

# Forest School – Tree Climbing Protocol

## Review Cycle:

Last Reviewed: 18<sup>th</sup> December  
2018

Responsible for Review: Forest  
School Leader

Next Review Date: September

Forest School nurtures children through giving them the opportunity to succeed and develop confidence and self-esteem. Children will grow with hands-on learning experiences which are led by the child. They will flourish within the open and natural space in our woodland environment. Tree climbing is an accessible part of our Forest School experience because we have strong climbable trees on site.

We allow children to climb the trees in the picture to the height of the yellow dot (approximately their own head height).

## Tree Management

If bark comes off the tree trunk or branches, or there is dead wood in the tree canopy the children will not be allowed to climb the trees, as they may cause further damage. If any rope, string or other material begins to damage any trees it will be removed. Tree management is part of the risk assessment procedure.



## Procedure for Tree Climbing

Children will not be allowed to climb trees if;

- The trees are too slippery due to wet weather conditions
- There is dead wood in the tree canopy above the climbing areas
- Their clothing is unsuitable- easily caught on tree branches or flimsy footwear
- A forest school session is not currently running
- No suitable first aid trained staff present
- An adult is not within sight- an adult must be near the tree children are climbing

## Risk Benefit

Forest School offers children the opportunity to manage risk, therefore if a child wishes to climb a tree they need to do it independently. Adults may show children where to put their feet and give verbal encouragement but they may not help children to climb. If a child has climbed up the tree and panics then an adult will help them by pointing out step by step how to get themselves down. If a child is very distressed and cannot get down independently then an adult may lift them down taking care of their own back whilst helping. One child may climb up and down at a time and the rest of the group need to keep a safe distance. If a child falls from a tree the Forest School Leader will administer first aid and parents will always be informed as soon as possible to decide whether or not the child needs to go home.



## Children's Climbing Guide

1. Tell an adult you want to climb a tree and take them to the tree
2. Put your foot in the lowest foothold and your hand on a branch or handhold
3. Lift your weight a little bit before lifting your body up to test the handhold or branch strength
4. Pull your other foot up to a higher foothold and lift your body
5. Use your hands to establish a safe position on your chosen branch
6. Sit on the branch or stand up whilst always holding on- never let go
7. Face the tree to get down
8. Feel the foothold with your foot and put your weight on it when it feels safe
9. Continue putting one foot underneath the other until your feet hit the floor
10. Well done- you have climbed a tree!