



Living by our Christian Values of

Peace  
Trust  
Love  
Hope  
Friendship



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# Forest School Handbook & Policies

## St Edward's CE Primary School

Approved by:	Governors	Date: 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2016
Committee:	Curriculum and Standards	Co-ordinator: Rebecca Elvins
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Rebecca Elvins  
Qualified Forest School Leader  
Forest School First Aid



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## FOREST SCHOOL HANDBOOK

### Introduction

Through Forest School and other environmentally-based initiatives, children attending St Edward's C.E. Primary School are able to develop a lifelong love and understanding of the natural environment, whilst developing the core purposes of the Forest School ethos, namely, development of self-esteem, confidence and social skills.

Through carefully planned activities, children from the EYs and KS1 take part in timetabled sessions of Forest School work each term which enable children to excel in all areas of their personal, academic and spiritual development.

The philosophy which underpins the Forest School movement is to encourage and inspire individuals of any age from 3 years upwards, and any groups, through mastery of small, achievable tasks in a woodland environment, to grow in confidence and independence so that they are able to develop a sense of self-worth. Children are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own actions, focusing on our core Christian values of; peace, love, hope, friendship and trust and in doing so, developing self-discipline, respect for themselves, others and the environment. Children will acquire new skills as they are ready for them so that activities can maintain a degree of challenge and excitement, whilst remaining safe and controlled.

At St Edward's C.E. Primary School, we operate our Forest School on the school grounds.

The freedom of the 'forest' allows the children the opportunity to experience remoteness and a realistic experience in which they are able to practise their skills and further develop their understanding of a woodland environment. Experience has shown Forest School to be inspirational, opinion changing and challenging. It raises expectations and develops insights into individual learning styles and schemas. It is personally and socially uplifting so laying the foundations for other learning. Unlike other forms of outdoor education which generally concentrate on team-building, challenging activities or competitiveness, the Forest School embraces an entirely different approach through the nurturing, support and development of the self-esteem of participants.

### Environmental Impact

Every activity carried out in the outdoors will have an impact on the immediate environment. We plan to keep this impact to a minimum. With two classes plus preschool participating in Forest School each week throughout the year, this issue will have to be managed rigorously.

The St Edward's Forest School is a small area of immature woodland in which most of the Forest School activities take place. The impact on this area has been significant already and without careful management, the area will deteriorate over time. To overcome this, the following safeguards and processes have been put in place:

Activities which require a low level of supervision from adults may take place in the wider school field area whenever possible: only more hazardous activities, (fire based work, cutting, whittling and sawing, etc) together with group meetings, discussions and evaluations will take place within the main area.



## **Forest School Procedures**

### **Prior to group's arrival on site**

- Forest School Leader to carry out visual risk assessment and prepare any materials needed, counting out and checking tools safely
- At the setting, children are checked for suitable clothing – Spare clothing must be packed
- Any relevant medical information and medication (for example inhaler) for those children attending is taken to the site.
- Check mobile phone and First Aid kit
- Children visit toilet
- Forest School Leader to provide additional adults with lesson plan

### **On arrival at the site**

- Head count of children
- Define boundaries for the activities
- Confirm safety procedures for the location and activities
- Mixture of adult-initiated and child-initiated activities
- Snack time to include feedback time
- Check site is tidy and count tools
- Head count of children
- Return to setting

### **On return to setting**

- Children get changed and wash hands
- Appropriate reports and evaluations are completed

## **Policy Documents**

The following policies are the minimum requirements for the safe running of Forest School activities. They are in addition to the main school policies and do not replace them. All members of staff and volunteer helpers have a duty to follow these policies and should be familiar with their contents. A sheet is provided in the Master Handbook where volunteers must sign to state they have read the Handbook, including all policies and risk assessments.

Policies located in the handbook are as follows:

Emergency Procedures

Lost Child Policy

Behaviour

Clothing Policy

Eating Policy

Equal Opportunities at Forest School

Fire Safety

Hand Tool Safety

Health and Safety (Forest School Addendum)

Risk Assessment



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Toileting  
Volunteer Helpers (Forest School Version)



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## Forest School Emergency Procedures Policy

All participants will be briefed in what to do in case of emergency. A whistle will be blown as a signal to stop what you are doing, gather with a member of staff, be silent and wait for instructions. The Forest School Leader will assess the situation, the nature and extent of the injury/accident. They will ensure that the rest of the group are safe from danger and are adequately supervised. They will attend to the casualty, giving first aid of necessary. An incident report will be completed later. In case of injury.

If anyone sustains an injury or illness which cannot be treated by first aid on site and requires medical assistance:

- In serious cases, 999 should be dialled using a mobile phone carried by the Forest School Leader and then the school will be notified. The school will be responsible for notifying the parent.
- The rest of the group will be supervised away from the incident and if in danger, will be moved to safety.
- One member of the staff will meet the ambulance at the site entrance and direct the crew to the incident site.
- If the injured child is taken to hospital, one member of staff will go with them and the child's parent will be updated about the situation by the staff remaining at school.
- In minor cases, the Forest School Leader will arrange to contact the parent of the injured child so they can be collected and taken to the hospital, doctor or home.

## Emergency Contact Numbers

Ambulance: 999

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital: 01743 261000

St Edward's C.E. Primary School: 01742 718462

St Edward's C.E. Primary School Mobile:

## Requesting attendance by Emergency Services

Dial 999 and ask for the emergency service. Be ready with the following information:

1. Telephone number (mobile number if call is made on a mobile – see above)
2. Details of your location

St Edward's C.E. Primary School, Church Road, Dorrington, Shrewsbury SY5 7JL

Vehicular access following brown finger signs from main A and B roads

Tel. 01742 718462

3. A brief description of the problem (for example, if you are requesting an ambulance, you will need to describe the symptoms of the person who is injured/ill)

4. State that the crew will be met by \_\_\_\_\_ at the entrance to the location to the site.

Speak clearly and slowly and be ready to repeat the information if asked.

## Qualified Forest School Leader

### Forest School First Aid

Rebecca Elvins

### Equipment

The Forest School Leader will take the following equipment for emergencies:



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- Children's medical details
- Necessary medication for example inhaler
- School contact number
- Emergency procedure details
- Mobile phone
- First Aid Kit
- Water
- Flask of hot drink (in colder seasons)
- Tissues
- Sick bucket
- Survival bag/blanket
- Spare clothes
- Non-alcoholic wipes



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## **Forest School Lost Child Policy**

St Edward's Primary School Forest School's overarching priority in everything it sets out to achieve is to keep all children safe. If it is discovered that a child is missing from the group, the situation will be taken very seriously from the outset and the following emergency procedure will be implemented:

1. The Forest School Leader shall be informed immediately.
2. Activity for the rest of the group shall be suspended in order that a member of staff, the Forest School Leader if appropriate, may be released to conduct a search which shall last no more than five minutes.
3. The remaining children will be given a low risk activity to complete, within the main area by the remaining adult/s, being mindful not to increase anxiety of the group.
4. If, after the five minute search, the child has not been located, the Forest School Leader will inform the school office. The school office will alert the police and contact the child's parents and inform them of the situation.
6. Staff should corroborate details of the situation, including last known position of the missing child and any timings. A written account of all events, times and contacts will be kept.

### **Routine Procedures**

- Any relevant medical information is taken to site and a copy left with the school office.
- Carry out regular head counts particularly when re-grouping.
- When walking to the site adults should be spread out – One at front and one at back (Do not allow too big a gap to appear).
- Children should be closed supervised.



## **Forest School Behaviour Policy**

St Edward's C.E. Primary School Forest School aims to:

- Build self-esteem, independence, motivation to learn whilst always maintaining a safe environment
- Promote awareness, respect and care for other individuals and for the natural environment
- Reinforce collaborative behaviour
- Develop continuity of expectations and of approach to behaviour management both inside and outside St Edward's C.E. Primary School
- Develop awareness of acceptable behaviour and responsible behaviour in an outdoor environment
- Develop in both children and adults a pride in their achievements.
- In order that these aims are achieved, certain standards of behaviour must be sustained and reinforced as a continuum of expectations within conventional school time.

### **The Role of the Forest School Leader**

The Forest School Leader will:

- Create a positive environment which encourages and reinforces caring, nurturing and acceptable behaviour towards one another, the environment and equipment
- Promote effective relationships in which all are accepted, valued and treated equally
- Be mindful of the need to maintain safety at all times
- Establish clearly defined standards of behaviour
- Provide a positive role model for all children and volunteers
- Involve school staff, parents, children and outside agencies in the establishment of acceptable standards of behaviour
- Place the needs of the children, including needs linked to their preferred learning styles, social and behavioural needs at the centre of the Forest School curriculum to maximise individual success and raise self-esteem.
- Give verbal praise to children demonstrating good work, good behaviour, cooperation and good group work.

### **The Role of the Children**

The children, to the best of their abilities and with or without support will:

- Listen carefully and respond to instructions and requests, especially those concerning safety
- Develop and maintain an acceptable attitude towards one another, the environment and all equipment

### **Rewards**

Rewards given at Forest School will feed into the conventional school's rewards system.





## Sanctions

Where sanctions need to be given, the Forest School Leader will ensure the following steps are adhered to:

1. The Forest School Leader or accompanying member of staff will try to re-engage the child in the first instance
2. A verbal warning will be given by the Forest School Leader or accompanying member of staff by taking the child to one side and reminding them of the importance of acceptable behaviour.
3. The children will be given time out from the activity. They will be moved away from the activity to a designated area (if within the on-site area, to the fire square seating logs; if in off-site location, to the base of a tree).
4. If three time-outs are given in one session, the child will miss the next Forest School session and a letter will be sent home to the child's parents/carers.

However, if the child's actions are placing the group or an individual at risk, the child will be dealt with in the following manner:

- The child will be escorted back into school to work in another classroom.
- In such cases a letter will be sent home to parents explaining the situation.
- Where the behaviour is deemed to have been very unsafe, the child will be excluded from the next Forest School session and sent to another classroom with work to get on with.
- If behaviour is deemed to have been less severe, the child will follow the school's behaviour policy and miss play time the next school day.



## **Forest School Clothing Policy**

It is of vital importance that children are dressed appropriately for the Forest School sessions they attend. Wearing the correct clothing helps to ensure that the children's health, safety, wellbeing and enjoyment are assured.

### **Cold Weather Kit:**

Wellies or other waterproof boots /Sensible walking shoes that are preferably waterproof

Warm socks

Warm under garments (thermal is the best)

Hard wearing trousers

Snug long sleeved T/shirt

Sweat shirt/jumper

Good winter coat

Full wet weather gear, coat and trousers

Hat

Gloves

Change of clothes

Bottle of water

### **Warm Weather Kit:**

Wellies or other waterproof boots /Sensible sturdy close toed shoes

Socks

Light weight trousers

Light weight long sleeved T/shirt

T/shirt

Full waterproofs (Jacket and trousers)

Sun hat

Change of clothes

Sun cream protection (Applied prior to coming to school)

Bottle of water



## Forest School Eating Policy

St Edward's C.E. Primary School Forest School recognises that raising awareness of the woodland environment increases children's interest in edible berries and fruits which may be found outside. However, there is no safe way of ensuring that children will always eat correct berries and/or fruit, or that appropriate berries and/or fruit will be clean. There is also the possibility that by promoting the correct ingestion of berries and/or fruit in Forest School sessions may lead to incorrect identification by children when out of school. With these considerations in mind, St Edward's C.E. Primary School Forest School adopts the following Policy on the eating of food during Forest School sessions:

1. Forest School sessions on-site (i.e. those lasting a maximum of 2 hours) will adopt a nil-by-mouth policy with the following exceptions:
  - a. Hot drinks made for the group, from commercially available products such as hot chocolate
  - b. Drinks and foods which have been made during classroom time or have been cooked during session under the supervision of an adult. In such cases, the Forest School Leader will be responsible for checking that no member of the group has any listed allergy to any of the products; if they have, the Forest School Leader will use their discretion as to whether a substitute product or different activity will be most appropriate.
  
2. Children will be taught, at an age appropriate time, reasons why berries and/or fruit from the woodland may not be eaten during Forest School sessions. They will be reassured that fruit from the woodland can be safe to eat, but can equally be dangerous and that adult (i.e. parent) supervision is very important in ensuring only the correct berries are eaten.



## Forest School Equal Opportunities Policy

There are two strands to the Equal Opportunities Policy: one concerns children and the other concerns staffing and recruitment issues.

This school adopts the Shropshire County Council guidelines for recruitment and selection and for Equal opportunities for staff

### 1. Statements of Principle

- Discrimination on the basis of colour, culture, origin, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable in this school.
- Every child and teacher will endeavour to further this objective by personally contributing towards a happy and caring environment and by showing respect for, and appreciation of; each other as individuals.
- All staff will practice an equal opportunities philosophy.
- The school acknowledges the complexity of British society and recognises that it would be failing the children if it did not prepare them for their integral part in society.
- The school is committed to emphasising the common elements and values of our multiple cultures rather than highlighting conflicting areas.
- This school will encourage involvement of the wider community in developing equal opportunities education.

The primary objective of this school will therefore be to educate, develop and prepare all our children, whatever their sex, religion, colour, culture, origin or ability, for life in Britain.

### 2. Aims of the Policy

We see our first task as equipping children with awareness of an increasingly diverse society and of presenting the world as it is and as we would like it to be. On these foundations children will develop their own attitudes to a pluralistic society. In addition we aim to:

- Contribute towards raising self-esteem.
- Allow equal access for all children to all aspects of the curriculum
- Challenge negative stereotypes
- Promote positive attitudes to gender equality

### 3. Practice

Our school aims and ethos support the idea of equality of opportunity for all; all staff are aware of the main issues. Equal opportunities practice in the school affects children, staff, governors and parents.

Everyone will be influenced by:

- The day to day organisation of school life
- The values and expectations that staff and children bring with them.
- The ways in which our school encourages children, staff and parents to relate to each other.
- The content and delivery of the whole curriculum.
- The way in which teachers and children learn.
- The way in which the Behaviour Policy is applied with fairness and consistency to all children.

3.1 Differentiation: We recognise the need to maximise the abilities of all children including the more able as well as children who are catered for under the special needs policy. Staff will consider the particular needs if any such children in their management of a differentiated curriculum.



3.2 Extra-curricular: All children are offered the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities,

3.3 Awareness: As few children from ethnic minorities attend our school it is important to develop understanding and tolerance of people from different races and cultures.

3.4 Admission: The school follows the County Council's Admissions Policy, which does not permit sex, race, religion, colour or ability to be used as criteria for admission.

3.5 Registration: Children's names should be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced. Names will be recorded on registers in order of year group and not separated by gender.

3.6 Discrimination: All forms of discrimination by any person within the school are to be treated seriously. A note must be kept of such incidents wherever they take place on the school site. It should always be made clear to any offenders that such behaviour is unacceptable. If there are repeated incidents of discrimination then the head teacher should be informed and informing parents should be considered.

Racist symbols, badges and insignias on the body, jewellery, clothing and bags are forbidden in school.

3.7 Staff: In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria. All staff should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes.

3.8 The Curriculum: All children must have access to the school's curriculum. Staff must be constantly aware that their own expectations affect the achievement, behaviour and status of each child. The curriculum must be balanced, objective and sensitive.

3.9 Language: The school views linguistic diversity positively and staff should be aware of the language and dialect spoken by children and their families. We will actively discourage racist, sexist or derogatory language or actions amongst all members of the school community, including governors, staff, children and parents. Children and staff must feel that their language or dialect is valued. They should therefore be allowed to use their home language in school, but never to exclude others. The school welcomes the support of the county's English as an Additional Language (EAL) team both in raising general awareness and in supporting individuals whose first language is not English.

The school's aim is to provide for all children according to their needs, irrespective of sex, ability or ethnic origins. Whenever possible, staff must ensure that the resources used in all curriculum areas are multicultural and non-sexist, containing positive images of all groups. Variety should be evident in the morals, stories and information offered to children. Children should have access to accurate information about similarities and differences between cultural groups.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The head teacher will monitor practice and together with the other staff will endeavour to ensure that resources support our policy. We will monitor how well we are meeting current legal requirements.



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## **Forest School – Fire Safety Policy**

Campfires and the use of storm kettles are an important part of Forest School and are used in many sessions. St Edward's C.E. Primary School aims to ensure that all children and adults participating in Forest School sessions with fires will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

### **Location**

- Only previously agreed areas will be used for campfires.
- Campfire areas are enclosed by logs or large stones to prevent the spread of fire.

### **Positioning of Children and Adults**

- Fire areas are surrounded by seating logs at least 1.5 metres from the fire pit.
- When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area without permission.
- When allowed to access the campfire, children must walk around the outside of the seating logs and wait for permission to step over. Once permission has been given, they must sit, ensuring legs are drawn into the log and not outstretched.
- Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.
- Children will be taught how to change seats by standing, stepping over the log and then walking around the outside of the seating area. They must never cross the inner area.
- Long sleeves and trousers must always be worn.
- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire.
- Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the children: they are advised to turn their head to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes and count to 30 (or ask an adult/peer to count for them)
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.
- If wind direction is variable, the leader should rearrange the seating if at all possible.

### **Safety and Responsibility**

- Only adults are permitted to light fires, unless children are under direct supervision. This will usually be the Forest School Leader.
- Fires are lit using cotton wool/natural kindling, and a strike stick or safety matches
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- No plastics are to be burnt.
- If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision.
- Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire.

### **Extinguishing**

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
- Forest School Leaders should ensure that any large remains of wood, especially when using a long log fire, are separated from one another.



- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.
- Large build ups of potash, from several fires, need to be dispersed. This must only be done when it has totally cooled, preferably the following day. It should be finely scattered throughout the woodland to enable natural decomposition.



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## Forest School Hand Tool Safety Policy

Using small hand tools is an important part of Forest School as it enables children to develop new, practical skills that help them develop self-confidence. Hand tools are to be maintained in good order by the Forest School Leader(s) and will be inspected before each session to ensure safety. Children and adults will be taught how to handle tools properly and to treat them with respect. Whilst using hand tools the staff to child ratio is increased. This will be achieved by following these guidelines:

- Staff to child ratio 1:2 for bow saws, bill hooks and knives and for KS1 children, all hand tool work
- Staff to child ratio 1:8 (KS2) with hacksaws and peelers
- Tools will be kept in the Forest School tool box and only removed by the Forest School staff.
- Penknives must be opened and closed by Forest School staff, TAs or volunteers.
- Running with tools is prohibited.
- Pointing with tools is prohibited.
- Children will lose permission to use tools if the guidelines are not followed.
- Bill hooks should not be swung or used with gloved hands.
- Bow saws must have a blade guard on them when not in use. Blade guards to be removed and put back only by Forest School staff, TAs or volunteers until children have been shown how to do this properly and safely
- Wood being sawn must be supported on a saw horse or a natural sawing break – hands must be kept away from the blade.
- When using penknives to whittle, this must be done at the side of, and downwards of the body
- All tools must be counted back into the tool box at the end of the session
- Volunteer helpers must receive basic training on the use of individual hand tools before being allowed to use them with children.

Further rules are applied to individual hand tools:

### Potato Peelers

- Must be used sitting down
- Always use the potato peeler away from the body

### Penknives

- Children will be taught how to use a penknife safely
- Always sit down when using a penknife with plenty of room around your body
- Penknives will be opened away from the body and the lock will be on
- Penknives will be used away from the body
- Penknives will be closed and locked away when not in use

### Bow Saw

- Children will be taught how to safely use a bow saw
- A guard will be in place when not in use
- Wood being sawn must be supported by a saw horse or suitable natural sawing break and hands must be kept away from the blade
- A glove must be worn on the non-sawing hand





- Child should hold the handle on the saw
- Child should be pushing the saw

### **Bill Hook**

- Children will be taught how to safely use a bill hook
- No gloves to be worn when using a bill hook
- If the bill hook is put down or stored it will be stored in a cover
- The bill hook will always be used away from the body

### **Trowels**

- Trowels can be used for digging in the designated digging area and are not to be transported to other areas
- Children will be taught how to use them safely



## Forest School Health and Safety Policy

*The Forest School Health and Safety Policy is an addendum to the School's Health and Safety Policy and does not change the school's position on health and safety matters set out in the original document.*

In order that Forest School sessions may be run safely, the Forest School Leader will:

- Have regard to the Local Authority guidance regarding Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-site Activities
- Ensure that at least one appropriately qualified first aider is on-site
- Establish and maintain a safe and healthy environment by:
  - Establishing, maintaining and evaluating appropriate procedures, policies and risk assessments, as set out in the Handbook.
  - Ensure the provision of sufficient information and instruction for all adults so that they can contribute to their own health and safety and that of the children they are working with.
  - Establish and be utterly familiar with, all emergency procedures including the reporting and recording of procedure.
  - Ensure that risk assessments and pre-site visits take place before children are permitted on to the site. Risk assessments will be held in the master Forest School file, located in the Head Teacher's office.
  - Ensure alternative plans are in place should a planned activity be compromised by health and safety concerns
  - Ensure that Forest School Volunteer Helpers are aware of their responsibilities towards the children.
  - Investigate any accidents and use information gathered to inform future risk assessment and policy making.
  - Teach all members of the party to maintain their own and others health and safety by involving them in the risk assessment process at appropriate opportunities.
  - Maintain the legal adult-child ratio
  - Ensure that safety equipment is in good working order and is used appropriately
- Forest School Leaders assume responsibility for the maintenance of the First Aid Kit, Kit Bag(s) and any tools brought into the Forest School area.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Forest School Leader:

- To plan and lead all Forest School activities
- To ensure that planned activities are within the capabilities of the children taking part, amending plans to provide an inclusive curriculum in its broadest sense.
- To take responsibility for discipline during Forest School sessions (see Behaviour Policy)
- To have an up to date First Aid qualification
- To ensure that inhalers and epipens are carried in identifiable containers during forest school sessions
- To ensure that all participants follow the Clothing Policy
- To carry out daily risk assessments as described in the Risk Assessment Policy
- To assist with the toileting of children if they request help



- To ensure all Forest School policies are regularly reviewed and that review is informed by observations and developing knowledge of the Forest School setting.

### **Responsibilities of Accompanying Staff and Forest School Volunteer Helpers**

- To take an active role in Forest School activities and assist with any discipline issues within the group (see Behaviour Policy)
- To assist with the Forest School Leader in ensuring equipment meets safety standards and to report any concerns about the state of equipment immediately
- To assist the Forest School Leader in teaching children to maintain their own and others' health and safety
- To report accidents or hazards to the Forest School Leader immediately
- To take responsibility for making themselves aware of safety issues, such as the whereabouts of the first aid kit
- To provide their own suitable outdoor clothing and footwear

### **Responsibilities of the Children**

- To take personal responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety of others
- To listen to and follow safety information given to them
- To bring appropriate clothing and footwear to Forest School sessions



## Forest School Risk Assessment Policy

St Edward's C.E. Primary School Forest School aims to develop children's self-esteem, independence and motivation to learn in a safe environment. In order that these aims can be met, the Forest School Leader will:

- Consistently apply the five-step approach to risk assessment for all Forest School sites and activities:
  1. Look for hazards
  2. Decide who may be harmed and how
  3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing controls are adequate or whether more should be done. Forest School activities may only proceed if the remaining risk is deemed to be low
  4. Record findings, including daily amendments to standing risk assessments based on site visits or observations
  5. Review assessments on a regular basis (or if circumstances change which may affect the rigour of the assessment) and revise if necessary
- Carry out full risk assessments on each site where Forest School activities will take place. These will be filed in the Master Forest School Handbook located in the Headteacher's office. Daily pre-visit checks will be carried out by the Forest School Leader on sites to be used prior to a day's activity, as near to the start of the activity as is reasonably practical.
- Move activities indoors if, in the opinion of the Forest School Leader, weather conditions such as high winds or the threat/occurrence of electrical storms make work outdoors unsafe.
- Note risks related to a specific activity on the appropriate lesson plan.
- Inform staff, volunteers and children of potential hazards and methods of working in order to minimise their risk further.
- Involve staff, volunteers and children in risk assessment, as appropriate, as part of learning.
- Ensure legal guidelines regarding off-site activities, such as adequate insurance and parental permission are met.
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers and children are aware of the emergency procedures for either site.
- Be responsible for teaching children adequate skills in order to keep themselves safe, particularly in relation to the use of hand tools and fire.
- Ensure children and adults will have access to drinking water during sessions



## **Forest School Toileting Policy**

Before a Forest School session, children will be given the opportunity to go to the toilet. Whilst working on-site, children will be allowed back into school if the toilet is needed. Children with special needs, including behavioural needs, who have an attached teaching assistant, will be escorted to and from the toilet.



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## **Forest School Volunteers Policy**

### **Rationale**

We welcome parents and helpers into school and value their input into the education and experiences of our children. Parents and other helpers have a wealth of strengths that they can bring to the classroom. We want to make them feel welcome in our school and valued in whatever they can offer. All doors are open to parents (in this Policy, the term Parents encompasses grandparents, relatives and other helpers from the community)

### **Purpose**

1. To welcome parents into school and give them the opportunity to contribute to the lives of the children
2. To ensure that parents are not put in positions of responsibility or supervision that are unsuitable for them
3. To ensure the safety of the children when working with different adults
4. To allow parents to assist staff in their day to day running of the classroom
5. To ensure that appropriate supervision of parents in school takes place
6. To promote the schools open door policy to parents and the larger community

### **Guidelines**

All parents should be treated the same in whatever classroom they are working in and staff should feel that parents are benefiting the children's education. This policy clarifies the different roles parents can undertake and the safety measures that should be adhered to ensure the well-being of all the children in the school.

### **Conclusion**

The role of parents is very important in our school. It is positive that our school is open to parents and that parents feel they can offer something to the children. Organising parents in the classroom and being clear about their role and work will benefit the children and give all adults a clear sense of purpose of direction. The more support the children have while they are in school can only give them great benefits.

### **Forest School Volunteers**

Whilst the role of a Forest School Volunteer (FSV) and their use to support learning shares all of the points covered above, the school recognises that responsibilities placed on FSVs in the outdoor environment are often more rigorous than might be found at other times. It is important that FSVs understand that they cannot be passive adults, effectively further children in the group, but that they have a responsibility under the guidance and direction of the Forest School Leader to ensure guidelines, policies, risk assessments and procedures are followed consistently all the time. They should be reassured that ultimate responsibility rests with the Forest School Leader but that by becoming a FSV, there will be an expectation for them to contribute actively in the wellbeing and safety of the group.



## **Forest School Volunteer Guidelines Policy**

When parents offer to help in forest school, forest school staff may wish to consult this policy document for guidance.

### **Discussion**

The Forest School Leader will arrange to meet with the parent at a mutually convenient time to discuss what they may be expected to do in the Forest School. Generally, duties will include the following activities;

- Becoming familiar with the Forest School Handbook and all procedures contained within it
- Take part in pre-session briefings from the Forest School Leader
- Assisting groups with tasks such as using saws, knives or bill hooks
- Promoting the ethos of forest school to raise self-esteem and confidence as an overarching aim
- Assist in monitoring children when walking to and from Forest School activities
- Assisting children with their kit, including waterproofs.

Parents will only be considered Forest School Volunteer (FSVs) when they have read and signed that they agree to policies and procedures contained within the Forest School Handbook.

### **Review and dialogue**

It is important that the FSV is comfortable in what they are doing, so they are encouraged to seek further advice or assistance from the Forest School Leader whenever instructions are unclear to them.

### **Police Checking (CRB)**

All Forest School Volunteer must be CRB checked before helping in Forest School. A full register of those who have been CRB checked is held in the Master handbook and maintained by the Forest School Leader.

CRB clearance of all helpers in school is good practice and one which we at St Edward's C.E. Primary School embrace. However, CRB checking DOES NOT mean that a FSV poses no threat to the well-being of our children. Even FSV who have had CRB clearance should be supervised appropriately. The Forest School Leader will introduce them to the group at the start of session briefing.

### **General guidelines for Forest School Volunteer**

All FSVs should sign in at the office upon arrival before going into class. They must get a School ID tag and wear it visibly over outdoor clothing. FSVs must be told by the Forest School Leader never to allow themselves to be in a one to one situation with a child. FSVs should be told that disciplining the children must take place within the ethos of Forest School. This will be discussed at the initial briefing session. If children behave poorly, they should seek the Forest School Leader's intervention immediately. FSVs should be told not to enter the children's toilets. If they feel there is a problem with a child when using the toilet, they must seek a member of staff to deal with the situation. FSVs should be told not to administer any medication to children including creams. This is the role of the first aid staff.

