

Forest Schools and Outdoor Learning – Procedures Policy

Date	Review Date	Coordinator	Nominated Governor
October 2019	October 2020	Ian Carson	Catherine Khan

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999
- Education & Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- School Premises (England) Regulations 2012

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (DfE)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years. Statutory Guidance for Organisations Who Work With and Support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (DfE) and (DoH)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children
- Race Disparity Audit - Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website (Cabinet Office)

We recognise the importance of outdoor learning/Forest School experience as we feel it makes a major contribution to children's development. We feel that children will be 'missing out on important learning opportunities if quality outdoor provision is not available to them.' (Margaret Edgington - 'The Great Outdoors')

In order for all children to take part in activities and to fully experience outdoor learning/Forest School we must have in place effective safety procedures.

We recognise our responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and will take all reasonably practicable steps to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions (on the school premises and during school-sponsored activities), equipment and systems of work for all our pupils, school personnel and visitors to the school.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children as the safety and protection of children is of paramount importance to everyone in this school. We work hard to create a culture of vigilance and at all times we will ensure what is best in the interests of all children.

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We recognise that the safety and protection of pupils is the responsibility of all school personnel and volunteers as they are in a unique position to notice injuries, marks or bruises when children are undertaking certain activities which might indicate a child has been abused. We believe that we must report and investigate all injuries for the safety and protection of the children in our care.

We wish to work closely with the School Council and to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We all have a responsibility to ensure equality permeates in to all aspects of school life and that everyone is treated equally irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We want everyone connected with this school to feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

We acknowledge the findings of the Race Disparity Audit that clearly shows how people of different ethnicities are treated across the public services of health, education, employment and the criminal justice system.

The educational section of the audit that covers: differences by region; attainment and economic disadvantage; exclusions and abuse; and destinations, has a significant importance for the strategic planning of this school.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aims

- To have in place effective procedures to ensure the safety of children when experiencing outdoor and Forest School activities.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.
- To work with other schools and the local authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body has:

- appointed a member of staff to be the Forest School leader;
- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel and stakeholders are aware of and comply with this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring full compliance with all statutory responsibilities;
- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;

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- nominated a designated Equalities governor to ensure that appropriate action will be taken to deal with all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;
- the responsibility of involving the School Council in:
 - determining this policy with the Governing Body;
 - discussing improvements to this policy during the school year;
 - organising surveys to gauge the thoughts of all pupils;
 - reviewing the effectiveness of this policy with the Governing Body
- nominated a link governor to:
 - visit the school regularly;
 - work closely with the Headteacher and the coordinator;
 - ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;
 - ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
 - attend training related to this policy;
 - report to the Governing Body every term.
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- work in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- ensure risk assessments are:
 - in place and cover all aspects of this policy;
 - accurate and suitable;
 - reviewed annually;
 - easily available for all school personnel.
- ensure good practice is shared throughout the school;
- work closely with the link governor and coordinator;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:
 - monitoring learning and teaching through observing lessons

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- monitoring planning and assessment
- speaking with pupils, school personnel, parents and governors
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by speaking with pupils, school personnel, parents and governors;
- celebrate the effort, success and achievements of pupils and school personnel;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

Health and Safety

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- the school Health and Safety policy is adhered to;
- all other linked policies and procedures are adhered to and are available to all Forest School personnel;
- all risk assessments are in place and up to date;
- all Forest School personnel and volunteers have received the relevant Forest School training such as health and safety, first aid and child protection and safeguarding;
- all accidents are investigated and reported;
- the legal adult : child ratio is maintained;
- all tools and safety equipment is maintained and safe to use;
- first aid equipment is in place and adequately maintained;
- suitable clothing and appropriate footwear are worn at all times;
- sunscreen and hats are worn during hot weather.

Risk Assessments

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- all risk assessments have been undertaken and are up to date.

Site Security (See separate, specific policy)

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- that the outdoor learning area / Forest School area is checked before each session;
- children must be told never to approach an unknown person or animal in the outdoor learning area / Forest School;
- school personnel are trained in dealing with strangers and dogs on site.

Emergency Procedures (See separate, specific policy)

The Forest School leader will:

- deal with all emergencies;
- ensure first aid is immediately administered to a casualty;
- immediately inform the Headteacher if further medical treatment is required;
- carry a school mobile at all times;
- ensure parents are informed if first aid has been administered to their child;

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- ensure parents are immediately contacted if their child has received a head injury;
- ask parents or a nominated person to come to school and check their child;
- log and report any incident.

First Aid (See separate, specific policy)

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- all school personnel have received the appropriate first aid training;
- first aid equipment is always present at all sessions;
- first aid equipment is in good supply and checked before each session.

Toilet Facilities

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- all children use the bathroom before beginning any outdoor session;
- no child is denied the use of the toilet;
- hand washing facilities are in place.

Fire Safety (See separate, specific policy)

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- all campfires are lit in fire pits in designated areas;
- all campfires are not left unattended;
- all Forest School personnel are aware of this;
- all campfires are enclosed by large stones;
- Forest School personnel are trained to lay a variety of fires namely, a Criss-cross fire, a Long Log fire or an Indian Fire;
- Forest School personnel are only permitted to light fires;
- fires are lit only using cotton wool, petroleum jelly and a strike stick;
- flammable liquids are not used in the fire lighting process;
- all sticks and logs must be placed and not thrown onto the fire;
- a fire bucket containing at least five litres of water and a damp cloth must be at hand during all fire lighting sessions;
- all fires must be extinguished with water at the end of an activity session;
- that large accumulations of potash must be dispersed throughout the Forest School area;
- storm kettles are supervised by adults;
- that when a campfire is in use children must have permission from an adult to gain access to the area;
- seating logs are placed at least 1.5 metres from the fire pit;
- children walk to their seating positions;
- children sit on the logs when permission has been given;
- children sit with their legs drawn into the log and not outstretched;
- children remain seated until directed by an adult to move;
- children never cross the inner fire area but will leave by standing, stepping over the log and then walking around the outside of the seating area;

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- that when dealing with too much smoke everyone is advised to turn their head to one side, to place their hands across their face and close their eyes.

Eating and Drinking (see also, separate Disposal of Food policy)

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- children do not eat any fruit or berries found on site;
- children only eat or drink foods linked directly with a topic and prepared by school personnel;
- children may bring their own food or drink for mid morning breaks;
- the dietary needs and allergies of children are known by all school personnel.

Cooking (see also, separate Disposal of Food policy)

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- all equipment is thoroughly clean before all sessions;
- all food is kept in air tight containers;
- the dietary needs and allergies of children are known by all school personnel;
- children must wash their hands before handling food and drink;
- all equipment is washed at the end of a session;
- waste food is disposed of correctly.

Hand Tool Safety (see also separate, specific policy)

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- all hand tools (bow saws, bill hooks and penknives) are well maintained;
- all hand tools are securely stored;
- all hand tools must be inspected before each session;
- all Forest School personnel are trained to use hand tools;
- all children are trained to use them;
- rules are set out clearly at the beginning of each session;
- an adult to child ratio 1:2 is in place when using hand tools;
- an inventory is kept and all tools are checked after each session.

Outdoor Equipment

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- all outdoor equipment is checked before each session;
- repairs are carried out immediately;
- any equipment not deemed safe to use will be taken out of use until repaired;
- all outdoor equipment must be annually maintained.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

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We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- School Handbook/Prospectus;
- School website;
- Staff Handbook;
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops;
- School events;
- Meetings with school personnel;
- Written communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters;
- Annual report to parents;
- Headteacher reports to the Governing Body;
- Information displays in the main school entrance;
- **Text messages**
- **Email**

Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on induction which specifically covers:
 - All aspects of this policy
 - Health and Safety
 - Risk Assessment
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection
 - School Security
 - Intruders
 - Medical and First Aid
 - Supervision of Pupils
 - Pupil Discipline and Behaviour
 - Equal opportunities
 - Inclusion
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications.

Equality Impact Assessment

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Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor.


A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement.

Linked Policies

- Food
- Health and Safety
- Intruders
- Medical and First Aid
- Parental Involvement
- Pupil Discipline and Behaviour
- Risk Assessment
- Risk Management
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- School Security
- Supervision of Pupils
- Volunteer Helpers

See Appendices Documents section on Policies for Schools Website

- Frequency of Policy Monitoring
- Monitoring Implementation and Policy Effectiveness Action Plan
- Initial Equality Impact Assessment
- Policy Evaluation
- Policy Approval Form

Headteacher:	Catherine Khan 	Date:	21st October 2019
Chair of Governing Body:		Date:	