



OUTDOOR ADVENTURE HOLIDAY CLUB

Forest Schooling Risk assessment and Risk/Benefit Analysis

Hazard	Location/event	Level of risk before/after control	Control and Implementation
Uneven forest environment <i>causing slips, trips and falls</i>	Walking to and from site and during activity	Low/Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to carry out site checks beforehand • Remove hazardous obstacles • Make group aware of environment • Ensure suitable footwear is worn • Ensure staff are trained in first aid • Keep First-Aid kit nearby
Misuse of equipment <i>causing injury</i>	During activities, any	Low/Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check all equipment before each session • Remove any objects that need repair • Demonstrate use of equipment so children, staff and volunteers, know how to use safely • Ensure equipment is age-appropriate • Ensure staff are trained in first aid • Keep First-Aid kit nearby
Poisoning or infection from ingesting or handling toxic plants such as fungi or berries	On site, on woodland walks and foraging trips	Medium/Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warn children not to ingest anything they find • Warn children not to put their fingers in their mouth or up their noses • Ensure handwashing at the end of activity and before eating
Injury from selecting and carrying natural forest materials such as sticks	Woodland area, especially when den building	Low/low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety talk on appropriate materials for use (ok form forest floor but not living plant) and safe handling of materials • Avoid areas with brambles or remove if appropriate • Ensure staff are trained in first • Keep First-Aid kit nearby
Handling and consumption of mini-beasts		Low/Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warn children not to put their fingers in their mouth or up their noses • Ensure handwashing at the end of activity and before eating

Fire <i>Scalds, burns, spread of fire</i>	Fire pit	Medium/Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure fire is minimum size required • Ensure water is nearby to extinguish fire • Give child fire safety talk • Ensure long hair is tied back • Ensure loose clothing is secured or removed • Ensure fire isn't left unattended • Extinguish fire if danger of child with erratic behaviour • Ensure staff are trained in first aid • Keep First-Aid kit nearby
Hot drinks and food <i>Scalds, burns,</i>	During cooking activities	Medium/Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all hot food and drinks given are cooled sufficiently • Always have water nearby • Ensure staff are trained in first • Keep First-Aid kit nearby
Adverse weather conditions	Hot/wet/windy days	Low/Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give parents appropriate kit list • Ensure children have appropriate clothing and refuse children who don't • On hot days, ensure children have plenty to drink, suntan lotion and keep out of midday sun • On wet days ensure children are aware of increased chance of slipping in muddy areas
Losing children	On trips outside of school grounds	Low/Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults to remain diligent at all times • Do regular head counts • Maintain correct staffing ratios • Inform children of boundaries and instructions if they become segregated from the group
Using sharp hand tools such as knives, scissors	Craft activities, knife craft	High/Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give tool safety talks to children including blood bubble and safe positions • Supervise at all times and ensure there is correct staff ratio, working in small groups • Use safety equipment (blade covers. Gloves) • Store tools safely • Keep tools well maintained and instantly remove any damaged or broken tools

Craft materials - small and loose parts and glue	Crafting activities	Low/Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety talk at beginning of session • Adult supervision at all times • Ensure staff are trained in first
Climbing trees <i>Danger from falling</i>	Woodland area	High/Med	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not allow children to climb trees unless it's a planned session • Only allow one/two children at one time • Choose appropriate trees to climb • Check trees for rotten branches before session • Don't allow children to climb too high • Demonstrate how to climb safely

Risk/Benefit Analysis

Below is our risk/benefit analysis for Forest School activities in school age children

Benefits of being outside in a natural environment:

1. Stress relief

Being outside in a natural environment has been shown to relieve stress by reducing the levels of the stress hormone cortisol in the brain. Children are increasingly being put within stressful environments (media, emphasis on targets and testing, screen time) being out in the woods and outside gives some much needed time to relax and have some stress free fun

2. Connection to nature

Children are increasingly being kept in doors because of understandable concerns over safety and being unsupervised. This means they are missing out on being able to connect with nature. By having an understanding of nature and the natural environment allows future generations to value and understand the natural world

Benefits of Forest School activities

Children who attend Forest School benefit from:

- increased confidence
- improved social skills
- an increased awareness of the consequences of their actions
- a better ability to work with stress and improve communication and language

Benefits of using tools and fire

Children will be introduced to tools and fire in a controlled and progressive way so they can learn about managing risk for themselves. They will learn how to keep themselves and others around them safe by learning simple safety procedures under close supervision.

They will benefit from:

- improved fine and gross motor skills
- confidence and ownership from achieving something
- design and planning skills
- improved coordination
- communication and teamwork skills

Added benefits

- Forest School offers a rich supply of resources to use in other curriculum areas
- Opportunities to involve parents and the wider community
- Offers an alternative to a reliance on digital and electronic resources for recreation learning and socialising