

GROUP DETAILS

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL:

Leader:	Group Phone:
Participants:	

ACTIVITY DETAILS

Purpose of Activity:	Date:
Benefit of Activity: Builds problem solving, risk assessment, and persistence. Enhances resilience and self regulation through challenging outdoor tasks. Improves physical literacy via natural movement and tool use. Increases wellbeing through time outdoors and reflective practice. Strengthens connection with nature and environmental stewardship. Supports communication and collaboration in small groups.	

HAZARDS

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Adverse weather (storms, lightning)	Lightning strikes, hypothermia	Teaches respect for nature and weather safety protocols.	Regularly check weather forecasts and have a plan for shelter in case of storms. Stop all outdoor activities immediately if lightning is detected within 30 miles. Use indoor spaces or pre-set shelters if necessary. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Allergies (plants, insect stings)	Allergic reactions, anaphylaxis	Encourages self-management and understanding of personal health needs.	Identify students with allergies and avoid known triggers. Have allergy medication on hand, including epinephrine for severe reactions. Educate about identifying dangerous plants like nettles or poison ivy. (ALL)	students with allergies	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Burns from campfires	Burns, fire spreading	Encourages respect for heat sources and fire safety awareness.	Only allow controlled access to the fire area. Use fireproof gloves when handling hot objects, and have a fire extinguisher or water nearby. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Climbing trees	Falls, injuries from heights	Builds confidence, balance, and risk management in climbing activities.	Set clear boundaries on which trees are safe to climb and supervise at all times. Limit the height to which students can climb based on age and ability. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Crossing streams	Drowning, slipping	Builds resilience and an understanding of natural watercourses.	Only allow stream crossing under adult supervision. Use designated crossing points and provide waterproof boots or change of clothes. Do not cross with a strong current. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Falling branches	Injury from falling branches	Enhances environmental awareness and promotes safety skills.	Conduct regular site checks for unstable or fallen branches. Instruct students to avoid playing near potentially dangerous trees. students learn to identify and assess their environment. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Fire lighting and campfires	Burns, fire spreading	Builds respect for fire safety and teamwork skills.	Follow strict safety protocols for building and maintaining fires. students must understand fire circle rules and only approach when invited by an adult. Water is always nearby to extinguish the fire. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Fire lighting tools (matches, lighters)	Burns, fires starting accidentally	Encourages safe fire use and basic survival skills.	Only adults or trained forest leaders use fire-lighting tools. students observe and participate under supervision in controlled environments. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Food allergies during cooking activities	Allergic reactions, anaphylaxis	Provides inclusivity and teaches about food preparation in a safe manner.	Identify all food allergies beforehand. Ensure that foods prepared at the forest school are safe for all students. Separate utensils and cookware for allergen-free preparation. (ALL)	students with allergies	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Getting lost	Missing, exposure	Develops navigation and orientation skills.	Implement clear boundaries and visual markers. Teach students how to navigate and use a whistle in case of emergency. Conduct regular headcounts. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Hypothermia in cold weather	Hypothermia, frostbite	Teaches preparation for cold environments and personal safety.	Ensure students wear appropriate clothing and check for signs of cold exposure regularly. Provide shelters and warm drinks if needed. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Inadequate adult-to-student ratios	Insufficient supervision, increased accidents	Ensures a safer, more controlled environment, allowing for closer supervision and support.	Ensure appropriate ratios are maintained for supervision. Pre-plan sessions based on group size, ability and age and adjust staff accordingly. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Incorrect use of tools	Cuts, injuries	Teaches practical skills and responsibility in a controlled, supervised environment.	Provide a comprehensive tool-use demonstration before any activity. Closely supervise all tool use, ensuring each student understands how to handle the tool safely and correctly. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Leader experience/qualifications	Poor guidance, increased accidents	Ensures activities are led by knowledgeable and capable individuals, enhancing safety and learning outcomes.	Ensure all leaders are properly trained and hold relevant Forest School qualifications. Regularly update skills through professional development and first aid training. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Open fire cooking	Burns, food poisoning	Enhances cooking skills and food safety awareness.	students must always be supervised. Only adults handle hot food and ensure it is adequately cooled before serving to students. Maintain a safe cooking distance from the fire. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Safeguarding	Abuse, neglect	Provides a safe environment that fosters trust and emotional security.	Ensure all staff and volunteers are background checked and follow safeguarding protocols. Maintain adult-to-student ratios, and conduct regular headcounts. students should be briefed on what to do if they feel unsafe or lost. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Sharp tools (knives, saws)	Cuts, lacerations	Teaches valuable life skills and responsibility when handling tools.	Only use under strict supervision. students are taught safety protocols, such as cutting away from the body and wearing protective gloves. Tools are stored securely when not in use. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Strong winds	Falling branches, structural damage	Teaches adaptability and situational awareness regarding weather conditions.	Monitor weather forecasts and cancel or modify the session if wind speeds are high. Avoid areas with loose branches or tall trees during windy conditions. Have an emergency evacuation plan in place for sudden wind changes. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Water bodies (ponds, streams)	Drowning, slipping on wet surfaces	Encourages learning about aquatic ecosystems and water safety.	Clearly mark boundaries and supervise closely when near water. Ensure students understand the dangers of water and restrict activities unless prepared with necessary safety measures. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: High
Bee stings	Allergic reactions, pain	Encourages respect for wildlife and understanding of personal allergies.	Carry appropriate first-aid supplies, including antihistamines and epinephrine for allergic reactions. Teach students not to disturb bees or wasp nests. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Carrying heavy objects (logs, stones)	Strains, dropping heavy objects	Encourages teamwork, problem-solving, and physical development.	Teach correct lifting techniques and supervise closely when students are handling heavy materials. Provide assistance for larger objects. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Cuts and scrapes from rough terrain	Minor injuries, infections	Teaches self-care and builds resilience in minor accidents.	Have first aid kits available to treat minor injuries immediately. Instruct students on how to avoid rough areas and use protective gloves when necessary. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Dehydration	Heatstroke, exhaustion	Promotes self-care and understanding of hydration needs.	Ensure students bring water bottles and take regular hydration breaks. Monitor for signs of dehydration during hot weather or intense physical activity. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Eye-level branches	Injuries from branches, restricted visibility	Enhances spatial awareness and navigation skills.	Regularly cut back any branches at eye level in frequently used areas. Educate students on safely navigating through wooded areas. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Fatigue from long sessions	Exhaustion, dehydration	Promotes stamina and the importance of rest during outdoor activities.	Plan regular breaks and provide seating areas. Rotate activities to prevent exhaustion and ensure everyone is adequately hydrated and nourished. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Inadequate clothing	Hypothermia, heatstroke	Promotes self-care and teaches students the importance of dressing for outdoor conditions.	Remind students to wear weather-appropriate clothing and footwear. Keep spare waterproofs, jackets, and hats available. Encourage parents to check the forecast and send students in layers for warmth. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Injury from natural materials (sticks, stones)	Cuts, bruises	Develops fine motor skills and creativity through hands-on activities.	Supervise and educate on the correct handling of natural materials. Ensure protective clothing like gloves when necessary. Regularly inspect the area for sharp objects. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Poisonous plants and fungi	Poisoning, allergic reactions	Promotes botanical knowledge and safe foraging practices.	Conduct site surveys to identify and remove or mark poisonous plants or fungi. Teach students about safe plant identification and the importance of not eating unknown plants. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Poor group management (safety briefing)	Miscommunication, accidents	Reinforces discipline and ensures everyone is on the same page for a safer experience.	Begin every session with a thorough safety briefing, outlining the rules and boundaries for the day's activities. Emphasize the importance of listening, staying within designated areas, and following instructions. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Running on uneven ground	Slips, trips, falls	Promotes physical activity and an understanding of terrain challenges.	Restrict running to safe, flat areas. Educate on the dangers of tripping over tree roots and other natural obstacles. Supervise running games closely. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Slips, trips, and falls	Slips on wet ground, trips over roots, falls from height	Promotes balance, coordination, and cautious movement.	Ensure pathways are clear and mark hazardous areas. Educate students on safe movement over uneven terrain. Supervise closely, especially near wet or steep areas. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Students with additional needs	Inadequate support, accidents	Promotes inclusivity and ensures that every student can participate and learn.	Tailor activities to accommodate all students, providing one-to-one support where necessary. Ensure accessibility in the environment and adapt tools or tasks. Train staff on working with students with varying abilities. (ALL)	students with additional needs	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Sunburn	Skin damage, dehydration	Increases awareness of skin protection and personal care.	Encourage the use of sunscreen and hats, especially during the summer months. Provide shaded areas for activities and monitor students for signs of sunburn. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Ticks and Lyme disease	Lyme disease, skin irritation	Raises awareness of tick-borne diseases and prevention methods.	Conduct tick checks after each session. Teach students how to check themselves and wear appropriate clothing (long sleeves, trousers). Use insect repellent. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Using dens and shelters	Structural collapse, entrapment	Fosters creativity, engineering skills, and teamwork.	Supervise the building process to ensure stability. Teach students safe den-building techniques and inspect shelters before use. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Using string and ropes	Strangulation, falls	Builds problem-solving and teamwork skills.	Instruct students on safe tying techniques and close supervision when using ropes for den building or climbing activities. Inspect ropes for wear and tear before use. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Weather extremes (heat, cold, rain)	Heatstroke, hypothermia, slips on rain	Teaches resilience and the importance of being prepared for different weather conditions.	Check the weather forecast before sessions and ensure students are dressed appropriately. Provide shelters if necessary and monitor for signs of heat or cold stress. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Wildlife (insects, animals)	Bites, stings, allergic reactions	Fosters respect and understanding of wildlife and ecosystems.	Brief students on local wildlife and the importance of keeping a respectful distance. Carry first aid for bites or stings, and have allergen procedures in place. (ALL)	students	Before Measure: Low After Measure: Med
Unpredicted risks	Illness, injury, death		Ongoing dynamic risk assessment carried out by all staff. Any observed potential hazards should be notified to group leader and immediate action taken if required. (ALL)	All	N/A

NOTES

Extra notes & activity evaluation:

Completed by

Reviewed/Approved by

Risk Assessment Date

Review Required Date