



Forest School Handbook



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Introduction and Background

"An inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults regular opportunities to achieve, and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands on learning experiences in a woodland environment."

Forest Education Initiative, 2005

Forest Schools was originally developed in Scandinavia in the 1950s'. It became an embedded part of the curriculum and studies showed that children attending 'Forest Kindergartens' were arriving at school with strong social skills and the ability to work in groups effectively. The children had high self-esteem and confidence in their own capabilities.

This was recognized in 1994 by Bridgewater College who developed the first British Forest School after observing children in Danish Schools. In 2003, the awareness of Forest Schools was becoming increasingly prominent across the UK. In 2012, the Forest School Association, along with a national governing body, was formed.

Vision

At Brompton and Sawdon Primary School, we motivate our children to achieve their personal best and explore their full potential. Attending Forest Schools allows our children the opportunity to develop an inquisitive and innovative attitude to the natural world. Being in the forest provides hands-on learning experiences which inspires our children to appreciate and conserve the world they live in.

Environmental Impact

During our Forest School lessons, we continually encourage and support children to think about their impact on the natural world around them. The children are aware that we are there to experience the woodland and all that it has to offer, however our aim is to leave the forest looking 'untouched'.

We have been given permission by the land owner to set up a fire pit with surrounding benches. This will be left in place for us to return to each week.

Between January and March there is a large amount of daffodil bulbs that begin to grow within the forest. During these months, we limit our Forest Sessions at the request of the land owner, to allow for the ground layer to thrive.

During the following months, our Forest Leaders monitor the woodland alongside the groundskeeper. If areas of the woodland become overused or damaged, we block this area off to allow regrowth. If the impact on the environment becomes excessive we will cease all forest sessions within our site for the foreseeable future.



Routes and Rules

Forest School is a fundamental part of the creative curriculum we offer at Brompton and Sawdon School. The children attend a forest session every week. It is at the discretion of the Forest Leader/class teacher/land owner as to when this will take place within their timetable.

Forest School Rules

- Always stay within the boundaries
- Do not put anything in your mouth unless the Forest Leader gives you permission
 - Don't disturb wildlife
- Do not collect more than 5 items from the same living plant/tree/bush
 - Do not throw anything
 - Drag sticks behind you
 - Care for nature
- Keep the tools in the tool store and return them when you are finished using them
 - Follow the tool talk to keep your tool licence
- Return to base when you hear "WOLF PACK RETURN"
- Always wash your hands after being in the forest

Woodland Activities

There is a vast amount of activities that can be enjoyed in the woodland. These can be based on classroom topics or standalone forest skills. Here are some examples of the activities in our Forest School Programme:

Bush craft

Shelter building

Mini shelter building

Fire lighting

Kelly Kettles

Cooking in the forest

Forest art

Bird watching

Identification surveys

Bug hunting

Tree felling

Nature walks

Tree climbing

Journey sticks

Story stones/ story telling

Planting and cultivation

Forest Planning

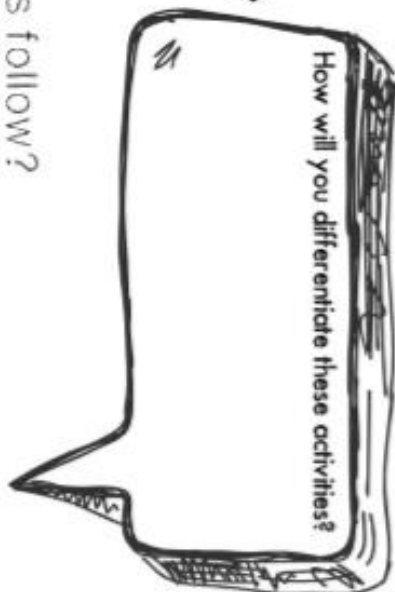
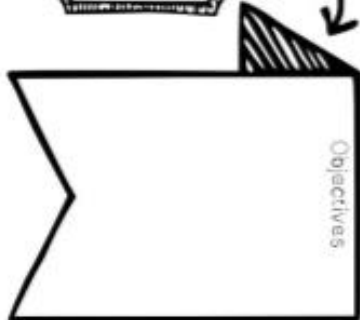
Date:

Group:

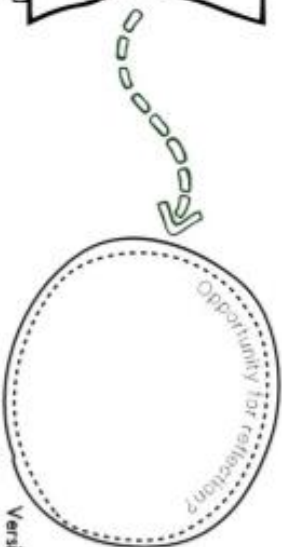
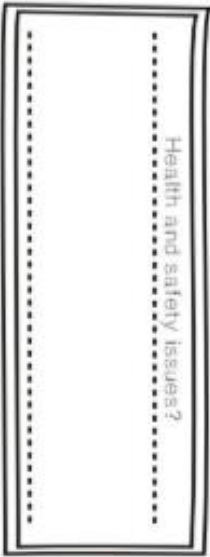
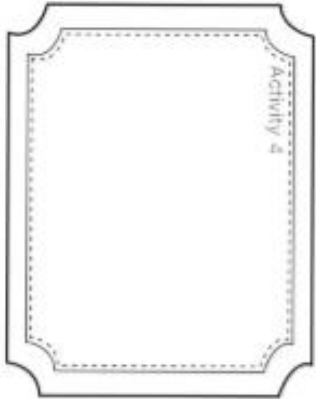
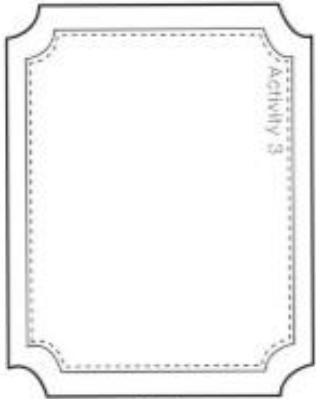
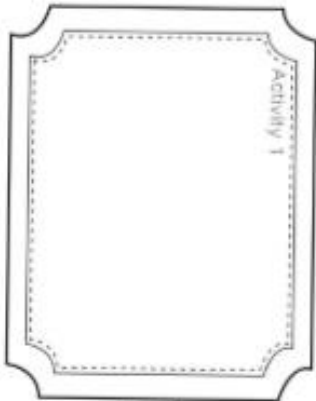
Location:

The 5 minute Forest School plan

...print and scribble away!



What sequence could your activities follow?



Clothing Requirements

It is important that children come prepared to be outside in the British weather and ready to get muddy. They will need the following equipment in their bags at all times to allow for us to access our site in all weathers:

- Wellington or walking boots
- Comfortable clothes that we can get muddy
- Warm jumper
- Light, waterproof jacket and trousers that can be rolled away into a bag if needed
- Woolly hat and gloves
- Thick socks
- Small rucksack to carry their own items above



Policy and Procedures - Tool Use

The safe use of tools is an important part of forest school. The Forest Leader will monitor this at all times and will assign a designated tool store area during every session.

The tools will be counted out at the beginning of every session and counted back in at the end of every session. It is the responsibility of the Forest Leader to store these tools safely.

All tools and equipment are checked and cleaned regularly. It is the responsibility of the Forest Leader to undertake maintenance on the tools and frequently sharpen them to allow for safe usage. Any tools that are deemed to be damaged or broken will be removed from use immediately and replaced.

The tools will be introduced to the children at the discretion of the Forest Leader. Children will be introduced to the Tool Talk in the early sessions of the Forest School Education. They will be required to show their capability to use tools correctly by following/modelling the Tool Talk at all times. If children show an effective use of the Tool Talk they will gain their **Tool Licence**. Failure to follow this will result in a Tool Licence being taken away from a child at the discretion of the Forest Leader.

Tools will be introduced to the children based on their individual skill level. Children will be familiarised with 'tame' tools first such as scissors and peelers to allow for the Tool Talk to become second nature.

It is advised that children wear protective gloves on their hand that is not holding the tool to prevent injury. It is recommended not to use a glove on the tool hand to allow for a better grip.

Policy and Procedures - Fire Lighting

Fire lighting is a very exciting part of forest school. To ensure the safety of everyone in the forest, it should only be undertaken at the discretion of the Forest Leader. Children who participate in fire lighting will follow the safety precautions and be show an understanding of the risks when lighting fires.

Considerations before deciding to have a fire

- Wind direction
- The canopy overhead/ over-hanging branches.
- Soil type - ensure the ground is not too peaty.

Clothing safety

- Jewellery to be removed
- Hair to be tied back
- Glove to be removed when placing materials on/around the fire

Fire Safety

- Seating and benches should be positioned 2m away from the fire pit/ Kelly Kettle.
- Allow gaps between seating as fire escape routes.
- Children are not allowed within the Circle of Respect unless invited into the inner circle by the Forest leader.
- If a child is invited into the inner circle they must kneel on one knee to allow a quick retreat from the fire if needed.
- Children must not throw anything onto the fire.
- Ensure the area between the seating area and fire pit is free from debris and trip hazards.
- Children will be taught to never cross the inside Circle of Respect.
- Children will move around the fire by stepping over the seating log and walking outside the seating area.

- Children will be taught to turn their heads and raise their arm across their face if smoke blows in their direction.

Management and Responsibility

- Fires will be lit by the Forest Leader.
- Children lighting fires must be done under direct supervision of the Forest Leader
- Fires will be lit using a flint and steel. Matches and firelighters can be used, but will be stored safely away in a fire proof box.

Flammable liquids and accelerants are not permitted.

- The fire will never be left unattended.
- A bucket of water will always be available in case of an emergency.
- Burn gel and a fire blanket will be available in the first aid kit within immediate distance.
- The fire will be lit in a designated area used only for this purpose.

Safe Extinguishing

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of the session.
- Adequate time should be allocated to allow for a fire to burn down and be extinguished.
- Fires will be dowsed in water until all the embers are extinguished.
- Using the back of the hand, an adult will check for heat and apply further water if necessary.

Kelly Kettles

Only adults are permitted to light the fire underneath the Kelly Kettle unless children are under the direct supervision of the Forest Leader.

Rules and Guidance

- The Kelly Kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground.
- Children must be seated at least 2m away from the Kelly Kettle.
- Kelly Kettles should **NEVER** be boiled with the cork in.
- Kelly Kettles should only be removed from the fire by an adult wearing fire safety gloves.
- Children can feed the fire under supervision from an adult. They must follow the instructions on fuelling the Kelly Kettle (placing their fuel on the edge of the Kelly Kettle, before letting the fuel drop in from the side).
- Children must kneel on one knee when fuelling the Kelly Kettle.



Boundaries

At the beginning of every forest school session, children are reminded of the boundaries which they must not pass. If a child is unable to remain within the boundaries, their forest school session will be terminated at the discretion of the Forest Leader.

Our Forest Site has 4 clear boundaries:

- **A fence leading into the land owner's field**
- **A bridge into/ out of our site**
- **A gate into the land owner's field**
- **A water boundary (small beck)**

In the event of a forest session taking place in a new site/ on an educational visit, new boundaries will be established by the Forest Leader immediately.

Children are all trained and familiar with boundary games including **Wolf Pack** and **1, 2, 3 Where are you? 1, 2, 3 I'm here**. When a Forest Leader calls to the children they will call back and/or return to base.



Eating and Drinking

Children are not permitted to put anything in their mouths unless they are given permission by their Forest Leader. Forest Leaders are trained in edible foraging, however they are advised to be cautious and when there is an element of doubt over the identification of a plant species they will not allow tasting.

Cooking and eating will take place during forest schools. Children are advised to clean their hands prior to eating using a sanitised wipe. They will be reminded about food hygiene and asked not to put their hands in their mouth during forest activities. *To complement this, however, children will develop their resilience by accepting that it is okay to get muddy and dirty sometimes.*



Rope and String Use

Children will use rope and string for a range of woodland activities including shelter building and bush craft. This will be modelled by the Forest Leader so the children can become familiar with knots and lashing for tasks.

Children will be supervised with ropes and string. To lead children towards independence in their tasks, they will be reminded about the dangers of using rope/ string.



Carrying and Transporting Materials

Children are encouraged to pull, roll, lift and drag materials to transport them around the forest. Large logs or sticks must be dragged behind the child so that they cannot get caught and/or injure passing children.

Larger materials must be carried in partners or groups. Children will be encouraged to ask each other for help if needed and offer their help if they see someone is struggling.

Children will be shown how to lift materials with care. They will bend at the knee get a good grip on materials before they lift.



Tree Climbing

Tree climbing is always supervised by an adult. Children are allowed to climb to their own limits or to a maximum of 1.5m at the Forest Leader's discretion. Children will be encouraged to begin climbing to their own head height and no further until they develop skill in their climbing control.

An adult will always pose as a 'spotter' for the child and stand below their climb. The floor must be checked for sharp objects or sticks and the tree must be checked for damaged/ loose/ dead branches that could break under stress before a child commences their climb.

Toileting

Prior to our forest session, the teacher will make sure that all of the children have been to the toilet at school.

Toilet facilities are not available at our forest site. Children will be supervised by an adult to have a 'wild wee'. To keep our forest site free from unnecessary contamination, we have a designated area that children will use.

Spare clothes and wipes will be taken by the Forest Leader in the event of an accident. A trowel will be taken if a hole is required.

Accident Procedure

In the event of a serious accident or injury whilst in an out-of-school situation, the two priorities are for the injured child to get treatment and to ensure the safety of the rest of the group.

In the event of an accident *out of school* where a child requires emergency treatment:

1. An ambulance must be called using a mobile phone. **All adults will have a charged mobile phone.**
2. The child must not be moved. Coats/blankets can be used to cover them and protect them from becoming cold.
3. First Aid must be given if needed.
4. A teaching assistant will accompany the child to hospital in the ambulance.
5. The class teacher will remain with the rest of the group and return them to school.
6. The school office and head teacher are contacted immediately, who can in turn contact the parents of the child.
7. It may be necessary for another member of school staff to relieve the adult at the hospital.

Accident forms must be completed once the group has returned to school. Minor injuries will be treated as they would in school, recorded and reported to parents.

Emergency Contacts

Emergency Services **999/112**

School Office **01723 859359**

First Aid

The Forest School Leader must be **Paediatric First Aid trained** and their certificate will be kept up-to-date. An emergency rucksack is carried to all forest sessions. This contains the First Aid Kit and medication/inhalers for identified children.

Emergency Rucksack List

Whistle

Antibacterial gel

Wipes

First Aid Kit

Foil blanket

Toilet paper, plastic bag, gloves and trowel

Spare clothes

Accident book

Fire blanket

Labelled medication for individual children

Mobile phone

Large bottle of water (burns and fire)

First Aid Kit

Sterile dressings (plasters) - various sizes

Triangular bandage

Safety pins

Eye-pad dressings

Sterile wipes

Adhesive tape

Disposable gloves

Scissors

Tweezers

Eye rinse

Burn gel

Designated Person and Responsibilities

Forest School Level 3 Leader: Miss Megan Watts

Forest School Level 2 Practitioner:

Mr Oliver Cooper

Mr Andrew Chilcott

Mrs Jo Martin

Trained in Paediatric First Aid:

Miss Megan Watts

Mrs Debbie Mitchell

Responsibilities of the Forest Leader

- To plan and lead all forest sessions.
- To store correctly, maintain, sharpen and replace tools required for forest sessions.
- To ensure that planned activities and resources available are within the capabilities of the children taking part.
- To amend plans to provide an inclusive curriculum enabling the children to achieve.
- To have an up to date Paediatric First Aid qualification.
- To ensure that inhalers, medication and the First Aid Kit is available at every session.
- To ensure that all participants are adequately dressed for the weather.
- To ensure that adults participating understand their role in promoting emotional intelligence, self-esteem and learning within the forest.
- To carry out daily risk assessments as described in the Risk Assessment Policy
- To ensure all Forest School policies are regularly reviewed and informed by observations of the Forest School site.

Consents and Ratios

Prior to the forest sessions, parental consent will be obtained for every child. This will ensure that parents are aware of the expected clothing and risks associated with forest schools. It will also require parents to inform us of any medical/additional needs their child may have before entering the forest.

Parent Letter

Brompton and Sawdon Community Primary School.



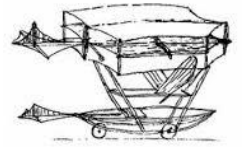
Headteacher: Mr J. Logue

Tel: 01723 859359

Cayley Lane, Brompton by Sawdon , Scarborough YO13 9DL

email: admin@bromptonsawdon.n-yorks.sch.uk

website: www.bromptonsawdon.n-yorks.sch.uk



Ready To Fly

9th September 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

FOREST SCHOOLS

Here at Brompton and Sawdon CP School, we are trained to deliver a Forest School Education. The children will have a weekly session which will allow them to take part in a range of discovery and exploratory woodland activities. These will include natural art, using mud, building shelters and fire lighting amongst many others. We begin by introducing all of the children to the Forest School Programme and allow them to familiarise themselves with our Forest School site and the behaviour expectations/boundaries.

Class 1 and 2 have their sessions together on Tuesday afternoons led by myself. It is important that children come prepared to be outside in the British weather and ready to get muddy. They will need the following equipment in their bags at all times to allow for us to access our site in all weathers:

- Wellington or walking boots
- Comfortable clothes that we can get muddy
- Light, waterproof jacket and trousers that can be rolled away into a bag if needed
- Woolly hat and gloves
- Thick socks
- Small rucksack to carry their own items above
- Named drink

During the Forest Schools sessions, the children will be encouraged to work together on den building, exploration, role play and flora/fauna conservations, all of which can be extended within the classroom setting. The children will also have the opportunity to work with 'real tools' and experience the excitement of fire lighting and using Kelly Kettles.

This is a fantastic experience for your children and that they will make the most of this wonderful opportunity to learn outdoors in our beautiful surroundings. To allow your child to access the Forest School sessions, could you please complete the consent form below and return it to the office promptly.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Miss Megan Watts
Level 3 Forest School Leader

Brompton and Sawdon Community Primary School.



Headteacher: Mr J. Logue

Tel: 01723 859359

Cayley Lane, Brompton by Sawdon , Scarborough YO13 9DL

email: admin@bromptonsawdon.n-yorks.sch.uk

website: www.bromptonsawdon.n-yorks.sch.uk



Forest Schools

I understand that there are inherent but measured risks involved when undertaking woodland activities.

Child..... Year.....

Please delete as necessary:

I **do/do not** give permission for my child to take part in Forest School sessions.

My child has the following additional needs:

Signature: Date:

Risk Assessment

Site Risk Assessment

Before a site is used, a risk assessment will be carried out by the Forest School Leader. The site risk assessment will be approved by Mr J Logue (Head teacher) and updated as and when there are any permanent or seasonal changes to the site which are not recorded on daily site assessment below.

Daily site risk assessment

A daily site risk assessment (safety sweep) will be carried out by the Forest Leader before the site is used to ensure that there are no changes which could cause harm. This should be taken with extra caution following high winds and other bad weather. Following the daily site risk assessment the Forest Leader will make a decision on whether the forest session will be **cancelled**, or undertake any amendments that are required to **make the site safe** (e.g. remove any hazards, mark off any unsafe areas).

Activity risk assessment

When planning activities for a forest session, it is vital that the Forest Leader identifies any hazards that are at risk of causing harm or injury to a participant. These should be recorded on an activity risk assessment with suitable control measures taken to control and minimise the risk. Due to the nature of Forest Schools the children may change or modify their activity during the session. The Forest Leader must make sure reasonable steps are taken to ensure the new activity is safe.

Risk Assessment and Risk Management Record Brompton & Sawdon Primary School
Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities

Date: On-going - weekly visits	Name of Visit: Forest Schools Education	Establishment: Outdoor site Manor House, The Butts, Brompton by Sawdon
Leader: M Watts	Other Adults: Staff: O Cooper A Chilcott J Martin D Mitchell S Sadler H Wright	
Mobile No. 07701033258 MW 07801959567 DM		
<i>Identifying the hazard – assessing the risk</i>		
<i>Control measures – reducing the risk</i>		
Site and its environment	Risk Rating	Action:
Walking to our site Crossing the bridge/road	Low	Chn are reminded of their behaviour expectations. Pupils to walk in pairs and to stay in line with the rest of the group along the route. Chn have walked this route multiple times previously and are familiar with the expectations of keeping pace and not going near the edge of the pavement. They will be reminded before each trip. The route takes under 5 minutes and requires the crossing of 1 main road. On crossing the road MW/OC to check first, cross to halfway and guide chn across the road in their groups (other adults to assist). Adults to supervise chn in their groups on opposite pathway. MW/OC to lead and AC/SW to supervise from back, other adults to walk with groups. In the event of an accident, MW/OC/DM will administer first aid. In the event of a serious injury, emergency services to be called. JL and parents will be alerted immediately via mobile phone. DM/SW is the designated adult to accompany children to the hospital.
Slippery paths/uneven surfaces/trips and falls	Medium	MW to lead at appropriate pace - not running and avoiding slippery surfaces where possible. Wheelchair users to be pushed on firm ground. The route to the site is a flat pavement all of the way until we reach the
		Outcome Risk manageable
		Outcome Risk manageable

<p>Getting lost Getting separated from the group</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>entrance to the site. If the site is wet and boggy during wet months, chn will be advised to take additional care. Wheelchair uses will be supported to walk or be pushed around the site by SW/OC. Chn are required to wear appropriate footwear as part of their Forest Schools kit. Chn will be shown clear boundaries of the site which they must not pass. We will spend a great deal of time making the chn familiar with these boundaries using games and activities. Chn will be shown a way of shouting out to contact adults if they are in need of help or support. The site is away from public access and will only be accessed by the land owner and/or their family. MW/OC and JL at school will be informed by mobile phone if a child becomes separated from group and is unable to be found. The rest of the group will be supervised by AC/SW whilst MW/OC initiates steps to finding the lost child(ren).</p>	<p>Risk Manageable</p>
<p>Woodland environment Falling Trees Falling dead branches Branch face whip Poke in eye Slippery logs Wasp/bee sting - bites and irritations Poisoning</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Avoid woods in very strong winds. Do not push on standing dead trees. Check for and avoid hanging branches with significant splits or cracks, particularly in breezy conditions. If the wind is too high, MW/OC will return the children and adults back to school. Chn will be reminded to hold branches for person behind or leave a big gap. Warn chn of eye level branches. Remind chn to step over logs, not on them. Chn will be wearing appropriate footwear. Chn will be told to avoid any nests of insects. Chn will be told to only eat items specified by group leader. If an accident occurs MW/OC/DM will administer first aid. In the event of a serious injury, emergency services to be called immediately. JL and parents will then be alerted by mobile phone. DM/SW is the designated adult to accompany children to hospital.</p>	<p>Risk manageable</p>
<p>Water Drowning</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>There are some areas of water around the site - Brompton Butts and a shallow boggy area within our site. During the summer months this area dries up. Chn will be informed of where the water is and this will be made a clear</p>	<p>Risk Manageable</p>

		<p>boundary that must not be passed during activities. Collecting water will be done in pairs, and under the supervision of an adult.</p> <p>If an accident occurs MW/OC/DM will administer first aid. In the event of a serious injury, emergency services to be called. JL and parents will be alerted immediately using a mobile phone. DM/SW is the designated adult to accompany children to hospital.</p>	
<p>Group Needs</p> <p>Behavioural issues First Aid Chn with asthma</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Chn have been on multiple outings in the village where behaviour expectations have been set. They are aware of what is expected - and will be reminded regularly.</p> <p>In the event of a child demonstrating challenging behaviour they will be moved to MW/OC's group for the remainder of the session.</p> <p>In the event of behaviour which puts other chn at risk, JL will be contacted to collect this child and return them to school immediately.</p> <p>First Aid Bags will be taken by MW, OC and AC</p> <p>Inhalers for every child will be taken in the First Aid Bag of their class teacher.</p> <p>If an accident occurs then MW/OC/DM will administer first aid. In the event of a serious injury, emergency services to be called. JL and parents will be alerted immediately using the mobile phone. DM/SW is the designated adult to accompany children to hospital.</p>	<p>Risk manageable</p>
<p>Completed by: Miss Watts</p>		<p>Signed by Headteacher.....</p>	

Insurance

The Children Act 2004 and the Health and Safety Work Act 1974 place a number of legal responsibilities on the school.

Brompton and Sawdon CP School has insurance cover appropriate to its duties under this legislation, including Employer's and Public Liability Insurance.

Responsibility will, in most cases, rest with the school, but staff will take reasonable care, both for themselves and other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.