



Forest School Policy

Aims

We aim to give children and practitioners a shared understanding of the ethos of a Forest School experience. This powerful approach enables young children to be independent, self-motivated and considerate which sets them up for life long learning. 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

Forest School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos. 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 children also learn about the impact of conservation and environmental issues. Empathy and care for wildlife is developed through careful planning and evaluation and by involving children in site checks and planning environmental games will enhance awareness.

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

Health and Safety Considerations

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 will support young children to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will even encourage early risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

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
- Key members of staff will have Child Protection Training and will have a named Child Protection member of staff.
- Forest School Leaders delivering sessions will have an enhanced level CRB check. All volunteers attending Forest School will also have current CRB certificate.
- Any concerns about a child's physical or mental wellbeing should be shared with the school's named Child Protection Person, so that the school's child protection policy can then be followed.
- Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear must be worn at all times(e.g. sunscreen and hats must be worn during hot weather)
- 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.
- 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.

Extra equipment and tools

Session plan, with specific activity or craft kit

Whistle

Camera

Fire kit – including matches if required

String and rope

Penknives (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

Nia 07738 101048

Darren 07970 489762

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 if further medical attention administered

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 have the overall responsibility for:

Planning of sessions including boundaries, activities and ethos

Liaison with school staff and governors

Safety and risk assessment including pre-checks (site and kit)

Nominal role and medical details/parental permission forms (held in office)

Administration of first aid and responsibility of the first aid kit, write ups in accident book, mobile phone

Supervision of tool use and all tool kit security

Understanding any SEN of the group/individuals and pastoral needs of group

Emergency procedures

Evaluations

Insurance

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

Equal Opportunities

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

In Forest School sessions all persons should be treated equally.

We aim to:

- provide a secure environment in which children and adults can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
- include and value the contribution of all children and adults to our understanding of equality and diversity;

Cancellation Procedure

There may be times when Forest School sessions have to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. These may be:-

- Staff illness – which prevents staff / child ratios being met.
- Severe weather conditions.
- Any situation that poses a health and safety risk.

In the event of this situation arising we recommend that:-

- Cancellation decisions are made as soon as possible

Policy agreed:

To be reviewed: