



Forest School Policy



The Ethos of Forest School

- Forest School builds on a child's natural 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 cooperate and work with their peers and adults
 - 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 on our field and in our woodland are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development.
- Activities are play based and we value play as the most important vehicle for learning.

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.

Health and Safety Considerations

- For all Forest School participants, safety is paramount at all times throughout any activity and session
- Within Forest School we follow the ethos that we prepare participants for the woods rather than the woods for them.
- All activities are thoroughly risk assessed by the Forest School Leader
- Sites used are assessed regularly.
- At some point participants may acquire scratches, bumps, small cuts and other minor injuries from ever-present countryside hazards
- Safe practice is reinforced through regular reminders
- The Forest School Leader is first aid qualified and will carry a first aid kit and mobile phone.
- Staff are 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
- The Forest School Leader has undertaken Child Protection training. Any concerns are reported to the school's named Child Protection Officer, to ensure the school's child protection policy can then be followed.
- Forest School Leaders and other members of staff/helpers assisting will have current CRB certificates
- Berkeley Primary School and **Little Jesters** provides waterproof suits for all children
- Suitable clothing and footwear must be worn

- Fire is always supervised by Forest School Leader when lit and is never left unattended. Safe fire practice is always adhered to. (See risk assessment for Fire)
- Tools and equipment are locked in the shed on the school grounds. (See risk assessment for Tools)
- Ratios – On the school site, there are no more than 14 children in a group at any one time and, with helpers, the ratio is 1:8 or higher.

Emergency Kit Bag

An emergency kit bag is always carried.

- The emergency kit bag contains all relevant medical information and emergency contacts for **every** member of the group
- The kit bag holds a copy of the emergency action plan
- The kit bag contains grid references, map and directions of how to get to and from Berkeley Primary School and **Little Jesters**.

Contents of kit are:

- First Aid Kit
- Mobile phone
- Risk Assessment for the day
- Parental consent forms, contact details
- Pen and accident sheet
- Any safety equipment needed for planned activity

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 school office if incident requires further medical treatment or parents need informing.
- Seek further aid if required
- Refer to emergency contacts below:

Emergency Phone Numbers

The nearest available phone is in the school office (01453 810254) or **Little Jesters** (01453 819328)

Forest School Leaders have mobile phones for use in the event of an emergency:

Mobile phones will be used **solely in the event of an emergency**. They will never be used to take photographs or make/receive phone calls during a Forest School session. The need for a mobile phone to be carried **solely in the event of an emergency** will be recorded on the site/activity risk assessment.

Roles and Responsibilities

Forest School Leaders will have

- Level 3 Forest School Qualification,
- Enhanced CRB check
- Outdoor/Paediatric First Aid Qualification
- Have the overall responsibility for:

- Planning of sessions including boundaries, activities and ethos
- Safety and risk assessment including pre-checks (site and kit)
- All participants medical details/parental permission forms
- Administration of first aid and responsibility of the first aid kit, documenting any accident
- Supervision of tool use and all tool kit security
- Understanding any SEN of the group/individuals and pastoral needs of group
- Emergency procedures
- Evaluations

Helpers/ Volunteers will

- Model good practice
- Support and talk to children, extending their learning as appropriate

Equal Opportunities

- All people involved In Forest School sessions will be treated with respect and equality
- Everyone is welcome. Forest School does not discriminate on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity or political affiliations. The school has no religious affiliations.
- 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.
- Children will be encouraged to participate equally regardless of gender, culture or special needs.

Inclusion

Forest School meets the needs of all groups of children including

- Special Educational Needs
- Gifted and Talented
- Those with English as a second language (EAL)

Every Child Matters

Forest School addresses the Every Child Matters Agenda

- Be healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being
- Learn to live sustainably

and contributes to the children's all round well-being.

Cancellation Procedure

If at any time, Forest School session needs to be cancelled, decisions will be made as soon as possible, and parents/carers notified.

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 adults to inform future planning.

Written Summer Term 2015

To be reviewed Summer Term 2017