



Forest Schools Policy

1.0 Aims and objectives

1.1 We aim to give children and practitioners a shared understanding of the ethos of a Forest School experience to achieve the following objectives:

- To enable young children to be independent and self-motivated
- To allow children to develop gross and fine motor skills in a natural environment
- To encourage children to be co-operative and to collaborate with each other
- To allow children to take risks within a controlled environment
- To encourage creativity through problem-solving activities
- To build self-esteem and self-confidence
- To increase competence
- To prepare children for life-long learning

2.0 Environmental Considerations

2.1 Forest School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos.

- Environmentally friendly products and recycled materials should be used when appropriate.
- Through good practice, adults will teach the children to treat the Forest School site with respect, so that they learn that we should all care for our world and everything that lives in it.
- Forest School is socially sustainable, providing a model for generations of families to use the woods for leisure activities.

3.0 Health and Safety Considerations

3.1 The Forest School programme will support young children to develop a collective responsibility. It will encourage children to learn risk management strategies to ensure that they begin to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

- There will be a site sweep before each session.
- The Forest School site has been assessed, both by the Forest School Leaders and National Trust.
- The site will be maintained by the National Trust.
- Full risk assessments and emergency procedures have been made and are available in the school office.
- All Forest School leaders are trained in outside first aid procedures.
- A full emergency procedure has been drawn up, including deployment of personnel, parking site for emergency vehicles, grid references, etc.
- Both the National Trust, as managers, and the school, as facilitators, carry full insurance cover for Forest School activities
- The Forest School Leaders will carry a mobile phone. The Forest School assistant will ensure that the phone is charged every day

- Young children will be trained to consider the importance of their actions on themselves and on others
- Tools and equipment will be locked in the 'Studio' cupboard
- Members of staff will ensure that suitable clothing and footwear are worn at all times
- A health and safety diary will be kept to inform others teachers using the site.

4.0 Child Protection

4.1 Forest School Leaders and practitioners regard their duty of care when working with young children as extremely important. The Forest School leaders will ensure that all individuals (children, workers, volunteers) are safe and protected at Forest School:

- Everyone involved in Forest School is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of sites and activities.
- Staff and volunteers are made aware of the relevant school policies and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them
- All adults accompanying children in Forest School should be CRB checked. Any volunteer who does not hold a current CRB certificate should not be left unsupervised with children
- Any concerns about a child's physical or mental wellbeing should be shared with the school's named Child Protection Officer
- An individual risk assessment will be written for any child with a known behavioural problem
- Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Any concerns should only be shared with those who need to know such as the Forest School Leader or class teacher who can then ensure the correct channels are then informed.

5.0 Equality and Inclusion

5.1 In Forest School sessions all persons should be treated equally.

We are committed to:

- provide a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued
- ensure that all children are included in Forest School, regardless of race, gender or disability.

5.2 In addition to the school's Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy, the legal framework for this guidance is:

- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986;
- Children Act 1989
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

6.0 Cancellation Procedure

6.1 There may be times when Forest School sessions have to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances:

- Staff illness, which prevents staff / child ratios being met.
- Severe weather conditions (particularly high winds)
- Any situation that poses a health and safety risk.

6.2 In the event of this situation arising we recommend that should we have to cancel a session, volunteers are contacted via telephone.

7.0 Planning, Evaluation and Assessment

7.1 Forest School leaders will be ultimately responsible for developing the Forest School programme, and for ensuring that good practice is maintained:

1. There will be an ongoing record of sessions (e.g. planning, curriculum links, activities)
2. Sessions will be evaluated every two weeks by the Forest School leader
3. Children will evaluate sessions as appropriate
4. Ancillary staff and volunteers will be given a questionnaire each term. Feedback will be analysed to inform planning
5. A diary will be kept to record Health and Safety information (e.g. site observations)
6. A record will be kept of each child's achievements and progress.

Approval

Approved at the full governing body meeting held on 24th June 2015 Minute G863.

Date for review: Summer Term 2018

Committee Responsible: Teaching & Learning