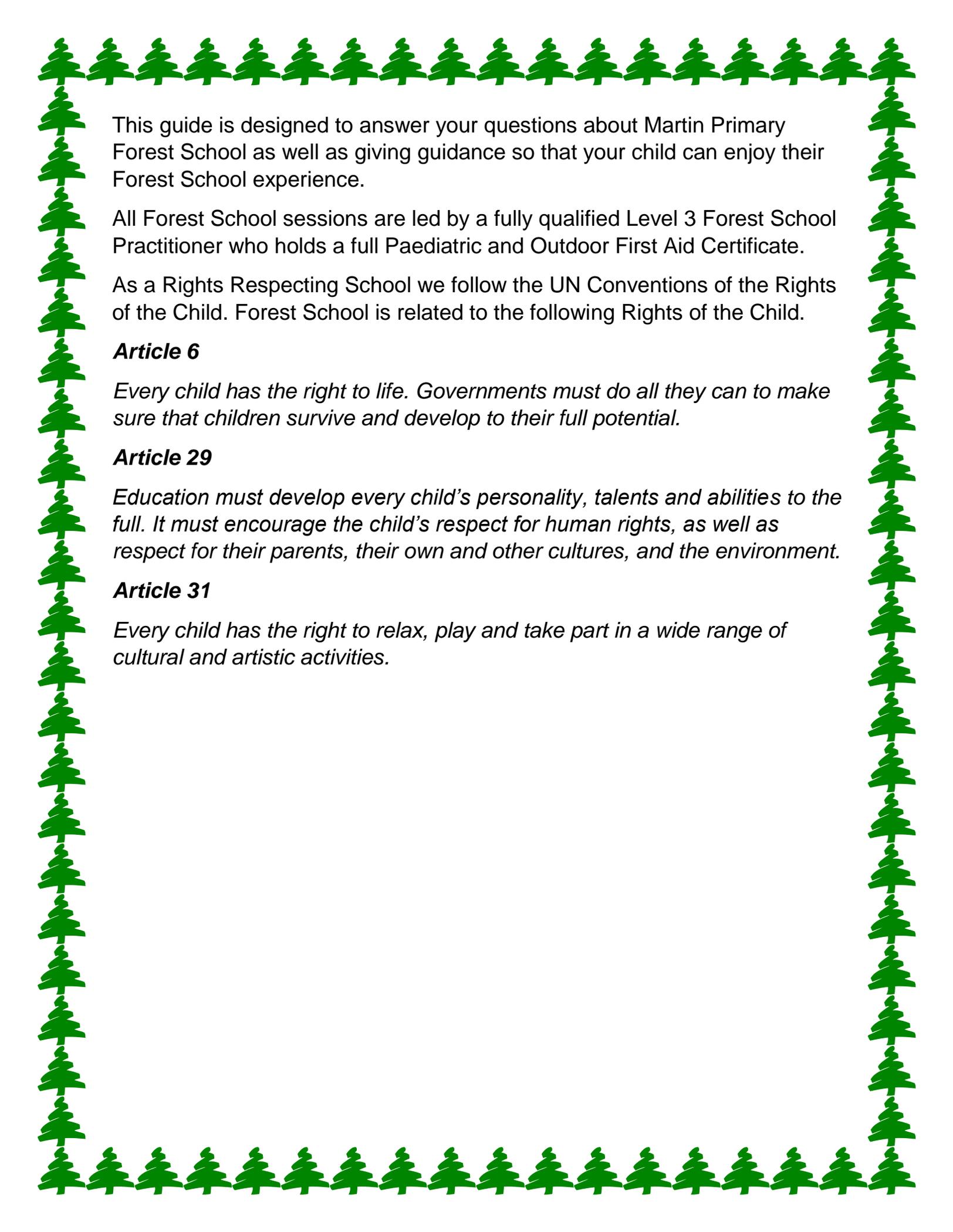


Martin Primary School
Forest School Handbook





This guide is designed to answer your questions about Martin Primary Forest School as well as giving guidance so that your child can enjoy their Forest School experience.

All Forest School sessions are led by a fully qualified Level 3 Forest School Practitioner who holds a full Paediatric and Outdoor First Aid Certificate.

As a Rights Respecting School we follow the UN Conventions of the Rights of the Child. Forest School is related to the following Rights of the Child.

Article 6

Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to make sure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

Article 29

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 31

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

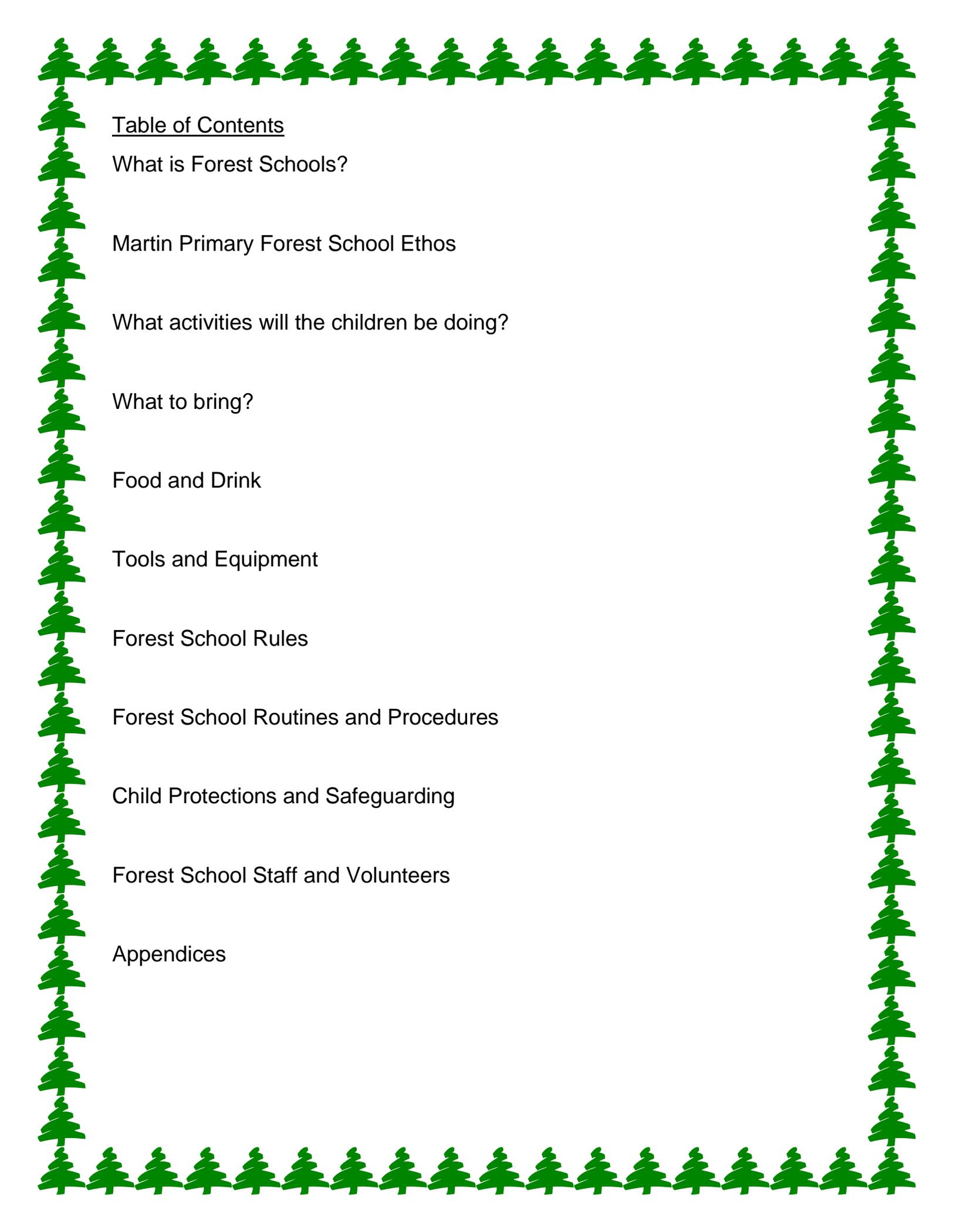


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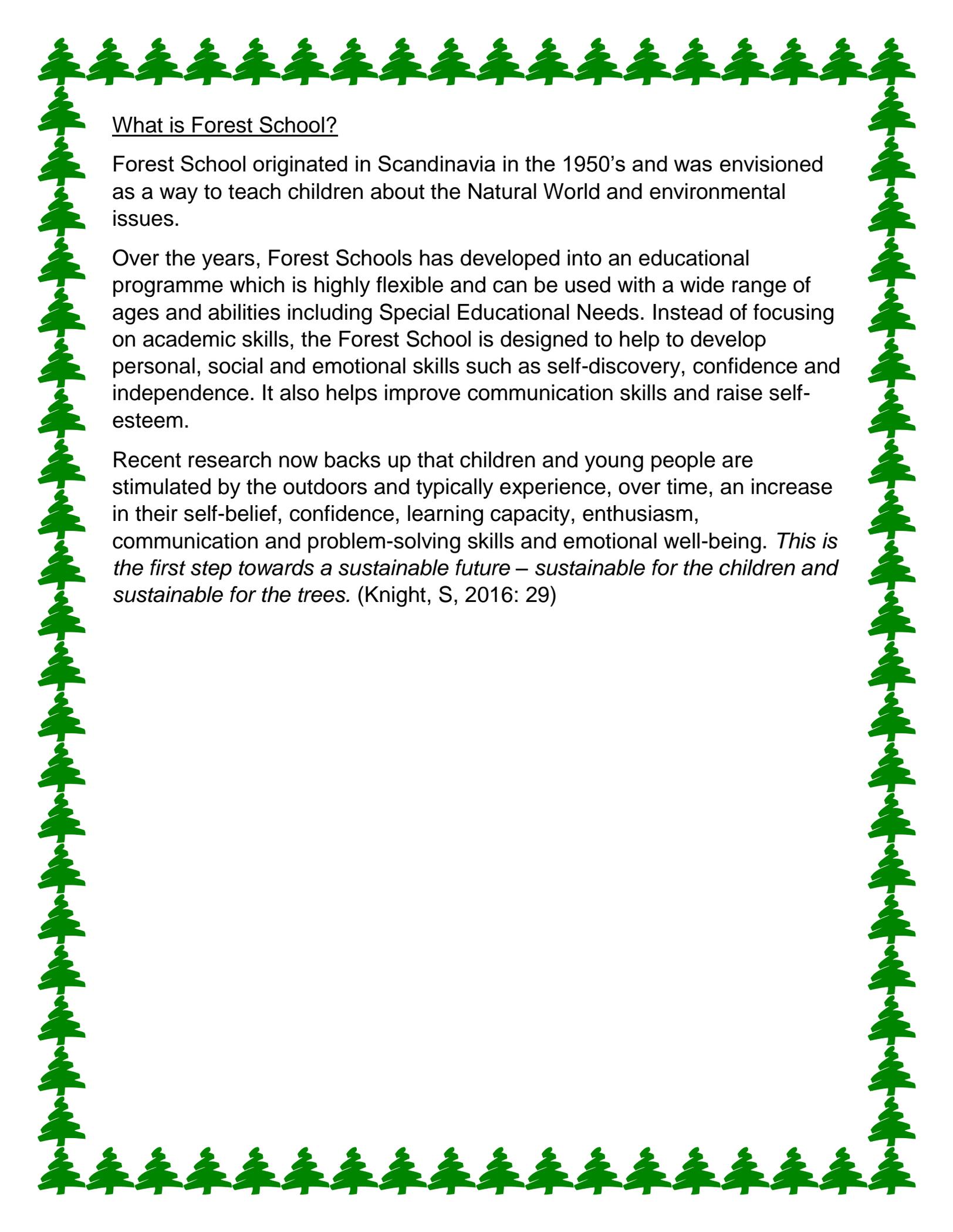
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What is Forest School?

Forest School originated in Scandinavia in the 1950's and was envisioned as a way to teach children about the Natural World and environmental issues.

Over the years, Forest Schools has developed into an educational programme which is highly flexible and can be used with a wide range of ages and abilities including Special Educational Needs. Instead of focusing on academic skills, the Forest School is designed to help to develop personal, social and emotional skills such as self-discovery, confidence and independence. It also helps improve communication skills and raise self-esteem.

Recent research now backs up that children and young people are stimulated by the outdoors and typically experience, over time, an increase in their self-belief, confidence, learning capacity, enthusiasm, communication and problem-solving skills and emotional well-being. *This is the first step towards a sustainable future – sustainable for the children and sustainable for the trees.* (Knight, S, 2016: 29)

A decorative border of green Christmas trees surrounds the text. The trees are arranged in a rectangular frame, with a single row of trees at the top and bottom, and vertical columns of trees on the left and right sides.

Forest School at Martin Primary

Each week children from across the school take part in Forest School sessions. These sessions are held in the Forest School area at the back of the school fields. Forest School will run throughout the year, with groups going out in almost all weathers. They will explore and learn during all four seasons and experience the environmental changes and challenges that seasonal change brings.

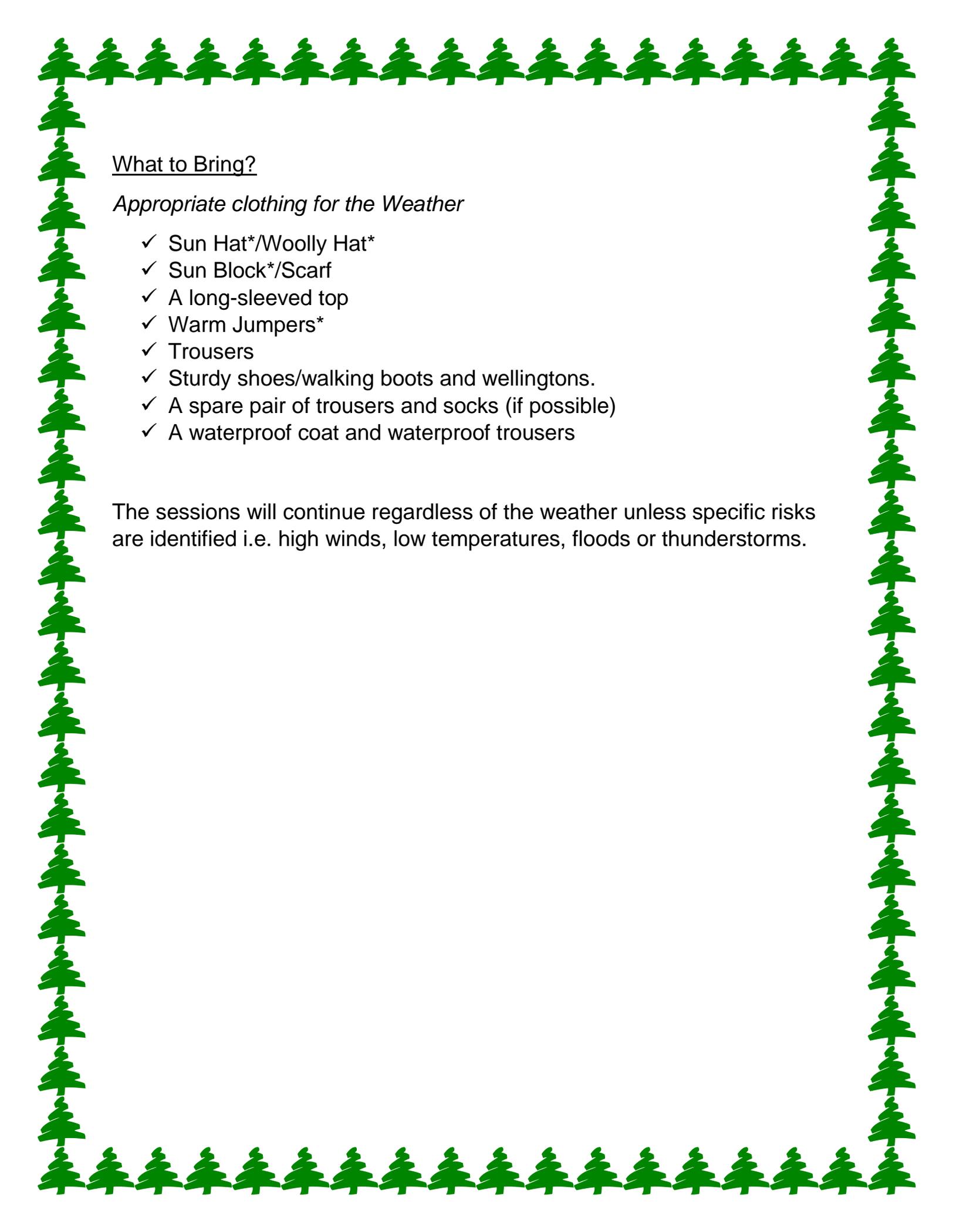
Individuals will work to problem solve and learn behavioural boundaries through play and the use of tools. This develops a sense of discovery in an imaginative and creative way and helps the children learn respect for themselves, each other and the environment.

We believe that woodland and natural environments create their own learning opportunities framed by safety routines and established boundaries. Our sessions are led by the children's interests within a loosely structured framework of intended outcomes that build on the interests and curiosity of the children and suits the individual learning style of the children. Our sessions encourage children to investigate, test and maintain curiosity for the world around us. This develops a sense of discovery in an imaginative and creative way and helps the children learn respect for themselves, each other and the environment.

What activities the children will be doing?

Types of Activities



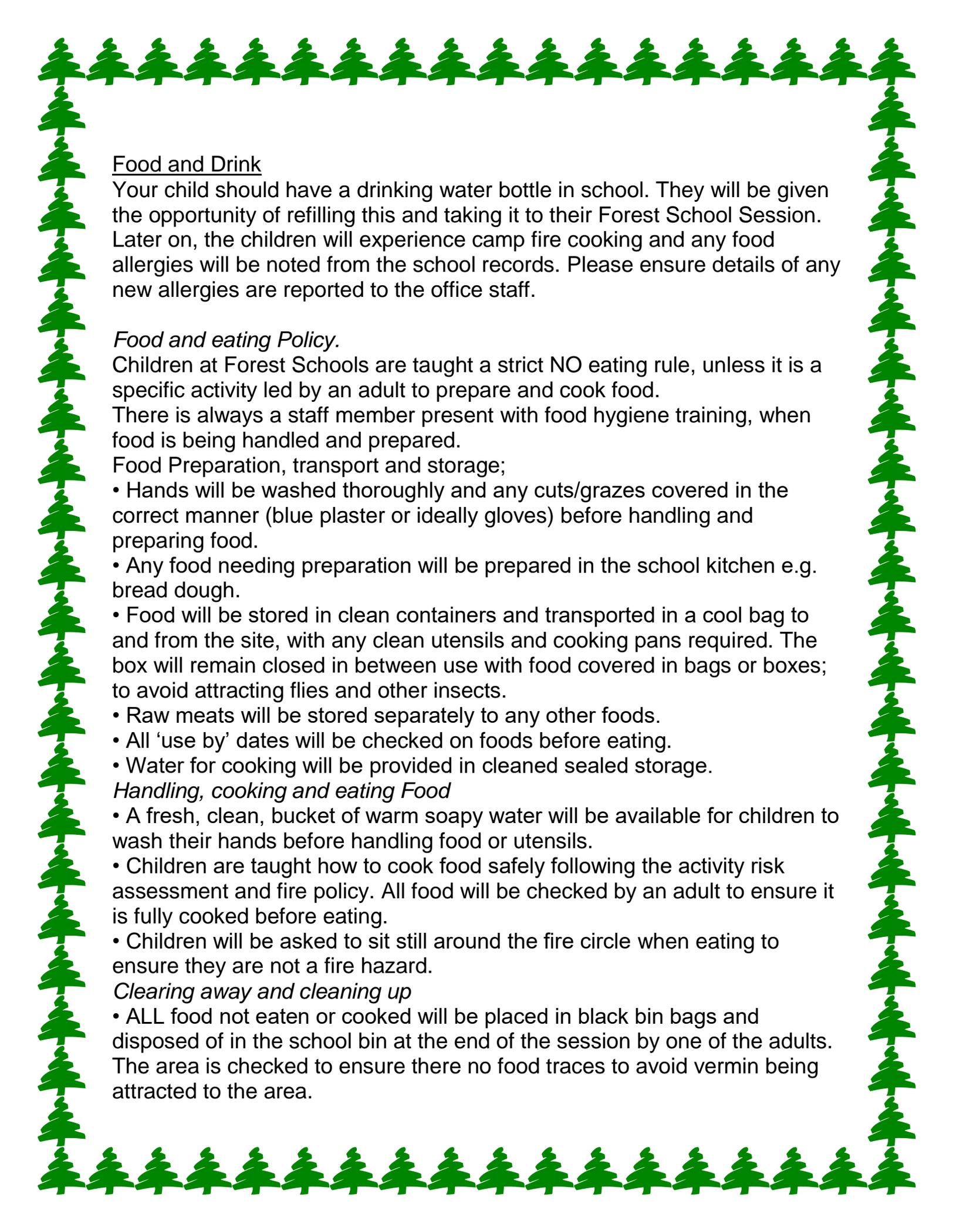


What to Bring?

Appropriate clothing for the Weather

- ✓ Sun Hat*/Woolly Hat*
- ✓ Sun Block*/Scarf
- ✓ A long-sleeved top
- ✓ Warm Jumpers*
- ✓ Trousers
- ✓ Sturdy shoes/walking boots and wellingtons.
- ✓ A spare pair of trousers and socks (if possible)
- ✓ A waterproof coat and waterproof trousers

The sessions will continue regardless of the weather unless specific risks are identified i.e. high winds, low temperatures, floods or thunderstorms.



Food and Drink

Your child should have a drinking water bottle in school. They will be given the opportunity of refilling this and taking it to their Forest School Session. Later on, the children will experience camp fire cooking and any food allergies will be noted from the school records. Please ensure details of any new allergies are reported to the office staff.

Food and eating Policy.

Children at Forest Schools are taught a strict NO eating rule, unless it is a specific activity led by an adult to prepare and cook food.

There is always a staff member present with food hygiene training, when food is being handled and prepared.

Food Preparation, transport and storage;

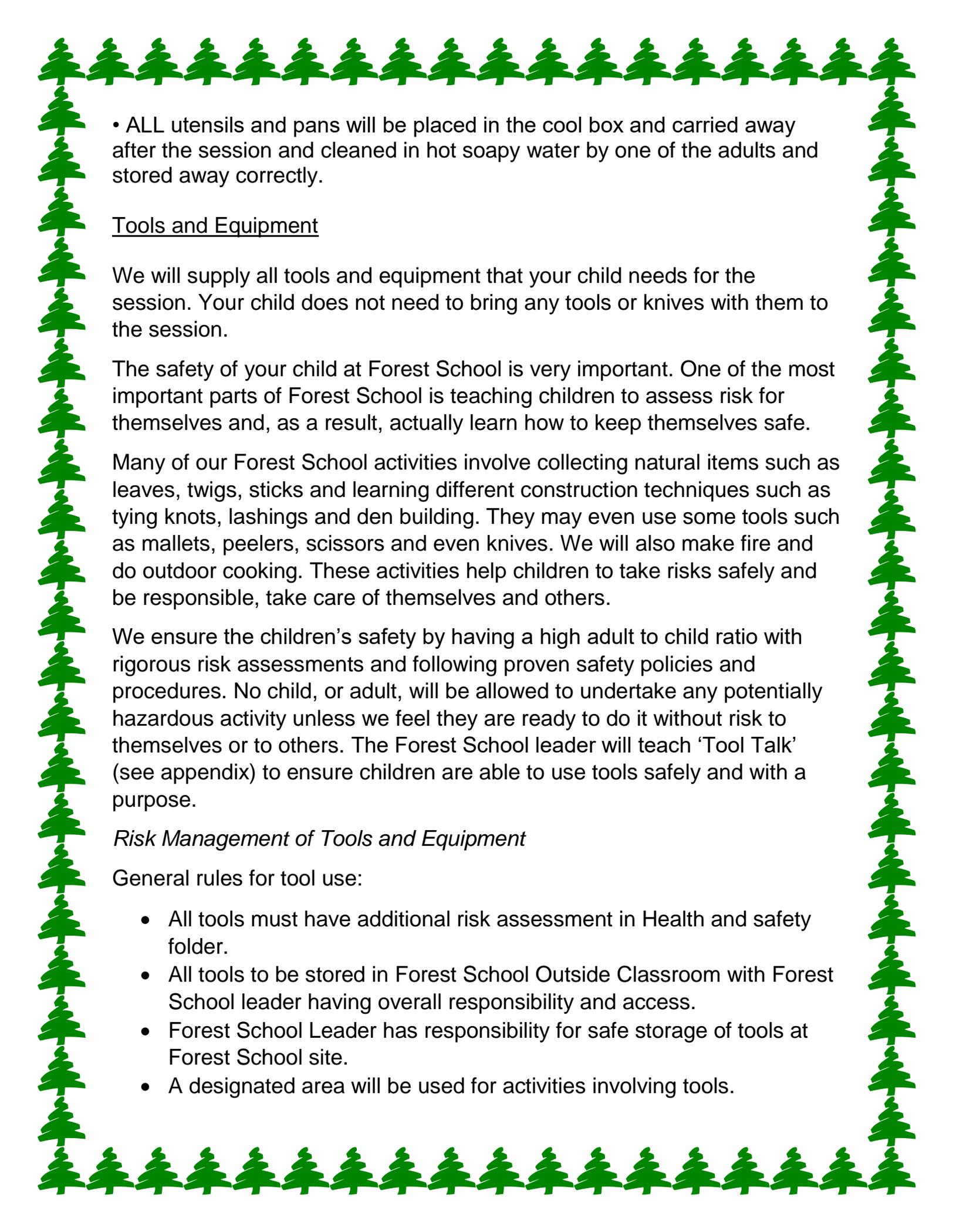
- Hands will be washed thoroughly and any cuts/grazes covered in the correct manner (blue plaster or ideally gloves) before handling and preparing food.
- Any food needing preparation will be prepared in the school kitchen e.g. bread dough.
- Food will be stored in clean containers and transported in a cool bag to and from the site, with any clean utensils and cooking pans required. The box will remain closed in between use with food covered in bags or boxes; to avoid attracting flies and other insects.
- Raw meats will be stored separately to any other foods.
- All 'use by' dates will be checked on foods before eating.
- Water for cooking will be provided in cleaned sealed storage.

Handling, cooking and eating Food

- A fresh, clean, bucket of warm soapy water will be available for children to wash their hands before handling food or utensils.
- Children are taught how to cook food safely following the activity risk assessment and fire policy. All food will be checked by an adult to ensure it is fully cooked before eating.
- Children will be asked to sit still around the fire circle when eating to ensure they are not a fire hazard.

Clearing away and cleaning up

- ALL food not eaten or cooked will be placed in black bin bags and disposed of in the school bin at the end of the session by one of the adults. The area is checked to ensure there no food traces to avoid vermin being attracted to the area.



• ALL utensils and pans will be placed in the cool box and carried away after the session and cleaned in hot soapy water by one of the adults and stored away correctly.

Tools and Equipment

We will supply all tools and equipment that your child needs for the session. Your child does not need to bring any tools or knives with them to the session.

The safety of your child at Forest School is very important. One of the most important parts of Forest School is teaching children to assess risk for themselves and, as a result, actually learn how to keep themselves safe.

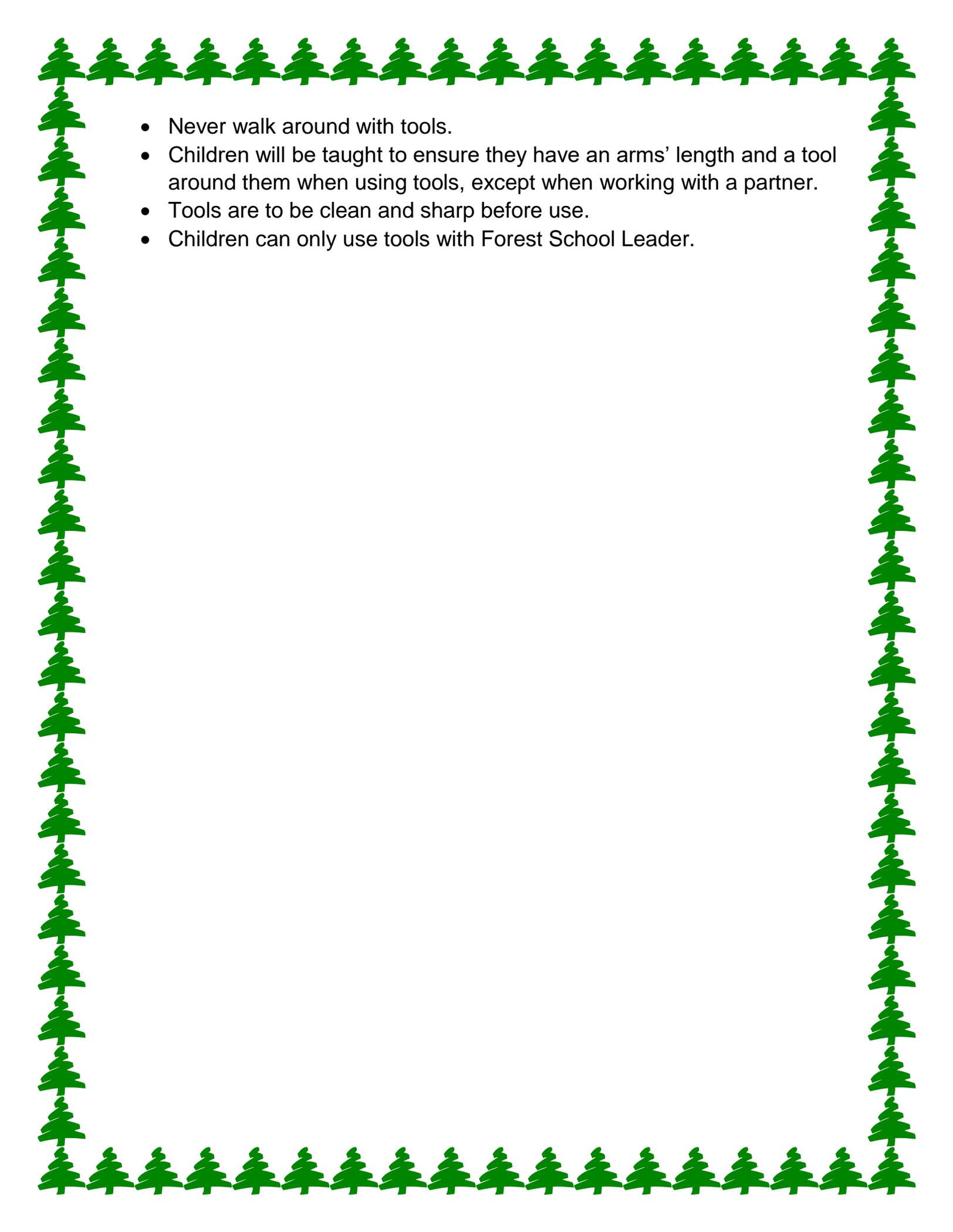
Many of our Forest School activities involve collecting natural items such as leaves, twigs, sticks and learning different construction techniques such as tying knots, lashings and den building. They may even use some tools such as mallets, peelers, scissors and even knives. We will also make fire and do outdoor cooking. These activities help children to take risks safely and be responsible, take care of themselves and others.

We ensure the children's safety by having a high adult to child ratio with rigorous risk assessments and following proven safety policies and procedures. No child, or adult, will be allowed to undertake any potentially hazardous activity unless we feel they are ready to do it without risk to themselves or to others. The Forest School leader will teach 'Tool Talk' (see appendix) to ensure children are able to use tools safely and with a purpose.

Risk Management of Tools and Equipment

General rules for tool use:

- All tools must have additional risk assessment in Health and safety folder.
- All tools to be stored in Forest School Outside Classroom with Forest School leader having overall responsibility and access.
- Forest School Leader has responsibility for safe storage of tools at Forest School site.
- A designated area will be used for activities involving tools.

- 
- Never walk around with tools.
 - Children will be taught to ensure they have an arms' length and a tool around them when using tools, except when working with a partner.
 - Tools are to be clean and sharp before use.
 - Children can only use tools with Forest School Leader.



Forest School Rules.

In the first Forest School session, children become involved with the setting and understanding of the Forest school rules to ensure their safety. At the beginning of every session a quick recap of the rules is reinforced by the children through a game and a song.

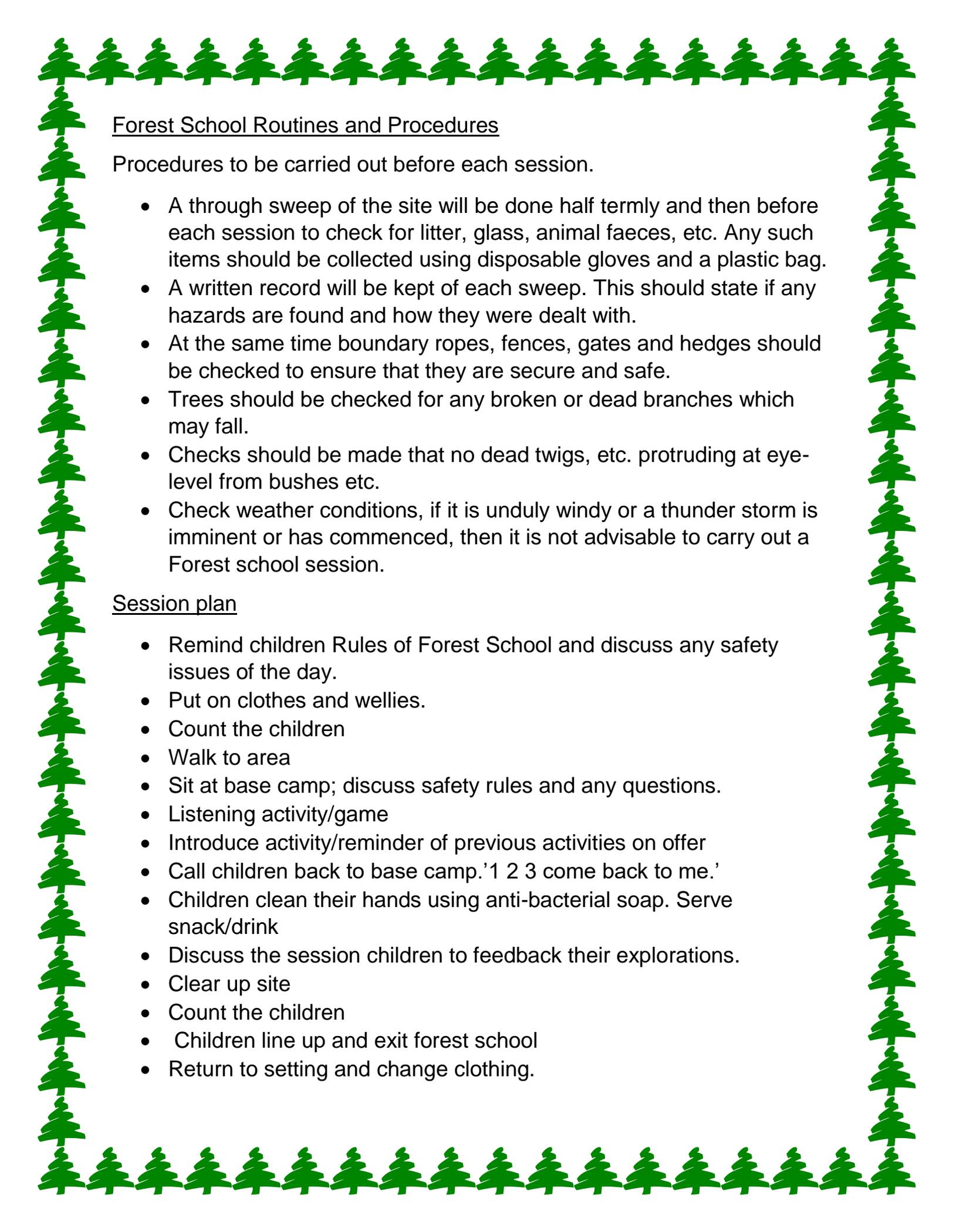
- Look after your Forest School
- No picking, no licking
- Stay within the boundaries marked, 'we don't go over it and we don't go under it'.
- Stay outside of the fire circle.
- Look above, below and around for hazards.
- No climbing a tree higher than their own shoulders without adult supervision.

Children will always be made aware of how far they can explore before a session begins. If we are unable to see all the children, shout '1, 2, 3, where are you?' The child should reply '1, 2, 3, I'm here.' This will have been introduced to through a game and practised many times.

Tree Climbing

Before allowing children to climb, trees should be checked for loose or rotten branches, as well as the ground surrounding the tree for hazards/sharp objects and then removed.

- Adult to child ratio 1:1
- Only one child climbing a tree at any one time.
- Tree climbing is NOT allowed in high winds or wet conditions.
- Adults should note that tree climbing should be carried out with extra caution when children are wearing wellies.



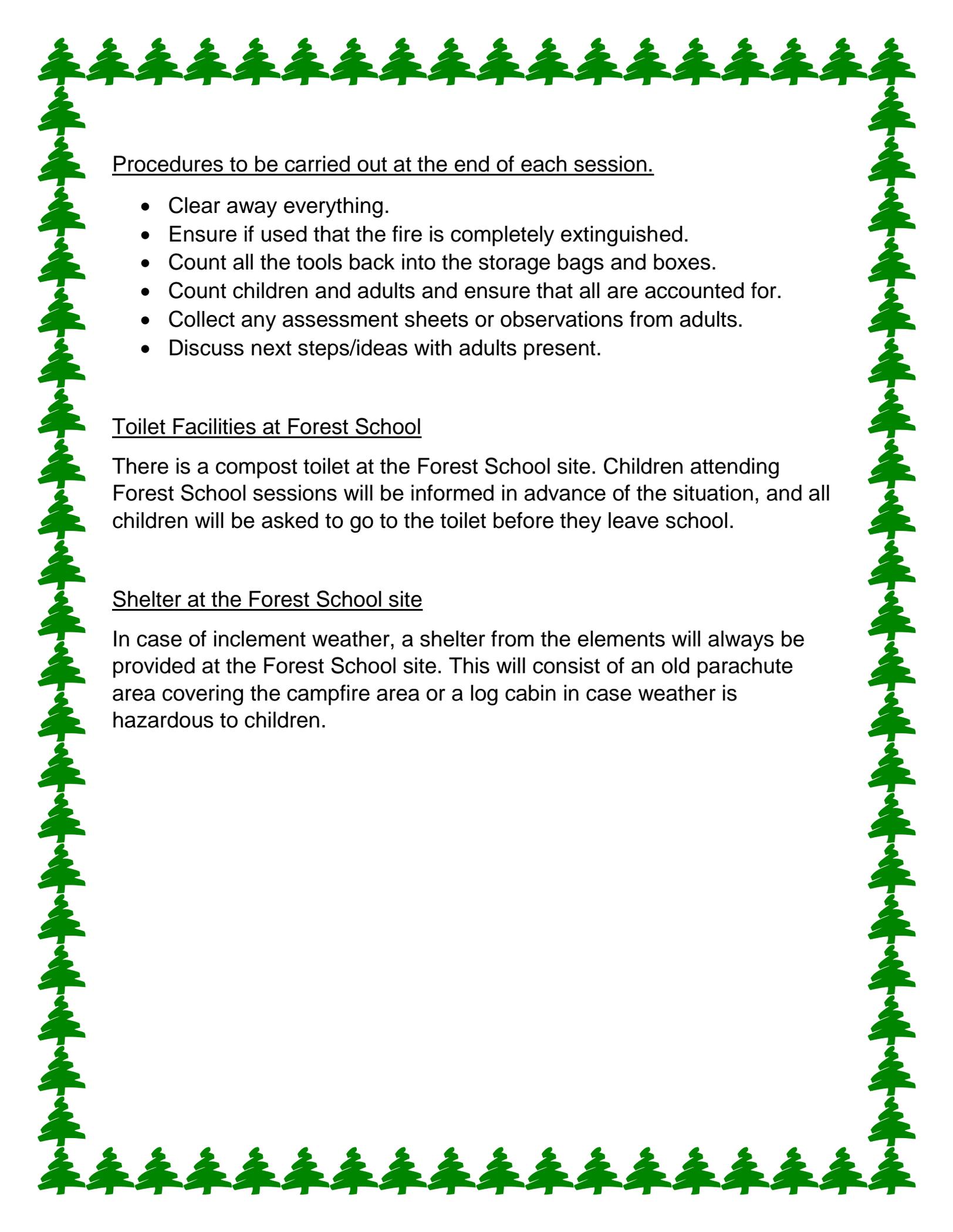
Forest School Routines and Procedures

Procedures to be carried out before each session.

- A through sweep of the site will be done half termly and then before each session to check for litter, glass, animal faeces, etc. Any such items should be collected using disposable gloves and a plastic bag.
- A written record will be kept of each sweep. This should state if any hazards are found and how they were dealt with.
- At the same time boundary ropes, fences, gates and hedges should be checked to ensure that they are secure and safe.
- Trees should be checked for any broken or dead branches which may fall.
- Checks should be made that no dead twigs, etc. protruding at eye-level from bushes etc.
- Check weather conditions, if it is unduly windy or a thunder storm is imminent or has commenced, then it is not advisable to carry out a Forest school session.

Session plan

- Remind children Rules of Forest School and discuss any safety issues of the day.
- Put on clothes and wellies.
- Count the children
- Walk to area
- Sit at base camp; discuss safety rules and any questions.
- Listening activity/game
- Introduce activity/reminder of previous activities on offer
- Call children back to base camp. '1 2 3 come back to me.'
- Children clean their hands using anti-bacterial soap. Serve snack/drink
- Discuss the session children to feedback their explorations.
- Clear up site
- Count the children
- Children line up and exit forest school
- Return to setting and change clothing.



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

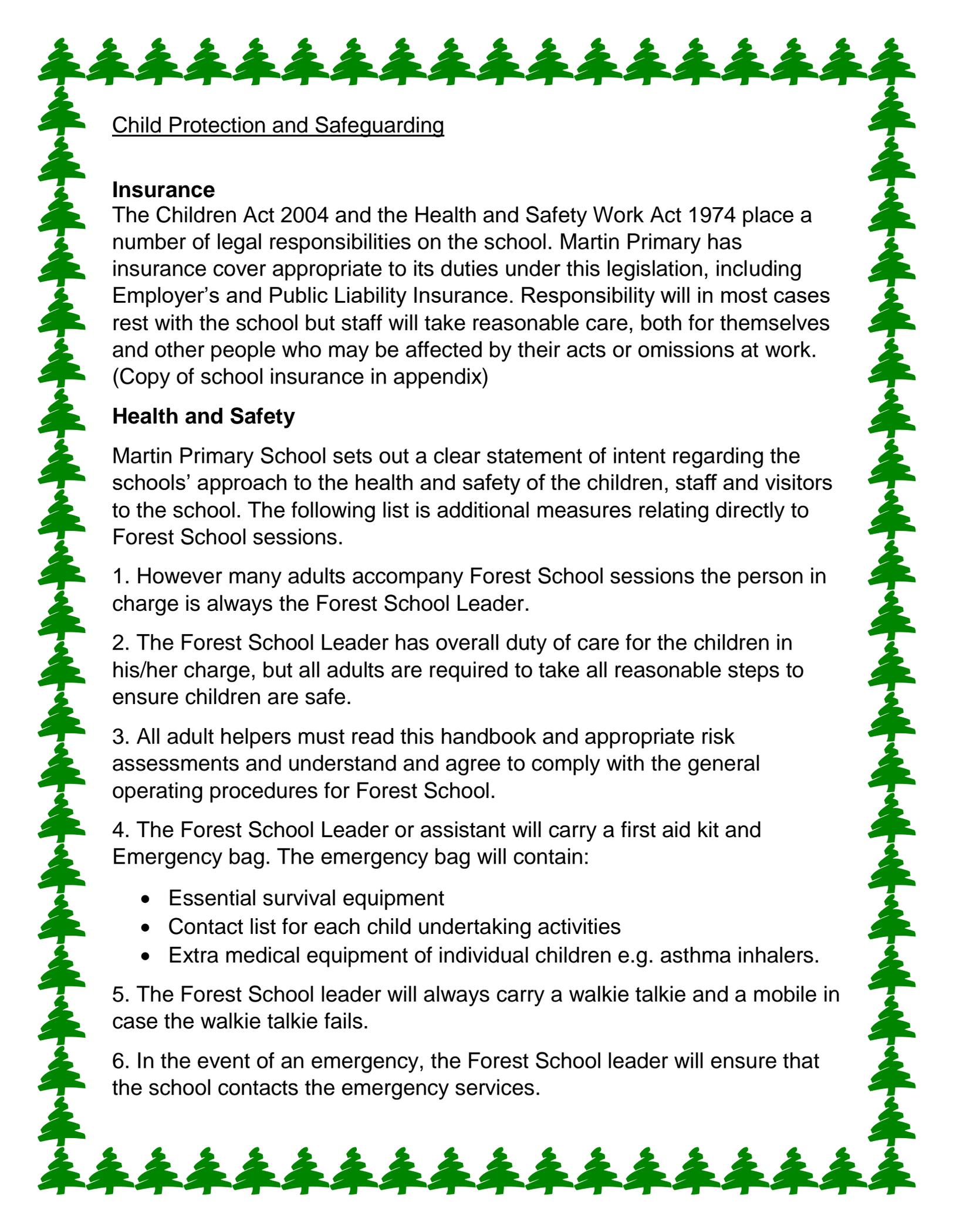
- Clear away everything.
- Ensure if used that the fire is completely extinguished.
- Count all the tools back into the storage bags and boxes.
- Count children and adults and ensure that all are accounted for.
- Collect any assessment sheets or observations from adults.
- Discuss next steps/ideas with adults present.

Toilet Facilities at Forest School

There is a compost toilet at the Forest School site. Children attending Forest School sessions will be informed in advance of the situation, and all children will be asked to go to the toilet before they leave school.

Shelter at the Forest School site

In case of inclement weather, a shelter from the elements will always be provided at the Forest School site. This will consist of an old parachute area covering the campfire area or a log cabin in case weather is hazardous to children.



Child Protection and Safeguarding

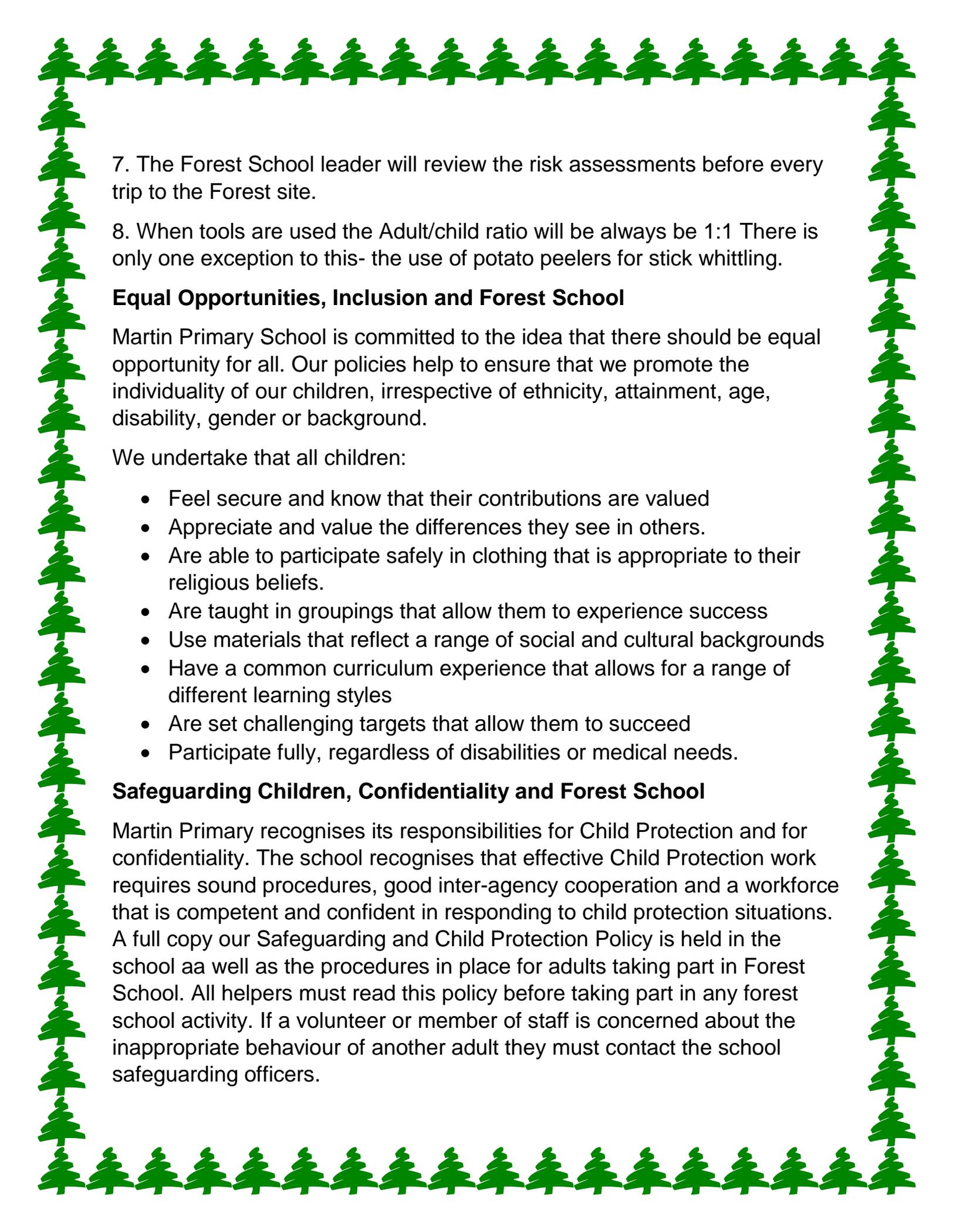
Insurance

The Children Act 2004 and the Health and Safety Work Act 1974 place a number of legal responsibilities on the school. Martin Primary has insurance cover appropriate to its duties under this legislation, including Employer's and Public Liability Insurance. Responsibility will in most cases rest with the school but staff will take reasonable care, both for themselves and other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work. (Copy of school insurance in appendix)

Health and Safety

Martin Primary School sets out a clear statement of intent regarding the schools' approach to the health and safety of the children, staff and visitors to the school. The following list is additional measures relating directly to Forest School sessions.

1. However many adults accompany Forest School sessions the person in charge is always the Forest School Leader.
2. The Forest School Leader has overall duty of care for the children in his/her charge, but all adults are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure children are safe.
3. All adult helpers must read this handbook and appropriate risk assessments and understand and agree to comply with the general operating procedures for Forest School.
4. The Forest School Leader or assistant will carry a first aid kit and Emergency bag. The emergency bag will contain:
 - Essential survival equipment
 - Contact list for each child undertaking activities
 - Extra medical equipment of individual children e.g. asthma inhalers.
5. The Forest School leader will always carry a walkie talkie and a mobile in case the walkie talkie fails.
6. In the event of an emergency, the Forest School leader will ensure that the school contacts the emergency services.



7. The Forest School leader will review the risk assessments before every trip to the Forest site.

8. When tools are used the Adult/child ratio will be always be 1:1 There is only one exception to this- the use of potato peelers for stick whittling.

Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Forest School

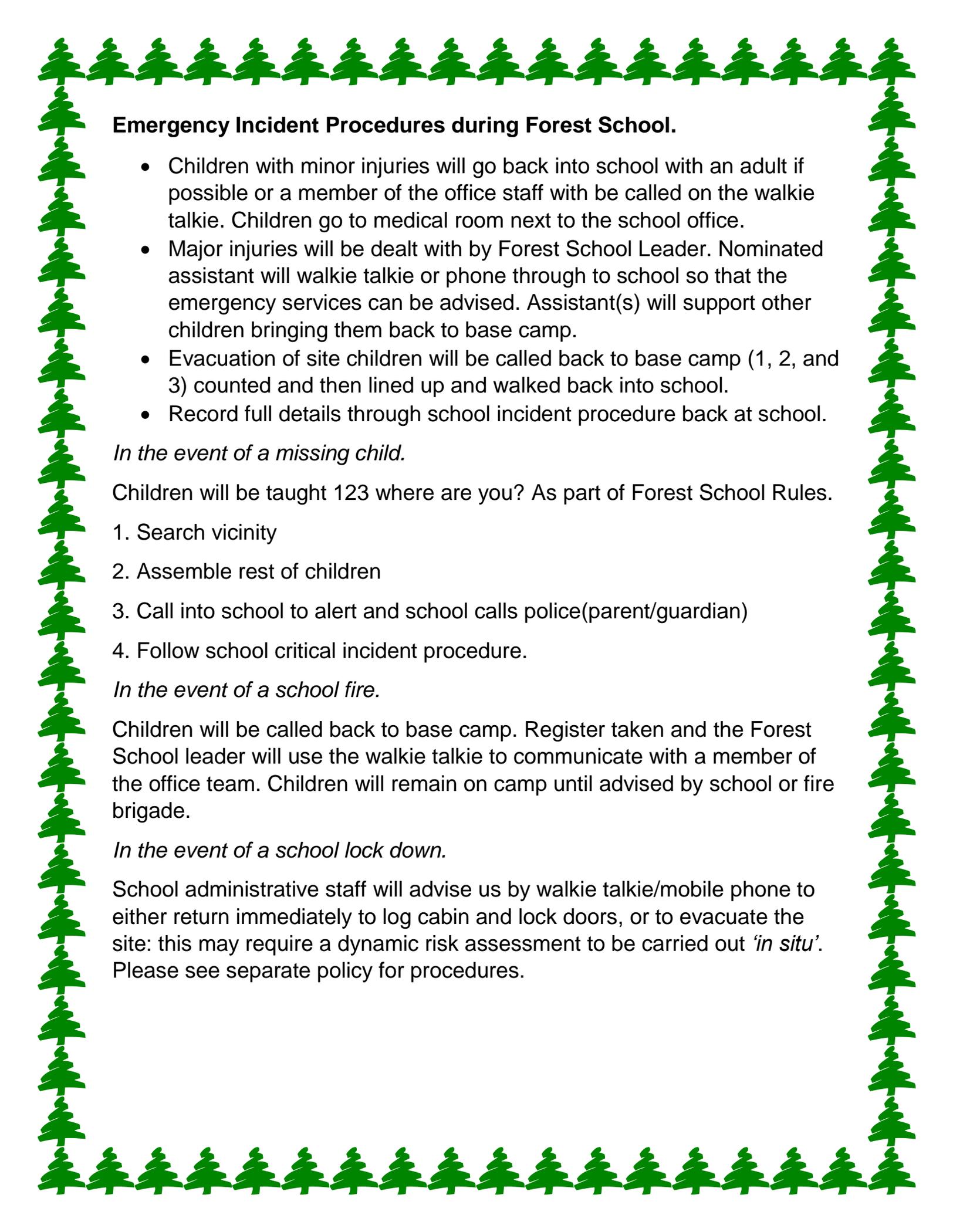
Martin Primary School is committed to the idea that there should be equal opportunity for all. Our policies help to ensure that we promote the individuality of our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

We undertake that all children:

- Feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- Appreciate and value the differences they see in others.
- Are able to participate safely in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs.
- Are taught in groupings that allow them to experience success
- Use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds
- Have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- Are set challenging targets that allow them to succeed
- Participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs.

Safeguarding Children, Confidentiality and Forest School

Martin Primary recognises its responsibilities for Child Protection and for confidentiality. The school recognises that effective Child Protection work requires sound procedures, good inter-agency cooperation and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to child protection situations. A full copy our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is held in the school as well as the procedures in place for adults taking part in Forest School. All helpers must read this policy before taking part in any forest school activity. If a volunteer or member of staff is concerned about the inappropriate behaviour of another adult they must contact the school safeguarding officers.



Emergency Incident Procedures during Forest School.

- Children with minor injuries will go back into school with an adult if possible or a member of the office staff will be called on the walkie talkie. Children go to medical room next to the school office.
- Major injuries will be dealt with by Forest School Leader. Nominated assistant will walkie talkie or phone through to school so that the emergency services can be advised. Assistant(s) will support other children bringing them back to base camp.
- Evacuation of site children will be called back to base camp (1, 2, and 3) counted and then lined up and walked back into school.
- Record full details through school incident procedure back at school.

In the event of a missing child.

Children will be taught 123 where are you? As part of Forest School Rules.

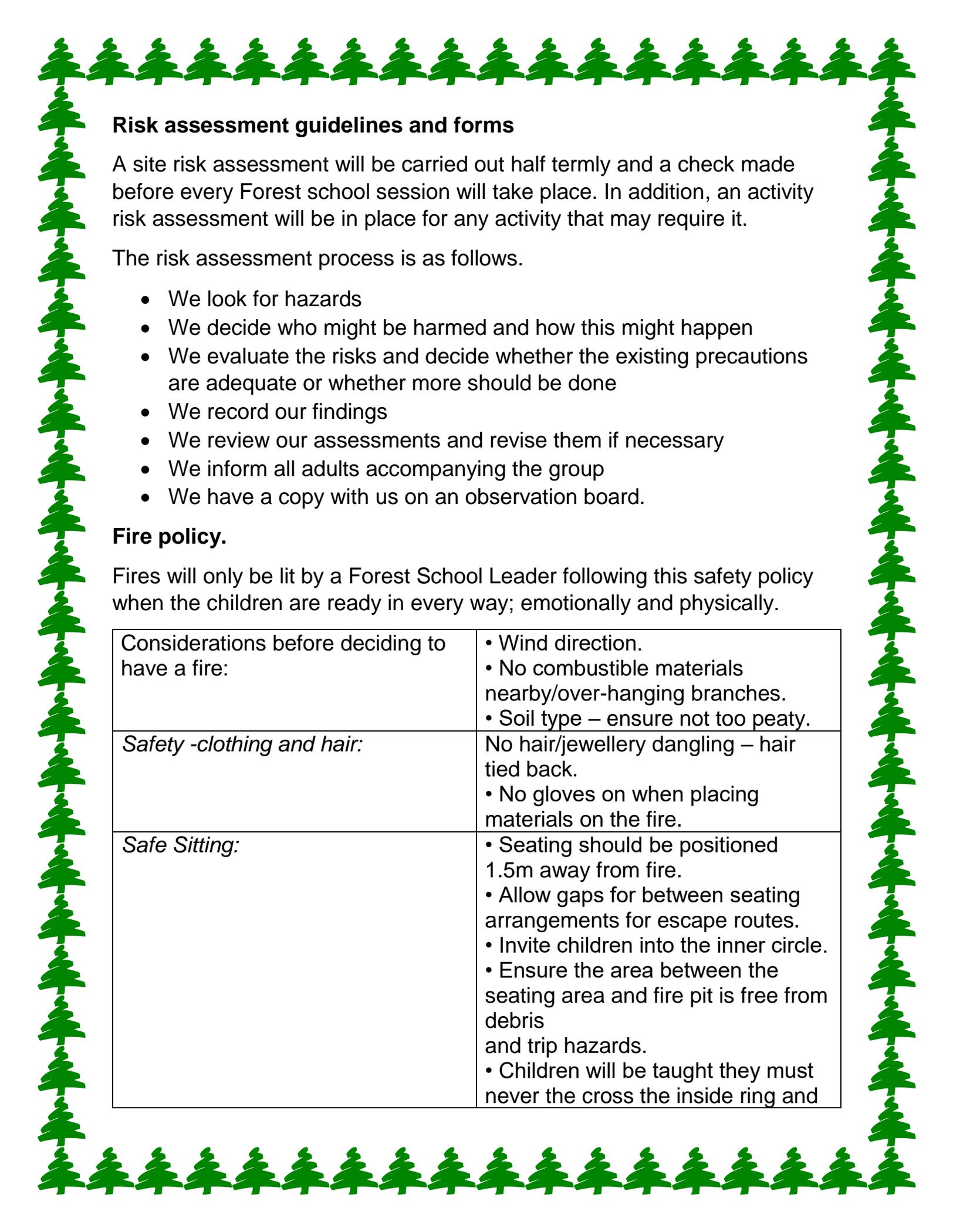
1. Search vicinity
2. Assemble rest of children
3. Call into school to alert and school calls police(parent/guardian)
4. Follow school critical incident procedure.

In the event of a school fire.

Children will be called back to base camp. Register taken and the Forest School leader will use the walkie talkie to communicate with a member of the office team. Children will remain on camp until advised by school or fire brigade.

In the event of a school lock down.

School administrative staff will advise us by walkie talkie/mobile phone to either return immediately to log cabin and lock doors, or to evacuate the site: this may require a dynamic risk assessment to be carried out *'in situ'*. Please see separate policy for procedures.



Risk assessment guidelines and forms

A site risk assessment will be carried out half termly and a check made before every Forest school session will take place. In addition, an activity risk assessment will be in place for any activity that may require it.

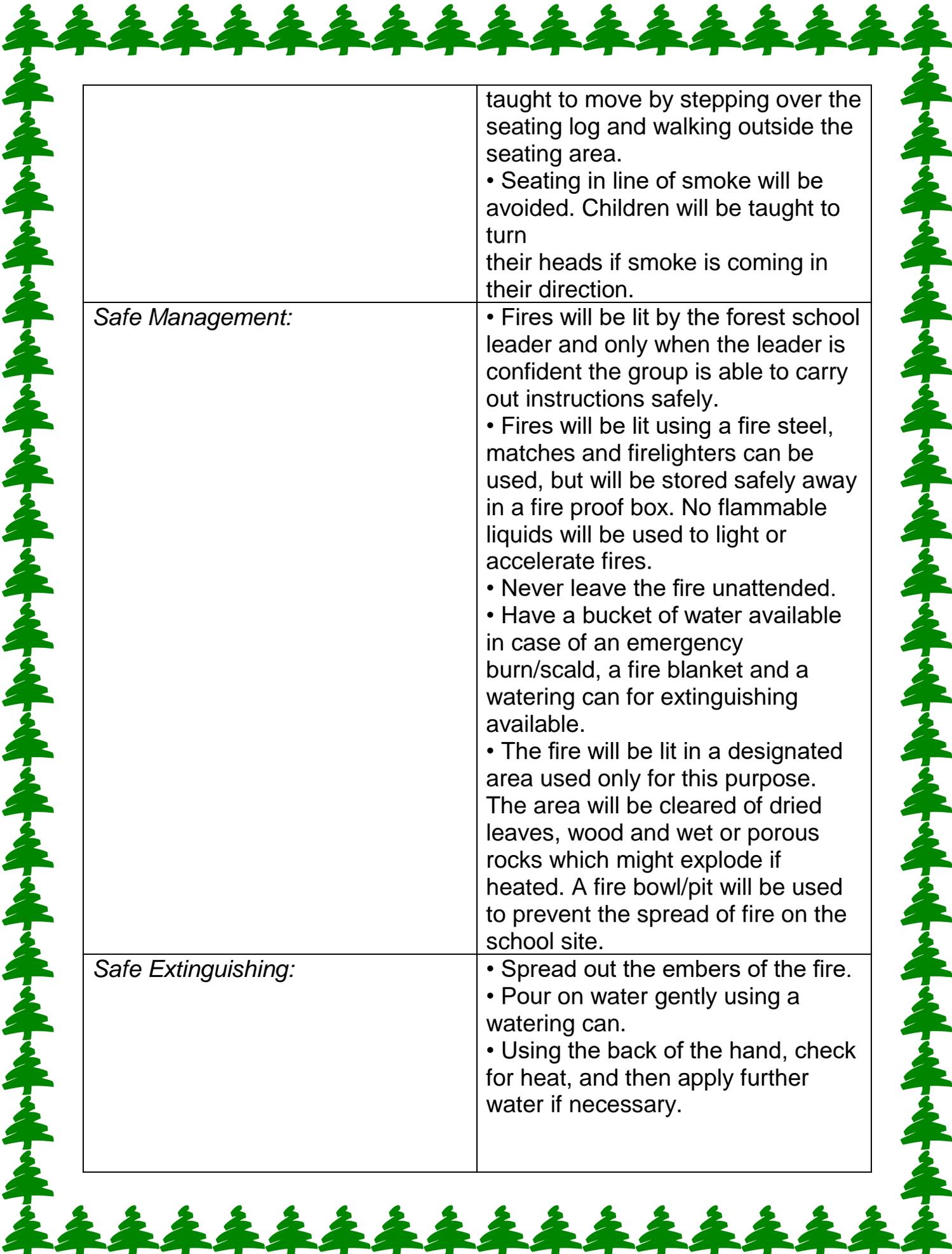
The risk assessment process is as follows.

- We look for hazards
- We decide who might be harmed and how this might happen
- We evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
- We record our findings
- We review our assessments and revise them if necessary
- We inform all adults accompanying the group
- We have a copy with us on an observation board.

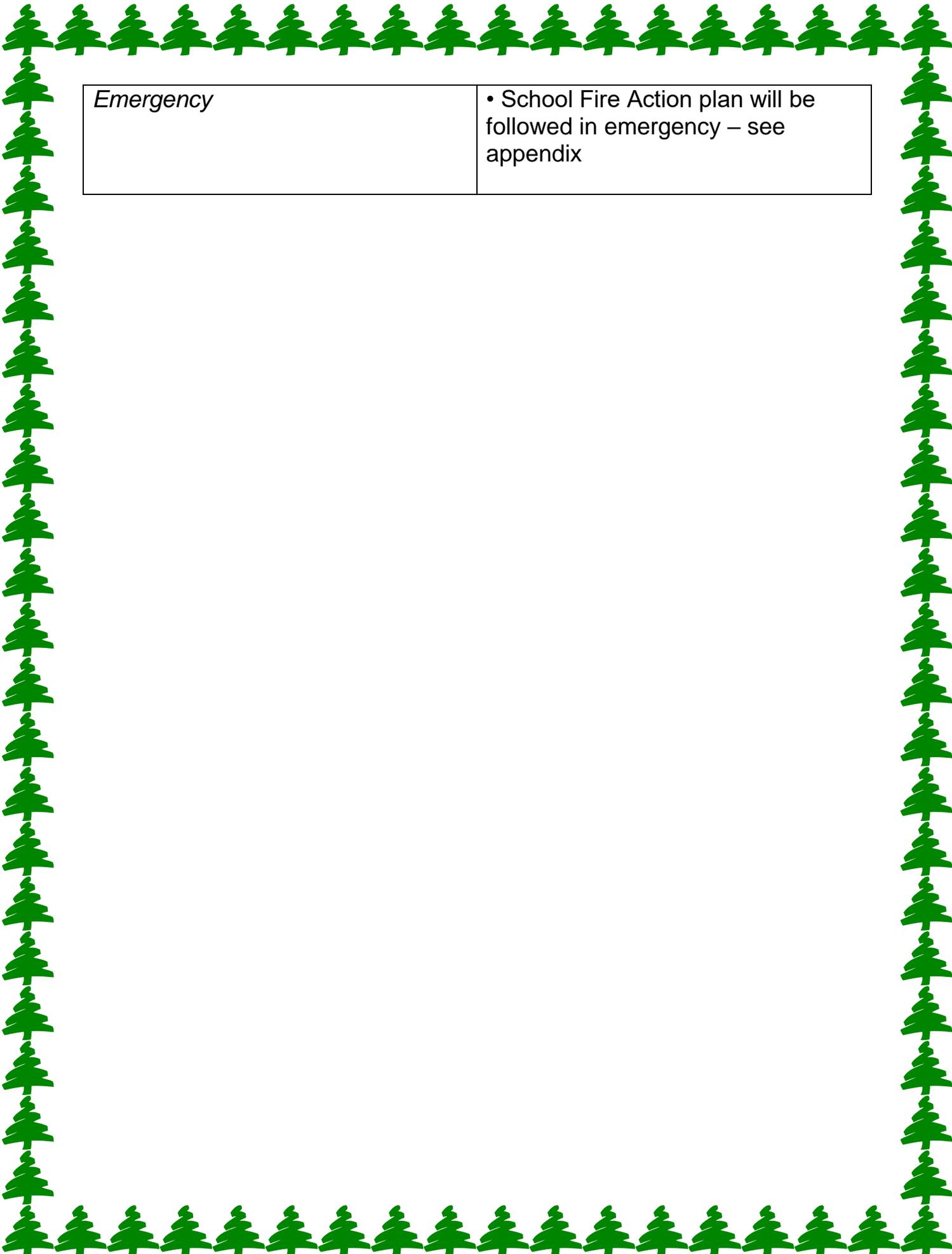
Fire policy.

Fires will only be lit by a Forest School Leader following this safety policy when the children are ready in every way; emotionally and physically.

| | |
|--|---|
| Considerations before deciding to have a fire: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wind direction.• No combustible materials nearby/over-hanging branches.• Soil type – ensure not too peaty. |
| <i>Safety -clothing and hair:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">No hair/jewellery dangling – hair tied back.• No gloves on when placing materials on the fire. |
| <i>Safe Sitting:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seating should be positioned 1.5m away from fire.• Allow gaps for between seating arrangements for escape routes.• Invite children into the inner circle.• Ensure the area between the seating area and fire pit is free from debris and trip hazards.• Children will be taught they must never the cross the inside ring and |

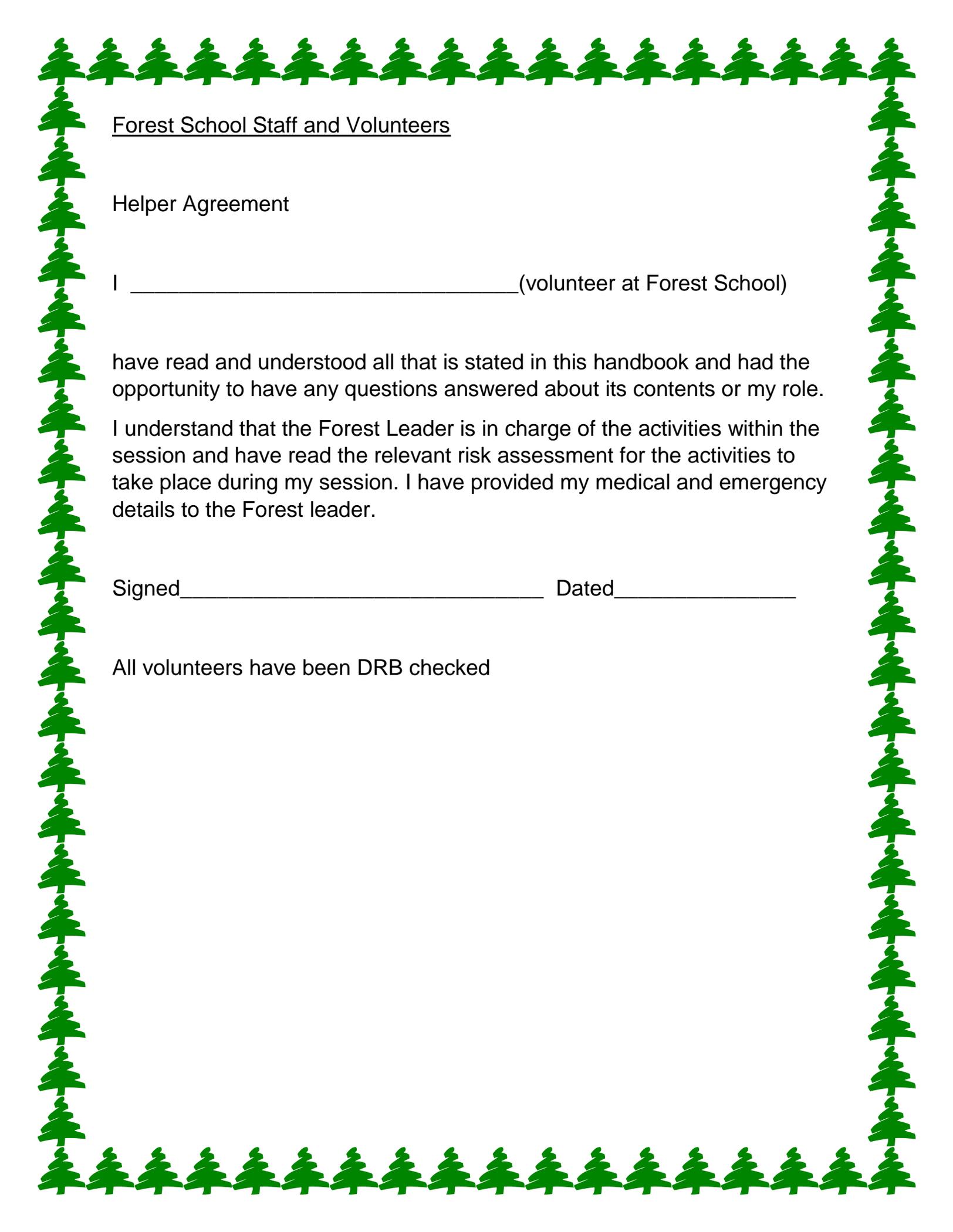


| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| | <p>taught to move by stepping over the seating log and walking outside the seating area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seating in line of smoke will be avoided. Children will be taught to turn their heads if smoke is coming in their direction. |
| <p><i>Safe Management:</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fires will be lit by the forest school leader and only when the leader is confident the group is able to carry out instructions safely.• Fires will be lit using a fire steel, matches and firelighters can be used, but will be stored safely away in a fire proof box. No flammable liquids will be used to light or accelerate fires.• Never leave the fire unattended.• Have a bucket of water available in case of an emergency burn/scald, a fire blanket and a watering can for extinguishing available.• The fire will be lit in a designated area used only for this purpose. The area will be cleared of dried leaves, wood and wet or porous rocks which might explode if heated. A fire bowl/pit will be used to prevent the spread of fire on the school site. |
| <p><i>Safe Extinguishing:</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spread out the embers of the fire.• Pour on water gently using a watering can.• Using the back of the hand, check for heat, and then apply further water if necessary. |



Emergency

- School Fire Action plan will be followed in emergency – see appendix



Forest School Staff and Volunteers

Helper Agreement

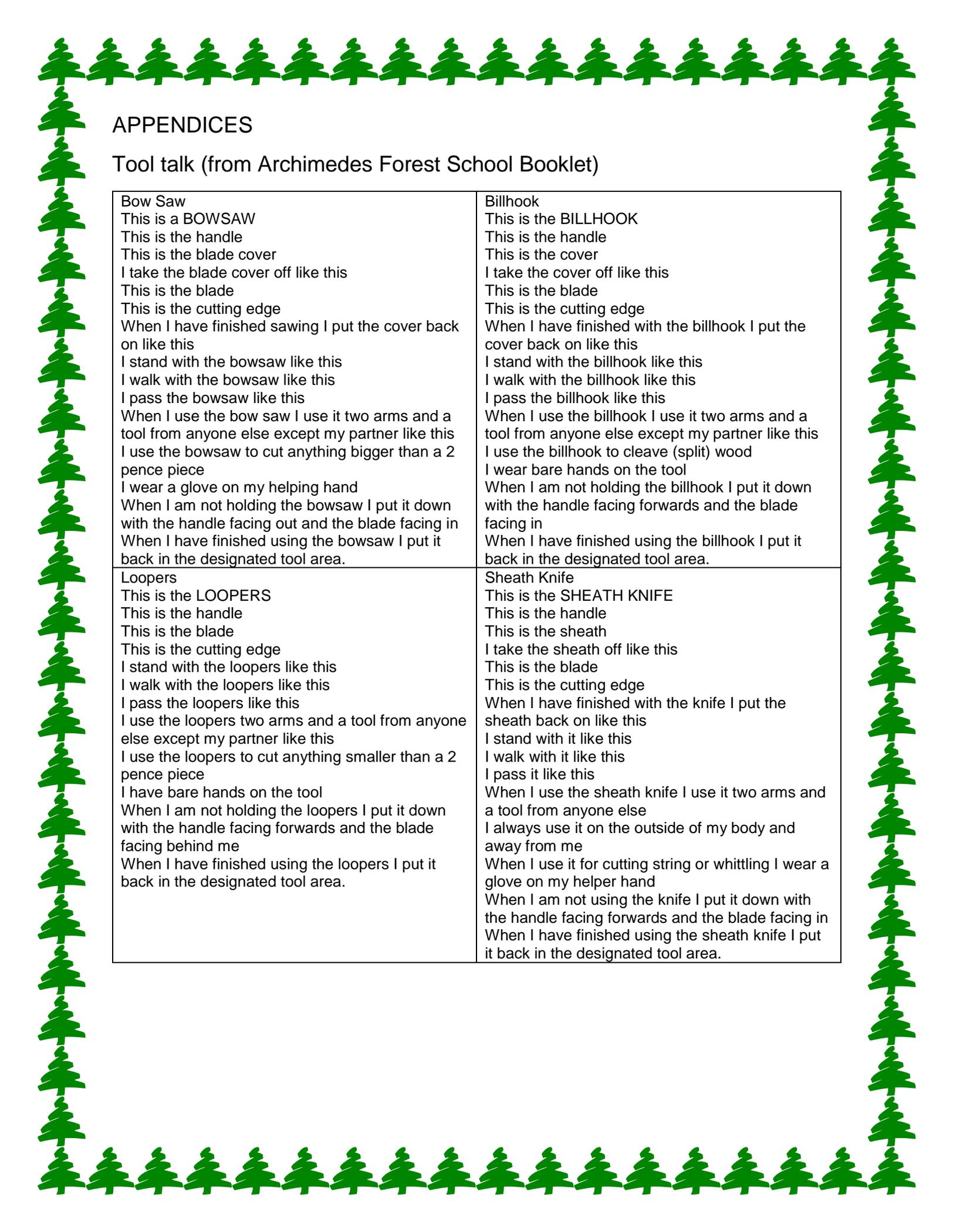
I _____(volunteer at Forest School)

have read and understood all that is stated in this handbook and had the opportunity to have any questions answered about its contents or my role.

I understand that the Forest Leader is in charge of the activities within the session and have read the relevant risk assessment for the activities to take place during my session. I have provided my medical and emergency details to the Forest leader.

Signed _____ Dated _____

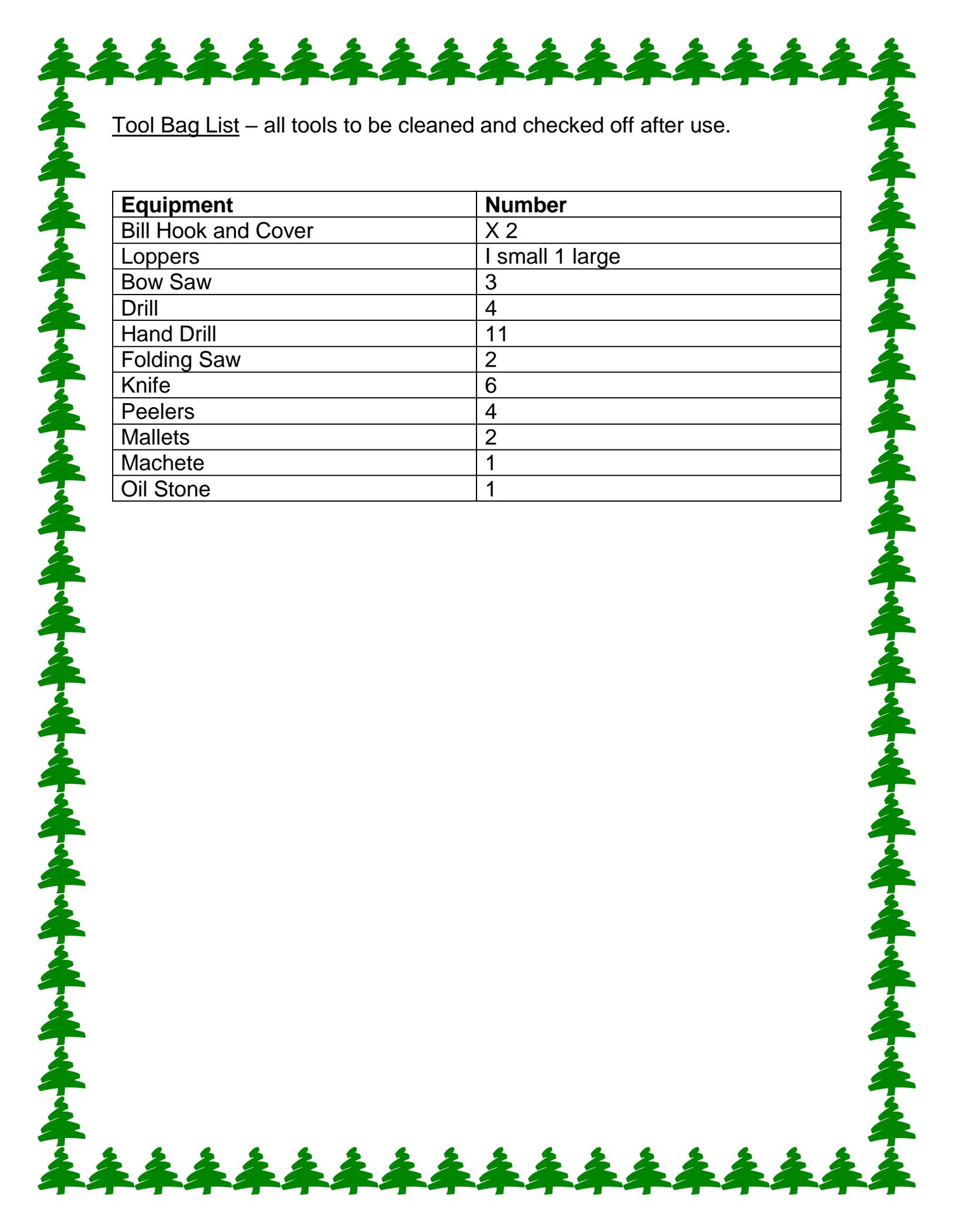
All volunteers have been DRB checked



APPENDICES

Tool talk (from Archimedes Forest School Booklet)

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Bow Saw This is a BOWSAW This is the handle This is the blade cover I take the blade cover off like this This is the blade This is the cutting edge When I have finished sawing I put the cover back on like this I stand with the bowsaw like this I walk with the bowsaw like this I pass the bowsaw like this When I use the bow saw I use it two arms and a tool from anyone else except my partner like this I use the bowsaw to cut anything bigger than a 2 pence piece I wear a glove on my helping hand When I am not holding the bowsaw I put it down with the handle facing out and the blade facing in When I have finished using the bowsaw I put it back in the designated tool area.</p> | <p>Billhook This is the BILLHOOK This is the handle This is the cover I take the cover off like this This is the blade This is the cutting edge When I have finished with the billhook I put the cover back on like this I stand with the billhook like this I walk with the billhook like this I pass the billhook like this When I use the billhook I use it two arms and a tool from anyone else except my partner like this I use the billhook to cleave (split) wood I wear bare hands on the tool When I am not holding the billhook I put it down with the handle facing forwards and the blade facing in When I have finished using the billhook I put it back in the designated tool area.</p> |
| <p>Loopers This is the LOOPERS This is the handle This is the blade This is the cutting edge I stand with the loopers like this I walk with the loopers like this I pass the loopers like this I use the loopers two arms and a tool from anyone else except my partner like this I use the loopers to cut anything smaller than a 2 pence piece I have bare hands on the tool When I am not holding the loopers I put it down with the handle facing forwards and the blade facing behind me When I have finished using the loopers I put it back in the designated tool area.</p> | <p>Sheath Knife This is the SHEATH KNIFE This is the handle This is the sheath I take the sheath off like this This is the blade This is the cutting edge When I have finished with the knife I put the sheath back on like this I stand with it like this I walk with it like this I pass it like this When I use the sheath knife I use it two arms and a tool from anyone else I always use it on the outside of my body and away from me When I use it for cutting string or whittling I wear a glove on my helper hand When I am not using the knife I put it down with the handle facing forwards and the blade facing in When I have finished using the sheath knife I put it back in the designated tool area.</p> |



Tool Bag List – all tools to be cleaned and checked off after use.

| Equipment | Number |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Bill Hook and Cover | X 2 |
| Loppers | 1 small 1 large |
| Bow Saw | 3 |
| Drill | 4 |
| Hand Drill | 11 |
| Folding Saw | 2 |
| Knife | 6 |
| Peelers | 4 |
| Mallets | 2 |
| Machete | 1 |
| Oil Stone | 1 |

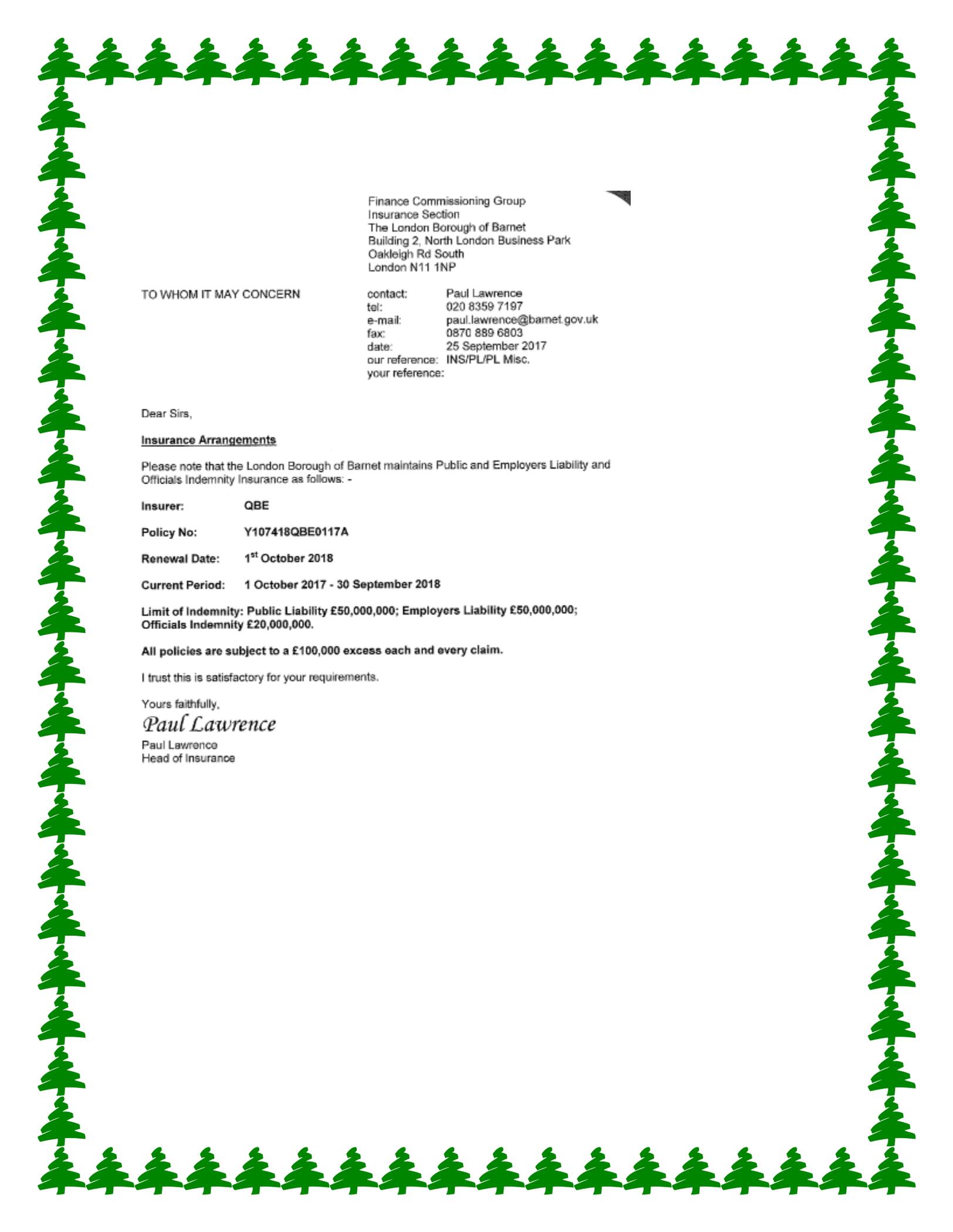
Observation Forms: Adult helpers will be given observation forms to make notes about focus children in the forest school group.

| | |
|----------|--|
| Child 1: | General Mood (please circle appropriately): positive negative responsive unresponsive hyperactive |
| | Confidence (1 low 5 high) With Peers 1 2 3 4 5 |
| | With Adults 1 2 3 4 5 |
| | Challenge/ Engagement (1 low 5 high) 1 2 3 4 5 |
| | Other observations: |
| Child 2: | General Mood (please circle appropriately): positive negative responsive unresponsive hyperactive |
| | Confidence (1 low 5 high) With Peers 1 2 3 4 5 |
| | With Adults 1 2 3 4 5 |
| | Challenge/ Engagement (1 low 5 high) 1 2 3 4 5 |
| | Other observations: |
| Child 3: | General Mood (please circle appropriately): positive negative responsive unresponsive hyperactive |
| | Confidence (1 low 5 high) With Peers 1 2 3 4 5 |
| | With Adults 1 2 3 4 5 |
| | Challenge/ Engagement (1 low 5 high) 1 2 3 4 5 |
| | Other observations: |

Casualty Monitoring Form

| | | | |
|---------------------|------|----------|------------------|
| Name of Casualty | | | Age |
| Date | Time | Location | Telephone |
| History of Incident | | | First Aider Name |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Time (24 hour clock) | | | | | | | |
| Consciousness | A (alert) | | | | | | |
| | V (voice) | | | | | | |
| | P (pain) | | | | | | |
| | U (unresponsive) | | | | | | |
| Breathing | Rate (per minute) | | | | | | |
| | Character | | | | | | |
| Pulse | Rate (per minute) | | | | | | |
| | Character | | | | | | |
| Colour | Describe | | | | | | |
| Temperature | Warm/dry | | | | | | |
| | Hot/wet | | | | | | |
| | Hot/dry | | | | | | |
| | Cold/dry | | | | | | |
| | Cold/wet | | | | | | |



Finance Commissioning Group
Insurance Section
The London Borough of Barnet
Building 2, North London Business Park
Oakleigh Rd South
London N11 1NP

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

contact: Paul Lawrence
tel: 020 8359 7197
e-mail: paul.lawrence@barnet.gov.uk
fax: 0870 889 6803
date: 25 September 2017
our reference: INS/PL/PL Misc.
your reference:

Dear Sirs,

Insurance Arrangements

Please note that the London Borough of Barnet maintains Public and Employers Liability and Officials Indemnity Insurance as follows: -

Insurer: QBE

Policy No: Y107418QBE0117A

Renewal Date: 1st October 2018

Current Period: 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2018

**Limit of Indemnity: Public Liability £50,000,000; Employers Liability £50,000,000;
Officials Indemnity £20,000,000.**

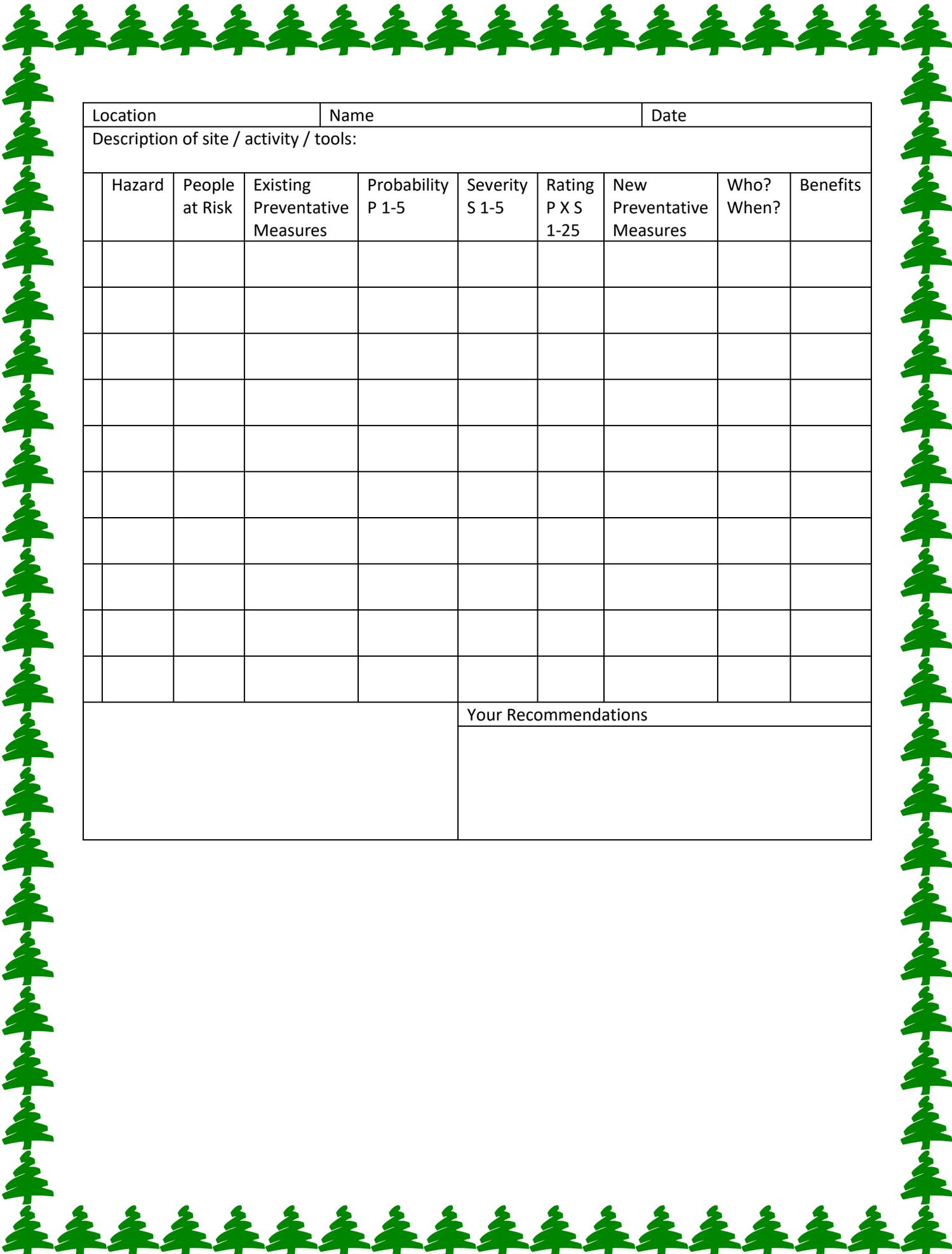
All policies are subject to a £100,000 excess each and every claim.

I trust this is satisfactory for your requirements.

Yours faithfully,

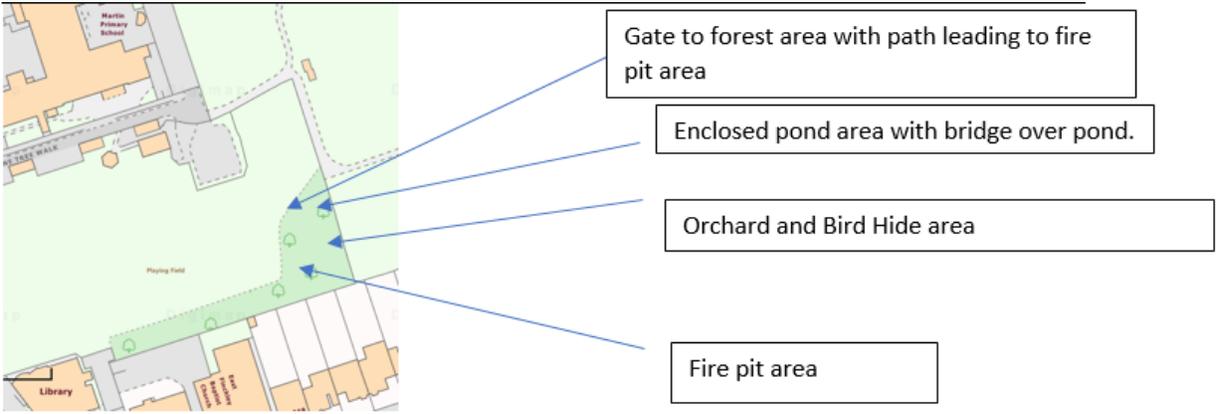
Paul Lawrence

Paul Lawrence
Head of Insurance



| Location | | | Name | | | Date | | | |
|---|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------|----------|--|
| Description of site / activity / tools: | | | | | | | | | |
| Hazard | People at Risk | Existing Preventative Measures | Probability P 1-5 | Severity S 1-5 | Rating P X S 1-25 | New Preventative Measures | Who? When? | Benefits | |
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| | | | | | Your Recommendations | | | | |
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Map of Area



In case of emergency enter by gate along pathway.