Risk Assessment – Axe use for carving and splitting

To be read in conjunction with other risk generic assessments i.e. General Welfare and Weather, Daily/ Site Specific and emergency site information.

Risk Benefit: What is the benefit to the children of offering this experience? Supervised activity using these tools allows participants to understand correct use of tools. Helps boost confidence and self-assurance. Encourages participants to have belief in their practical ability. Teaches new practical skills. Encourages participants to take responsibility for their own and each other's health and wellbeing by following safety precautions.				
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 5. Major accident – multiple injuries or fatality		**Calculate the risk levels:** The rating is calculated from the probability multiplied by the severity which will give a rating between 1 & 25. Our Forest School will not be carrying out any activities deemed to have a revised rating of over 12 as they are deemed too dangerous	
<u>Storage of tool and equipment-</u> • returning of equipment to its storage facility or the FS Vehicle.	May suffer from falling items	1x3=3	• Storage of tools and equipment in suitable, safe containers • FS leader will lead and monitor unloading and	1x2=2
<u>Improper use</u>	Cuts or lacerations, severe bleeding which could be potentially fatal	4x5=20	• Axe to be kept with blade guard on unless in use • Warning to take more care given when ground is wet or slippery	1x4=4

			• Participants are taught to use an axe in the correct way and explanations given as to the dangers of misuse • Participants to use an axe only when it is age and stage appropriate as judged by staff • Axes only to be used in specified area	
<u>Lack of maintenance-</u>	may suffer injuries from broken parts or unsafe technique of use.	1x3=3	• Check all tools before use • Ensure tools are correctly maintained, including cleaning and sharpening • Clean and dry tools after use • Store damaged tools separately	1x2=2
Badly maintained axes	Increased risk of cuts, lacerations, severe bleeding, death	5x5=25	• Axes to be routinely checked for damage after every use. All axes to have the coverings they came with when new. To be regularly serviced so that they always have sharp and well-maintained blades.	

			• If an axe has damage that is not easily and quickly rectified it will be decommissioned and responsibly disposed of.	
<u>Incorrect tool use-</u>	Cuts or lacerations, severe bleeding which could be potentially fatal	4x5=20	• Instructions in correct tool use given to all staff, volunteers and participants including stance, positioning when carrying tool. • distance from other people to be an arm length • When using an axe participants must stand to the side and have no part of their bodies in the travel line of the axe • Supervision by FS leader and other responsible adults	2x4=8
<u>Trips, Slips, Falls-</u>	are at risk from tripping over objects	2x2=4	• Make participants aware of trip hazards, uneven ground and muddy sloped • Prior Information sent to participants suggesting they wear sturdy outdoor footwear with a firm grip	1x2=2

			• Trip hazards and slippery surfaces mentioned in safety discussion can be made particularly important when carrying and using heavy or sharp tools. • FS leader should monitor ground conditions and fill out daily site check sheet before each session	
Poor Behaviour	Cuts or lacerations, severe bleeding which could be potential fatal	5x5=25	• If staff are concerned that the behaviour is compromising the safety of their session they must immediately stop all axe work. • Axe work will only be taught to participants who are age and stage appropriate. Staff need to dynamically risk assess and decide whether participants are in the right frame of mind or not on any given day.	2x5=10
<u>Improper PPE</u>	Risk of Injury from knife use to self or others	2x3=6	• Hair should be tied back and any loose dangling clothing removed	1x3=3

			• Correct use of gloves should be ensured, ie not one on the hand holding the axe	

Date : 3/10/2026 Signed by: Liz Cooke