

Warkworth Church of England Aided Primary School



*'Learning together through love,
forgiveness and friendship'*



This year we have chosen to focus on the Christian Values of Love, Forgiveness, Friendship,
Respect, Community and Perseverance.

Forest School and Beach School

Policy to be approved: Autumn 2017

Review Date: Autumn 2019

Headteacher: Mrs Ritson

Chairman: Professor Hobrough

Reviewer: Governing Body

Forest School and Beach School Policy

Overview

Forest School is an *'Inspirational process that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self-esteem through hands on learning experiences in a natural environment.'* Forest School Association. We feel this

Aims of Our Forest School

- To provide children with experiences that encourages an appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.
- To learn to respect and care for their own local environment.
- To abide by rules and set standards of behaviour, to work cooperatively in groups and to respect each other.
- Develop children's self-esteem and self-confidence through a range of open-ended and child-initiated activities.

Environmental Considerations

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 wild area around them. The aim is to promote respect for wildlife, which will be achieved through detailed session plans and careful evaluation.

Encouraging children to care for the environment is an essential part of Forest School. In order to encourage the children to look after the site we will always leave it tidy and never damage anything growing in it. We will only collect things that are on the ground and leave the area as we found it when we leave. All staff will monitor the site so that it does not become overused and an alternative area will be found and risk assessed if necessary.

Legislation and Forest School

Legislation of importance to Forest School includes the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This act makes it a statutory that an employer has a duty to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare at work of their employees (in the case of schools adults and children) and any equipment used by them, and that employees are responsible for the Health and Safety of themselves and others they may be affected by their acts. The risk assessments carried out for Warkworth C of E Primary school are written in conjunction with the Act but also Northumberland County Council .

The Children's Act 1989, makes it important to consider adult ratios for all activities, equal opportunities and access, clear communication with parents and DSB checks for staff and regular volunteers. Routines and procedures at Warkworth C of E Primary school are developed with reference to this act and safeguarding practices.

This policy also was written in conjunction with the following policies and all school staff are aware of these as it is part of our induction process for all staff and volunteers. Staff and volunteers must adhere to the guidance contained within all of these policies.

- Health and Safety policy
- First Aid policy,
- Risk Assessments

- Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection policy
- Equality policy
- Positive Behaviour policy
- Risk assessments are also carried out prior to the visit using Evolve.

Safety

The Forest School Leaders and other practitioners regard their duty of care when working with pupils as extremely important to ensure the safety and protection of all individuals – children, staff and volunteers.

The Forest School leader will carry out a thorough sweep of the site for hazards and risks before the group enter the site and appropriate measures will be put in place, e.g. the removal of an object, or warning the group of specific dangers related to the site.

The Forest School Leaders and other school staff delivering sessions all have an enhanced level CRB check.

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 the summer months. It is part of school policy that staff do not apply sunscreen to children, they must do this themselves.

Any concerns about a child's physical or mental well-being will be shared with our named DSL (Mrs Ritson) and a Cause for Concern sheet will be filled in as soon as possible, so that our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy can then be followed. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Any concerns should only be shared with those who need to know such as the class teacher who can then ensure the correct channels are then informed.

We have a number of Forest School leaders in school trained to Level 3 and all staff also have first aid training. A first aid kit is taken on all sessions. In the case of an accident requiring further assistance, an emergency contact form is kept in the Office and a mobile phone is carried. The school will contact the parents.

Emergency Action Plan

This EAP (Emergency Action Plan) is kept in the school office at all times.

In the event of an emergency and a child needs to be taken to hospital a member of staff (TA) would direct the emergency services to the casualty and a qualified first aider, would attend to the casualty until the Emergency Services arrive. The casualty would be accompanied to hospital by a member of school staff. The remaining members of staff would oversee the rest of the group are counted and prepared to return to school.

The school office would be informed after dialling the Emergency Services and assistance to return back to school requested if necessary. The adult accompanying the casualty would return to school once the child was in the care of their parents/carers.

In the event of an adult needing emergency attention it must be judged whether they need to be accompanied or support may be required. Decisions taken must ensure the safety of the children within the group and accompanying adults.

In the event of the Forest School Leader needing emergency assistance it would be expected for the a member of staff to remain with the casualty and the other adults would return to school with the pupils.

Minor injuries would be treated as they would within school and recorded and reported to parents and carers in line with school policy.

Accident and incident forms would be completed back at school.

The 'Accident Report Form' requires a written 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 Headteacher. A copy will then be sent to the LA. The original form will be kept in school.

Equipment

Tools and safe use of tools are an important part of the Forest School experience. Their use will be carefully managed by the Forest School Leaders and good practice will be demonstrated at all times. Tools will be introduced to the children only when leaders feel that children are ready. Risk assessments of tools and the fire pit are carried out regularly. All tools will be returned to the tool bag and locked away at the end of each session in the Forest School cupboard. This is the responsibility of Forest School Leaders. All resources and equipment are checked regularly. Any unsafe, worn out, dirty or damaged equipment is repaired and cleaned, or replaced.

Fire Pit

Fires are a valuable part of the Forest School experience but will only be lit according to the procedures below.

- Before lighting a fire at Forest School, the following should be in place: Children must have a secure knowledge of log circle safety: 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.
- Only a trained Forest School Leader will take responsibility for the fire. They shall be responsible for lighting it, manning it while it is burning and putting it out at the end of the session.
- The fire shall be contained within the area marked out within the centre of the log circle. The ground around shall be cleared of flammable material.
- Check for low overhanging trees. Have a container of water beside the fire to put it out and deal with burns.
- The flames of the fire should never reach higher than the knee.
- While the fire is being lit, the children will be engaged in activities elsewhere.
- The fire will be extinguished before the session ends.

All adults are aware of the following when cooking and eating at Forest School

- Everyone should wipe 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 children who have food allergies and any medication
- Food will be cooked correctly.

- All equipment and waste is cleared away.
- Any unsafe, worn out, dirty or damaged equipment is repaired and cleaned, or replaced

The Role of Forest School Leaders

They are responsible for organising the planning and running all Forest School sessions. The Forest School leader has the safety of the children uppermost at all times. The leader will carry out a detailed safety check before each session and comply with health and safety risk assessments. The leader will ensure that all documentation is relevant and up to date. The leader will carry an emergency pack at all times. The leader is responsible for all equipment and will ensure that it is checked before use and returned to the resource area after use. The Forest School leader will keep an accident book and update Mrs Gibson and Mrs Ritson of any incidents that may occur during a session, eg, trips, falls, stings, etc.

After the session equipment will be washed and stored as appropriate. Waterproofs will be dried and hung on rails. Flasks and water containers will be emptied and cleaned out. Tools (if taken) will be cleaned and locked away in the WAH shed. The essential equipment Happy sack will be put away and any items used replaced.

Cancelling a Forest School Trip

A Forest School trip may need to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions, e.g. high winds, or blizzards. Adapted classroom activities will take place instead. Forest School Leaders will check weather forecast and consult with headteacher who will have to make the final decision.

Clothing Requirements

The following clothing requirements are for everyone attending a Forest School session (even adult volunteers).

- Woolly hat/sunhat
- Jacket/waterproof coat
- Fleece/sweatshirt
- Waterproof trousers
- Wellies/boots

Toileting

All children will visit the toilet before leaving the classroom. Any children needing the toilet during the session will use the portable toilet that staff will take to the forest.

Insurance

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

Equal Opportunities

Our priority is to ensure that all children and adults have access to a safe and secure environment. We believe that any contributions made by staff, volunteers and participants in our sessions will be listened to and appreciated. Please see our Equalities policy and objectives for further information.

