

Forest Schools and Outdoor Learning – Responsibilities Policy

Date	Review Date	Coordinator	Nominated Governor
September 2020	September 2021	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')

We aim to create an outdoor learning area which is stimulating, exciting, takes account of children's interests and is used throughout all year groups. We feel that an outdoor learning area has a positive impact on children's sense of wellbeing and helps all aspects of children's development.

We aim to develop in all children, independence, self-motivation, self-esteem and self-confidence while preparing them for lifelong learning. By developing an outdoor learning/Forest School experience programme we want children to take responsibility for their actions and that of others when they are faced with situations when risk management strategies have to be used.

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We want children wearing appropriate clothing to go out in all weathers and all seasons, exploring and experiencing the natural world through a range of practical activities.

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.

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.

Intent

- To develop a stimulating outdoor learning / Forest School area in order to further develop children's learning.
- To promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability.
- To teach respect and responsibility for the world around us.
- To be aware of conservation issues and to have respect for wildlife.
- To develop children's independence, ability to manage risk and encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning.
- 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.

Implementation

Forest School activities have been provided to children at Oakfield for the past five years. Initially activities were undertaken by Year 4 children and for the past 2 years all of KS2 children have participated in activities. In 2019 – 20 school year, it was planned for Forest School to be rolled out across both KS1 and KS2, with KS2 classes undertaking activities during either the Autumn or Spring terms and KS1 classes during the Summer term.

The introduction to KS1 was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, although some KS1 children of key workers were able to participate in Forest School activities as part of the school's lockdown provision.

All classes **currently undertake** approximately 12 sessions **of Forest school each year**. Classes are divided into two groups, one group working outside in the forest area and the other working **on forest school activities** inside the classroom. This is necessary to ensure the safe supervision of the activities provided and the sustainability of activities on the site. Children working in the classroom undertake activities that compliment activities and understanding developed outside and wherever possible curriculum activities in other subject areas. Art, Design, and Science themes are often covered, but other curriculum areas may also be covered. Discussions take place with year group teachers to find common ground. Outdoor and indoor sessions are provided on alternate weeks.

Long, medium, and short-term plans are provided as with all other subjects across the school. These are based around the progression targets that have been introduced this year. Previously, progression was promoted to match an individual needs but as Forest School has been offered to more Year groups the school has sought to formalize the process. Five key areas of the Forest School sessions have been identified along with the steps seen as appropriate to each year group, that **are** built upon in subsequent years. The progression model that has been adopted is based upon experience of the Forest School coordinator and programmes followed in other settings. It is an evolving model, which is likely to undergo further change.

Forest School has a focus on being pupil led. There needs to be flexibility in the planning to allow children to pursue their interests and planning being used **effectively** to scaffold their interests. In order for this to happen, a good understanding of practical skills and an ability to match or adapt activities to learner's interests is needed. For the outdoor sessions, weather also impacts planning, though we do endeavour to go out whatever the weather.

The Forest School setting and activities can quite easily facilitate the holistic development of children. The natural environment can in many ways provide limitless opportunities for development when visited repeatedly. Changing of seasons or even the daily weather patterns, for example, providing an endless changing canvas of opportunities. Careful planning **ensures** that opportunities are provided to support **the** holistic development of the child.

Impact

The progression areas provide a framework for assessment of activities. Like other areas of the school curriculum they are assessed as *'Beginning'*, *'Developing'* or *'Secure'* against the objective of that lesson. On completion of a topic, a judgement is made to decide if a child is *"Beginning"*, *"Developing"* or *"Secure"* for **that specific** area. The areas relate primarily to the outdoor sessions although indoor activities may complement them. In some case these tasks have a simple recognisable outcome, whereas for others, judgement may be made against a number of criteria. The teacher's professional judgement is therefore key to the assessment process in Forest School activities.

For indoor sessions, where they have a specific outcome related to another curriculum area then the teacher will make a professional judgement on how well a child has met their objective by deciding if a child is *'Beginning'*, *'Developing'* or *'Secure'* **against** each objective.

For children at Oakfield, Forest School provides chances to learn practical skills that there is often little opportunity to learn in formal school settings or even in the home. For tasks such as tool use, fire lighting or cooking there might be an element of managed risk. However, by giving children these opportunities they ultimately become better equipped to manage risk and as a result, have the opportunity, to develop their self-confidence.

Opportunities for reflection and to share experiences are provided and these help with the social and emotional development of participants. Group size plays an important role in this area, smaller groups allowing, eventually, more in-depth reflection to take place, and greater social interaction. Feedback is provided to class teachers, on an informal basis, on aspects of social and emotional development when behaviour of note is observed.

In addition to the above, at the end of each term, pupils complete a simple form providing feedback on the sessions they have completed to provide a 'pupil voice' for monitoring purposes.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body has:

- appointed a member of staff to be responsible for outdoor learning and the Forest School experience;
- identified members of staff who wish to be trained as Forest School Leaders
- 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 that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- 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;
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;

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- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- 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
 - monitoring planning and assessment
 - speaking with pupils, school personnel, parents and governors
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- celebrate the effort, success and achievements of pupils and school personnel;

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- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

Role of the Coordinator

The coordinator will:

- lead the development of this policy throughout the school;
- have the recognised Forest School qualification;
- be trained in outdoor learning / Forest School techniques, health and safety, risk management and first aid;
- undertake an audit of the outdoor space and develop a programme for outdoor learning and for the Forest Schools experience;
- ensure all activities are within each child's capabilities;
- ensure the outdoor area gives children the opportunity to:
 - develop their gross motor skills
 - investigate, explore, problem solve, to use their imagination creatively
- encourage children:
 - respect the outdoor environment
 - care for living things
 - use tools safely and appropriately
 - work independently and to collaborate with others
- develop a timetable so that all year groups are able to access the outdoor area regularly;
- create a positive environment with very effective standards of behaviour by promoting effective relationships;
- ensure suitable clothing and footwear are in place;
- ensure the supervision and security of all tools;
- have in place safe Forest School procedures;
- have in place emergency procedures;
- ensure risk assessments are:
 - in place and cover all aspects of this policy;
 - accurate and suitable;
 - reviewed annually;
 - easily available for all school personnel.
- work closely with the Headteacher and the nominated governor;
- provide guidance and support to all staff;
- provide training for all staff on induction and when the need arises regarding;
- keep up to date with new developments and resources;
- review and monitor;
- update procedures and policies when required;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

Role of School Personnel

School personnel will:

- comply with all aspects of this policy;
- be trained in first aid and health and safety procedures;
- assist with planning the programme for outdoor learning and for the Forest Schools experience;
- wear appropriate outdoor clothing;
- take an active role in all activities delegated to them by the Forest School leader;
- assist with any behavioural issues;
- ensure all equipment is safe to use;
- train children in health and safety procedures;
- train children in security issues;
- be aware of all associated risk assessments;
- report any accidents or hazards;
- be aware of all other linked policies;
- maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour within and outside school and not to undermine fundamental British values;
- implement the school's equalities policy and schemes;
- report and deal with all incidents of discrimination;
- attend appropriate training sessions on equality;
- report any concerns they have on any aspect of the school community.

Role of Pupils

Pupils will:

- be aware of and comply with this policy;
- take responsibility for their own safety and that of others;
- be polite and well behaved at all times;
- show consideration to others;
- talk to others without shouting and will use language which is neither abusive nor offensive;
- listen carefully to all instructions given by the teacher;
- ask for further help if they do not understand;
- learn to take pride in their work;
- produce work of a high standard;
- participate fully in all activities;
- participate in discussions concerning progress and attainment;
- treat others, their work and equipment with respect;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school;
- obey all health and safety regulations;
- wear correct footwear and outdoor clothing;
- liaise with the school council make suggestions about improving school behaviour;
- take part in questionnaires and surveys.

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will:

- be aware of and comply with this policy;
- work in partnership with the school;
- comply with this policy for the benefit of their children;
- be asked to take part periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school
- be encouraged to work as volunteers in the Forest School programme;
- as a Forest School volunteer:
 - be Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked before becoming a volunteer
 - undertake Forest School training
 - be familiar with guidelines, policies, risk assessments, health and safety and security procedures
 - wear an appropriate identification badge
 - never be in a one to one situation with a child
 - inform the coordinator when a child has misbehaved
 - not deal with any situation regarding a child's personal hygiene
 - not administer any medication to children
 - be actively involved with the wellbeing and safety of all children
 - promote the ethos of outdoor learning and the Forest School experience
 - be aware of all associated risk assessments;
- be asked to take part periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- ensure regular and punctual attendance;
- encourage effort and achievement;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school;
- ensure their children wear the correct outdoor clothing and footwear.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the School Handbook/Prospectus
- the school website
- the Staff Handbook
- meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- school events
- meetings with school personnel
- communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters
- reports such annual report to parents and Headteacher reports to the Governing Body
- information displays in the main school entrance

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
 - Pupil Behaviour and Discipline
 - Medical and First Aid
 - Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checked
 - Volunteer Helpers
 - Parental Involvement
 - 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

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

- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check
- Health and Safety
- Medical and First Aid
- Parental Involvement
- Volunteer Helpers
- Pupil Behaviour and Discipline

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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:	<i>lekhan</i>	Date:	
Chair of Governing Body:		Date:	