

BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - BRANCHES & STICKS

Benefits of the activity

West Suffolk Hive CIC 
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- muscle development
- coordination
- crafts - creating artwork or tools
- teamwork - social skills
- den building/shelter making

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
eye injury from stick being waved around	2	2	4	3
cuts/bruises from lifting heavy branches	2	1	2	2
splinters	2	1	2	2
injury to body from falling branches	2	2	4	3

Control Measures

- complete site risk assessment
- deliver clear instructions regarding expected behaviour when using sticks and branches
- do not allow anyone under the den/shelter while under construction
- check for loose branches and unfavourable weather conditions
- dismantle dens/shelters after sessions and especially before bad weather

Further Measures

- First aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and updates of risk assessments

Date assessment completed: 7th April 2024

Assessment Completed by: Steph Holland

Date review due: 7th April 2025

BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - DEAD ANIMAL ON SITE

Benefits of the activity

- Learning opportunity – anatomy/life cycles/food chain etc
- connection with nature
- respect and dignity
- ceremony

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
contamination via bacteria or parasites on the dead animal	1	3	3	2
emotional trauma/sense of loss	2	1	2	2
injury from teeth/claws/sting	1	2	2	2

Control Measures

- complete site risk assessment – check for decomposing animals – decide if it is safe/appropriate to leave in place
- encourage children to be respectful and be aware of each other’s reactions when dealing with death
- thorough hand washing before eating
- handle with gloves if necessary to move it
- advise participants not to touch the animal with their bare hands in case of living parasites etc
- if necessary, explain the natural life cycle of animals and, potentially, allow participants to perform a burial ceremony

Further Measures

- First aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and updates of risk assessments

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BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - EATING AT FOREST SCHOOL

Benefits of the activity

- Social Activity – promotes sense of community
- Restorative after active play
- Essential for keeping hydrated and energy levels high
- Improves knowledge of nutrients
- Cooking skills

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Contaminents via insects/animals	1	2	2	2
Contaminents via spread of germs from fellow participants	1	2	2	2
Allergic reaction	1	3	3	2
proximity to dirty water – waterborne diseases spreading	1	3	3	2

Control Measures

- Provision of hand washing facilities – running water and soap
- encouraging hand washing before eating and after each session
- discouraging attendance by adults/children who may have a communicable illness
- food and drink to be kept covered in a waterproof container
- where possible, participants to provide their own drinking bottle and snack to limit contamination
- all cooking equipment to be washed each time it is used
- follow basic food hygiene procedures when handling food
- session leader to be made aware of all dietary requirements and allergies each term

Further Measures

- First aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and updates of risk assessments

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BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - FIRES

Benefits of the activity

- Risk management
- Respect for the environment
- Social activity – promotes community
- Cooking skills
- ID skills when looking for suitable tinder
- Warming drinks and making hot soup/stew to warm up

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Burns and scalds to person tending fire and bypassers	2	2	4	3
Fire spreading to trees/bushes/buildings	1	2	2	2
damage to ground from heat	2	1	2	2
smoke inhalation - aggravating existing respiratory conditions eg asthma	1	3	3	2
injury to habitant wildlife	1	3	3	2

Control Measures

- complete site risk assessment
- follow fire policy and procedures
- ensure boundary around fire is clearly marked and at least 1.5m away
- ensure there are at least two exit routes away from the fire
- provide fire extinguishing kit including at least 5L water and a fire blanket
- ensure the area around and underneath the fire is clear from dry leaves/twigs and there is no sign of animals nesting nearby
- limit the number of people working with the fire at any one time
- always have an adult supervising the fire area as long as it is still lit
- ensure it is completely extinguished before leaving the site

Further Measures

- First aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and updates of risk assessments

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BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - MINIBEASTS

Benefits of the activity

- Respect for environment/nature
- Knowledge of wildlife/habitats
- Investigating skills
- Listening skills
- Fine motor skills

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
bites/stings/toxins from insects via bite/sting/ingestion	2	2	4	3
inhaling spores/allergens from fungi/plants	1	2	2	2
infectious disease from insect carrier - eg Lyme's disease from ticks	1	3	3	2
contamination from poor hand-washing after handling dirt/minibeasts	2	2	4	3
infection from contaminated water - eg Vile's disease	1	3	3	2
panic attack/phobia eg spiders	1	2	2	2
allergic reaction to insect sting - eg bee sting	1	3	3	3

Control Measures

- Complete site risk assessment - check for wasp/ant/hornet nests
- deliver clear instructions regarding handling of animals/insects and explain which ones ought to be avoided
- ensure all relevant medical conditions are known and you have received clear information regarding treatment etc
- encourage good hand washing before eating

Further Measures

- First aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and updates of risk assessments

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BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - MUD

Benefits of the activity

- Boosts immune system
- Tactile activity
- Open-ended play
- Allows a greater physical connection with nature
- No equipment necessary

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Slips, trips and falls by participants	2	1	2	2
Mud getting into eyes of participants	1	2	2	2
Contamination due to animal faeces/urine - risk of infection	1	3	3	3
Cuts due to sharp stones or broken glass in the mud	1	3	3	3

Control Measures

- complete site risk assessment and site check – check for obvious signs of animal waste
- ensure appropriate footwear is worn at all times
- give clear instructions that mud is not to be thrown at other people
- encourage good hand washing before eating

Further Measures

- First aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and updates of risk assessments

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BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - PLANTS AND FUNGI

Benefits of the activity

- ID skills – biological knowledge
- Respect for environment
- Sensory development
- Improved connection with the outside world

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Poisonous fungi – skin irritation or poisoning by ingestion	2	3	6	3
Poisonous berries – poisoning by ingestion	1	2	2	2
Allergic skin reaction to irritant – urticaria/rash	1	2	2	2
Stings and scratches from nettles, brambles etc	2	1	2	2
Trips and falls from ground level plants – brambles, tree roots etc	2	2	4	2

Control Measures

- Complete site risk assessment and site checks. If necessary, cordon off areas with poisonous or delicate plants or fungi
- obtain relevant medical information of participants – eg known allergies, asthma etc
- Ensure participants are wearing appropriate protective clothing and shoes
- use gloves when handling nettles/brambles

Further Measures

- First aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- Annual review and update of risk assessments

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BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - POND

Benefits of the activity

- Biological knowledge/ID skills
- Ecology of riverside plants and animals
- Teamwork
- Caring for the environment
- Investigating skills – measuring & collecting data

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Drowning from falling into the pond – all participants	1	3	3	2
Weil's disease or other infection from contaminated water/blue-green algae	1	3	3	2
Trips and falls on slippery banks	2	1	2	2

Control Measures

- Complete site risk assessment and site check
- deliver clear instructions regarding safety near water – point out warning signs
- only use specific site for pond dipping – with adult supervision
- follow site recommendations regarding blue green algae and adhere to warning signs
- high adult-child ratio whenever near water
- erect fence around pond so adult supervision required to access water's edge
- warning sign clearly visible by entrance to pond

Further Measures

- First aid kit on site and qualified first aider present (if possible with water safety training)
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and updates of risk assessments.

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BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - ROPES AND SWINGS

Benefits of the activity

- Physical development and core strength
- Balance and coordination
- Concentration and patience
- Trust and teamwork
- Communication and listening skills
- Role play
- Risk-taking
- Rope tying/knot skills

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Strangulation by rope	2	3	6	3
Broken bones from falling	2	2	4	2
Head injury from falling	2	3	6	3
Cuts and grazes	3	1	3	2
Bystanders injured	2	2	4	2
Rope burns	2	1	2	2

Control Measures

- Carry out site risk assessment and site checks
- rope is checked for correct installation before use
- ensure loose end of rope is secured safely
- when activity is finished, ensure rope is taken down and stored in a dry place
- only run the activity in acceptable weather conditions (not wet/icy)
- spotter appointed to stay by the activity
- create a safe boundary zone around the area and limit the number of children using the rope at any one time.
- regularly check the ropes for any damage

Further Measures

- First aid kit on site and qualified first aider present (if possible with water safety training)
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and updates of risk assessments.

BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - SENSORY ACTIVITIES (BLINDFOLDS ETC)

Benefits of the activity

- Helps with development of motor skills
- Improves balance and co-ordination
- Enhances listening and communication skills
- Teamwork skills
- Trust/empathy – forming relationships with fellow teammates
- Problem solving
- Sensory development
- Heightened awareness of surroundings and improving connection with the natural world
- Risk management

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Bump on head from walking into a tree or branch	2	1	2	1
Major injury to limbs/ joints from tripping on obstacles (break or sprain)	1	3	3	3
Minor injury to limbs/ joints from tripping on obstacles (bruise/pulled muscle)	3	1	3	2
Eye injury from branches or plants (scratch or penetrative injury)	1	2	2	2
Bruises, cuts, grazes or stings from nettles, brambles, logs etc	3	1	3	2
Panic attack from blindfold sensation	1	2	2	2
contamination from shared use of blindfolds	1	1	1	1
allergic reaction to vegetation or to blindfolds	1	3	3	3

Control Measures

- selecting a suitable site for the activity with no unnecessary obstacles on the route
- appropriate adult supervision
- an appointed person to be watching those blindfolded and ensuring they are not heading towards dangerous obstacles
- washing and drying the blindfolds after each use to avoid contamination spreading
- clearly explaining that those who feel uncomfortable are not obliged to be blindfolded

Further Measures

- First aid kit on site and qualified first aider present (if possible with water safety training)
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and updates of risk assessments.

BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - TOOLS

Benefits of the activity

- Improves manual dexterity and strength
- Access to new skills and equipment
- Problem solving
- Creativity and design
- Responsibility
- Hand/eye coordination
- Teamwork and patience
- Benefit to the environment from end product – eg bird box, insect house

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Major cut (severing or impaling part of the body)	1	3	3	1
Minor cut/graze	2	2	4	3
Injuring bystander or teammate	1	2	2	2

Control Measures

- complete site risk assessment and site checks
- teach safe practice and correct tool use
- designated work area for tool use
- tools stored in a safe place with access only by session leader
- careful maintenance of tools – sharpen/clean blades and drill bits
- ensure adult:child ratio is high enough for someone to supervise work area
- individual risk assessments for each tool

Further Measures

- First Aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and update of risk assessments

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BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - TOOLS - DRILLS

Benefits of the activity

- Improves manual dexterity and strength
- Access to new skills and equipment
- Problem solving
- Creativity and design
- Responsibility
- Hand/eye coordination
- Patience
- Benefit to the environment from end product - eg bird box, insect house

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Major cut (severing or impaling part of the body)	1	3	3	1
Minor cut/graze	2	2	4	3
Injuring bystander or teammate	1	2	2	2

Control Measures

- complete site risk assessment and site checks
- teach safe practice and correct tool use
- designated work area for tool use
- tools stored in a safe place with access only by session leader
- careful maintenance of tools - clean/replace drill bits
- ensure adult:child ratio is high enough for someone to supervise work area

Further Measures

- First Aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and update of risk assessments

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BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - TOOLS - KNIVES

Benefits of the activity

- Improves manual dexterity and strength
- Access to new skills and equipment
- Problem solving
- Creativity and design
- Responsibility
- Hand/eye coordination
- Patience
- Creating useful tools for the site - tent pegs, bashers, kindling etc

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Major cut (severing or impaling part of the body)	1	3	3	1
Minor cut/graze	2	2	4	3
Injuring bystander or teammate	1	2	2	2

Control Measures

- complete site risk assessment and site checks
- teach safe practice and correct tool use
- designated work area for tool use
- tools stored in a safe place with access only by session leader
- careful maintenance of tools - sharpen/clean blades
- ensure adult:child ratio is high enough for someone to supervise work area
- individual knives need to be signed in and out using the book in the tool box

Further Measures

- First Aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and update of risk assessments

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BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - TOOLS - SAWS

Benefits of the activity

- Improves manual dexterity and strength
- Access to new skills and equipment
- Problem solving
- Creativity and design
- Responsibility
- Hand/eye coordination
- Teamwork and Patience
- Benefit to the environment from end product - eg bird box, insect house

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Major cut (severing or impaling part of the body)	1	3	3	1
Minor cut/graze	2	2	4	3
Injuring bystander or teammate	1	2	2	2

Control Measures

- complete site risk assessment and site checks
- teach safe practice and correct tool use
- designated work area for tool use
- tools stored in a safe place with access only by session leader
- careful maintenance of tools - clean/replace blades
- ensure adult:child ratio is high enough for someone to supervise work area

Further Measures

- First Aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and update of risk assessments

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BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - TOOLS - SECATEURS AND LOPPERS

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Benefits of the activity

- Improves manual dexterity and strength
- Access to new skills and equipment
- Responsibility
- Hand/eye coordination
- Conservation and ID skills - coppicing
- Providing materials for craft activities

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Major cut (severing or impaling part of the body)	1	3	3	1
Minor cut/graze	2	2	4	3
Injuring bystander or teammate	1	2	2	2

Control Measures

- complete site risk assessment and site checks
- teach safe practice and correct tool use
- designated work area for tool use
- tools stored in a safe place with access only by session leader
- careful maintenance of tools - sharpen/clean blades
- ensure adult-child ratio is high enough for someone to supervise work area

Further Measures

- First Aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and update of risk assessments

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BENEFIT RISK ASSESSMENT - TREE CLIMBING

Benefits of the activity

- Develops muscle strength
- Improves balance and coordination
- Problem solving skills
- Develops confidence and builds self-esteem
- Relationship with the world, closer to nature
- Tactile sensation
- Role play
- Knowledge of tree identification/habitats

Risks	likelihood	severity	RR	PCMRR
Broken bones from falling from tree	2	2	4	2
Head injury from falling from tree	2	3	6	3
Eye injury from sharp stick (scratch or penetration)	2	2	4	2
Bite or sting from disturbed insects	1	2	2	2
Splinter from tree	2	1	2	2

Control Measures

- Complete site risk assessment and site checks
- ensure there are always three points of contact on the tree
- no one may climb to a height above 5m
- check the health/suitability of the tree
- do not allow other children to stand beneath the tree while it is being climbed
- designated spotter within sight of the tree
- explain safe practice for tree climbing

Further Measures

- First aid kit on site and qualified first aider present
- qualified Forest School leader or equivalent present
- annual review and updates of risk assessments