



Roundwood Forest School

PARENTS HANDBOOK



Tandridge Village Pre-School



Parental Information

What is Forest Schooling?

Forest schooling is a process, which builds on an individual's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering children the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves. Forest Schooling aims to give everybody the opportunity to develop an inquisitive and positive relationship with the natural world, have fun and enjoy themselves. Forest Schooling helps develop confidence and self-esteem, communication and social skills, physical and mental dexterity and resilience.

Though we plan activities which are available for children to take part in every session, many children chose to do other activities and we as adults support and facilitate them.

"Forest schooling is like a walk in the forest with a very long stop in the middle to explore and play."

Health and Safety policies

As Forest School practitioners we have a duty of care towards everybody involved in the Forest School. We aim to provide an environment that is secure and that promotes good health. We ask everybody to be responsible for their own health and safety as well as the health and safety of others who may be affected by what you do.

Risk Assessment

Risk is an integral part of childhood, and children are intuitively drawn toward risky play. Risk is subjective and has little to do with actual danger. Every effort will be made to keep everybody safe from injury. Risk-taking has fundamental benefits for the risk-taker and when children are given the opportunity to assess risk by themselves, they learn to appreciate the consequences of risk-taking and develop a sense of responsibility. Our aim as Forest School providers is to promote the concept of risk benefit assessment and to support



and encourage children to evaluate the potential value in assessing risk for themselves.

An initial site risk assessment will be done in conjunction with the children so that they can share the responsibility of their own safety and create their own boundaries. A comprehensive outdoor first aid kit will accompany every Forest School session and the Forest School Leader will be trained specifically for Forest School First Aid. Mobile phone reception in Roundwood is good and an emergency contact list will accompany any trip to the forest. Detailed location coordinates and emergency access points have been determined in the unlikely event of emergency services being needed.

A generic site inspection will take place at the beginning of every block of Forest School sessions and will include an inspection of all four layers of the woodland. A safety sweep of the site will take place before every session and will be carried out by the Forest School Leader. The safety sweep will cover general risks including fallen trees, harmful insect nests, identification of poisonous plant species and animal faeces etc. Generic activity risk assessment will be carried out on all new activities. All risk assessments are on-going and will be regularly reviewed and revised where necessary. Where the benefit outweighs possible injury we deem it a viable exercise. Trips and falls on uneven terrain are foreseen as being the most common injury, so expect a few bumps, scrapes and bruises.

Staffing and Ratios

A level 3 Forest School leader must always be present and will be supported by an additional staff member. A ratio of 4 children to 1 adult will be maintained for all sessions. Parent helpers may be present on some sessions in addition to normal staff ratios.

Boundaries

Children and adults will jointly determine how far we can explore before a block of sessions begin. If necessary, coloured markers will be tied around



trees or objects indicating the determined boundaries and will be reviewed once the children are familiar with their surroundings. Adults will keep children within eyesight (preferably) or earshot at all times. The forest school “1,2,3 where are you?” will be used to locate and summon children when necessary. We practice this several times per session so the children are familiar with it.

Sticks and Stones

The picking up of sticks will not be discouraged and a child may carry a stick shorter than their arm's length. Children will be encouraged to think about using a stick in close proximity to other children. Longer sticks can be dragged along or carried with a child at both ends. Children will be asked to determine whether the stick is living or dead and should only be used if it does not harm other living things (plants or animals). Children will be allowed to pick up stones and will be encouraged to use them in a way that will not harm other living things.

Tree Climbing

Children may climb trees provided they have been checked by the forest school leader and are deemed suitable. Children may not climb higher than 5 foot off the ground. A 5 foot piece of rope will be used to determine the climbable height. The trees we deem suitable for climbing are marked with ribbons or string at a height of roughly 5ft to identify the maximum climbing height.

Rope and String

We encourage the use of rope and string for appropriate undertakings but prevent children tying themselves and other children up and are especially vigilant about not allowing ropes to be looped around necks and limbs. Any child playing with a rope may not be out of sight.

Sand, Water and Mud

Earth and water are amongst the most important physical attributes to our



world, and mixing them together is truly intriguing, especially when they interact. Muddy and “messy” play have a foundational role in early childhood which has deep importance and endless possibilities for well-being, development and learning.

Tools and Equipment

Children will be made aware of the behavioral expectations when using tools and the potential for injury. Children may only use tools with the permission of the Forest School leader and must be supervised by an adult at all times. Before any child uses any tool, they will be trained by the Forest School leader who will introduce by demonstration how to use the tool safely and assess the competency of the individual.

The Forest School leader will be responsible for the maintenance, transport and storage of all tools and damaged tools will be repaired, recycled or replaced as necessary. A tool maintenance log will be kept and regularly reviewed. Blunt tools cause more injury than sharp tools as more control and effort is required to use them effectively. Types of tools, their use, adult to child ratios and age restrictions are governed by our insurance policy, a copy of which is available on request.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Appropriate PPE will be provided by the Forest School Leader where the associated activity's risk assessment deems it necessary and as stipulated by our insurance policy. In most cases a leather glove will be worn on the non-tool or “holding” hand.

Fire

Fire is colourful and animated, dynamic and responsive. Children and adults alike are fascinated by fire. Fire circles will be strategically placed to minimise the risk of fire spreading and to ensure the safe movement of people around the fire circle. Campfires will be introduced by demonstration and the safe movement in and around the fire circle will be modelled and practised before



any fires are lit. Fire lighting equipment will be stored safely away when not in use. (Fire steels will be used and not matches or gas lighters). Fires will be closely supervised at all times. A water bucket and a fire blanket will always be made available before any fire is lit, and the fire will be thoroughly extinguished before leaving the woodland and the area covered over so no trace remains. Any children under the age of 3 may not join the fire circle as stipulated by our insurance policy.

Food and Eating

Children will be made aware of the dangers of eating anything found in the woodland. A handbook will be available to identify harmful flora and medical advice will be sought if ingested. Children will sanitise their hands before eating any food and will sit down to minimise the risk of choking.

Weather

Weather is viewed as a resource and experiencing all weather conditions will provide the greatest learning experience. Only extreme weather conditions will prevent the Forest School from opening. Windy conditions pose the greatest threat as falling tree branches may cause serious injury. Sudden changes in weather conditions will be evaluated as they occur and may result in an emergency shelter being erected or sessions being cancelled.

Adverse Weather Conditions and Cancellation Procedure

Weather should be viewed as a feature and a learning resource, not a barrier, and we will plan activities accordingly. We are on occasions however, humbled by the forces of nature. Sessions may be shortened to avoid sickness and discomfort and when the safety of the group is put at risk, the session may be cancelled all together or rescheduled to take place on the field adjacent to the school.

Stormy and windy conditions are most likely to cause concern as falling branches can cause serious injury. If tree limbs are blowing at an angle of 20 degrees off the vertical or when the Forest School Leader deems the site



unsafe, the group will be evacuated to the pick-up point and arrangements made for the collection of the children. The Forest School Leader will stay with the children until they have all been collected.

Clothing

Common sense plays an important role here.

The best way to dress for Forest School sessions is to layer clothing, so items can be added or removed as necessary. A base layer that lies next to the skin needs to fit snugly. It should let moisture get away from the skin quickly to keep you dry. A t-shirt or vest is ideal for this. A mid layer provides warmth by trapped air and is usually a fleece or a wool layer. The waterproof layer is the most important and provides protection from the damp and cold. Sturdy footwear is recommended (wellies or boots are preferable) and no open toed footwear may be worn. Long trousers should be worn even in the summer to protect them from scratches, insect bites and nettle strings. Nettles are encountered on the walk to and from the woodland and any exposed skin may invite an uncomfortable reaction. Even on sunny days, playing on the forest floor can dampen ones clothing. Water resistant over trousers will help children keep dry and make the session a more enjoyable experience for them.

The walk to the woodland requires effort so please be aware of overdressing your children. Please ensure your child has a sufficient supply of drinking water that they will be required to carry themselves. In the summer months, children should be sun screened before they start the session and sun hats should be worn as necessary.

Children may only participate in Forest School sessions if they are appropriately dressed.

Moving and Lifting

Safe lifting advice including technique will be given to adults and should be



demonstrated to children where necessary. Moving long objects should be done in pairs. Dragging and rolling of objects must be done with the safety of all in mind.

Woodland Access

Access to the woodland is via public footpath, bridleway and residential roads. Adults must remain vigilant and ensure the children stay grouped together and make regular head counts. Children will be made aware that they share the access pathways and need to consider their safety when crossing roads, passing residential gardens (barking dogs may scare some children) and horses on the bridleway should not be approached unless invited to do so.

Water

The woodland is situated away from any running or standing water and the associated risks are therefore eliminated. Water for fire buckets and burns will be provided and regularly refreshed. Children will be required to provide their own drinking water.

Walking to the Site

Getting to and from the woodland is via public footpath, bridle path and by road. Regular head counts will be made along the way. Children will be made aware of behavioural expectations and may not cross any boundaries by themselves. Crossing Tandridge Lane and the bridge will be done *Fireman style* using a rope – the Forest School Leader at the front, supporting practitioner at the back and all the children in the middle, holding onto the rope. The bridge will be crossed when conditions are suitable. If the surface of the bridge is slippery, provided there are 3 adults, each child will be supported 1 to 1. If there are only 2 adults present, the woodland will be accessed via the entrance further up the bridle path.

Toileting

All children will be encouraged to “use the loo” before setting out to the forest. Once in the forest the children may do a “wild wee” once an adult has



been informed. A trowel and roll of toilet paper will be left at a predetermined “spot” where a hole will be dug, a port-a-potty is available for children to use. The hole is then covered and the child will be asked to wash their hands. Anti-bacterial solution will be supplied.

Legislative considerations

The HASWA (Health and Safety at Work Act) outlines the responsibilities of employers (in this case, the Forest School Leader), and also of employees (being adults working with the group).

The main considerations relevant to Forest School sessions are as follows:

Employers must:

Tell you about risks to your health and safety.

How this will be done:

All adults involved in the Forest school session will be asked to read the Risk Assessment at the beginning of the session.

Employers must:

Tell you how to do your job safely.

How this will be done:

The Forest School Leader will introduce the adults involved to the activities and inform them of safety considerations.

Employers must:

Ensure that safe working practices and appropriate policies are in place to safeguard its staff and users.

How this will be done:

Record accidents and incidents, and review whether they could have been avoided, making appropriate changes to procedures and policies if necessary.

Employers must:

Inform you how to get First Aid.

How this will be done:

The Forest School Leader will have a First Aid kit and will administer First Aid.

Employers must:

Tell you what to do in an Emergency.

How this will be done:



Staff and assisting adults will be asked to read the Emergency Procedures at the start of their involvement with the Forest School. A copy of the Emergency Procedures will be kept in the handbook and will be taken to every Forest School session.

Employers must:

Provide you with any protection you may need to fulfil your role.

How this will be done:

Safety equipment and advice will be given to anybody who needs it.

Employees must:

Take care of their own health and safety and that of people who may be affected by what they do (or don't do).

How this will be done:

Assisting adults must actively manage risks by either reporting them, or removing them where possible, providing is safe to do so.

Employers must:

Co-operate with others on health and safety, and not interfere with, or misuse, anything provided for health, safety or welfare.

How this will be done:

Follow the health and safety advice given during the session by the Forest School Leader, or seek advice if uncertain. Nobody should interfere with safety equipment, such as the first aid kit, essential equipment, or protective equipment.

Designated Person Responsibilities

The Forest School Leader will have a recognised Forest School and First Aid qualification and will have overall responsibility for Roundwood Forest School.

It is the duty of the Forest School Leader to:

- Provide staff and supporting adults with the relevant information relating to Forest School before sessions are implemented.
- Ensure that all equipment and resources are safe to use, with the accompanying personal protective equipment.
- Undertake necessary risk assessments for each session and to brief the



adults involved on the *Health and Safety* considerations.

-Come prepared with all the necessary equipment to ensure the safety and welfare of all taking part in the session.

Emergency procedures

The Forest School leader will co-ordinate the emergency procedure.

Any adult who is involved in or suspects an incident that requires immediate attention must inform the Forest School leader as soon as possible.

-An emergency bag will accompany any trip to the forest and will contain:

-A charged mobile phone.

-A laminated list of emergency service numbers, site location and children's emergency contact numbers including any relevant medical conditions.

-First Aid kit.

-Emergency blanket.

-Thermos containing hot drink in winter.

-Temporary shelter

Medical emergency

1. An assisting adult will gather all the children away from the casualty but close enough to assist the Forest School leader as necessary. Children should remain seated in a group and any other adults must remain in the vicinity.

2. The Forest School leader will review the casualty and decide on what action is appropriate. The assisting adult will be asked to call the emergency services and relay any information necessary. Site location coordinates and access points will be available to coordinate any evacuation procedures if necessary. The casualty's emergency contact will then be called and informed of the situation. The Forest School leader will be responsible of monitoring and administering first aid to the casualty. The assisting adult will be asked to extinguish the fire, safely store any tools and contact Tandridge Village Pre-School in order to arrange additional support.



3. The whole group will return to the Village Hall. If possible, the assisting adult will accompany the casualty when the emergency services arrive.

The Forest School leader will then lead the children and any remaining adults back to Tandridge Village Pre-School and wait with the remaining children until they have been collected. The Forest School leader will then proceed to the hospital to meet with the family of the casualty. An incident report will then be completed by the Forest School leader and any witnesses.

Fire

1. If a fire burns out of control and the safety of the group is at risk, the Forest School leader must be informed immediately. The “1,2,3 where are you?” call will be used and any supporting adults must help gather the children in an area upwind from the fire circle. Everything except the emergency bag will be left behind. After a rapid headcount, the Forest School leader will issue instructions. (These instructions will tell the group where to head to i.e. the bridge, the field or the bridleway.)

2. Once a safe distance has been established between the group and the fire, adults and children will be accounted for and the group will prepare for evacuation.

3. The Forest School leader will determine the safest route away from the fire and lead the way, with the supporting adult at the back of the group. The fire brigade will then be called en route. The group will return to the Village hall. The Forest School leader will remain with the group until everybody has been collected and then make a written report of what happened.

Missing person

If any adult or child suspects a person may be missing, they are to inform the Forest School leader immediately. The Forest School “1,2,3 where are you?” will be used to gather the group and everybody will be accounted for. If it is established that a person is missing, the Forest School leader will ask the supporting adult to extinguish the fire, store



any tools safely and keep the remaining children in a group. While this is being done, the Forest School leader will do an initial sweep of the site.

If the missing child is not found, an initial enquiry will try to ascertain when and where the missing child was last seen and the Forest School leader will use this information to help direct his second search of the site. The rest of the group should stay together in the presence of the supporting adult and prepare for evacuation.

If the child is not found within 5 minutes the Forest School leader will call the police. The remaining children will evacuate the site and will be led by the assisting adult to the hay barn and await further instructions. The Forest School leader will collect the emergency bag and organise a search party with any remaining adults. The search party must stay within earshot of each other during the search.

If the site and surrounding areas are searched and the child is still not found, the Forest School leader and any supporting adults will return to the hay barn. The missing child's parents will be contacted. The remaining children will be escorted back to the Village Hall.

The Forest School leader will return to the site with any remaining adults. Working in pairs the entire site will be searched. If the child is still not found, the search area will be increased and the search will continue until poor light prohibits progress.

First Aid Requirements

All Forest School sessions will have a qualified Forest School First Aider in attendance. This course is specifically designed to deal with outdoor injuries including those of a serious nature and is approved by The Association of Forest School First Aid (AOFSPA). Practitioners are retrained every 3 years.



Insurance Requirements

Public Liability and Employer's Insurance is provided by Morton Michel and is underwritten by the Sterling Insurance Company Limited. Roundwood is situated on private land and the owner will not take responsibility for any accident or injury as set out in the land usage agreement.

Safeguarding policy

Article 19 of *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* states that children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body and mind. Round Wood Forest School aims to uphold these rights by attending regular training to ensure they can identify signs of abuse and promote the safeguarding of children. The Forest School leader will ensure all assisting adults are aware of the safeguarding policy and where ever possible will not be out of sight of other adults. Assisting adults who do not have full disclosure may not be left alone with children. Safe recruiting practices are used and all permanent staff are CRB checked to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. When children are comfortable and content and they trust an adult sufficiently, they may have an instinctual urge to disclose information which they might otherwise keep to themselves.

Dealing with Disclosures

Disclosures are when a child tells you or when you overhear a child speaking about an incident of abuse. Disclosures must be dealt with sensitively and appropriately. Take seriously any concerns raised by the child and do not attempt to investigate or interrogate the child. Listen carefully and support as necessary, taking note of the child's views and wishes, not only the incident. Never promise to keep the information a secret, tell the child that only the people who will be able to keep them safe will be told. Disclosures must be recorded on the same day by the adult who witnessed the disclosure and the information passed on to the setting's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Communication with Parents and Helpers

The importance of building a positive relationship with parents is an essential



part of ensuring a positive outcome for all the children who attend Roundwood Forest School. Staff members, parents, and helpers will receive a copy of this handbook. The Forest School Leader will make them self available to answer any questions regarding Roundwood Forest School. This means that everyone is working toward the same goals. Observations and photographs will be taken of children in the woods and will be added to their Tapestry profile as they are in the setting. Registration forms will be completed before the block of sessions begin to ensure medical and emergency contact information is up to date.

Equality

We will endeavor to provide equal access to all of the activities offered by forest school to all of the children in our care. If you have any concerns regarding this matter please speak to a member of staff, who will be happy to offer advice.

Ticks

On the following pages you will find guidance on ticks and midges, either may be encountered at forest school and we ask parents to especially vigilant checking for evidence of ticks on your child.



UK & Ireland – ticks can be active all year round in long grass, bracken, heather, woodland and hedgerows, especially where deer and livestock are present



BE TICK AWARE

Ticks can carry organisms which may cause physical and neurological illness in humans and animals

Prevention

- > Wear gaiters or long trousers tucked into socks
- > Use insect repellent
- > Check yourself for ticks regularly



Removing ticks

- > Wear surgical gloves
- > Use a tick-removal tool or fine-nosed tweezers
- > Disinfect the tick bite
- > Wash your hands afterwards
- > Make a note of the date and place of the bite
- > Contact your GP if you notice signs of a rash or flu-like symptoms



What NOT to use when removing ticks

- > Creams/petroleum jelly/oils/spirits/freezing agent/powders or other substances
- > Cigarettes/matches/lighter
- > Your fingers or teeth
- > Anything that squeezes the body of the tick

(All these methods may cause regurgitation / back-flow of infective fluids)



BADA-UK Registered charity No. 1113329 (England and Wales), SC038414 (Scotland)

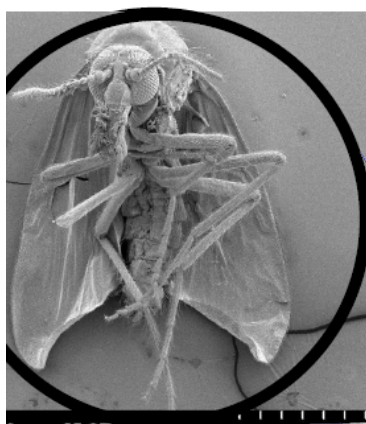
www.bada-uk.org

all about...midges

Have you ever sat outside on a warm summer evening, enjoying the good weather? Perhaps having a picnic?

The sun sets gradually with beautiful colours but as soon as the sun is below the horizon you feel something crawling over your eyelid: it stops and then suddenly it bites. Soon you are covered in tiny black biting midges, they crawl inside your clothes and continue the onslaught where they are protected from your swiping hands.

This is a story that is heard all over Scotland. Not just in the highlands. Midges live in gardens and parks in cities too. There are actually around 35 species of midge in Scotland, although only 5 of these will bite humans. The most famous Midge is the Highland Midge, or Scottish Biting Midge, which lives mainly in upland areas and the Highlands, but there is a midge that is found in cities and towns. This is the Garden Midge. It has a less painful bite than the Highland Midge but is even more persistent.



What is a midge?

A midge has no internal skeleton like we do. • This means that it is an **INVERTEBRATE**.

• A midge has an external hard skeleton. • This means that it is an **ARTHROPOD**.

• A midge has 6 jointed legs. • This means that it is an **INSECT**.

• A midge has just one pair of wings. • This means that it is a **FLY**...

...But not all flies are midges.

What makes a midge special?



← Midges are very small – they only have a wingspan of 1.4mm

Midges also have a very specialised way of feeding

**WARNING!
GORY BIT**

An interesting fact:

Only the **females bite**. Males' mouthparts are not strong enough to pierce skin and they feed on **rotting plants** or nectar from flowers. Females need the blood to form eggs although some species of midge can lay their first batch of eggs without feeding, but **need blood** to lay any further batches.

Mosquitoes pierce the skin with mouthparts like a syringe and suck up the blood. Midges, however, **cut the skin with sharp mouthparts like a pair of scissors** and then **suck up the pool of blood** that forms by rolling its mouth into a short feeding tube. Meanwhile, the midge's saliva **stops the blood in the wound from clotting** (forming a scab) so it can keep drinking to its heart's content. It is this **saliva that irritates the body** and causes us to get **itchy lumps and bumps** where we have been bitten



Emergency Contact, Medical Information and Permission			
Child's Name:			
Parent/Guardian Name			
Phone:			
Known allergies: (Please include any known adverse reactions to bites or stings)			
If we cannot contact you, who should we phone?	Name	Phone	
GP's contact details	Name		
	Address		
	Phone		
If your child needs to be hospitalised and staff are unable to accompany them, do you give permission for a social worker to look after them?			
Sign:		Date:	



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Member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance
Registered Charity No. 1075958