



St Mary & St Thomas Church of England Primary School



Forest School Policy

**Author: Headteacher
Owner: CEO/Directors
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We are a rights respecting school. All our policies and procedures are written and reviewed to ensure that children's rights, as detailed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, are respected and promoted and this policy ensures:

Article 19: Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Forest School Policy

Aims and objectives:

St Mary and St Thomas C.E. Primary School aims to use both a natural outdoor woodland area and an area within the school grounds to offer the children an insight into the Forest School ethos. This approach to outdoor learning encourages children to become independent, use their imagination, take appropriate risks within boundaries and initiate learning for themselves. Forest School is a holistic approach to learning, incorporating children's individuality and develops their skills for lifelong learning. It can cover all six areas of learning, including the emotional and spiritual aspects of learning where self esteem and self confidence can grow and positive relationships with peers can be formed. Forest School explores the outdoors and the natural environment with practical, useful activities all year round. It develops peer learning with the adults providing support and enabling activities to take place. The child's interest will be at the heart of any activity. St Mary and St Thomas' School has many additional policies which will be adhered to alongside this policy during Forest School sessions within the school site and a natural woodland area outside the school grounds.

Legislation considered for policy

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
Disability Discrimination Act 2005
Race Relations Acts 1976 & 2000
Sex Discrimination Act 1986
Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
Children Act 2004

Implementation

Risk assessments, good practice, Forest School activities, rules for tools and fire etc. can all be found within the Forest School guidebook which contains everything you need to know about our Forest School sessions, for example, procedures, risk assessments, environmental impacts etc. A laminated Forest School Handbook is taken into the woodland on each visit; this contains vital information needed for each session which includes procedures in the event of an emergency etc.

Equality and Diversity:

All children will be included with all activities and no form of discrimination will take place, reasonable adjustments will be made to make it inclusive for all. Inclusion is a thread which runs through all of the Forest School activities regardless of a child's ability, disability, gender, race, culture, etc. St Mary and St Thomas' C.E. Primary School has Inclusion; Special Educational Needs and Equality Policies which will be adhered to during Forest School sessions.

Health and Safety:

Forest School sessions by their nature encourage children to develop their own risk management skills and will support them to become responsible for themselves and others around them. Children will be reminded of rules and safe play if they are considered too dangerous. Whether within the school grounds or outside the school premises the ratio of adult to children will be in line with the guidelines given by the DfE (2013). EYFS will be 1 to 5; Year 1 to Year 3 – 1 to 6 with Years 4 to 6 being 1 to 7.5 adults to children. The ratio

for Year 4 to Year 6 is higher than recommended (1 to 15 adults to children), but specifically applies to Forest school activities.

72. In addition to the teacher in charge there

Risk assessments will be carried out before each site prior to each session and also for each activity undertaken by the children. This includes activities that use tools and equipment. Dynamic risk assessments will be in place to cover other eventualities. The Forest School Practitioner will assess weather conditions regularly and will evacuate the area if they become too extreme. All children and adults will wear appropriate clothing depending upon the weather conditions. An open fire risk assessment will be carried out before a fire is allowed and protection procedures followed. A Forest School Practitioner will be present at all times and children will be reminded of safe practice. The school has a Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy etc. to enhance all aspects of health and safety

Risk Assessments will include:

The sites used for Forest School activities.

Individual Risk Assessments for tools (bill hook, bow saw, mallets, knives, loppers, hand drills)

Open Fire

Rope and string

Shelter building

Collecting natural materials

Climbing

First Aid:

For all activities a qualified first aiders will accompany the group. This may be the Forest School Practitioner, or another member of staff. They will administer the care needed; in addition the Forest School Practitioner has an enhanced first aid certificate to specifically cover outdoor activities.

All staff will be expected to ensure the safety of the children within the group and the possible need to evacuate them from the site. They will seek emergency help if needed. There will be a SAFETY BAG taken into the woodland areas which will include a full first aid kit as well as other safety equipment. In the event of an accident the normal school reporting procedures Contact the parents and complete the accident report forms, contact HSE if it is a serious accident. Emergency procedures are within the Forest School Sessions handbook which is taken into the woodland each session. Ensure all staff are aware of medical conditions of the children and inhalers, epi pens etc. are taken into woodland.

Use of Tools

Children and adults will be trained in the use of each tool before they use it. Tools will be counted in and out and checked against an inventory. Tools will be stored safely and kept out of the reach of children. They will be cleaned after each use to prolong their life, broken and damaged tools will not be used and replaced as soon as possible. Children and adults will be informed of rules, safety and how to use before they use.

Use of Fires

A Forest School Practitioner must always be present when a fire is lit and it must never be left unattended. There must always be water available to extinguish the fire. Plus a fire blanket and fire resistant gloves for adding fuel to the fire, as well as a burns kit in case of emergencies.

Children will be reminded of the fire pit procedures at each and every visit.

Walk behind the log seats and stand behind the log.

Step over and sit down on the log seat.

Stand up, turn around and step over the log.

Younger children are not allowed to cross the inner circle and older children will only do so under direct adult supervision. (Adults should be role models of this).

Environment:

Wherever possible environmentally friendly products and recycled materials will be used. St Mary and St Thomas C.E. Primary School promotes environmental awareness and care for our environment. Conservation issues and sustainability will also be supported. The woodland will be maintained to ensure the survival of all native flora and fauna and new flora will be introduced if needed. We will remove all litter and debris we take into the woodland. We will be caring towards our neighbours and try to minimise the amount of smoke and noise produced. Brambles and nettles will be removed from the main pathways but will be allowed to grow in other areas of the woodland. Branches at eye level and below on the main pathways will be removed to avoid injuries for people entering the woodland unsupervised (without the Forest School Practitioner), they will remain on all other trees. Dead and fallen branches will be left and provide a valuable habitat resource for woodland creatures. During the winter months large stones and logs will be left alone to avoid disturbing hibernating creatures. There will be areas created where wood is allowed to rot to encourage insects to thrive, wild flowers will be allowed to grow and children encouraged to enjoy them growing rather than pick them.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Forest School Practitioner: will have a level 3 Forest Schools qualification, CRB enhanced disclosure and an outdoor first aid qualification.

Forest School Practitioner will have the overall responsibility for:

Risk assessments for each session, pre-visit site checks and continuous safety monitoring.

Planning for sessions, differentiation for individual children's needs.

Ensuring necessary equipment is taken into woodland.

Administration of first aid and first aid kit.

Supervision of tools use, cleaning and storing.

Organising emergency procedures.

Staff/ students / volunteers: will model good practice throughout the session, carry out delegated roles and responsibilities, extend children's learning where appropriate by asking extending questions, support children to manage their own risk, remind children of rules and boundaries, be aware of dangers within Forest School and monitor levels of safety at all times, support the Forest School Practitioner to run the sessions.

Insurance:

St Mary and St Thomas C.E. Primary school will ensure that appropriate insurance will be obtained to cover all activities taking place within the Forest School programme. The certificate will be held by the school.

Policy for the use of tools

Use of Tools

Children and adults will be trained in the use of each tool before they use it. Tools will be counted in and out and checked against an inventory. Tools will be stored safely and kept out of the reach of children. They will be cleaned after each use to prolong their life, broken and damaged tools will not be used. Children and adults will be informed of rules, safety and how to use before they use.


Procedures for the use of tools:

For each tool:

- The Forest School practitioner will refer to the detailed Tool Sheet which is laminated and attached to the tool storage container.
- Each Tool sheet will include:
 - A tool talk (To inform the children and other adults of the tool and its usage.)
 - Details for cleaning and maintaining the tool.
 - Safety considerations for the tool.
 - Storage details for the tool.
 - The number of tools that are in the container.
 - Picture of the tool.
- All tools used by the Forest School will be stored in a locked cupboard within the school building. The Forest School Practitioner will be the only person with access to the tool storage area.
- Tools will be carried in appropriate containers, which can be closed and locked if necessary when the tools are carried about school, or to an off-site location.
- Tools will be counted out of the container when they are given to the children for usage, and then counted back in.
- Once back in school each tool will be cleaned, and maintained if necessary, with broken or damaged tools being removed from the container and either repaired or replaced.

Sample of a Tool Sheet:

Tool: SHEATH KNIFE	Number of tools in container: 16
Tool Talk: This is the sheath knife. This is the handle. This is the sheath. I take off the sheath like this. This is the blade. This is the cutting edge. When I am not using the sheath knife, I put it back in the sheath like this. I stand with the sheath knife like this. I walk with the sheath knife like this. I pass the sheath knife like this. I always use it two arms and a tool away	How to clean and maintain the tool: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each blade should be rubbed with wire wool and oiled before being placed into the sheath.• If the blade requires sharpening (the cutting edge is dull, or there are nicks in the blade surface) the this should be done using an oil or wet stone.• Sharpening to an approximate angle of 20° on either side of the blade. Rub in a circular motion and then a longitudinal action. Storage Details:

length away from anyone else. I always use it on the outside of my body and away from me. When I use the sheath knife for cutting string or whittling wood, I wear a glove on my helper hand. When I am not using the sheath knife, I put it on the ground with the handle facing forward and the blade facing in. When I have finished using the sheath knife, I put it in the designated tool area or the tool box provided.	Knives are stored in their container and locked into the Forest School cupboard in the main school building.
Safety considerations: No gloves on the tool – a glove on the helper hand	
	

Emergency Action Plan for Forest School site, St Mary and St Thomas CE Primary School St Helens, Merseyside

Copies to be held in school office and taken to the site with the children.

In the event of a serious accident while on the Forest School site:

Serious Incident:		
CASULTY Forest School Practitioner / First Aider to administer First Aid and remain with the casualty.		Support staff 1. Remaining children to be moved to a safe area, back on the main school site (relevant classroom). Support staff to return to Practitioner.
2. Support staff to: Contact emergency services 999 call Pass information as given by the Forest School Practitioner.		3. Support staff to contact school office 01744 734320 (if off site) Give information of Casualty's name and outline of problem.

Name and age of casualty:
State of consciousness
Apparent extent of injury/ies
Location of casualty:

St Benedict's Wood
Rainhill Road
Rainhill
St Helens

Grid reference:
SJ489929

Return and give information as to when
the emergency services will arrive.

School to:

Contact parents, using the emergency list on Arbor.
Parents to be advised that an ambulance has been called, and to meet their child at Whiston Hospital.

School to:

Arrange for **member of SLT** to attend to Forest School site

Support staff to:

Return to the remainder of the children inside.
Offer support, tell stories, sing songs.
Be ready to assist the Forest School Practitioner if required.

Be available to direct the emergency services to the site/location of the accident.

Practitioner to be ready to accompany the child to the hospital in the ambulance.

Once the emergency services are on site, support staff to collect any loose equipment and return equipment to Forest School store.

When SLT arrive:

Member of the SLT to go to the Forest Practitioner to offer support. If they have already left for the hospital, to follow on to report back to school and bring the practitioner back to school once the pupil's parents have taken responsibility for their child.

Once the casualty has been removed, and the parents taken responsibility at the hospital, the Forest Practitioner to return to school with the additional member of the SLT.

WHEN BACK AT SCHOOL

Forest School Practitioner to evaluate both causes and responses to feed back to the Head teacher and any other interested bodies.

Equipment to be cleaned and the First Aid kit restocked.

Policy for Siting and Use of Fire

Use of Fires

A Forest School Practitioner must always be present when a fire is lit and it must never be left unattended. There must always be water available to extinguish the fire. Plus a fire blanket and fire resistant gloves for adding fuel to the fire.

Children will be reminded of the fire pit procedures at each and every visit.

Walk behind the log seats and stand behind the log.

Step over and sit down on the log seat.

Stand up, turn around and step over the log.

Younger children are not allowed to cross the inner circle and older children will only do so under direct adult supervision. (Adults should be role models of this).

In addition to this the following procedure is included:

Procedure for siting a fire:

A) In school

- Fires must only be lit in the Fire Pan provided, and stored in the outside shed with the additional Forest School equipment.
- The Fire Pan must be placed in a suitable position, and clearly identifiable barriers placed around the fire pan at least 2m from the fire pan. When placed it must be stabilized and unable to tip before any fire is set on the pan.
- Fuel should be prepared, and placed in a position near the barrier,
- This would normally be the center of the Forest School circle on the Key Stage 1 area.
- If using the tripod for cooking etc. this must be put together, and placed close to hand ready to be placed over the Fire Pan.
- Adequate water for emergency and normal extinguishing must be placed inside the barriers.
- Fire gauntlets, Fire blanket and a first aid kit containing a burns kit must be in place ready to use.
- ONLY WHEN THESE ARE IN PLACE SHOULD THE FIRE BE LIT.

B) At an external site: (E.g. Scarisbrick)

- Selection of an appropriate site:
 - Attention must be given to the ground surface that the fire pan is being placed upon.
 - The forest floor gives rise to risks of a fire spreading through the sub soil. (Clay: Low risk; Stony soil: Low risk; Brown muddy soil: Low risk; Peaty soil: High risk; Light, fluffy, or woody: High risk; Leaf Litter: High risk). The use of the fire pan dramatically reduces the risk as the fire is contained on the metal surface.
- The Fire Pan must be placed in a suitable position, and clearly identifiable barriers placed around the fire pan at least 2m from the fire pan. When placed it must be stabilized and unable to tip before any fire is set on the pan.
- Appropriate fuel should be collected, and brought up to the barrier and placed just outside it.
- If using the tripod for cooking etc. this must be put together, and placed close to hand ready to be placed over the Fire Pan.
- Adequate water for emergency and normal extinguishing must be placed inside the barriers.

- Fire gauntlets, Fire blanket and a first aid kit containing a burns kit must be in place ready to use.
- ONLY WHEN THESE ARE IN PLACE SHOULD THE FIRE BE LIT.

Procedures for the Use of Fires:

- ONCE LIT, A FIRE SHOULD NEVER BE UNATTENDED; A RESPONSIBLE ADULT MUST REMAIN BY THE FIRE. (They can be supervising a child as a Fire tender, but MUST never leave the Safety space.)
- Fires are to be used for the following purposes:
 - Cooking
 - Heating water (As in using a Kelly Kettle)
- When lighting a fire an appropriate safety area around the fire must be set up prior to the lighting of the fire.
- The children MUST be informed of the safety procedures and expectations for their behaviour while the fire is alight.
- Where not to go. (inside the Safety space)
- Where to sit or stand to be safe. (On the logs or seat provided)
- How to approach the fire. How to use the safe three point (respect) stance when tending the fire (if they are the fire tender)
- How to pass fuel to the Fire Tender.
- How to use Fire Gauntlets (Whenever touching anything that has been on the fire, or they are placing on the fire.)
- How to extinguish the fire when the session is over.

FIRE IS A USEFUL TOOL, BUT NOT A TOY; YOU SHOULD NEVER PLAY WITH FIRE.

Monitoring of policy

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually or before should any incidents arise or laws and policies change.

Date	Authorised Signature	Review Date