

OUTDOOR & FOREST SCHOOL · ALL AGES

Outdoor Learning Risk Assessment

Pre-session checklist for any outdoor session

How to use this template

This is a working checklist designed to be photocopied and signed off before each outdoor session. It is NOT a substitute for your school's full written generic and site-specific risk assessments — but it IS the practical pre-session check that catches the day-of issues a generic assessment can't. Fill it in 10–15 minutes before you head out. If anything is unclear or unsafe, postpone or relocate. Trust the checklist over the timetable.

Site check (do before children arrive at the gate)

- Walk the route — any new hazards (fallen branches, broken glass, animal mess, wet steps)?
- Note the muster point — children all know where to gather if you call them?
- Note the nearest exit route to the school building
- Check the boundaries — any gaps in fencing, open gates, road access points?
- Identify the 'no-go' zones today (deep mud, flooded patch, area with stinging nettles)
- Check phone signal at the site (if relying on it for emergencies)

Weather check (within the last hour)

- Temperature suitable for the planned duration?
- Wind speed — branches whipping or large debris being moved? Cancel under woodland.
- Rain forecast — heavy or thunder? (Cancel for thunder. Light rain usually fine.)
- Sun strength — sunscreen needed? Hats?



■ Ground condition — frozen, icy, waterlogged, slippery from previous rain?

■ What time does the weather change? Plan to be back inside before it does.

Children check (before leaving the classroom)

■ Headcount written down (numbers + names)

■ Anyone absent today who would normally need adapted activities?

■ Anyone with allergies, asthma inhalers or medication needed on-site?

■ All children have appropriate footwear? Coats? Wet weather gear if needed?

■ Toilet trip done before leaving

■ Ground rules briefly recapped (boundaries, signal to gather, no eating found berries/plants)

Adult check

■ Required adult-to-child ratio met (typical EYFS 1:6, KS1 1:10, KS2 1:15 — check school policy)

■ All adults briefed on plan, hazards, signal-to-gather, evacuation route

■ First aider on site (you or a named adult). First aid kit with you?

■ Emergency contact list (children's parent numbers) accessible — school office or printed?

■ Phone charged. Whistle. Watch.

■ Adult roles assigned: lead, sweep, first-aid, free-floating supervision

Equipment check

■ All tools/equipment for the planned activities — checked, counted, fit for purpose

■ Tools children will use are age-appropriate; demonstration of use planned

■ Sanitiser / wipes for hand cleaning before snack/eating

■ Spare clothing if applicable (waterproofs, gloves)

■ Activity resources (clipboards, pencils, ID cards, scavenger lists) ready

■ Any tools to be removed at end of session — counted on departure

Emergency plan

■ Adult on-site if injury occurs — what is your call-school signal?

■ Route back to school building — do all adults know it?



■ Where is the nearest road access for an ambulance?

■ If a child becomes lost — who searches, who stays with the group, who calls school?

■ Note: on departure, headcount BEFORE you re-enter the building. And again at the door.

Sign-off

Note on policy

