



# Forest School

# Information Booklet





## **Forest School Policy**

### **Aim**

We aim to give students and staff a shared understanding of the ethos of a Forest School experience. This powerful approach enables young children to be independent, self-motivated, courageous, and considerate and sets them up for life long learning. It particularly supports the development of self-esteem and self-confidence. There are many important issues to be considered here and we aim to remain true to the Forest School ethos and approach.

### **Environmental Considerations**

Forest School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos. Wherever possible, environmentally friendly products and recycled materials should be used when appropriate. Adults showing children that the world in which we live in should be cared for should model good practise. Involving children in site checks and planning environmental games will help support this.

### **Health and Safety Considerations**

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.

### **Children and Vulnerable Persons**

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

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 relevant school 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 training will have an enhanced level CRB check. It is strongly recommended that any regular volunteer attending Forest School should also have this. Where a volunteer does not hold a current CRB certificate then they should not be left unsupervised with children.

Vulnerable groups are those under the age of 18 and those people of all ages with a disability or with a diagnosed mental health problem.

Any concerns about a child's physical or mental wellbeing should be shared with the schools named Child Protection Person, so that the schools child protection policy can then be followed.

We regard safety and good practice as extremely important and it is the responsibility of individual staff and volunteers to ensure general safety during working.

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 informed.

### Considerations for Equality and Inclusion

In Forest School sessions all persons should be treated equally.

We aim to and are committed to:

Providing a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued; including and valuing the contribution of all children and adults to our understanding of equality and diversity; Making inclusion a thread which runs through all of the activities of Forest School.

This policy states the means by which Bamburgh School will meet the requirements of the Equality Act (2010). This replaces all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. The policy applies to all members of the school community including staff and learners, in addition to any volunteers working in the school or on the site.

Bamburgh School will adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by not discriminating against learners, staff, volunteers, or any other persons with whom the organisation may be working, on the following grounds:-  
Gender, race, disability, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation

### 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;

Back up sessions should be in place that can be undertaken in school.

We will endeavour to run Forest School sessions whenever possible, however, reserve the right to cancel on the day, informing our client group as soon as possible.

### Evaluation Procedure

In order to develop the Forest School program and to ensure good practice is maintained a number of evaluation tools are recommended.

Evaluation of session – looking at what dispositions and attitudes are being developed.

Evaluation from students.

Evaluation from all staff involved in Forest School.



## **Role Specifications**

### Forest School Leader

To ensure the safety of children and adults as they travel to and from the forest school site.

Ensure the safety of children and adults whilst at the site.

Provide clear guidance and expectations to adults and children.

Carry out a safety check of the site prior to visiting.

To assess the site on a quarterly basis.

Carry out a safety sweep before each session

### Support Staff

Ensure the safety of children and adults as they travel to and from the forest school site.

Partake in children's activities.

Ask open-ended questions rather than directing them to activities/ telling them what to do.

Record observations.



## **Health and Safety Policy**

Bamburgh School's Health and Safety Policy (See Separate Document) sets out a clear statement of intent regarding the School's approach to the health and safety of its children, staff and visitors to the School. The following is a 10 point list of additional measures relating directly to Forest School sessions.

1. However many adults accompany Forest School sessions the person in charge is always the trained Forest School Leader.
2. The Forest School Leader has overall duty of care for the children in his/her charge, but all adults are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure children are safe.
3. All adult helpers must sign and date a form to show they have read this handbook and appropriate risk assessments and understand and agree to comply with the general operating procedures for Forest School.
4. Whenever sessions are being carried out the Forest School Leader will inform staff of the group's whereabouts and for how long we intend to stay.
5. The Forest School Leader or Assistant will carry the Emergency Bag.
6. The Forest School Leader will ensure that the Emergency Bag contains:
  - Essential survival equipment;
  - A contact list for each child undertaking the activities, and;
  - The School's telephone number.
7. The Forest School Leader will always carry a mobile phone/walkie-talkie.
8. In the event of an emergency, the Forest School Leader will ensure that the School contacts the emergency services.
9. The Forest School Leader will review the risk assessments before every session.
10. When tools are used the adult: child ratio will always be 1:1



## **Fire Policy**

Aim- To use fire safely as part of the Forest School experience.

### **Method**

Fires must only be lit after a risk assessment has been carried out and they must only be within the fire circle area. This includes the use of Kelly Kettles. There must always be a trained adult present within the fire circle when a fire is lit or hot embers remain, never leave a fire unattended.

There must be an adequate supply of firewater close to the fire basket to ensure there is enough water available to extinguish the fire if it gets out of control. A fire blanket must be brought into the woodland to wrap round someone if their clothes become alight. Fireproof gauntlets should be kept at the fire area to allow adults to pick up hot items.

Before visiting the area the children should have had the opportunity to ask questions and be given information about fire safety. When at the fire circle the rules should be demonstrated for the children to see. There should be no more than 2 people, adults and children, within the fire circle next to the fire at any one time. The best position for cooking is on one knee so you can move backwards easily and remain stable. Long hair should be tied back and scarves removed.

### **Medical Procedure**

Parents shall be asked to complete a Medical form when they give permission for their child to attend forest school. The form shall be carried at all times in case of an emergency.



## Accident and Emergency Procedure

If an emergency occurs on a school visit the group leader should maintain or resume control of the group overall. She will, however, delegate responsibility when necessary, so all adults accompanying the visit must read and sign the visit handbook before the trip begins.

<b>The group leader will:</b>	<b>details</b>
Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.	See scenarios
Ensure that the entire group are safe and looked after and kept together.	<i>All other adults will be told as soon as possible and allocated roles; roles may be changed as needed.</i>
Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention.	<i>Children's names and medical details will be in the emergency bag. First Aid box will be on site.</i>
Phone for an ambulance if appropriate.	<i>Another adult may be asked to do this.</i>
Ensure that a teacher or teaching assistant accompanies casualties to hospital with any relevant medical information	<i>In extremis a CRB checked adult may have to take this role</i>
Inform the school of the name of the casualty and details of their injuries plus action taken so far.	<i>Head will notify the police if necessary</i>
Pass on to school details of nature, date and time, location of the incident.	<i>Head will notify parents, providing as full a factual account of the incident as possible.</i>
Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence.	<i>The group leader will give copies of notes and reports to the head teacher.</i>
Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts <b>after</b> the incident.	
Complete an accident report form as soon as possible.	<i>Report forms are kept in the head teacher's office.</i>
Keep receipts for any expenses incurred – insurers will require these.	





## **Scenarios**

### **First aid**

1. Ensure the rest of the group is safe – where appropriate delegate responsibility.
2. If appropriate, remove the danger or people from the danger.
3. Qualified First Aider called to check A-B-C, administer First Aid and if necessary call for further assistance (999).
4. Have medical form details available in emergency bag and call parent/guardian as appropriate.
5. Record full details through school incident procedure back at school.
6. Follow up to parents as usual.

### **Lost or missing child**

1. As soon as child is found to be missing, make an immediate search of vicinity and use 1, 2, 3 procedure.
2. Assemble rest of children and ensure they are safe.
3. Call School to alert and then School calls police (and parent/guardian).
4. Follow School critical incident procedure.

### **Death or serious accident**

1. Follow First Aid procedure.
2. Stay with casualty, but ensure rest of the group are removed from the situation and they are safe.
3. School to call parent/guardian/next of kin ASAP.
4. Follow School critical incident procedure.
5. Gain advice on follow up from police.

### **Irregular occurrence, uninvited person/stranger**

1. The intruder will be challenged and asked to leave politely.
2. If a child is involved then the police should be called and the child/children involved should be removed from the situation and made to feel safe.
3. Follow School's critical incident procedure
4. Parents/guardian should be briefed by Forest School leader asap.
5. Inform School Child Welfare Officer and gain advice.



### **Poor weather conditions**

1. If trees blowing more than 20 degrees, or if group leader feels uncomfortable take emergency 'safe' route out ASAP.
2. Use indoor areas or shelter outdoors (away from trees) areas as alternative.

### **Behaviour problems** (See behaviour policy)

1. Trained members of staff to use de-escalation strategies.
2. Remove other children from area of risk (if deemed necessary).
3. If thought necessary, trained members of school staff to use appropriate restraint technique.
4. Debrief child after calm down period.
5. Log incident.
6. Inform parents/guardian.



### Risk Assessment 1

Nature of Hazard	Uncontrolled Outcome	Precautions to be taken (planning and group guidance)	Risk level L,M,H
Very cold, wet, hot or windy weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exposure &amp; dehydration</li> <li>- Injury from falling branches</li> <li>- Hypo/hyperthermia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advise all to wear appropriate outdoor clothing.</li> <li>- Leave woodland in high winds with falling branches</li> <li>- Area under leaning trees or loose branches to be cordoned off</li> </ul>	
Slippery/muddy or uneven underfoot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sprain, fracture or concussion</li> <li>- Falling from a height</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advise group to wear appropriate outdoor footwear</li> <li>- Tutors to identify areas appropriate to the access needs of the group.</li> <li>- Advise all to walk carefully</li> <li>- Nobody aided in climbing higher than head-height</li> <li>- Brief group on slipperiness of logs</li> </ul>	
Poisonous or thorny plants, berries or fungi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stings, rashes &amp; sickness</li> <li>- Infected wound</li> <li>- Damage to clothing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All to be briefed on contact with plants</li> <li>- Group instructed not to eat anything not presented by a group leader</li> <li>- Advise to clean hands before eating or drinking</li> <li>- Advise to wear appropriate clothing</li> </ul>	
Stinging and biting insects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stings leading to allergic response</li> <li>- Tick bite leading to Lyme disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brief group on potential for bee and wasp stings and possibility of ticks in the woodland</li> <li>- Ask about any history of allergic responses</li> <li>- Ask group to check skin for any bites at home and if rash, red halo, or flu type symptoms occur go to doctor</li> <li>- Advise to keep skin covered</li> </ul>	

Litter and animal faeces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cuts</li> <li>- Infection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leaders to check and clear area</li> <li>- Advise all participants to wash hands after an activity</li> <li>- Gloves, disposal bags and wipes to be available</li> </ul>	
Animals and public present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unwanted attention from animals</li> <li>- Confrontation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Signs up for dog owners to keep dogs under control</li> <li>- Encourage all to keep and quiet still when dogs approach</li> <li>- Raise awareness of golfers and location of golf course</li> <li>- Group to be made aware of cyclists in yew woods</li> <li>- Leaders to have mobiles available</li> </ul>	
Lost member of group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exposure, panic, injury, shock</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Walk boundaries with group</li> <li>- Ask group to stay within boundaries</li> <li>- Highlight boundaries using marker flags</li> <li>- Staff familiarise themselves with Lost or Missing Person Procedure</li> </ul>	
Fires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Burns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep a clear space free from equipment or undergrowth around the fire area</li> <li>- Have extra water available to put out fire</li> <li>- Have burns kits available</li> <li>- Have heat-proof gloves and fire blanket available</li> <li>- Safety briefing on fire</li> <li>- Use fire wok to contain fire if necessary</li> </ul>	
Food preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food poisoning</li> <li>- Food allergy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask group if anyone has food allergies</li> <li>- Ensure all food stored correctly prior to cooking</li> <li>- Ensure all wash hands correctly before cooking</li> <li>- Insure all cooking equipment is clean</li> </ul>	
Date Assessed & signed			



### Safety Sweep

Forest School Leader: Charlie Henderson		
Date:	Time:	Weather:
Checklist:	Yes/No	Comments:
Fallen branches		
Low branches		
Protruding thorns		
Brambles/Nettles		
Slippery areas		
Broken glass		
Vandalism/intruders		
Weather effects		
Standing water		
Boundary line/fence		
Base camp		
Tool area roped off		
Emergency rucksack		
Equipment ready		
Spare clothes		
Other hazards identified:		
Action taken:		



## School Parent Agreement

The School	The Family	The child
We will aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to :-	I/we will aim to work in partnership with the school and its staff to:-	I will aim to follow the rules of the forest:-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide high quality teaching &amp; learning through a broad and balanced curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that my child will attend school regularly and on time</li> </ul>	I will be gentle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Value each child as an individual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that my child is equipped appropriately for Forest School</li> </ul>	I will be kind
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand that each child has their own learning style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Let the school know about any concerns and problems which might affect my child's behaviour or progress</li> </ul>	I will try my best
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage each child to achieve their personal best in all areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support my child in opportunities for learning at home</li> </ul>	I will be honest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide opportunities for children to learn and practice new skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attend parent consultations and discussions about my child's progress and school life</li> </ul>	I will listen to others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage collaborative learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support the school policies and their rules for promoting good behaviour.</li> </ul>	I will look after living things
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage children to take risks in their own learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Respond promptly to school correspondence</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a high ratio of adults to children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To attend the children's celebration of Forest Learning in the Forest</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure all adults working with our children are fit to do so</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Signed: _____</li> <li>▪ Dated: _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Signed: _____</li> <li>▪ Dated: _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Signed: _____</li> <li>▪ Dated: _____</li> </ul>



I \_\_\_\_\_

(Volunteer at Forest School)

**Volunteers at Forest School**

I have read and understood all that is stated in this handbook and had the opportunity to have any questions answered about its contents or my role. I understand that the Forest Leader is in charge of the activities within the session, and have read the relevant risk assessment for the activities to take place during my session. I have provided my medical and emergency details to the Forest leader.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_



### **Health and Personal Safety Questionnaire**

To help us plan our woodland sessions and first aid provisions please answer the following questions: Is there any activity/task that you or your group may find difficult for health or mobility reasons?

Are you or your group taking any medication that a first aider or doctor would need to be aware of?

Is there any information that we may need to ensure you and your group's safety (e.g. behavioural issues)?





## **Incident log sheet**

Complete the form for every accident leading to injury, violent or aggressive incident, ill health, disease or near miss.

Incident of date and time:

Person injured or subject of aggression:

Was the incident:

- a near miss
- an accident leading to injury

Location:

Relationship to Bamburgh Forest School:

- ill health/disease
- a violent or aggressive incident

What happened (describe below including the nature of any injury/illness):

Was anyone else involved (note names if so)? Was anything damaged (e.g. vehicle)?

What action has been taken to prevent a recurrence?

Name of person completing form:



### Session Evaluation Form

Session date & number	
Group & Leader/s	
Overview of Session Delivery Activities undertaken by group Factors effecting delivery	
Learning & Development Outcomes for the group – observations and comments from leaders and learners.	
Observations relating to learning, behaviour and development for 3 individuals being followed	
Examples of play occurring in the Group that supports holistic learning and development	
Examples of interventions where leaders provided	

<p>additional support or guidance aimed at encouraging appropriate behaviour and promoting learning and development</p>	
<p>General feedback from group Input &amp; ideas for next session</p> <p>Changes to following sessions</p>	
<p>Safety issues that arose during the session or near misses</p> <p>How issues were dealt with</p> <p>Recommended changes to policy or procedure to ensure issues are mitigated</p>	
<p>First Aid Kit used Accident Log Made What needs re-stocking</p>	
<p>Date completed</p>	<p>Signed</p>

