

Severndale
Specialist Academy



Forest School Policy

Policy proposed: Spring Term 2017
Policy to be reviewed: Spring Term 2019

Aim

We aim to give children an understanding of the ethos of a Forest School experience. This approach enables children to be independent, self-motivated, courageous, considerate and will set them up for life long learning. Forest School 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 recyclable materials should be used when appropriate. Good practice should be modelled by adults showing children that the world in which we live in should be cared for. Involving children in site checks and planning environmental games will help to support this.

Health and Safety Considerations

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

A Forest School Risk Assessment has been carried out by Forest School Leaders. This Risk Assessment is seasonal and should therefore, be amended as the seasons change.

In addition, a daily Site Risk Assessment will be carried out prior to each session. This is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader. A copy of which is to be provided to the Educational Visits coordinator on a weekly basis.

Child and Vulnerable Persons

(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.)

Forest School Leaders and practitioners should regard their duty of care when working with young persons as extremely important. To ensure all individuals (children, workers, 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
- It is strongly recommended that any regular volunteer attending Forest School should be DBS checked.
- Any concerns about a child's physical or mental wellbeing should be shared with the schools named Designated safeguarding leads , 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 each session.
- All staff to be made aware of vulnerable pupils in each group, including those that are on Individual Behaviour Management Plans.
- All staff and pupils will need to wear appropriate clothing suitable to the session and the time of year. Staff must prove to be good role models for children.

Summer Clothing	Winter clothing
Long trousers	Long trousers
Long sleeved t –shirt	Warm jumper
Sun hat	Hat/ scarf/ gloves
Light weight waterproofs	Waterproof warm jacket
Old trainers/sturdy footwear	Waterproof trousers
	Wellies
Sun cream	Extra socks

- Forest School Leaders must ensure that they can provide suitable clothing in all conditions as spares.

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 value the contribution of all children and adults to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- make inclusion a thread which runs through all of the activities of Forest School

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.

Using Tools

Children will be taught how to use tools safely and correctly. When working with tools children will be working at a maximum ratio of 1 adult to 2 children. A Tool Risk Assessment will be carried out prior to each session involving tools.

When using tools, a designated area should be marked for tool use. This should ensure that children not using tools do not go in this area. Using tools with children should be carried out on a 1:1 basis. Young children should begin tool use with a potato peeler. As their experience within Forest School progresses this can be extended. When using tools with children it should take place in a designated area and tool safety should be taught from the onset. Knives should be closed after use and tools returned to the secure box.

Tools should be kept in a secure box or tool bag. No tool should be put away dirty. Billhooks, knives and saws should be wiped with an oily rag. Persistent marks can be removed with emery paper. Billhooks should be wrapped in a leather case or an oiled rag to prevent the blade rubbing against other tools. Saws should have their covers replaced and pen knives should be stored closed. All tools should be returned to the box or bag when not in use. Tool should not be left unattended.

Tools should be kept sharp. A blunt tool is a dangerous tool. Billhooks and knives should be sharpened using a sharpening stone. The stone should be taken across the blade towards the cutting edge using single one-way movements. Always sharpen with the cutting edge away from you. Blades should be re-oiled after sharpening. The blades on saws should be checked regularly and replaced once starting to wear.

Tools will be signed in and out by a Forest School Leader each session. *It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to visually risk assess the tools prior to use.*

When cutting wood, remember that green wood is easier to work with. Wood left will season and harden, as the moisture is lost from it.

Off Site Fire Safety

Fires are a part of Forest School delivery. A fire area should be established at each Forest School site. A Fire Risk Assessment should be carried out prior to a session which involves the lighting of a fire.

Forest School leaders will work with a group to make sure that they fully respect safety issues regarding Forest School practice before lighting fires with them. However, it is important to keep the following guidance notes in mind:

- No low overhanging trees
- Some means of putting the fire out, (water-at least 10 litres or more depending on size of the fire) to be stood by in case the fire takes off or spreads out of the fire surround.
- The area of the fire should be kept to a minimum
- The flames of the fire should never reach higher than the knee
- A competent person to be responsible for the fire and to ensure that it is out and safe to leave at the end of the session.
- During the summer months, when the ground is particularly dry, a fire bucket is to be used for fires.
- A forest school leader will check the site at the end of each session to ensure that no items are left that could possibly start a fire.

Children should be taught that they should not cross the fire area. Children and adults walk around the outside of the area at ALL times, not only when the fire is lit.

A clear emergency procedure plan will be available on site for information of all staff.

Forest School Sessions

The Forest School session will be planned by the Forest School Leader.

Each session will have a clear Beginning, middle and end. It is recommended that a group partaking in Forest School has a block of at least 6-10 sessions.

Evaluation Procedure

In order to develop the Forest School programme and to ensure good practice is maintained an evaluation of activities will be undertaken.

1. Evaluation of session – looking at what dispositions and attitudes are being developed.
2. Evaluation from children. This may involve talking about what children liked about the session.
3. Evaluation from all staff involved in Forest School.

Off Site Essential equipment and resources:

- Medical information and any necessary medication .
- Mobile phone.
- Accident book.
- Bin bags (for rubbish but also to keep injured people warm.)
- Shelters for group and equipment.
- Toilet facilities. (composting toilets located at Beech and Alder Sites, Superloo located by the Llama Hut)
- Seating area. This can be logs or tree branches arranged in a square/circle, so that the whole group can be seated.
- Fire area. This area can be incorporated within the seating area, however, ideally it should be a separate area.
- Water. This is essential for washing hands and also for fire safety.
- Tools. These vary on age and experience of groups.
- Children will arrive in an array of different clothing. Forest School leaders should have spare wellies, hats, gloves, socks and waterproof clothing available for the entire group.
- First aid kit. Plasters, med-wipes, dressings and micro pore should be found in the basic kit. With parent's permission, cream for insect bites and stings, sun cream and insect repellent can be used.
- Fire First Aid kit.
- Moist wipes for cleaning of hands and face.
- Ice cool pack to be taken on every session.

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 it is recommended that :-

- Cancellation decisions are made as soon as possible and that any staff and volunteers are contacted via telephone.
- Bus drivers are informed of decisions
- Inform admin.

We will endeavour to run Forest School sessions whenever possible, however we reserve the right to cancel on the day.

Communication with parents/carers:

A standard letter of consent will be sent to all parents of pupils participating in all Forest School Sessions. Consent must be sought and received before a pupil may participate in any Forest School session. Pupils' medical details are held in school. Forest School Leaders must be aware of the medical needs of the group and know who to contact in an emergency.

It is also advisable to send home information to parents about the Forest School programme both prior to the block of sessions taking place and during the program.

An initial meeting with teachers, parents or carers can be useful to inform them and help to ease any concerns they may have.

Parents/carers will be invited to attend a Forest School session on at least one occasion within a school year.

Emergency Procedures:

All staff and volunteers must be familiar with these procedures in the event of an emergency:

The Forest School Leader will be responsible for phoning the emergency services if required - the Leader has a mobile phone during sessions. The information for the emergency services (grid reference if appropriate) is to be kept with the Forest School Leader when undertaking a session off site and at various locations across sites.

(See Emergency Procedure sheet)

FIRES:

- The priority in case of fire is to make sure everyone is safely out of the way.
- In the event of a Fire, all staff and pupils should gather outside the Forest School Entrance at the nearest designated assembly point if appropriate.

- If there is fire extinguisher on site during sessions all staff and volunteers should know how to use it safely.
- Only use a fire extinguisher if the fire is small enough to control and there is no risk of injury.
- Do not delay in calling out the emergency services.

ACCIDENTS:

Forest School Leaders hold a Forest School First Aid Certificate. These will be updated every three years.

- Assess the situation
- Deliver emergency 1st Aid while someone phones the emergency services
- Make sure rest of the group is gathered safely and out of the way of the casualty and not impeding access to the paramedics.

Medical Emergencies

- Follow individual pupil medical protocol.
- Trained staff to administer medication where appropriate.
- Dial 999 for medical assistance should this be necessary.
- Forest School leader personal details to be kept in their ruck sacks in a sealed envelope in case of emergencies.
- All supporting staff are advised to provide details of any medical conditions that are relevant to Forest School activities.

Consideration must be given to the time it may take the medical response team to attend an emergency.

After any accident or emergency make sure information is given to relevant staff and that all records are in order.
Procedures may need reviewing and implement any changes required.

Forest School Leaders

Sarah Russell Co-ordinator

Jo Garner (Assistant Principal)

Kate Dromgool

Louise McGowan

Alicia Chisnell

Tracey Edwards

Claire Brining

Melanie Roberts

Anna Hepplewhite

To be reviewed: May 2018

OFF SITE EMERGENCY PROCEDURE: Tickwood

Request for attendance by ambulance/police/fire service

Radio for assistance from Mr Dugdale or Farm staff using school radios.

Remember to state your location and the nature of the emergency.

Dial 999, ask for the emergency service and be ready with the following information:

1 Site telephone no.: owners- Edward & Anna Dugdale. 01952 882624 _____

2 Location details as follows: _____ Tickwood Farm, Much Wenlock, TF13 6NZ _____

3 Grid reference: _____ SJ642026 _____

4 The exact location within the site: PLEASE SEE MAP OF SITE. _____

5 Your name: _____

6 A brief description of the problem (for example, if you are requesting an ambulance, you will need to describe the symptoms of the person who is ill/injured): _____

State that the Emergency Crew will be met.

Speak clearly and slowly and be ready to repeat information if asked.

This form is based on information in the DfEE publication 'Supporting pupils with medical needs'.

OFF SITE EMERGENCY PROCEDURE: Caterpillar

Request for attendance by ambulance/police/fire service

Send a member of staff to inform the gatehouse of the situation and inform them that the emergency services are being called.

Dial 999, ask for the emergency service and be ready with the following information:

1 Site telephone no.: 01743 212000

2 Location details as follows: Caterpillar Remanufacturing Services, Lancaster Road,
Shrewsbury, SY1 3NX

3 Grid reference: SJ501149

4 The exact location within the site: PLEASE SEE MAP OF SITE.

5 Your name: _____

6 A brief description of the problem (for example, if you are requesting an ambulance, you will need to describe the symptoms of the person who is ill/injured):

State that the Emergency Crew will be met.

Speak clearly and slowly and be ready to repeat information if asked.

This form is based on information in the DfEE publication 'Supporting pupils with medical needs'.

Lost Child Policy

Aim:

We aim at all times to keep children safe and secure whether on school premises or in our charge off site. We take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of the children. In the event that a child goes missing from a school Forest School area or when out in the Forest, we shall follow the procedures outlined below.

Missing child on Severndale school site:

If a child goes missing from the Forest School area on site;

- The person in charge will carry out a thorough search of the Forest School area, playground and building.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- Use the radio to inform others of search requirements.
- Person in charge talks to staff to establish what happened
- If the child is not found the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.

Missing child off site

If a child goes missing from a Forest School site away from school, the following procedure should be followed;

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- One staff searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- Other staff on site should be contacted via the radio to inform of missing pupil.
- Other groups on site to suspend session and support search wherever possible.

If the child has not been found after a maximum of 5 minutes;

- Notify school phone admin on 01743 281600 / 01743 281635 request for Head Teacher or available SLT.
- Staff member to take remaining students to the bus.
- Remaining staff to continue to extend the search
- At Tickwood notify Mr & Mrs Dugdale via telephone to inform them of the situation Anna Dugdale 07967213552 Home 01952 882394
- At Caterpillar Site notify the security guards in the gate house. Assign a member of staff to immediately search the vicinity outside of the Forest School area.

It is up to the Forest School Leader to make a professional decision regarding time, but must not be left any longer than a further 10 minutes before;

- The Forest School leader should contact the police and school (Principal).
- Staff take the remaining children back to school
- The Principal contacts the child's parent who makes his/her way to the school or Forest School site as agreed with the Educational Visits Coordinator.