

## **Forest School Policy**

“Forest School offers a unique opportunity for children to experience the outdoors in a way that facilitates their holistic development and fosters their growth as confident and competent learners. It also encourages healthy habits and lifestyles.” (Knight 2009).

A session provides the children with inspirational and challenging outdoor learning opportunities. It focuses on a learner centred approach, where children can learn through self-directed play and exploration. Children will be given the opportunity to develop their curiosity, confidence, self-esteem, creativity, empathy, communication skills, knowledge of the natural environment and ability to assess risk.

This policy is to be read by all staff and volunteers that are involved in delivering Forest School sessions and procedures must be followed as detailed below.

### **Health & Safety**

Forest School sessions may include activities that are considered higher risk than usual for children. In planning the sessions, we will consider the risks of each activity but the potential benefits too. Leaders seek to minimise risk by following appropriate procedures for more risky activities, such as tool use and fires, and by carrying out risk assessments covering key hazards that children may come into contact with during a session.

### **Staff & Training**

All our leaders are level 3 trained and have an up to date first aid certificate.

### **On Site Risk Assessment Procedure**

A termly risk assessment will be completed as well as a daily site check by the Forest School Leader. All risk assessment forms will be completed by the Forest School Leader and kept in the Forest School File which can be accessed by all.

### **Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure**

Most emergencies can be resolved on-the-spot by the leader removing the group from potential threat and providing first aid.

However, in the event of a serious incident, which could arise as a result of an injury, illness or threat, emergency services should be contacted and the following procedures followed:

1. **Secure safety of whole group** from further danger. Stop all work/activities if safe. Call in and locate group promptly as agreed with group in advance. If possible, remove whole group from any further danger or threat of danger.
2. **First Aider to attend to any casualties** with adult helper and with regard for maintenance of required supervision ratios for the rest of the party. At least one first

aider must be on site at all times. A record of changes in casualties' state and anything administered to them to be made if possible.

3. **Emergency services contacted as necessary.** Charged mobile phones are carried by staff so that emergency services can be called quickly. A red Forest School Emergency card is carried by all Leaders and sent into school office if an emergency arises so that they are informed as soon as possible and can assist. Office staff will be responsible for directing emergency services to the school site through the car park/playground.
4. **Safety of the rest of group** will be maintained by the remaining staff and adults away from the scene of the incident.
5. **Incident report and/or first aid book** will be filled in by the Forest School Leader.

First aid kits must be restocked after use and a stock check carried out every 6 months.

### **Lost or Missing Person Procedure**

All our sessions will be carried out on the school site so if a person goes missing a runner will be sent to the school office and they will carry out the school's missing person procedure.

### **Toilet Use**

Any child needing to use the toilet during a Forest School session will be sent to the upper school toilets. Children in key stage one will be escorted by an adult.

### **Hand washing**

A 'Tippy-tap' will be set up on site so that the children are able to wash their hands with running water if they wish. A bar of soap in an old pair of tights will be taken out by the Forest School Leader.

### **Safeguarding/child protection**

If a child makes a disclosure to any adult during a Forest School Session, then the school safeguarding procedure should be followed.

### **Medication**

All essential medication e.g. asthmas pumps, epi-pens, should be taken out to the Forest School site by the Forest School Leader and kept securely with the first aid kit.

### **Tools**

Rules for using knives, saws, loppers, secateurs & vegetable peelers:

Beginners and key stage 1 children - 1:1 adult to child ratio moving to 1:2 if child demonstrates competence.

Year 3 & 4 – Begin as 1:1, once competent 1:3

Year 5 & 6 – Begin as 1:1, once competent 1:4

Tools will be introduced when the leader and their assistants feel confident that the children will use them in a safe and mature manner.

Knives are kept in a separate lockable box, box will be stored in Mrs Bertrum's office in a locked cupboard as stated by police rules.

All other tools are stored in a locked cupboard. Keys again in Mrs Bertrum's office. After use tools should be cleaned with a rag and WD40.

### **Fire**

A designated fire area will be set up and marked with a log circle. Within the log circle will be a dug out fire pit surrounded by logs. The children will be taught to walk around the outside of the log circle and to only approach the fire pit when asked to and under adult supervision.

Any child who is given permission by the Forest School Leader to approach the fire pit for cooking purposes will be wearing protective gloves if necessary for task, have their hair tied back and be supervised by an adult at all times. No more than 4 children must approach the fire at any one time.

There will be an adult 'fire watcher' at all times when the fire is lit.

### **Clothing**

Children and adults must be dressed appropriately for the time of year and current weather conditions. The school expectation is:

Summer – Long trousers/leggings, short sleeved top, sun hat, trainers (no sandals).

Winter – Layered clothing, waterproofs and wellies/boots (no trainers).

### **Weather**

Forest School is an all-weather activity and will only be cancelled in the event of extreme weather conditions e.g. high winds, thunder & lightning. Sessions may be shortened, especially for key stage one if it is extremely cold, hot or wet. It is at the discretion of the Forest school leader to make these decisions when carrying out daily risk assessments.

### **Boundaries**

The boundaries of our Forest school site are marked by wooden fencing and there will be a gate at the two entrances. As weather deteriorates may use second entrance to minimise damage to ground.

### **Staff & volunteers**

All Forest School sessions will have a ratio of 4 adults to one class. This will be made up of the forest School Leader, the class teacher and two LSAs. At times, there may be more adults.