

Forest School Policy

Aims

By producing and adopting this policy for Forest School, we aim to give all children and practitioners a collective insight into the ethos of Forest School. Forest School builds on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.

The Forest school learning environment provides opportunities for children to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, to form positive relationships with others, to develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others, to learn to co-operate and work with their peers and adults and to develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety.

Forest School is about exploring and experiencing the natural world through practical activities. The children go out in all weathers, all year round, exploring and learning from the seasons and environment changes. The children's interests along with the varied natural resources in our woodland are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development, all in the guise of play.

Environmental Considerations and Conservation

One of the principles of Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. The children are taught about respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both the children and adults are encouraged to respect their environment and to be aware of conservation issues of the woodland around them. The aim is to promote respect for wildlife, which will be achieved through detailed session plans, evaluation and careful reference to our woodland management plan and ecological impact assessment.

If appropriate, reclaimed, recycled and sustainable resources will be used to maintain and develop our forest school site.

Health and Safety Considerations

Please refer to school's Health and Safety policy

The health and safety of the adults and children is paramount at all times throughout any activity and session. Safe practice is reinforced through regular reminders.

The Forest School programme provides children with opportunities to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own learning. Whilst being independent in their learning, they will develop early risk assessment strategies and understand that their actions have consequences.

Forest school site is at St. Mary's Church Aided School and is located on our school field – Details of map and grid reference below.



Grid Reference SJ 374 419

Forest School Leaders and practitioners regard their duty of care when working with young persons as extremely important. To ensure all individuals (children, workers, and volunteers) are safe and protected the following is recommended:-

- Everyone involved in Forest School is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of sites and activities. Staff and volunteers should be made aware of the school's Health and Safety, Child Protection and Equal Opportunity policies and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them
- All members of staff at St. Mary's School have undertaken Child Protection training. Any concerns are reported to the headteacher, the school's named Child Protection Officer, to ensure the school's child protection policy can then be followed.
- Forest School Leaders delivering sessions will have an enhanced level CRB check. All volunteers attending Forest School will also have current CRB certificate.
- Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear must be worn at all times(e.g. sunscreen and hats must be worn during hot weather)
- We adhere to the school's Confidentiality Policy at all times
- Whistles are worn by forest school leaders. Long sustained loud whistle indicates emergency, everyone to gather immediately at source of sound.
- Fire is always supervised by forest school leader when lit and is never left unattended. Safe fire practice is always adhered to.
- Pond access is always supervised by forest school leader and children are never left unattended. Access to the area is kept secure with perimeter fencing and a locked gate
- Tools and equipment are locked in the shed adjacent to forest school site.

Emergency Kit Bag

The emergency kit bag will contain all relevant medical information and emergency contacts for **every** member of the group

Contents of kit are:

Full first aid kit – with survival bag
Mobile phone
Risk Assessment for the day
Parental consent forms, contact details
Shelter sheet and ropes
Non antiseptic wet wipes
Fire Blanket and cling film
Water for putting out fires and for first aid treatment
Pen and accident book
Penknife
Spare clothes
Bin bags
Plastic bowl
Scissors
Torch

Adapted from www.norfolkesinet.org.uk – Forest School Manual and from Forest School Training Co. Ltd

Extra equipment and tools

Session plan, with specific activity or craft kit
Whistle
Camera
Fire kit – including matches
String and rope
High visibility boundary tape
2 penknives (Forest school leaders)
2 Secateurs (Forest school leaders)

Emergency Procedures – Forest School site on school premises

In case of injury to adults or children

Forest school leader to administer first aid to the casualty
Ensure the safety of the remainder of the group
Alert emergency services if necessary
Inform headteacher if incident requires further medical treatment
Information to parents
Seek further aid if required

Refer to emergency contacts below:

Emergency Phone Numbers

The nearest available phone is (in Head's Office 01978 710 370)

Forest School Leaders have mobile phones:

Jo 07801 089343
Kay 07876 427313

In the case of an emergency contact:

Emergency services 999
School 01978 710370
Doctors surgery 01978 710666
Wrexham LEA 01978 297505
Wrexham Maelor Hospital 01978 725441

Following school procedures:

Complete accident book and report of accident to pupil form for Education Authority

Send copies of both reports to:
Local Education Authority, Health and Safety Officer,
Mr. Nigel Lawrence 01978 292135

Copy of reports to:
Headteacher and Chair of Governing Body

Roles and Responsibilities

Forest School Leaders will have full recognised forest school qualification, CRB and outdoor first aid qualification and have the overall responsibility for:

Planning of sessions including boundaries, activities and ethos
Liaison with school staff and governors; Forestry Commission Education Officer
Safety and risk assessment including pre-checks (site and kit)
Nominal role and medical details/parental permission forms
Minimum staffing ratio of 1:8
Administration of first aid and responsibility of the first aid kit, write ups in accident book, mobile phone
Kit security and a signing in/out procedure, any activity kit or clothing is appropriate
Supervision of tool use and all tool kit security
Understanding any SEN of the group/individuals and pastoral needs of group
Emergency procedures
Evaluations

Adapted from www.norfolkesinet.org.uk – Forest School Manual and from Forest School Training Co. Ltd

Volunteers and trainees will

Adhere to the guidelines in 'Student and volunteer helper' manual
Have certain delegated jobs
Model good practice
Support and talk to children, extending their learning as appropriate

Insurance

Insurance for activities is included within the school's policy *

Equal Opportunities

Please refer to 'St. Mary's School Equal Opportunities for all policy'

All people involved In Forest School sessions will be treated with respect and equality.

Our priority is to ensure that children and adults have access to a safe and secure environment, in terms of emotional well-being and safety. We would like everyone involved to believe that any contributions they make to our sessions will be listened to and appreciated.

The legal framework for this guidance is:

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

Adapted from www.norfolkesinet.org.uk

Cancellation Procedure

If at any time, Forest School session needs to be cancelled, decisions will be made as soon as possible, with all concerned being contacted directly or by telephone.

Evaluation Procedure

As leaders, to ensure the Forest School programme is progressive, we undertake to reflect and evaluate each session after completion. We will reflect and act on evaluations from children and other staff members to inform future planning.

Policy agreed:

To be reviewed: