

The Federation of East Cowton and Kirkby Fleetham Church of England
Primary Schools Forest School Policy

Document Status			
Date of Next Review	Autumn 2017	Responsibility	<i>The Governing Body</i>
Success Criteria for review completion		Responsibility	<i>(Chair)</i>
Date of Policy Creation Autumn 2013	Adapted School written model	Responsibility	<i>Chair of Governing Body</i>
Date of Policy Adoption by Governing Body		Signed	
Method of Communication (e.g Website, Noticeboard, etc) School website			

Aim

We aim to give children and practitioners a shared understanding of the ethos of a Forest School experience.

Forest School is a holistic approach which enables children to develop independence, self-confidence and raise their self-esteem building a positive attitude towards learning, as they explore and experience the natural world for themselves in an enjoyable and relaxed way.

Forest School is child centred; leaders and staff provide support and enabling open ended activities.

It aims to develop peer learning through communication, team working and responsibility.

A combination of freedom and responsibility is beneficial to children with little confidence or challenging behaviour as it encourages them to take on new challenges, take managed risks and persevere with difficulties.

There are many important issues to be considered 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 culture. Good practice will 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 support this.

Curriculum

In the Foundation Stage Forest School provides opportunities for developing all areas of the curriculum in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Policy.

Staff explain and demonstrate clear consistent boundaries and routines to help children to learn to assess risks and keep safe.

Other Key Stages are facilitated by Forest School with planned specific curriculum topics e.g.

Science - projects relating to plants/mini-beasts/campfire/cooking

DT - materials and construction

Art - collage and sculptures using natural materials/textures

Music - homemade instrument using natural materials

All activities include elements of mathematics, creativity and the development of personal and social skills.

Health and Safety Considerations

The Forest School programme supports children in developing responsibility for themselves and others. It encourages early risk management strategies that will ensure that individual begin to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

First Aid

First aid kit, mobile telephone, emergency alarm and fire safety equipment are always taken on site. A copy of the 'emergency procedure' is kept in the first aid kit. Health check questionnaire must be completed in order to ascertain allergies and any health requirements; including adults. Any minor injuries or accidents must be reported in the usual way.

Risk Assessments

The risks within Forest School are carefully managed; adults and children are taught the rules for safe handling and use of tools and fire safety before given access.

All tools are carefully controlled and monitored and correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is essential before some activities take place: see PPE procedures.

Risk assessments of all Forest School activities is written and reviewed annually: including use of tools, campfire procedures and emergency procedures.

Additional risk assessments are produced relating to Forest School sessions; taking into account specific activities, weather conditions and specific need of pupils.

Risk assessments are the responsibility of the Forest School Leaders whose duty it is to review and communicate them to all adult assistants and volunteers including communicating the emergency procedures before each session commences.

Child and Vulnerable Persons

Forest School Leaders and 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 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.

There must be at least one qualified First Aider on site throughout a Forest School session.

Key members of staff will have Child Protection Training and will have a named Child Protection member of staff.

Forest School Leaders and volunteers will have an enhanced level CRB check. Where a volunteer does not hold a current CRB certificate then they will not be left unsupervised with children.

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 Forest School sessions.

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 then informed.

Considerations for Equality and Inclusion

In Forest School sessions all persons will 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

include 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.

Ratios

A minimum of two adults will be present, including a trained Forest School Leader.

See **Educational Visits Policy**

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.

Ratios (see above)

In the event of this situation arising we recommend that:

Cancellation decisions are made as soon as possible and that the school, staff and volunteers are contacted via telephone.

Evaluation Procedure

In order to develop the Forest School programme and to ensure good practice will be undertaken.

1. Evaluation of session – looking at what dispositions and attitudes are being developed and whether objective have been met

2. Evaluation from children.
3. Evaluation from all staff involved in Forest School.
4. Evaluation of activities.