

JOYDENS WOOD JUNIOR FOREST SCHOOL

What is Forest School?

Forest School is an exciting initiative that uses the outdoor environment to help all children learn. Through regular visits to Forest School, children are encouraged to develop independence, take risks, improve their decision making and raise their self-esteem through small achievable tasks. Sessions at Forest School are child-led to accommodate different learning styles and the adult's role is facilitative.

Originally, Forest School, an idea that came from Scandinavia, was developed for pre-school and early years settings. The concept was later adopted in the UK, initially in pre-school settings, but is now enjoyed by KS2 and KS3 children.

JOYDENS WOOD JUNIOR FOREST SCHOOL

Introduction to Joydens Wood Junior Forest School site

The Forest School was set up in 2013 and is located at the back of the smaller playground. The woodland area has been unused for some time, but is believed to have once been used as a nature area. There were already pathways through the woodland, if a little overgrown. In September 2012, 3 large trees were felled as they were too close to a neighbour's garden. The space created from the felled trees became the natural choice for 'base camp'. A tree surgeon came to saw the trunks of these trees into long logs in order to create the seating area in base camp.

The site is fenced on three sides and is open to the playground, therefore there are no 'stranger dangers' or bother from dogs as you would find in a public woodland. There are some fox holes and resident foxes.

How we will use the site?

Presently, one teacher is in the process of gaining her level 3 practitioner Forest School qualification. It is intended that other teachers will gain their qualifications in the future.

JOYDENS WOOD JUNIOR FOREST SCHOOL

Primarily, the trainee Forest School practitioner (level 3) will take her class for the first term. Her teaching assistant has attended the 'helpers' course, so has some understanding of the ethos of Forest School. The first sessions will include 28 year 4 pupils. During the first few sessions the children will be encouraged to explore the area, so that they can familiarise themselves and practise the Forest School rules. They will also discover the exciting opportunities that await them. The plan for subsequent sessions is for children to be encouraged to discover the flora and fauna that lives on the site. We may also make bug hotels etc.

The future 'big' plan is for all children in the school (280 children) to enjoy Forest School. They will enjoy Forest School sessions, learning bush craft skills; sessions can also be steered to support the learning that is taking place in the classrooms. An example of this could be making camps or mini settlements, whilst we pretend to be Romans or Saxons or make bomb shelters during the blitz.

Who will run Forest School?

Forest School is run by designated, trained staff. These staff are:

Mrs Deborah Boyle - Fully Qualified Class Teacher

Level 3 AEN diploma

Foundation Degree in Learning Support

First Class Honours Degree in Education Studies

PGCE 7-11 specialising in Design and Technology

Level 3 (OCN) Forest School Practitioner Course

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First Aid STA Level 2 Award in Paediatric First Aid

Mrs Helen Stock- Teaching Assistant

Level 2 Teaching Assistant Course

Forest School Helper Course

First Aid trained

Adult Helper Roles

On occasions other adults will accompany classes during Forest School sessions. These adults could be teachers, teaching assistants, parent helpers or volunteers. These helpers must familiarise themselves with the safety procedures and evacuation details. They must adhere to the Forest School rules. They should also be given certain tasks to ensure the smooth running of the session. They may be asked to support certain children or complete observation tasks on named children.

JOYDENS WOOD JUNIOR FOREST SCHOOL

Rules of Forest School:

- Look after your Forest school
- Do not pick anything growing
- Do not put your fingers or anything else in your mouth (no pick, no lick!)
- Stay within the boundary rope, we don't go over it or under it

The Countryside Code:

There are five sections of The Countryside Code dedicated to helping us learn how to respect, protect and enjoy the countryside:

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

FOREST SCHOOL ROUTINES

Procedures to be carried out before each session:

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- A through sweep of the site will be done before each session to check for any litter, glass, animal faeces, etc. any such items should be collected using plastic bags and disposable gloves.
- A written record will be kept of each sweep. This should state if any hazards were found and how they were dealt with.
- Trees will be checked for any broken or dead branches which may fall.
- A check of the weather conditions must be made. If it is unduly windy or a thunder storm is imminent or has commenced, then it is not advisable to carry out the Forest School session.

Session plan:

- Ensure all children have been to the toilet before leaving the premises
- Put on suitable clothing and wellies/boots
- Walk the area discussing things seen on the way, pointing out any hazards
- Discuss any safety issues
- Walk to base camp
- Sit down, discuss rules & any safety issues again
- Discuss activities and any safety issues arising
- If children have a drink/snack during the session, ensure that they clean their hands thoroughly first (either take out a bowl of soapy water or take wet wipes). Try not to allow them to return to school during the session
- During or at the end of the session allow children to discuss their activities and feedback
- Return to setting and change back into uniforms and change footwear

Procedures to be carried out at the end of each session:

- Clear everything away
- Make a note of any issue arising from the session (i.e. dangerous brambles or holes that need attention before next session)
- Remember to follow through with any classroom follow up

Health & Safety

Joydens Wood Junior School's Health & Safety Policy is attached and issues related to Forest School are highlighted.

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Safeguarding Children

Joydens Wood Junior School's Safeguarding Children and Missing Child Policies are attached and issues related to Forest School are highlighted.

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Equal Opportunities

Joydens Wood Junior School's Equal Opportunity Policy is attached and issues related to Forest School are highlighted.

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ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT LIST

- Register with emergency numbers/contact numbers
- Medical forms/lists
- Mobile phone
- Newspaper
- Matches
- Wet wipes
- Protective gloves
- Sun cream
- Plasters
- Bandages
- Scissors
- Water bottle with water for drinking/ washing
- Sleeping bag/survival bag
- Thermal wrap sheet
- Map of woodland area
- Pamphlet on hypothermia and first aid
- Container for inhalers, epipens etc.
- Carry bag for dirty/wet clothing

CLOTHING LIST

(For everyone)

- Woolly hat/sun hat

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- Gloves
- Jacket/waterproof coat
- Fleece/sweatshirt
- Long trousers
- Spare socks
- Stout shoes/wellies/boots
- An emergency change of clothes and a carrier bag for dirty/wet clothing

Forest School Medical Information Form

Child's full name	
Date of Birth	
Contact name & relationship to child	
Home address	
Phone numbers	
Doctor's name, surgery and telephone	

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numbers	
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Has your child had any of the following?

Illness	Comment (yes/no)	Medication needed (please specify)
Asthma/bronchitis		
Sight/hearing difficulties		
Heart condition		
Diabetes		
Epilepsy		
Eczema or Allergies: e.g. pollen, nuts, plants		
Has your child ever been stung by a wasp or a bee? If yes, please describe the reaction		
Date of last tetanus injection		

Signed:

Date:

Print name:

First Aid

The Forest School Practitioner will have first aid equipment in their kit and if a serious accident occurs, first aid can be administered on the Forest School site. A First Aid bucket will also be carried to the site. Minor injuries will be dealt with in the usual way on site or sent to the school office, due to the close proximity of the site.

Prior to commencement of Forest School, parents will be asked to complete a Forest School Medical Information Form listing medical information about their children. The Forest School practitioner will create a data base of medical needs, so that this is always easy to access prior to the Forest School sessions. All adults attending the sessions should be made aware of children with certain allergies or reactions to bites etc. Asthma pumps, piriton and epipens held in school for named children should be carried onto the Forest School site in case of need.

JOYDENS WOOD JUNIOR FOREST SCHOOL

Tree Hazards and Maintenance

Prior to each Forest School session, a safety sweep of the site should be actioned. The attached form should be completed as evidence and filed as proof in the Forest School Health and Safety folder. Any immediate dangers need to be dealt with prior to the session. If, however, the Forest School practitioner is unable to rectify the danger, the session may have to be cancelled and specialist professionals called in to deal with the issue.

Adherence to the Forest School Three Year Sustainability Woodland Management Plan will ensure that the site is looked after carefully and environmental and ecological issues are considered.

SAFETY SWEEP EVIDENCE

Before each Forest School session there will be a safety sweep of the Forest School site to look for and assess immediate risks. All safety sweeps will be recorded and filed by the Forest School Leader.

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Safety weeps will be recorded and stored in the H&S folder.

Date: **Time:** **Weather conditions:**

Name of Forest School leader:

Checklist	Yes/no	Comments
Fallen branches		
Low branches		
Protruding thorns		
Brambles/nettles		
Slippery areas		
Broken glass/needles		
Vandalism/intruders		
Weather effects		
Standing water		
Boundary line/fence		
Base camp		
Tool area roped off		
Emergency rucksack		
Equipment ready		
Spare clothes		

Other hazards identified:

Action taken:

RISK ASSESSMENT ON TOOLS

General rules for tool use:

- All tools must have an individual risk assessment in Health & Safety folder
- Ensure safe storage at school with nominated Forest School Leader access and responsibility
- Ensure safe storage and responsibility by Forest School Leader at the Forest School site
- Never walk around with tools
- Always make sure the tools are clean and sharp before using them
- When using tools with children it should only be with the Forest School Leader

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- When using tools you have a designated tool area where you and the children sit when using the tool

Penknife:

- Must be with the Forest School Leader
- Always sit down when using the penknife
- Ensure the penknife is closed and locked when not in use
- Open the penknife away from you sitting down with plenty of room around you
- Always use the penknife cutting away from your body
- Always ensure the children are supported when using the penknife on a one to one or one to two ratio dependant on age
- All penknives must be stored in a lockable box/tin

Bow Saw:

- Ensure guard is in place when not in use
- Must only be used with a Forest School Leader
- Always used in a designated tool area
- Use the Bow Saw with a saw horse where ever possible talking with the children about safety and the way you hold a Bow Saw is imperative
- Ensure safe storage and safe handling in Forest School

Fire Procedures

If there is a fire drill during a Forest School session, we **will** be able to hear the bell outside. The children know the sound of the drill bell and will walk out of the site and line up in the designated area in order to be counted. The lead practitioner will then unlock the gates (key code, down by the side of the school) and walk the children to the fire assembly point in the large playground. The children should assemble in their usual class lines to be registered.

JOYDENS WOOD JUNIOR FOREST SCHOOL

Major Incident Procedures

In the case of a serious accident or injury, the practitioner will blow a loud whistle. This indicates to all at Forest School that there is an emergency and that they need to assemble immediately at base camp. The Forest School leader will have her mobile phone to call for an ambulance or can access the school office to use the phone.

If an ambulance needs to be called, there is access to the Forest School site in two places, although the ambulance cannot drive onto the small school playground.

JOYDENS WOOD JUNIOR FOREST SCHOOL

Weather Policy

The only occasions that the Forest School site should not be used is when we experience high winds, torrential rain, blizzards or thunder storms. The site is sheltered and has lots of tree canopies to provide shade and shelter from strong sun and cold winds.

On occasions, a decision will be made that the site needs to be rested for a month or so, due to overuse. The paths may become too slippery, which could cause health and safety issues and when it gets really wet the natural vegetation could be threatened by too much 'traffic'. These ecological impacts are considered in the Forest School Three Year Sustainability Woodland Management Plan.

JOYDENS WOOD JUNIOR FOREST SCHOOL

Toileting

All children attending Forest School will be encouraged to go to the toilet prior to the session. Due to the close proximity of the boys and girls toilets, the children will have access to the toilets throughout the sessions if absolutely necessary.

Food and Drink

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Due to the proximity of the site, it will **not** be necessary to take snacks onto the site. Children will be encouraged to take water bottles and drink regularly.

On some occasions, hot chocolate may be offered to children with a biscuit, especially during very cold conditions. Parental permission regarding consumption of such beverages and snacks needs to be considered.