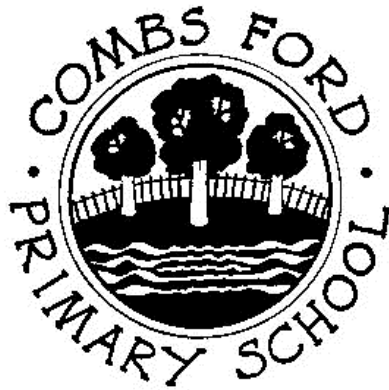


Combs Ford Primary School

Health and Safety Code Of Practice

Coppicing and Tree Work



Successful Learners ~ Confident Individuals ~ Responsible Citizens

Declaration

This Code of Practice is for all adults who support regularly Combs Ford Primary School Forest School sessions and must be read as part of their induction process. A copy is always available in the woodland for reference. This Code of Practice is based on documentation from Suffolk Wildlife Trust as recognised experts in Forest School training and delivery.

Updated On:	12 th October 2024
Updated By:	Kathryn Day (Headteacher and Forest School Leader)

Essential Requirements

- Coppicing and tree work will only be carried out by adults.

Tool	Min Age	Ratio: EYFS	Ratio: KS1	Ratio: LKS2	Ratio: UKS2
Bow Saw	1	1:1	1:1	1:2	1:4
Laplander ⁺	11	-	-	-	-
Secateurs	8	-	-	1:1	1:4
Loppers	11	-	-	-	-

+ In the table above, Laplanders can have the same minimum age and ratios as Bow Saws as long as the children don't open or shut the blades. Otherwise, the minimum age and ratios in the table above should be adhered to.

- Qualified First Aider present (refer to the *Accident and Emergency Procedures (Including First Aid)* in the *Combs Ford Primary School Forest School Handbook* and the [First Aid Policy \(CET\)](#)).
- Hand-held radios for calling for support and the Emergency Service are always charged and in the woodland during Forest School sessions.
- Follow the *Combs Ford Primary School Risk Assessment - Coppicing and Tree Work (January 2024)* and *Combs Ford Primary School Risk Assessment – Manual Handling*.
- *Risk-Benefit Assessments for Tool Use* are in place and adhered to.
- Guidance in the [Health and Safety Policy \(CET\)](#), [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy \(CET\)](#), and [First Aid Policy \(CET\)](#) must be followed.
- Staff and volunteers must have received relevant training and be suitably experienced in the activity.
- Where necessary, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be supplied and used.

Introduction

Coppicing is an ancient form of woodland management that involves repetitive felling on the same stump, near to ground level, which allows the shoots to regrow from that main stump. The shoots are used for a range of products, and the rotational management benefits the woodland by creating coppice stools of different ages adding diversity to the habitat structure.

Before You Start...

- Refer to the *Health and Safety Code of Practice – Tool Use* for safe working with tools.
- Required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all adults and children:
 - Gloves that fit;
 - High visibility jackets;
 - Hard hats that fit if coppicing anything with a girth more than 8cm at the point of cutting.
- If working near the playground or the edges of the school site where the public may be present ensure warning signs are used.
- Demonstrate safe tool-carrying techniques:
 - Loppers should be carried by your side with the sharp edge facing down. They should not be carried over the shoulder or waved around.

Loppers should be used to cut anything up to the thickness of your thumb or between 2.5cm and 5cm in diameter.

- Bow saws should be carried by your side with the teeth facing the ground. They should not be swung backwards and forwards or held over the shoulder. Bow saws can be used to cut anything larger than 2.5cm in diameter. It is often a good idea to set an upper limit if you are working in areas with larger trunks and branches.
- Gloves must be worn at all times. However, it is essential to wear one on the non-tool-holding hand when using a bow saw if this hand is being used to support or hold the branch you are cutting – it is very easy for the saw to jump onto that hand, so protection with a thick glove is essential.
- If the group will be lifting logs and branches, demonstrate good manual handling techniques by lifting using your knees and not your back (refer to *Combs Ford Primary School Risk Assessment - Manual Handling*). It is also a good opportunity to promote team work when large logs or long branches need more than one person to move them.
- Pairs or single people cutting trees must be a safe working distance from others – this must be at least twice the length of the height of the tree being cut.

Getting Practical...

Gather your group and always demonstrate the whole process for using the tools.

- Pick your tree or stool (the roots and stump).
- Ensure it is safe to work on the tree by checking for dead wood on the tree itself and ensure you are a safe working distance away from others (not including your partner when working in pairs).
- Prepare the tree using loppers to cut and clear away any lower twigs or thin branches that will get in the way of your felling.
- Ensure there are no trip hazards around you so you can safely move away from the area.
- Work out which way your branch or trunk is going to fall depending on which way it is leaning.
- For upright branches or trunks it helps to cut a small notch or wedge on the side you want the branch to fall.
- For small branches or trunks that are leaning you can often cut straight through from the top.
- If you're working with a partner, check that they're behind you and the branch or trunk and not anywhere near where it will fall.
- Your partner is now responsible for ensuring that nobody else approaches while you cut through the branch.
- Standing to the side of the branch or trunk make your final cut with the bow saw, being sure to cut all the way through the wood to help prevent it splitting.
- Stop and move out of the way if you need to.
- Once the trunk or branch is below head height your partner can come and help you push it the final way to the ground or make the final cuts.



- You can then process your trunk or branch depending on what the site needs which can vary from cutting up branches and trunks for firewood, log or habitat piles, or leaving them where they fall.
- Depending on the plan for the site make sure that you consider after care for the stumps:
- If coppicing to promote re-growth of the stools, then the stools can be left quite high from the ground. They must be cut at an angle to allow for surface run-off and to stop rainfall from drowning the tree.
- If you are felling to remove the tree and prevent regrowth, then leave the stumps parallel to the ground to allow rainwater to sit on them and kill the tree. To aid this you can use a bow saw to cut slots into the stump to help the water to collect there. Cut the stumps as low to the ground as possible to make it easier for any follow up management which may require bringing vehicles onto the site.
- Now swap and allow your partner to have a go.

Now Let Them Have a Go...

- Depending on the children's abilities and ages, it is a good idea to ask them to pick their tree and prepare their area.
- Then ask them to get their partner to fetch a volunteer or staff member to oversee the first time (or every time) they cut a branch or trunk.