

**Broadbent Fold Primary School
and Nursery**

Forest School Policy



March 2022

Broadbent Fold Values are instilled through our Broadbent Fold Expectations are clearly visible around school. All expectations are child friendly and they are linked to our Rights Respecting class charters.

We want our children to be happy. Children are happy when they:

- feel good about themselves
- are confident in their own ability

Within all subjects taught at Broadbent Fold and in- line with the Equalities Act (2010) we aim to ensure that any child, irrespective of protected characteristics (age, gender including intersex and transgender, ethnicity or sexuality including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and transvestite) is treated fairly and with respect. The law states that the public sector equality duty includes a general duty to, “Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.”

Introduction

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 and Diversity Policy

Within this policy, the term ‘Forest School Leader’ refers to a member of staff who holds a fully recognised Level 3 Forest School Practitioners qualification. Within our school it is Mrs Anson.

Aims

The ethos of Forest School is to encourage and inspire children through positive outdoor experiences. Children will have the opportunity to learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and most importantly to use their own initiative to solve problems, co-operate with others, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.

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. The children's interests along with the varied natural resources in our Forest School area are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development. The children use full sized tools, play, learn boundaries of behaviour; both physical and social, establish and grow in confidence, self-esteem and become self-motivated. It helps children to form positive relationships with others, to develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others, to learn to cooperate and work with their peers and adults and to develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety.

At Forest School nobody fails. This is achieved by setting small achievable tasks. It is a child-centred and child led programme that provides the opportunity for the children to use their personal learning style to complete their chosen tasks.

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 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 possible, reclaimed, recycled and sustainable resources will be used to maintain and develop our Forest School Site.

Equal Opportunities

Please refer to the school's Equality and Diversity Policy. All people 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.

Health and Safety Considerations

Please refer to the Health and Safety Policy. 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:

The Forest School information pack and Forest School handbook is available to all adults involved in Forest School. These booklets contain the policies and procedures that are used and referred to in Forest School. Everyone involved in Forest School is briefed on health and safety and risk assessments of the site, which can be found in the Forest School Information Pack.

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 all have an enhanced level DBS check. Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear must be worn at all times. During the 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 waterproof 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.

Risk / Benefit Analysis

During Forest School sessions, we undertake a range of activities that may contain a theoretical degree of risk. Through careful supervision, full training and risk assessments, we aim to ensure that accidents are avoided and that risks are reduced to manageable and acceptable levels.

While there are risks that must be considered, there are also a wide range of potential benefits that can be gained by those involved. Taking risks is an important part of learning and development and we want to provide a safe and supportive environment in which participants can learn about risks, challenges and personal safety. Consequently, risk/benefit analysis is used in the assessment of the site 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 will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others that will help them to make better decisions late on in life.

Risk Assessments

Written Risk Assessments are reviewed and regularly updated in order to reflect the safest practice possible at Forest School.

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 assessment can be found on the school server (P drive), in the school office and in the Forest School information pack.

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 (Dynamic) Risk Assessment Procedure

In addition, a dynamic risk assessment will be undertaken before and during 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 in the willow outside classroom and on the far right of the school field.

Fire at Forest School

Please see the Fire Safety Policy. Only a trained Forest School Practitioner will take responsibility for the fire. This will be their sole responsibility for the session. They shall be responsible for lighting it, staffing it while it is burning and putting it out at the end of the session.

- Fires will never be left unattended.

- 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.
- A boundary of 1m from the fire is always adhered to and children will be taught how to sit in the respect position.
- The area will be checked for low overhanging trees.
- The flames of the fire should never reach higher than the knee.
- There will always be adequate water, fire gloves and fire blanket next to the fire.
- A large container of water will be beside the fire to put it out and deal with burns.
- While the fire is being lit, the children will be engaged in activities elsewhere.
- The fire will be extinguished before the session ends.

Children are taught and reminded of the fire circle rules from their first visit to Forest School. These rules are emphasised by games such as 'wood, wood, fire':

- To enter and leave the fire circle: Stand up, turn around and step over the benches or 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:

- The respect position should always be used when near the fire.
- Children are reminded to let the food cool before eating it.
- 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 a toolbox and in a locked shed when not in use.
- After use, all tools will be handed back to the Forest School Leader and/ or placed in the tool box.
- Rules are set out clearly at the beginning of the tool use session.

- Leaders ensure that official safety tool talks are demonstrated and discussed before any tools are used.
- Children will be asked to carry out their own tool talks to ensure they understand how to safely use the tools.
- All tools will be used on a 1:1 adult to child ratio when using them.
- Children are supervised at all times whilst using tools of any description and reminded of how to use them safely.
- Inappropriate use of tools will not be tolerated and will result in immediate withdrawal from the task.
- Tools are counted in and out and checked for damage or wear and tear after each session.
- Any unsafe, worn out, dirty or damaged equipment is repaired and cleaned, or replaced.

Activities and resources

Children are provided with resources and equipment that help to consolidate and extend their knowledge, skills, interests and abilities. A number of different activities may be carried out in the sessions. These include:

- Team Games
- Singing
- Role play
- Creative activities - with natural resources, clay, water and wool
- Tool use
- Den building
- Climbing trees
- Scavenger hunts
- Nature hunts – insects, birds, trees and plants.

The Forest School ethos means that activities are child led and based around the children's interest. The Forest School leader will observe children and plan activities that children will enjoy but the activities will follow the direction in which children choose to take them. They may decide to work independently, working on developing their own problem solving skills and creativity, or they may join up with other children and work within teams. This is excellent for children's social development, as they will learn how to collaborate within a team, and how to share their ideas and to listen to others. Children will learn to challenge themselves and become more resilient as a result.

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 are available in the outside toilet but if this is not possible, wet wipes and cleaning gel can be used. All wet wipes will be placed in bags and disposed of when back in school.
- Spare pants and jogging bottoms are available for younger children

First Aid

The Forest School Leaders is qualified in outdoor first aid. A first aid kit is always available on the Forest School site and in the leader's Forest School bag. 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 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.
- The first aider will attend to any casualties 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.
- 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. The Forest School leader always carries charged mobile phones and a walkie-talkie.
- A designated adult is to meet the emergency services at the entrance of school to direct them quickly to the casualty.

- The remaining staff and adults away from the scene of the incident will maintain safety of the rest of group.
- The next of kin should be informed as soon as possible 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, 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 Leader holds a fully recognised Level 3 Forest School leader qualification, has fully enhanced CRB and an outdoor first aid qualification that is renewed every three years. The Forest School Leader 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 and tool maintenance
- Supervision of fires and cooking area
- Understanding the needs of children with SEND
- Emergency procedures

Volunteers and trainees with support from the Forest School Leader 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 foil blanket
Spare clothing	Fire blanket (when using fire)
Tools & fire lighting kit (when using fire)	Burns kit (when using fire)

Setting Up

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

Opening

- Introductions of any new faces
- Make the group aware of new hazards or medical considerations
- Check that they are all wearing suitable clothing and footwear
- Form an opening circle and carry out a review or reflection activity. Carry out a check in to see how everyone is feeling.
- Engage children in the development of rules and guidelines for the day and discuss the session's possible 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
- Observe children's interests to help plan for future sessions
- Encourage children to take pride in their own and other's achievements.

Closing the Session

- Extinguish any fires properly
- Count any tools used into the toolbox or bag and collect any equipment that has been used.
- Tidy and remove structures if appropriate to do so
- Check for litter and remove

- Form a closing circle and conduct a reflection with the group – e.g. Who has helped you today? What are you proud of?
- Thoroughly check equipment for damage or wear and tear

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.
- Timetable changes

We will endeavour to run Forest School sessions whenever possible, however reserve the right to cancel on the day, but will aim to inform the group and their parents/ carers as soon as possible by text message.

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 challenges, creativity and abilities 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.

This embodies our Broadbent Fold school vision.