

Risk benefit assessment: **Site specific for March Wood**

To be read in conjunction with other related risk assessments & policies/procedures.

NB: It is accepted that this risk benefit assessment is applicable to everyone attending the programme.

Risk benefit assessment compiled by: Pablo Joyce

March Wood Forest School site.

Devonshire Hill Forest School sessions will take place in March Wood - the school's own on-site Forest School area.

The Devonshire Hill Nursery & Primary School

Weir Hall Road, Tottenham

N17 8LB

Benefits to children:

March Wood offers a safe Forest School environment in a familiar locale where children feel surrounded by nature in an ever growing woodland that is not open to the public. March Wood has a long way to go before becoming a truly immersive woodland but it is a great adventure for the children to see it growing and developing around them.

March Wood is a short walk from the school building so that children have a maximum amount of time and energy to engage in Forest School activities, play and exploration.

March Wood is currently being developed with further planting of saplings and willows so that it will grow into a small woodland in the near future.

March Wood has areas that appear to children to be completely away from anything but still retains useful facilities for practical issues and comfort, such as a water tap and a composting toilet.



Probability Score:

1. <5% chance that it will occur – very unlikely
2. 25% chance that it will occur
3. 50% chance that it will occur
4. 75% chance that it will occur
5. >95% chance that it will occur – very likely

Severity Score

1. Not serious – no first aid required
2. Minor Injury – requiring basic first aid
3. Injury – requiring non immediate professional medical attention
4. Serious injury/multiple injuries – requiring immediate medical attention

Calculate the risk levels:

Multiply probability by severity to give a rating between **1 & 25**.
 Any activities deemed to have **a revised rating of over 12** are deemed dangerous even with control measures

Hazard		Harm	Risk level prior to control measures	Control measures to reduce the risk	Revised risk rating
				5. Major accident – multiple injuries or fatality	in place. In this case, review control measures.
<p>The March Wood site is on the eastern third of the school's huge playing field which still has room for two large football pitches. Planting of semi-mature trees began in March 2020, preceded by the planting of various living willow structures and followed by the planting of 420 saplings of various species. More planting is taking place throughout the Autumn of 2020, mainly on the south eastern side of March Wood. Irrigation has been put in place for the semi-mature trees, the saplings and the willow structures.</p> <p>In the spring and summer of 2020, we had a wooden roundhouse and a composting toilet built on site. March Wood also has a few other structures; two geodesic domes, a shipping container FS store, and wood shed and strategically placed sweet chestnut poles for the fixing of dens, shelters and hammocks.</p> <p>There is willow screening along the west side of the site along with various climbers to try and obscure the urban buildings and screen off the playing field to give a more immersive feeling in March Wood. Many of the planted saplings form a hedge that runs along the western edge and along the north side.</p> <p>The FS store container will house all the FS supplies and tools. The site has unestablished pathways leading to the geo-domes and roundhouse from the site's entrance.</p> <p>The roundhouse has a fixed fire pit and benches, and will serve as the main Forest School base for the beginning and end of sessions.</p>					
Trees and plants	Cuts, bruises, allergic reactions, rashes and allergies	4x4=16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone is made aware that tree roots can protrude from the ground and create trip hazards. Everyone is made aware that tree branches grow at many different levels and that they need to be aware of their surroundings when moving around. Be particularly aware of branches above when getting up from a low position. Everyone to be aware of the condition of tree limbs and be aware of the danger of falling or low-hanging branches Everyone is made aware that woodlands contain some toxic plants that should be avoided. The Forest School 	1x4=4	

			<p>leader is responsible for identifying and making children aware of these hazards. Everyone should be aware that they should not put anything in their mouth other than food and drink provided for eating and drinking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is made aware that they should not handle nuts, berries or fungi that they come across unless they know that it is safe to do so. Nothing that they find should be put in their mouths. No pick, no lick. • Everyone is made aware that woodlands may contain plants that can cause a 'sting' such as nettles. Everyone should look out for and avoid these plants. • Everyone should be aware of the presence of thorny plants in the woodland. Trees such as hawthorn have sharp spines and need to be handled with care. Plants with spikes and thorns such as brambles can easily hide amongst other plants so participants need to be careful to avoid these or handle them with care. • The Forest School leader will have an up-to-date medical conditions list which includes accurate information about any allergies that any children in the group have. Any updates will be shared with the class teacher and forest school leaders. 	
<p>Uneven surfaces, holes and woodland floor materials, e.g. dead wood</p>	<p>Cuts and bruises</p>	<p>4x3=12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone needs to be aware that March Wood contains many uneven surfaces that can be trip hazards. There are obvious dips and peaks but there are also many sizable holes that can be obscured by grass in particular, including holes left by animals. • Substantial holes or depressions likely to cause injury will be clearly marked and addressed by the Forest School Leaders or Site Manager as soon as practicable. • Everyone needs to be aware that March Wood may contain hidden hazards in the soft undergrowth, leaves, foliage, etc. and that unless you can clearly see the ground surface, e.g. earth, then care is needed when moving around. 	<p>1x3=3</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sitting dead wood such as old branches deliberately brought to the site can be trip hazards. These should be kept in designated areas and care taken when moving around the site. ● Low foliage, e.g. brambles and floor ivy, can easily entangle feet and ankles when walking or running and become a serious trip hazard. This becomes a particular issue when moving rapidly through overgrown areas. Participants should be aware of the dangers of rushing through overgrown areas, particularly with tough low plants such as bramble and vines. ● Everyone needs to be aware that tree roots can grow above the surface some distance away from the trunk of the tree creating and that low tree stumps may be found anywhere on site, both being trip hazards. 	
Toxic plants	Allergic reaction, rashes and sickness	3x4=16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Everyone is to be given a briefing on specific toxic plants relevant to the site, notably poison hemlock. ● All participants to be aware of a Forest School 'no pick, no lick' policy where nothing is ever put in the mouth unless provided for that purpose. ● Nuts and fruit only picked when specifically permitted by the Forest School leader. ● Everyone to wash hands before eating or handling food ● Forest School leader to make sure that hand washing facilities are available. ● The Forest School leader will have an up-to-date medical conditions list which includes accurate information about any allergies that any children in the group have. Any updates will be shared with the class teacher and forest school leaders. 	1x4=4
Faeces and other unsanitary matter	Sickness and infection	3x3=16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Everyone is to be aware that faeces are not sanitary and should be avoided. ● Everyone is to maintain an awareness of the environment in which they are working/playing/learning/exploring. 	1x3=3

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forest School leader is to make a daily site sweep to be aware of any particular hazards. • All participants are to be aware that nothing is ever put in the mouth unless provided for that purpose. • Forest School leader to make sure that hand washing facilities are available. 	
Getting lost, running off and straying	Anxiety and fear	4x3=12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March Wood is a small woodland site and all children will be given an initial tour of the areas that we will be using on their first visit there. • Children are advised to stay within the boundaries of March Wood and ideally in sight of adults. • Children are advised to ask an adult if they wish to go elsewhere on the site, and to only do so with permission. • Children are advised to let an adult know when the toilet is needed simply so that an adult is aware of where they are. • Children are advised that if at any point they think that they are lost, that they should call loudly for help and stay where they are. • If any child has left the main area and been gone for longer than expected, an adult will look for them. 	1x3=3
Toilet	Cuts, bruises, head injury, sickness and disease	4x3=12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The composting toilet at March Wood has small wooden steps to access the toilet. Children are advised that the steps can be slippery in wet conditions including most of the winter. Children are advised to climb and descend slowly whilst holding on to the rope siderailing. • All users must be seated when using the toilet. The toilet is to be fitted with a dual child/adult size toilet seat. • Children, and adults, must wash their hands after using the composting toilet. There are hand washing facilities available. • For the functioning of the composting toilet, all users are asked to put a small amount of organic material provided after they have used the toilet. All users are asked to use the scoop provided. 	1x3=3

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If children are unsure of how to get to, or back from the toilet, they should make an adult aware of this. ● 'Only what comes out of you goes down the loo' - toilet paper must be put into a nappy sack, tied and placed in the bin provided. The bin will be emptied by the FSL. ● The toilet paper bin will be emptied by the FSL into a clinical waste bin for collection by the relevant contractor. 	
Insect bites and stings	Itches, discomfort, pain and allergies	4x2=8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children are advised that everywhere in nature there are insects and that some of these are able to bite and sting, such as ants, bees and wasps. ● Children are advised to avoid contact with these insects whenever possible and to not disturb them. If they are unsure what an insect is, then they have an opportunity to try and find out. ● Children should be aware that stings and bites can be painful/irritating for a while but that the pain/irritation does go away. ● The Forest School leader is to have up to date and accurate information about any allergies that any adults or children in the group have. 	2x2=4
smoke	Discomfort, sore eyes and respiratory conditions	4x3=12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The site at March Wood has a designated campfire fire pit within the roundhouse and we will use Kelly Kettles on site during Forest School sessions when it is appropriate to do so. ● Only appropriate materials are burned in the firepit (please refer to ● Everyone advised that they should move if they find themselves in the path of smoke and it is uncomfortable ● The Forest School leader checks the medical list of children in the group for any respiratory conditions or other that may be caused or aggravated by smoke. Adults with respiratory conditions are to make the Forest School leader aware of these. 	1x3=3

Allergens, e.g. nuts, plants, dust	Sickness and allergies	4x4=16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone to be made aware by the Forest School leader of any known plants at March Wood that may cause reactions. • Everyone advised that nothing is ever put in the mouth unless provided for that purpose. • The Forest School leader is to have up to date and accurate information about any allergies that any adults or children in the group have. 	1x4=4
strangers	Anxiety, fear, harm by strangers	3x4=12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March Wood is a private site that is not open to the public. • If a stranger is seen by children or adults, they should let the Forest School leader know right away. The Forest School leader will approach the stranger and ascertain why they are present, and if needed, report their presence to the site manager and the Headteacher. • The Forest School leader will do a sweep before every session and check that all gates are closed and padlocks still secure. • The two external gates that lead out of March Wood will be checked during the daily site sweep. 	1x4=4
Getting there and back	Cuts and bruises	2x3=6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The March Wood site is a short walk across the field from the school building • The school field may contain holes, such as those left by foxes. Children will be advised to look at where they are walking or running. 	1x3=3
Animals	Bites and scratches	4x4=16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As March Wood is a private site not open to the public it is unlikely that children will encounter any dogs on site. If an unknown dog is on site, children are advised not to approach it and if they are worried by it, to stay close to an adult. • Children to be advised that most wild animals that they may encounter at March Wood are likely to stay away from them, • If anyone does come across wild animals, they should 	1x4=4

			<p>not disturb them and respect that we are in their home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There have been foxes at March Wood in the past. Children are advised to not approach the foxes and go to an adult if they are concerned. 	
Pond area	Falling, panic, drowning.	5x5=25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pond area will be fenced off from the rest of March Wood so that it is clear that access is blocked. Children will be told not to go over to the pond area unless permitted to do so and accompanied by an adult. 	1x5=5
Irrigation pipes	Cuts and bruises	4x4=16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible, irrigation pipes will be buried under the ground. Where there are exposed pipes, e.g. the dripper pipes, children will be made aware of these and requested to make sure they do not step on them. Where irrigation is currently being worked on, children will be made aware of this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible, exposed pipe will be grouped to occupy a smaller area of the site. It will be suggested that they stick to other areas of the site. When in the area of exposed pipe, children will be told to pay extra attention to where they are walking and moving around. It will be made clear to children how the pipes are a hazard and possible harm. 	1x4=4
FS store	Cuts and bruises	4x4=16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children will only be allowed to enter the FS store when permitted to do so by the FSL. Children will only be permitted to enter the FS store by the FSL when it is safe to do so, e.g. tools are in order and safely arranged. Tools and resources will be arranged neatly including tools being stored on a 'shadow board' so that it is clear where they belong and what is present. No children will be allowed near the FS store doors when they are being opened or closed due to their 	1x4=4

			<p>weight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In any breezy or windy weather, including when there is a chance of winds or gusts, the FS store doors will be fixed in an open position so that they cannot be moved by the wind. • In rainy conditions, the FS store doors will be fixed in an 'almost closed' position, open just enough to get in and out, so that rain is not driven inside making surfaces slippery. 	
Roundhouse	Cuts, bruises and head injuries	4x4=16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are made aware that the roundhouse posts are very hard and can cause injury if they are run/walked/fallen into. • Children are advised to take care if running around/near the roundhouse. • Children are made aware that they must not run around or play physical games inside the roundhouse. • Children advised that the benches can be trip hazards and everyone must move carefully around the roundhouse. • Children are made aware of the firecircle rules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nobody should enter the firecircle without the permission of a Forest School Leader. ○ We use the reminder word, <i>jellyfish</i>, to remind each other not to enter the fire circle. ○ Anyone needing to move around the fire circle leaves at the nearest exit and walks around the outside. ○ No belongings, clothes, etc. to be within the fire circle. • The roundhouse roof has a wooden structure that overhangs with hard edges. If children are climbing near the roundhouse, they will be advised to be careful around the roof edges. 	1x4=4
Geodesic domes	Cuts and bruises and head injuries	4x4=16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are made aware that the geodesic dome upright posts are very hard with sharp edges and can 	1x4=4


			<p>cause injury if they are run/walked/fallen into.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are advised to take care if running around/near the geodesic domes. • Children are made aware that they must not run around or play physical games inside the geodesic domes when there is active tool use inside these structures. • Children advised that the dome tops to these structures are not suitable for climbing and must not be climbed on under any circumstance. • Adults advised to be careful when entering and exiting the domes as no entry/exit point has a large height clearance for tall adults. • Adults advised to take extra caution when using the wide '<i>front</i>' entrance to the large geodesic dome as it has a hard oak lintel making it the lowest entry/exit point, where tall adults may not clear without ducking down. The lintel has a climbing plant, clematis montana, climbing round it to highlight its position. • Heavy objects are not to be hung from the geodesic dome structures above the upright post level. 	
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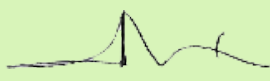
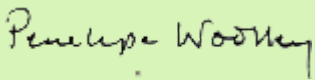

Any further information that needs to be noted:

- The Forest School leader will make a daily sweep of the site to assess the safety at that moment in time and look for specific hazards that participants need to be aware of..
- This risk benefit assessment is to be viewed in conjunction with other information in the Devonshire Hill Forest School Handbook.

This RBA was amended on 11.06.2021 to include specific sections regarding the roundhouse and geodesic domes.

Please note – The Devonshire Hill Forest School operates under a dynamic risk assessing process which is the continuous process of identifying hazards, assessing risk, taking action to eliminate or reduce risk, monitoring and reviewing.

Signed: 	Name: Pablo Joyce	position: Forest School Leader	Date: 11.06.2021
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Signed: 	Name: Thomas Ssesazi	position: Forest School Leader	Date: 16.11.2020
Signed: 	Name: Julie D'Abreu	position: Headteacher	Date: 15.06.2021
Signed: 	Name: Penny Woolley	position: School Governor	Date: 16.06.2021
Signed: 	Name: Christina Georgiades	position : Forest School Leader	Date: 31.01.2022

This assessment is reviewed annually unless an accident/incident occurs requiring immediate review.