

Forest School Guidance

Fox Wood School

2019



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Philosophy:

Forest School is an inspirational process that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.- Forest School Association

The philosophy at Forest School is to encourage and inspire individuals through learning outdoors, pupils will participate in a range of hand on learning activities, that are engaging, motivating and develop self-awareness to achieve their full potential.

Forest School first developed in Scandinavia and is the roots of its education. It enables pupils to access the woodland areas on a regular basis and develop their skills through play and structured learning. It develops opportunity for pupils to learn about their natural surroundings, how to handle risks and use their own initiative to problem solve and develop relationships with peers.

Principles of Forest School

Forest school follows the 5 principles these are as follows:

- Forest School is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.
- Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
- Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.
- Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
- Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
- Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

This was taken from the forest school association more information can be found at:

<https://www.forestscholassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/>

Forest School at Fox Wood

At Fox Wood, the focus of Forest School is to enable all pupils the opportunity of exploration and to flourish in their self-confidence, increase their independence and excel their communication. This is at the heart of enhancing pupils wellbeing and the school community this will be promoted through all sessions.

At Fox Wood, we aim for every child to access the Forest School area. This will be throughout lessons, enrichment groups and Enhanced Provision activities. Pupils will be rotated to ensure that all pupils access the environment.

We aim for all sessions to incorporate, working together, problem solving, build self-esteem, support risk taking and work on enhancing practical skills, which can then be transferred into the classroom. We also aim for sessions to be fun, practical and spark children's love of learning in the outdoors.

Assessment

Forest School will have continuous observation to assess the progress of pupils; this will be tracked through photographs, written observations, evaluations and evidence uploaded to Evidence for learning. If you have any queries regarding assessment and forest school please do not hesitate to contact one of the forest school leaders.

Clothing at Forest School

Pupils will access the forest school in all weathers to ensure they gain the most from their experiences and explore the changes in the seasons.

Therefore it is important that pupils come equipped for these sessions and for the weather forecast. Essentials include:

- Waterproof pants
- Waterproof Jacket
- Waterproof shoes/Wellies
- Spare clothes
- Sun cream/Sun hat (in hot weather)
- Extra layers (in cold weather)

Safety in Forest School is key, prior to any sessions beginning the area will be safety checked by one of the trained Forest School staff. The area will then be assessed for safety throughout the sessions and after a session. We aim to engage in Forest School sessions in all weathers although in extreme weathers (e.g. high winds) unfortunately we may have to cancel. You will be made aware if a session has unfortunately been cancelled, this will be to ensure that we keep all pupils safe.

Communication

Communication to our pupils is key throughout Fox Wood and developing these skills is paramount to our teaching. At Forest School communication will be promoted through a use of communication aids in line with individual pupil's speech and language reports. This will be specific to each individual pupil to promote communication skills. Forest school will also require pupils to listen carefully to instructions, work as a team and carry out tasks independently.

Forest School Rules

At the beginning of our Forest School sessions, rules will be shared with the pupils to ensure they are kept safe at all times, these are as follows:

- Never run in forest school, always walk so you do not hurt yourself
- Always hold a stick downwards never up

- Wash your hands before snack and after forest school sessions
- Be kind to the creatures and the trees
- Stay in Forest School
- Do good looking
- Do good listening to instructions
- Be happy and have fun!

Trained Staff

Sam Scott Forest School Leader (Class Teacher)

Forest School Level 3

First aid in the outdoors (2 day)

Jade Ashton Forest School Leader (Class Teacher)

Forest School Level 3

First aid in the outdoors (2 day)

Other staff:

Outdoor learning for SEND children

Jayne Garratt (Teaching assistant)

Andrew Poskitt (Class Teacher)

Briony Duane (Teaching assistant)

Stacey Radley (Teaching assistant)

Diane Garcia (Teaching assistant)

Lesley Beswick (Teaching assistant)

Health and Safety/First Aid

At Fox Wood the health and safety of staff, pupils and visitors are crucial. Therefore at Fox Wood there are minimum requirements to ensure safety is ensured whilst in the Forest.

Forest School is located on the school premises and pupils from school will access the area. The Forest School leaders are responsible for the safe running of the sessions with support from the teaching assistants supporting on the day. However, all staff has a duty of care to the pupils and are required to take all responsible steps to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors are priority. Before a session begins all staff included in the session will have access to planning of the activities and a sweep of the area will be completed to minimise risks.

A First Aid kit will be taken out to Forest School and readily available if it is required. This must only be accessed by the Forest School staff. A phone will also be taken and only used in case of emergency.

Emergency support

Whilst a serious injury or incident is unlikely within our Forest School, every precaution is taken to reduce any potential risks and to ensure that plans are in place for quick and decisive action should this be required.

Emergency numbers:

999- Emergency services

01925811534- Fox Wood School

111- Out of hours

1) Situation will be assessed and First Aid will be administered if required.

Adult 1 (This will be determined at beginning of sessions): Forest School Lead to treat the injured person.

Adult 2 (This will be determined at beginning of sessions): To support Forest School Lead and get additional support if required.

All other staff: To lead other children to a safe space and complete a headcount, await further instruction and keep the children calm. A game may be played to distract pupils.

2) A decision will then be made to either:

Carry on with the session

Whether the injured person needs to go home

Whether the injured person needs to go to hospital

3) Staff will then inform parents and Senior Leadership Team of the incident and an accident/incident form will be completed.

Fire support

At Forest School, fires will be lit and used for cooking purposes and different activities throughout the sessions. This will only be done by a trained member of staff and the fire safety rules will be shared with pupils prior to the session.

Fire rules include:

- Do not go and sit at the camp fire circle unless told by an adult
- Always walk around the outside of our camp fire circle
- Stay seated unless told by an adult
- When seated keep legs tucked in, do not stretch legs out
- Never throw things into the fire

Tool handling

During Forest School, pupils will have access to a range of different tools to support their learning. This will be risk assessed on the day and pupils will only access these when the Forest School Lead feels it is safe to do so.

All tools will be thoroughly checked before given to the pupils and will be demonstrated on how to use safely by the forest school leader. If they notice the tool is unsafe in any way use will be terminated immediately and the tool will be labelled as unsafe.

Tool Rules:

- Only use the tools when an adult tells you too
- Never run with the tools only walk
- Listen carefully to instructions and stay safe