

SCHOOL POLICY FOR FOREST SCHOOL

Co-ordinator:

Caroline Allen

Buddy:

Patricia Ashling

Date Adopted:

Sept 2016

Review by:

Sept 2019

How the Policy developed

The policy was developed to support the extension of Forest School and outdoor learning across the Key stages and the additional training of Level Three Forest School Leaders.

How it relates to the School Development Plan

The school development plan highlighted the need for further development of Forest School to sustain usage throughout Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. As a result, Forest School has currently been extended with the view to further development.

Key Targets for the Period to the Date of the Policy review

- i. Policy to be adopted by staff and Governors.
- ii. Forest School trained staff Key Stage One & Two to provide Forest School Sessions across the school.
- iii. All trained staff to ensure they have an up to date handbook which covers all aspects of Forest School risk management and procedures.
- iv. Develop a Three Year development and sustainability plan for Forest School.

Tasks	Action Group	Timescale	Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All trained Forest School staff to develop handbook which is relevant to the Year Groups taught. 	Forest School Leaders	January 2017	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present policy to all staff and governors and adopt it. 	Co-ordinator and buddy	Autumn 2016	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion and attainment of Level 3 Forest School Leader Qualification for 4 staff. 	Forest School Leaders	January 2017	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To look at ways of recording and development of cross curricular work through Forest School and outdoor learning. 	Co-ordinator & Forest School Leaders	Autumn 2017	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 3-year management and sustainability plan. 	Co-ordinator & Forest School Leaders	Autumn 2017	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit / update of resources across key stages. 	Co-ordinator & Forest School Leaders	January 2017	Request Forest School budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Forest School meetings and CPD training. 	Co-ordinator & Forest School Leaders	On-going	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest School to be delivered across all year groups. 	Forest School Leaders	Summer 2017	
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Intentions

- To develop the delivery of Forest School and outdoor learning across the school.
- To work closely with subject co-ordinators to develop cross curricular learning.
- Encourage children to have a positive attitude to the outdoors, developing their natural curiosity of the world around them. To encourage children to care for their environment.
- To provide children with degrees of challenge through questioning, exploration, development of new skills and managed risk taking.

Aims and Objectives

We aim to give children and practitioners a shared understanding of the ethos of a Forest School experience. This powerful approach enables young children to be independent, self-motivated, courageous, and considerate and sets them up for life long learning. It particularly supports the development of self-esteem and self-confidence.

We aim to remain true to the Forest School ethos and approach.

- To empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing their minds and bodies to thrive.
- To promote an enjoyment of energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of well-being that it brings, including opportunities to develop gross motor skills.
- To provide a safe and secure environment so that they can learn to take managed risks
- To provide high quality learning experiences.

We aim to ensure that pupils acquire:

- 1) The ability to work effectively as individuals and in groups.
- 2) The ability to talk about, record and evaluate their work and share their experiences with others through different mediums.
- 3) A sense of achievement and self worth, responding to challenges with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

The pupils will:

- Learn about and understand the changes in their surroundings and environment by using all their senses.
- Generate ideas for example, through looking, talking, drawing, modelling, exploring and playing.
- Use tools correctly and safely to make products / artefacts, recognising the need for choosing appropriate materials.

Principles of Teaching and Learning

Teachers and support staff are in a unique position to:

- Observe, assess and record outdoor learning, ensuring that there is adequate provision for children to extend their learning through cross curricular planning and next steps approach.
- Encourage children to become confident, independent learners.
- Enable children to work both individually and co-operatively outside.
- Enable children to appreciate the beauty of nature; encouraging them to use a variety of natural resources.
- Help children to take responsibility and care for the outside environment and resources within it.
- Encourage children to respect their environment and to care for living things
- Encourage children to be confident in questioning what they see and find.
- Provide a holistic learning environment where children are encouraged to use all their senses to support their

learning.

- Ensure planning supports all learning styles and preferences.
- Be spontaneous and flexible to learning opportunities that arise in responding to and extending children's interests.
- Help children to be aware of and develop their social skills and emotional development.

Equal Access and Outcome

In Forest School sessions all persons should be treated equally in accordance with the school Accessibility Plan and Equality Scheme. We aim to and are committed to:

- Providing a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.
- Including 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

Health and Safety

The Forest School programme will support young children to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will even encourage early risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

To ensure all individuals (children, workers, volunteers) are safe and protected we adhere to the following:

- Everyone involved in Forest School is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of site and activities and what to do in the event of an emergency. Support staff and volunteers will be made aware of the relevant school policies and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them.
- Any volunteer attending Forest School should hold a current DBS certificate.
- We regard safety and good practice as extremely important and it is the responsibility of individual staff and volunteers to ensure general safety during working.

We adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy. A generic site risk assessment and a copy of pre-session risk assessment pro-forma are all contained in the Forest School Leaders handbook. Session plans also contain a risk assessment for that particular activity if required.

A Tree Survey of the site is carried out bi-annually by Shropshire Council last one in 2015.

Implementation

This policy is to be implemented with reference to the generic policies in the staff policy boxes, and also working within the general aims of the school and National Curriculum.

Following the acceptance of the policy all staff will be provided with a copy. All staff has a responsibility to implement the policy. The policy will also be implemented through the use of the school long term plan and NC requirements

Pupil Groupings

An important consideration is the group size and the ratio of adults to pupil, especially if working with tools which should be 1:1 with very young children depending on the activity.

Time Allocation

There is no statutory time allocation and this is left to the discretion of the school, in Foundation and Key Stage one the children are allocated a half day per week.

Behaviour

Our school behaviour policy will be followed in Forest School; however, the following behaviour is expected from all children: -

- Listen when an adult is talking.
- Take turns and be patient with each other.
- Keep to Forest School Boundaries.
- Keep you and your friends safe.
- Use Forest School language, kind words and always be polite.

Resourcing

1. Forest school boxes are currently used in Foundation and key Stage One to store resources for forest school. These can be easily adapted/ developed to suit the ages and needs of older children. Many resources provided will be dependent on the activity being undertaken however, it is good practice to provide a selection of resources that the children can be familiar with and use in their free time. See Forest School Leaders handbook for suggestions.
2. Tools are stored separately and only used under adult supervision depending on the activity being carried out.
3. There is a small budget allocated for Forest school to provide essential resources for forest school sessions and upkeep.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

- In Foundation assessment is done through observations, recording is through photographs and children's own annotations and mark making.
- In Key Stage one children will often continue their learning in the classroom by recording the work they have carried out in forest school or extending their ideas through cross curricular work and literacy.
- The expectations for Key Stage Two would be that outdoor learning/forest school extends, enhances and supports the classroom based learning. Encouraging reluctant writers an alternative stimulus and environment.

Summary

'The best classroom and the richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky' Margaret McMillan

'On going research from a variety of sources shows positive benefits in improving behaviour and motivation to learn, raising achievement in boys, developing deeper understanding about the natural world, developing positive attitudes towards citizenship and increased parental (especially father's' involvement) in their children's education'.

Forest School Shropshire Handbook