



‘Old Heath is a safe place for your child
to learn, achieve and enjoy success.’

FOREST SCHOOL POLICY

SEPT 2017

(ratified by Full GB 28th November 2017)

‘TRY OUR BEST, THINK OF OTHERS,
TELL THE TRUTH & SHOW RESPECT’

OLD HEATH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL 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' within the national context. 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 cooperate 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. Appropriate clothing will be worn and during high winds it will be considered unsafe to go into the woods. The children's interests along with the varied natural resources in our woodland are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development

Forest School Association: principles and criteria for good practice

In our practice of Forest School at Old Heath Community Primary School, the Forest School Leader (FSL) and support staff will ensure that their practice reflects the FSA principles

1. Forest School is a long term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.
2. Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world
3. Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners
4. Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
5. Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.
6. Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and 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, 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 in agreement with the Stanley Hall Estate.

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.

The Forest School Leader will carry out risk assessments at the beginning of each term which will take account of seasonal change. In addition a daily risk assessment will be undertaken before each forest school session.

The Forest School Leader and other involved 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 site and activities. Staff and volunteers should be made aware of the school's Health and Safety, Child Protection, Equal Opportunity and First Aid policies and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them.

All members of staff at Old Heath Community Primary School undertake 'Safeguarding' training. Any concerns are reported to the Head Teacher who is the school's Designated Safeguarding Officer, to ensure the school's child protection policy can then be followed.

The Forest School Leader delivering sessions will have an enhanced level CRB check. As will other members of staff attending Forest School.

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.

Fire

Fire is always supervised by the Forest School Leader when lit and is never left unattended. Safe fire practice is always adhered to. There will always be a bucket/container with minimum of five litres of water and fire blanket next to the fire. Children will be taught and reminded of the log circle rules from their first visit to Forest School.

- Stand behind the log
- Step over and sit down on log
- Stand up, turn around and step over log
- Children are not allowed to cross the circle or step into the circle

Food

Forest School Leaders and other adults are aware of the following when cooking and eating at Forest School:

- Everyone should wash their hands before handling food and drink.
- All foods are stored in air tight containers.
- Only clean equipment is used.
- Everyone is aware of any special dietary needs of the participants who have food allergies and any medication and copies of care plans will be in the planning bag.
- Food will be cooked correctly.
- All equipment and waste is cleared away.

Tool Use

There is a padlocked tool box which contains peelers, children's knives, tent pegs, palm drills and junior hacksaws. There is also a tool bag which contains bow saw, loppers, secateurs, bill hook. Children are taught that they ask an adult for a tool.

Children will have adult supervision as appropriate to age, experience when using tools. For instance at the beginning of learning to use a peeler a Foundation Stage child will be supervised by an adult. As they become more competent they may be in a small group of children with an adult supervising the group. The same procedure is followed when children are learning to use a knife. Children are always accompanied by an adult when using loppers in the wood.

Rules are set out clearly at the beginning of each session. Persistently bad behaviour will result in withdrawal from task.

There are clear risk-benefit assessments and tool cards to support adults in the use of tools with children. The Forest School Leader is always available to oversee use and support, advise, make adjustments to adult practise as necessary.

Dealing with strangers, members of public and loose dogs

As our site is contained within the school grounds we should not have any issues with strangers on the site. However we may experience loose dogs or members of the public as people do walk along the path that lies to one side of the school grounds.

Should we experience an 'escaped dog' staff will look for owner and ask them to keep dog on lead ~ would have to be very small to get through the fencing/gate areas.

(In an emergency don't approach front of dog. Grasp tail and pull backwards.)

Emergency / Sessional Kit

Full first aid kit ~ FS Emergency R/sac

Mobile phone ~ with FS Leader

Risk Assessment for the day ~ in FS bag

Non antiseptic wet wipes ~ part of wash kit / loo kit

Fire Blanket and burn gel ~ on fire days

Pen and accident book ~ in FS bag

Spare clothes ~ FS Emergency R/sac

Bin bags ~ in cup/flask bag

Scissors ~ in wool and scissors bag

Extra equipment and tools

Session plan, with specific activity or craft kit ~ in FS bag

Camera ~ in FS bag

Fire kit ~ fire strikers/tinder/cotton wool pads etc depending on planned activity.

String and rope

Emergency Procedures

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 if incident requires further medical treatment
- Information to parents
- Seek further aid if required
- Refer to emergency contacts below:

Forest School Leader has mobile phone: 07938 150 092

There is a full emergency procedure that is taken to each session ~ FS Leaders Emergency R/Sac

In the case of an emergency contact:

If an accident occurs to a pupil, member of staff or a visitor that requires help in addition to first aid, Fire, Ambulance and Police contacted first, then inform school office.

In the event of serious injury (this includes amputation, serious burns, acute illness, fracture, loss of sight or consciousness, or if detained in hospital over 24 hours, or death) In addition to the LEA, the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) must be informed, these notifications are a legal requirement. RIDDOR is now completed on line.

The 'Accident Report Form' requires a written statement be made with reference to the sequence of events, actions taken and responses and times of these actions. Names of witnesses should be recorded. The statement should then be signed dated and given to the Head teacher. It will be photocopied and the original sent to the LEA.

Copies of the 'Accident Report Form' will be filed in a cabinet located in office filing cabinet with Accident/Riddor etc

The process outlined above is of vital importance to the enquiry which will surely follow a serious accident and will be critical to any action for damages or compensation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Forest School Leader will have full recognised Forest School qualification, enhanced CRB and Forest School First Aid qualification 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
- Minimum of FSL and 1 staff members with groups of 10 Early Years to Year 3 children. 1 FSL with 10 Y4 to Y6 children. We are still on school site, small group older children and in mobile contact.
- 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 needs of the group/individuals, medical and pastoral needs of group
- Emergency procedures
- Evaluations

Staff & Volunteers will:

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

There is a 'Volunteer Helper's Handy Guide'

Insurance

Insurance for activities is included within the school's policy

Equal Opportunities

Please refer to 'Old Heath Community Primary School Single Equality 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 upheld in the following regulations:

- 'In loco parentis'
- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)
- Health and Safety (first Aid) Regulations (1981)
- Children Act (1989)
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulations (1992)
- Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) (1995)
- The Protection of Children Act (1999)
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (2002)
- Children Act (2004)
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.
- Equality Act 2010

Evaluation Procedure

The Forest School Leader will ensure the Forest School programme is progressive, and undertakes to reflect and evaluate each session after completion. The Forest School Leader will reflect and act on evaluations from children and other staff members to inform future planning.

Forest School Woodland Sustainability Plan

It is important to bear in mind the ecological impact of running a Forest School and with that in mind consideration will be given to the following:

- The fire will be contained in a sacrificial fire pit area
- There will only be one fire for each group per half term (at the most) to reduce the impact of the smoke disturbing any nesting birds in the upper canopy of the forest area. This will limit the amount of dead wood that is burnt as it is important for the soil layer of the forest.
- Children will be educated think about what they are picking so that plant stock is maintained.
- Wood will be brought in from other much larger woodlands, roadside 'collection' or 'farmed' wood to ensure we do not damage our own very small site and resources.
- There will usually be only one/two Forest School sessions planned each week to allow the ground cover to recover in between visits. Previously children have been

allowed to use the site at lunchtimes this is no longer allowed due to ensuring 'Forest School' special site ethos and keeping the site protected and ready for FS sessions.

Forest School Plan for 2017/2018

Tuesdays:

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Year 2	Year 3	Year 1
Year 4	Year 5	Year 6

Plan for another morning for Early Years for Summer 2018

Amanda Mitchelson
Headteacher & Forest School Leader Level 3
September 2017
Presented to GB on 28th November 2017