



GREAT LEAPS ADVENTURE CIC

COMPREHENSIVE RISK ASSESSMENT FOR LITTLE LEAPS FOREST SCHOOL

Buckmore Park Scout Campsite Woodland | All ages: toddlers to older adults | Forest School, outdoor learning and nature-based wellbeing activities

Organisation	Great Leaps Adventure CIC / Little Leaps Forest School	Location	Buckmore Park Scout Campsite Woodland
Assessment scope	General forest school provision, play features, fire, cooking, nature walks and tree platform	User groups	Toddlers, children, young people, adults, older adults, SEND and additional needs
Assessment date	20/05/2026	Review date	May 2027
Assessor	Graeme Pryke Managing Director	Approved by	David Knight Director
Emergency access point	Address: Buckmore Park Scout Campsite, Maidstone Road, Chatham, Kent. ME5 9QG Main Gate Ordnance Survey Map No. 178, ref 745632 Gate what3words location: ///tables.bats.senior	First aid cover	Trained first aider on site; first aid kit carried/available
Linked policies	Safeguarding, Behaviour, Fire Safety, First Aid, Accident Reporting, Environmental Policy	Version	1.0

1. Purpose, Scope and Risk-Benefit Approach

This risk assessment covers Little Leaps Forest School activities delivered at Buckmore Park Scout Campsite woodland for all ages, from toddlers through to older adults. It includes general woodland activity, open fire cooking, tool-supported forest school activity, agility area, rope swings, aerial zip line, nature walks and a raised tree platform.

Little Leaps follows a proportionate risk-benefit approach. The aim is not to remove all risk, but to control foreseeable significant risks while preserving the developmental, social, physical and mental health benefits of outdoor learning and adventurous play. Activities are adapted to age, ability, weather, group needs, SEND considerations and staff judgement on the day.

Design and management of the play features and platform has, where possible, taken account of BS EN 1176 playground equipment principles and BS EN 1177 impact-attenuating surfacing principles. These standards are used as good-practice benchmarks, not as a claim of formal certification unless separately inspected and certified by a competent playground inspector.

2. External Guidance Considered

- HSE, Children's play and leisure - promoting a balanced approach, which states that play opportunities should weigh risks and benefits rather than eliminate all risk.
- BSI guidance on BS EN 1176:2017 series, which describes good practice for design, installation, inspection and maintenance of public playground equipment and recognises the role of good risks in play.
- BS EN 1177 principles for impact-attenuating surfacing and critical fall height considerations.
- Forest School practice, including learner-led exploration, progressive skill development, dynamic risk assessment and appropriate adult support.

3. Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	Meaning		Severity	Meaning	Risk rating
1	Rare		1	Minor injury / discomfort	1-4 Low
2	Unlikely		2	First aid injury	5-9 Medium
3	Possible		3	Medical treatment / reportable concern	10-14 Significant
4	Likely		4	Serious injury / hospital treatment	15-19 High
5	Almost certain		5	Fatality / life-changing injury	20-25 Critical

4. Core Operating Controls

- Arrival brief covers boundaries, toilets, fire area, site rules, expected behaviour, activity zones, first aid point and emergency procedures.
- Sessions are dynamically risk assessed before and during delivery, including weather, ground conditions, group presentation, equipment condition and staffing.
- Supervision ratios are adapted to age, ability and activity. Toddlers attend with parent/carer. Children aged 5-11 and young people are supervised together as young people, with increased supervision where activity risk, SEND or group behaviour requires it.
- Age and ability determine participation in higher-risk activities such as tool use, fire lighting, cooking, rope swings, zip line and tree platform access.
- No accelerants are used for fire lighting. Fire and cooking equipment is controlled by staff and introduced progressively.
- Equipment is visually checked before use and removed from use if damaged, unstable or unsuitable.
- Accidents, near misses and defects are recorded and reviewed. Significant issues are escalated to the responsible manager/site contact.
- Activities are adapted for older adults, SEND users and participants with mobility, sensory, medical, anxiety or communication needs.

5. Master Site Risk Assessment

No.	Hazard / Activity	Who may be harmed	Existing controls and safe system of work	L	S	RR	Further action / monitoring	Owner
1	Uneven woodland ground, roots, mud, leaf litter and natural obstacles	All users; increased risk for toddlers, older adults and mobility-impaired participants	Site orientation on arrival; appropriate footwear/clothing communicated; routes chosen to suit group; hazards highlighted; staff model safe movement; assistance offered; higher-risk areas avoided in poor weather; dynamic risk assessment throughout.	3	2	6	Monitor seasonal changes; fill/mark emerging trip hazards where practical; adapt routes for older adults and toddlers.	Lead staff
2	Weather: rain, cold, heat, wind, lightning and reduced visibility	All users	Sessions planned for all-weather provision but adjusted for extremes; shelter/tarps available; clothing expectations communicated; hydration encouraged; fire used for warmth where appropriate; high winds trigger tree/branch risk review; lightning/extreme wind may lead to cancellation or moving to safer areas.	3	3	9	Check forecast before sessions; record decisions where session altered/cancelled.	Lead staff
3	Trees, deadwood, falling branches and woodland structures	All users	Visual checks of activity areas; avoid obvious deadwood/hung-up branches; activity zones moved after storms/high winds; participants briefed not to pull on dead branches; site defects reported to Buckmore Park contact.	2	4	8	Consider periodic competent tree inspection by site owner; close areas if concerns arise.	Site owner / Little Leaps
4	Mixed-age interaction and variable ability across toddlers to older adults	All users; especially toddlers, SEND users and older adults	Activities zoned where needed; staff set rules on speed, waiting turns and no pushing; parent/carer support for toddlers; activities adapted; older adults supported with seating/rest breaks; higher-risk play separated from calm activity where required.	3	3	9	Use group-specific briefings; reduce group size in higher-risk zones.	Lead staff
5	Safeguarding, vulnerable participants and lost child/person	Children, young people, vulnerable adults	Safeguarding policy followed; DBS-checked staff where required; clear boundaries; headcounts; sign-in/out process; parent/carer responsibility clarified; staff maintain line-of-sight or agreed checks; missing person procedure in place.	2	4	8	Test missing person procedure periodically; ensure emergency contacts are current.	DSL / Lead staff
6	Medical needs, allergies, medication and health conditions	All users	Registration/consent information gathered; allergies and medication reviewed; first aid kit available; trained first aider present; emergency access identified; food allergy controls used during cooking; participants encouraged to disclose relevant needs.	2	4	8	Update participant information regularly; consider individual risk assessments.	Lead staff
7	Insect bites, stings, ticks, plants, fungi and animal waste	All users	Awareness briefing; no eating unknown berries/fungi; handwashing/sanitiser before food; tick awareness shared where appropriate; animal waste avoided/removed; gloves/tools used when clearing debris.	3	2	6	Provide seasonal tick/plant reminders to families.	Lead staff
8	Manual handling, carrying logs, water, equipment and cooking kit	Staff, volunteers, older children/adults	Loads kept manageable; team lifts for heavy items; trolleys used where available; children carry age-appropriate items only; safe lifting modelled.	3	2	6	Review storage locations to reduce carrying distance.	Lead staff
9	Water, ponds, ditches, wet ground or drainage features if encountered	All users	Known water hazards identified in site briefing; boundaries set; close supervision near water; no unsupervised access; routes adjusted after heavy rain.	2	4	8	Mark exclusion areas if temporary water appears.	Lead staff

No.	Hazard / Activity	Who may be harmed	Existing controls and safe system of work	L	S	RR	Further action / monitoring	Owner
10	Public/site visitors and other Buckmore Park users	All users	Clear Little Leaps boundaries; respectful shared-site use; participants briefed; staff monitor interaction with unknown adults/other groups; signage on fixed play areas where appropriate.	2	3	6	Liaise with Buckmore Park about shared use and out-of-hours expectations.	Lead staff / site owner

Annex A - Fire Lighting and Open Fire Cooking

No.	Hazard / Activity	Who may be harmed	Existing controls and safe system of work	L	S	RR	Further action / monitoring	Owner
1	Fire lighting using matches, ferro rods, flint and steel, bow/drill or other methods	All users, particularly toddlers and inexperienced participants	No accelerants; methods selected by age, maturity, ability and session aims; direct adult supervision; small controlled fires; fire circle established; respect position taught; long hair/loose clothing controlled; water/fire blanket/extinguishing method available; burns first aid available.	3	4	12	Record fire rules in operating procedure; ensure staff competence.	Lead staff
2	Open fire cooking, hot food, hot drinks, Kelly kettle, tripod, pots, pans, frying pans, utensils and cooking equipment	All users	Cooking area controlled; staff manage kettles, pans and heavy/hot items unless participant ability allows supervised involvement; pan handles turned inward; gloves/utensils used; stable cooking position; participants taught safe movement around fire; food cooled before serving; allergies checked; hygiene controls followed.	3	4	12	Use separate food allergy checklist; inspect cooking kit before use.	Lead staff
3	Smoke inhalation, eye irritation and burns from embers/sparks	All users; asthma/respiratory conditions higher risk	Fire sited considering wind; participants seated/positioned out of smoke; dry suitable fuel used; smoke-sensitive users offered alternative position/activity; no running around fire; fire size controlled.	3	3	9	Check medical info for asthma/respiratory needs.	Lead staff
4	Fire spread to woodland, clothing or equipment	All users, site and environment	Fire contained in agreed fire area; ground cleared of excessive leaf litter where needed; no accelerants; fire never left unattended; extinguished fully before leaving; weather/wind considered; water available.	2	5	10	Suspend fire activity in high wind/drought/site fire restrictions.	Lead staff

Annex B - Agility Area (maximum 600mm)

No.	Hazard / Activity	Who may be harmed	Existing controls and safe system of work	L	S	RR	Further action / monitoring	Owner
1	Low-level agility area up to 600mm: balance beams, stepping elements, logs, tyres or similar	Children, adults and older adults	Height limited to no more than 600mm; used progressively; participants briefed on waiting turns and no pushing; surfaces checked; natural/loose impact-absorbing ground maintained where possible; unsuitable users supported or redirected.	3	2	6	Inspect and record condition; remove rotten/unstable elements.	Lead staff
2	Falls, slips and collisions in agility play	All users	One-way flow or spacing encouraged; wet/slippery items taken out of use; running restricted where necessary; toddlers supported by parent/carers; older adults offered alternative route/activity.	3	2	6	Add simple signage/rules for free-play periods.	Lead staff

Annex C - Rope Swings

No.	Hazard / Activity	Who may be harmed	Existing controls and safe system of work	L	S	RR	Further action / monitoring	Owner
1	Rope swings: fall from swing or loss of grip	Children, young people, adults	One user at a time; clear swing arc; soft/clear landing zone; age/ability judgement; under 11s supervised; no standing in swing arc; no twisting/overloading; wet/slippery use reviewed.	3	3	9	Routine rope/anchor inspection log.	Lead staff
2	Rope, anchor or tree failure	All users	Visual check before use; rope and anchors inspected; signs of rot, fray, abrasion or tree damage lead to closure; anchors positioned to reduce bark damage; maximum user expectations briefed.	2	4	8	Annual or periodic competent inspection recommended.	Lead staff / site owner

Annex E - Nature Walks and Woodland Exploration

No.	Hazard / Activity	Who may be harmed	Existing controls and safe system of work	L	S	RR	Further action / monitoring	Owner
1	Nature walks, boundary exploration and off-path movement	All users	Route assessed for group; boundaries agreed; lead and rear staff/adult where appropriate; headcounts; weather and daylight considered; participants briefed on staying with group; mobile/emergency contact available.	2	3	6	Use route cards for repeated walks.	Lead staff
2	Contact with flora/fauna, fungi, nettles, brambles and allergens	All users	Look but do not eat rule; safe plant identification by competent staff; gloves if handling natural materials; handwashing before eating; allergies reviewed.	3	2	6	Seasonal plant/allergy reminders.	Lead staff

Annex F - Tree Platform (maximum 2m, guarded platform)

No.	Hazard / Activity	Who may be harmed	Existing controls and safe system of work	L	S	RR	Further action / monitoring	Owner
1	Tree platform up to 2m: fall from height	All users; especially under 10s	Platform height not more than 2m; guardrails/railings installed; under 10s supervised access only; older children/young people free play with staff oversight; no climbing on railings; no pushing; max 8-10 users; impact area considered in line with BS EN 1177 principles.	3	4	12	Post clear platform rules; inspect rails, floor, ramp/steps and surface.	Lead staff
2	Overcrowding, pushing, rough play or inappropriate use	All users	Maximum 8-10 users; staff intervene if behaviour unsafe; rules explained; access restricted where group behaviour, weather or surface condition increases risk.	3	3	9	Add max-user signage.	Lead staff
3	Access ramp/steps: slips, trips, handrail issues	All users	Access checked before use; mud/leaf build-up cleared; non-slip surface considered; users encouraged to move slowly and hold rails where provided; toddlers/older adults assisted.	3	3	9	Improve grip if recurrent slipping identified.	Lead staff
4	Structural failure, rotten timber, loose fixings, damaged railings	All users	Visual check before sessions; defects lead to closure; repair by competent person; inspection log maintained; no use after storms/high winds until checked.	2	5	10	Set formal periodic inspection schedule.	Great Leaps Management
5	Use by Buckmore Park visitors when Little Leaps staff are not present	Other site visitors	Passive controls required: visible signage stating use at own risk, children must be supervised, maximum users 8-10, no climbing on railings, no jumping, no pushing, no use if wet/icy/damaged; design to avoid obvious climb-over points; defects reported to site owner.	3	4	12	Agree responsibility for out-of-hours signage, inspection and defect closure with Buckmore Park.	Site owner / Little Leaps

Annex G - General Forest School Activities, Tools and Natural Materials

No.	Hazard / Activity	Who may be harmed	Existing controls and safe system of work	L	S	RR	Further action / monitoring	Owner
1	Use of hand tools such as mallets, peelers, knives, saws, loppers or craft tools where included	Children, young people, adults	Tools introduced by competence; safe tool talks; tool zones/blood bubble; one tool per user unless directed; seated/kneeling stable position; direct supervision; tools counted out/in; damaged tools removed; gloves/eye protection used where appropriate.	3	3	9	Create separate detailed tool RA for higher-risk tools/sawing.	Lead staff
2	Natural loose parts, den building, shelter building and mallet making	All users	Materials checked for sharp edges/rot; lifting/dragging controlled; no throwing sticks; structures kept low and stable; staff check dens before use; activity adapted to group ability.	3	2	6	Remove unstable structures at session end if needed.	Lead staff
3	Mud play, digging, sensory play and water/messy materials	Toddlers, children, SEND users	Safe area chosen; no contaminated water; handwashing; eyes/mouth guidance; clothing expectations; tools age appropriate; slips monitored.	3	2	6	Monitor hygiene and ground condition.	Lead staff

Annex H - Inclusion: SEND, Additional Needs and Older Adults

No.	Hazard / Activity	Who may be harmed	Existing controls and safe system of work	L	S	RR	Further action / monitoring	Owner
1	SEND, neurodiversity, anxiety, sensory processing, communication or mobility needs	Participants with additional needs	Individual information gathered; calm spaces available; visual/verbal briefings adapted; participation by choice; staff adjust expectations; parent/carer input used; predictable boundaries and routines.	3	3	9	Individual risk-benefit plans for known higher needs.	Lead staff
2	Older adult participation, frailty, reduced mobility, fatigue or medical risk	Older adults	Routes and activities adapted; seating/rest points; support offered without removing independence; avoid steep/slippy areas; encourage self-pacing; emergency contacts/medical info where appropriate.	3	3	9	Consider pre-session health declaration for adult wellbeing groups.	Lead staff

6. Inspection, Maintenance and Closure Procedure

- Before each session, staff complete a visual sweep of the activity area, fire area, agility features, rope swings, zip line, platform access and obvious tree/branch hazards.
- Any feature is closed immediately if it is damaged, unstable, excessively slippery, affected by weather, or if participant behaviour makes safe use unlikely.
- Defects are recorded and reported to the nominated Little Leaps lead and, where relevant, the Buckmore Park site contact.
- Fixed play features and the tree platform should have a routine inspection log and a periodic competent inspection proportionate to use, exposure and construction type.
- Signage should remain visible, legible and accurate, especially for the platform and any play feature accessible outside Little Leaps session times.

7. Emergency Arrangements

- First aider: [Insert name/role]. First aid kit location: [Insert]. Burns kit/gel/dressings available when fire activities are taking place.
- Emergency access route and meeting point agreed with Buckmore Park and briefed to staff.
- Mobile phone or agreed communication method available; emergency services called by lead staff or nominated adult.
- Accident/incident forms completed for injuries, near misses and significant behavioural/safeguarding incidents.
- Parents/carers/emergency contacts informed according to incident severity and organisational policy.

8. Signage Required for Platform and Play Features

Area	Recommended wording	Reason
Tree platform	Children must be supervised. Maximum 8-10 users. No climbing on railings. No pushing. No jumping from platform. Do not use if wet, icy, damaged or crowded. Use at own risk outside supervised Little Leaps sessions.	Controls foreseeable out-of-hours use by Buckmore Park visitors.
Rope swing	One person at a time. Keep clear of swing arc. Do not use if rope, seat or anchor appears damaged.	Controls collision and equipment defect risk.
Fire area	Do not enter fire circle unless invited by staff. No running. No accelerants. Fire activities only under supervision.	Controls burns and fire spread.



9. Declaration and Review

This risk assessment should be read alongside relevant Great Leaps / Little Leaps policies and any site rules issued by Buckmore Park Scout Campsite. It should be reviewed at least annually, after a significant incident, following changes to equipment/site layout, or where guidance or practice changes.

Prepared by Graeme Pryke	Signature G. Pryke	Date 20/05/2026	Role Managing Director
Approved by David Knight	Signature D. Knight	Date 20/05/2026	Role Director
Next review due May 2027	Review completed by	Date	Notes

References

- Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Children's play and leisure - promoting a balanced approach, accessed May 2026.
- British Standards Institution (BSI), Children's play areas: A guide to standards for playground equipment and surfacing (BS EN 1176 series: 2017), accessed May 2026.
- BS EN 1177: Impact attenuating playground surfacing - methods of test for determination of impact attenuation, considered as a good-practice benchmark for surfacing and fall-height considerations.