blade is more dangerous than a sharp one.
- Count tools in and out of the toolbox.

Please see appendix for a full outline of tool talks.

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Activity risk: benefit assessments

A copy of these risk assessments can be obtained from the school business manager as and when these activities become viable at the Forest School site.

- Exploring the Forest School site assessment- see completed.
- Bird feeders risk assessment.
- Shelter building risk assessment.
- Environmental art risk assessment.
- Fire lighting and cooking on a fire risk assessment.
- Hammock risk assessment.
- Running and hiding games risk assessment.
- Tree climbing risk assessment.

Safeguarding

Volunteers for the Forest School will only be allowed to supervise pupils alone if they have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information.

Volunteers without an enhanced DBS check will be supervised by a member of staff at all times.

Measures will be implemented to ensure that pupils' exposure to members of the public during Forest School activities is minimised as much as possible.

Pupils will be instructed and reminded frequently to remain close to the group, and to avoid leaving the sight of staff and interacting with members of the public.

All members of staff will report any safeguarding concerns to the DSL immediately.

The DSL will deal with safeguarding concerns in a timely and appropriate manner in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

In addition, volunteers working within Forest School need to appreciate that when children feel comfortable and content, they may disclose information which they might have otherwise kept to themselves. Any volunteer, or member of staff, who finds that a child is telling them something of concern should follow the steps identified below:

- Listen to the pupil but ask NO leading questions. Allow the child to lead the discussion but do not press for details.
- Accept what the child says without challenge.
- Make NO promises. You cannot 'keep a secret'.
- Inform a member of the school staff team on site or in class.
- Keep an accurate, written record of the conversation, including the date, the time, the place the conversation occurred in and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence.

Toileting

Children will be encouraged to use the toilet at school before the Forest School session begins. Any accidents will be managed in line with the school's Intimate Care Policy. The Forest School leader will make staff aware the use of a toilet is via the school site only. Children will only be supervised by a member of staff where necessary and not by volunteers. Anti-bacterial wipes or hand sanitiser will be available to allow pupils to clean their hands when necessary. Clean water for handwashing will be supplied when a fire is in use.

- Hand washing
- Vermin prevention and disposal of litter
- Lone working (also see LWT Lone Working Policy)

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Tool use

Children will be taught how to use tools and equipment independently and safely during activities.

Tool areas will consist of four logs to create a square shape consisting of a distance of a person's one arm's length and a tool from the middle of the tool area to the boundary logs. The logs represent the tool area boundary.

Staff will demonstrate the safe use of all tools and PPE before pupils are allowed to use them.

The Forest School leader assesses the risks posed by particular tools and consequently implements suitable staff: pupil ratios to supervise pupils using these tools. Where possible a 1:2 will be in place.

Tools will only be used in the tool area at all times.

All activities planned, including those using tools, will be risk assessed by the Forest School leader.

All tools will be kept clean and fit for use; tools which are damaged or defective will not be used.

An inventory of all tools is kept to ensure they can be accounted for and any lost or misplaced items identified.

All tools will be cleaned and maintained regularly by the Forest School leader.

If a member of staff, volunteer or pupil suffers an injury during the use of a tool, the activity will be suspended, and the injury will be handled in line with the First Aid Policy.

Tools will be kept in a locked tool box when not in use.

Bush craft knives will be kept on the Forest School Leader at all times through use of a para cord or placed in a locked knife safe if not in use.

Conservation procedures and guidance

Children will be encouraged to interact with the environment, which includes touching and moving materials, e.g. rocks and sticks safely and are warned about not ingesting poisonous plants and berries.

Children will be allowed to carry sticks, provided they are shorter than the length of their arm and they maintain a suitable distance from others when carrying the stick to avoid injury.

Staff will supervise and encourage children to work together to move larger materials, e.g. branches.

Children will be asked to return any materials to the environment before leaving the Forest School.

Staff will supervise all interactions with the natural world, e.g. climbing, and intervene where there is a substantial risk posed by the children to themselves or others.

Children will be taught about the importance of not damaging or defacing living nature, e.g. trees and plants, when interacting with the environment and its materials.

The Forest School Leader will provide materials during sessions, e.g. rope, and encourage pupils to use them to interact with their environment.

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The Forest School Leader will plan sessions in order to allow pupils to engage with wildlife as much as possible while considering safety at all times.

Children will be encouraged to discover and learn about the variety of wildlife that lives within the Forest School.

Children will be taught the importance of not disturbing natural habitats and respecting wildlife.

Staff, volunteers and pupils will be instructed by the Forest School Leader about potential risks from local wildlife and the necessary precautions to take, e.g. how to spot and avoid stinging nettles and poisonous plants.

Children will only be allowed to get close to, touch, move or pick up plants or wildlife where it is safe to do so.

Instances of deliberate harm or damage to wildlife will be managed in line with the school's Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

Children will be instructed that they are not to consume any food they find, e.g. berries.

Adverse weather conditions

We will not go to Forest School if the conditions are deemed dangerous such as in high winds, during thunderstorms, or during periods of extreme cold. We will use the BBC weather online forecast to make judgments about the expected conditions.

The Forest School Leader will make the decision with the Headteacher to continue with Forest school or postpone due to bad weather. When it is wet, a shelter or tent will be built immediately by a trained adult so that there is a sheltered area that is available from the start that can be used.

Equal opportunities

Forest School is for everyone. The Forest School leader will always endeavour to provide spare all weather clothing and to make time to explain the benefits of parents and carers providing the clothing needed to fully participate in a Forest School session. The Forest School leader will actively encourage every child to take a level of risk, always with close adult supervision, and actively build positive friendships and teamwork between all children and adults.

Forest School activities are always designed to produce success and enjoyment, even when this appears to be of a short-lived nature. The Forest environment is an environment to which every child and adult is able to enjoy and Forest School leader will aim to ensure the experiences will be memorable for all. Any pupils with medical needs or disabilities will be fully supported so they can access all activities at Forest School.

Behaviour

Pupils will be informed of their behaviour expectations and that poor behaviour may result in them being unable to participate in the Forest School. The Forest School leader will establish set rules which are repeated during each session in order to promote pupils' ability to explore independently while keeping safe and behaving appropriately.

Positive behaviour, e.g. teamwork and consideration for others, will be promoted through planned activities. All staff will model good behaviour, e.g. co-operation and caring for the environment, during Forest School activities. Pupils will be made aware that positive behaviour, e.g. displaying respect for the environment, means they will be trusted to explore and lead sessions with greater independence.

Challenging behaviour is managed in line with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy. Challenging behaviour will initially be dealt with by one-to-one adult support, where possible, to identify its cause. Pupils persistently displaying challenging behaviour, or acting in a manner that places themselves or others at risk of harm, will be directed towards utilising the provision areas of the Forest School session.

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Inclusion statement

Forest School activities will be planned in line with the school's SEND Policy to ensure that pupils with SEND can participate as much as possible.

The headteacher will liaise with the SENCO and the parents/carers of children with SEND to identify and assess any additional individual needs for consideration prior to Forest School activities.

The headteacher will liaise with the school nurse and the parents/carers of children with medical conditions or allergies to identify and assess any additional individual needs for consideration prior to Forest School activities.

The headteacher will identify if the location poses accessibility issues to any children and whether any accessibility means will be required, e.g. accessibility ramps.

Children with SEND will be provided with supervision during Forest School activities where required; this supervision will not count towards other relevant staffing ratios.

A variety of materials will be used that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, learning styles and linguistic needs, without stereotyping.

Sensitivity to the religious and cultural beliefs of pupils will be displayed at all times, e.g. in regard to their clothing or foods they may not wish to eat.

All children will be encouraged to participate and will be made to feel that their experiences and contributions are valued in order to build their confidence and self-esteem.

Monitoring and review

This handbook will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Forest School leader, Headteacher, School Business Manager and School Governors. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant members of staff, volunteers and other stakeholders.

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Permission form

Child's name: _____

Class: _____

	Please tick and/or add any further information if required
<p>Forest School clothing I understand that my child will have to bring their own warm and waterproof outdoor clothing and wellingtons for the session in a named bag. This is additional to coming to school in their school uniform. I understand that my child should have their arms and legs covered during the session.</p>	
<p>Photographs I give permission for my child to be photographed whilst in the Forest School and for these to be used in Miss Killian's own assessment portfolio for Forest School training.</p>	
<p>Medical information I confirm that the medical information held by school is fully up-to-date.</p>	
Please complete as appropriate for your child	
<p>Insect stings My child has never been stung by a wasp/bee?</p>	
<p>My child has been stung by a wasp/bee and made a normal recovery.</p>	
<p>My child has been stung by a wasp/bee and had an allergic reaction.</p>	
<p>Food Allergies My child has food allergies. Please list.</p>	

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Activities risk/benefits assessment

ACTIVITY ASSESSED	ASSESSED BY	TK	APPROVED BY	NS
ACTIVITY LOCATION Forest School site	ASSESSMENT DATE	21/06/22	APPROVAL DATE	21/06/22
HAZARD	Who is at risk and how?	Risk Level Without Precautions	PRECAUTIONS To reduce the risk level	Who will do them?
Risk: Benefits				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The children may... 2. The children may... 3. The children may... 4. The children may... 5. The children may... 6. The children may... 				

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Appendix 3

Site Sweep Session Risk Assessment Form

A safety sweep will take place before each Forest School or outdoor learning session to identify any hazards and document any steps taken to reduce risk. This will be completed by the Forest School Leader and/or class teacher and will be accessible during every session.

Date:	Location: Forest School	Forest School Leader/Class teacher:
Hazard Checklist:	Checked (Tick)	Action taken, if any:
Fallen Branches		
Wet, muddy and/or slippery areas		
Litter/Broken glass		
Vandalism		
Boundary		
Weather effects		
Fire Circle		
Emergency Kit		
Equipment Ready		
Dead animals		
Faeces		
Other hazards identified:		

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Tool Use and Maintenance

Tool	Maintenance	Used for
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billhook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipe blade with a cloth to ensure it is clean and dry. • Check handle is secure. • Sharpen billhooks on a cigar stone. • 2 in 1 polish to prevent rust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a clean cut within a thick log. • Used with a mallet at all times.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loppers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipe with a cloth to ensure it is clean and dry. • Check hinges and handles are secure. • Sharpen, only the levelled end of the blade, if needed. • WD 40 to prevent rust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used for cutting back leaves or twigs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potato peelers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and dry it using a soft cloth. • 2 in 1 polish to protect from rust. • If the peeler blade is blunt, dispose of and replace it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used for early whittling skill of sticks and wood or bark.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand drill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and dry it using a soft cloth. • Check all the parts are tight and secure. • 2 in 1 polish to protect from rust. • Replace drill bits when blunt or broken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used for drilling basic holes into wood cookies or blocks of wood.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bow saw blue m peg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and dry it using a soft cloth. • Check all the parts are tight and secure. • 2 in 1 polish to protect from rust. • Replace any broken blades and discard safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used for cutting wood with a diameter greater than a 2 pence piece. • Used for wet live wood e.g. chopping a branch off a tree.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bow saw orange tooth peg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and dry it using a soft cloth or rag. • Check all the parts are tight and secure. • 2 in polish to protect from rust. • Replace any broken blades and discard safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used for cutting wood with a diameter greater than a 2 pence piece. • Use for dry deadwood e.g. wood that has been chopped and dried out.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tent pegs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check pegs are not bent. • Check the correct tent pegs are being used for the type of activity. • Check no unexpected sharp elements are present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be used with a mallet only, never feet. • To be used for securing tent guide lines or shelter paracord.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bush craft knives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipe blade with a cloth or rag to ensure it is clean and dry. • Check handle is secure. • Sharpen bush craft knives on a cigar stone. • 2 in 1 polish to prevent rust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used for whittling of sticks or wood. • Used for chopping small pieces of solid wood with a mallet. • Used for cutting paracord, string or twine.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secateurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 in 1 polish to prevent rust. • Clean with a soft rag or cloth. • Check no parts have come loose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used for cutting wire. • Used for pruning plants or cutting willow. • Anything you cut must be thinner in depth than a 2p coin.

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Tool	Maintenance	Used for
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mallet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean and loose bits of wood off with an old rag or cloth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a force to tools that split wood. To hammer wooden pegs into ground and other activities that require a pounding force.
<p>Benefits of tool use</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Learn to take personal responsibility and develop resilience. Develop an awareness of real risk versus perceived risk. Learn how to use the natural woodland environment to create crafts. Learn to self-regulate their behaviour in risky situations. Learn the sustainability message of 'leave no trace'. 		

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Tool talk script

Bowsaw

- This is a bowsaw.
- This is the handle.
- This is the blade.
- This is the blade cover, when I'm not using the saw the blade cover remains on the bowsaw.
- To remove the cover, you gently pull it off along the edge of the blade.
- This is the cutting edge. This is sharp and can cause lacerations to your arms and legs.
- When I have finished sawing I put the blade cover back on.
- When I am not using the bowsaw I put it down with the blade facing inwards and the handle facing outwards like this.
- I use the bowsaw to cut anything bigger than a 2 pence piece.
- Keep your legs to one side of the saw.
- When I have finished using the bowsaw I put it back in the locked toolbox.
- When I use the bowsaw I use it with 2 arms and a tool away from anyone else like this.
- When you first saw the wood, make a small insertion three times before continuing to saw.
- No gloves on tool – glove on helper hand.
- To pass, hold blades in gloved hand and offer handles to other person.
- To place, put the tool down on ground or surface with handle facing backwards, or return it to its designated place.
- To walk, hold blades in gloved hand next to leg with handles facing downwards.

Billhook

- This is a billhook.
- This is the billhook cover/sheath.
- This is the handle.
- This is the blade.
- This is the cutting edge.
- I hold the billhook like this.
- I walk with the billhook like this.
- I pass the billhook like this.
- When I am not using the billhook I put it on top of cover with the blade facing out and the handle facing forward.
- I use the billhook to cleave (split) wood.
- When I use the billhook I use it with 2 arms and a tool away from anyone else like this.
- When I have finished using the billhook, I put it back in its cover and place it in the locked toolbox.
- No gloves on tool – glove on helper hand.

Bush craft knife

- This is a fixed blade knife.
- This is the handle.
- This is the cover.
- I take the cover off like this.
- This is the blade.
- This is the cutting edge.
- When I have finished with the knife I put the cover back on like this.
- I stand with the knife like this.
- I walk with the knife like this.
- I pass the knife like this.
- When I use the knife I use it with two arms and a tools length away from anyone except my partner, like this.
- I use the knife to cut cord and to whittle.

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Bush craft knife continued

- I have bare hands on the tool.
- I have a glove on my helper hand.
- When I am not using the knife I put it down with the handle facing forwards and the blade facing inwards.
- When I have finished with the knife I put it in the locked toolbox.
- When I use the knife I use it with 2 arms and a tool away from anyone else, like this.
- No gloves on tool – glove on helper hand.

Potato peeler

- This is a potato peeler.
- This is the handle.
- This is the blade.
- This is the cutting edge.
- When using the peeler, you need to be sat down where it will not hit other items.
- Whittle with the peeler by using the blade moving away from you towards the ground.
- Carefully scrape away the bark from the stick.
- When I am not using the potato peeler I put it in the locked toolbox.
- No gloves on tool – glove on helper hand.
- To pass hold blades in gloved hand and offer handles to other person.
- To place, put the tool down on ground or surface with handle facing backwards, or return it to its designated place.
- To walk, walk holding blades in gloved hand next to leg with handles facing downwards.

Hand drill

- This is a hand drill.
- This is the main handle.
- This is the turning handle.
- This is the chuck.
- This is the jaw.
- This is the drill bit.
- I hold the hand drill in my dominant hand and use the drill bit to drill a hole in the wood.
- I turn the drill in a clockwise direction so it goes into the wood.
- I remove the drill from the wood by turning anti-clockwise.
- When I am not using the drill it goes in the locked toolbox.
- No gloves on tool – glove on helper hand if applicable.

Mallet

- This is a mallet.
- Here is its handle and here is its head.
- Maintain safe distance from others.
- Ensure no-one is directly in front of you or behind you when using the mallet.
- Don't use a glove on your tool hand, glove on helper hand.
- To pass, hold the top of tool and offer the handle to the other person.
- To place, put the tool down on ground or surface with handle facing backwards, or return it to the locked toolbox.
- To walk, hold the handle of the tool next to your leg with your head facing downwards.

Secateurs

- These are secateurs.
- This is the handle.
- This is the grip.

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Secateurs continued

- This is the lock and catch.
- Do not use gloves with this tool.
- To put down, close and lock safety catch and return to the locked toolbox.
- To pass hold the blades in one hand and offer handles to other person.
- To walk, close and lock safety catch, hold blades in hand next to leg with handles facing downwards.

Loppers

- This is the shaft.
- These are the jaws.
- This is the handle.
- Always keep the lockers securely closed when not in use and walk facing the floor to return to the locked toolbox.
- To pass, hold blades in one hand and offer handles to other person.
- To place, put the tool down on ground or surface with handle facing backwards.

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