Risk Assessment – Billhook (cleaving)

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 use of different muscles and physical control in a physical activity 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	
Hazard	**Who is at risk and from what?**	**Risk Rating (Probability x Severity =)**	**Control measures to reduce the risk and actioned by whom?**	**Revised Risk Rating (Probability x Severity =)**
Accident/ Illness-	may suffer accident, illness requires treatment etc.	2x3=6	• Induction and reminder health and safety talks given to emergency situation to new staff, volunteers and participants • Up to date first aid kit on site	1x3=3

			• Appropriate no. of first aid trained staff and volunteers on site during sessions • Accident book for incident recording on site • Emergency site information sheet available to direct emergency services to site • Charged mobile phone/s available and emergency site information form available to show directions to nearest main lines phone.	
<u>Storage of tool and equipment-</u> • returning of equipment to its storage facility or the FS Vehicle.	May suffer from falling items	2x3=6	• Storage of tools and equipment in suitable, safe containers • Containers and tools will be secured with bungee cords in transit • FS leader will lead and monitor unloading and	1x3=3
<u>Moving tools and equipment to site-</u>	may suffer from trips or falls or other injuries due to incorrect carrying technique	2x3=6	• Billhook must be carried by the handle with blade pointing downwards and hook facing forwards	1x3=3

			• When passing billhook, pass tool by the handle with blade facing down. • Warning to take more care given when ground is wet or slippery	
Lack of maintenance-	may suffer injuries from broken parts or unsafe technique of use.	2x3=6	• Check all tools before use • Ensure tools are correctly maintained, including cleaning and sharpening • Clean and dry tools after use • Store damaged tools separately	1x3=3
Incorrect tool use-	may suffer injury from incorrect tool use	2x4=8	• 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 and to keep fingers and limbs away from the mouth of the blade. • Billhook only to be used in designated Tool Area	1x3=3

			• One person to hold the billhook in position, one hand on handle. The user calls out to the assistant to strike it with mallet, only when clear. • Supervision by FS leader and other responsible adults, ratio 1:1 • Billhook to be left on the chopping log within the tool area or moved to shed and tool box when not in use	
<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 • 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	1x2=2

			daily site check sheet before each session	
Poor Behaviour	Cuts or lacerations, severe bleeding which could be potentially fatal	5x5=25	• If staff are concerned that the behaviour is compromising the safety of their session they must immediately stop all tool work. • Tool 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

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