



Forest School Policy Policy Statement

Vision

We believe that Forest School is an educational experience that offers children the opportunity to develop confidence, independence and self-esteem through a hands on approach in a woodland environment. We believe Forest School teaching should engage and excite children's natural curiosity about the world around them. We aim to create memorable and positive outdoor learning experiences that go beyond the classroom to help them make sense of the world around them. We want to provide children with experiences that encourage an appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural world.

Intent

In teaching Forest School we are developing in our children:

- A positive attitude, curiosity and excitement towards the natural environment
- An appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural world around them
- Respect, care and responsibility for their local environment
- Confidence and self-esteem through the setting of small achievable tasks
- an ability to take risks safely and recognize hazards
- an ability to make choices and initiate learning for themselves
- an ability to form positive relationships and co-operate with others
- an ability to think creatively, problem solve and develop skills
- an ability to respect and care for their local environment

Implementation

We strive to achieve our vision for pupils by:

*Introducing children to a wide range of Forest School skills and knowledge:

- Play/exploring
- Shelter Building
- Knots
- Tools
- Fire for cooking

These areas are covered in each year group but they have a clear progression over the different year groups (see Forest School Knowledge and Skills progression).

*Helping pupils acquire skills to use tools and fire safely

*Enabling children to take and manage risks safely

*Making cross curricular links where possible to enhance their learning in other areas of the curriculum

*Helping children understand how to respect and take care of their local environment

*Helping children become confident independent learners at Forest School

*Helping all children to achieve regardless of their gender or background

St Mildred's benefits from its own Forest School site. Every year 1 and 2 class have Forest School Sessions for 2 terms of the school year. Reception classes will have weekly Forest School sessions throughout the school year. Forest School leaders carefully plan each session based on the children's interests, prior knowledge to ensure the progression of knowledge and skills is clear.

Impact

In Forest School children will develop life long skills which they can apply to everyday life both at school and at home.

By the end of KS1 children should be able to:

- *Know and understand the forest school and fire circle rules
- *understand how to care for living things and their environment
 - *know how to light and extinguish a fire safely
 - *know the fire triangle and what is needed to make a fire
 - *know a wide range of ways to cook on the fire
- *name and use a wide range of tools safely and for different purposes
 - *know how to tie basic knots independently
- * construct a tripod structure and a lean to shelter independently which is fit for purpose
 - *work collaboratively and independently to investigate and explore the outside world

Forest School and SEN

At St Mildred's we believe that all pupils are entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and teachers match the learning to the needs and abilities of all of the pupils. We use a range of strategies to develop the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Where appropriate, materials are modified or support is provided to enable pupils with SEND to access the learning. In every lesson there are a range of strategies used to ensure inclusion of all pupils. These include:

- Adult support
- Quality first teaching to ensure the way lessons are planned and delivered meet the children's needs
- Visual aids
- Pre teaching of specific skills prior to the lesson
- Sharing objectives and success criteria verbally
- Peer support
- Small achievable practical activities are planned
- 1:1 support if needed
- Adaption of specific materials if needed

Equal Opportunities

All children regardless of race, gender or ability have equal access to Forest School in order to develop their Forest School skills. We aim to provide a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.

Through careful planning, monitoring and assessment we ensure that all our pupils:

1. have equal access to Forest School resources;
2. have equal opportunities to develop Forest School skills;
3. take part in small achievable tasks which are appropriate to their age and ability.

Environmental considerations and conservation

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.

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. Forest School Leaders will monitor the site so that it does not become overused and we will use our other linked Forest School site at Bromstone Primary school and other outdoor learning spaces.

Legislation

Legislation that is important 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 are written with the Health and Safety of all participants in mind; children and members of staff.

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 are developed with reference to this act and safeguarding practices.

Forest School Staff

Lucy Perry – Forest School Leader (Class Teacher)

Forest School Practitioner Level 3

Beckany Morriss – Forest School Leader

Forest School Practitioner Level 3

First Aid

Forest School rules

- *Treat every bug and living thing with care, this includes plants.
- * No sticks to be raised above your shoulder, sticks are not to be thrown or used to hurt anyone.
- * Do not leave the site unless with an adult, never cross the blue line boundary.
- * Wash or wipe your hands before eating. Don't put your hands in your mouth.
- * Put things back so that the forest stays tidy and the animals are safe.
- * Be kind to each other, share and take turns.
- * Always listen to a grown up.
- * Never eat anything you find in the forest.
- * If you hear a whistle, stop what you are doing straight away and listen.

Forest School Procedures

Daily Site Risk/Benefit Assessment

Forest school sessions are run on the school site. Before the site is used a risk/benefit assessment will be carried out by a Forest School Leader to ensure that there are no changes to the site which could cause harm. Following the daily site risk assessment the Forest School leader will carry out anything that is needed to make the site safe (e.g. remove any hazards, mark off any unsafe areas). At the same time they will consider specific circumstances which make it appropriate to cancel a Forest School session e.g. high winds.

Activity risk assessment

When planning activities for Forest School, any hazards associated with that activity that are at risk of causing harm and the benefits of the activity should be considered. These should be recorded on an activity risk/benefit assessment form with suitable control measures taken to control and minimise the risk. Due to the nature of Forest School the children may come up with a new activity during a session and therefore reasonable steps will be taken to ensure the activity is safe.

The risk/benefit assessments will be reviewed and updated if an incident occurs, there are changes to legislation and before a time period of 12 months has passed.

Health and Safety

When attending Forest School the leading practitioner is responsible for the safety of their group at all times. The Forest School staff aim to provide a healthy and safe environment for staff and children participating in Forest School activities. At all times staff will co-operate fully implementing the school's health and safety policies. The Forest School staff aim to do everything possible to make sure injuries do not occur to themselves or others.

Forest School will be run by a trained member of staff. Mrs Perry and Miss Morriss are qualified Level 3 Forest School leaders and Miss Morriss holds a relevant first aid qualification. All Forest School activities are fully risk/benefit assessed by Forest School practitioners. These are available on request and will be stored on site.

Any details of medical conditions should be given to a Forest School practitioner. These should be readily available in case of an emergency.

All tools will be checked before use by the Forest School leaders. All tools and resources are left in locked storage until required for use at the beginning of the session. Sometimes children are encouraged to help carry and transport resources safely to the session.

Procedures continued...

First Aid

A first aid kit will be easily accessible on site and will be maintained by Forest School Leaders. There will always be a qualified first aider on site. If fire is used during the session a burns kit, fire blanket, water bucket and wet towels will be next to the fire at all times when it is alight. In addition to this a summary of medical information relating to each child and/or specific care plans are carried by the Forest School leader. The leader will also ensure mobile phone and walkie talkies are available in the area during each session. Any accidents will be recorded in an accident book located in the Forest School store. It is the responsibility of the Forest School leader and the senior management team to decide whether somebody requires hospitalisation.

Insurance

All Forest School activities are covered by the school's KCC public liability policy.

Toileting

Children will be encouraged to use the toilet before beginning a session. Should a child need to go to the toilet during a session they will use the nearest toilets in the year 1 corridor. If children are able they will escort themselves to the toilet.

Clothing

Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear should be worn at all times at Forest School. A list of suggested clothing will be sent to parents before the sessions and a selection of waterproof trousers and jackets are available on request. It should be expected that children/clothes will become muddy and they come to school in their Forest School clothes on their designated day.

Food and drink

Forest School leaders and practitioners will adhere to the school's policy and procedure.

Tools

Tools are an important part of Forest School and will be timetabled into sessions. Children will be expected to manage their own risks, within reason, while at Forest School. A safety talk will be given before any tool is used. Tools are used in a cornered off part of the woodland and have appropriate seating for tools. The tools will be maintained by leaders and will always be accounted for. Protective equipment is required for using tools and children will not be allowed to use tools without this.

Children will only use tools when the leader feels confident they can manage their own risk and stay safe. A risk/benefit assessment will be done on every tool used and tool activity plan. Each tool will be kept in the tool bag which is stored in the locked store.

All tools are modelled by the Forest School leader. If any tools are deemed unsafe for purpose, they are moved to the designate damaged tools area in the locked shed so they are not used.

Child protection and safeguarding

Forest School leaders and practitioners will adhere to the school's child protection and safeguarding policy and procedure. All staff have current DBS checks. Any concerns about a child's physical or mental well-being will be shared with our named Safeguarding Leaders and a green form/CPOMS will be filled in and passed onto them. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times.