

Forest School Handbook

Abergele Youth Den



Blue Douglas

Declaration from adults involved with Forest School

I declare that I have read the Forest School handbook and will refer to it regarding all policies and procedures. I will carry out all roles and responsibilities set out within this handbook.

Name	I have read the handbook?	Signed
Blue Douglas		
Jamie Rogers		
Ben		

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Person responsible:	Richard Blue Douglas

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Section 1- Introduction

What is forest school?

Forest school is the use of outdoor spaces, like woodland, which enables us to create a program to enrich the lives of children and young people through outdoor learning experiences. Giving hands on opportunities to connect and explore nature and the natural environment helps young people scaffold their learning by building skills such as confidence, communication, personal co-ordination, self esteem and resilience.

Forest school has been developed in the UK since the 1900's and is based on outdoor learning. Initially this was championed by practitioners such as Wordsworth or Baden Powell through the scouting movement. They provided spaces where young people could learn about the environment around them , manage risk and use one's own initiative to develop independence. In 1925 Leslie Paul founded The Woodcraft Folk as a direct result of the national social problems caused by world war one. This was developed 'entirely by young people themselves' (L.Paul 1950) to provide a space where young people can grow through the natural environment and make new friends. In 1993 three nurses from Somerset went to Denmark to explore pre school education in the open air culture of Scandinavia focusing in particular on alternate models of learning. Back home, they established their own outdoor learning programs with great success. By 1995 outdoor learning and forest school was recognised as needing trained professionals and the first national courses were established. In 2001 the Welsh Government was crucial in forming Forest school Wales and by 2011/12 the first definitive principles were established and the Forest School Association (FSA) was established for the whole of the UK.

The Forest School Association describes Forest school as;

'A young person focused process providing learner inspiration, hands on experience and opportunities to explore the natural environment, in particular woodland covered areas.'
(FSA 2023)

There are 6 underpinning principles that are central to the ethos of Forest School;

1. It is a long-term process and takes time
2. It takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment
3. Promotes holistic learning and development
4. It encourages and explores managed risk taking
5. It is delivered by qualified and experienced professionals
6. It takes young people where they are personally are learner centered

Section 2 - Who We Are

Youth Den Forest School

Youth Den Forest School (YSFS) has three locations but is primarily based at The Youth Den, Llandrillo College, Faenol Avenue, LL22 7HT. This is where we would undertake some training, theory and health and safety with our young people before taking them out to one of our two other external locations. Young people can explore some outdoor learning on site and feel safe and comfortable, develop trust with staff before going into an actual forest or woodland.

Our second site is in Coed Y Gopa woods (SH937767) and with permission from The Woodland Trust (Becky Good). This is a broadleaf wooded area within a scheduled monument where we are strict about leaving the designated site exactly as we found it. This site can be prohibitive especially during dry weather and /or if there are forest workers present. We access this through driving to the car park and then a short 20 min walk up to the site.

Our third site (and the one we most use) is on Tower Hill (SH9575) and is managed by the Forestry Commission, and is in a coniferous woodland. Our site is up through the coniferous sections and in the broadleaf copses that surround the tower it's self on top of the hill. On this site young people have developed a more permanent space where shelters, the fire circle and fence structures can be left standing. We ensure any structure or affordances are made of windfall, temporary and can be removed quickly.

Our Site Provisions

Youth Den provides a safe Forest School Provision over seen by Abergele Community Action, and (at time of writing) in partnership with Emrys High School in terms of pupil involvement. On site there is normally one Level 3 forest school provider and two level 3 qualified youth workers. Staff are also First aid Qualified and DBS checked. which is updated every 3 years to comply with regulations. All Abergele Youth Den staff must have DBS and First Aid, as well as Safeguarding and food hygiene. In addition we have a trained Mental Health first aider. We also have a MIND mental health worker on secondment with our team who can provide immediate support where young people need additional help.

Mission Statement

We believe in fun. Through weekly visits to our forest school site young people will have the opportunity to focus on their wellbeing and connect with the natural environment; building their self-esteem and confidence through learning about the natural world and developing skills. Our focus will be enriching the lives and skill base of young people using different experiences, and the power of nature as a tool to help alleviate pressures such as anxiety and fears of the wider world. We aim to do this through putting our young people at the heart

of our decision making processes and empowering them through participation, involvement and education. We will also provide food every week not only working on living skills, but meeting the needs of our young people while offering nurture and a safe space. In particular we use forest school as a model to work through anti-social behaviour problems with young people. It is important to note that we also follow youth work guidelines and adhere to the [Principles and Purposes of Youth Work in Wales \(2022\)](#).

Site Layout

YSFS provides for young people age 11-25. However mostly we work with young people 11-15. We ensure each site adheres to the site management plan so as not to overuse. Having three separate sites means we can alternate to limit any potential damage to each site. We also ensure safety checks are undertaken before and after sessions. Full site maps are available in the appendices



Section 3 - Policies & Procedures

Health and Safety

Within the forest school all Youth Den Health & Safety policies and procedures are followed. All staff and adult helpers (parents and volunteers) must read the main forest school handbook, and be aware of the relevant risk assessments before participating in Forest school sessions. Additional information can be obtained through Abergele Community Action which is informed by the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974).

The Forest school Leader is the person responsible for health and safety during Forest school sessions. They must adhere to the rules and regulations set out by the Youth Den manager and Health and safety at work Regulations 1999. Forest School is underwritten by the Abergele Community Action Insurance Policy provided by AXA Insurance. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (2014) and the Health and safety at work Act (1974) also places a number of legal and safeguarding responsibilities on us. These can be accessed through our project manager and deputy safeguarding officers Jamie Rogers and Helen Edgely.

Essential Equipment

As standard, essential equipment **MUST** be carried by the leader/senior member of staff and must be on hand. this will include the following:-

- A copy of the Handbook.
- first Aid Kit, including burns kit.
- List of the children with allergies and Medication.
- Emergency Contact List
- Risk assessments
- Accident book
- Spare clothes/kit. Mobile Phone.
- Water for both Fire and drinking, Snacks/food

Operations

Forest School operates through the year and in all weather conditions. However, there are exceptions such as:

- High Winds over 15mph,
- Temperatures under 4 degrees Celsius
- If any other weather warnings are issued by the Met Office

in such cases the groups will be notified of cancellation at the earliest opportunity. Alternatively we can rearrange for a more enclosed site (like the youth den), or we can opt

for a theory day, again back at the youth den. There will be a minimum of 1 qualified 1st aider for each group of 15 participants.

We run two days per week with a theory day followed by a practical day. During half terms and holidays we run a forest school for one day per week, and all year round and this is aimed at our youth den members as opposed to those referred to us.

There is a kit list or de-brief provided to each group before the start of their activities and changes made dependent on activities time of year and weather.

Cars can be parked on site at youth den, hiking to both sites from there takes up to an hour. There is a small car park at the Coed Y Gopa site and a lay-by near the Tower Hill site. From here each site respectively from the car park is about 20-30mins depending on equipment.

Normally the forest school worker will meet the groups at the car park and walk them to the forest school site. If the group is leaving the Youth Den then responsibility for carrying equipment is shared between the group.

First Aid

There must be First Aid kits available at all sessions. Access to these is permitted to the relevant and qualified people, and they are not to be used by children and young people. The first aid kit will be in date and fully stocked containing:- instant ice/heat packs, antiseptic wipes, eye irrigation, solution sachets, jumbo plasters, medium plasters, triangular bandages, large self adhesive wound dressings, small self adhesive wound dressing, crepe bandages, protective gloves, eye pads, roll micropore tape, CPR face shield, foil Blankets and a separate burns kit.

When first aid is administered the first aid record is completed by the member of staff. This includes a description of what happened, what treatment was applied, who provided the treatment, time and date. This information is reviewed periodically by Youth Den staff to identify any recurring patterns that require further Health and Safety intervention.

As aforementioned we also recognise that first aid is not just external, and so we also have a mental health first aider with us should our MIND support worker be absent.

Emergency Accidents and Near Misses

In case of an emergency the appropriate people must be contacted Immediately. Accidents or incidents must be dealt with in accordance with Abergele Community Action guidelines. All Accidents and near misses must be recorded in the correct booklet. RIDDOR (Reporting of injuries, disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) Is a required UK health and safety regulation we adhere to.

In case of emergency the Forest School leader will have access to all participants emergency contact details. These are stored in accordance with GDPR in a passcode accessible box. Parent and Carers will be informed as soon as possible. All forest school

staff are able to contact each other via walkie talkies which can be used to communicate if needed during emergency situations. Mobile phone signal is available at all sites, and in the event of an emergency the staff will contact Youth Den Safeguarding Officer.

Code of Conduct

Youth Den has its own [code of conduct](#). Additionally we discuss codes of conduct with our young people on a session by session basis. This way each set of young people are treated uniquely. We have agreed with our young people standard rules such as no one should be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or they will be unable to attend the session or should they turn up under the influence they will be asked to leave.

The core principles of the Youth Den code of conduct are:

- We beg, we borrow but we do not steal
- Everybody matters, everybody is valued
- There has to be give and take – it is not a one-way street
- We live for the moment but we plan for tomorrow
- We accept and we are accepted
- We create a safe and secure space where people can turn to
- We leave a legacy for other young people to be a part of
- We serve our community not just ourselves
- We might not have the skills, but we will learn the skills we need
- We eat together, we BE together
- We enjoy the journey together – the highs and the lows

Young people are made aware that forest school can be a dangerous place should they choose not to listen to safety advice when using tools, and that if they refuse to follow safety procedures they will not be allowed to proceed with that activity for the safety of themselves and others. This is in keeping with the provision and use of work Equipment Regulations (1998). No tools are to be carried off site during Forest School activities, and tools will be counted in and out. All tools are stored in safety boxes that are passcode accessible. The Criminal Justice Act (1988) states that it is illegal to carry a tool that can be deemed as a weapon including a knife over 7.6cm therefore they will be carried in locked boxes if carried off site. Young people are also taught safe fire lighting and extinguishing and are expected to follow these guidelines.

Young people are encouraged not to use their mobile phones during forest school activities. There is a charging point in the Youth Den building where young people can leave their phones securely. Where mobile phones are used we ask for discretion and participation and not to take photographs of people unless they have consented.

Equality / Inclusion Policy

The Equality Act (2010) makes it a legal responsibility not to discriminate on the grounds of gender, religion, disability age and race. Forest school must be inclusive to all and offer each individual the same opportunities and provide adaptations where applicable and when asked to do so. Equality reminds us to be aware of diversity and that each person is an individual with rights. We aim to empower people through the equality act making forest school accessible to all. For example we have cultural and religious needs within our group. We need to provide Halal meat where necessary or deliver vegetarian food. We also need to be aware of hidden disabilities within our group such as ASD/ADHD and be adaptable and inclusive to these needs. We also have staffed trained in mental health first aid and a seconded MIND worker to provide immediate support where necessary.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Young people attending Forest School will be issued with a kit list prior to starting. They are advised to wear long trousers, and closed toe shoes like hiking boots or trainers. Clothes should be worn dependent on weather like warm clothes for cold weather or waterproofs or cool breathable layers. Sun cream should be worn/ advised in hot weather.

When using tools PPE should be used such as:-

Work Gloves:- A work glove should be worn on the non working/tool hand to avoid cuts/scrapes/ splinters. it is advised not to wear a glove on the dominant hand as it may impede grip.

Hard Hats:- Hard hats are required when working in areas where there is a potential of injury to the head from falling objects. such as from branches when coppicing.

High Vis Jackets: - High Vis jackets are worn by Forest School leaders and staff when walking to and from sites and escorting groups.

Manual Handling

Manual handling is a mandatory part of our internal induction within Youth Den and all staff must complete. Within forest school we foster the participation and ownership of the session to our young people and expect them to play a role in the carrying and transporting of materials. Young people are encouraged to roll, lift, drag and pull materials whether by hand or ropes. The safe way to lift will be demonstrated and verbalized. This includes bend with your knees keeping your back straight. Heavier objects will be carried by multiple people to work in teams and share loads.

Comfort Breaks

At the Youth Den there is a designated toilet area that young people are encouraged to use before they leave for Forest School activities. There is one public toilet which is accessible to and from the Forest School sites. If and Forest School participants need to use the toilet during activities they are advised that toileting should be at least 30 m away from any water source or path, and waste buried at least 15cm deep and covered over. A designated shovel is provided, along with biodegradable toilet paper which is then placed in a waste carrier bag and removed from site. A handwashing site is also provided.

Food will be provided due to dietary needs and as well as culture. Young people will have a say on what is cooked each week to foster ownership of the session. Drinking water will always be provided. Young people are briefed not to eat anything they find in the woods.

Fire Circle

At our forest school site we have a fire circle with a fire at the center. Young people are seated on logs and branches 1.5 meters from the fire. There must be no running within the fire, young people may be encouraged to walk around the seating area and not cross in the middle. Items being carried must be placed on the ground behind the seating. Young people are encouraged to step over the logs and branches and sit down.

The fire is not left unattended and an adult is always at hand until it is extinguished. We tend to the fire on the one knee position this is demonstrated by the adults/staff and taught/reminded to the young people at each session. Young people will be taught about fire safety and the importance of extinguishing a fire properly after each session.

Campfire management

Below are the principles used for the management of campfires during Forest School.

- The site of the fire should be away from buildings and structures, and away from tents and tarps.
- If lighting a fire under a tarp, it must have a clearance height of 2.5 meters.
- Staff will check for any trip hazard.
- Wind direction must be considered when choosing a site.
- To create a base for the fire three larger logs can be used. This also represents the three elements needed for lighting a successful fire Oxygen, Heat, and Fuel.
- Always have a 15 liters. bucket of water on hand deep enough to submerge an arm in case of a burn.
- No plastics to be placed on the fire
- We have a space of at least 3ft between the fire and young people attending
- No objects to be thrown into the fire
- Children and young people to be supervised adding fuel (wood) to the fire.
- We have a separate storage area for baggage

Procedures to be carried out before each session

Each half term our site is thoroughly checked and any major jobs are done. A daily safety site sweep risk assessment is required before the beginning and end of each session (an example is available in the appendices). This is done by looking around the site at the start of each session checking for broken items, hanging branches and litter, anything that may be a hazard or affect session. Weather conditions and considerations to impact on session should also be reviewed.

Procedures to be carried out at the end of each session

Check site and ensure fire is extinguished properly. Ensure all tools are in, cleaned and locked away. Ensure everyone is accounted for and off the site. Take all rubbish away and clean up. Collect observations or assessment sheets. Assess what learning took place, what went well, what didn't and observations or unexpected outcomes. Discuss ideas and future planning with staff.

Tools

All tools are to be stored securely. The forest school leader has overall responsibility and access. Designated areas are used for activities involving tools, and young people are taught the safe way to carry, extract and use tools and in accordance with demonstrations from a forest school practitioner. When not being used they are stored in a locked safe room and on site in a secure designated box. Tools are counted out and in. They are kept sharp, clean and disinfected. Tool risk assessments are below:

Tool	USE	Safety/Maintenance.
Knife 	• used for cutting string or rope. • whittling, • splitting wood, • carving cooking • chopping	• Glove to be worn on non tool hand • check tool for any damage before using • pass by the handle not the blade. • check “blood bubble” is clear before using • always cut away from the body, arms over legs to the side. • blade kept clean and sharpened. • put back in sheath with a ‘click’ when not in use • should be stored somewhere that can be locked.
Loppers 	• Cutting branches no bigger than 7 cm diameter thickness. • use sheath of the leath for leverage. • put wood as close to the hinge as possible	• Both hands on handles, no gloves worn when using loppers • one person at a time using tool although people can assist in holding branch still and firm. • check “blood bubble” is clear • when cutting ensure footing is secure • Carry loppers. keeping both ends together. using lower handles. pass shaft first. • hard hat needed if cuing above head height. • Loppers will need to be stored safely in tool bag.
Pruning Saw  Secateurs	• used to cut larger bushes and smaller trees. used to trim. • secure wood before using • make an impression/groove in the wood the blade works on the pull action • Used for cutting small branches	• Gloves to be worn on non tool hand • check blood bubble • carry folded and pass folded or handle • clean after use fold and store securely in tool bag • glove to be worn on non tool hand • check tool for damage • carry tools by handles and facing

	and off-shoots • putting wood as close to the fringe as possible, cutting branches and wood up to thumb size.	down and closed • pass closed handle first. • use safety lock when not in use. store safely
Axe 	• Used to split wood. or chopping large peices of wood. • when in use, position yourself to the side of the blades arch. • when splitting wood place the axe head onto wood and hit with a mallet do not hit metal on metal.	• glove to be worn on non tool hand • make sure blade cover is on when not in use • ensure axe head is secure to handle. check axe eye • clean • sharpen • put away safely in bag or box

Section 4 - Personal Safety

Safeguarding

We adhere to Abergele Community Action safeguarding policies and procedures. We have a duty of care to keep children and adults safe, promote their welfare and wellbeing and protect them from abuse. Social Services is the lead Service for dealing with enquiries regarding allegations /concerns that children and adults may be suffering significant harm, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard. Therefore, everyone working with children, young people or vulnerable adults needs to be DBS checked which is done every 3 years. All our staff have also completed separate safeguarding training (2023) and are trained (up) to under and post level graduates as nationally qualified JNC youth workers.

Disclosures

If a young person is disclosing something to a member of staff it is advised to follow this practice:-

1. Listen to the child/young person. But do NOT ask any leading questions. Allow the child to lead the discussion but do not press for details. our job is to listen not investigate.
2. Keep calm and offer reassurance. Accept what the child says without challenge.
3. Make No promises. You can not keep a secret. you must make it clearly understood there are limits to confidentiality and you are bound by safeguarding rules.
4. inform your manager, as soon as possible. do not discuss with irrelevant people for confidentiality reasons, but remember information sharing within agencies.
5. keep accurate written record of the conversation. date, time. and what happened. complete safeguarding referral if necessary.

Lone working

There is no lone working in Forest School. Forest school sessions must not be run by lone workers; at least two or more adults must be on site for the session to run. One leader can work with a group of up to 4 young people but another adult must be within contactable space.

Lost person

In the event of a young person becoming lost while at forest school the forest school leader will follow a systematic approach to find them. This includes the use of staff walkie-talkie to coordinate a search, while 2 staff remain with the rest of the group. Young people should not participate in any search efforts, as this could lead to greater risk. Considerations will be made to the level of risk regarding the lost person. The procedure will be as follows:

- Attendance will be checked
- Staff members will discuss last time and place seen and what they were wearing, and their mental state of being
- A search conducted as soon as possible.
- Emergency contact will be notified and authorities notified when applicable.
- If deemed necessary police will be contacted and police advice and guidance will be followed
- While this is ongoing other members of the group will be cared for separately and taken home if applicable.

Loose animal or intruder

The Forest School sites are not private spaces and open to public use. Therefore the group may come into contact with dogs, animals and members of the public. The staff will make an

assessment with regards to the level of danger posed by the animal or human, eg looking for signs of aggression or sickness for example. Staff will have a designated safe phrase that will be used in emergency situations. If used by members of the staff team, the procedure will be to gather the group together by the fire, call emergency services, and attempt to safely move the danger away.

Data protection

Youth Den follow GDPR rules and guidelines as outlined by Abergele Community Action, as well as Data protection Act (2018). The Data protection Act outlines that personal data that leads to identification of an individual such as name, DOB, address should be kept securely so as not to be shared with any other parties. All young people's information is kept safe in a password coded box. A person under 18 can not consent to their information or pictures being used; this must be obtained in written consent from parents/careers. There is a separate content form for this.

Risk management/assessment and risk-benefit assessment policy

In order to ensure the safe operation of Forest School activities, a complete risk assessment process has been completed. This includes a general site risk assessment for each site, risk benefits assessments, as well as processes for site safety sweep before and after sessions. In addition the Forest School leader and other staff are encouraged and supported to undertake dynamic risk assessment whilst activities are in progress. These risk assessments are included in the appendices. All risk assessments are periodically reviewed at least every 6 months.

Risk assessment documents are found in the appendices below, including

- **General site risk assessment**
- **A minimum of 6 Risk benefit assessments**
- **Daily site safety sweep checklist and sign-off form**

Section 5 - Appendices

1) Site Maps

2) General Site and activity risk assessment for Forest School

3) Site risk assessment for Coed Y Gopa and Tower Hill site

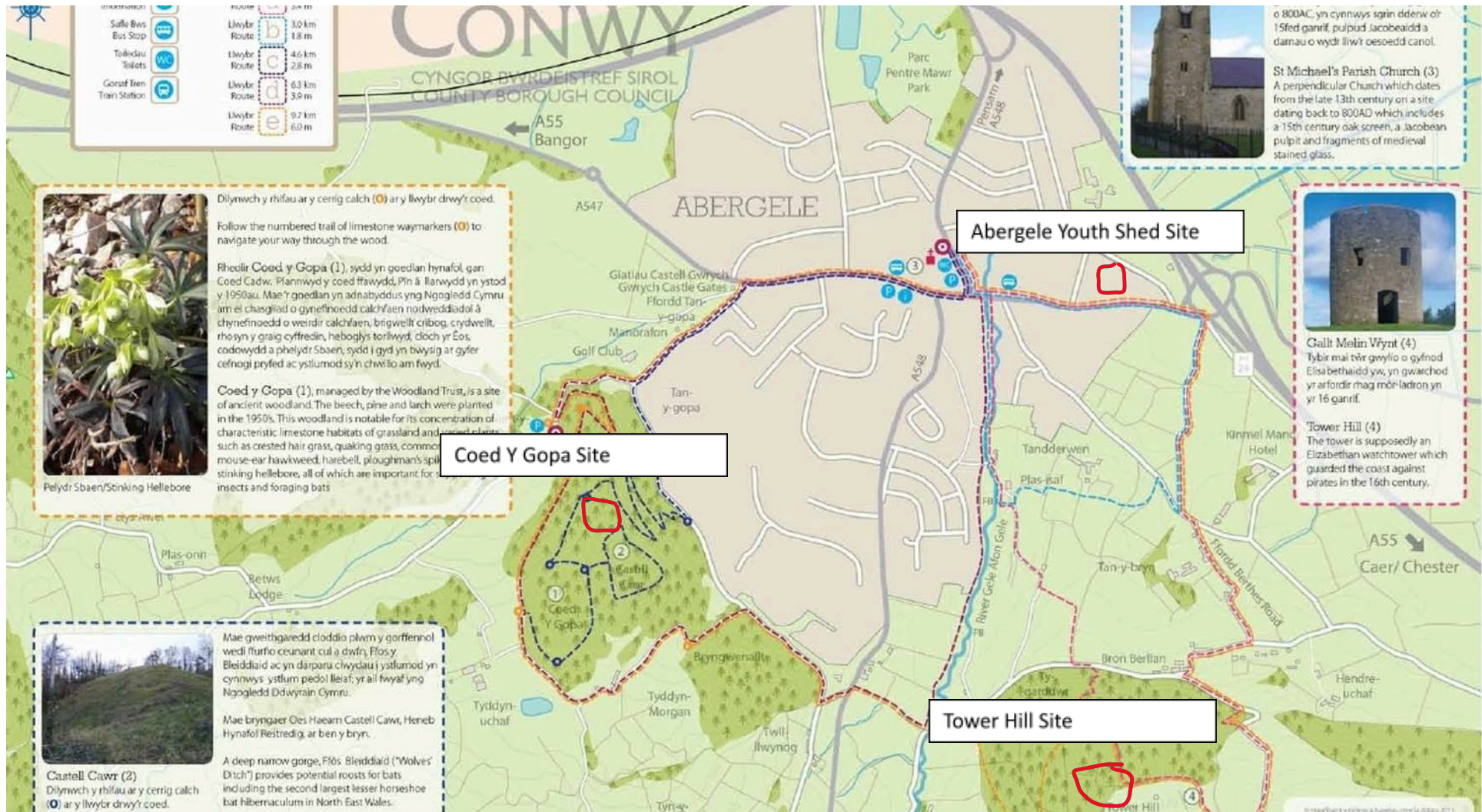
4) Risk benefit assessments

5) Example Daily site safety sweep checklist and sign-off form

6) Example Parental Consent Form

7) Site Management and ecological impact plan

Appendix 1 – Site Map



Appendix 2_General Site and activity risk assessment for Forest School

Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Risk level	existing measures / new measures	New Risk level	Responsibility
nettles and brambles	stinging	all	Medium	Make children aware, clear pathways and main play areas. Children to wear long trousers.	Low	Session leader
berried flora	poisoning	children	High	Inform all children not to pick or eat berries. Wash hands before eating.	Low	Session Leader
tree roots and stumps	tripping	all	Medium	Inform all to take care in woods, clear walkways of bramble roots.	Low	Session Leader
tree branches	Branches falling, children falling.	all	High	Pre-visit & continuous risk check, remove hanging dead wood. Remind children of risks.	Low	Session Leader
sticks	hitting	children	Medium	Inform children of rules, use a stick no longer than your arm, no hitting.	Low	Session Leader
faeces	contamination	all	High	Pre-visit & continuous risk check, remove and discard safely.	Low	Session Leader

Hazard	Harm	People at risk	Risk level	existing measures / new measures	New Risk level	Responsibility
debris / rubbish	Glass, drug use, metals.	all	High	Pre-visit & continuous risk check, ask children not to pick up rubbish, inform an adult if they find something, adult to remove safely.	Low	Session Leader
fire	Burns, out of control.	all	High	Trained staff present at all times, safety procedures followed.	Low	Session Leader
perimeter & gates	escape of children	children	Medium	Ensure all gates are closed and main gates are locked.	Low	all - on visit
Mushroom and fungi	poisoning	all		Inform all children and adults to look only, no touching.	Low	all - on visit

bees, wasps, adders.	stings and bites	all	Medium	Check area for nests, avoid contact, first aider always on site, and seek medical aid (999) if anaphylactic shock or adder bite are present.	Medium	all - on visit
tools	cuts, grazes, amputation.	all	High	tools stored away from premises, used on a one to one basis, <i>*separate risk assessment for each tool available in Forest School handbook</i> , strict supervision, correct use of tools.	Medium	All - on visit
boundaries	escapees	children	Medium	Children informed of boundaries, staff supervise the boundary.	Low	All - on visit
ropes and swings	falls	children	Medium	Check quality of ropes & knots. First aider on site at all times.	Low	All - on visit
trees	falls	children	Medium	First aider on site at all times, support children to manage their own risks.	Low	All - on visit

Appendix 4 – Example Risk Benefit Assessments

Activity Risk Assessment Forest School Youth Den Abergele

15/6/ 2026

Young People 11-18

Activity Leaders
Blue Douglas
Jamie Rogers

Lighting fires

Hazard	Persons affected	Effect Of hazard	Severity	Likelihood	Total Risk	Existing and additional Control Measures (Where appropriate)	Risk Benefit	Who is responsible	Severity	Likelihood	Total Risk
Collecting wood	all	Splinters, cuts, gouges	2	3	6	When collecting wood always use gloves Remind individuals note to run around the trees Remind individuals to be aware of any low branches particularly at eye level	Pupils enjoy the fun of collecting wood	all	2	2	4
Using a saw	all	Cuts to fingers, and & legs	3	3	9	Holding had must always be gloved. Blood bubble must be established. Correct stance for using a saw must be used Remind user to always close or guard the blade before putting it down. Remind user to return the tool to the tool bag when they have finished with it.	Pupils learn and practice sawing. And the ability to cut the wood to a given length	all	3	2	6
Using striker (flint and steel)	all	Burns, blisters to fingers, Burn holes to clothing.	2	3	6	Staff to "warm up strikers for any pupil who may have difficulty producing a spark Pupils will be instructed how to use the striker kit safely and for the greatest effect Pupils will direct the spark only at the fire starter and nowhere else Old clothing to be worn	Fun of creating a spark Excitement of creating a spark Sense of achievement at creating a spark and lighting a fire	all	2	2	4

						Pupils will be shown how to Adopt the correct stance when working near a fire Bucket of clean water near the fire					
Adding wood to an established fire	all	Burns	4	3	12	Pupils will wear a glove when adding wood to an established fire Pupils will adopt the correct stance for working by a fire. Pupils will be taught to add wood in small amounts i.e. a handful at a time. Long hair to be tied back or put in a hat Bucket of clean water near fire	Seeing the flames grow Hearing the wood crackle Smelling the wood smoke Feeling their eyes run when smoke get sin them Learning to stay out of the smoke and stay upwind	all	2	3	6
Name of Assessor		Signature of Assessor				Renewal Date					
R. Douglas		<i>Richard Douglas</i>				July 2027					

Activity Risk Assessment and Risk Benefits Forest School Youth Den Abergele

Date 15/6/ 26

Young People 11-18 years Old

Activity Leaders

Blue Douglas

Jamie Rogers

Clay Pot making using clay from the ground

Hazard	Persons affected	Effect Of hazard	Severity	Likelihood	Total Risk	Existing and additional Control Measures (Where appropriate)	Risk Benefit	Who is responsible	Severity	Likelihood	Total Risk
Using a trowel to dig up clay	all	Possible hand injury /blisters	2	3	6	Pupils wear thick gloves	Seeing where clay for posts comes from Achievement of digging the clay out	all	2	2	4
Squashing clay and water together by hand	all	Cuts from stones and o sharp objects mixed in the clay	2	3	6	Pupils wear non latex gloves	The feeling of squashing the clay between fingers Smell of the wet clay	all	2	2	4
Wet clay on skin	all	Infections from soil via broken or sore skin psoriasis	2	3	6	Pupils are given non latex gloves to wear Clean water and soap present so hand washing can be done as soon a possible	Forming a pot or object from clay dug from the earth Sense of achievement	all	1	2	2
Placing the completed clay pots in the fire to dry and harden	all	Pupils burning fingers Pupils falling in the fire Pupils hair catching fire Burns to clothing	3	3	9	Pupils will all wear gloves when putting the "pots" in the fire Pupils will all be shown the correct stance near a fire any pupil with long hair will ether tie it up or wear a hat to keep it away from the flames	Pupils see how clay was fired by prehistoric people. Sense of achievement of finished pot	all	3	2	6
Name of Assessor			Signature of Assessor				Renewal Date				

Blue Douglas	<i>Blue Douglas</i>	July 2027
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Activity Risk Assessment and Risk Benefits Forest School Youth Den Abergele

Date 15/6/26 **Group** Young people aged 11-18

Activity Leaders
Blue Douglas, Jamie
Rogers

Den Building

Hazard	Persons affected	Effect Of hazard	Sever ity	Lik eli ho od	Tot al Ris k	Existing and additional Control Measures (Where appropriate)	Risk Benefit	W ho is res po nsi ble	Se ver ity	Lik eli ho od	T o t a l R i s k
Collecting wood	all	Splinters , cuts, gouges	2	3	6	When collecting wood always use gloves Remind young people not to run around the trees	Young people enjoy the fun of collecting wood	all	2	2	4

						Remind YP to be aware of any low branches particularly at eye level					
Using a saw	all	Cuts to fingers, and legs	3	3	9	Holding Non-working hand bubble must be gloved Established blood bubble Correct stance for using a saw must be used Remind user to always close or guard the blade before putting it down. Remind user to return the tool to the tool bag when they have finished with it.	Young people learn and practice sawing and the ability to cut the wood to a given length	all	3	2	6
Construction	all	Falling timber	2	2	4	Leaders to periodically check the construction and advise modifications if needed	Young people are able to take part in the design and construction of a den	all	2	2	4
Tying knots	all	Knots not effective	2	4	8	Individuals practice knots to be used prior to beginning to build Leaders to check knots to establish they are fit for purpose	YP are able to practice their knotting skills and see them used in a practical and meaningful way	all	2	3	6
Using loppers	all	Cuts to fingers and other part of a body	3	3	9	Use gloves on both hands Remind user to keep the tool pointed at the floor when moving around	Young people can cut wood to given lengths to enable the construction of their design of Den.	all	3	2	6

						Remind the used to always leave the tool in the closed position when putting it down Reminded user to return the tool to the tool bag when they have finished using it.					
Using cord/rope	all	Rope burns strangulation	4	2	8	Young people told not to misbehave with the cord. Staff to be vigilant at all times.	Safe use of ropes and cords		2	2	4
Slips, trips and falls	all	Tripping over roots and branches. Tangled in ropes Slipping on wet leaves.	3	4	12	Young people to work as a team. YP and staff to maintain a clear working area ensuring trip hazards are removed where practicable	Safe working conditions		2	3	6
Name of Assessor		Signature of Assessor				Renewal Date					
Blue Douglas		Richard Douglas				July 2027					

Activity Risk Assessment and Risk Benefits Forest School Youth Den Abergele	
Date: 15/6/ 26	
Activity Leaders Blue Douglas Jamie Rogers	Making a Mallet

Hazard	Persons affected	Effect Of hazard	Severity	Likelihood	Total Risk	Existing and additional Control Measures (Where appropriate)	Risk Benefit	Who is responsible	Severity	Likelihood	Total Risk
Collecting wood	all	Splinters, cuts, gouges	2	3	6	When collecting wood always use gloves Remind individuals note to run around the trees. Remind individuals to be aware of any low branches particularly at eye level	Pupils enjoy the fun of collecting wood	all	2	2	4
Using a saw	all	Cuts to fingers, and & legs	3	3	9	Holding hand must always be gloved. Blood bubble must be established. Correct stance for using a saw must be used. Remind user to always close or guard the blade before putting it down. Remind user to return the tool to the tool bag when they have finished with it.	Pupils learn and practice sawing. And the ability to cut the wood to a given length	all	3	2	6
Using a fixed blade knife	all	Cuts to fingers, hands, legs, Possible torso wounds	4	3	12	Pupil will wear glove on the holding hand. Pupils will establish a blood bubble. Pupils will adopt the correct position for using a knife to carve with Pupils will adopt the correct position when using the knife as a means of splitting and paring the timber. Pupils will be instructed the correct way to put a knife down and sheath it Pupils will be instructed to return the knife to the box when not using it.	Pupils will learn to use a knife safely and responsibly as a tool.	all	3	3	9
Chips of wood flying into eyes when using the knife and mallet to "chisel" the wood	Carver and F/S	Eye injuries	3	3	9	Safety glass to be worn by all	Pupils learn to use a knife and "mallet" to shape live wood.	Both pupil and staff	3	2	6
Name of Assessor		Signature of Assessor				Renewal Date					
Richard Douglas		<i>Richard Douglas</i>				July 2027					

**Activity Risk Assessment and Risk Benefits Forest School Youth Den
Abergele**

Date: 15/6/ 26		Young People aged 11-18									
Activity Leaders Blue Douglas, Jamie Rogers		Swings									
Hazard	Persons affected	Effect Of hazard	Se ver ity	Lik eli ho od	Tot al Ris k	Existing and additional Control Measures (Where appropriate)	Risk Benefit	Who is respo nsibl e	Se ver ity	Lik eli ho od	T o t a l R i s k
Walking into path of swinging	Person on swing and walker	Bump or knock over	2	3	6	· If possible, use brightly coloured ropes/string. · Mark ropes/string with visible objects if needed. · Adults to monitor locations of ropes/string and move if necessary.	Fun activity that encourages social and team building skills	Leader	1	3	3
33Rope Burn	User	Injury to hand or other body part	2	2	4	Gloves to be worn if activity involves pulling a rope. · Adults to monitor use of rope and to control activities that involve pulling on rope	Fun activity that encourages social and team building skills		2	2	4
Entanglement	User	Strangulation	3	2	6	Groups taught to avoid putting ropes at neck height where people could walk into them. · Adults to monitor and advise where appropriate.	Fun activity that encourages social and team building skills		3	1	3
Name of Assessor		Signature of Assessor					Renewal Date				
R Douglas		<i>Richard Dougkas</i>					July 2027				

Name of Section or Activity	Pathways Pumpkin Carving	Date of risk assessment	15/6/26	Name of who undertook this risk assessment	Blue Douglas	To be reviewed	July 27
Hazard Identified? / Risks from it?	Who is at risk?	How are the risks already controlled? What extra controls are needed?		What has changed that needs to be thought about and controlled?			
<i>Hazard – something that may cause harm or damage. Risk – the chance of it happening.</i>	<i>Young people, Leaders, Visitors?</i>	<i>Controls – Ways of making the activity safer by removing or reducing the risk from it. For example - you might use a different piece of equipment or you might change the way the activity is carried out.</i>		<i>Keep checking throughout the activity in case you need to change it...or even stop it! This is a great place to add comments which will be used as part of the review.</i>			
Hazard: Cuts to themselves whilst carving the pumpkin (typically hands, fingers wrists etc) Risk: Low Severity: Low	Leader	• Leader will cut the top of the pumpkin off, using a large knife • Older members could be supervised with this once shown how to use sharp implements properly.					
		• Leader will cut the top of the pumpkin off, using a large knife • The carving tools to be used by the young people, for the carving itself are small carving kits, not proper knives. • Leader to talk to the young people about safety prior to carving					

		• Demonstrate how to carve the pumpkin safely • Support any young people that require assistance throughout the carving • Supervise the young people using the carving kits, throughout the session • Ensure that a First Aider is present	
Hazard: Allergies: to Pumpkins or plasters Risk: Low Severity: Moderate	Young people	• Ensure that no children have allergies to Plasters • Ensure that no children have allergies to Pumpkins	
Hazard: Covid-19 contamination (If C19 a risk) Risk: Moderate	Leaders & young people	• Remind young people of Covid rules regarding social distancing • Sanitise hands (hand gel) before, during & after session • Set up pumpkin stations at a safe distance (1m apart) • Leaders to wear masks (PPE) • Young people each have their own pumpkin & their own carving tools • Any transfer of any other equipment shall be sanitised / wiped between users – but none anticipated	

Severity: Moderate			
Hazard: Weather conditions Risk: Moderate Severity: Low	young people	If outdoors: • Ensure that the cubs are prepared & suitably dressed for being outside • If the weather is extreme e.g. torrential rain, then consider cancelling the session or find an indoor alternative • Start with a warmup game, or do one at some point during the session • Check with the young people that they are ok: verbally & observation If indoors: • Not applicable	
Hazard: Burns Risk: Low Severity: Low	young people	• Remind young people of Covid rules regarding lighting tea-light candles ○ Strike match away • Young people each have their own candles • Leaders to supervise whilst they're lighting them • Ensure water is available to put out any fires which become out of control • Any transfer of any other equipment shall be sanitised / wiped between users – lighter / matches	
Hazard: Challenging behaviour with knives / carving kit	(young people)	• Leader to talk to the young people about behaviour & safety prior to the session • Ensure the young people are aware of expected behaviours during the session and the consequences of not behaving properly • If behaviour is unacceptable consider a time-out or ultimately a sit out of the session	

Risk: Low			
Severity: Low			
Equipment	(young people)	• 1 pumpkin per yp • 1 small carving kit per yp • 2 tea-light candles per yp • Matches/lighter • Sharpie or marker pens	
Equipment	Leaders	• 1 large knife per leader • Newspaper and bin bags	

Appendix 5 – Example Daily Site Check List

Daily Checklist of Site

Location:

Forest School Leader:

Procedures to be carried out before each session:

A detailed check of the site will be carried out before each session to check for any litter, glass, animal faeces etc. Any such items shall be collected using plastic bags and disposable gloves.

- A written record will be kept of each check (Appendix 2). This shall state if any hazards were found and how they were dealt with.
- Trees will be checked for any broken or dead branches which may fall.
- Check of weather conditions. If it is excessively windy or a thunder storm is imminent or has commenced, then it will not be advisable to carry out a Forest School session.

Procedures to be carried out at the end of each session:

Collect resources in containers (check all are returned) and ensure forest school area is tidy.

- Participants to walk to the gate in pairs.
- Once through the gate participant can walk ahead of the leaders.
- Return resources to the storage area.
- Remove outdoor clothing.
- Wash hands.

Daily Risk Assessment:

Activity	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk5	Wk 6
Fire						
Cutting tools						
Games						
Rope work						
Tree felling						
Other						
Weather conditions						
Wind speed						
Risk of environmental injuries, hypothermia/heat stroke						
Location identified on SSRA. Grid ref and/or postal address post code						

Mobile phone available and best location identified						
1st aid kit available						
Water available						

Daily Checklist of Site

Date:	Time:	Weather:
Name of Forest School Leader (who carried out check):		

To Check	How	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk5	Wk6
General Site Condition: Rubbish, glass shards, cans etc.	Do a sweep of site on the morning of forest school session						
Check boundaries: Hazards tape in place at specific locations – along river bank, dodgy branch, back boundary	Put tape out in specified locations prior to each forest school session						
Trip hazards – check no branches have come down in weeks gap	Sweep of site – check for new large trip hazards						
Check seats are in position	Seats being stored in shelter						
Check kit list- first-aid, basin & water, tools etc.	have kit list needed for forest school						
Check Toilet/set up toilet space – dig hole in ground, weekly	dig hole and fill in on weekly basis						
Canopy, Shrub, & Ground Layer, fallen branches, stinging plants – nettles, brambles etc.	Remove obvious ones in way of where activities will take place						
Equipment in place, rucksack with gear present							

Other hazards identified:

Action taken:

Appendix 6 – Example Parental Consent Form

Forest School Parental Consent Form

Name of Child:

.....

I agree to my child taking part inForest School activities at regular intervals during the coming academic year/the next 8 weeks. Sessions will be led by a fully qualified Forest School leader. I understand my child will need to bring their own wellington boots and appropriate outdoor clothing.

I understand that my child may, at an appropriate level, have opportunities to work with hand tools and small fires through the course of their Forest School work.

Photographs/ Video Recordings			
I give permission for my child / children to be photographed whilst at Forest School and for these to be used in press releases or publications and on the website.			
Transport			
I give my permission for my child / children to be transported by Forest School in an emergency medical situation.			
Sun Cream			
I give my permission for my child to have sun cream applied, when necessary			
Medical Information			
I confirm that the medical information I have supplied in the form attached is fully up to date.			

I, being the parent/carer of

.....

agree/do not agree for my child to participate in the Forest School activities at with Abergele Youth Den

I give permission for my child

..... to take part in Forest School activities managed by Abergele Youth Den Leaders

To be given emergency treatment / first aid if necessary when attending a Forest School programme.

Signed

Date: