

# RISK BENEFIT ASSESSMENT: NATURAL MATERIALS/LOOSE PARTS

**Site name:** Wild Garden, Nettlebed Community School, High Street, Nettlebed, RG9 5DA

**Location grid reference:** SU698866

**Assessment carried out by:** Diana Mills

**Date:** Sept 2019

**Review Date:** Sept 2020

**RISK BENEFIT:** The benefits to children playing with natural materials are endless: physical play, engagement with and understanding of natural environment and natural elements, potential for incorporation into imaginative games, communication and social interaction between adults and children, mental and social health and wellbeing improvements, numeracy, creating art (*materials include sticks, stones, mud, plants, leaves, water, minibeasts*).

The FS Leader will be responsible for monitoring loose parts activities to ensure the actions proposed are followed and risk is minimised. A first Aid kit will always be available, as will appropriate protective clothing and tools to safety clean, maintain and remove any hazardous objects

HAZARDS	What is the risk?	Who is AT RISK?	ACTION PROPOSED	Does the BENEFIT outweigh the RISK?
<b>Collection and movement of branches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poking with sticks/splinters/stick in the eye, head or body injury from collection and movement of wood or wood being lifted and swung around</li> </ul>	ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't run whilst collecting or carrying wood, do not use sticks for hitting people</li> <li>- Encourage group to be aware of other people when lifting and moving wood</li> <li>- Educate on not lifting objects that are too heavy</li> </ul>	YES - if action proposed is followed
<b>Digging and playing with Mud</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sharp stones in mud</li> <li>- injury from digging implements</li> <li>- mud in eyes</li> <li>- soil dwelling bacteria</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing risk assessment</li> <li>- Check soil where children are digging - make them aware of hazards, if necessary wear protecting clothing/gloves</li> <li>- All to be aware of Leptospirosis/Weil's disease and its prevention</li> </ul>	
<b>Playing with sharp stones, including 'mining' flint and making flint tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- injury to hands, legs, eyes from sharp shards of flint as a result of bashing rocks together</li> <li>- injury to self or others from using or moving with flint tools</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- encourage children to wear goggles and gloves when 'mining'</li> <li>- ensure children 'mining' are away from others and have plenty of space</li> <li>- encourage children to dynamically risk assess the situation for themselves - what could go wrong, who could get hurt, how do we prevent/mitigate against it?</li> <li>- discuss damage tools could do - heavy, and/or sharp edges</li> <li>- no running with tool or heavy/sharp stones</li> <li>- no taking flint tools or stones into school</li> </ul>	
<b>Sticks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Walking, running, playing with sticks resulting in injury to hands, limbs, body, head</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children asked to walk and not run with sticks</li> <li>- Children reminded constantly that hitting/poking/waving sticks at others is not acceptable and sticks will be removed, or suitable consequence. This includes 'stick fighting'.</li> <li>- Staff constantly assessing situations and reinforcing the message of safe stick play</li> <li>- No sticks will be sharpened for the use of play</li> </ul>	

<b>General Lifting Injury</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cuts and splinters</li> <li>- Muscular injuries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear communication and safety talk regarding correct lifting/carrying, size of logs/sticks</li> <li>- Ongoing risk and adults supervision/observing</li> </ul>	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div>
<b>Rubbish/rusty wire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possibly sharp objects hiding in leaf litter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FS Leader to regularly monitor site to make sure there is not dangerous rubbish</li> <li>- Encourage group to take responsibility for personal litter, and where safe, to pick up litter they find (appropriate PPE to be used)</li> <li>- Medical information to state if participant has up to date tetanus injections</li> </ul>	
<b>Nettles, Brambles, thistles &amp; other flora</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stings, scratches, skin punctures, cuts, clothes ripping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leader to know flora onsite and advise group of hazards</li> <li>- Wear gloves/appropriate PPE to avoid scratches/splinters (inc trousers/long sleeves)</li> </ul>	
<b>Poisonous plants/fungi</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pain, itching, sickness, discomfort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leader to know flora onsite and advise group of hazards</li> <li>- No picking/eating unless guided by an adult</li> <li>- Encourage photos and identification, encourage protection of wildlife</li> </ul>	
<b>Harmful fauna/invertebrates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insect bites/stings leading to pain, itching, discomfort.</li> <li>- Faeces on sticks/mud etc</li> <li>- Potential infections from organisms:</li> <li>- Zoonosis – Toxoplasmosis, E-Coli 157, Lyme disease and Weil's disease.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage thorough hand washing after activities and especially before eating</li> <li>- Educate on the hazards and risks, and symptoms to look out for</li> <li>- Letters home to parents of signs and symptoms</li> <li>- Do not lick fingers, put any natural parts in mouth</li> </ul>	