

	William Gilpin Forest School			Title		Risk Assessment				
	Risk Assessment			Reference						
				Status		DRAFT/ACTIVE				
	Activity: Use of fire			Fire lighting and building is a regular activity for Forest School sessions. It is often planned for the end of a series of sessions when the children and their ways of behaving are known to the practitioner			Revision	0	Date	February 22
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GENERIC HAZARDS				PEOPLE	RATING (RISK = L X S)			RISK CONTROL						
A	Stairs	B	Stair gate	C	Doors	SEVERITY (S)	3	6	9	HIGH DO NOT PROCEED, Further controls required				
D	Windows	E	Flooring	F	Shelves						2	4	6	MEDIUM Further controls required unless not reasonably practicable. Only continue under strict control.
G	Small movable objects	H	Knives	I	Cooker									
J	Water	K	Food	L	Chemicals/Harmful substances		LIKELIHOOD (L) 1 LOW 2 MED' 3 HIGH							
M	Fire	N	Electric sockets	O	Lifting/stooping / twisting trunk									
P	Cars	Q	Visitors	R	Strangers									
S	Estranged parent	T	Climbing	U	Child exiting the building unsupervised									
V	Radiators	W	Animals	X	Chicken pen									
Y	Tool	Z	Plants	A1	Rubbish									
B1	Lost Child	C1	Uneven pathways and protruding roots	D1	Branches at eye level									
E1	Falling deadwood	F1	Wasps & Bees	G1	Extreme weather conditions									
H1	Extreme hot weather	I1	Extreme high wind	J1	Claustrophobia/Fear of the dark									
K1	Falling objects													

Benefits of the activity:	Children will have opportunity to learn and understand the effects of fire; they gain knowledge of scientific concepts of keeping safe & protecting self and others
Is the risk acceptable?	YES - Opportunity to explore and investigate with fire in a safe controlled environment therefore reducing the possibility of playing alone or in less safe uncontrolled situation

ACTIVITY	HAZARD	RISK	PEOPLE AFFECTED	UNCONTROLLED RISK RATING			CONTROL MEASURES	RESIDUAL RISK RATING		
				L	S	R		L	S	R
Trip or slip resulting on contact with the fire	M - Fire	Burns	1 & 2	2	3	6	Fire is contained within the 'Fire Square' made from large logs. The fire square is surrounded by the 'Fire Circle' – a seating area 1.2 meters away from the fire. The area inside the fire circle is kept free of trip hazards. People walk around the back of the Fire Circle (seating area) and not inside the circle.	1	3	3



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							<p>How to move around the fire circle is practiced regularly at Forest School.</p> <p>There should be no running in the main Forest School area where the fire and tool use occur.</p> <p>The number of children approaching the fire to cook on it is limited and depends on age and ability.</p> <p>When a child is given permission by the Forest School Leader to approach the fire e.g. to cook on it, the child kneels on one or both knees to increase stability.</p> <p>An adult is always present when the fire is being used to remind children of the ground rules ensure appropriate behaviour.</p>			
Sparks coming out from the fire/spitting wood	M – Fire	Burns	1 & 2	2	2	4	Use dry hard wood where possible and avoid soft pine wood. Where pine wood is used be very aware of the potential of spitting and increase safety measures listed above as necessary e.g. no cooking on the fire if it is spitting.	1	2	2
Clothing igniting	M – Fire	Burns	1 & 2	2	3	6	<p>Children and adults are strongly advised not to wear flammable nylon/polyester clothing e.g. fleeces to Forest School.</p> <p>Children wearing highly flammable clothing are not permitted to cook or sit close to the fire. They must remain seated in the fire circle or outside.</p> <p>A bucket of water/watering can is kept next to the fire at all times and we are also ordering a fire blanket.</p>	1	2	2
Sticks with smouldering ends	M – Fire	Burns	1 & 2	3	2	6	<p>A high adult child ratio is maintained by the fire at all times and should be dynamically assessed to reflect the age, ability and behaviour at the group.</p> <p>All sticks are to remain in the fire. Children are not permitted to poke the fire with sticks or take sticks from the fire.</p> <p>The fire is extinguished with water when we leave the site and no one is permitted to return to the fire circle.</p>	1	2	2



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Hot ash in the fire pit	M – Fire	Burns	1 & 2	3	2	6	Children are taught about: the fire triangle; which substances are highly flammable (e.g. oil used to make popcorn); which substances are used to extinguish a fire (e.g. water, fire blanket) and that it's not just the flames that are hot. The children are shown how hot the ash can be even after the fire has been extinguished. The fire is thoroughly extinguished with water at the end of each session.	1	2	2
Foreign elements introduced to the fire (natural)	M – Fire	Burns and spread of fire	1 & 2	3	2	6	The children are taught what wood is the only fuel we put on the fire at Forest School and not to put anything on the fire without an adult giving permission to approach the fire (supervised).	1	2	2
Foreign elements introduced to the fire (unnatural)	M – Fire	Burns, spread of fire and toxic fumes	1 & 2	2	1	2	As above. If plastic, foam or polystyrene is placed into the fire it will be dowsed immediately with water to prevent toxic fumes. If a highly flammable item was thrown into the fire e.g. aerosol can, lighter etc. all participants would be evacuated from the fire site immediately. Adults should lead by example and must not put any rubbish e.g. paper, card etc on the fire at any point.	1	1	1
Over hanging trees or other environmental features	M – Fire	Spread of fire	1 & 2	1	3	3	The fire pit was specifically located in a clearing, with limited vegetation and trip hazards and few over hanging trees and branches and those low branches in existence were lopped off by the tree surgeon.	1	1	1
Children becoming upset or frightened	M – Fire	Anxiety	2	1	1	1	Reassure the child, explain the risks and support the child in expressing their feelings.	1	1	1
Children's unwanted behaviour by the fire	M – Fire	Burns, spread of fire	1 & 2	2	3	6	Set the ground rules with the children as outlined in the first point. Role play appropriate behaviour and discuss what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour around the fire circle. If a child is not behaving appropriately by the fire they will be asked to move away (or be removed) from the fire circle immediately and will move on to a different	1	2	2



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							activity. If at any point the adults feel that during a session it is not possible to maintain appropriate fire safety, the fire must be extinguished and children told not to go into the fire circle.			
Surrounds of fire - rocks, stones or bricks splitting, cracking or exploding	M – Fire	Injury from flying fragments of rocks and stones	1 & 2	3	2	6	We do not use any rocks or stones to surround our fire; instead we use large hardwood logs.	0	0	0
Cooking on the fire	M – Fire	Burns	1 & 2	3	2	6	All cooking is undertaken with long handled pans, spoons or sticks. When actively cooking the guide ratios are - 1:4 for 8+, 1:3 for 5-7 year olds and 1:2 for under 3s but this ratio may increase depending on specific children or the activity When a child is cooking with the skillet or the popcorn kettle they do so kneeling by the fire (not standing). Removing the kettle, grill or kotlich suspended from the tripod should only be done by an adult because it requires the person to stand and lean over the fire.	1	2	2
Surface on which fire is built	M – Fire	Spread of fire	1 & 2	2	2	4	We have built our fire pit on soil and removed all leaf litter and pine needles.	1	1	1
Using a Storm Kettle	M – Fire	Burns and scalds	1 & 2	3	2	6	The Storm Kettle is used within the fire square and all normal fire circle rules apply (see above). Children collect sticks for the kettle and may feed the fire from the top after being shown how to do this (e.g. resting a small stick on the edge and gently tipping it in, keeping their hands well away from the hole/chimney opening and the flames). Children are not permitted to carry the storm kettle once the water has been heated. The kettle is used by an adult to make the hot drinks and then is returned to the fire square to cool or reheat.	1	2	2



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