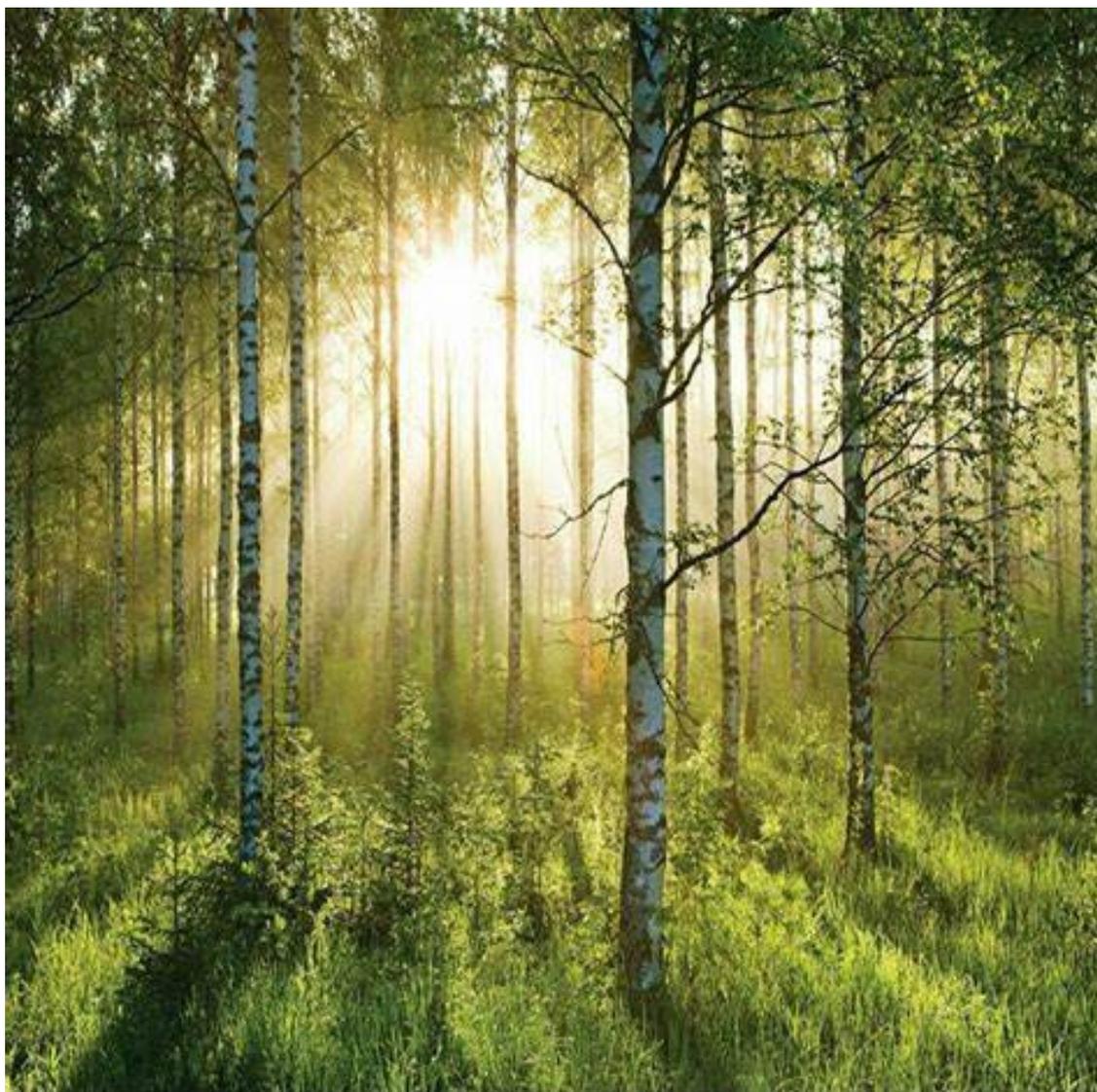




St Michael's Church of England Primary School



Forest School Handbook

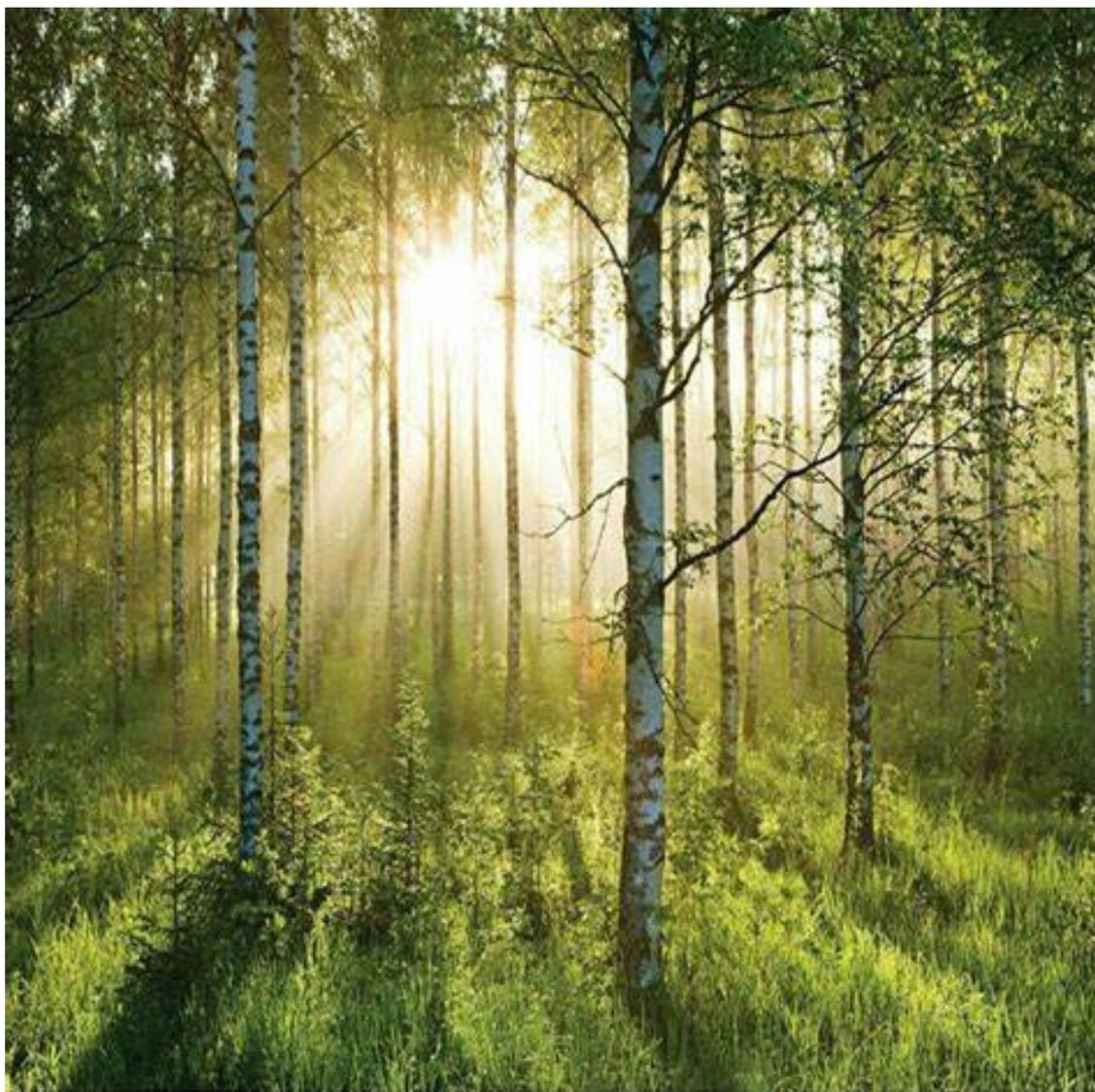
St Michael's CE Primary School Forest School Handbook Policy reviewed July 2020
Next Review July 2021

St Michael's CE Primary School – Forest School Handbook

1. Introduction to Forest Schools	4
1.1 What is Forest School?	4
1.2 Provision	4
1.3 Communication	4
1.4 Environmental Impact	4
2. Forest School Rules	5
2.1 Rules	2
2.2 Code of Conduct	5
2.2.1 Entering the Forest School Area	5
2.2.2 Boundaries	5
2.2.3 Lighting a Fire	5
2.2.4 At the Fire Circle	5
2.2.5 Using Tools	6
2.2.6 Picking up and Playing with Sticks	6
2.2.7 Picking up and Playing with Stones	6
2.2.8 Digging	6
2.2.9 Collecting Wood	6
2.2.10 Eating & Drinking	6
2.2.11 Rope and String Use	6
2.2.12 Carrying and Transporting Materials	7
2.2.13 Toileting	7
2.2.14 Leaving the Site	7
2.2.15 Tree Climbing	7
3. Staff at Forest School	7
3.1 Forest School Leader	7
4. Health & Safety	8
4.1 Site Risk Assessment	8
4.2 Daily Site Risk Assessment	8
4.3 Activity Risk Assessment	9
5. First Aid	9
5.1 Emergency First Aid Procedure	9
6. Daily Operating Procedures	10
6.1 Access to Outdoor Classroom	10
6.2 What to do During the Session	10
6.3 What to do at the End of the Session	10
6.4 Evaluation for Next Session	11
6.5 Cancellation Policy	11
6.6 Staff Ratio	11
7. Toileting Policy	11



St Michael's Church of England Primary School



Forest School Handbook

8. Parental Consent and Confidentiality	11
8.1 Aims	12
9. Clothing Policy	12
10. Tools	13
10.1 Tool Handling Policy	13
10.2 Tool Rules	13
11. Fire Policy	14
12. Food and Eating Policy	14
13. Tree Climbing Policy	15
14. COSHH Policy	15
15. Safeguarding Policy	16
15.1 Policy Principles	16
15.2 Policy Aims	16
15.3 Safeguarding within Forest School	17
15.4 If Staff are Concerned About a Child's Welfare	17
15.5 If a Pupil Discloses to a Member of Staff	17
16. Safeguarding Adults	18
16.1 Safe School, Safe Staff	18
16.2 Allegations Against Staff	18
16.2.1 Extracted from St Michaels CE Primary School Safeguarding Policy	18
17. Supervision at Forest School	19
17. 1 1-2-3 Where are you?	19
17.2 Boundaries	19
17.3 Headcounts	19
17.4 Ratios of Adults to Children	19
18. Missing Child Procedure	20
19. Equality Policy	20
19.1 Public Equality Duty	20
19.2 Forest School for All	20
20. Behaviour Policy	21
20.1 Rewards	21
20.2 Sanctions	22
21. Bullying	22
21.1 Definition of Bullying	22
22. Roles & Responsibilities of Adults	22
22.1 Other Roles / Responsibilities	23
22.2 Roles & Responsibilities of the Forest School Leader	23

22.3 Roles & Responsibilities of Children.	23
23. Evaluating, Monitoring & Assessing	23
24. Parental Consent Form - Forest School Sessions	24
25. Equipment Checklist	24
26. Tool Handling Policies	25
26.1 Palm Drill	25
26.2 Vegetable peeler	25
26.3 Secateurs	25
26.4 Loppers	25
26.5 Bow Saw	26
26.6 Mallet	26
26.7 Knives	26
27. Ecological Management Plan	26
27.1 Year 1	26
27.2 Year 2	27
27.3 Year 3	28
28. Ecological Impact	29
29. Hazard Risk Assessments	29
29.1 Exploring the Site	30
29.2 Bites and Stings	30
29.3 Inclement Weather	30
29.4 Allergies / Pre-existing Medical Conditions	30
29.5 Missing Child	31
29.6 Den Building, Activities Using Sticks.	31
29.7 Balls from PE Classes on Playing Field Entering FS Area	31
29.8 Poisonous Flora, Including Funghi	31
29.9 Animal Droppings	32
29.10 Branches, Thorns	32
29.11 Using String / Rope	32
30. Open Fire Risk Assessment	32
30.1 Fire & Heat	33
30.2 Fire Out of Control	33
30.3 Falls into Fire	33
30.4 Smoke	34
30.5 Heat from Hot Embers	34
30.6 Balls from PE Class on Playing Field Entering Fire Pit Area	35
31. Cooking on an Open Fire Risk Assessment	34
31.1 Open Fire	35
31.2 Cooking Food	35
32. Tool Use Risk Assessment	35
32.1 Small Tools – Peelers, Knives	35
32.2 Larger Tools – Knives, Secateurs, Loppers, Bow Saw & Billhook	35
Notes	36

Introduction to Forest Schools

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 is a specialised learning approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education.

At Forest School all participants are viewed as:

- Equal, unique and valuable
- Competent to explore & discover
- Entitled to experience appropriate risk and challenge
- Entitled to choose, and to initiate and drive their own learning and development
- Entitled to experience regular success
- Entitled to develop positive relationships with themselves and other people
- Entitled to develop a strong, positive relationship with their natural world

This learner-centred approach interweaves with the ever-changing moods and marvels, potential and challenges of the natural world through the seasons to fill every Forest School session and programme with discovery and difference. Yet each programme does also share a common set of principles, aimed at ensuring that all learners experience the cumulative and lasting benefits that quality Forest School offers.

(Taken from Forestschoolassociation.org)

1.2 Provision

The aim at St Michaels CE Primary School is to offer all children in the infant years the experience for at least 1.5 hours per week, for two half terms over the school year. This will be rotated to give children the opportunity to experience the changing seasons.

In addition to Forest School, outdoor cross-curricular learning is encouraged throughout the School. Forest School sessions are run in the environmental area adjacent to the school field or at Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre woodland. The sites have a diverse variety of flora and fauna including native species, ornamental planting and mature trees including Oak and Hornbeam. There is a stream and bog area which provides a habitat for amphibians such as newts and flora associated with this environment. There is access to the wider school field as required.

The sites are within school grounds with no public access.

1.3 Communication

To enable the successful operating of Forest School, key stakeholders (Head Teacher, SLT, Governors and Parents) will be informed of the aims, objectives and outcomes in a variety of ways throughout the year. This will include staff meetings and taster sessions for Staff.

1.4 Environmental Impact

The aim at St Michaels CE Primary School is to teach the children about caring for the environment in a variety of ways. These may include habitat creation and using non-native species for craft activities. There is a Woodland Management plan in place, with objectives to minimise the impact of activities on the site. The aim is to balance the benefits the outdoor environment provides the children, with caring for it.

2. Forest School Rules

In the initial Forest School session, children are involved in the setting and understanding of the Forest School rules. This is to ensure their safety. At the beginning of each subsequent session there will be a recap of the rules to reinforce understanding.

All adults involved in Forest School are to ensure that children understand the rules and the reason for having them. Children are to be made aware that if the rules are not adhered to, that individual may be unable to attend Forest School sessions. See the section on Behaviour.

2.1 Rules

The Forest School has the following rules, which must be adhered to:

- Walk with caution within the Forest School area
- Keep everything out of your mouth
- Stay within the Forest School boundary
- Kneel on the wooden boards when looking in the pond
- Drag sticks behind you
- Do not throw anything
- Be respectful of nature and the environment
- Always ask an adult before you use a tool and follow the Tool Safety rules • Enjoy yourself and have fun!
- Remember to wash your hands at the end of a session

2.2 Code of Conduct

2.2.1 Entering the Forest School Area

We will enter the Woodland 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 Woodland 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 as guests.

2.2.2 Boundaries

Before each session begins children are made aware of how far that they can explore. All children will be taught the '1-2-3-Where are you?/1-2-3 Come to me' game.

2.2.3 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 a fire square.

2.2.4 At the Fire Circle

An open fire will be lit within a fire square. A fire circle using log sitting stools may be established around the perimeter, 1.5 m from the fire square. No one may enter the fire circle perimeter unless invited to do so by an adult. There is 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.

2.2.5 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.

2.2.6 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. 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. Sticks must not be pulled from living trees.

2.2.7 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?

2.2.8 Digging

Digging large holes is not encouraged. Children may carefully move soil to look for insects and their habitats using fingers or small sticks found within the forest but deep holes should not be made.

2.2.9 Collecting Wood

Wood is collected for fire lighting purposes. It is collected in four thicknesses – matchstick sized, pencil sized, thumb sized and wrist sized. This is a good mathematical activity involving sorting and matching. Sticks may be collected for creating pictures and patterns but should be collected sparingly so as not to disrupt creature habitats. Sticks should not be removed from the site and there are resources available within school in the Forest School area for activities where natural resources cannot be found on the site.

2.2.10 Eating & Drinking

Nil by mouth policy (No lick, no pick) for anything found in the area, unless this activity has been specifically planned for during the session. Children must be reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses. When having drinks and snacks children will use soap and water to clean their hands before consumption.

2.2.11 Rope and String Us

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.

2.2.12 Carrying and Transporting Materials

Children are encouraged to roll, lift, and 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.

2.2.13 Toileting

Children are invited to use the toilets before we leave the school buildings. Children will be allowed to return to the school buildings at St Michaels, or the sports hall at Homewood, with an accompanying adult. The nearest toilets are to be found in the Key Stage 1 area.

2.2.14 Leaving the Site

We work according to the ethos 'leave no trace' that we were in the wood as much as is reasonably possible. Shelters should be taken down, imported materials need to be removed. All equipment is carefully counted out and back in again, especially when using tools and tent pegs. Very occasionally large items may be left between sessions. All rubbish will always be removed. If artefacts have been found or made these may be taken off the site with the consent of an adult.

2.2.15 Tree Climbing

An adult must be present when children climb trees in the Forest School. The ground cover should be checked for 'sharp objects' and the tree marked 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 be able to watch, but far enough away to not be invasive to the children's exploration

3. Staff at Forest School

3.1 Forest School Leaders

Jeff Lewis

- Level 3 Forest School Practitioner (in training)
- Outdoor First Aid qualification
- St Johns Ambulance First Aid at Work qualification
- Scout (UK) Section Leader (Cub Scouts)

Sara Williamson

- Level 3 Forest School Practitioner (in training)
- Head Teacher
- First Aid
- Safeguarding Lead

Sarah Burton

- Level 3 Forest School Practitioner (in training)
- Head Teacher
- First Aid

Other Staff

The teaching assistants from each class may accompany children to Forest School sessions as needed. Forest School is carried out with an adult to child ratio of at least 1:8, but additional support will be provided where appropriate for those children with disabilities or SEN's.

When using tools and/or equipment a definitive adult to child ratio is determined. (Please see section on Tool policies).

A separate risk assessment will be carried out for each activity. If any hazards associated with that activity are at risk of causing harm, ratios for that activity will be determined by the type of activity, competence of children and the level of risk involved. Both Forest School leaders are DBS checked and are first aid trained.

All Staff and adults involved in Forest School are required to sign and date a form to show they have read this handbook, appropriate risk assessments and understand the safety procedures. A copy of this form is available at the end of this document.

4. Health & Safety

At St Michaels CE Primary School we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued.

The following policies within this handbook are in addition to the main school policies and do not replace them. They are the minimum requirement for the safe running of Forest School.

All Forest School sessions are held on either St Michaels CE Primary School or Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre school premises either the bottom of school field or in Homewood School woods and solely attended by St Michaels CE Primary School pupils.

The designated Forest School Leader (Jeff Lewis) is responsible for the safe running of Forest School sessions and therefore has a duty of care to all children involved. However all adults are required to take reasonable steps to ensure children are safe.

Before a session commences all Staff involved are required to read the activity plans and risk assessments associated with the activities.

4.1 Site Risk Assessment

Before the site is used a risk assessment will be carried out by the designated Forest School leader. It will be updated as necessary when there are permanent or seasonal changes to the site not recorded on the daily site risk assessment.

4.2 Daily Site Risk Assessment

A daily site risk assessment (safety sweep) will be carried out before the site is used to ensure there are no changes to the site that could cause harm. This should be undertaken with extra caution following high winds and/or other bad weather. It should be carried out by the Forest School leader. Following the daily site risk assessment, the Forest School leader will carry out any appropriate action to make the site safe (e.g remove any hazards, mark off unsafe areas). At the same time they will consider specific circumstances which may make it appropriate to cancel a session.

4.3 Activity Risk Assessment

When planning activities for Forest School, any hazards associated with that activity that may cause harm should be considered. These should be recorded on the individual activity risk assessment with suitable control measures in place to control and minimise the risk. Due to the nature of Forest School being child led, the children may come up with a new activity during a session. In this situation reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that the activity is safe.

5. First Aid

A small First Aid kit is available during all Forest School sessions. If a greater level of First Aid is needed, the Forest School leader will contact the school office, or if appropriate the Help Card will be sent into the office.

The small First Aid kit will contain:

- Sterile water
- Antiseptic wipes
- Eye washing solution
- A selection of different size plasters
- Protective gloves

It is the responsibility of the Forest School leader to ensure this is well stocked and replenished. In addition to this a summary of medical information relating to each child and/or specific care plans are carried by the Forest School leader, in addition to specific medication required (e.g inhalers, auto-injectors). Staff will be advised of any specific medical information. The Forest School leader will also ensure that all staff and helpers carry mobile phones and that they have a good signal.

Access to the first aid kit, burns kit, medical information and mobile phones is restricted to adults only.

As per the policy on Fires a burns kit is also available whenever a fire is lit.

5.1 Emergency First Aid Procedure

In the event of an emergency the following will happen:

- Emergency whistle blown
- Children advised of tools down and to await further instructions
- Forest School leader to assess situation

Under the guidance of the Forest School leader the following protocol will then be followed:

1 long whistle, emergency within FS area

- Children to line up at entrance to Forest School area
- Evacuate area to designated safe point with other adults
- Forest School leader to communicate next steps with SLT

3 short whistle bursts, danger outside of FS area

- Children and adults to assemble at meeting point Fire Square seating
- Forest School leader to communicate next steps with SLT

If required First Aid will be administered by any of the trained members of Staff available. The school office will be notified of any accident/incident at the same time as SLT. They will be responsible for calling emergency services and accompany them to the site. They will ensure the school gates are opened and will wait at the gate to direct emergency services.

6. Daily Operating Procedures

Before a session takes place the Forest School leader will carry out a daily risk assessment of the area and will take any necessary action to ensure the site is safe before use. The Forest School leader will list the resources required for each session as part of the planning. All resources will be checked out of storage and tools will be checked before use following the tool policy procedure. (Refer to appendices).

All tools and resources will be stored safely/locked away until required. Children may be encouraged to transport resources necessary for a session. The Forest School leader will provide risk assessments to all Staff prior to the session starting (See appendices), this will ensure all adults are aware of any risk/hazard associated with an activity and the control measures in place. Before the session starts all adults will be briefed on the intended structure of the session, possible outcomes and their responsibilities.

6.1 Access to Outdoor Classroom

Children will be brought to the outdoor classroom, after registration, by the Forest School teacher and any other member(s) of the teaching staff assisting that day.

Children should be ready to start the session at within 10 minutes of registration having changed into their outdoor clothes. The accompanying adult(s) will advise the Forest School leader of any pertinent information (e.g. absence). The beginning of each session will follow the same pattern, coming together to reinforce rules and boundaries.

6.2 What to do During the Session

It is the responsibility of ALL adults to make ongoing risk assessments. Regular head counts are to be carried out and if there is any doubt of numbers the game '1-2-3 Where are you?' will be played, to bring children out from a hiding place. If any child is unaccounted for then the missing child procedure is to be initiated. All adults should follow the roles and responsibilities of adults, being mindful of the adult to child ratio.

6.3 What to do at the End of the Session

At the end of the session children are called together at the Fire Square using the designated signal (1,2,3, Come to me.) Children will be encouraged to return resources safely to a central location ready to put away. Children will then group together in the forest circle for a head count. A reflection session will then take place to formally end Forest School for that session. Children will then be led back to class where another head count will take place before the children are handed back to the class teacher. Remaining Staff will stay onsite to gather resources and return them to storage. They will be checked over and any issues raised with the Forest School leader(s).

6.4 Evaluation for Next Session

During and following a session, Forest School Staff will ensure they provide any observations/notes to the Forest School leader to enable planning for future sessions.

6.5 Cancellation Policy

Following the Forest School ethos of: 'There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing' Children are advised to dress appropriately for the time of year. See Clothing policy. However there may be some occasions where it may not be safe or practical to go ahead with Forest School due to extreme weather. This would be:

- In the case of high wind of 25mph or more determined by the Met office online
- In the case of extreme temperature, determined by a Met office amber weather warning
- In the case of extreme cold of below zero degrees Celsius. If the temperature is near to this the Forest School leader will ensure the session can go ahead if children are appropriately dressed. The session may be shortened and activities may differ to the plan to ensure children are kept moving.

6.6 Staff Ratios

A session may need to be cancelled due to Staff illness or other circumstances if the adult to child ratio is compromised. If a Staff member is unable to attend a Forest School session Alison Hollis will inform the Forest School leader(s) as soon as possible. Unfortunately, a decision to cancel may be made at short notice, on the morning of a session. The Forest School leader will endeavour to give as much notice as possible to Staff and children.

In the case on cancellation consultation with the class teacher will determine whether an indoor nature or skills related session (e.g. knots or crafts) can take place instead.

7. Toileting Policy

Children will be encouraged to use the toilet before coming out for their Forest School session. There will always be 3 adults at an infant Forest School session, so 1 available to escort infants to the toilet. Should a junior child need to go to the toilet during a session they will need to ask a member of Staff before they leave the outdoor classroom. They must inform the same member of Staff when they return (at Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre all children must be escorted by a member of the Forest School staff. At St Michaels children will be asked to enter the Year 2 toilets.

If a toileting accident happens on site, the Forest School leader will advise all remaining adults and children to stop use of tools whilst the situation is dealt with. If necessary the help card can be used/contact made with the office via mobile phone. The child can return to the session when ready and the Forest School leader has been informed.

8. Parental Consent and Confidentiality

This information is extracted from St Michaels Primary School data Protection (GDPR) Policy and can be read in conjunction with the full policy available on the school website.

8.1 Aims

Our school aims to ensure that all personal data collected about Staff, pupils, parents, governors, visitors and other individuals is collected, stored and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the expected provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) as set out in the Data Protection Bill.

This policy applies to all personal data, regardless of whether it is in paper or electronic format. In relation to Forest School, medical information for each child is obtained at the beginning of each half term from the records stored in the main school office. The Forest School leader is given a report of specific medical needs for individual children (e.g. asthma, epilepsy allergies).

At the start of the school year parents/carers are provided with information outlining the ethos of Forest School and proposed activities. They are required to sign a consent form to allow their child to participate in Forest School. (See appendix) On the consent form, as a cautionary measure, parents are asked to advise us of any further medical reason or phobia that could affect their child's wellbeing and experience of Forest School.

The consent forms are stored in accordance with the school policy on data storage. All information about individual children is private. Specific information that could affect a child's wellbeing and safety at Forest School is shared with Forest School Staff to ensure the best care and safety of children.

A summary of medical information and any medication is kept in a secure emergency bag available at each session. Access to the bag is only permitted to Forest School Staff; not to volunteers, visitors or children. In between Forest School sessions this information is securely stored in the school office. All emergency contact information is kept within the school office and if contact is necessary it will be performed by Alison Hollis (or her replacement in the event of her absence) to leave the Forest School team able to deal with whatever the issue is.

9. Clothing Policy

Forest School leaders will carry a spare set(s) of clothes outside in each session. We are building a bank of spare outdoor clothing and wellington boots.

As the responsible adult in charge the Forest School leader has the right to exclude any child they feel is inappropriately dressed for Forest School activities.

Parents are informed in advance of sessions starting what the expectation for clothing is. Suggested clothing is as follows:

Winter

- Vest or T-shirt
- Long sleeved top
- Fleece or jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Thick socks
- Long trousers
- Wellington or sturdy boots
- Hat, scarf and gloves

Summer

- Long sleeved top or long sleeved T-shirt
- Light weight long trousers NOT shorts
- Trainers, sturdy boots or wellingtons. Crocs, sandals, flip-flops are not suitable
- Sunhat

We remind parents that all items of clothing should be clearly labelled with the child's name. Participants are responsible for providing and applying their own sunscreen. This is in line with school policy.

10. Tools

10.1 Tool Handling Policy

All tools used within Forest School are stored in tool box/bag within a locked shed. When they are bought onto the Forest School site they are placed in a designated area with access to them limited to adults only.

Children will not be using tools until the Forest School leader has decided they are ready emotionally and physically.

Specific tool policies are in place for each tool that may be used in Forest School. These can be found in the appendices. The policies cover specific ratios for tool usage and any PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) required for adults/children whilst using the tools. All tool usage will be modelled by Forest School leaders to the children in accordance with their respective policies.

All adults participating in Forest School activities will receive training on the safe use of tools before being allowed to use them with children.

Tool Maintenance

Tool safety checks will be completed by the Forest School leaders before the beginning of a session. If any tool is deemed unsafe for use it will be removed from site and returned to the locked shed.

Through safe modelling of tools, in initial 1:1 ratios children are taught how to check a tool before using as a matter of routine. At the end of a session tools are checked back in by the Forest School leader to ensure no tools are missing. Once returned they will be cleaned and maintained if necessary.

10.2 Tool Rules

- Ask an adult before taking a tool from the tool area.
- You must have a purpose for your tool.
- You must choose a safe working area and check your blood bubble.

Children are taught these rules and they are reinforced at the beginning of each session involving tools.

11. Fire Policy

Fires will only be lit under the guidance of the Forest School leader, following this safety policy, when the children are ready emotionally and physically.

Considerations before deciding to have a fire.

Wind direction We will have a designated fire circle which complies with these criteria.

- No combustible materials nearby/overhanging foliage
- Condition of soil – not too peaty.

Safety – clothing and hair

- Long hair to be securely tied back
- Clothing is to be checked for loose or dangling items. These are to be secured or removed.
- No gloves to be worn when placing materials onto fire.

Safe sitting

- Seating 1.5m away from the fire.
- Allow gaps between seating arrangements for escape routes.
- Children to be invited into the inner circle.
- Ensure the area between seats and fire is clear of debris and trip hazards.
- Children taught not to cross/walk inside the fire circle. Children taught to stand up, step back and walk around the outside.
- Seating in line of smoke will be avoided. Children taught to turn their heads if smoke comes in their direction.

Safe management

- Fire to be lit by FS leader or children with 1:1 guidance, only when deemed as confident and safe by FS leader.
- Fires will be lit by using a fire steel or BBQ lighter. Natural firelighters may be used but no matches or flammable liquids.
- The fire will never be left unattended.
- A bucket of water, fire blanket and burns kit are available.
- The fire will only be lit in the designated fire circle.

Safe extinguishing

- Spread out the embers of the fire
- Gently pour on water
- FS leader, using the back of the hand will check for heat and apply further water if necessary.

12. Food and Eating Policy

Children at Forest School are taught a strict NO EATING rule, unless it is a specific activity led by an adult to prepare and cook food. Initially, when children are ready they will participate in simple cooking on the fire such as toasting marshmallow and cooking damper bread. As skills develop other activities may be introduced such as vegetable kebabs, baked apples/bananas/potatoes. No wild food will be cooked to avoid any confusion about what is safe and unsafe to eat. All adults will be aware of hand washing and safe handling of food products. The activity will have a risk assessment and the fire policy will be adhered to.

Food preparation, transport and storage

- Hands washed thoroughly before handling/preparing food.
- Any food needing preparation will be done before the session in the staffroom e.g damper dough.
- Food will be stored in clean containers and transported to site in a clean bag/cool bag along with any utensils required. Containers will remain closed to avoid attracting flies/insects.
- Any water need for cooking will be provided in a clean sealed container.

Handling, cooking and eating food

- A fresh, clean bucket of soapy water will be available for hand washing before handling any food/utensils.
- All food will be checked by an adult before being eaten.
- Children will be instructed where to sit safely to eat.

Clearing away and cleaning up

- All food not eaten or cooked will be placed in a black bin bag and disposed of in the school waste bin at the end of the session by an adult.
- Any utensils and equipment will be carried back to school, washed and put away by one of the adults.

13. Tree Climbing Policy

Within the Homewood School environment there are a limited number of mature trees which are suitable for children to climb. Before allowing children to climb, trees will be checked for any loose/rotten branches. The ground and surrounding area will be checked for any hazards/sharp objects which will then be removed.

The Forest School leader will make the decision at the beginning of each session as to whether tree climbing can be undertaken following these rules.

- Adult to child ratio of 1:1
- Only one child to climb a tree at a time
- Tree climbing will not be allowed in high winds or wet weather
- Children will only be allowed to climb to a maximum height of 1.5m. This will be depicted on the tree with a yellow marker.
- Adults to ensure that tree climbing to be carried out with extra caution if children are wearing wellington boots.

There are no suitable climbing trees at St Michaels Primary School

14. COSHH Policy

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

As a school we have a duty of care under the COSHH regulations 2002 to prevent any participants at Forest School sessions coming into contact with substances hazardous to health.

At Forest School we will avoid using any substances that have a risk of being hazardous to health. We will only use liquid hand soap (as used within the school cloakrooms) for handwashing and or hand sanitiser if and when deemed necessary.

15. Safeguarding Policy

The information below is extracted from the St Michaels Primary School Safeguarding Policy. This information has been applied to Forest School. The full Safeguarding Policy should be read alongside this and referred to for further information. The full policy is available on the school website.

15.1 Policy Principles

The welfare of the child is paramount. All children regardless of age, gender, culture, language, race, ability, sexual identity or religion have equal rights to protection, safeguarding and opportunities. We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm; All Staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

Pupils and Staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.

15.2 Policy Aims

a) To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection to pupils, parents and other partners.

b) To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.

c) To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident to, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to.

d) To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching Staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.

e) To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.

f) To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of Staff.

g) To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.

h) To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Social Care.

i) To ensure that all Staff working within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory DBS check (according to guidance), and a single central record is kept for audit.

15.3 Safeguarding within Forest School

Through the long term nature of Forest School we aim to build trust and meaningful relationships between the adults and children. Therefore, disclosures may occur. Any member of Staff who has information disclosed to them should follow the school policy. The relevant procedures are extracted from the policy and can be read below.

15.4 If Staff are Concerned About a Child's Welfare

If staff notice any indicators of abuse/neglect or signs that a child may be experiencing a safeguarding issue they should record these concerns on an Expression of Concern Form and pass it to the DSL. They may also discuss their concerns in person with the DSL but the details of the concern should also be recorded in writing on the aforementioned form. There will be occasions when Staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical or inconclusive signs may have been noticed. St Michaels Primary School recognise that the signs may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill or an accident has occurred. However, they may also indicate a child is being abused or is in need of safeguarding. In these circumstances, Staff will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. It is fine for Staff to ask the pupil if they are OK or if they can help in any way. Staff should use the Expression of Concern to record these early concerns and give the completed form to the DSL. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of Staff remains concerned they should discuss their concerns with the DSL and put them in writing. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, Staff should follow the advice below regarding a pupil making a disclosure.

15.5 If a Pupil Discloses to a Member of Staff

We recognise that it takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, guilty or scared, their abuser may have threatened that something will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults or believe that what has happened is their fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.

a) A child who makes a disclosure may have to tell their story on a number of subsequent occasions to the police and/or social workers. Therefore, it is vital that their first experience of talking to a trusted adult is a positive one.

b) During their conversation with the pupil Staff will:

Listen to what the child has to say and allow them to speak freely

Remain calm and not overact or act shocked or disgusted – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting the listener

Reassure the child that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling someone

Not be afraid of silences – Staff must remember how difficult it is for the pupil and allow them time to talk

Take what the child is disclosing seriously

Ask open questions and avoid asking leading questions

Avoid jumping to conclusions, speculation or make accusations

Not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who is being abused.

Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing sooner. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about it when it started' may be the Staff member's way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean they have done something wrong.

Tell the child what will happen next. If a pupil talks to any member of Staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing the Staff member will let the child know that they will have to pass the information on – Staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The member of Staff should write up their conversation as soon as possible on the Expression of Concern Form in the child's own words. Staff should make this a matter of priority. The record should be signed and dated, the member of Staff's name should be printed and it should also detail where the disclosure was made and who else was present. The record should be handed to the DSL.

16. Safeguarding Adults.

16.1 Safe School, Safe Staff

We will ensure that;

a) All Staff receive information about the school's safeguarding arrangements, the school's safeguarding statement, Staff behaviour policy (code of conduct), child protection policy, the role and names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy(ies), and Keeping Children Safe in Education;

b) All Staff receive safeguarding and child protection training at induction in line with advice from Kent Safeguarding Children's Board which is regularly updated and receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually.

16.2 Allegations Against Staff

16.2.1

- All school Staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.
- All Staff should be aware of Kent's Guidance on Behaviour Issues, and the school's own Behaviour Management policy.
- Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by Staff and volunteers will be given at induction
- We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of Staff or Staff may have concerns about another Staff member. If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of Staff receiving the allegation or aware of the information, will immediately inform the Head Teacher.
- The Head Teacher on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the earliest opportunity and before taking any further action.
- If the allegation made to a member of Staff concerns the Head Teacher, the person receiving the

allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult the LADO as in 23.6 above, without notifying the Head Teacher first. [NB where the Head Teacher is also the sole proprietor of an independent school the concerns should be reported directly to the LADO]

- The school will follow the Kent procedures for managing allegations against Staff, procedures set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's Managing Allegations policy and procedures.
- Suspension of the member of Staff, excluding the Head Teacher, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and the Head Teacher will seek the advice of the LADO and an HR Consultant in making this decision.
- In the event of an allegation against the Head Teacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the Chair of Governors with advice as in 23.9 above.

17. Supervision at Forest School

Children are taught a game from the initial Forest School session.

17.1 1-2-3 Where are you?

This game is similar to hide and seek. Children are asked to hide within the boundaries of the Forest School site. On the call of '1-2-3 where are you?' Children make themselves seen by an adult and make their way to the designated call back area. (This is the circle of trees at St Michaels or the fire square at Homewood.) This game can also be played as a call-back when needed during a Forest School session, using '1-2-3 come to me'. Children then make their way back to the call back area and adults who will then do a head count.

17.2 Boundaries

Boundaries are established with children at the beginning of a session. Children are taught the rule of asking an adult if they wish to go beyond the boundary. Children are involved in the risk management process of establishing boundaries and safe areas to go. St Michaels School Forest School sessions will take place either in tree circle area and the school playing field at St Michaels or the wooded area at Homewood. Children will not leave the school site other than during transport from one site to the other. If a child did leave the Forest School site the outer school gates are locked during the day.

17.3 Headcounts

At the beginning of, during and at the end of a session headcounts take place. The number of adults to children participating is noted on the daily risk assessment. It is calculated specifically for each session to take into account the activities planned and the cohort attending. It is the responsibility of all adults participating to ensure they are aware of the headcount for the session and be involved in the monitoring of this. As the children become more aware of Forest School they can also, under supervision, undertake headcounts.

17.4 Ratios of Adults to Children

The high ratio of adults to children, minimum 1:8,(additional for infant children if required) will ensure that children are well supported and supervised in their development and learning. Additional SNTA's will be resourced, if necessary, to support individual children.

Adults are expected to spread out within the Forest School site and be seen by but not impose on the children. The size of the group participating in Forest School will be limited to 15 children. This will allow for physical safety and also for the Forest School ethos to have maximum effect.

18. Missing Child Procedure

If after using the designated callback a child is found to be missing, the following protocol will be followed.

Adult 1 – Forest School Leader (Jeff Lewis or Sarah Burton)

- To call 1-2-3 where are you?
- Headcount
- If still not appeared to blow emergency whistle.
- If still not appeared take action.

Adult 2 – Forest School practitioner

- Start immediate search of area

Adult 3 – Teaching assistant helping at session

- To lead children to main playground at St Michaels or Wood/ field gate if at Homewood and supervise children, remain calm and ask other children where they last saw named child.
- Keep children safe and calm await further instruction.

Adult 1 – Forest School Leader

- To immediately contact school office to advise situation. Await support from senior team and begin search of surrounding area. Under control of Head teacher and/or SLT
- Search to begin of grounds perimeter of fence and possible hiding places.
- School calls police (and parent/guardian).
- Follow School critical incident procedure, as detailed in the school Emergency Plan If child is found/appears IMMEDIATELY pass this information to school office and all Staff.

19. Equality Policy

Please refer to the St Michaels School Equality policy, Anti-Bullying policy and Special Educational Needs Disabilities policy.

19.1 Public Equality Duty St Michaels Primary School is a multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-ability community of approximately 200 people, parents, professionals and pupils. We believe that everyone in the School is of equal value and should have equal opportunities in school, the community and in life.

19.2 Forest School for All

Forest School aims to be child led and enables children to develop their independent learning skills at their own pace through their own interests. This links with the schools SEND policy detailing how this school will do its best to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any pupil who has special educational needs and those needs are made known to all who are likely to teach them. The high ratio of adults to children enables support so children can fully participate in physical and practical activities. Adults facilitate learning to ensure children achieve, enabling them to develop their self-esteem and confidence. Forest School is a long term process. At St Michaels School we aim to promote equality of opportunity for all members of the school community. As a long term process, with high adult to child ratios, Forest School allows time to build meaningful and effective

relationships consisting of trust, acceptance and empathy. Through a range of activities we develop trust between adults and children as well as children with other children. We aim in Forest School to create an all equal environment with a sense of community and belonging to make children feel safe, secure and valued. Adults within the Forest School environment are in control of this, ensuring that the messages we communicate both verbal and non-verbal help young people to feel respected and valued. The United Nations Convention Rights of the Child (UNCRC 1989) articles 12 and 13 recognises the competences of children and their views should be listened to and respected.

In Forest School we aim to build an inclusive environment by:

- Using reflection – talking about feelings and emotions. Teaching children to become emotionally literate and aware of their own and others’ feelings.
- Facilitating opportunities for children to work together. To develop social skills, share resources and try new activities.
- Ensure activities and resources are suitable for all. For example, tool size appropriate for users.
- Ensuring that the Forest School area is accessible for all users.
- Allowing children to choose to take their learning in a way that is appropriate and individual to them. To give children the time and space to do this.

20. Behaviour Policy

Please refer to the St Michaels School Behaviour policy, (the full versions are available on the school website), in conjunction with this information. As a Unicef Rights Respecting School all behaviour expectations are linked to the Unicef Children’s Charter. The focus of the behaviour policy is the Code of Conduct drawn up by the School Council through consultation with all classes. St Michaels Primary School believes that encouraging a high standard of behaviour is essential for all members of the school to thrive as individuals. The school aims to develop children’s self-esteem, respect for others and self-discipline. The overriding ethos is: “treat others as you would like to be treated yourself.” St Michaels places great importance on positive reinforcement of behaviour through praise. The school aims to build children’s confidence and self-esteem through encouragement, incentives and rewards, both verbal, written and merits. At Forest School we encourage positive behaviour and learning through

- Building relationships and trust. It is vital for children to trust adults if the experience is to be a positive one. As trust is built we can teach children coping strategies and use reflection times to talk about feelings and emotions allowing children to become more emotionally literate.
- Adults model positive behaviour and create a positive environment where everyone is equal.
- Consistent boundaries give children security. By involving children in setting the rules and boundaries they are more likely to abide by them.
- Setting up activities that enable children to achieve, providing opportunities to work collaboratively.
- Being in the natural environment, Forest School naturally creates a calming environment. Being outside with nature encourages social and emotional wellbeing, self-confidence and resilience.

20.1 Rewards At Forest School

We aim to build children’s self-esteem and confidence through self-appraisal and a sense of achievement through completion of activities. Adults at Forest School facilitate learning to ensure children achieve. Achieving a task will lead to a positive learning experience. When giving praise it will be for recognising skills and asking how the child feels. With permission, we will share items made with the rest of the group to celebrate individual success.

20.2 Sanctions

If a child's behaviour becomes unsafe to himself or others then that behaviour needs to be stopped, and every measure taken to prevent a situation escalating. If needed the child will be removed from the Forest School area. Incidents will be recorded in the Forest School incident book and the class teacher informed (for information only). The behaviour is dealt within the Forest School setting and no further sanctions carried out. If repeated unsafe behaviour then further discussions to involve the head teacher to establish the next course of action.

21. Bullying

Please refer to the St Michaels School Anti-Bullying policy, (the full version is available on the school website), in conjunction with this information. At St Michaels Primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our pupils in order for them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and to help them maximise their potential. Pupils should feel safe in school, including issues relating to bullying, and feel confident to seek support from school should they feel unsafe. We aim to establish an ethos in which Staff, pupils and parents feel comfortable to report incidents and where they can feel confident that their concerns are dealt with sensitively, promptly and effectively. All Staff have the responsibility to model respectful behaviours towards pupils and other adults.

21.1 Definition of Bullying

'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally'.

How does bullying differ from teasing, falling out between friends, or other types of aggressive behaviour?

- There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate.
- There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.
- It is usually persistent.

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of sexual, sexist, racist or homophobic bullying and when children with disabilities are involved. If the victim might be in danger then intervention is urgently required. At Forest School we aim to create a positive learning environment and develop relationships between children. All cases of bullying will be reported to the school Anti-Bullying Leader.

22. Roles & Responsibilities of Adults.

The adult to child ratios are such to ensure sessions are high quality and children have access to risk taking in a safe and supported way. It is expected that all adults will take an active part in all activities. This may involve getting muddy and experiencing a wide variety of child initiated activities. Where possible Forest School sessions are child led, with adults expected to support the children; not take over. This enables children to achieve at their own level. Adults are to model activities where appropriate, take an active role and extend learning through open ended questions and sharing in experiences. Getting to know the children, developing relationships and building trust is vital in understanding, developing and supporting their emotional needs.

22.1 Other Roles / Responsibilities

- Before taking part in a session ensure you have read and understood the handbook, and signed to agree the policies and procedures in place.
- Before the session takes place read the lesson plan and refer to any related risk assessment.
- Alert the Forest School leader immediately to any first aid issue, however minor.
- ONLY use tools if the Forest School leader has said it is ok to do so. Follow the correct tool handling procedure and lead by example when using tools. Report any concerns to the FS leader immediately.
- Lead by example at all times, follow the Forest School rules and reinforce them to children as necessary.
- Be aware of the first aid kit.
- Only tend the fire to extinguish in an emergency, if instructed by the FS leader and you feel comfortable to do so.
- Stay within the boundaries and alert the FS leader if you need to leave the area/activity you are supervising.
- Be aware that you are duty bound under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to work safely. Take responsibility for your own safety, the implications of your actions and report any hazard immediately.
- Ensure you wear the appropriate clothing and footwear.
- At the end of the session support the FS leader with any observations and tidying away of resources.

22.2 Roles & Responsibilities of the Forest School Leader.

- To plan and lead all Forest School activities.
- To ensure that planned activities and resources available are within the capabilities of the children taking part, amending plans to provide an inclusive curriculum enabling the children to achieve.
- To take responsibility for discipline during Forest School sessions (see Behaviour Policy)
- To have an up to date First Aid qualification.
- To ensure that medication (e.g. epipens/inhalers) and appropriate First Aid is available at every session.
- To ensure that all participants are adequately dressed for the weather.
- To ensure that adults participating understand their role in promoting emotional intelligence, self-esteem and learning at Forest Schools.
- To carry out daily risk assessments as described in the Risk Assessment Policy
- To ensure all Forest School policies are regularly reviewed and that review is informed by observations and developing knowledge of the Forest School setting.

22.3 Roles & Responsibilities of Children.

- To take personal responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety of others.
- To listen to and follow safety information given to them.
- To bring appropriate clothing and footwear to Forest School sessions.

23. Evaluating, Monitoring & Assessing

In order to develop the Forest School program and to ensure good practice is maintained, evaluation of activities will be undertaken. Across all Reception and KS1 classes evidence is gathered using the following criteria; self-esteem/confidence, behaviour, relationships, independence, communication/language, exploration/curiosity, creativity/imagination, physical/practical skills, participation, taking appropriate risks and other general observations. The evidence collected, in the form of notes and photographs, of children's learning is collated primarily to plan for future sessions. The Forest School leader will write a reflection/evaluation of the session and plan accordingly for the

next session based on the children's interests and learning in order to develop their skills and learning further.

APPENDICES St Michaels Primary School – Forest School Handbook Appendices Page 27

24. Parental Consent Form –

Forest School Sessions

Dear Parents & Carers, We would like to invite your child to attend our Forest Schools on
For.....weeks Forest Schools is a unique opportunity 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 is a specialised learning approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education. The children will be in a group of maximum 15, with our qualified Forest School practitioners. If you would like to discuss further, do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher. I,

_____, confirm that I give consent / do not give consent for _____ to attend Forest School sessions.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Medical Information Medical information will be obtained from the medical information you provided at the start of the school year. However, if there is further information that you would like to make us aware of that might affect your child's involvement in outdoor learning (e.g. phobias, complaints) or any other allergies (e.g. material, food, medicine, pollen, dust, etc.) please indicate below. Phobias, complaints, allergies...

Please give the Date of your child's last Tetanus Jab __/__/__

As a parent/guardian of the child named above, I agree to my child participating in the Outdoor learning activities taking place. I understand that activities may include, walking, craftwork, tool use, flint fire lighting skills, den building, campfire cooking and other related activities. I give my consent for the equipment and tools necessary for the activity to be used by the young person mentioned above. I understand that a strict code of practice for working with children will be followed and all activities will be risk assessed and I will be informed of any extra details of activities that are out of the ordinary pattern.

Child's Name:

Child's Class:

Signed:

Date:

Name (in CAPITALS):

Relationship to Child:

25. Equipment Checklist

Name of Equipment

Total in Stock

Taken for Session

Checked Back In

Mallet 1

Bow saw 2

Loppers 1

Hatchets 2

First aid kit 1

Water carrier 3
Washing up bowls 2

26. Tool Handling Policies

26.1 Palm Drill Safe use PPE Storage

- Be aware of drill bit as it is sharp
- Place wood for drilling on hard stable surface and keep it there until finished
- Hold wood steady and press firmly down on drill, twist, reverse to remove drill
- Check progress to avoid drilling into surface underneath
- Glove on hand holding wood steady, no glove on hand using drill
- Dry bits before putting them away
- Check bit for rust regularly
- Replace when necessary
- Store in locked tool box

26.2 Vegetable peeler Safe use PPE Storage

- Be aware of peeler blade as it is sharp
- Whittle sitting down
- Ensure a safe area before starting. Be aware of you 'Blood Bubble'
- Hold stick downwards pointing downwards between legs or to the side of legs
- Whittle downwards and away from body
- Glove on hand holding wood steady, no glove on hand using peeler
- Dry peelers before putting them away
- Check bit for rust regularly
- Replace when necessary
- Store in locked tool box

26.3 Secateurs Safe Use PPE Storage

- Keep the secateurs locked close when not in use
- Cut nothing thicker than 2cm diameter
- Keep fingers away from open blade when not in use
- No glove on hand holding secateurs but glove on hand holding wood
- Store closed and locked
- Dry blades before putting away
- Check blades for rust regularly
- Replace when necessary
- Store in locked tool box

26.4 Loppers Safe use PPE Storage

- Carry the loppers closed, tucked under arm and holding the lower handle end pointing downwards
- Cut nothing thicker than 4cm diameter
- Hold the handles at the end when cutting
- When not cutting, place flat on floor, closed, next to yourself
- No gloves when using this tool as both hands needed to grip
- Store closed
- Dry blades before putting away
- Check blades regularly for rust
- Replace when necessary

- Stored in tool bag, in locked shed when not in use

26.5 Bow Saw Safe use PPE Storage

- Carry the saw down by your side
- Guard to be kept on saw unless in use
- Safe stance, body and eyes in line with saw. Look down length of saw to keep the cut straight
- Create groove in wood by drawing saw back 3 or 4 times.
- Use long strokes and pull rather than push
- Children to support wood if necessary by holding wood rather than rotating, or allowing the wood to fall to the floor
- No glove on hand holding bow saw, but glove on hand holding wood.
- If other children holding wood gloves to be worn
- Ensure guard is on
- Dry blade before putting away
- Check blade regularly for rust
- Replace when necessary
- Stored in tool bag

26.6 Mallet Safe use PPE Storage

- Carry by handle down by your side
- Have legs apart when standing
- Use the mallet in a straight up and down motion
- Hold the mallet at the end of the handle to ensure maximum force, but if struggling move hand up closer to the head to ensure smaller movements
- None
- Check clean and dry before storage. Wipe clean if necessary
- Store in tool bag

26.7 Knives Safe use PPE Storage

- Sheath should be kept on until ready to use, replaced after
- Ensure a safe area before starting. Be aware of you 'Blood Bubble'
- If someone enters your safe space, stop, sheath knife and wait for them to leave
- Hold knife in writing hand, firmly on handle.
- Cut downwards and away from body, between legs or to the side of legs
- Only pass a knife when it is sheathed. Pass pointing down
- No glove on hand holding knife, but glove on hand holding wood.
- Keep sheath on when not in use
- Dry blade before putting away
- Check blade regularly for rust
- Replace when necessary

27. Ecological Management Plan

27.1 Year 1

Factors affecting Woodland

How will this affect the woodland? How will you manage this? How will you monitor the effect of the management?

Camp Fire

- Denudation of dead wood habitat
- Compaction of soil around fire
- Damage to tree roots and shrub layer
- Impact on wildlife
- Importing firewood from off site
- Fire only when appropriate
- Establish dedicated fire circle
- Fixed point photography
- Ongoing monitoring

Removal and use of deadwood

- Impact on wildlife – removal of habitat for mini beasts
- Prevent regeneration of ecosystem
- Minimise amount of deadwood that is removed from site
- Importing wood from off site
- Reinstate mini beast hotel
- Check impact of imported wood for potential changes to environment
- Ongoing monitoring
- Learners to survey inhabitants of mini beast hotel

Trampling by people

- Compaction and erosion of soil
- Ground layer may struggle to grow which may have an adverse effect on other ecological areas
- Keep to pathways as much as possible
- Look into putting down bark chippings on vulnerable areas
- Fixed point photography
- Ongoing monitoring

Cutting live wood

- Removal of habitat
- Impact on small mammals using trees to travel through the area
- Minimise the use of live wood as much as possible
- Use quick growing wood, e.g willow from willow arch
- Fixed point photography
- Ongoing monitoring How effective are these measures? (Evaluation to influence next year's plans)

27.2 Year 2

Factor Affecting Woodland

How will this affect the woodland? How will you manage this? How will you monitor the effect of the management?

Camp Fire

- Denudation of dead wood habitat
- Compaction of soil around fire
- Damage to tree roots and shrub layer
- Impact on wildlife
- Importing firewood from off site

- Fire only when appropriate
- Dedicated fire circle
- Fixed point photography
- Ongoing monitoring Removal and use of deadwood
- Impact on wildlife – removal of habitat for mini beasts
- Prevent regeneration of ecosystem
- Minimise amount of deadwood that is removed from site
- Importing wood from off site
- Use learners to help survey mini beast species found
- Continue to monitor condition of mini beast hotel
- Check impact of imported wood for potential changes to environment
- Ongoing monitoring

Trampling by people

- Compaction and erosion of soil
- Ground layer may struggle to grow which may have an adverse effect on other ecological areas
- Keep to pathways as much as possible
- Fixed point photography
- Ongoing monitoring

Cutting live wood

- Removal of habitat
- Impact on small mammals using trees to travel through the area
- Minimise the use of live wood as much as possible
- Use quick growing wood, e.g willow from willow arch
- Fixed point photography
- Ongoing monitoring How effective are these measures? (Evaluation to influence next year's plans)

27.3 Year 3

How effective are these measures? (Evaluation to influence next year's plans) Factor Affecting Woodland How will this affect the woodland? How will you manage this? How will you monitor the effect of the management? (include frequency)

Camp Fire

- Denudation of dead wood habitat
- Compaction of soil around fire
- Damage to tree roots and shrub layer
- Impact on wildlife
- Importing firewood from off site
- Maintain fire circle
- Fixed point photography
- Ongoing monitoring

Removal and use of deadwood

- Impact on wildlife – removal of habitat for mini beasts
- Prevent regeneration of ecosystem
- Minimise amount of deadwood that is removed from site
- Importing wood from off site
- Use learners to help survey mini beast species found
- Maintain mini beast hotel

- Check impact of imported wood for potential changes to environment
- Ongoing monitoring

Trampling by people

- Compaction and erosion of soil
- Ground layer may struggle to grow which may have an adverse effect on other ecological areas
- Keep to pathways as much as possible
- Maintain pathways
- Fixed point photography
- Ongoing monitoring

Cutting live wood

- Removal of habitat
- Impact on small mammals using trees to travel through the area
- Minimise the use of live wood as much as possible
- Use quick growing wood, e.g willow from willow arch
- Fixed point photography
- Ongoing monitoring

28. Ecological Impact Score 1 = low, 5 = high

Wild Life	1
Bird Life	1
Soil	2
Ground Layer	1
Field Layer	1
Shrub Layer	1
Canopy Layer	1
People trampling	3
Fire on ground	3
Removing dead wood	2
Use of deadwood on site	2
Cutting live wood	2
Using trees for support	1
Bringing organic materials onto site	2
Collecting live material	1
Mini beast hunt	2
Bringing non-organic material onto site	3

29. Hazard Risk Assessments

The purpose of a Forest School session is to offer the children an acceptable risk activity to enhance their learning opportunities and own coping strategies. If we only provide a sanitised environment and risk adverse activities children will not explore and discover the world for themselves, they will only experience a safety conscious environment. However, safeguards must be in place to ensure the activity is at an appropriate level for their abilities and understanding without turning the activity into a safety-first pursuit.

Other teachers and Staff onsite to be made aware that a FS session will be taking place. If any groups will be using the adjacent playing field a safety brief must be carried out with the Staff and students within that group to ensure those not involved in the activity are kept at an acceptable distance if necessary due to the FS activities taking place.

29.1 Exploring the Site

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5)

Risk Rating 1

Existing measures/ new measures

Who will do it and when?

Uneven ground, slip and trip.

Foliage at head height.

Promoting physical development.

Encourage self confidence in exploring a new environment.

Members of the group.

- FS leader site inspection before session.
- Children supervised
- Children introduced to FS site, safety brief given
- 2 First Aid trained Staff members present
- Staff to carry mobile phone in case of emergency.
- Higher adult to child ratio if appropriate for those with additional needs.

29.2 Bites and Stings

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5)

Risk Rating 1

Existing measures/ new measures

Who will do it and when?

Topical rash, bite or sting - Display a positive attitude to insects.

Respect the natural environment and habitats.

Members of the group; other school users

- Appropriate clothing to be worn
- Reinforce knowledge and awareness of potential hazards RS before activity. RS and Staff throughout activity

29.3 Inclement Weather

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5)

Risk Rating 1

Existing measures/ new measures

Who will do it and when?

Exposure, cold, wet

Respect the natural environment

Members of the group

Seasonal implications

Make dynamic risk assessment.

If necessary cancel session and return to class before activity.

29.4 Allergies / Pre-existing Medical Conditions

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5)

Risk Rating 1

Existing measures/ new measures

Who will do it and when?

Allergic reaction Promote independence in knowledge and avoidance of allergens

Members of the group; other school users

- As above
- Staff to have knowledge of medical conditions/allergies and required treatment.
- Staff to carry mobile phone in case of emergency.

Staff throughout activity

29.5 Missing Child

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5) Risk

Rating 1

Existing measures/ new measures

Who will do it and when?

Child may wander off/go missing from session

Children to realise the importance of following rules, working as a group and building trust.

Members of the group; other school users

- Children told and continually reminded of rules and boundaries.
- Regular headcounts, initiated by adults but where appropriate children encouraged to do this.
- No access out of school grounds.

29.6 Den Building, Activities Using Sticks.

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5)

Risk Rating 1

Existing measures/ new measures

Who will do it and when?

Risk of sharp objects Chance for team work, problem solving.

Development of social skills and fine/gross motor skills

Members of the group; other school users

- Children to be aware of dangers.
- Children to be instructed in how to carry/hold sticks and branches
- Injuries/incidents to be dealt with and recorded according to FS policy
- Higher adult to child ratio if appropriate for those with additional needs RS and Staff throughout activity

29.7 Balls from PE Classes on Playing Field Entering FS Area

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5)

Risk Rating 1

Existing measures/ new measures

Who will do it and when?

Knocking people or objects

Members of the group; other school users

- FS leader to be aware of other users adjacent to FS site.
- Other users to be made aware of FS activities RS before start of session and throughout activity

29.8 Poisonous Flora, Including Funghi

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5)

Risk Rating 1

Existing measures/ new measures

Who will do it and when?

Poison/ topical skin reaction

Promote knowledge of flora.

Understanding of the natural world and what is safe Members of the group; other school users

- Site inspection before session and Staff to be made aware of hazards.
- Children reminded not to touch/pick living /growing things
- Children reminded not to touch their faces/mouths during FS session
- Handwashing mandatory at end of session. RS before activity. RS and Staff throughout activity

29.9 Animal Droppings

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5)

Risk Rating 1

Existing measures/ new measures

Who will do it and when?

Risk of disease

Promote knowledge/identification of native species

Members of the group; other school users

- Site inspection before session and Staff to be made aware of hazards.
- Children reminded not to touch animal droppings
- Children reminded not to touch their faces/mouths during FS session
- Handwashing mandatory if touched and at end of session. RS before activity. RS and Staff throughout activity

29.10 Branches, Thorns

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5)

Risk Rating 1

Existing measures/ new measures

Who will do it and when?

Risk of cuts, grazes Children to be selfaware and start to risk assess for themselves.

Encourage self confidence in exploring a new environment.

Members of the group; other school users

- Site inspection before session and Staff to be made aware of hazards.
- Minor injuries dealt with on site, if in doubt follow FS policy and direct to school office
- Children encouraged to risk assess for themselves RS before activity. RS and Staff throughout activity. Children to risk assess for themselves during activity under adult supervision.

29.11 Using String / Rope

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5)

Risk Rating 1

Existing measures/ new measures

Who will do it and when?

Risk of string/ rope burn Learning new skills, development of fine motor skills.

Encourages creativity Members of the group.

- Children to be instructed in how to use string/rope for their purpose. (E.G making dens, tying sticks together, creative activities)
- Close adult supervision
- Higher adult to child ratio if appropriate for those with additional needs RS and Staff throughout activity. Children to risk assess for themselves during activity under adult supervision. 1 - Risk Rating – rethink the activity if the rating is over 12

30. Open Fire Risk Assessment

The purpose of an open fire is to offer the children an acceptable risk activity to enhance their learning opportunities and own coping strategies. If we only provide a sanitised environment and

risk adverse activities children will not explore and discover the world for themselves, they will only experience a safety conscious environment. However, safeguards must be in place to ensure the activity is at an appropriate level for their abilities and understanding without turning the activity into a safety-first pursuit.

The risk benefit of experiencing an open fire is huge. Children will develop awareness and respect of fire.

Working in a team building trusting relationships and self-confidence. They will gain new experiences that empower them to use their initiative and enjoy the natural environment. It can also promote development in curricular activities such as mathematical developing in size and sorting of wood.

Other teachers and Staff onsite to be made aware that a fire will be taking place. If any groups will be using the adjacent playing field a safety brief must be carried out with the Staff and students within that group to ensure those not involved in the activity are kept at a safe distance.

30.1 Fire & Heat

Harm At Risk Likelihood (1-5) Severity (1-5)

Risk Rating 2

Existing Measures/ New Measures

Who will do it and when?

Burning to skin & clothes

Members of the group; other school users

- Fire circle clearly marked
- Supervision of the fire, leader to be sat beside fire at all times while alight or hot embers remain, to ensure children do not have unsupervised access.
- Children will be given rules and safety advice and dangers of fire prior to visiting the fire.
- First aiders and first aid box will be available.
- Fire proof gloves/fire bucket/fire blanket within easy reach. RS and Staff throughout activity.

30.2 Fire Out of Control

Harm At Risk Likelihood (1-5) Severity (1-5) Risk

Rating 2

Existing Measures/ New Measures

Who will do it and when?

Burning to skin and clothes, and damage to area.

Members of the group; other school users

- As above
- Fire will be in a soil pit surrounded by stones or logs to prevent the fire escaping the area.
- Fire area will be away from buildings.
- The fire will not be under overhanging trees which may catch alight.
- A good supply of water will be available to put out flames and dampen heat.
- A fire blanket will be available.

RS to check site Prior to activity. All Staff responsible for fire control.

30.3 Falls into Fire

Harm At Risk Likelihood (1-5) Severity (1-5)

Risk Rating 2

Existing Measures/ New Measures

Who will do it and when?

Burning to skin & clothes

Members of the group; other school users

- As above

- Children have a safety brief before entering the fire circle area.
 - No walking between the seats and fire allowed.
 - When cooking etc. everyone at fire should be on one knee to remain stable.
 - Maximum numbers and adult to child ratios monitored. Extra adult support asked for if necessary.
- RS and Staff to give safety brief.
All Staff check rules are followed.

30.4 Smoke

Harm At Risk Likelihood (1-5) Severity (1-5)

Risk Rating 2

Existing Measures/ New Measures

Who will do it and when?

Inhalation, irritation Members of the group; other school users

- The position of the fire will be away from buildings.
 - The wind direction will be constantly assessed and children advised to move safely out of smoke direction.
 - Dry suitable wood used to prevent excess smoke.
- RS and Staff to advise children.

30.5 Heat from Hot Embers

Harm At Risk Likelihood (1-5) Severity (1-5)

Risk Rating 2

Existing Measures/ New Measures

Who will do it and when?

Burning to skin & clothes

Members of the group; other school users

- When the fire activity is finished the embers will be dampened and cooled with water and spread out with a spade.
- Ash removed to compost heap when cold RS at end of activity.

30.6 Balls from PE Class on Playing Field Entering Fire Pit Area (St Michaels)

Harm At Risk Likelihood (1-5) Severity (1-5) Risk

Rating 2

Existing Measures/ New Measures

Who will do it and when?

Knocking people or objects in to the fire and causing burns to skin & clothes and fire getting out of control

Members of the group; other school users

- Fire will be supervised at all times by activity leader.
 - A list of groups due to use the playing field at the time of the activity to be sought, and the relevant teachers briefed on the campfire activity taking place to ensure students on the field are kept at a safe distance and to reduce the likelihood of balls/sports equipment from interfering with the fire.
- RS on morning of activity.

31. Cooking on an Open Fire Risk Assessment

In cooking, certain food items on the fire children will learn about the importance of fire, independence and life skills. It also encourages an individual's creativity.

31.1 Open Fire Harm At Risk Likelihood (1-5) Severity (1-5)

Risk Rating 3

Existing Measures/ New Measures

Who will do it and when? See campfire RA Members of the group; other school users

- See separate RA for open fire.
- This RA to be used in conjunction with above RA RS at start of session. RS and Staff during session.

31.2 Cooking Food

Harm At Risk Likelihood (1-5) Severity (1-5)

Risk Rating 3

Existing Measures/ New Measures

Who will do it and when?

As campfire Members of the group; other school users

- All children's medical/allergy details checked
- Parental consent included on initial FS letter to allow certain food items to be cooked. (E.G marshmallows, dampers) RS at start of session. RS and Staff during session.

32. Tool Use Risk Assessment

32.1 Small Tools – Peelers, Knives

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5)

Risk Rating 4

Existing Measures/ New Measures

Who will do it and when?

Risk of injury to self and others learning new skills, building self-confidence. Improve sense of achievement and self-worth.

Develop and improve hand eye coordination Members of the group.

- FS leader to assess appropriateness of activity with children involved
- Safety talk given and instruction on particular task.
- Children made aware of FS safety policy. 'Blood Bubble'
- PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) provided as necessary

32.2 Larger Tools – Knives, Secateurs, Loppers, Bow Saw & Billhook

Harm Risk Benefit At Risk Likelihood (1 Low-5) Severity (1 low-5)

Risk Rating 4

Existing Measures/ New Measures

Who will do it and when?

Risk of injury to self and others learning new skills, building self-confidence.

Improve sense of achievement and self-worth.

Develop and improve hand eye coordination

Members of the group.

- FS leader to assess appropriateness of activity with children involved
- Safety talk given and instruction on particular task.
- Children made aware of FS safety policy. 'Blood Bubble'
- PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) provided as necessary
- Strict use of tools on a 1:1 basis under close supervision.
- Only trained FS practitioners to use tools with children
- FS leader to be aware and act upon displays of frustration and manage behaviour RS and Staff at beginning of session. RS and Staff throughout session.

Handbook created for St Michaels for use at both the St Michaels Primary School and Homewood School and Sixth Form Forest School sites.

Notes: