The Discovery School

Forest School Handbook

Contents

Section 1

1. What is Forest School?

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

(Forest School Association)

2. School Vision:

Forest School at The Discovery School aims to foster a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences to develop a long-term, environmentally sustainable attitude and practice in staff, children, and the wider community, whatever the weather! Our programme will be tailored by the trained Forest School Leader (practitioner) to meet the needs of the children as they grow in confidence, skills and understanding. We strive for all children to be the best that they can be.

3. Forest School – A brief history:

Forest School, in the United Kingdom, has been officially recognised since 1995 after a group of nursery nurses from Bridgewater College, Somerset were inspired by a visit to Denmark in 1993 to observe the Danish open-air culture 'friluftsliv' which permeates their early years education. It is a child-centred, play-based pedagogy which is mainly held outdoors.

However, there is a cultural difference between Scandinavia and the UK. Due to many families still working the land, they are more prepared for all types of weather and engage more readily with the outdoor experience. Whereas in the UK, due to our industrial heritage, we have different lifestyles and families can be ill-prepared for being outdoors. It is this difference that makes it even more important for us to provide Forest School experiences to allow the opportunity for children to engage and learn with nature.

In 2002 a collaboration of practitioners held the first national conference at which a UK definition of Forest School was pronounced. They also identified the original key features for Forest School which were then reviewed in 2011 along with the definition and criteria and adapted to the six principles which are used today.

4. Principles and criteria for good practice

In developing our approach to Forest School at The Discovery School we have adopted the ethos and principles of the Forest School Association. The Forest School ethos has 6 principles, which were agreed by the UK Forest School Community in 2011.

- **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.

- **Principle 5.** Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

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

The Forest School Principles in full, and other information can be located at: http://www.forestschoolassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/

5. Roles, responsibilities and rules at Forest School

Expectations of behaviour will be set by the Forest School Leader and discussed with the children in the classroom beforehand, in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Children will also help set rules, which will be revisited at every session. These include:

- 'No pick, no lick, be careful how you carry a stick.'
- Respect for plants, trees and animals
- Staying in view, or for the older children, within hearing distance, of the base camp at all times
- Staying within the designated areas at all times
- Adult supervision for tree climbing

- Be patient with everyone as we all learn at different rates
- Always be polite and only use kind words
- Listen when people are talking and take turns to speak

The Forest School Programme Leader at The Discovery School has many leaves on their tree.

Leaf one, be a facilitator - It is not to teach or direct, but to plan and provide stimulating resources to inspire the children, then step back to allow them to play, explore and lead their own learning and development within the natural environment. The Forest School Leader will respond to children's emerging interests and needs, celebrating their creativity, creations, and achievements.

Leaf two, the observer – The Forest School Leader will watch their learners, identify how they learn and when they learn. By observing and only stepping in and asking questions when required allows the children to immerse themselves in an activity. The

information can then be used to maximize the learning opportunities for groups and individuals either during the current session, or future sessions.

Leaf three, the environmentalist - At The Discovery School we are lucky to have a designated area for our Forest School within the school grounds. As a Forest School Leader, it is important to love the outdoors and care for the natural environment ensuring that the Forest School area is sustainable. Through modelling this care, we hope to inspire children and adults to also care for their natural environment wherever they are.

Leaf four, be adaptable - Takes advantage of naturally occurring events and uses them to help develop learning. If children take a digression from the original activity, then they will happily adapt to go with the children's interests and engagement.

Leaf five, be knowledgeable - The leader should have a good knowledge about the Forest School site. Helping children understand the natural environment and sharing knowledge. They should also understand key foresting skills and share them when appropriate.

Leaf six, be a risk assessor – To complete a dynamic risk assessment before each session. Looking at activities and the environment to decide whether they are safe or not. In addition, consider potential risks for individuals and groups. This is to ensure everyone's safety.

Leaf seven, be a risk taker – The Forest School Leader should encourage individual and groups to take new risks when they think it is appropriate. These measured risks are within a safe and supportive environment and are optional but suggested to further develop an individual's skill or knowledge.

Leaf eight, be a builder – The Forest School environment is ideal for building an individual's self-esteem and emotional intelligence. This is through planned activities and interactions with the group.

Leaf nine, be a guardian – As a Forest School Leader, we will take time to get to know the group and adapt to their needs. We are friendly and approachable, but expect everyone to follow the Forest School Rules, to encourage good behaviour and respect for the environment. This is to foster a relaxed and inspiring environment for learning.

Leaf ten, the welfare officer – As a Forest Leader, we are responsible for ensuring everyone's safety and well-being. That would also include being an Outdoor First Aider and food hygienist.

The Forest School Leader at The Discovery School is supported by additional adults which are members of the teaching and support staff. Their role is to assist the Leader in observing the children during their chosen activity and feedback any observations

which could enhance the child's development. In addition, they model appropriate behaviour and assist in encouraging a safe and immersive natural environment to enable the children to lead their own learning.

Additional adult Role:

- Promote the safety and well-being of the children at all times
- Carry out necessary risk assessments prior to the sessions e.g. weather, tools, fire and on-going risk assessment throughout the session
- Carry a first aid kit (in the 'emergency rucksack') and administer first aid as required
- Create a positive learning environment, based on each child's needs
- Encourage good relationships, based on respect of each other
- Promote, honesty, politeness and kindness through example
- Use encouraging language and show appreciation of each child's contributions and effort
- Ensure fair treatment and equality for all attending, regardless of age, gender, faith, ability or race, in line with the school's Equality Policy.

Section 2

1. **Communication:**

Forest School involves the majority of our school community, so it is vital that everyone has access to the same information. An information leaflet (see below) is available in school and on the school website (www.discovery.kent.sch.uk)

Staff

School Staff CPD sessions will be provided when needed to ensure that staff are aware of how forest school operates and how tools etc. are used. The handbook is available to all staff. Mrs. Chapman is the Forest School Leader and she will be the first point of contact for any queries or questions staff may have.

All documents are available to staff in the staff shared drive, in a folder titled 'Forest School'. There are also paper copies of all documents kept in the headteacher's office. Tools and fire equipment are kept in a locked box in the caretaker's room, other equipment are kept in a storage box in Discovery Walk. Each class teacher will be emailed with the session plan before the session, where possible forest school will complement the topic being undertaken by the class.

Parents/Carers

- Parents/Carers will receive the information leaflet (see below) with any medical needs/allergies and photographic consent passed on via the class teacher before their child's initial six-week programme.
- Parents/Carers will be given a list of items that their child should wear/bring to the session.
- The groups and dates for each Forest School session will be available on the school website and some photos or videos alongside updates will also be posted.
- Further information about Forest School is also included in newsletters and the school website.

Wider Community

The school website has a section for Forest School under the 'curriculum' tab. The School Business Manager regularly liaises with immediate neighbours especially when changes are being made to the site. The courier newspaper is invited up to Forest School.

Our Information Leaflet: See Appendix A for a larger version of the leaflet

How can I help?

- Put the dates for Forest School on your fridge/in your calendar/on your notice board.
- Make sure your child has the right clothing for the weather.
- Listen to what your child is learning and feedback to us if you would like.
- Support Forest School by supplying resources such as wool, wood, ribbon, pans and utensils for mud kitchen, string, art materials, old light coloured sheets.

Health and safety.

The health and safety of all participants is central to everything undertaken within a Forest School Programme. Forest School leaders are fully trained in risk assessment and emergency first aid.

The Forest School operates under the school's policies and a handbook with all the forest school protocols is available to view on the website. Alongside this the following are completed:

- a seasonal and daily risk assessed site;
- risk assessments for activities;
- first aid and emergency equipment.

Some of the activities the children may participate in are 'higher-risk activities' (such as campfire cooking or tool use). However, these activities are not available to the children until certain behaviours and boundaries are established. Children are encouraged and supported in recognising and managing risk for themselves, through real life situations and experiences.

The Discovery School

Parent's guide to

The Discovery School
Discovery Drive
West Malling
ME19 4GJ

01732 847000

office@discovery.kent.sch.uk

www.discovery.kent.sch.uk

What is Forest School?

The Discovery School embraces the benefits that outdoor learning experiences can have on children. Forest school is inclusive to all children. Through regular sessions of hands-on learning experiences in a natural environment, it enables children to develop physically, emotionally and creatively as well as improve their well-being, self-confidence and self-esteem.

Our aim

Forest School at the Discovery School aims to foster a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences in order to develop a long-term, environmentally sustainable attitude and practice in staff, children and the wider community. We strive for all children to be the best that they can be!

Where will Forest School be taking place?

The area that we use for our Forest School is Discovery Walk, adjacent to the school field. It is fenced and we will make sure, at every session that the children are secure in their understanding of the boundaries and of our Forest School rules. The area has been thoroughly risk assessed and this will be updated regularly.

Who will be staffing the Forest School?

Mrs Chapman is a qualified teacher, the Forest School and Outdoor Learning Leader and a qualified Forest School Practitioner, Level 3. Each session will also be supported by the class teacher or TA. However, more adult helpers would be great and make it even better; so if any parents (or grandparents) who would like to help out too, they would be most welcome. If you do not have DBS clearance but are interested in helping, please ask for an application form from the office.

When will Forest School be taking place and how should the children be dressed?

Forest School will take place on a Wednesday, Thursday or Friday morning or afternoon. Each class will be taken out on a rotational basis. Please refer to the attached timetable to see when your child's class will be involved.

Please make sure this your child has wellingtons, a waterproof coat and ideally a pair of waterproof trousers in school. In summer, a sunhat would be advisable and in winter, a warm coat, warm socks, extra layers, a hat and gloves. A full kit list is available on the website or from the school office.

"Forest School is a feeling you can't put into words."

Example of a Six Week Programme:

Week 1: Introduction and orientation Welcome circle Tour of site - Learn boundaries of behaviour. Game - 1,2,3, where are you? Collecting activity – forest litter Free exploration Hot chocolate and reflection
Week 2: Exploring our senses – touch (World Book Day) Welcome circle Game - Blind folded recognition Story - Stickman Collecting activity – stick to make own Stickman Free exploration Hot chocolate and reflection
Week 3: Exploring the seasons - Spring Welcome circle Game – Electric pulse Collecting activity – Signs of Spring (photos) Free exploration Hot chocolate and reflection
Week 4: Exploring our senses - sight Welcome circle Blindfolded caterpillar / Eagle eye Collecting activity – plant duplication Free exploration Hot chocolate and reflection
Week 5: Exploring our senses - hearing Welcome circle Run, rabbit, run Collecting activity – rope windchimes Free exploration Hot chocolate and reflection
Week 6: Exploring our senses - taste Welcome circle Otter, salmon, mosquito Collecting activity – clay fairies and gnomes Free exploration Campfire cinnamon bread Hot chocolate and reflection

Section 3

1. **Our Forest School Code of Conduct:**

Entering the Forest School area

- We will enter the Forest respectfully and know that when at Forest School specific expectations are in place.
- We will explore, investigate, learn and play in a manner that will not damage our Forest environment.
- We understand that we share our Forest School with plants and animals and that when we are in our Forest School, we are sharing the environment with them.

Boundaries

- Before each session begins children are made aware of how far that they can explore and of any fixed boundary markers.
- If children move to explore hidden areas an adult should also move into the cover deep enough to be able to see the children but allowing the children the freedom to explore independently.
- If you lose sight of a child shout '1,2,3, where are you?' The children have been taught to respond '1,2,3, I'm here' through games that are practiced regularly.

Lighting a fire

- When lighting a fire, the Forest School leader will take control of the operation and all accompanying adults will be briefed before we 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 designated fire circles.

Tree Climbing

- An adult must be present when wanting to climb trees in the Forest School. The ground cover should be checked for 'sharp objects' and the tree identified as suitable for climbing.
- A visual check must be made for loose and rotten branches.
- Children are permitted to explore to their own limits or to a maximum height of 1.5m.
- Adults should be near enough to catch if a child should fall but far enough away to not be invasive to the children's exploration

Carrying and Transporting Materials

- Children are encouraged to roll, lift, drag and to pull materials, either by using their hands or by using ropes.
- We encourage 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.

Rope and String Use

- We encourage the collection and transportation of materials.
- 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.

Picking up and playing with stones

- Stones may be picked up and transported.
- Children often like to make patterns and pictures with them.
- Stones may not be thrown.
- They may be dropped but thought must be given to whether it is safe to do so, i.e. what is beneath where I am dropping it?

Using Tools

- All tools have their own clear code of conduct for correct use which will include consideration of specific personal protective equipment, correct use of a specific body posture, and consideration of the appropriate types of activity that each tool may be used for. (See tool use protocols).

Picking up and playing with sticks

- Children can carry sticks shorter than their arm's length but are encouraged to think about how close they are to other children.
- Sticks must be carried pointing towards the floor.
- Longer sticks may be dragged or carried with the help of another person when each person is at either end.
- Sticks must not be thrown.

Eating and Drinking

- Nil by mouth policy for anything found in the Forest, unless this activity has been specifically planned for during the session (e.g. blackberry picking).
- Children must be reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses.
- When having drinks and snacks children will use wipes & water to clean their hands before consumption.

Collecting wood

- Wood is collected for fire lighting purposes.
- It is collected in four thicknesses – matchstick sized, pencil sized, thumb sized and wrist sized.
- Sticks may be collected for creating pictures and patterns but should be

collected sparingly so as not to disrupt creature habitats.

Clothing

It is nearly always true to say, "there is no such thing as bad weather, just unsuitable clothing."

- It is important that all children and staff have appropriate clothing suitable for **all** weather conditions.
- Forest School leader will ensure that they carry items of spare clothing in the kit bags.
- If any child is considered inappropriately dressed for Forest School and alternative clothing cannot be found in school that child will remain in class at school.

2. **Daily Operating Procedure:**

What to do before the session

- Check that all risk assessments are in place, particularly the check list
- Assess the site for new hazards
- Set up activities
- Take up and check equipment
- Prepare snack and/or drink
- Ensure that there is correct staff/client ratio and that all staff are familiar with this handbook.

Before walk up

- Register to be completed by class teacher (if a class group) or Forest School Leader (if a target/intervention group)
- Check children are appropriately dressed
- Ensure children have water bottles
- Make sure children have been to the toilet
- Do head count of children
- Remind them of the walk up rules

What to do during the session

- Ongoing dynamic risk assessments to be carried out by Mrs. Chapman.
- Carry out regular head counts, particularly when entering and leaving site.
- Run carousel of activities.
- Observe and evaluate.

What to do after the session

- Head count
- Tool Check and tools maintenance.
- Evaluation for next session the learning is reviewed and evaluated.
- Mrs. Chapman will discuss any observations with the other adults who have

attended the session and will review the session in general.
- Evaluate the plan for the session that has just been completed and then plan for the next session taking due consideration of all observations and comments made.

3. Flora and Fauna:

Flora (plants) and fauna (animals) are the main contributors to a natural ecosystem. It is important to be able to identify a range of different flora and fauna in the Forest School area for a number of reasons:

- So, you can identify safe and dangerous plants in the Forest School area. The children have a '**no pick, no lick**' rule to help stop them ingesting potential hazards.
- So, you can impart important knowledge to the children and feed their investigative minds.
- So, children will be able to touch and sense different species with guidance from the leader.
- So, you can develop your own and others appreciation of the wild world and its fantastic diversity.
- So, you can teach about foraging and how to keep it sustainable.

Here is a list of the flora and fauna identified in The Discovery School Forest School are:

Flora:

Trees

Name Field Maple	**Distinguishing features** Leaves - small, dark green and shiny, with five lobes and rounded teeth. They fade to a rich, golden yellow before falling in autumn. Flowers - small, yellow-green, cup-shaped and hang in clusters. Fruits - The fruit is a samara with two winged nutlets. The wings are opposite each other horizontally. Bark - light brown and flaky. Twigs are slender and brown and develop a corky bark with age.
	
Interesting Facts Field maples can grow to 20m and live for up to 350 years. The field maple is the UK's only native maple. It is found growing in woods, scrub and hedgerows, and on	

chalk lowland. It is widely planted in gardens and parks due to its compact habit, tolerance of pollution and rich autumn colours.

Field maple is attractive to aphids and their predators, including many species of ladybird, hoverfly and bird. Lots of species of moth, such as the mocha, feed on its leaves. The flowers provide nectar and pollen sources for bees and birds, and small mammals eat the fruits.

The flowers appear to be hermaphrodite, meaning that both male and female reproductive parts are contained within one flower. After pollination by insects, flowers develop into large, winged fruits which are dispersed by wind.

In parts of Europe, it was thought that maple branches hung around a doorway stopped bats entering. The herbalist Culpepper recommended maple leaves and bark to strengthen the liver.

Name Silver Birch

Distinguishing features

Leaves - light green, small and triangular-shaped with a toothed edge, which fade to yellow in autumn.

Flower - Male catkins are long and yellow-brown in colour, and hang in groups of two to four at the tips of shoots, like lambs' tails. Female catkins are smaller, short, bright green and erect.

Fruits – tiny seeds with papery thin 'wings' that are dispersed by the wind.

Bark - The white bark sheds layers like tissue paper and becomes black and rugged at the base. As the trees mature, the bark develops dark, diamond-shaped fissures.

Interesting Facts

Silver birch is monoecious, meaning both male and female flowers (catkins) are found on the same tree.

Silver birch provides food and habitat for more than 300 insect species – the leaves attracting aphids as well as caterpillars of many moths, for example, Kentish glory. Woodpeckers and other hole-nesting birds often nest in the trunk, while the seeds are eaten by siskins, greenfinches and redpolls.

Pretty, pale, a symbol of purity. This common tree, with its silver-white bark, is favoured by gardeners who want to renew and purify their land for coming year.

In early Celtic mythology, the birch symbolized renewal and purification. Bundles of birch twigs were used to drive out the spirits of the old year, and gardeners still use the birch besom, or broom, to 'purify' their gardens. It is also used as a symbol of love and fertility. In Scottish Highland folklore, a barren cow herded with a birch stick would become fertile, and a pregnant cow would bear a healthy calf.

Birch wood is tough and heavy, making it suitable for furniture production, handles and toys. It was once used to make hardwearing bobbins, spools and reels for the Lancashire cotton industry. The bark is used for tanning leather.

Name Hawthorn

Distinguishing features

Leaves - around 6cm in length and comprised of toothed lobes, which cut at least halfway to the middle or 'mid-rib'.

Flowers - are highly scented, white or occasionally pink with five petals, and grow in flat-topped clusters.

Fruits - deep-red fruits known as 'haws'.

Bark - grey with shallow, longitudinal fissures with narrow ridges.

Interesting Facts

Hawthorn is a pagan symbol of fertility and has ancient associations with May Day. It was the ancestor of the Maypole and its leaves and flowers the source of May Day garlands as well as appearing in the wreath of the Green Man.

Hawthorn was never brought into the home. It was believed that bringing hawthorn blossom inside would be followed by illness and death, and in medieval times it was said that hawthorn blossom smelled like the Great Plague.

Common hawthorn can support more than 300 insects. It is the foodplant for caterpillars of moths, for example the hawthorn moth. Its flowers are eaten by dormice and provide nectar and pollen for bees and other pollinating insects. The haws are rich in antioxidants and are eaten by migrating birds, such as redwings, as well as small mammals.

Hawthorn can be used in turnery and engraving and to make veneers and cabinets, as well as boxes, tool handles and boat parts. It also makes good firewood and charcoal, and has a reputation for burning at high temperatures.

The young leaves, flower buds and young flowers are all edible. They can be added to green salads and grated root salads. The developing flower buds are particularly good. The haws can be eaten raw but may cause mild stomach upset. They are most commonly used to make jellies, wines and ketchups.

It has long been grown as a hedging plant and is a popular choice in wildlife gardens.

Name Oak

Distinguishing features

Leaves - around 10cm long with 4–5 deep lobes with smooth edges. The leaf upside is dark green, the underside of the leaf is blue-green. The leaves have almost no stem and grow in bunches.

Flowers - long, yellow hanging catkins which distribute pollen into the air

Fruits - acorns are 2–2.5cm long, on long stalks and in cupules (the cup-shaped base of the acorn). As it ripens, the green acorn turns brown, loosens from the cupule and falls to the canopy below.

Bark - the bark is grey in young trees, smooth and thin. In older oak trees the bark is black-brown and deeply fissured.

Interesting Facts

English oak is the second most common tree species in the UK, after birch. It's especially common in deciduous woods in southern and central Britain. In fact, it's so frequent that it has assumed the status of a national emblem.

Oak forests support more life forms than any other native forest. They are host to hundreds of insect species, supplying many birds with an important food source. In autumn, mammals such as squirrels, badgers and deer feed on acorns.

The oak was sacred to many gods, including Zeus, Jupiter and the Celtic Dagda. Each of these gods ruled over thunder and lightning, and oak trees are often hit by lightning as they are the tallest living feature in the landscape.

Ancient kings and Roman Emperors wore crowns of oak leaves.

In England, the oak is a national symbol of strength. Oaks produce one of the hardest and most durable timbers on the planet and used for flooring, wine barrels and firewood. Its acorns have also been used to make flour for bread making.

Name Beech

Distinguishing features

Leaves – around 4–9cm long. Lime green to dark green, stalked, oval and pointed at the tip, with a wavy edge.

Flowers - tassel-like male catkins hang from long stalks at the end of twigs, while female flowers grow in pairs, surrounded by a cup.

Fruits - The cup becomes woody once pollinated, and encloses one or two beech nuts (known as beechmast). Beech is wind pollinated.

Bark - The bark is smooth, thin and grey, often with slight horizontal etchings.

Interesting Facts

In the UK, common beech is only considered truly native to south-east England and south-east Wales. It grows in woods or as single trees, usually on drier, free-draining soils, such as chalk, limestone and light loams.

Beech woodland is shady and characterized by a dense carpet of fallen leaves and mast husks which prevent most woodland plants from growing. Only specialist shade-tolerant plants can survive beneath a beech canopy.

Beech woodland provides an important habitat for many butterflies, particularly in open glades and along woodland rides.

Because beech trees live for so long, they provide gnarled and knotted habitats for many deadwood specialists, such as hole-nesting birds and wood-boring insects. The bark is often home to a variety of fungi, mosses and lichens.

Beech is associated with femininity and is often considered the queen of British trees, where oak is the king.

The wood burns well and was traditionally used to smoke herring.

Name Goat Willow (Pussy Willow or Great Sallow)

Distinguishing features

Leaves - the leaves are up to 12cm long, are oval with a pointed tip that bends to one side. They are hairless above, but with a felty coating of fine grey hairs underneath. (most other willows have long, thin leaves)

Flowers - the male catkins are grey, stout and oval, becoming yellow when ripe with pollen; the female catkins are longer and green.

Fruits - female catkins develop into woolly seeds. The hair on the seeds helps dispersion by the wind. They are pollinated by wind. Most willows can also propagate

themselves by lowering their branches to the ground, where they then develop roots.

Bark - smooth and grey. Older trees have cracked bark at the base and brittle branches. Bark on young twigs is red-brown and shiny.

Interesting Facts

Goat willow is dioecious, meaning male and female flowers grow on separate trees.

Also known as the pussy willow, the male catkins of the goat willow look like a cat's paws. It supports lots of wildlife, including the elusive and regal purple emperor butterfly.

Catkins provide an important early source of pollen and nectar for bees and other insects, and birds use goat willow to forage for caterpillars and insects.

Goat willow timber is soft and yellow in colour. Unlike most willows, its brittle twigs are not suitable for weaving. The wood burns well and makes a good fuel and charcoal.

Traditionally, willows were used to relieve pain associated with a headache or toothache, and the painkiller aspirin is derived from salicin, a compound found in the bark of all *Salix* species. In medieval times, in many parts of Europe, the bark was chewed to release the salicin.

It is thought that 'willow' is the source of the words witch, wicked and Wiccan.

Shrubs and flowers

Name buddleia

Distinguishing features

Leaves – long, narrow, lance-shaped, pointed, green or grey-green leaves up to 25cm long.

Flowers – dense sprays, 30cm or more long, of small, fragrant flowers (honey-like fragrance) in various shades of purple.

Fruits – Numerous oval, pointed seeds cases develop on each flower spray.

Stem – Pale brown bark becomes deeply fissured (long narrow openings) with age, the younger bark has more shallow fissures.

Interesting Facts

Buddleia is also known as the 'Butterfly Bush', because it is such a popular nectar source in gardens. Eminent naturalist, Richard Mabey, reported regularly seeing 'more than 50 butterflies of up to ten species together on a single bush' in his own garden.

Buddleia are not native to the UK and if left unchecked can become invasive. Their roots can grow through brick and concrete, potentially making buildings and river banks unstable.

Name Clematis - Old Man's Beard or Traveler's Joy

Distinguishing features

Leaves - elliptical in shape with rough toothed margins. Leaves grow in an opposite leaf arrangement.

Flowers - white in colour and in clusters. The flowers are around two centimeters in width. Although they appear to have four petals, they are in fact sepals.

Fruits - seed clusters which have a feathered appearance and are white-grey in colour. They are called achenes. It is the fruit which gives the plant its other name: 'old man's beard'.

Stem - climbing, layering vine (<20 m tall) with very long, woody stems with six prominent ribs (appear as furrows in older vines) and pale, easily rubbed-off bark.

Interesting Facts

The flowers of this plant are visited by pollinating insects during the day, such as bees as well as hoverflies. Traveller's joy is also a food plant for moth species such as the pretty chalk carpet moth. The seed heads of this plant also provide a food source for birds, such as goldfinches.

The Latin *Clematis* is thought to derive from the Greek word for shoot as it is a climbing plant. It was also suggested that traveller's joy did the devil's work as it would kill other plants by out-competing them. This is why it is viewed as an intrusive weed by many people.

Traveler's joy has been used in various treatments as it is said to contain anti-inflammatory properties. Traditional recipes used the plant to treat various ailments, including skin irritations and stress.

As this species is a woody plant, the stem was used in the past to make baskets. It is called traveler's joy because it adorns hedges and banks in the countryside with billows of beautiful feathery seed heads in the grey months leading up to Christmas.

Name Clover

Distinguishing features

Leaves – trifoliolate (three leaflets) that are elliptical (egg shaped) and smooth. The leaves form a symbol known as shamrock.

Flowers – white, pink or purple. The heads are 1.5–2 centimeters wide, and are at the end of 7cm peduncles or inflorescence stalks.

Other features

Low growing, open habit of growth with the stems creeping

as much as 18cm a year.

Interesting Facts

Both red and white clover are perennial legumes (peas and bean family). They are high in protein and fibre that are widely used as forage for animal grazing and pastures. They are typically planted with companion grasses and used as a cover crop during crop rotation, particularly organic crops.

In herbal medicine, red clover is typically used to treat respiratory issues (such as asthma, whooping cough, and bronchitis), skin disorders (such as eczema and psoriasis), inflammatory conditions like arthritis, and women's health problems (such as menopausal and menstrual symptoms). *Please note, that no herbs have been FDA-approved for medical use and you should always consult with your doctor before taking red clover tea for any health-related purpose.*

Name Blackberry

Distinguishing features

Leaves – dark green with a white fuzz on the surface. The leaves have three to five leaflets forming around a center ridge and a row of thorns on the underside of the leaflets.

Flowers – white, five petal flowers that appear towards the tips of the canes.

Fruits – blackberries are an aggregate fruit made up of multiple drupes. As the berry ripen, they turn from white to red and deep purple and black when fully ripe. When picked, the berry has a white center at the top of the fruit.

Stem – or canes are thorny and woody if mature, or green if young.

Interesting Facts

In the wild blackberries grow as thorny dense shrubs that form impassable thickets. The shrubs grow up to 4 meters tall.

Blackberries are ramblers rather than climbers.

Blackberry plants spread aggressively by sending up long canes. As the canes mature, they lie down on the ground outside of the patch. Where the cane touches the soil, new roots grow, creating a new plant.

Blackberries are traditionally used in crumbles, pies, jams and jellies, vinegars and wines.

Name Stinging Nettle

Distinguishing features

Leaves – 7-15cm long, short-stalked, oval leaves that taper to a point with a saw-toothed edge. The underside of the leaves are covered in fine stinging bristles or hairs. They grow in opposite pairs up the stem.

Flowers - Greenish, stalkless flowers, 1–2 mm long, are tinged with pink or red and grow in dense, drooping clusters at stem tips and upper leaf joints. Male and female flowers can be on separate plants or in separate clusters on the same plant. Flowers have 4 tiny sepals and no petals. Male flowers have 4 pollen stalks (stamens).

Fruits - Flattened, lens-shaped, hard-coated seeds (achenes), 1–2 mm.

Stem – stinging nettles have one main leafy stem that is square (in cross section). The stem is covered in the same fine stinging bristles or hairs as the leaves.

Interesting Facts

The stinging hairs secrete acid into the skin when their brittle tips are broken upon touching. The sting of a nettle may be cured by rubbing the part with rosemary, mint or sage leaves

Nettle stems contain a fibre, which may be (and was!) used for making ropes, sails and fine linen cloth, suitable even for shirts and beddings. It is sometimes called 'poor relative of Flax'.

Leaves of the nettle may be used for producing beautiful and permanent green dye for woolen stuffs and even for food, while roots boiled with alum, produce a yellow colour.

In many nations exists the belief, that stinging nettles have magic powers. People would put some nettles leaves into pockets to be safe from lighting, or some dry leaves into shoes – that evil power would not be able to lead them to vicious places.

The leaves have high nutritive value (iron, calcium, and vitamins A, C, and D) when eaten or drunk as a tea. Young leaves can be used in soups, salad, pies or even pesto!

Name Teasel

Distinguishing features

Leaves - The first year of this plant has shiny, green, rosette leaves with scalloped edges, stout hairs on the upper surface of each leaf, and is attached to the stem by way of a petiole (leaf stalk). Second year leaves on the flowering stem are similar to rosette leaves except they are smaller, are opposite with two leaves per node, and have short spines on the underside of the midrib. The leaves are fused around the stem forming a saucer-like shape that holds rainwater.

Flowers - Flowers heads are egg-shaped in outline but cut off squarely at the base. The entire flower head (peduncle) measures anywhere between 50 and 100 cm in height and consists of tiny individual flowers that measure 10 to 15 mm long. Teasel flowers are lilac and appear between late June and September. The familiar seed heads turn brown in winter.

Stem – 60 – 250cm tall (in second year) with many small thorns that are angled downwards. Main stem is erect with branching near the upper part of the plant.

Interesting Facts

Teasel is self-fertile and it is noted for attracting wildlife.

An average teasel plant produces 3300 seeds that birds enjoy. The seeds are very important for birds, such as the goldfinch, which can often be seen alighting on the old, brown flower heads in autumn to 'tease' the seeds from them.

Young leaves are edible although one must take great care to avoid the spiny, stout hairs. Teasel leaves can be consumed raw, cooked or added to a smoothie. The root can be used in a tea or for making vinegar or tinctures.

Name Cow Parsley (Wild chervil or Queen Anne's Lace)

Distinguishing features

Leaves – bright green with a slight downy covering. They have a fern-like appearance with 2 – 3 pinnate leaflets. The leaves produce an aniseed-like scent when crushed.

Flowers - large, flat umbrellas of small, white 5-petal flowers. The umbels are 20 – 60mm across and the individual flowers 3-4mm across.

Stem – triangular, hollow with a furrowed surface giving a ribbed look and slightly hairy. Can turn purple when mature, but never blotchy! Can grow to 100cm tall

Seeds – brown/grey, 6-10mm long, thin, flattened, smooth

Interesting Facts

One of several common members of the carrot family, this is the most abundant, and the earliest-flowering of the umbellifers.

Cow parsley is attractive to a huge number of creatures, from orange-tip butterflies to marmalade hoverflies, and even rabbits.

As a herbal remedy it has been used to treat kidney and bladder stones

Not poisonous – some plant parts are used by foragers. Young basal leaves taste like parsley. Young stems (April) are steamed, stir-fried and used in salads.

Be aware: Similar umbellifers; Hemlock is poisonous, hogweed sap is an irritant and the giant hogweed can cause serious burns.

Fungi

Name fungi- umber brown puffball

Distinguishing features

Width - 3-8cm

Height – 3 – 7cm

Brown spherical balls that do not have a visible stem or an open cap with gills to bear spores. Instead, the puffball is a sponge like ball with the spores produced internally.

Spores – olive-brown

Interesting Facts

Puffballs were traditionally used in Tibet for making ink by burning them, grinding the ash, then putting them in water and adding glue liquid which, when pressed for a long time, made a black dark substance that was used as ink

Edible when young and the flesh is white throughout. ***Warning: be sure and 'never munch on a hunch'***

Name fungi – grooved bonnet

Distinguishing features

Width – 2-4cm

Height – 5-10cm

Brown, circular conical caps becoming bell shaped and eventually umbonate (rounded and convex). The cap is smooth with striations (long, thin streak, ridge, or groove on a surface) almost to the center and a scalloped edge. The gills are off-white or greyish and adnate (joined as they have grown together).

Stem – 5-10cm with longitudinal grooves

Interesting Facts

Saprobic (living in or being an environment rich in organic matter and relatively free from oxygen). They nearly always grow on dead hardwood stumps or on rotting trunks and large branches, but rarely grow on rotting conifers.

Inedible

Fauna:

Name robin

Distinguishing features

A small bird, about 14 cm long.

Unmistakable red-orange breast, throat and forehead with olive-brown upper parts. The orange part is often edged with a band of grey. Distinguishing between the sexes of these birds is difficult as both the males and females share the same colouration and patterns. Their young lack the orange on the breast and have dark-brown and buff mottling.

A repeated, persistent 'tic; is the most common call. Their song is thin and warbling and may be heard almost throughout the year.

Interesting Facts

Territory boundaries are fluid, and change frequently as circumstances change.

The sole purpose of a robin's red breast is in territory defense: it is not used in courtship. A patch of red triggers territorial behaviour, and robins are known to persistently attack stuffed robins and even tufts of red feathers.

They can be aggressive towards its own kind and birds of other species. Both sexes defend their territory. In the position of defence, the Robin holds its head erect to display their orange breast, their body rapidly sways sideways.

Robins generally nest in forests with dense undergrowth. Like scrub, gardens, hedgerows and town parks. It is a common suburban bird.

Postmen used to be called robins because of their red tunics and the reason the robin is associated with Christmas cards is because these were delivered by the red-coated postmen 'robins'.

Name Nursery Web Spider

Distinguishing features

Size – 1.5cm long

Brown and black stripes running the length of its body.

Does not spin a web to catch food, it makes a quick sprint to capture flies and other insects. The female only uses a web to make a protective tent for its young.

Interesting Facts

The nursery web spider is often seen sunbathing among brambles and stinging nettles. They are a common spider of grassland and scrub land.

The male spider, if not careful, will be eaten by the female, so he presents a gift of food to the female and lays still pretending to be dead. When the female investigates the food, the male will suddenly jump up and mate with her.

The female spider carries the large round egg sac in her fangs. Then, when they're about to hatch, she builds a silk sheet among the vegetation to act a tent, sheltering them until they are old enough to leave on their own.

Name Garden Spider

Distinguishing features

Size – 0.9 – 1.8cm long

Females are twice the size of males.

Distinctive white cross-shaped group of spots on the abdomen. However, the overall colour can vary from red-orange to almost black.

Spin orb webs to catch their flying prey, then sit in the center of their web. Orb webs are built by laying spirals of silk around radial threads, it is the most complex spider web.

Interesting Facts

The garden spider is one of the UK's largest spider species and are common throughout the UK and are often found in gardens, hence their name.

After mating, the female builds a silken cocoon in which she lays her eggs. She protects this egg sac until she dies in late autumn. The spiderlings hatch the following May.

A garden spider's web can be up to 40cm wide. They sit in the middle of the web waiting to feel the vibrations of a struggling insect in the sticky threads of its web. They rush out and wrap their prey tightly in silk to stop them from moving, finishing the job with a venomous bite. However, they are completely harmless to humans!

Name Ladybird

Distinguishing features

Ladybirds are beetles, or Coleoptera. The main characteristics are;

- Hard forewings (elytra) that cover the **abdomen** and meet centrally without overlapping
- biting mouthparts.

The seven-spot ladybird is usually red. Its seven black spots are arranged three on each elytron and one at the back across the two elytra.

Body 6-8mm in length that is round or oval

Short clubbed antennae

Six short legs that are retractable under the body.

Interesting Facts

In the past, people would eat ladybirds as they believed the yellow fluid they secrete was a good pain killer, and would cure toothache!

The 7-spot is common and widespread across the UK. It can be found on vegetation in parks, woods, gardens and urban areas.

The bright colours of ladybirds warn predators that they taste horrible, although some birds will still have a go!

Both larvae and adults feed on aphids which helps their image as a gardener's friend.

Name Snail

Distinguishing features

Shell diameter up to 40mm

A gastropod mollusc (soft muscular body covered in mucus) They have a brownish soft body that is covered with slimy mucus.

Two pairs of retractable feelers or tentacles.

The shell is spherical with about 4 or 5 spirals and a slightly rough surface. It is a yellow or cream colour with brown spiral stripes.

Interesting Facts

Garden snails eat leaves, lichen, algae, fungi and rotting plant debris. It loves eating crops like lettuce, so is often considered a pest. When it's not feeding, or when it feels danger, the soft body retracts into its shell.

Garden snails are a terrestrial mollusc that does most of its activity either at night, very early in the morning, or if it rains during the day. They are very common around the world and can reach a speed of one meter per hour, so they can travel across an average British garden overnight.

The garden snail has a flat 'muscular foot' that helps it move with a gliding motion. The mucus reduces the friction with the surface and helps the snail move around. The mucus is the snail's trail.

Garden snails are a food source for animals like frogs, worms, birds and lizards.

Name Earthworms

Distinguishing features

Length up to 30 cm

Body is made up of many ridged segments that are covered in minute hairs. They also have a saddle.

Interesting Facts

Earthworms use the minute hairs on their body to grip the soil and move. They usually live in the soil's top few centimeters, but will burrow deeper to find moisture if the ground is too dry or frozen.

Earthworms are very important in maintaining soil structure and fertility. They eat decaying organic matter and bring nutrients to the surface for plants to use as well as aerate the soil and improve drainage with their burrowing.

It is widely thought that if a worm is cut in half that it makes two new worms. Unfortunately, although they can regenerate a little usually both halves die.

Earthworms are an important food source for lots of animals, for example; hedgehogs, foxes, birds and toads.

Name Woodlouse

Distinguishing features

Hard outer shell (exoskeleton) that can vary in colour from brown to pink. The outer shell is made up eleven sections (or plates) that allows them to roll into a ball.

Woodlouse have 14 jointed legs

Interesting Facts

Woodlouse are nocturnal minibeasts that can be found sheltering under rocks or hiding in compost bins. They like damp conditions and feed off dead plants and creatures which helps to recycle vital nutrients.

There are about 30 different species of woodlouse in the UK.

Woodlouse are a crustacean, so closely related to crabs and shrimps, but they live on land.

Name Slug

Distinguishing features

A gastropod mollusc (soft muscular body covered in mucus)

Two pairs of retractable feelers or tentacles.

There is a saddle-shaped mantle on top of the slug behind the head.

The underside of the slug is flat (the foot) and secretes a layer of mucus.

Interesting Facts

Slug is a common name for a shell-less gastropod mollusc that lives on the land (terrestrial).

The upper pair of retractable tentacles are light sensing with eyespots at the ends. The lower pair provide a sense of smell.

Under the mantle (saddle) on one side is the anus (bottom) and on the other side the respiratory opening (nose).

The mucus secreted by the foot contains fibres that help prevent the slug from slipping down vertical surfaces. It can also help slugs recognise the path of a slug from the same species as well as making it hard to be picked up by predators.

Most slugs feed on decaying plant material and fungi. Some of the slugs are carnivorous and eat other slugs, snails and even earthworms.

Section 4

Policies, Procedures and Protocols

1. Health and Safety

Mrs. Chapman (Forest School Leader) holds a current outdoor first aid certificate. She is responsible for all aspects of health and safety and carries out all medical equipment checks as detailed below. Any first aid incidents will follow the school's procedure and be logged on the school recording system. Parents will be contacted if it is a serious incident.

First Aid Kit

The kit needs to be regularly checked and re-stocked. The kit should contain the following items:

- Disposable gloves
- Swabs
- Plasters
- Micropore tape
- Sterile water

Other essential items

- Welfare kit (wet wipes, hand gel, drinking water)
- Medication for individuals
- Emergency fire kit
- Duct tape – to seal tools which have become unfit for purpose during session.
- Spare items of warm clothing

2. Accident and Emergency Procedures

Here is a list of possible circumstances of emergency and a list of steps to take in the event of that happening.

First aid

- Any illness or injury to be treated by qualified first aiders (Forest School leader and assistant)
- Check A-B-C (Airway, Breathing and Circulation) and administer first aid.
- Allocate adult/s to ensure rest of group are brought back to base and kept safe. Head count remaining group.
- Notify school office/head teacher and/or emergency services depending on severity of injury. Complete incident form in Forest School leader bag.
- Have medical details available if applicable.
- School office to notify parents/guardians, if appropriate.
- All accidents reported to head teacher who will complete an accident report form, as required.

- If appropriate child to visit school office on arrival back at school
- Communication to parents to be shared ideally by the witness or telephone contact to be made if more urgent.
- Review and amend risk assessment as appropriate.

Death or serious incident

- Attend to casualty and qualified first aiders administer first aid as appropriate
- Inform local emergency services
- Allocate adult/s to ensure rest of group are brought back to base and kept safe.
- Head count remaining group.
- Inform head teacher and school office who will follow school Critical Incident Policy.

School number: 01732847000

No-one in the group should speak to the media as this could cause distress for families. Any enquiries from journalists should be referred to the Headteacher who will be following the critical incident procedure process. No-one in the group should discuss any legal liability with other parties without clear advice.

Fire Drill

As the Forest School site is within the school grounds. The children need to stop their activity and exit the site quietly and in an orderly fashion under the instruction of the Forest School Leader. Line up on the playground or field just as if they were leaving any other part of the school.

Lockdown

As the Forest School site is within the school grounds. The children need to stop their activity and gather at the gazebo under the instruction of the Forest School Leader. Sit down quietly and wait for further instruction.

3. Weather Checks

Before the session use a local forecast to assess safety of running. The site should be assessed prior to taking out a group. Try and leave cancellation as late as possible. Below is a short outline of conditions that may lead to a cancellation of a session:

- Check children are appropriately dressed.
- A rough guide to high winds - don't enter the Forest School area in winds of Force 4 increasing to 5 or more.
- In windy conditions, keep a watchful eye on the surrounding tree branches. (If

substantial branches are blowing at 20 degrees or more, leave the site).

- If the children are getting too cold, either warm them up through exercise, shared shelter, sitting by the fire or going inside.
- In the case of an electrical storm, children will be guided by an adult to safe shelter and conduct (Avoid tall trees especially Oak, crouch down on the balls of your feet with your feet close together. Keep your hands on your knees and lower your head. Get as low as possible without touching your hands or knees to the ground. DO NOT LIE DOWN
- In the case of extreme heat, children will be encouraged to drink plenty of water, wear suitable clothing, seek shelter from the sun when necessary and staff will monitor the situation and end session if necessary.
- Where children are distressed by extreme weather conditions a decision can be made to end a session either for that child or the in some cases the whole group. It is important to remember emotional wellbeing is as important as physical wellbeing.

4. Educational Visits Policy

Forest School visits will be completed in accordance with The Discovery School's Educational Visits Policy. (See appendix B or https://www.discovery.kent.sch.uk/about-us/policies/)

Adult to child ratios are as follows for educational visits:

- EYFS – 1:5
- Year 1 to Year 3 – 1:6
- Year 4 to Year 6 – 1:10

However, for Forest School sessions the following ratios will be used because of the nature of the activities being undertaken:

- EYFS – 1:5
- Year 1 to Year 3 – 1:5
- Year 4 to Year 5 – 1:6 to 1:8 (depending on the level of risk)

There must always be a minimum of two adults on site

5. Food Hygiene Procedure

- Parents/Carers should have declared any allergies on their child's consent form.
- Please refer to "Campfire Cooking Procedure"

6. Cancellation Procedure

After conducting a pre-session dynamic risk assessment, or in cases of severe weather where it is obvious that the session cannot take place. Class teachers and parents/Carers are to be informed of the cancellation either by Mrs. Chapman or via school comms.

7. Toileting Procedure

As the Forest School site is on the school grounds, the children are encouraged to visit the toilet prior to leaving for Forest School. If, however they need to go during the session and with permission from Mrs. Chapman, one of the school staff adults will take them to the allocated toilets.

8. Safeguarding Children Procedure

The Discovery School is committed to the safeguarding of all pupils in our care. To that end, all staff, governors and volunteers will help keep our children safe by:

- Adhering to the school's Child Protection Policy (See appendix C or https://www.discovery.kent.sch.uk/about-us/policies/)
- Providing a safe place for our children to learn and develop.
- Ensuring that our behaviour does not make any child or member of the school community, uncomfortable or leave us vulnerable to accusation.
- Having the children's physical, emotional, and personal safety at the forefront of all we do.
- Immediately notifying the DCPC of any concerns, however trivial they may seem, in order to pull together a picture of any potential safeguarding issues.

All staff employed by the school, and volunteers who work in school for a set minimum of time as outlined in official guidance, will be subject to DBS checks. References will be sought and safer recruitment procedures adhered to at all times.

9. Confidentiality Policy

It is important never to repeat anything overheard or witnessed in school. If there are any concerns regarding a child/children please discuss with the designated teacher. A copy of the school's Code of Conduct set out in the "Behaviour Policy" is available (See appendix D or https://www.discovery.kent.sch.uk/about-us/policies/). Any external adult volunteers will be asked to sign a Code of Conduct form before assisting in the session.

10. Equality and Diversity

Forest School operates under the School's policy on Equality (See appendix E or https://www.discovery.kent.sch.uk/about-us/policies/)

We aim also to meet the five outcomes outlined in the document 'Every Child Matters – Change for Children 2004' (DfES publication – 1088-2004, version 1.0); namely:

1. Be healthy
2. Stay safe
3. Enjoy and achieve through learning
4. Make a positive contribution to society
5. Achieve economic well-being

11. Risk Protocol

We encourage our children, in a safe and structured way, to take risks. Children learn by their mistakes and by being free to make them in a comfortable and safe surrounding.

When appropriate children should be encouraged to "have a go" at an activity, take a risk and learn from their experiences.

'Providers should strike a balance between the risks and the benefits. This should be done on the basis of a risk assessment. Crucially this risk assessment should involve a risk-benefit trade-off between safety and other goals, which should be spelt out in the provider's policy'.

Managing Risk in Play Provision – A Position Statement by the Play Safety Forum. Children's Play Council, 2002.

When managing risk, we identify and manage any significant chance of harm. The significance is determined by two factors:

1. The likelihood of an accident or incident happening.
2. The severity of injury or harm if it does occur.

Forest Schools conduct four types of risk assessment:

1. **Generic Site** – this should take into account all four layers within a woodland, and general uses of the site.
2. **Generic Activity/Experiences** – this should take into account all the aspects of activities/experiences, including creative experiences, games and tool use. Once correct procedures, such as safe tool use has been established these generic activity risk assessments become part of the standard operating procedures.
3. **Daily** – includes weather, wild factors and any changes noted on the day. This can include assessments on individuals attending the session. This should be carried

out by the Forest School Leader prior to the session. The children should be encouraged to conduct a generic site risk assessment with their Leader on arrival at the site and before entering the designated area.

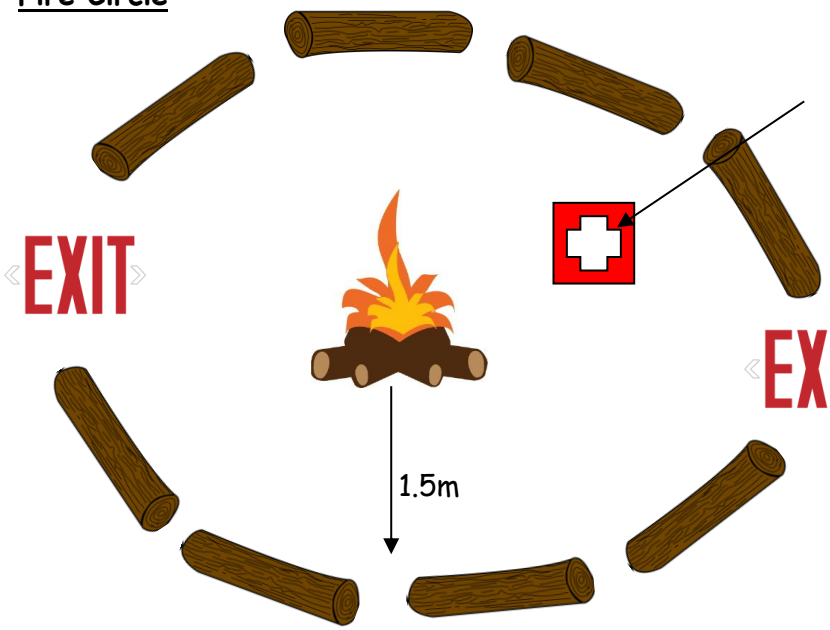
4. **Ongoing Dynamic** – involves professional judgements during the session in response to changing situations.

All risk assessments are checked and signed by the headteacher Miss Gobell and kept in her office.

For completed risk assessments please see appendix F and for risk benefit assessment please see appendix G.

12. Fire Protocol

Fire Circle



Fire Safety Equipment (a container of water, fire gloves, first aid kit)

Space to walk around the outside

- Establish a fire area, checking for branches beforehand. The fire circle should be at least 1.5 meters away from the fire all round.
- Site your fire carefully; avoid tree roots, peat soil, deep leaf mold, uneven ground etc.
- Don't light in windy or very dry conditions.
- Ensure fire safety equipment (a container of water, fire resistant gloves, first aid kit) is within the fire circle.
- Train young people how to approach and leave before lighting a fire.
- Keep fires approx. 4m from any shelter built from easily combusting materials.
- If a shelter is designed to have an integral fire establish safety rules and multiple exits before use (check design with an expert and keep a record of

this).

- A kneeling position should be used when attending the fire (respect position).
- **Never leave a fire unattended.**
- No one may enter the fire circle perimeter unless invited to do so by an adult.
- There may be no running past the fire circle.
- No items must be carried and placed within the fire circle unless by an adult.
- If you wish to move around the fire to a new stool you must step out of the circle and walk around the outside of the log circle.
- Even when the fire is unlit, we will treat it as if it is lit.
- Prior to lighting the fire, check for permission from the landowner. The fire brigade may need to be informed before lighting the fire.

When Children are Lighting or Managing a Fire (Only when supervised by a trained adult)

- Remove personal gloves.
- Wear fire resistant gloves
- Tuck in hair/hat tails.
- Ensure jacket sleeves etc. are not past their wrists.
- If young people have fires then restrict the flame height to equivalent of your knee

13. Campfire Cooking Procedures

- Check client group does not suffer from food allergies or that other reasons, such as religious reasons, do not permit individuals to handle or consume certain food types.
- Ensure you have up-to date information about allergies and religion.
- Food hygiene regulations should be followed.
- Risk assess working area and activity.
- Food hygiene regulations should be followed.
- Carry antiseptic wipes or soap and water for hand washing.
- Have a plant sprayer filled with water to clean hands, this qualifies as running water.
- Split open food and check it is cooked before consumption.
- When cooking with a stick use green wood and remove bark before cooking using a knife and scraping action.
- Don't re-heat cooked food.
- Avoid foods that need a lot of fat to cook in case of pan fire.
- Get young people to tuck in long hair and tie, roll up or fasten loose clothing.

14. Tool Protocol

The Forest School Leader, Mrs. Chapman, is responsible for the safe usage and maintenance of all tools.

- Tools must be checked before and after each session and monitored when in use.
- Duct tape is carried to make safe any tools which break during the session.
- Use glove on non-sawing hand when using a bow saw.
- Peelers, small snipping tools, saws, knives and loppers are kept in the padlocked Forest School tool box in the caretaker's office.
- When introducing a new tool: - Tool Talk - Ask the children what it is and what it is for. Discuss uses for the tool at Forest School.
- Emphasize that all movements should be made in the direction away from the body.
- Keep the hand holding the wood as far away as possible from the blade.
- Always assume safe position – for example; low kneel.
- When passing tools, ensure eye contact is maintained. A useful script is: - '(child 2's name). I am passing you the _____'. Tool then placed on ground in front of child 2 ready to be picked up safely.

Axe  Billhook 	**<u>Information</u>** An **axe** is used for pointing off or splitting wood and is used with a throwing action. Whereas a **billhook** is a more precise tool for shaving off wood being tapped with a mallet. Both tools are very sharp and need to be transported in a lockable tool box with their guard cover on. When being carried, they need to be down by the side with the blade facing forward. Use the correct position and keep a good working distance. Never leave an axe or billhook on the ground and replace guard when not in use. **<u>Safety</u>** Before use check the handle for any cracks and check that it is securely fixed to the metal head. Look for signs of the head shifting. Take the guard off and twist to check for security. Also check that the wedge, pin and rivet are firmly in place and that there are no signs of movement. Then examine the blade for chips and fractures and check that the blade is clean and sharp. **<u>Storage</u>** Before storage, clean and dry the sheath, guard and axe or billhook. Sharpen if necessary. Then store in a dry, secure place such as a locked toolbox.

Bowsaw  Hacksaw 	**Information** A **bowsaw** can have two types of blades. Pegged and even teeth are used for seasoned and dry wood. Whereas the raker blade is specifically designed to cut green wood. A **hacksaw** has small teeth and is used to cut wood no more than a finger width. The blade should always have a cover on when not in use or when in transit. Neither saw should be left flat on the ground. Hang it up or lean it against a tree or saw-horse (with its blade cover on). **Safety** The Forest School Leader will examine the blade for debris and blunt teeth, then clean or change the blade if necessary. If a new blade, then the Forest School Leader is to use the new blade first to 'wear them in' before the children use them. When using either saw, it needs to be done in a quieter area of the Forest School site and should be free from trip hazards and falling branches. Children are to wear cut resistant gloves when sawing and use the 'handover 'method with a bowsaw to prevent blade slippage and harm. **Storage** Before storage, clean and dry the blade, removing any debris, and replace the blade cover. Then store in a dry, secure place such as a locked toolbox.
Fixed-blade Knife 	**Information** Fixed-blade knives are used for whittling and to perform a power cut. Knives should always be sheathed (with a blade cover) to protect the blade when not in use, or in transit. Never use a glove on the working hand and use the 'thumb push method' to whittle with the blade pointing away from yourself and downwards. Always push the blade away from you in a controlled way. **Safety** Before use, check there are no cracks in the sheath or signs of denting or rust. Also check that the blade is securely fixed to the handle and it is clean and sharp. If necessary, carefully clean with a rag and sharpen. **Storage** Before storage, clean and dry the blade, removing any debris carefully with a rag, and replace the blade cover (sheath). Then store in a dry, secure place such as a locked toolbox.
Loppers  Secateurs	**Information** **Loppers** are used for cutting branches that are thicker than your finger, whereas **secateurs** cut twigs and smaller branches (that are no thicker than your finger). Always assess if the correct tool has been selected for the job. Loppers should be carries at the side holding onto the bottom handle, making sure that the blade has a smiley face. The loppers and secateurs need to be transported in a sturdy bag or toolbox. **Safety** Before use, check handles and hinges as well as the blades. During the check, make sure the loppers can't close on you by using your body as

	a bar. Or is secateurs, use your knee to prevent the blades from closing. Then ensure the blades are clean and sharp, using a rag to carefully remove any debris. After that, sharpen if necessary. Use a quiet working area and keep at a safe distance called a 'blood bubble'. When passing either tool, maintain eye contact and ask "Are you ready?" they reply "I am ready" then you "Ok, I am passing you the tool", then pass the lopper or secateurs handle first. **Storage** Before storage, clean and dry the blade, carefully removing any debris with a rag. Then store in a dry, secure place such as a locked toolbox.
Bradawl  Palm drill 	**Information** The **bradawl** is used to make a small puncture or pilot hole in the wood. To use, make sure the piece of wood is on a secure, flat surface. Then place the metal point where the hole is required and push down on the handle with your palm. Once the pilot hole has been made, the **palm drill** can be used to drill the piece of wood. Repeat the above process, but this time, place the drill bit in the pilot hole (on a secure, flat surface) and use your palm to twist the drill around whilst pushing downwards. **Safety** Before using either tool, check that the metal 'bit' is securely fixed in the handle and that it is clean. Forest School Leader to supervise the correct use of bradawl or palm drill and make sure that the piece of wood to be drilled is on a secure, flat surface. **Storage** Before storage, clean and dry, removing any debris carefully with a rag. Store in a dry, secure place such as a locked toolbox.

For relevant tool risk assessments, please see appendix H

15. Forest School Policy

The Forest School Policy (see appendix I) summarizes the above policies and procedures in a user-friendly document. It can be read alongside the Forest School Handbook.

Section 5

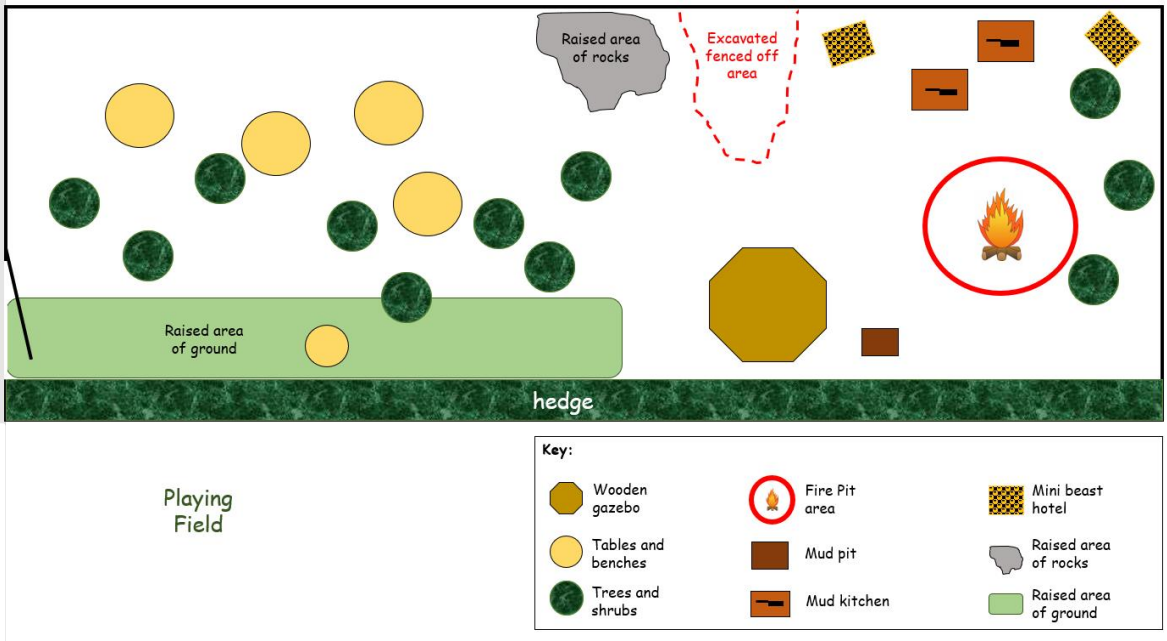
1. Management plan

The three-year management plan is to ensure the site is kept in a sustainable condition for use, and that any harm to the environment is minimal. In addition, the walk to the site doesn't impact too greatly on the ground layer and that all stake holders, including learners, take part in the management of the area.

For the current Management Plan, please see appendix J

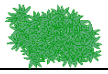
2. Environmental Impact Assessment

This is an ecological impact assessment to assess the impact of running Forest School sessions on the Discovery Walk site.

Name: Discovery Walk	**Location:** The Discovery School, Kings Hill, Kent ME19 4GJ	**Grid Ref:** TQ672556
Owner: The Discovery School		
Other Identified Stakeholders: School Governing Body, Kent LEA, Liberty Property Trust		
General Site Description: 		

The Forest School area is situated in a location on the school grounds called Discovery Walk. It is situated next to the school playing field enclosed by a hedge and fence. Around the left-hand side and hedge is the school playing field, with some of the school buildings near the access gate. The right-hand side runs alongside a wooded public footpath. Along the back fence are houses, gardens and resident parking. Discovery Walk has a slightly raised pathway upon entering with a gentle slope to the wooded area and gazebo. The whole area is found in the grounds of Kings Hill a redeveloped airfield near West Malling, Kent. Due to its location, you often find footballs from the neighbouring house near the mud kitchen / firepit area.

Flora:

Trees 	The indigenous trees were planted after the school was built in 1990. There is a mix of field maple, silver birch, hawthorn, oak, beech, goat willow.
Plants 	There is a substantial amount of grass, long and short. There is a mixture of shrubs such as buddleia and Old Man's Beard as well as blackberries, stinging nettles, teasel, cow parsley and clover. The hedge is made from a mixture of oak, hawthorn, birch and beech.
Fungi 	There are a wide variety of fungi, some of which are needing to be identified. Those identified are; umber brown puffball and grooved bonnet.
Mosses 	None identified

Fauna:

Birds 	Robin, sparrow, pigeon and thrush.
Mammals 	Squirrels and cats seen running along the fence and in the site. Foxes seen on school grounds.
Invertebrates 	Woodlice, centipedes, millipedes, wasps, butterflies, ladybirds, slugs, snails, ants, Nursery Web Spider and Garden Spider.

Archaeological Considerations:

- Kings Hill was originally an area of woodland and farm land which was later developed into an airfield.
- Houses built around the edge of the school site with a wooded public footpath along the back of the playing field / Forest School site.
- Discovery Walk developed into and outdoor classroom in 2018.
- Discovery Walk further developed into a Forest School area in 2020.

No archaeological significance identified.

Management History of site:

In the Middle Ages, the school site was part of Kings Wood, an area of coppiced wood and farmland which was used as a hunting ground for boar. Eventually the land passed into private ownership and the coppiced wood from the site was used for hop poles and fences, then later charcoal. In the mid nineteenth century, the site was called Kings Hill Wood and Abbey Woods and the whole area was cultivated as a woodland.

During the 1940's and World War II, part of the woodland was converted into an airfield, RAF West Malling. This airfield was both the front line and the last line of Britain's defenses during World War II.

The airfield remained in use until the early 1960's as Britain's premier night fighter station and then became home to several squadrons of the US navy. Eventually it fell empty until Kent County Council and Liberty Property Trust joined forces in 1989 and restored the heart of the RAF base, including the Grade II listed control tower.

The school site is located towards the back of the Kings Hill development near the remaining woodland, now called Warren Wood. The school was built in 1990 to educate primary aged children from the newly developed Kings Hill estate by Kent County Council and Liberty Property Trust.

Originally, Discovery Walk was part of the school field, but due to its trees and bushes, wasn't used. In 2012, the Head Teacher decided that the area would make a good outdoor learning space, so arranged for the gazebo, sunshade and wooden woodland creature seating to be installed. However, governors felt that it presented a hazard due to the 'overgrown' nature of the area and requested that it was fenced off into a separate outdoor space and named it Discovery Walk.

In 2019, there was a drive to revive the little used outdoor learning space and wooden outdoor tables with benches as well as outdoor art and play equipment were added. Then from 2020, Forest School sessions regularly use the area as their woodland space.

Long Term Vision:

To use Discovery Walk on a weekly basis in term time for Forest School sessions and outdoor curricular learning. In addition, provide a greater range of woodland material for pupils to interact with, for example; logs, branches etc. Also, monitor the site for the effects of usage on habitats, flora and fauna. Adjust and maintain site as required to protect the habitats and inhabitants.

Impact matrix to assess the ecological effects of Forest School activities

	Area Impacted On							
Activity	**Ground Layer**	**Field Layer**	**Shrub Layer**	**Canopy Layer**	**Deadwood**	**Nesting Birds**	**Pathways**	**Other habitats**
Fire	x			x	x	x		x
Den building	x	x	x		x		x	x
Tool based activities	x				x			
Exploring	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Journey to site	x						x	x
Environmental art	x	x			x		x	x