

Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery



Forest School Policy 2018-2019

Approved

Review

This policy has been specifically written so that all parents, staff, volunteers and governors at Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery have a shared understanding of the Forest School ethos and its implementation at our school.

The contents of this policy should be read alongside the following policies:

Health and Safety Policy

Behaviour Policy

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

SEND Policy

Equality Duty Policy

Within this policy, the term 'Forest School Leader' refers to a member of staff, adult volunteer or bought in professional who holds a fully recognised Level 3 Forest School Practitioners qualification.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to provide an insight into the ethos of Forest School as operated at Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery. 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.

Our Forest School learning environment provides opportunities for children to:

- Develop self-esteem
- Develop self-confidence
- Form positive relationships with others
- Develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others
- Develop their ability to improve their cooperation skills and work with their peers and adults
- Develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety
- Learn specific skills which link into the curriculum
- Develop knowledge and appreciation of the natural world and a forest environment

Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery 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 changes in the environment. Appropriate clothing will be worn. During high winds or lightning it will be considered unsafe to go into the woods.

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 under the premise of 'learning through play.'

Environmental Considerations and Conservation

One of the principles of our Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. The children are taught respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both children and adults are encouraged to respect their environment and to be aware of conservation issues of the woodland around them.

We aim to promote respect for wildlife and our woodland environment. This will be achieved partly through detailed long-term, medium-term and lesson planning. Careful reference will be made to our 3 year woodland management plan and ecological impact assessment. If appropriate, reclaimed, recycled and sustainable resources will be used to maintain and develop our Forest School Site.

Equal Opportunities

Everyone involved in Forest School sessions will be treated with respect and equality. Our priority is to ensure that 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 in line with our Equality Duty Policy.

Health and Safety Considerations

The health and safety of the adults and children is paramount at all times throughout any Forest School activity and session. Safe practice is reinforced through regular reminders. The Forest School programme provides children with opportunities to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own learning. Whilst being independent in their learning, they will develop early risk assessment strategies and understand that their actions have consequences.

The Forest School Leader and other practitioners regard their duty of care when working with pupils as extremely important. For the safety and protection of all individuals – children, staff and volunteers - we ensure the following:

Staff and volunteers are made aware of the Health and Safety Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Equality Duty Policy, SEND Policy and Supporting children with medical conditions policy. This is undertaken as part of induction and orientation of all staff and volunteers taking part in Forest School activities. Staff and volunteers adhere to the guidance contained within all these policies.

All members of staff at Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery undertake Child Protection training. Any concerns are reported to the designated safe guarding leads to ensure the school's child protection policy is followed. The Forest School Leader and other school staff delivering sessions have enhanced DBS checks. Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear is to be worn at all times. During winter months pupils are expected to wear sturdy footwear or wellington boots, hats scarves, gloves and waterproof outerwear. School will provide wellingtons and all in one water proof suits for KS1 children. Older children will be required to bring their own clothes, waterproof outerwear and sturdy shoes or wellingtons.

Sunscreen and hats should be worn in the summer months. It is part of school policy that staff do not provide or apply sunscreen to children, they must do this themselves.

Assessing and Reducing Risk at our Forest School

A range of activities are undertaken at school which contain a theoretical degree of risk. Through careful supervision, full training and good practice, we aim to ensure that accidents are avoided and that risks are reduced to manageable and acceptable levels.

Risk / Benefit Analyses

While there are risks that must be considered, there is a wide range of benefits that are to be gained by those involved. We also recognise that taking risks is an important part of learning and developing and we want to provide a safe and supportive environment in which participants can learn about risks, challenges and personal safety. Consequently, we will use a risk/benefit analysis in our assessment of our sites and activities

The Forest School programme will support young children to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will encourage early risk management strategies that ensure young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others which will help them to make better decisions later on in life.

Risk Assessments

Written Risk Assessments are the starting point for our safe practice and procedures in Forest School. These are constantly reviewed and regularly updated in order to reflect the safest practice possible.

The Forest School Leader will carry out risk assessments for each activity including for fire and tools (when used) at the beginning of each term and these risk assessments will take account of seasonal changes. Copies of these risk assessments are kept at the school office.

We have full written risk assessments in place for:

- Child protection issues
- Slips, trips and falls
- Insect bites and stings
- Infection
- Allergic reaction
- Behaviour
- Fire
- Weather
- Transport
- Building shelters
- Tools
- Activities

On Site Risk Assessment Procedure

In addition, a risk assessment will be undertaken before each session by the Forest School Leader who will assess the area for any dangers.

There are five steps to risk assessment:

1. Look for the hazards, such as windblown trees or litter
2. Decide who might be harmed and how

3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
4. Record the findings
5. Review the assessment and revise if necessary

The Forest School site at Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery is situated on the far right of the school field.

Fire at Forest School

If a fire is lit at Forest School, it is always be supervised by the Forest School Leader. Fires will never be left unattended. Safe fire practice is always adhered to. A boundary of 1m from the fire is always adhered to and children will be taught how to sit in the respect position. There will always be a water bucket, fire gloves and fire blanket next to the fire.

Children are taught and reminded of the fire circle rules from their first visit to Forest School. These are:

- Stand behind the logs.
- Step over and sit down on the logs when instructed to by the Forest School Leader.
- To leave the fire circle: Stand up, turn around and step over the logs
- Walk in a clockwise direction around the fire circle.
- Keep the area around the fire circle free from debris
- NEVER cross the fire circle
- When near the fire, always use the respect position.

Cooking and Eating at Forest School:

Forest School Leaders and other adults are aware of the following when cooking and eating at Forest School:

- Open fire cooking is only permissible in the designated areas.
- The respect position should always be used when near the fire.
- Everyone should wash their hands before handling food and drink.
- All food is stored in appropriate containers.
- Only clean equipment is used.
- Any dietary requirements are noted and catered for.
- Food will be cooked correctly.
- All equipment and waste is cleared away.

Tools

The safety of all participants is of paramount importance. Participants ensure that tools are used safely by adopting the following:

- Tools are stored correctly in school and checked after each session.
- Rules are set out clearly at the beginning of the tool use session.
- Leaders ensure that tool talks are given before any tools are used.
- Children are supervised at all times whilst using tools of any description.
- Inappropriate use of tools will not be tolerated and will result in immediate withdrawal from the task.

Equipment and resources policy

- We aim to provide children with resources and equipment which help to consolidate and extend their knowledge, skills, interests and aptitudes.
- We provide a sufficient quantity of equipment and resources for the number of children.
- We provide equipment and resources which promote continuity and progression.
- We provide sufficient challenge and meet the needs and interests of all children
- We provide natural and recycled materials which are in good condition and safe for the children to use.
- We check all resources and equipment regularly.
- We repair and clean, or replace any unsafe, worn out, dirty or damaged equipment.
- We use the inventory to: record the dates and results of checking the resources and equipment.
- We plan the provision of activities and appropriate resources so that a balance of familiar equipment and resources and new exciting challenges is offered.
- We ensure that a working mobile phone or walkie talkie is accessible to all adults.

Toileting

- Encourage everyone to use the toilet before coming on site.
- If necessary children can use the outside toilet. Children will be sent to the toilet in pairs.
- Hand washing facilities should be available but if this is not possible wet wipes and cleaning gel can be used. All wet wipes should be placed in bags and disposed of off-site.

The Forest School leader will have:

- Wet wipes and cleaning gel
- Nappy bags
- Spare pants and jogging bottoms for younger children

First Aid

Level 3 Forest School Leaders are qualified in outdoor first aid. A First Aid Kit is always available on the Forest School site. It is the Forest School Leader's responsibility to ensure that the First Aid Kit is brought onto the site at the commencement of the session and returned to school after each session.

In cases of minor injury, such as cuts and grazes the Forest School Leader will administer first aid and complete a first aid note for the injured person to take home.

Emergency Procedures

It is vital that emergency procedures are adhered to. These are in place to safeguard pupils and adults alike. If a serious incident takes place, it will be essential to carry out an investigation promptly. Please refer to the Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

In the event of a serious incident, which could arise as a result of an injury, illness or threat, emergency services should be contacted and the following procedures followed:

- Secure safety of whole group from further danger. Stop all work/activities if safe. Call in and locate group promptly by adopting the 'Howl' call to ensure the safety of other participants. Participants will be made aware of this procedure for calling everyone together in initial sessions of Forest School.
- First Aider to attend to any casualties with adult helper and with regard for maintenance of required supervision ratios for the rest of the party. At least one first aider must be on site at all times. A record of changes in casualties' state and anything administered to them to be made if possible.
- Contact the school office as soon as possible to allow them a) to contact other staff to assist the forest school leader if necessary. b) to alert parents and/or emergency services if necessary. c) to inform the head teacher if the incident requires further medical treatment.
- Emergency services contacted as necessary, ideally by an adult helper/ office staff. Charged mobile phones are carried by staff. Despatch a designated adult to meet emergency vehicle at the entrance where possible/necessary.
- Safety of the rest of group will be maintained by the remaining staff and adults away from the scene of the incident.
- Informing next of kin should be carried out as soon as practicable after the incident.

If an accident occurs to a pupil, member of staff or visitor that requires help in addition to first aid e.g. Fire, Ambulance and Police then the LA must be informed of the circumstances as soon as possible. An accident form will be completed and a copy sent to the LA.

In the event of serious injury (this includes amputation, serious burns, acute illness, fracture, loss of sight or consciousness, or if detained in hospital over 24 hours, or death); under RIDDOR the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) must be informed. These notifications are a legal requirement.

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.

Insurance

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

Roles and Responsibilities

The Forest School Leaders hold a fully recognised Level 3 Practitioners qualification; enhanced DBS certificate and outdoor first aid qualifications. Forest School Leaders have the overall responsibility for:

- Safety and risk assessment
- Planning of sessions, evaluation and feedback

- Liaising with school staff and governors
- Administration of first aid
- Responsibility for first aid kit, accident book, etc.
- Supervision of tool use
- Supervision of fires and cooking area
- Understanding the needs of children with SEND
- Emergency procedures

Volunteers and trainees with support from the Forest School Leaders volunteers and trainees are responsible for:

- Modelling good practice
- Supporting and talking to pupils to extend their learning as appropriate
- Additional support when Forest School leader is supervising tools or fire activities
- Additional delegated jobs

Session Routines

Equipment

Register including medical information	First Aid Kit
Risk-benefit analysis	Incident log
Emergency Procedure	Mobile phone
Toileting kit	Handwashing kit including wipes.
Fresh water (bottles)	Emergency bivi-bag
Spare clothing	Fire blanket (when using fire)
Tools & fire lighting kit (when using fire)	Burns kit (when using fire)

Setting Up

1. Carry out a session risk assessment of site and advise/act accordingly
2. Collect necessary equipment and restock first aid where necessary
3. Meet and register group
4. Check phone signal

Opening

1. Introductions of any new faces
2. Make the group aware of new hazards or medical considerations
3. Check that they are all wearing suitable clothing and footwear
4. Take the group to the location
5. Form an opening circle and carry out a review or reflection activity
6. Describe or walk the boundaries for the day, engage children in the development of rules and guidelines for the day
7. Describe the day's activities

During the Session

- Visually check all equipment before use
- Check on pastoral needs of group
- Conduct a head count, as needed
- Ensure appropriate personal protective clothing is worn

Closing the Session

1. Extinguish any fires properly
2. Count any tools used into their bag
3. Remove structures
4. Check for litter etc.
5. Collect the equipment
6. Form a closing circle and conduct a reflection with the group (questions, talking stick or drawing)
7. Thoroughly check equipment
8. Complete the appropriate planning /evaluation form

Cancellation Procedure

There may be times when Forest School sessions have to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. These may be:

- Staff illness – which prevents staff / child ratios being met.
- Severe weather conditions.
- Any situation that poses a health and safety risk.
- Events taking precedent in school.

We will endeavour to run Forest School sessions whenever possible, however we reserve the right to cancel on the day, but will inform the group as soon as possible.

Evaluation Procedure

In order to develop the Forest School program and to ensure good practice is maintained, at the end of each term the leader will reflect on current activities and then use this to inform future planning. They will:

- Evaluate the sessions – looking activities and what dispositions/attitudes are being developed.
- Evaluate the children's experiences – What do they enjoy? What have they learnt?
- Case studies of specific children will be taken and developed over the year.
- Evaluate all staff that are involved in Forest School.