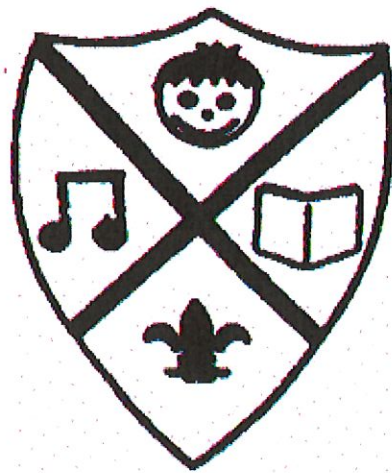


Milborne St Andrew First School



Outdoor Education Handbook



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1. The Ethos

OE is a unique educational experience and process that offers children the opportunity to succeed and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in an outdoor environment. Children engage in motivating and achievable tasks and activities throughout the year and in almost all weathers, with the appropriate footwear and clothing. Children will work with tools, play, learn and begin to understand the boundaries of behaviour, both physical and social. They will grow in confidence, self-esteem and motivation whilst developing an understanding of the natural world. The concept originates in Denmark, originally aimed at pre-school children, where it was found that children who had attended forest school then arrived at school with strong social and communication skills, having the ability to work in groups effectively, generally had high self-esteem and a confidence in their own abilities. These foundations helped them to raise their academic achievements. At our School we use OE as a tool to encourage children to:

- develop personal and social skills
- work through practical problems and challenges
- use tools to create, build or manage
- discover how they learn best
- pursue knowledge that interests them
- learn how to manage failures
- build confidence in decision making and evaluating risk
- develop practical skills
- understand the benefits of a balanced and healthy lifestyle
- explore connections between humans, wildlife and the earth
- regularly experience achievement and success
- reflect on learning and experiences
- develop their language and communication skills
- improve physical motor skills
- become more motivated
- improve their concentration skills
- improve their communication
- and explore the world through all the senses available to them

2. What happens at OE

Typically, small class groups of individuals (depending on child/adult ratio) take part in a programme linking with their topic, lasting for about an hour and a half. The sessions involve practical hands-on activities which aim to build up children's skills, abilities and confidence week by week. All sessions are designed and led by trained teaching staff, with the help and direction of our OE coordinator.

However, we strongly encourage child-led learning, so as the weeks progress, learners are given more freedom and responsibility to explore their interests and therefore initiate and direct their own learning, particularly in the Early Years.

OE uses natural resources to stimulate imagination, creativity and investigation.

Activities can include:

- Shelter building
- Natural art
- Using knots and lashings
- Fire lighting
- Animal tracking
- Bug hunts
- Tree investigations
- Climbing and balancing
- Woodwork using tools, e.g. making musical instruments, jewellery, decorative items
- Creating bug homes and bird feeders
- Collecting, identifying and sorting natural materials such as leaves
- Team games

Most activities are curriculum-linked and span a number of subjects, including Math's, English, Design & Technology, Science, Music and Art. OE sits wonderfully in the enquiry based curriculum that we have at Milborne St Andrew First School

3. The Benefits

OE is suited to all ages and abilities. The aim is to develop the person as a whole. It is particularly suited to people who have a low sense of self-worth and who struggle for various reasons to learn in a traditional classroom setting. Completing small achievable tasks, coupled with genuine praise from staff, helps to boost confidence and self-esteem. For children at school, attitudes to learning are improved as they find that learning can be fun and enjoyable. This new positive outlook is then transferred to the classroom where they are found to be more motivated and able to concentrate better. OE can also:

- Develop physical abilities and help participants to stay active and healthy.
- Heighten self-awareness and improve emotional and social skills.
- Promote co-operative and group working.
- Encourage participants to take care of themselves and others.
- Foster care, appreciation and respect for wildlife and wild places.
- Broaden knowledge and understanding of the natural world.

4. Staff

Our OE sessions are organised and run by Jenna Wittman who is working towards her Level 3 Award for Coordinating the Outdoor Curriculum. All staff and volunteers have undergone an appropriate selection process to assess their skills and suitability for working with children and have been subject to enhanced DBS checks as well as attended fire pit safety training with Adrian Goodhand. All sessions are staffed by a qualified first aider and all staff have access to a recommended first aid kit.

5. The Site

Our OE sessions take place within our school grounds surrounded by fences and gates. The site is a small open area with a mixture of flora including ferns, bramble and nettles. The area has no running or boggy water sections however it does have a still water pond. It is made up of mixed deciduous trees, mainly mature Oak, Hawthorne and Beech. Around the fence area there is a mixture of climbing plants such as ivy. Large fauna cannot access the area, however smaller fauna such as cats, hedgehogs, foxes and rabbits can enter. There is no access for vehicles into the woodland area. Children taking part in OE sessions will be encouraged to minimise their impact on the site. This will include:

- Finding out about the different animals and plants that live in and amongst the trees
- Learning to respect animals' homes
- Careful observation of live animals
- Leaving lying deadwood in place
- Taking all materials and litter with them when they leave
- Ensuring that the site is left like they found it

6. Location of Wildlife Area

<Insert photos of wildlife area and castaway camp>

7. Code of Conduct

Entering the Wildlife Area: We will enter the Wildlife Area respectfully and know that when taking part in OE, specific expectations are in place. We will explore, investigate, learn and play in a manner that will not damage our environment. We understand that we share our Wildlife Area with plants and animals and that when we are taking part in OE we are sharing the environment with them.

Boundaries: Before each session begins children are made aware of how far that they can explore. We do have lots of fun beneath the trees. If children move to explore hidden areas an adult should also move into the cover deep enough to be able to see the children but allowing the children the freedom to explore independently. If you lose sight of a child shout '1, 2, 3, where are you?' The children have been taught to respond '1, 2, 3, I am here', or signal in other ways if non-verbal. This enables the teacher to trace children who have strayed. Children who are known to need 1-1 support are given the support needed.

Lighting a fire: When lighting a fire the teacher will take control of the operation and all accompanying adults will be briefed before we start. The person in charge of the fire safety and management will wear a clear and visible symbol as a visual cue to the children, we suggest a high visual jacket. A lit fire will not be left unattended at any point. A fire may not be lit until it has been confirmed to

all that our fire safety equipment is in place. Open fires will be built within the fire circle.

At the Castaway Camp: An open fire will be lit within the fire circle. A second circle using log sitting stools is established around the perimeter, 2.0m from the fire circle. No one may enter the fire circle perimeter unless invited to do so by an adult. There is no running past the fire circle. No items must be carried and placed within the fire circle unless by an adult. If you wish to move around the fire to a new stool you must step out of the circle and walk around the outside of the log circle. Even when the fire is unlit we will treat it as if it is lit.

Using Tools: All tools have their own clear code of conduct for correct use which will include consideration of specific personal protective equipment, correct use of a specific body posture, and consideration of the appropriate types of activity that each tool may be used for.

Picking up and playing with sticks: Children can carry sticks shorter than their arm's length but are encouraged to think about how close they are to other children. Longer sticks may be dragged or carried with the help of another person when each person is at either end. Sticks must not be thrown. Sticks must not be pulled from living tress.

Picking up and playing with stones: Stones may be picked up and transported. Children often like to make patterns and pictures with them. Stones may not be thrown. They may be dropped but thought must be given to whether it is safe to do so, i.e. what is beneath where I am dropping it?

Digging: Digging large holes is not encouraged. Children may carefully move soil to look for insects and their habitats using fingers or small sticks found within the Wild Life Area but deep holes should not be made.

Collecting wood: Wood is collected for fire lighting purposes. It is collected in four thicknesses - matchstick sized, pencil sized, thumb sized and wrist sized. This is a good mathematical activity involving sorting and matching. Sticks may be collected for creating pictures and patterns but should be collected sparingly so as not to disrupt creature habitats. Sticks should not be removed from the site and there are resources available within school in the shipping storage container for activities where natural resources cannot be found on the site.

Eating and Drinking: Nil by mouth policy (No lick, no pick) for anything found in the area, unless this activity has been specifically planned for during the session. Children must be reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses. When having drinks and snacks children will use wipes & water to clean their hands before consumption.

Rope and String Use: We encourage the collection and transportation of materials. We do not allow children to tie up each other. If a child has a good idea and wants to tie up something, for example a tarp or a swing, an adult should help them as needed, modelling appropriate knot tying and modelling how to talk through ideas and decisions.

Carrying and Transporting Materials: Children are encouraged to roll, lift, drag and to pull materials, either by using their hands or by using ropes. We encourage safe lifting by bending our knees and keeping our back straight. Safe lifting should always be modelled by adults. Heavier objects should be rolled, lifted or carried by more people working together (safe lifting risk assessment).

Toileting: Children are invited to use the toilets before we leave the school building. Children will be allowed to return to the school building with an accompanying adult. The nearest toilets are to be found by the entrance to and from the playground.

Leaving the Site: We work according to the ethos 'leave no trace' that we were in the Wildlife Area as much as is reasonably possible. Shelters should be taken down, imported materials need to be removed. All equipment is carefully counted out and back in again, especially when using tools and tent pegs. Very occasionally large items may be left between sessions. All rubbish will always be removed. If artefacts have been found or made these may be taken off the site with the consent of an adult.

Tree Climbing: An adult must be present when children climb trees in the Wild Life Area. The ground cover should be checked for 'sharp objects' and the tree marked as suitable for climbing. A visual check must be made for loose and rotten branches. Children are permitted to explore to their own limits or to a maximum height of 1.5m. Adults should be near enough to catch if a child should fall but far enough away to not be invasive to the children's exploration.

8. **Suggested Activities:** Activities are diverse and numerous but it should be reminded that we are trying to create independent learners who are inspired to try out their own ideas, explore their own interests and to attempt new ideas. Some activities might include:

- Shelter building
- Fire lighting
- Tool use
- Studying wildlife
- Playing team and group games
- Sensory activities
- Tracking games
- Cooking on an open fire
- Using a Kelly Kettle
- Rope and string work
- Art and sculpture work
- Woodland and traditional craft
- Developing stories and drama, and meeting imaginary characters
- Physical movement activities

9. A typical OE session

Each session follows a simple routine. The session starts with participants getting ready to go outside by putting on appropriate clothing - waterproof coats, trousers and wellington boots. We go through rules and routines whilst still in class and children help gather any resources we need to take out with us. The class then walks to the site and gathers at a meeting place, usually the castaway camp. It is a focal point where the class assembles and socialises. At the start of the session, children and teachers sit together and talk about what they did and particularly enjoyed doing at the last session, and what they are planning to do during the current one. Many activities take place in or around the circle, such as natural art and woodwork. Half way through or at the end of each session children gather together to have a drink and a snack. This often includes helping to light a fire at the base of a Kelly Kettle to heat water for warm drinks. Early sessions involve participants getting to know the site and learning basic safety rules. They then move on to more complex and detailed tasks and are given more "free time" for personalised learning. At the end of each session, participants help teachers to pack away the tools and materials they have been using and help to return the Wild Life Area to the state in which they found it.

10. Equipment

In addition to tools suited to the planned for activities, the teacher will always take an emergency bag with them. The contents of the emergency bag will vary depending on the time of year and weather conditions, the site being used, and the planned for activities according to the relevant risk assessments and daily risk assessment. There are of course also essential items that should be carried out for every session.

Trolley for transportation	Sit mats –carpet tiles
Set of spare clothes	Firestriker / cotton wool / kindling
Spare clear plastic bags and bin liners	Squash, hot chocolate powder and biscuits
Wet wipes	Plastic beakers
Tarpaulins & tent pegs	Plastic plates
Penknife	Disposable gloves
Whistle for use in emergencies	String and rope
Insect repellent (summer)	Pen and paper
Washing up bowl & antiseptic hand wash gel	Fire blanket and bucket
Kelly kettle and gloves	Facial tissues and kitchen towel
Drinking water in jerry can with date	Spare water in jerry can

Emergency procedure information

Mobile phone with emergency contact numbers – in school.	At a glance sheet - children's medical and contact information
Staff handbook and emergency procedures in water-proof folder	Risk assessments
School radio	Map of forest school site with postcode and / or grid reference

First aid kit

First aid guidance booklet	Disposable gloves (latex free)
Radio	Safety pins
Sterile non-medicated dressings	Eye bandage
Triangular bandages	Eye wash
Cleansing wipes	Instant ice pack
Space blankets x 2	Burn cool x 4
Cling film	

Activities equipment

Wood – ash, hazel, elder, willow	Beads
Wool, ribbon, string	Felt pens and charcoal
Scissors	Paint brushes
Wood glue	Masking tape
Cotton sheet	Pots for mixing natural dyes
Clay, wooden boards & modelling tools	Sieves
Pestle and mortar	Bug pots, spoons, paintbrushes, ID sheets

Tools

Tool bags and tool box	Knives x 5 in lockable box
Bow saws 12" x 3	Loppers x 4
Potato peelers x 20	Work gloves - adult's: 4 & children's: 10
Tent pegs (blunt ended) x 20	Rope – various sizes inc. poly prop.
Pruning saws x 1	Billhooks x 2

11. The OE Day

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

OE helps children and young people to develop their confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in the outdoor natural environment. It provides:

- A safe, supportive and positive environment for learning and discovery.
- Session plans and risk assessments for all activities.
- Activities that link to the National Curriculum and the Milborne enquiry based curriculum and cater for different learning styles.
- High adult to child ratios, enabling individual one-to-one and small group work.

- Monitoring and reporting of individual children's progress and development.
- Greater involvement of parents in their children's education through the invitation to take part in OE sessions with their children.

Responsibilities

Clothing: It is our responsibility to ensure that children are appropriately dressed for sessions. Any child not wearing appropriate clothing will not be able to participate.

We will provide a shelter from the elements (a Tepee) plus full waterproof clothing (including wellington boots if necessary), but it is still important that pupils wear clothes that are warm and that are OK to get wet and muddy. These are: warm trousers; a long-sleeved jumper, fleece or t-shirt; a vest or t-shirt underneath; thick socks - thermal if possible or two pairs of thinner ones.

Safety and First Aid: The Outdoor Curriculum Coordinator (Jenna Wittman) is a qualified first aider and carries a recommended first aid kit. Activities are thoroughly risk assessed and staff continuously monitors the safety of the class as activities progress.

An emergency plan has been drawn up, which will be followed in the unlikely event of an accident. All staff and volunteers have undergone an appropriate selection process to assess their skills and suitability for working with children and have been subject to enhanced DBS. OE follows the same high staff to pupil ratio as all areas of the curriculum and activities at Milborne.

Cancellation: OE sessions usually take place outdoors whatever the weather. However, sessions may need to be moved to a more sheltered site within the school grounds if there are high winds.

12. ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

- First Aid Kit (See contents list, contents review record)
- Emergency Procedures
- Medical information for each individual and Emergency contact details for every member of the group (adults & children)
- Risk Assessments
- Communication Devices - school radio and mobile phone.
- Clean Water
- Emergency whistle
- Emergency Life Blanket
- Accident forms
- Medication for individuals (it should be clearly labelled - staff must have been trained to administer it and parental consent must have been received)
- Appropriate Clothing
- Sharps box and gloves

Other Possible Equipment:

- Wet wipes, hand gel
- Sun cream (parental permission required)
- Spare Clothing
- Thermos of hot water
- Hot chocolate
- Plastic bag
- Roll Mat and Blanket
- Fire blanket
- Torch
- Bucket of water
- Emergency fire kit
- Knife
- Emergency shelter
- Burns kit
- Tick remover
- Bivi Bag

Clothing: No person will be permitted to take part without appropriate clothing that will protect them from extremes of heat or cold, keep them covered to reduce the likelihood of cuts and scrapes, that fits appropriately for comfort, and that meets any religious requirements.

Children and parents are encouraged to think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities, and to be aware they are likely to take some of our mud home with them after a session. In the Wild Life Area it can often be cooler than expected under the shade of the trees.

Clothing list:

- Waterproof trousers
- Waterproof coat, with a hood.
- Long sleeved top
- Full length trousers
- Warm boots (wellies can be very cold during the winter)
- Warm Socks, and a spare pair
- Gloves and Woolly hat - Cold weather
- Sun hat: that fits well to ensure good visibility- sunny weather

We work on the principle that "there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing", but staff must be aware of how children in their class react to different weathers and how this affects their sensory processing.

We do have a selection of spare clothing but this will need to be matched to the child prior to the session and checked for suitability. Ask our staff for help.

First Aid Kit

- Latex Gloves
- Bandages
- Burns gel
- Burn dressing
- Dressings
- Eye wash
- Sewing Kit
- Scissors
- Cotton wool
- Antiseptic wipes
- Medication for individual children
- Tick removers
- Sterile water
- Cling film

When having a fire

- Flame retardant gauntlet gloves
- Fire Blanket
- Bucket of water
- Fire steel
- Cotton wool
- Matches

13. Using and Storing Tools

All tools are counted out and back in at the beginning and end of each session in which they are used. When not in use they are kept secured away in a locked area. Before each tool is to be used it will be checked for damage and working order. Each tool type is kept in their own suitable containers, many of which are also lockable. Children must never be allowed to help themselves and will always have adult supervision when collecting, transporting and using tools. Tools are only used for a specific purpose. All adults should model correct and safe tool use, storage and transportation at all times. When using a tool, they are used well away from others in the group, (two arm's length and the tool length) and ensuring that others are aware that a tool is in use. Only walking is permitted when transporting a tool.

14. Risk assessments

Food safety and cooking procedure: Food and drink preparation and sitting together whilst eating and drinking are important parts of OE.

This procedure has been devised using advice in Preventing Food Poisoning - Good Hygiene at Home published by the Food Standards Agency and 10 Ways to Prevent Food Poisoning on the NHS Choices website.

We will provide hand washing facilities at each session where food and/or drink is prepared and will ensure that all staff, volunteers and participants follow the food hygiene rules.

Food hygiene rules: Everyone involved should be involved in food safety and follow the food hygiene rules below. If you spot a problem, please point it out to the teacher. When involved in food and drink preparation you should:

- Wash hands before and during cooking.
- Cover sores and cuts with a waterproof dressing.
- Avoid handling food when possible, and instead use spoons, tongs or other suitable implements.
- Tie hair back.
- Keep food that is waiting to be cooked separate from food that is ready to be eaten.
- Prepare food on a suitable surface, e.g. chopping board, cup, saucepan and not on the ground.
- Ensure food is cooked thoroughly before serving. Food should be cooked right through and piping hot in the middle.
- Keep utensils clean and regularly wash tea towels and cloths.
- Store food in clean plastic containers with non-leaking lids.
- Take all rubbish and food scraps away with them at the end of the session to avoid attracting vermin to the site.

Food allergies and special dietary requirements: Participants are asked to state any food allergies and special dietary requirements they may have on their Parental Consent and Medical form. This information will be used to plan what food and drink to provide during sessions, ensuring that the food and drink provided is suitable for all.

Safe use of tools:

General

- Keep tools in good, clean order.
- Check tools are safe to use before the start of each session.
- Carry out tool maintenance (cleaning and oiling) once a week.
- Do not use tools with damaged blades or handles or with loose bolts or fixings.
- When transporting tools do not carry more than can be held securely.
- Count tools in and out.

Bow Saws - use for cutting wood with a diameter greater than a 2 pence piece

- Wear a glove on the non-sawing (helping) hand, not on the tool.
- Use the saw to the side of you and not in front.
- Keep your non sawing hand away from the blade when sawing.
- Saw with easy relaxed strokes using the full length of the blade. Let the blade do the work - don't force it, especially if it sticks.
- Carry with the frame at your side with the blade facing down, like carrying a handbag.
- Keep the blade covered when not in use and especially when transporting.

- Ensure the item to be cut is firmly held.
- When using with children - Teacher and child to kneel on floor with teacher on one side of saw and the child on the other, both in the 'respect position'. The teacher guides the saw and the child follows.

Billhooks - use for cleaving wood

- Never wear a glove on the hand holding the tool - it makes the handle hard to grip safely.
- Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work. Stop if anyone comes too close.
- Hold billhook away from your body and cut away from yourself.
- Stop if you get tired.

Loppers

- Loppers - use for cutting wood with a diameter smaller than a 2 pence piece
- Always carry with blades closed (and locked if applicable).
- When not in use leave with blades closed (and locked).
- Do not exceed the cutting capacity of the tool.
- Use away from your body and keep hand not holding tool away from blades.
- Children only to use when sitting or kneeling.

Knives - use to whittle small sticks, peel bark and cut string

- Never wear a glove on the hand holding the tool - it makes the handle hard to grip safely. Wear a safety glove on your other helper hand.
- Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work. Stop if anyone comes too close.
- Hold the knife away from your body and cut away from yourself.

Potato Peelers - use to peel bark

- Rest the wood you are peeling on the ground or on a bench and not on your leg.
 - Hold the potato peeler away from your body and peel away from yourself towards the ground.
 - Keep the hand not holding the tool away from sharp end of potato peeler.
 - Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work.
 - Children only to use when sitting or kneeling - remind them not to move around when using the peeler.
- Tent Pegs - (when used to hollow out elder piths)
- Rest the wood you are working with on the ground or on a bench and not on your leg.
 - Poke out the piths away from your body towards the ground, and not towards you.
 - Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work.
 - Children only to use when sitting or kneeling - remind them not to move around when using the tent pegs.

Site Risk Assessment

	Hazard	Harm	People at risk	existing measures / new measures
1	nettles and brambles	stinging	all	make children aware, clear pathways and main play areas. Children to wear long trousers.
2	berried flora	poisoning	children	inform all children not to pick or eat berries. Wash hands before eating.
3	tree roots and stumps	tripping	all	inform all to take care in woods, clear walkways of bramble roots.
4	tree branches	branches falling, children falling.	all	pre-visit & continuous risk check, remove hanging dead wood. Remind children of risks.
5	sticks	hitting	children	inform children of rules, use a stick no longer than your arm, no hitting.
6	faeces	contamination	all	pre-visit & continuous risk check, remove and discard safely.
7	debris / rubbish	glass, drug use, metals.	all	pre-visit & continuous risk check, ask children not to pick up rubbish, inform an adult if they find something, adult to remove safely.
8	fire	burns, out of control.	all	<i>*separate risk assessment for activity is available</i> trained staff present at all times, safety procedures followed.
9	perimeter fence & gates	escape of children	children	ensure all gates are closed.
10	Mushrooms and fungi	poisoning	all	inform all children and adults to look only, no touching.
11	bees, wasps, adders.	stings and bites	all	check area for nests, avoid contact, first aider always on site, seek medical aid (999) if anaphylactic shock or adder bite are present.
12	tools	cuts, grazes, amputation.	all	tools stored away from premises, used on a one to one basis, <i>*separate risk assessment for each tool available</i> strict supervision, correct use of tools.
13	boundaries	escapees	children	children informed of boundaries, staff supervise the boundary.
14	trees	falls	children	first aider on site at all times, support children to manage their own risks.

15. Fire Policy

As part of the experience it is desirable to have an open fire at times to allow the children to enhance their learning and development with some risky activities. Encounters with risk help children to manage their coping strategies and discover and explore the world through real experiences. This policy sets out the guidelines to follow to ensure safe practice is a thread throughout the activity.

Aim: To use fire safely.

Method: Fires must only be lit after a risk assessment has been carried out and they must only be within the fire circle area. This includes the use of Kelly Kettles. There must always be a trained adult present within the fire circle when a fire is lit or hot embers remain, never leave a fire unattended.

There must be an adequate supply of fire water close to the fire pit to ensure there is enough water available to extinguish the fire if it gets out of control. A fire blanket is kept at the fire area to wrap round someone if their clothes become alight. Fire proof gauntlets should be kept at the fire area to allow adults to pick up hot items.

Before visiting the area the children should have had the opportunity to ask questions and be given information about fire safety. When at the fire circle the rules should be demonstrated for the children to see. There should be no more than 2 people, adults and children, within the fire circle next to the fire at any one time. The best position for cooking is on one knee (the respect position) so you can move backwards easily and remain stable. Long hair should be tied back, tassels and ties tucked away and scarves removed.

Monitoring of policy: This policy will be reviewed annually but may also be influenced earlier by new research and government guidelines.

Kelly Kettle: The teacher may use this to heat water. Never leave the bung in whilst heating water. This is only to be in place during storage so as to keep the chamber clear from forest debris or insects and mini-beasts. Once the fire is going in the Kelly Kettle base carefully add the chimney top to it by holding the handle parallel to the ground, and supported on each side by your hands. When lit, do not stand directly over, or look straight down the chimney. Never blow into the top. When pouring out the water support the base by holding the bung chain in one hand and the handle with the other. To put the fire out, pour the remaining water into the base. When not in use all tools will be securely locked away in the tool shed. Tools should be checked and cleaned before they are put away. Half termly the Outdoor Education Coordinator will ensure that each tool is thoroughly cleaned and oiled. Wear and tear will be monitored daily.

16. Health and Safety Policies & Procedures

Milborne through GTAT sets out clear statements of intent regarding the Whole School's approach to the health and safety of its children, staff and visitors to the School and the School Site.

Provided below is a list of additional points and measures which relate directly to our OE sessions.

There is always a high adult to child ratio. The high number of adults means that children can safely experience activities like climbing trees, walking across logs blindfolded, lighting (controlled) fires and using knives that are usually considered too risky in other situations. It also means that teachers are able to give individuals one-to-one attention when needed, and to lead small group work.

All activities are thoroughly risk assessed before the start of each session and teachers continue to monitor the safety of the class as activities evolve. There is always a trained first aider present at each session and a written emergency plan to follow.

Children are also involved in completing their own risk assessments throughout the sessions. This gives them ownership of the process and helps them to be aware of, and calculate, the risks involved in each activity. They are asked to state what risks and hazards they should be aware of and what steps they can take to reduce or mitigate them. For example, they are given string to mark hazards like brambles and hidden ditches.

DAILY PROCEDURES

To ensure the safety of children and adults, there are certain checks that need to be made before, during and at the end of each session. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that all checks have been completed.

This daily health and safety checklist provides a reminder of all daily procedures.

Pre-visit checks

- Run through the site risk assessment and amend/update as necessary. Remove all visible litter and faeces.
- Remove obvious trip hazards and mark off areas as out-of-bounds where appropriate.
- Ensure risk assessments are completed for all activities.
- Check that the rucksack contains all necessary items (see section on equipment), including all emergency procedure information, a stocked and in date first aid kit, fire blanket and dated fresh water.
- Check you have all the materials and resources needed for the activities you have planned.
- Check that all tools you are planning to use are in good working order.
- Check that your phone is in working order and is fully charged.

At the start of the session

- Take register and head count.
- Remind children about physical boundaries (use visual cues when needed) and that they must stay within these. In the first sessions, and at the beginning of each session play a game to reinforce this.
- Remind children how they should behave and how to stay safe on site (see site risk assessment).
- Explain the need for, and principles of, fire safety.

Throughout the session

- Be vigilant.
- Remind children of how to stay safe by highlighting potential hazards (see individual activity risk assessments), reminding them of the boundaries and asking that they make an adult aware of any possible hazards that they spot.
- Carry out regular head counts at the start of activities and at break time.
- Take photos and make observations of individual children.
- Use de-escalating techniques whenever possible when dealing with behavioural issues.

At the end of the session

- Carry out a final head count and escort the class back to the school.
- Count and pack up all equipment.
- Count and pack up all resources.
- Clear fire area and make safe. Remove ash and cover over the site of fire.
- Evaluate the session.

WHAT TO WEAR WHEN TAKING PART IN FOREST SCHOOL

Winter

- Waterproof coat
- Waterproof trousers
- Wellington boots
- Warm hat, scarf and gloves
- Warm trousers
- Long-sleeved jumper or fleece
- Long-sleeved top
- Vest or t-shirt
- Thick socks - thermal if possible or two pairs of thinner ones

Summer

- Waterproof coat and waterproof trousers in bag
 - Walking boots, trainers or wellington boots - sandals are not suitable
 - Sun hat
 - Sunscreen
 - Long-sleeved top or light shirt - to protect shoulders and arms
 - Light trousers - shorts/skirts are not suitable
- Adult Roles & Responsibilities

- The teacher has overall duty of care for the children in their charge. However all adults involved in the session are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe.
- All adult helpers **MUST** sign and date a form to show that they have read and understood this handbook and the risk assessments appropriate to the session in which they are helping. They must sign and date the form stating that they comply with the general operating procedures (code of conduct).
- The teacher will always carry and take a first aid kit at every session.
- The teacher will always carry a mobile phone and will ensure that there is easy access to a land line if the group is out of range.
- In the event of an emergency, the teacher will ensure that the School contacts the emergency services. If contact with the school is lost the teacher will contact the emergency services.
- The teacher will review the risk assessments before every trip.
- The teacher is responsible for the maintenance and checking of all tools and equipment to be used, prior to their use.
- The teacher is responsible in training the children in how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately.
- The teacher will be responsible for the pre visit check of the site prior to a session.

Ambulance procedure

Call the emergency service/s that you require on 999 from a landline or 112 from a mobile. Notify a member of Senior Management.

Location of the nearest working landline if mobile not working / no signal is situated in the main reception.

Give as much information about the patient and their location as possible:

- Who has been injured
- What their injuries are
- If they have any medical conditions
- Where on the site the patient is
- The directions to the site and the patient

Arrange for someone to stand at the entrance to the school to direct emergency services.

Don't hang up until you are told to do so by the call taker.

Try to stay calm.

Missing person procedure

The following procedure should be instigated and followed by the teacher responsible for the class in the event of any person (adult or child) going missing.

- Carry out 1, 2, 3 routine.
- Conduct a head count to check that all other members of the class are present.

- Have one member of staff to stay with the class and await further instructions.
- Send the remaining staff and volunteers to search the immediate area for an agreed length of time (e.g. 10 minutes). Arrange for them to return to the agreed meeting place at an agreed time.
- Ensure that each of the searchers has a mobile phone with sufficient battery life. Searchers should stay within an area they know and be aware of their own safety.
- If the missing person is not found in the agreed length of time, everyone should walk to the school. Here the rest of the class can wait in safety and comfort.
- Alert school staff to the fact that there is a missing person.
- Organise a second search party. Any staff member who knows the site can be recruited to help this second search. Arrange for them to search for a specified length of time (e.g. 20 minutes) and return to main reception at an agreed time. If the missing person is not found by this second search, then with the head teachers consent, contact the police. The decision may be made to do this while the second search is in progress depending on circumstances. At this point, a decision will need to be made regarding the rest of the group, in consultation with the head teacher. It is likely that once they have changed out of their waterproofs, it will be best for the children to return to normal lessons. Areas for search:
- All outside fields and areas.
- The school car park
- Toilets within school
- All classrooms and cloakrooms in school

After the incident is over, complete a full report using the Incident Report Form.

Fire procedure

- In the event of a fire that cannot be put out quickly and safely by the teacher, blow repeated long whistles to alert the group.
- Gather everyone together, conduct a head count and evacuate area to a safe location - Playground meeting point in case of fire.
- Alert head teacher and instruct one person to call the fire brigade and give directions to the site.
- Ask a second person to telephone the emergency numbers (see emergency plan).
- Arrange for someone to stand at the entrance to the school to direct emergency services.

Castaway Camp procedure

OE provides opportunities for children to get closer to nature and the outdoors through a variety of activities, which include learning about fire safety and how to make fires through the use of Kelly kettles.

All teachers are skilled and practiced in fire-building and management. Kelly kettles and small fires only will be used and lit in the centre of the circle.

All OE activities are rigorously risk assessed. Sessions are planned in such a way as to introduce higher risk activities to children over a period of time. This allows teachers to get to know the children in the group and for the children to learn how to behave responsibly and to build knowledge and understanding of the activity.

Boundary setting

In the first session, both physical and behavioural boundaries are agreed with the children. At each subsequent session, these boundaries are revisited and reinforced.

Developing routines - Sessions 1 and 2

- When they arrive at the site, children are shown how to sit round the circle (step over tree stumps and sit down).
- The need for, and principles of, fire safety are explained. This will include the rule that when kelly kettles or a fire are being used in the centre of the circle, only one child at a time is permitted to approach the kelly kettle or fire, on instruction from the teacher.
- The children are shown how to move around the circle (step out of circle and walk around outside).
- For young children (Foundation and KS1), a game is then played to reinforce this - Leaders call out different statements that will relate to certain children in the group. E.g. "Everyone who has brown hair step outside and move around the circle" and so on.

In subsequent sessions, children will be asked to recall how they should behave at the circle. Depending on the behaviour and ability of the group, the use of kelly kettles and/or lit fires will usually be introduced in much later sessions.

Engendering responsibility

Through practicing these established routines, the children will be able to enforce/remind others how to behave. Peers expect responsible behaviour and to a degree will be self-policing.

Campfire and use of kelly kettle and camp fire procedures

To ensure that everyone stays safe on site and that risk is managed effectively, teachers will follow a campfire and kelly kettle procedure. Teachers will:

- Keep igniters in a safe location.
- Ensure there is a supply of water/soil/sand to douse the fire.
- Always carry a fire blanket.
- Ascertain the location and size of the fire to be built and plan accordingly including fuel stocks.
- Carry out a pre-visit site check and risk assess the site and the activity.
- Douse fires at completion and check them after 30 minutes to ensure that they have not spread.

When lighting fires, teachers will:

- Not wear loose clothing and tie long hair back, and ensure that children have their hair tied back and also have no loose clothing.
- Wear gloves.
- Allow only one child at a time to help with fire construction / approach the fire.
- Try to keep away from the smoke.
- Put out the fire with water when finished.

When using kelly kettles, teachers will:

- Only light a fire in the tray of the kelly kettle in the centre of the circle.
- Kneel on one knee for ease of moving backwards.
- Never place the kettle on the fire without containing water.
- Only fill the kettle with water when cool.
- Place the tray of the kettle on a flat surface.
- Remove the cork before putting the kettle on the fire.
- Keep the spout on the opposite side to themselves and others.
- Remove the kettle from fire when the water starts to boil.
- Remove the kettle from the fire with the handle held vertically, using the chain to support it in an upright position.

Toilet and shelter facilities

Toilet facilities: There are no toilets on the site. Children attending OE sessions will be informed in advance of the situation, and all children will be asked to go to the toilet before they leave school. Children who need the toilet. Will go in pairs back into the accessible toilet in school. An assisting adult will accompany all children.

Shelter: In case of inclement weather, a shelter from the elements will always be provided at the site. This will consist of one or more securely fixed tarpaulins which will provide shade in the summer months and protection from wind, rain and snow in the winter.

Litter and Waste Water Procedure

All waste/litter will be collected for appropriate disposal.

- The teacher will provide waste containers.
- All waste produced or found on site during the session will be placed within the waste containers
- At the end of the session the teacher will remove the waste containers for appropriate recycling/disposal. A small amount of waste water is created, from hand washing and washing up. Solid debris is removed from the water for disposal in the waste containers. The waste water is then disposed in the Wild Life Area over a wide an area as possible, so it will evaporate quicker.

17. Safeguarding Children, Confidentiality and OE

Everyone at Milborne has a responsibility in relation to child protection. We are committed to:

- taking all reasonable measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of each child and young person (pupil) in our care
- the practice of safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people
- protecting each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil

Our aims:

- to raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- to provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting of concerns and cases
- to provide guidance on recognising and dealing with suspected child abuse
- to provide a framework for inter-agency communication and effective liaison
- to ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay
- to ensure that safe recruitment procedures are operated
- to design and operate procedures which promote this policy and which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations
- to contribute to the operation of appropriate health and safety procedures
- to have regard to and be consistent with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements and guidance.

In addition, adults need to appreciate that when children feel comfortable and content, when their instinct to trust and risk take is encouraged, they may be moved to disclose information which they might have otherwise kept to themselves. Any volunteer, or member of staff, who finds that a child is telling them something that concerns them should follow the course of action set out below in simple steps:

- Listen to the pupil but ask NO leading questions. Allow the child to lead the discussion but do not press for details.
- Keep calm and offer reassurance. Accept what the child says without challenge.
- Make NO promises. You cannot 'keep a secret'. You should make it understood that there are limits to confidentiality at the start of the disclosure.
- Inform the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead.
- Keep an accurate, written record of the conversation, including the date, the time, the place the conversation occurred in and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence.

18. Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and OE

The mission statement of Milborne emphasises the value placed on the individuality of all our children. We are committed to giving each child every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual children or groups of children. We aim to provide all our children with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. We will:

- Ensure equality of access for all children
- Employ a range of styles, including collaborative learning, so that children can value working together
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education
- Take account of the performance of all children when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- Make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of children.

Our teachers ensure that our children:

- feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- appreciate and value the differences in others
- take responsibility for their own actions
- participate safely, in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs
- are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success
- use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, learning styles and linguistic needs, without stereotyping
- have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- have challenging targets that enable them to succeed
- are encouraged to participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs.

We do have a stock of extra all weather clothing but ask that both parents and children think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities, and to be aware that they are likely to take home muddy and wet clothes after an OE session. We encourage a level of risk-taking, always under close adult supervision, and actively foster friendships and collaboration between all children and adults. OE activities are always designed to produce success and enjoyment, even when this appears to be of a transitory nature. The environment is an environment to which we are all entitled and we strongly believe that the experiences we will have there will linger in the memory for years to come. Children with medical needs or disabilities will be helped so that they can take part fully in each OE session. Those children with challenging behaviour will be risk assessed and may need one to one supervision, but their entitlement to participate in OE remains the same.

19. Risk Assessment Guidelines

A site risk assessment is carried out by the Outdoor Education Coordinator, teachers check is made prior to every session. In addition, an activity risk assessment will be established prior to any activity that may require it. These will include: whittling, cutting wood, shelter building, fire lighting and cooking on an open fire, and palm drilling.

Specific additional risk assessments will be undertaken for children whose medical condition or whose behaviour requires them.

The risk assessment process is detailed below:

- We look for potential hazards.
- We decide who might be at risk of harm.
- We think about how harm may occur and the worst outcome that we could face.
- We evaluate the current level of risk.
- We decide on a course of action or set of precautions that will be put in place to minimise the potential risk.
- We then re-evaluate the level of risk once our course of action and precautions have been put in place.
- We create a risk assessment and collate them in the health and safety file.
- We inform all adults, accompanying the class and require them to read each relevant risk assessment.
- We regularly monitor and review each risk assessment, half termly and as an action is needed.

20. Poor Weather Procedures

We will not go to Wild Life Area if the conditions are deemed dangerous such as in high winds, during thunder storms, or during periods of extreme cold. We will use the BBC weather online forecast to make judgments about the expected conditions. The teacher will make the decision to continue with or postpone due to bad weather. When it is wet a shelter will be built immediately by a trained adult so that there is a sheltered area that is available from the start that can be used.