



Findern Primary School

Forest School Policy

1. **Introduction**

Forest School is a long-term approach to education for children and young people that maximises the benefits of learning in the outdoors. It is an inspirational process that provides opportunities for the children to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through first hand experiences. (Taken from Forest Education Initiative)

2. **Aims**

- 2.1 We aim to give all children and practitioners a collective insight into the ethos of Forest School.
- 2.2 Forest School builds on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.
- 2.3 The Forest School learning environment provides opportunities for children to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, to form positive relationships with others, to develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others, to learn to co-operate and work with their peers and adults and to develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety.
- 2.4 Forest School is about 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 environment changes. Appropriate clothing will be worn and during high winds (Beaufort Scale 5 and above) it will be considered unsafe to go into the woods.
- 2.5 The children's interests along with the varied natural resources in our woodland are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development, all in the guise of play.

3 **Environmental Considerations and Conservation**

- 3.1 One of the principles of Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 The aim is to promote respect for wildlife, which will be achieved through detailed session planning, evaluation and careful reference to our woodland management plan and ecological impact assessment.

3.4 If appropriate, reclaimed, recycled and sustainable resources will be used to maintain and develop our Forest School site.

4. Health and Safety Considerations

4.3 The health and safety of the adults and children is paramount at all times throughout any activity and session. Safe practice is reinforced through regular reminders.

4.4 Forest School provides the children with opportunities to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own learning. Whilst being independent in their learning, they develop early risk assessment strategies and understanding that their actions have consequences.

4.5 The Forest School leader will carry out site, activity and daily risk assessments. All Forest School staff will be involved in the ongoing risk assessments taking 'wild factors' into account.

5. Equality and Inclusion Considerations

5.1 In Forest School all people should be treated equally.

5.2 We aim to provide a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.

5.3 We aim to include all children by differentiating the activities at Forest School.

6 The Role of the Forest School Leader (level 3)

6.1 It is the leader's responsibility to promote good practice with health and safety at Forest School.

6.2 The Forest School Leader is responsible for choosing a suitable site for the programme.

6.3 The Forest School Leader must ensure that all risk assessments are up to date including; site, daily, ongoing and activity risk assessments. They must then manage these risks and ensure that all adults are aware of the risks and how to control them; ensuring that everyone is safe at all times.

6.4 The Forest School leader must ensure that a well equipped first aid kit is taken to the site and restocked after use. They must also check that the adults at Forest School have the appropriate training and qualifications for first aid.

6.5 The Forest School Leader should ensure that the appropriate medical / contact details are taken to the site and they are kept confidential.

- 6.6 The Forest School leader must follow safeguarding procedures to ensure that the children are safe.
- 6.7 The Forest School Leader should check that all staff should have a current DBS and be briefed on how to deal with disclosures.
- 6.8 The Forest School Leader should continually assess the site for other members of the public accessing the area.
- 6.9 The Forest School Leader will ensure that the personal needs of the children and adults are met.
- 6.10 The Forest School Leader will take care that food preparation, cooking and eating is hygienic and that the participants have the opportunity to eat or drink where appropriate.
- 6.11 It is also important that the leader checks that all participants are wearing the appropriate clothes and shoes (including PPE and sun-cream where appropriate).
- 6.12 A high adult to child ratio is essential at Forest School; the leader should make sure that this is followed.
- 6.13 The leader must establish clear rules and boundaries, both concerning behaviour and use of the site.
- 6.14 It is the leader's responsibility to cancel the sessions in bad weather (storms and winds Beaufort Scale 5 and above) when it would put people in danger to attend.
- 6.15 The leader will act as a good role model and always demonstrate best practice to ensure that all participants are kept safe at all times.
- 6.16 The Forest School Leader will plan small, achievable tasks that promote the development of the children's self-esteem and sense of self-worth.
- 6.17 The Forest School Leader will ensure time is allowed for free play.

7 The role of the Forest School Assistant (level 2)

- 7.1 To support the Forest School Leader with the planning of the sessions.
- 7.2 To assist with the delivery of Forest School sessions.
- 7.3 To follow all the policies and procedures for Forest School and model good practice.
- 7.4 To make careful observations of the children and to comment on the impact on their development and learning.

8 The role of the Head Teacher

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that Forest School sessions are only delivered by a level 3 Forest School Leader.
- 8.2 The Head Teacher must ensure that provision for a high ratio of adults to children is made.
- 8.3 The Head Teacher must ensure that staff receive sufficient training in relation to first aid and Forest School.
- 8.4 The Head Teacher must provide the opportunity for a long term programme to be delivered on a regular basis.

9 Monitoring and Review

- 9.1 Formative assessment will be made after each Forest School session.
- 9.2 Summative assessment will be made at the end of each programme.
- 9.3 This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's monitoring and review cycle.

Signed: Mrs C. Preston

Date: February 2016