

# Trawden Forest Primary School Forest School Handbook



# What is Forest School?

Forest School is not a 'one-off' session but should be built up long-term over regular opportunities for children to be in an outdoors woodland environment. It should always allow all learners to achieve and develop skills of self-esteem and confidence within an outdoor, woodland environment. Within this, all children must be treated as equal, be allowed to explore and discover for themselves, take appropriate risks (through fire lighting, tree climbing and tool use), seek challenge, solve problems, co-operate with others and experience regular success. Through this, they will develop positive relationships both with others and the natural world and develop their personal potential.

Forest School is focused more on learning processes rather than on the content so that it is not what children achieve but how they have achieved it and the steps that they have taken along with the skills learnt. It is based very much on a child-centered approach where children are given encouragement to direct their own learning using their senses to explore the outdoor woodland environment. Therefore, the role of the adult is more one of facilitator and observer rather than teacher and this is a role in which the adult must be flexible and adaptable with planning.

Most importantly, Forest School develops the whole child which enhances each child's personal, social, emotional, intellectual, linguistic, spiritual and physical development to increase their ability to become independent, inquisitive, resilient and confident learners who can manage risk safely.



# What is Forest School?

The Forest School Training Company explains Forest School in this way:



Forest School is a **long-term approach** to education, for children, young people, families and adults, that maximises the benefits of learning in the outdoors.

Whilst its roots are planted firmly in our best understanding of the theory of how children learn, its practice puts the **learner at the heart of their learning** experience.

From this fundamental platform, Forest School offers children and young people the opportunity, **over repeated visits**, to engage with the rich natural diversity of the **woodland environment** to help build **confidence, sensitivity, resilience** and **curiosity**.



**Every Child  
Matters;  
Every Moment  
Counts**

# Forest School Ethos

At Trawden Forest Primary School, we recognise the uniqueness of every child and help them to respect each other and the natural world whilst developing their social, physical, intellectual, communication, spiritual and emotional skills and allowing them to take risks within a safe environment. In turn, this will help the children to further their confidence, creativity and independence. We nurture children to become motivated and resilient so that they can attain their potential, and discover a curiosity and love of learning in the outdoors.



We aim to do this by:

- Providing a woodland environment which the children can access on a regular basis.
- Creating a safe and secure environment to help the children to explore and practice skills.
- Giving children time and space to develop their skills, interests and understanding through a hands-on practical approach.
- Allowing children to use tools, build dens, create and make fires.
- Planning flexible learning opportunities, including play, and observing children in their learning.
- Enabling the children to achieve success through challenges which focus on process rather than outcome.



# What are the benefits of Forest School?

**“The best kept classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky.”** (Margaret McMillan (c1925) Nursery Schools and the Pre-school Child NSA Publication)

Through being outdoors children learn to take risks, develop self-regulation and respect. They develop first-hand experience of the seasons and the natural world which, in turn, enables them to experience awe and wonder, who they are and what they are doing here. Permitting children to take part in open-ended outdoor play can ignite a curiosity and desire to find out more.



Additionally, it is active and allows children to become physical in a world where many young children spend much time inside watching television, DVDs or glued to computers due to a cultural shift within our society and a desire to keep children safe.

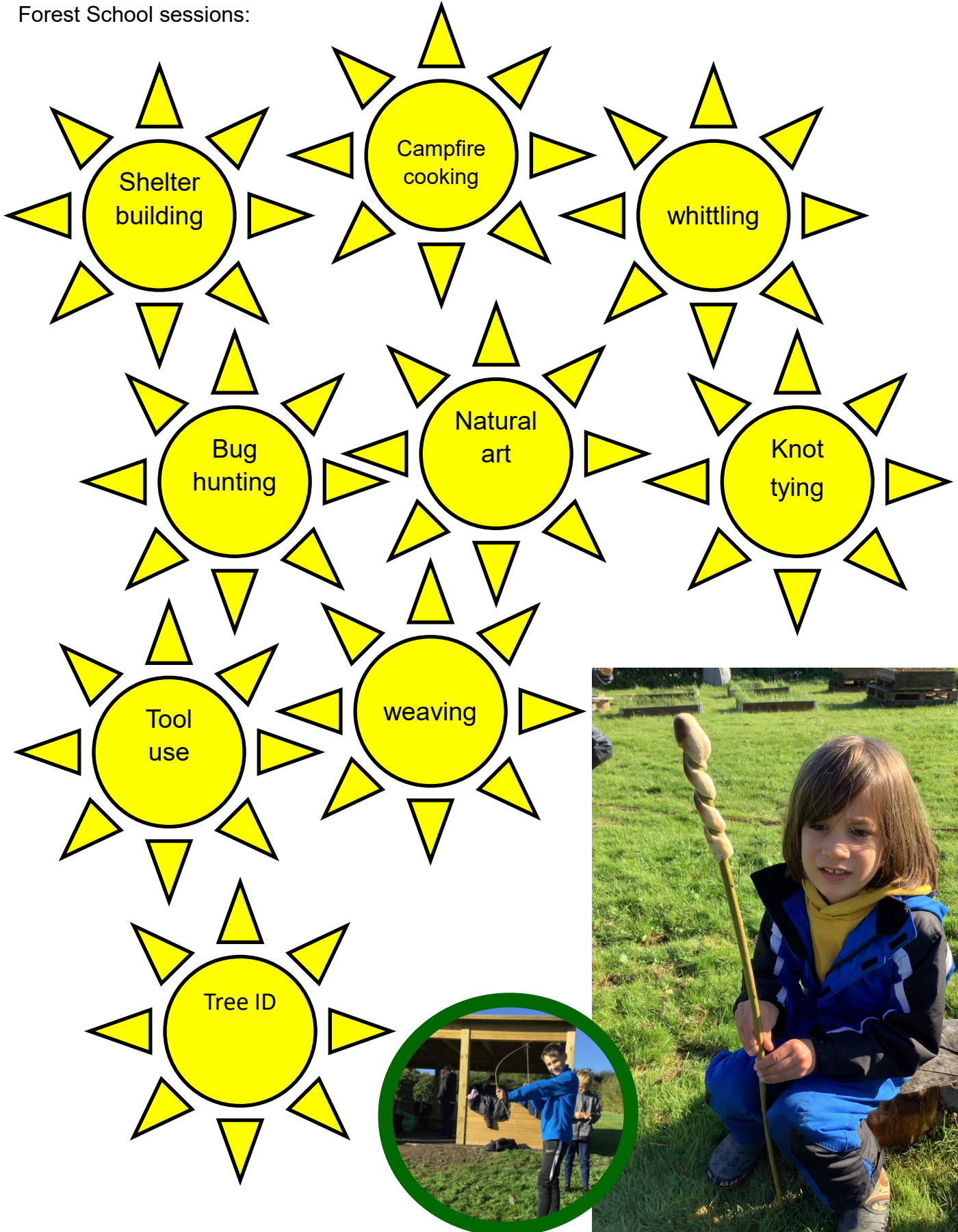
Being in nature is engaging and fun, it enables children to develop a sense of responsibility for the environment and be ‘at one’ with nature. It gives them a sense of responsibility for the environment as well as an empathy for creatures and respect for the world around them.

It is not dangerous but teaches children about risk in a supported way.



# What will my child be doing at Forest School?

Whilst at Forest school, children will take part in and enjoy a range of both structured and unstructured activities. Each session will have a plan but will also be tailored to the children's interests. Below, you will find some of the activities that children may experience during their Forest School sessions:



# Staffing

## Staff

### **Mrs Atkinson:**

Forest School Level 3 Accredited Practitioners Certificate  
Outdoor First Aid  
Paediatric First Aid  
Emergency First Aid at Work

### **Mr Lomax, Mrs Nelson and Miss Gallagher:**

Level 3 Outdoor Activities Instructors  
Outdoor First Aid

ALL SCHOOL STAFF HAVE FIRST AID AT WORK



## Volunteers

Although we haven't any current volunteers, we very much welcome support and would encourage you to come and join us. Please see Mrs Atkinson for details.  
[katkinson@trawden.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:katkinson@trawden.lancs.sch.uk)



# What does my child need?

## Kit List

As with any outdoor activity, the equipment needed depends very much on the weather, but as a guide:

Also please see our website for further details:

<https://www.trawden.lancs.sch.uk/forest-school>



## Summer Kit

- Sun hat
- Sun cream
- Wellies/outdoor trainers
- Midge repellent
- Waterproof coat



## Winter Kit

- Wellies
- Snow suits
- Waterproof coat and trousers
- Gloves or mittens
- Warm hat
- Scarf
- Spare gloves
- Warm winter coat
- Thick socks



# Health & Safety



Keeping children safe is the highest on our list of priorities and central to everything that we do at Forest School. Assessment of the site is carried out by a qualified staff member prior to the beginning of each Forest School session. They will take the following variables into account: weather, children's stage of development, activities and environment. Mrs Atkinson is trained in paediatric first aid as well as outdoor first aid. However, children are also taught how to manage risks within Forest School by carrying resources in the correct way and explaining how to avoid accidents as well as giving tool talk to explain how tools are to be used, carried and stored safely.

A first Aid kit is kept within the designated tool area. The first aid kit contains: gloves, bandages, dressings, plasters, Micropore tape, sterile water and scissors. A mobile phone is also taken to the site if we leave the school premises. A fire blanket is always kept next to the fire pit when it is in use and fire safety procedures are followed. Additionally, all volunteers have enhanced CRB clearance and have undertaken online child protection training.

## Safeguarding

Trawden Forest Primary Forest School will follow the school policy for safeguarding children. Any disclosures made at Forest School will be reported to the Forest School leader immediately. A note of the date, time and what has been said will be made. We will follow procedures set out by Lancashire.

## Equal Opportunities

Forest School at Trawden Forest Primary School realises that each child is unique and deserving of respect. We also recognise that all children, irrespective of race, gender, religion, belief or disability should be allowed to take part in and experience success in Forest School activities. We follow the equal opportunities policy of Trawden Forest Primary School.

## Behaviour

During Forest School sessions, positive behaviour will be encouraged primarily through positive reinforcement. The children will have the opportunity to earn Team points and Golden Tickets. The children will also be encouraged to praise and encourage each other in order to develop their team work skills and become positive role models.

It may be necessary in some circumstances to use sanctions, for example, where the behaviour of a child has put others or themselves at risk. Sanctions will be considered on an individual basis and be appropriate for the child. Sanctions could include exclusion from certain activities or providing the child with time out. Whilst at Forest School, we will follow the Behaviour and Discipline Policy for Trawden Forest Primary School.

## Toileting Procedure

The children will all be encouraged to go to the toilet before the Forest School sessions starts. However, as we remain on the school site, children gain permission from the Forest School Leader to use the toilet. If we are off site, then a school volunteer escorts the children to the toilet.

# Health & Safety

## Tools

All children will receive a tool talk prior to tool use. This will include consideration of specific personal protective equipment, correct use, how to stand and carry the tool, consideration of the appropriate types of activity that each tool may be used for as well as what to do with the tool when it is not in use or has been finished with. (Please refer to the tool use guides and risk assessments). Children must move around the outside of the tool area and must only enter when given permission from the tool manager.



## Fire

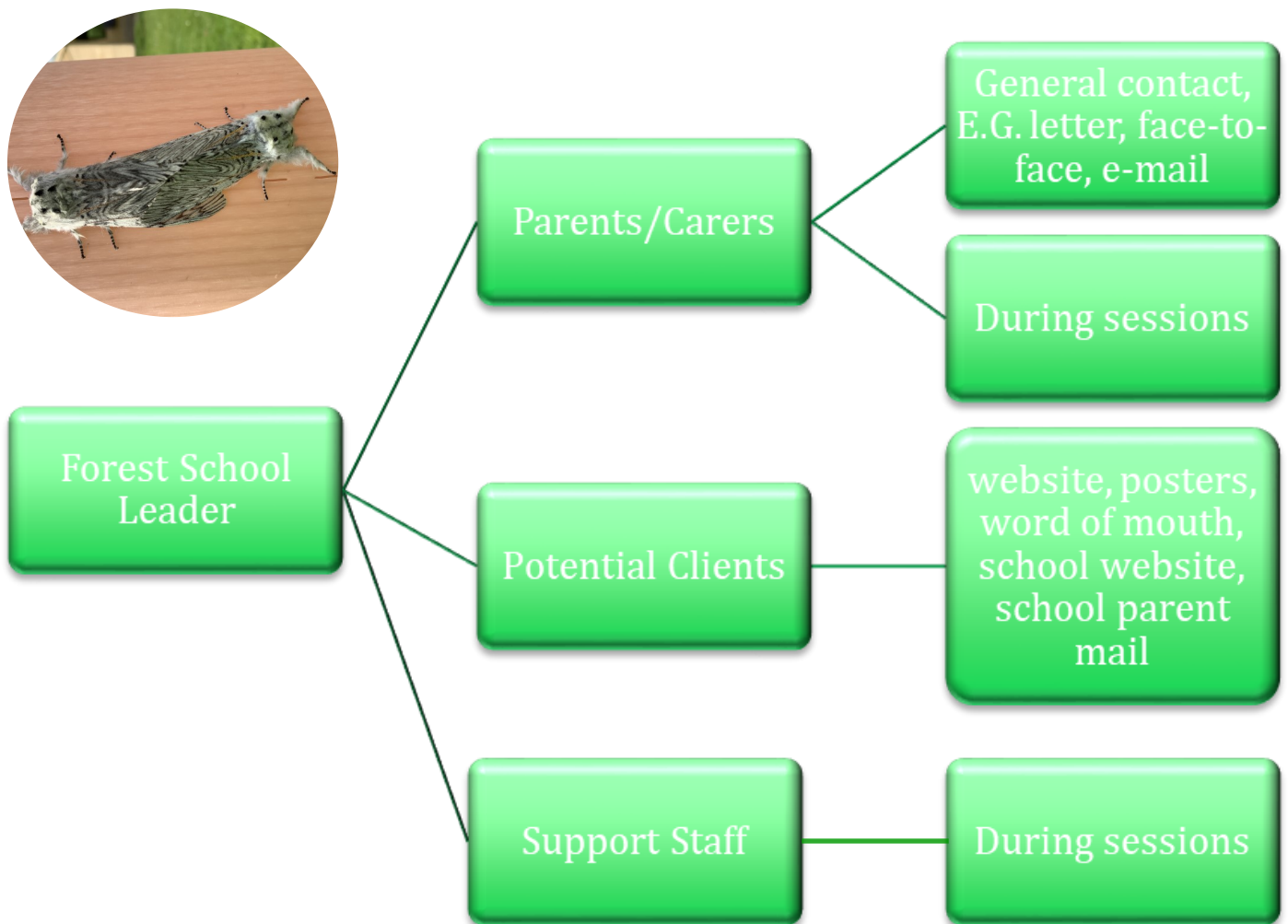
There are procedures to follow when the fire is lit. There are logs placed around the central fire pit which are for sitting on. Permission from the fire manager must be gained prior to accessing the fire square. There must be no running around or past the fire square. If a child has permission to be at the fire pit, they must adopt the defence position. If they wish to move around then they must step out of the log fire square and move clockwise around the outside of it. The fire square and fire pit must be treated in the same way even when the fire is not lit. Please refer to the fire risk assessments.

## Food & Hygiene

Children are not to eat anything that they find unless they have been given express permission from the Forest School leader to do so. When children prepare or eat food, they will wash their hands with water or use a gel rub or wipes to clean their hands. Children are always reminded not to put their hands in their mouths or noses after handling plants and animals and to wash their hands after Forest School sessions.



# Communication Strategy



## Cancellation Procedure

Forest School will be cancelled if the Level 3 Forest School Leader is absent. The sessions will also be cancelled in extreme weather conditions such as thunder and lightning and high winds. Since the Forest School sessions take place in school time, children will continue with their learning inside.

## Further Information

For further information, please visit our website:

<http://www.trawden.lancs.sch.uk>

Alternatively, please email the school at:

[bursar@trawden.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:bursar@trawden.lancs.sch.uk)

Telephone: 01282 865242

