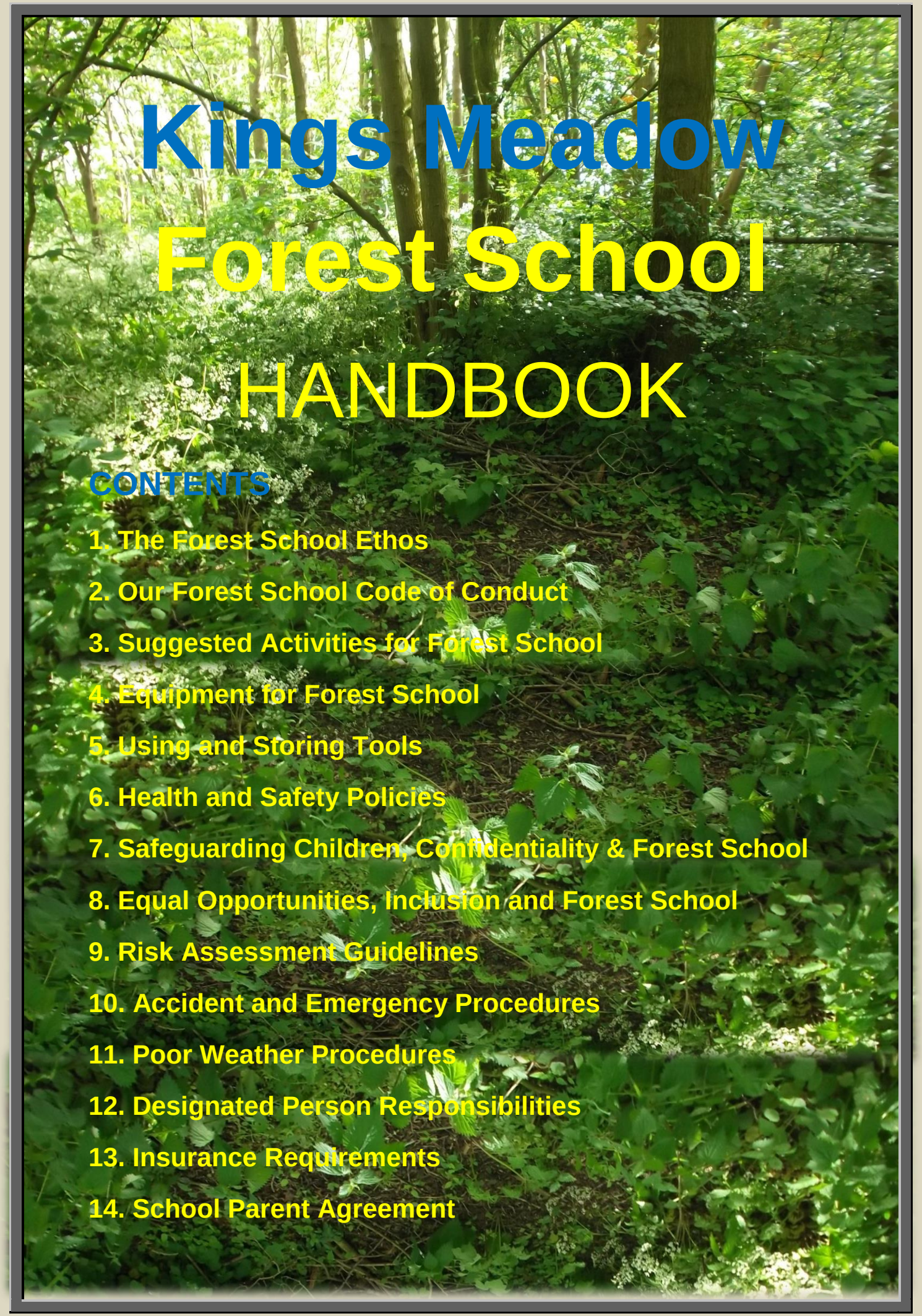


Kings Meadow Forest School

HANDBOOK

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1. Our Forest School Ethos

We at Kings Meadow base our Forest School philosophy on the 6 key principles designated by the Forest School Association as follows

Principle 1: Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

Principle 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.

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners

Principle 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.

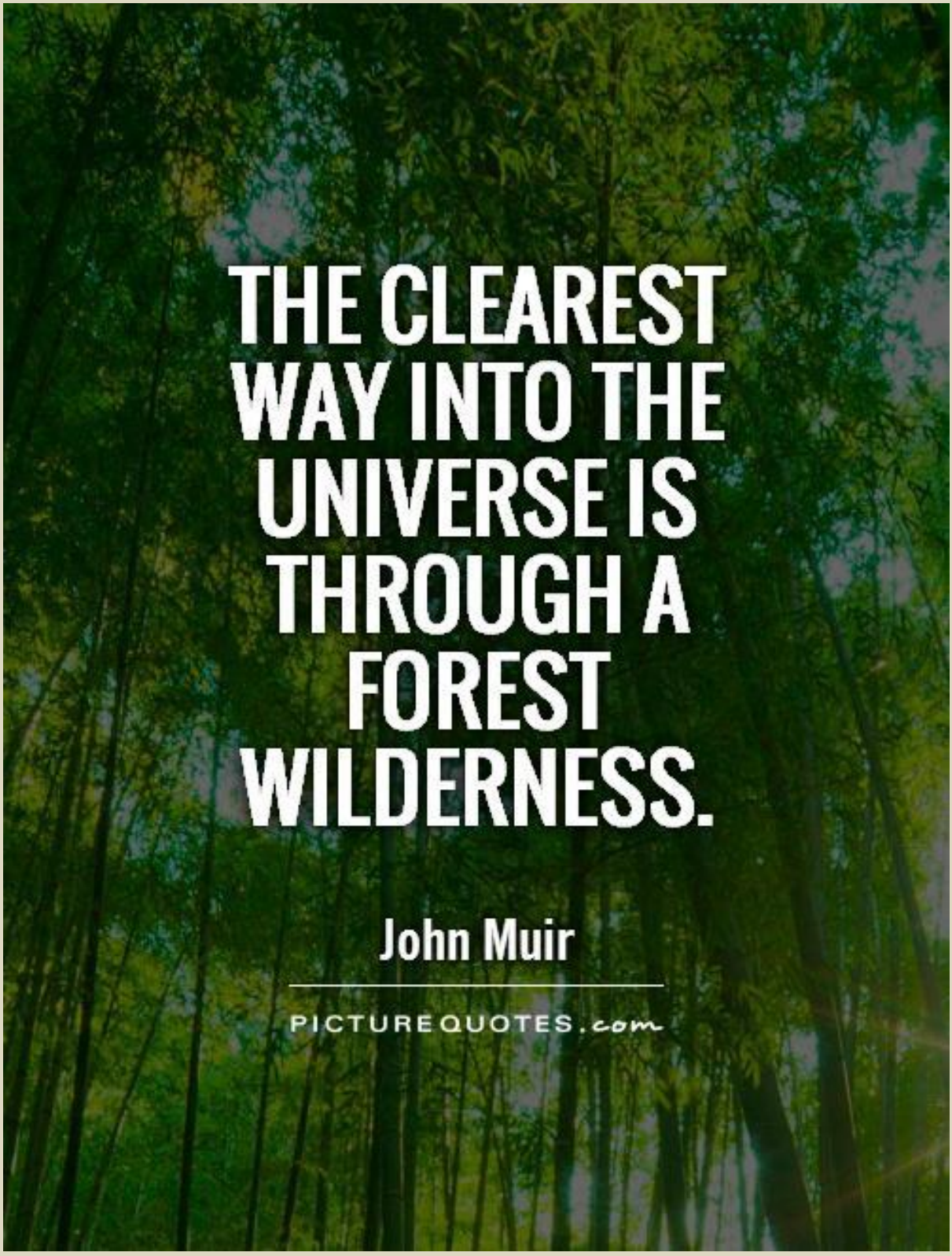
6. Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

We recognise the right of all children, at a time when their liberties are being eroded, to engage without prejudice with the natural world in a journey of self-discovery and education free from the boundaries of a classroom and with a child-centred pedagogy as the foundation to their learning.

We believe that our Forest School is based on a fundamental respect for children and young people and for their capacity to instigate, test and maintain curiosity in the world around them. We believe in children's right to play; the right to access the outdoors (and in particular a woodland environment); the right to access risk and the vibrant reality of the natural world; and the right to experience a healthy range of emotions, through all the challenges of social interaction, to build a resilience that will enable continued and creative engagement with their peers and their potential.

We understand that our children's health and safety are priority in the delivery of our provision and through the process they will learn how to manage risk to keep themselves safe. The Forest School leader will ensure each child understands how to do this taking into consideration their age and stage of development and the benefit these activities have for each child.

Through engagement with the environment and reflective practice both the learners and practitioners can understand their achievements, develop emotional intelligence and plan for the future. We see Forest School as a mechanism through which the learners can develop the skills that are fundamental to their well-being in the twenty first century.


THE CLEAREST WAY INTO THE UNIVERSE IS THROUGH A FOREST WILDERNESS.
John Muir
PICTUREQUOTES.com

1.11.17

2. Our Forest Code of Conduct

Consent to Participate	*Parental consent for the children to take part in the Forest School will be obtained. The consent form will also indicate if the child has any allergies and the status of their tetanus injection and any relevant additional information.*
Entering the Forest	*We understand that the forest is a habitat for plants and animals so as visitors we will always enter the environment with respect. As learning takes place we will consider and minimise our impact on our surroundings and in doing so adopt the role of 'custodians' of a special place.*
Boundaries	*At the beginning of each session the children are reminded about the boundary of their exploration and why this is important. Adults will monitor the children from a distance should they move to explore hidden areas. If an adult loses sight of a child they will shout* *'1,2,3, where are you?'* *The children will have been taught to respond* *'1,2,3, I'm here!' through games that are regularly practised.* *(Site risk assessment)*
Raising the alarm	*Each adult taking part in the Forest School session will be given a whistle and the children will be given at least one between two, worn around their neck on a lanyard, in order to be able to raise the alarm for help in an emergency. The alarm for help will be will be a continual whistle sound.*
Fire Lighting	*The Forest School leader will always take control of the operation and all accompanying adults will be briefed before the start. A lit fire will not be left unattended at any point. A fire may not be lit until it has been confirmed to all that our fire safety equipment is in place. Open fires will be built within a fire square within our designated fire circle.* *(Fire risk assessments)*
The Fire Circle	*A fire square will always be constructed to contain a lit fire within our designated fire circle. The perimeter for the positioning of the fire circle will always be at least 1.5m from the fire square. No one may enter inside the perimeter of the fire circle unless an adult invites them in. The fire circle is recognised by everybody as a 'walking only' area.* *If you wish to move around the fire you must step out of the circle and walk around the outside of the perimeter. Even when the fire is unlit we will treat it as if it is lit.* *(Fire risk assessments)*
Tree Climbing	*An adult must be present during tree climbing. The ground cover will be checked for 'objects likely to cause injury' and the tree marked as suitable for climbing with yellow high vis reflective tape which will be removed at the end of the session.* *A visual check must be made for loose and rotten branches. Prior to climbing the children will be coached and reminded about the 'three point of contact' rule. Children are permitted to explore to their own limits or to a maximum height of 1.5m. Adults should be near enough to provide support if needed but far enough away to not be invasive to the children's exploration.* *(Tree climbing risk assessment)*
Tool Use	*All tools have their own clear code of conduct for correct use including* *1. Personal Protective Equipment* *2. Correct body posture*

	3. Fit for Purpose *(See tool use guides and risk assessments).*
Sticks	*Children can carry sticks shorter than their arm's length but are encouraged to think about how close they are to other children. Longer sticks may be dragged or carried with the help of another person. Sticks must not be thrown. Sticks must not be pulled from living trees.*
Stones	*Stones can be picked up and moved. Children often like to make patterns and pictures with them. Stones may not be thrown. They can be dropped if the impact area is clear and it is safe to do so.*
Digging	*Children are not encouraged to dig large holes but they can carefully move soil to look for insects and their habitats.*
Collecting Wood	*Wood is collected for fire lighting and woodcrafts. It is collected in four thicknesses – matchstick sized, pencil sized, thumb sized and wrist sized. Wood is not snapped off live trees.*
Eating and Drinking	*Children are taught not to eat and drink in the forest unless the activity has been specifically planned for during the session (e.g. blackberry picking). Children are reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses. Children have access to washing facilities before consuming food or drinks (Hand wipes and sanitizer, bin bag, paper towels and clean water).*
Rope and String	*Rope and string is used for collecting and making items. We do not allow children to tie up each other. If a child has a good idea and wants to tie up something, for example a tarp or a swing, an adult should help them as needed, modelling appropriate knot tying and modelling how to talk through ideas and decisions. All rope and string will be removed at the end of the session.*
Moving Materials	*Children are shown how to roll, lift, drag and pull materials, either by using their hands or by using ropes. We teach and use safe lifting by bending our knees and keeping our back straight. Safe lifting should always be modelled by adults. Heavier objects should be rolled, lifted or carried by more people working together.* *(Safe lifting risk assessment)*
Blind Folds	*Blindfolds maybe used during some sessions to enhance the sensory experience. Blindfolds will always be optional and will only be used as part as a specific, directed activity.*
Toileting	*All children will be encouraged to use the toilet facilities at the school prior to leaving for the site. In the event that a child requires the toilet then they will be escorted by a member of staff back to the school site. The required ratio of pupil:adult will be maintained and the Forest School Leader will be informed when the party leave the site and on their return. Regular toilet breaks will be planned for within extended sessions.* *(Toileting policy)*
Leaving the Forest	*We 'leave no trace' that we were in the forest.* *Occasionally large items may be left between sessions. If artefacts have been found or made these may be taken off the site with the consent of an adult.*
Staffing	*Staffing ratios (dependent on age/ability) will be strictly adhered to ensuring the safety of all members of the group. No child or staff member will ever be unsupervised or left in a position of vulnerability.*

3. Suggested Activities for Our Forest School

Our Forest School aims to create independent learners and to do so we place the learner at the centre of the experience as they create their learning journey. Our role as teachers is to become a facilitator for learning along the child's pathway. Some activities that could be used to do this include:

- Shelter building
- Fire lighting
- Tool use
- Studying wildlife
- Playing team and group games
- Sensory activities
- Tracking games
- Cooking on an open fire
- Using a Kelly Kettle
- Rope and string work
- Art and sculpture work
- Woodland and traditional craft
- Developing stories and drama, and meeting imaginary characters
- Physical movement activities
- Self-reflection and quiet times

4. Equipment for Our Forest School

The Forest School leader will always take an emergency bag with them to the Forest site. The contents of the emergency bag will vary depending on the time of year and weather conditions, the site being used and the activities according to the relevant risk assessments and daily risk assessment.

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT:

- *First Aid Kit (See contents list, contents review record)*
- *Emergency Procedures*
- *Medical information for each individual and emergency contact details for every member of the group (adults & children)*
- *Risk Assessments*
- *Communication Devices (mobile phone / walkie talkie)*
- *Clean Water*
- *Emergency whistle*
- *Emergency Life Blanket*

- *Accident forms*
- *Medication for individuals (if not appropriate for the individual to carry the medication for themselves it will be held at the school site in accordance with the Policy Procedure for Medicines and administered at school. Epi-pens will be clearly labelled and kept in the First Aid Kit at the Forest School site)*
- *gloves*

Other Possible Equipment:

- *Wet wipes, hand gel*
- *Trowel*
- *Sun cream (parental permission required)*
- *Spare Clothing*
- *Thermos of hot water*
- *Chocolate/sugary food*
- *Plastic bag*
- *Roll Mat and Blanket*
- *Fire blanket*
- *Torch*
- *Bucket of water*
- *Emergency fire kit*
- *Knife*
- *Burns kit*
- *Tick remover*
- *Bivi Bag*



ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT: Clothing

Both adults and children must wear clothing that is appropriate for our Forest School. The clothing will need to protect them from extremes of heat or cold, keep them covered to reduce the likelihood of cuts and scrapes, that fits appropriately for comfort, and that meets any religious requirements.

Children and adults are encouraged to think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities, and to be aware they are likely to take some of our mud home with them after a session. In the forest it can often be cooler than expected under the shade of the trees.

Clothing list:

- *Waterproof trousers*
- *Waterproof coat, with a hood.*
- *Long sleeved top*

- *Full length trousers*
- *Warm boots (wellies can be very cold during the winter)*
- *Warm Socks, and a spare pair*
- *Gloves and Woolly hat – cold weather*
- *Sun hat: that fits well to ensure good visibility– sunny weather*

We keep a small selection of spare clothing at school that can be used but it will need to be matched to the child prior to the session and checked for suitability.

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT: First Aid Kit

- *Contact Cards (location using postcode and OS grid reference)*
- *Latex Gloves*
- *Bandages*
- *Plasters*
- *Burns gel*
- *Burn dressing*
- *Dressings*
- *Eye wash*
- *Sewing Kit*
- *Scissors*
- *Cotton wool*
- *Antiseptic wipes*
- *Medication for individual children*
- *Tick removers*
- *Sterile water*
- *Cling film*
- *Blood bag (disposal sack for medical waste)*
- *Bites and stings cream or spray (parental permission required)*

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT: When having a fire

- *Flame retardant Gauntlet gloves*
- *Fire Blanket*
- *Bucket of water*
- *Fire steel*
- *Cotton wool*
- *Matches*

5. Using and Storing Tools

All tools are counted out and back in at the beginning and end of each session in which they are used. When not in use in the Forest they are kept secured away in a locked shed. Before each tool is to be used it will be checked for damage and working order.

Each tool type is kept in their own suitable containers, many of which are also lockable. Children must never be allowed to help themselves and will always have adult supervision when collecting, transporting and using tools.

Tools are only used for a specific purpose. All adults should model correct and safe tool use, storage and transportation at all times. When using a tool, they are used well away from others in the group, in a 'blood bubble' and ensuring that others are aware that a tool is in use. Only walking is permitted when transporting a tool.

Only wear a glove when using a bow saw and only on your bracing hand. No other tools may be used when the operator is wearing gloves.

Potato Peelers and Knives (for peeling or sharpening sticks; whittling) - A ratio of 1 adult to 2 children will be observed. This tool must be used seated on a log with elbows placed upon knees and using the tool in a downward motion away and to one side. A 'blood bubble' space must be in place to ensure a safe distance away from others. When children are carrying peelers they must walk with them held down by their side. Once a child is deemed to be competent by the forest leader they may be allowed to use a fixed blade knife to whittle. The same rules as above still apply. When carrying a knife return it to its sheath and tie it in securely using the strings. Carry the knife either by your side or with the string around your neck. Tools must be returned to the storage container when no longer in use.

Bow Saws (for cross cutting wood up to 12cm diameter) - Children may be taught how to use a bow saw with 1:1 supervision, or with a 'buddy' helping in a 'push-pull' fashion 1:2. Adults must always supervise closely. The safest method of use is to brace the wood through the bow saw itself for support. A glove must be worn on the holding hand which should be positioned behind the supporting bridge of the sawhorse. The saw blade must be covered when not in use. When being carried the bow saw blade (in its' cover) should be pointing downwards, and to the back. When not in use (shed storage) blades should be loosened off by an adult.

Palm Drills/Bit and Brace (for making holes) - The item to be drilled should be placed and held securely using a suitable clamp on a firm flat surface. A

'blood bubble' space should be established. Tools should be carried by the individual's side facing downwards.

When not in use all tools will be securely locked away in the tool shed. Tools will be checked and cleaned before they are put away. The Forest Leader will ensure that each tool is thoroughly cleaned and oiled. Wear and tear will be monitored daily.

6. Forest School Health and Safety

Kings Meadow Primary School's Health and Safety Policy, 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.

1) The **TRAINED** and **NAMED** Forest School Leader is always the person in charge of Forest school sessions.

2) The Forest School Leader has overall duty of care for the children in their charge.

However all adults involved in the Forest School session are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe.

3) All adult helpers **MUST** sign and date a form to show that they have read and understood this handbook and the risk assessments appropriate to the session in which they are helping. They must sign and date the form stating that they comply with the general operating procedures for Forest School (code of conduct).

4) The Forest School Leader or Assistant will always carry and take a first aid kit into the forest at every session.

5) The Forest School Leader or Assistant will always carry an Emergency Bag into the forest for every session.

6) The Forest School Leader will ensure that the Emergency Bag contains:

- Essential survival equipment
- A contact list for each child undertaking the activities: and
- The School's telephone number (and location details for the emergency services)

7) The Forest School Leader will always carry a mobile phone/walkie talkie (charged and switched on at all times). Whilst there is good connectivity throughout the site should the need arise for access to a land line the school will be the first contact.

8) In the event of an emergency, The Forest Leader will contact the emergency services first and ensure that the school is informed who will then make contact with the necessary adults.

9) The Forest School Leader will review the risk assessments before every trip into the School's Forest Site.

10) When tools are used the adult child ratio will be 1:1 unless otherwise stated in the PPE guidance - when using peelers for whittling the ratio can be 1:2, when using the Bow saw the ratio can be 1:2 'push/pull' buddy system.

12) The Forest School leader is responsible for the maintenance and checking of all tools and equipment to be used at Forest school, prior to their use.

13) The Forest Leader is responsible in training the children in how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately.

14) The Forest leader will be responsible for the pre visit check of the Forest School site prior to a Forest School session.

7. Forest School Safeguarding Children and Confidentiality

Kings Meadow Primary School's Safeguarding and Confidentiality Policy, sets out clear statements of intent regarding the Whole School's approach to the safeguarding of its children, staff and visitors to the School and the School Site.

In addition to the policy, adults working within Forest School need to appreciate that when children feel comfortable and content, when their instinct to trust and risk-take is encouraged, they may be moved to 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 that concerns them should follow the course of action set out below in simple steps:

- LISTEN to the pupil but ask NO leading questions. Allow the child to lead the discussion but do not press for details.
- KEEP CALM and offer reassurance. Accept what the child says without challenge.
- MAKE NO PROMISES. You cannot 'keep a secret'. You should make it understood that there are limits to confidentiality at the start of the disclosure.
- INFORM THE LEAD DESIGNATED PERSON (LDP) for Safeguarding & Child Protection, Mrs S. Lineton (Headteacher). In her absence inform Miss K O'Brien (Deputy Designated Person).
- 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. Keep the record secure (enter it on CPOMS) and inform the LDP.

8. Forest School Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

The mission statement of Kings Meadow Primary School emphasises the value placed on the individuality of all our children. We are committed to giving each child every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual children or groups of children. We aim to provide all our children with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement.

We will:

- Ensure equality of access for all children
- Employ a range of styles, including collaborative learning, so that children can value working together
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education
- Take account of the performance of all children when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- Make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of children.

Our teachers ensure that our children:

- feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- appreciate and value the differences in others
- take responsibility for their own actions
- participate safely, in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs and are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success
- use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, learning styles and linguistic needs, without stereotyping
- have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- have challenging targets that enable them to succeed
- are encouraged to participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs.

Forest School does mean Forest School FOR ALL. We do have a stock of extra all-weather clothing but ask that both parents and children think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities, and to be aware that they are likely to take home muddy and wet clothes after a Forest School session. We encourage a level of risk-taking, always under close adult supervision, and actively foster friendships and collaboration between all children and adults. Forest School activities are always designed to produce success and enjoyment, even when this appears to be of a transitory nature. The Forest environment is an environment to which we are all entitled and we strongly believe that the experiences we will have there will linger in the memory for years to come. Children with medical needs or disabilities will be helped so that they can take part fully in each Forest School session. Those children with challenging behaviour will be risk assessed and may need one to one supervision, but their entitlement to participate in Forest School remains the same.

9. Forest School Risk Assessment Guidelines

A SITE risk assessment is undertaken each week and a DAILY risk assessment and check is made prior to every Forest School session at our Forest site.



In addition, an ACTIVITY risk 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.

The risk assessment process is detailed below:

- We look for potential hazards.
- We decide who might be at 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 and require 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, half termly and as an action is needed.

10. Forest School Accident and Emergency Procedures

First Aid	1. Follow Policy and Procedures Document. Any illness or injury to be treated by a qualified first aider. 2. Check Dr -A-B-C, Administer First Aid. 3. Remove others in group from the situation, ensuring they are safe. 4. Notify school office and if necessary call for further assistance, or notify emergency services. 5. Have medical details available in medical bag, and notify parents/guardians as appropriate. 6. All accidents, however minor, must be reported and an accident report form completed. 7. Follow up to parents as usual.

Missing Child	1. On discovery of missing child use '1,2,3, where are you?' procedure and recall rest of the group to the centre of the site – Fire Circle. 2. Children to be supervised at this point 3. Commence immediate search of vicinity. 4. Immediately notify school office. 5. School will notify the Leadership and a decision will be made on whether to notify the police, then the parent or guardian. 6. The Group will be escorted back to school site.
Death or serious Incident	1. Follow First Aid procedures. 2. Remain with casualty and remove others in group from the situation, ensuring they are safe. 3. Immediately notify school office. 4. School to inform emergency services, specifically the police. 5. The police will notify the parents/guardians/next of kin. 6. Gain advice on follow up from the police. 7. Report to RIDDOR and Ofsted.
Stranger or Uninvited Person	The site is regularly used by the local community for dog walking and home owners in proximity to the site have been informed that the site is being used as a Forest School. In the event that an 'intruder is behaving inappropriately' 1. Challenge intruder, asking them to leave immediately. Escort them from the site. 2. Inform the School's Office and Child Protection Liaison Officer. 3. If a child is involved the police must be called, and the child/children involved are to be removed from situation and made to feel safe. 4. Parents/guardian should be briefed by Forest School Leader ASAP or in accordance with advice of the Police.
Dogs	The site is used by the local community to walk their dogs, they are generally walked on the lead or well trained. 1. The children will be instructed not to touch or pet dogs, never run and listen to instructions. 2. If a dog is loose and agitated on the site the children will be directed to walk to a safer place. 3. The owner will be asked to recall the animal and use the lead.
Behaviour Problems	1. Talk child involved down. 2. Remove other children from the area of risk, if it is deemed to be necessary. 3. Inform office and call for help as needed. 4. Debrief child after calm down period. 5. Log incident. 6. Inform parents/guardian. 7. Create risk assessment, if necessary. 8. Close supervision and monitoring of behaviour.

11. Forest School Poor Weather Procedures or cancellation

We will not go to Forest School if the conditions are deemed dangerous such as in high winds, during thunder storms, or during periods of extreme cold or any other risk as identified by the Leader. We will use the BBC weather online forecast to make judgments about the expected conditions. In accordance with our Severe Weather Clause in the School's Health and Safety Policy documents the Leadership group in consultation with the Forest School Practitioner, will ultimately make the

decision deeming if the weather is suitable for Forest School. When it is wet a shelter 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. In circumstances that could lead to conflict – uninvited children, adults, motorised vehicles the Forest School Leader will decide to return to school and cancel the session or complete the session at the school site.

12. Forest School Designated Person Responsibilities

Forest School Leaders: Miss Adkins & Miss Steele

First Aider 1: Miss Adkins

First Aider 2: Miss Steele

Additional First Aiders in the school include: All staff

Designated Persons for Safeguarding: Mrs. Lineton / Miss O'Brien

13. Insurance

Insured through AON – Y092874qbe0115a

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or as deemed appropriate by the Headteacher and School Governors

Date: 1st Nov 2017 Review Date: November 2019

15. Declaration

I have read, understood and will abide by the policy and procedures within this document

Signed …….. Date …….