

Talking Trees Risk Assessment for working on Ashdown Forest

Task: Schools and Education Team Activities

Area: Ashdown Forest and Forest Centre

People at risk: Children, teachers, adult helpers, members of the public and Ashdown Forest Leaders

Date: April 2020

Hazard	Risk	Control measures	Severity	Likelihood	Risk level
Uneven, slippery terrain, tree roots, steep banks, ditches, brambles.	Broken bones, sprains, strains and cuts and abrasions.	Ashdown Forest (AF) Leader to warn group of the hazards. Adults to supervise. Schools advised about suitable footwear.	2	3	medium
Trees/branches in possible 'falling' condition. Branches at eye level, swinging branches.	Crush injuries, concussion and cuts and abrasions. The Forest is an area of open access countryside and people visit at their own risk. The Forest Rangers have deemed the open Forest as low risk. However, where there are self-guided walk routes and identified routes used by led school groups these areas then become high risk and are managed accordingly.	AF Leader(s) to be aware of immediate environment and if dangerous trees observed, keep group away and inform Office and Chase Ranger. Rangers to inform AF Leader of any hazards and areas that should be avoided. In strong winds activities to be focused in open areas or indoors. AF Leader warn of dangers twigs and branches.	5	1	low
Diseases from soil and animal faeces	Sickness and disease	AF and School Leader(s) remind people not to put their hands in their mouths and wash hands on return to the centre and before eating.	1	3	low
Insect bites, stings and ticks.	Allergic reactions and/or insect borne diseases.	Visitors advised to wear long trousers, long sleeves and closed toe shoes School provided with information on ticks.	3	1	low

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Dogs and other domestic animals.	Bites and intimidation.	AF Leader(s) to warn group not to approach or touch animals, stand still and keep quiet.	2	2	low
Snakes.	Adder bite, possible allergic reactions.	AF Leader(s) to warn group to stay on paths on the heathland and stay behind the leader unless otherwise directed. AF Leader(s) and group be vigilant. Warn against touching wildlife.	3	1	low
Bracken	Breathing in spores, cuts	If bracken sporing - keep out of areas of dense bracken. AF Leader warn not to pick without gloves.	1	2	low
Adverse weather	Heat, cold, rain, snow, strong winds and thunder storms.	In extreme weather the session may be cancelled, or indoor activities provided. Adults to be aware of how children are feeling and respond accordingly.	2	2	low
Cars and moving vehicles.	Injury from impact	If crossing the road adults in road with high vis to stop traffic. Walk around outside of car parks.	4	1	low
Barbed wire. Temporary electric stock fence	Cuts, abrasions. Electric shock	Make children and adults aware where this hazard exists and avoid.	2	1	low
Forest operations – falling trees, unstable log piles, spraying.	Crush injuries, cuts and abrasions, contact with chemicals.	Rangers to let AF leaders know where Forest operations are taking place and AF Leader(s) to plan alternative route.	3	2	low

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Rope swings and shelters made by others	Broken bones, trapped limbs, concussion etc.	AF leader(s) to warn group to keep away from constructions by others.	3	1	low
Climbing Trees	Falls, broken bones or concussion	Children warned not to climb trees. On sessions when climbing permitted head height only. Climbing on tree trunks on Forest Schools sessions may be allowed with supervision.	3	1	low
Forest Centre garden: log seats, pond, barbed wire.	Slips, abrasions, drowning	School staff to supervise children during lunchtime and on arrival at site. School advised children are not to walk on logs in wet conditions, to keep away from pond and barbed wire and be aware of out of bounds areas which are signposted.	2	2	low
Streams.	Slips and drowning	AF Leader(s) make group aware of hazard and ensure appropriate supervision.	5	1	low
Getting lost from group / issues relating to child protection.	Abuse and alleged abuse	School to provide suitable ratio of adult to children not including Forest staff. Clear boundaries given to group working in an area and children advised to stay with the group. Follow school policy and reporting procedures if the situation arises.	3	1	Low
Poisonous plants / fungi.	Poisoning	AF leader to warn not to eat any plants unless advised and wash their hands before eating. Careful instruction and close supervision if foraging.	5	1	Low

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Hazards from indoor activities.	Burns and accidents with kitchen equipment	Keep fire exits clear at all times. Follow fire procedures in case of fire. Children are not to enter kitchen area or mezzanine floor the Education Barn.	3	1	Low
Mirror walk and blindfold activities.	Bumps, branches flicking in faces, trips and slips	Clear instruction given at start of activity. Adults maintain close supervision.	2	2	low
Shelter building.	Falling branches, sticks in face/eyes.	Children to work in small groups with an adult. Clear instruction given by AF leader and supported by accompanying adults.	2	2	low
Use of tools e.g. scissors, palm drills, and loppers, flints.	Cuts, puncture wounds	Clear instruction for safe use of tools and adults to supervise correct use.	2	2	low

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