

Wiltshire Outdoor Learning Team - Risk Benefit Assessment – Forest School



Venue: Roundwood

Staff in charge: Darren Oram

Dates: January 2019 – December 2019

Activity / Situation	Hazard	Benefit of Activity	Level of Risk	Control Measures	Further Action
Shelter Building	- Falling trees / branches - Shelter collapse - Dead wood	- Improves teamwork and communication - Helps creativity	Medium	- Assess trees, look for large dead limbs – avoid building shelters under those areas - Staff to encourage 'wiggle test' and regularly check shelter is OK - Highlight rotten branches	- Staff to monitor trees - Cut branches if necessary
Fires (boiling water / cooking / marshmallows)	- Burns and scalds - Spreading of fire - Boiling water - Hot food	- Improves listening skills - Builds confidence	High	- Keep ground clear around fire squares - Fire bucket next to fire - Staff to demonstrate kneeling 'respect position' when approaching fire and to monitor - Use of fire glove when using pans / kettles etc and putting wood on fire - Staff may need to put out fire if an individual is not listening / following instructions.	- Group ability constantly assessed
Cooking	- Burning mouth or other body part with hot marshmallow - Burn mouth having hot chocolate too hot	- Good fun - Encourages teamwork - Improves communication - Improves hand eye coordination		- Keep working area clean - Staff to check hot drinks to ensure they aren't too hot, add cold water if necessary	
Tool usage (knives, axe, bow saw, loppers, folding saw)	- Cuts / stabs - Aggressive participant	- Helps participants assess risk - Improves focus - Improves listening skills	High	- Instructors to follow Forest School protocol on tool usage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool talk • Blood bubble • Glove on non tool hand • Specific area for tool usage • Monitor usage - Tools will be removed from any participant who is deemed unsafe	- Group ability constantly assessed
Animals / insects	- Bites / stings - Allergic reaction - Cuts - Illness	- Improves knowledge and understanding of nature	Low	- Highlight specific creatures to avoid - Get participants to check themselves at end of session or at home	- Remove ticks if necessary - Move areas if risk changes
Collecting and using natural materials	- Poisonous plants / mushrooms - Cuts / stings - Trip hazards / falling - Illness due to poisons / toxins - Allergic reaction	- Improves knowledge and understanding of nature	Low	- Highlight specific plants to avoid (e.g. Lords and ladies) - Explain not to pick berries or fungi as some are poisonous - Group to wash hands before eating and after session - Respond to medical consent forms (e.g. allergic reactions may need epi-pens) - Highlight the need to look down to avoid trip hazards	
Off-the-ground activities	- Falling - Sprains / breakages	- Physical benefit - Hand eye co-ordination	Low	- Encourage members to climb no higher than adults shoulder height - Highlight and remove rotten branches	- Staff to monitor trees
Blindfold activities	- Trees / roots / branches - Falling, tripping, collisions	- Improves other senses - Improves communication	Low	- Encourage slow movement – feeling ahead - Move major trip hazards - Remove any sharp branches	
Chasing games (e.g. 40/40 / manhunt)	- Trees / roots / branches - Falling, twists, collisions	- Physical benefit - Improves teamwork	Medium	- Before game highlight trip hazards and branches. - Monitor and adjust / end game if needed	- Staff to monitor impact on site
Absconding	- Getting lost - Cars - Members of public - Accident - Abduction		Medium	- Keep students whereabouts known at all times - Staff to carry radios and students to be followed if they walk off - Students to be spoken to about the dangers of walking off - Gate into woods to be closed after group arrive	- Better understanding of specific behaviour
Members of public	- Unsuitable members of public talking	- People may take interest in	Low	- Keep students whereabouts known at all times	- Move group away

	to participants - Unwanted attention - Unpleasant words / behaviour witnessed	what is happening		- Gate into woods to be closed after group arrive - No right of way signs are visible - Staff to carry radios and mobile phones in case of emergency	from area if needed
Aggressive behaviour from participants	- Physical harm to self, other participants and staff	n/a	Low/ Medium	- Watch for signs of frustration/escalation of behaviour - Try to calm participant - Staff to radio office/head/other designated staff to remove aggressive participant from the group if necessary - Move other participants to safety if required	- In some circumstances physical intervention may be required
Rope swings	- Falling off - Getting tangled in the rope - Hitting a tree	- Physical benefit - Hand eye co-ordination - Can be a teamwork activity	Medium	- Area around rope swing to be checked by staff - Make sure rope is tied properly to tree - Ensure people hold tight to rope when on it - Don't push too high - Staff to monitor rope swings when in use	
Hammocks	- Falling out - Hitting a tree	- Physical benefit - Hand eye co-ordination - Very relaxing	Low	- Ensure hammocks are tied properly to trees - Ensure hammocks are not erected too high from the ground - Explain that hammocks are not for swinging in, only gentle rocking	
Site specific					
	- Electricity pylons, electrocution	- Good usable area near the poles	Low	- Make participants aware not to climb the pole - Remove participant from pole if necessary	
	- Dog poo, standing in or touching it	n/a	Low	- Make sure participants are aware of hazard - Remove poo by staff if spotted	
	- Thorny trees / brambles - Puncture wounds / scratches	n/a	Medium	- Make sure participants are aware of hazard - Cut branches and use of gloves to remove if necessary	
	- Pond, falling in	- Habitat for frogs - Drinking area for animals	Low	- Explain to participants the associated dangers and uses - Hazel fence along front and back - Not easily accessible from the sides due to brambles and other shrubs	- Fence off sides if needed
	- Log piles, falling wood when climbed on	n/a	Low	- Signs are on wood piles telling people not to climb - Groups are reminded not to climb on wood piles	
	- Falling trees	n/a	Low	- Remove rotten branches and whole trees if needed	- Staff to monitor trees
	- Crossing road to Brokerswood	- Other activities available on Brokerswood site.	Medium	- Cross at gate opposite Brokerswood entrance - Group to stay back behind gate and wait for staff member to cross first to ensure no vehicles are coming	
	- Vehicles on site	n/a	Low	- Most vehicle movements will take place while groups are not on site - Vehicles to be driven very slowly if necessary to move while groups are on site	
	- Archery range, getting hit by an arrow	- Physical benefit - Hand eye co-ordination	Medium	- See archery risk assessment for archery specific risks - People are to stay away from the rear and sides of archery range while archery is taking place - Explain to groups not to go near area	
	- High ropes area, someone being knocked over / fallen on	- Physical benefit - Hand eye co-ordination - Improves teamwork	Low	- See high ropes risk assessment for specific risks - High rope area is fenced off - Staff running high ropes to keep aware of anyone entering area without a helmet - Explain to groups not to go in the area	