



The Forest Folk

Risk Assessments

2026



The Forest Folk

Forest School Risk Assessment

GENERAL

Activity: Outdoor Forest School Sessions (excluding fire and tool use)

This risk assessment should be read alongside The Forest Folk Handbook and the Policies and Procedures Booklet

Created by	Artemis Artemiou	General Controls (applies to all hazards)
Role	Director	• Qualified Forest School Leader Level 3 in charge • Appropriate staff ratios based on group needs • Dynamic site check before each session • First aid kit and trained first aider present • Emergency procedures known by staff • Clear boundaries and safety briefing at start of session • Charged mobile phone carried
Date created	25/02/2026	
Last review date	N/A	
Review frequency	Annual or following significant change	
Next review due	25/02/2027	
Location / Site	Multiple woodland sites - see individual site-specific addendum where required.	



The hazard	What might happen?	Who might be harmed?	Potential level of risk	Controls	Level of risk after controls	Does the benefit outweigh the risks?	Responsibility
Uneven ground, slips and trips	Slips, trips or falls leading to sprains, bruises or minor fractures.	Participants, staff, visitors.	Medium	• Pre-session ground check • Clear session boundaries • Appropriate footwear required • Running restricted to agreed areas • Active staff supervision	Low	Yes. Develops balance, coordination and environmental awareness.	Forest School Leader
Natural environment – plants, fungi, insects, animal waste, contaminated soil	Allergic reaction, infection from cuts, bites or stings, illness from ingestion of unsafe materials.	Participants and staff, particularly those with known allergies or open wounds.	Medium	• “No picking, no licking” rule reinforced • Handwashing before eating and after muddy play • Known allergies recorded and medication accessible • Site checks for hazardous plants and nests • Cuts covered before session	Low	Yes. Direct engagement with the natural world builds ecological awareness and resilience when managed safely.	Forest School Leader
Sharp objects (glass, litter, thorns, discarded items)	Cuts, puncture wounds, possible infection.	Participants and staff.	Medium	• Daily visual sweep of site • Students instructed to alert an adult if found • Sharps kit available • Exclusion zone created if required	Low	Yes. Learning to recognise and respond safely to hazards supports risk awareness and independence.	Forest School Leader
Adverse weather (heat, cold, wind, rain)	Hypothermia, heat exhaustion, sunburn, falling branches in high wind.	Participants and staff.	Medium	• Daily weather monitoring • Clothing expectations communicated to families • Shelter available • Wind threshold (35mph immediate cancel; 30mph amber warning) in place for woodland sessions	Low	Yes. Experiencing seasonal change is integral to holistic development and nature connection.	Forest School Leader



				• Warm drinks and emergency warmth kit available			
Manual handling (moving logs, equipment and natural materials)	Strains, twisting when lifting, crush injuries, impact injuries.	Participants and staff.	Medium	• Demonstration of safe lifting techniques • Team lifting for heavy items • Use of wheelbarrow or trolley where possible • Staff monitoring during construction tasks	Low	Yes. Develops physical strength, cooperation and practical problem-solving skills.	Forest School Leader
Unauthorised person or external threat	Distress, potential confrontation, risk to physical safety.	Participants and staff.	Medium (site dependent - may reduce to Low in enclosed sites)	• Mobile phone carried • Clear retreat route to main building • Staff briefed on escalation procedure • Unauthorised persons reported immediately • Suitable staff to participant ratios	Low	Yes. Managed outdoor learning remains appropriate when safeguarding controls are in place.	Forest School Leader



The Forest Folk

Forest School Risk Assessment

PLAY

Activity: Child-led play and exploratory activity (excluding fire and tool use)

This risk assessment should be read alongside The Forest Folk Handbook and the Policies and Procedures Booklet

Created by	Artemis Artemiou	General Controls (applies to all play activity)
Role	Director	• Qualified Forest School Leader Level 3 in charge • Appropriate ratios based on group needs • Dynamic site check before each session • Clear boundaries and base area established • Safety briefing at start of session • First aid kit and trained first aider present • Active supervision proportionate to activity level
Date created	25/02/2026	
Last review date	N/A	
Review frequency	Annual or following significant change	
Next review due	25/02/2027	
Location / Site	Woodland sites used for Forest School provision.	



The hazard	What might happen?	Who might be harmed?	Potential level of risk	Controls	Level of risk after controls	Does the benefit outweigh the risks?	Responsibility
Height and movement play (climbing trees, scrambling, balancing, swinging)	Falls leading to bruising, sprains or fractures.	Participants; staff if assisting.	Medium	• Pre-use inspection of trees and structures • Height limits adjusted to ground conditions • Clear fall zones • Climbing only where adult can supervise • Ongoing dynamic assessment	Low	Yes. Develops balance, risk judgement, confidence and physical competence.	Forest School Leader
Constructive play (den building, moving logs, rope use, plank play)	Crush injuries, trapped fingers, minor cuts, unstable structures collapsing on participants.	Participants and assisting staff.	Medium	• Demonstration of safe lifting and carrying • Team lifting encouraged for heavier materials • Structures checked for stability prior to use and during building. • Ropes positioned safely and monitored • Unsafe structures adapted or dismantled	Low	Yes. Encourages teamwork, problem-solving, resilience and spatial awareness.	Forest School Leader
High-energy play (running games, chasing, rough-and-tumble play)	Collisions, trips, minor impact injuries, emotional escalation.	Participants.	Medium	• Clear physical boundaries • Agreed group expectations revisited • Close adult supervision during high-energy play • Staff to participant ratios in place • Intervention if play becomes unsafe or non-consensual	Low	Yes. Supports social development, emotional regulation and cooperative play.	Forest School Leader



				• Relocation of play if terrain unsuitable			
Sensory and muddy play (digging, water play, contact with soil)	Slips, minor cuts, ingestion of soil, hygiene-related illness.	Participants and staff.	Medium	• “No picking, no licking” rule reinforced • Handwashing before eating • Cuts covered before session • Monitoring of water depth (constant monitoring on depth of 5cms for small children) • Site checked for contamination	Low	Yes. Promotes sensory regulation, creativity and connection with the natural environment.	Forest School Leader



The Forest Folk

Forest School Risk Assessment

FIRE & COOKING

Activity: Fire lighting, fire management, and campfire cooking

This risk assessment should be read alongside The Forest Folk Handbook and the Policies and Procedures Booklet

Created by	Artemis Artemiou	General Controls (applies to all fire activity)
Role	Director	• Fire led only by qualified Forest School Leader • Fire area clearly defined and marked • Appropriate staff ratios maintained • Water and fire blanket always available • First aid kit accessible • Clear fire safety briefing given before participation • Dynamic risk assessment based on weather and ground conditions
Date created	25/02/2026	
Last review date	N/A	
Review frequency	Annual or following significant change	
Next review due	25/02/2027	
Location / Site	Woodland sites used for Forest School provision.	



The hazard	What might happen?	Who might be harmed?	Potential level of risk	Controls	Level of risk after controls	Does the benefit outweigh the risks?	Responsibility
Open flame, heat, and embers	Burns to skin, clothing catching fire, uncontrolled spread of fire.	Participants and staff.	High	- Fire pit established in designated, cleared area - Fire circle rule in place (clear seating boundary) - No running within fire circle - Long hair tied back - Appropriate clothing (no loose synthetic fabrics near flame) - Constant adult supervision - Fire never left unattended - Qualified first aider onsite - First Aid kit with Burns kit available - First Aid trained staff on site	Low	Yes. Develops responsibility, focus, respect for fire and practical life skills within a controlled environment.	Forest School Leader
Hot equipment and cooking utensils	Burns from kettles, pans, grills, sticks or heated food. Scolds from hot water.	Participants and staff.	High	- Clear demonstration before use - One participant at a time in cooking area (where appropriate) - Suitable cooking equipment fit for purpose - Heat-resistant gloves available - Stable positioning of grills and pans - Adults manage movement of hot equipment - Safe storage of hot items when not in use - Qualified first aider onsite	Medium	Yes. Encourages patience, practical skills, cooperation and understanding of cause and effect.	Forest School Leader



				• First Aid kit with Burns kit available			
Smoke inhalation	Eye irritation, coughing, mild respiratory discomfort.	Participants and staff, particularly those with asthma.	Medium	• Fire positioned to allow smoke to drift away from group • Participants briefed to move if smoke direction changes • Known medical conditions recorded • Inhalers accessible if required • Fire size kept proportionate • Correct choice of fuel for fire (no Rhododendron/Cherry Laurel)	Low	Yes. Participants learn awareness of wind direction and environmental conditions while engaging safely.	Forest School Leader
Fuel storage and handling	Trip hazards, accidental ignition, minor injuries from carrying wood for example, cuts, splinters.	Participants and staff.	Medium	• Fuel stored away from main fire circle • Clear stacking area • Safe lifting guidance • Only appropriate materials used as fuel • No accelerants used	Low	Yes. Supports understanding of sustainable resource use and safe preparation.	Forest School Leader



The Forest Folk

Forest School Risk Assessment

TOOL USE

Activity: Supervised use of hand tools (e.g. loppers, bow saws, palm drills)

This risk assessment should be read alongside The Forest Folk Handbook and the Policies and Procedures Booklet

Created by	Artemis Artemiou	General Controls (applies to all tool use)
Role	Director	• Tools introduced progressively based on readiness • Clear tool talk given before use • Appropriate tool used for chosen activity • Appropriate staff ratios maintained • Designated tool-use area established • First aid kit accessible • Tools counted out and back in • Daily pre use tool safety checks • Damaged tools removed from use
Date created	25/02/2026	
Last review date	N/A	
Review frequency	Annual or following significant change	
Next review due	25/02/2027	
Location / Site	Woodland sites used for Forest School provision.	



The hazard	What might happen?	Who might be harmed?	Potential level of risk	Controls	Level of risk after controls	Does the benefit outweigh the risks?	Responsibility
Sharp cutting edges (saws, knives, peelers)	Cuts or lacerations to hands, arms or legs.	Participants and supervising staff.	High	• Staff trained in safe use and handling of tools • 1:1 supervision for edged tools where appropriate • Clear safety demonstration before use • Safe body position and blood bubble (safe working space) reinforced • Tools used seated or in stable position where appropriate • Stop-work instruction if unsafe behaviour observed • Clear behavioural expectations before tool issue • Immediate removal of tool if expectations not met	Medium	Yes. Develops fine motor skills, concentration, responsibility and confidence through real tasks.	Forest School Leader
Tool misuse or distraction	Accidental injury to self or others. Cuts, lacerations, saw cut	Participants and nearby peers.	High	• Clear behavioural expectations before tool issue • Immediate removal of tool if expectations not met • Tools not used during high-energy or dysregulated moments • Adults positioned to observe full working area • Appropriate staff to participant ratios during tool use	Medium	Yes. Supports self-regulation, impulse control and safe decision-making.	Forest School Leader



Manual handling of wood during cutting	Crush injuries, trapped fingers, unstable materials shifting.	Participants and staff.	Medium	• Safe lifting technique demonstrated • Stable chopping block or sawing horse used • Clear hand placement, demonstrated • Larger logs supported securely • Gloves used where appropriate	Low	Yes. Encourages physical coordination and safe handling of materials.	Forest School Leader
--	---	-------------------------	--------	--	-----	---	----------------------