



FOREST SCHOOL ACTIVITIES POLICY

ADOPTED: 21st November 2017

REVIEWED:

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: Autumn 2019

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Aims and Objectives

This policy outlines the aims of Forest School Activities and gives a collective insight into the ethos of Forest School. It outlines the organisation and management of Forest School Activities implemented at Waldringfield Primary School. Forest School builds on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning; offering them opportunities to take risk, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.

Our Forest School environment aims to:

- enable children to develop self-esteem, self-confidence and a positive self-image
- enable children to develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others
- learn to co-operate and work with their peers and adults
- form positive relationships with others
- to enable children to learn how to take risks and develop strategies in order to do so within the boundaries of safety
- develop understanding and appreciation of the natural world
- develop skills and knowledge which link to the curriculum

Waldringfield School's Forest School Activities emphasise 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 changes in the environment. Appropriate clothing will be worn. During high winds and thunderstorms it will be considered unsafe to go into the woods.

The children's interests are highly important in Forest School Activities and are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development.

The contents of this policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

Environmental Considerations and Conservation

One of the principles of our Forest School Activities is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. The children are taught to respect the environment and encouraged to take responsibility for the world around them (and beyond).

Sustainable management and ecological impact will be monitored and when appropriate reclaimed, recycled and sustainable resources will be used to maintain and develop our outdoor environment.

Health and Safety Consideration

In the first instance please refer to Waldringfield School's Health & Safety Policy.

The health and safety of the children and adults is paramount throughout any Forest School 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. As a result of this, children will develop early risk assessment strategies and understand that actions have consequences.

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

The Forest School Activities Leader and other practitioners regard their duty of care when working with pupils as extremely important. To ensure all individuals – children, staff and volunteers – are safe and protected, we ensure the following:

- Everyone involved in Forest School Activities is briefed on health and safety and risk assessment of the site
- Staff and volunteers are made aware of Health and Safety, Child Protection, Equal Opportunities Policy, Administration of Medicine and First Aid policies, Disability Policy and Accessibility plan and must undertake to adhere to the guidance contained in them
- The Forest School Leader and other school staff (and volunteers?) delivering sessions all have an enhanced level DBS check
- Any Child Protection concerns are to be reported to the Head Teacher and/or other Designated Officers at school
- Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear must be worn at all times. During winter months pupils are expected to wear sturdy footwear or wellington boots, hats, scarves, gloves and waterproof outerwear. Sunscreen and hats should be worn in summer months. It is part of school policy that the children must apply sunscreen, insect repellent to themselves
- All equipment and waste must be cleared away at the end of the session
- Tools must be stored correctly and checked off against an inventory after each session
- Children will have close adult supervision when using tools that are age appropriate
- Rules and boundaries must be set out clearly at the beginning of each session
- Everyone must be aware of individual medical or dietary needs.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

At Waldringfield Primary School we are committed to provide a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so that they can learn in a calm and secure atmosphere. We believe every child should be able to participate in school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed, or invited to participate/deliver services at Waldringfield School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

Key members of staff will have child protection training and all members of staff are aware of Designated Persons and the procedure for passing on a concern.

The Forest School Leader will have enhanced DBS clearance. Regular volunteers will also be DBS cleared. Where a volunteer or member of staff does not hold a current DBS certificate, they should not be left unsupervised with children at any time.

In line with school policies on the use of photographs and digital recording media, children may be filmed or photographed during Forest School sessions (providing the school holds parental permission to do so).

Minimum staff/child ratios will be observed.

Assessing and Reducing Risk during Forest School Activities

During Forest School Activities a range of activities may be undertaken which contain a theoretical degree of risk. Through careful supervision, full training and good practice, we aim to ensure accidents are avoided and risks are reduced to manageable and acceptable levels. Considerations are given to:

* site * weather conditions * group * individual * buildings and shelters * rope and string * fire * food * water * collecting natural materials * being off the ground * blindfolds * tools

Risk Assessments for specific site hazards can be found in a separate folder. Risk assessments are the starting point for safe practices and procedures in Forest School Activities. They are reviewed and updated in order to reflect safest practice possible at Waldringfield School. When/if excursions are made off the school site separate risk assessments are applicable.

First Aid

Forest School Activity Leaders are qualified in first aid. A first aid kit is always available on site.

In cases of minor injury, such as bumps, cuts and grazes the Forest School Leader or staff member will administer first aid and, if necessary, complete a first aid note for the injured person to take home.

Emergency Procedures

It is vital that emergency procedures are adhered to. These are to safeguard pupils and adults alike.

Should a serious incident or accident occur the Forest School Leader/Adult helpers will ensure the safety of the remainder of the group.

The Leader or other trained adult will administer first aid to the casualty.

They will alert the emergency services and inform the office/head teacher if the incident requires further medical treatment. The parents will be contacted by the head teacher/school office.

If an accident occurs to a pupil, member of staff or visitor that requires help in addition to first aid, e.g. Fire, Ambulance and Police then the L.A. must be informed of the circumstances.

In the event of serious injury (this includes acute illness, amputation, fracture, serious burns, loss of sight or consciousness or if detained in hospital over 24 hours or death) the Health & Safety Executive must be informed. These notifications are a legal requirement.

The 'Accident Report Form' requires a statement to 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. A copy will then be sent to the L.A. and the original kept in the school.

Emergency Phone Nos: School Office 01473 736276

Staff members to carry mobiles when off school site and have each other's phone numbers.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Forest School Leader will hold a fully recognised Forest School qualification, DBS and first aid qualification.

The Forest School Leader will have overall responsibility for:

- Safety and risk assessment
- Planning of sessions, evaluation and feedback
- Liaison with school staff and governors
- Administration of first aid
- Responsibility for first aid kit, accident book, communication (mobile phone, accident book, etc.,)
- Supervision of tool use
- Supervision of fires and cooking areas
- Kit security
- Understanding of children with SEND
- Emergency procedures

Volunteers and trainees

With support from the Forest School Leader volunteers and trainees will:

- Model good practice
- Familiarise themselves with relevant School Policies
- Support and communicate to pupils to extend their learning as appropriate
- Carry out delegated jobs
- Offer additional support when Forest School Leader is supervising tools or fire activities
- Observe and offer feedback to Forest School Leader

Insurance

Insurance for activities within Forest School are included within the school's insurance policy.

Equal Opportunities

In the first instance please refer to the school Equalities Policy.

All people involved in the Forest School Activities 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.

Evaluation Procedure

The Forest School Activities Leader will ensure the programme is progressive. They undertake to reflect and evaluate each session after completion.

The Forest School Activities Leader will reflect and act on evaluations and feedback from all participants to inform future planning.