



St Luke's C.E. Primary School

Forest School Policy

Langport Avenue

Longsight

Manchester

M12 4N

Introduction

It is the mission of St Luke's Primary School to develop the full human potential of everyone at our school in an environment.

We have introduced Forest School provision at our school in order to help educate the whole child. This policy has been specifically written so that all parents, staff, volunteers and governors at St Luke's have a shared understanding of the Forest School ethos and its implementation at our school.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to provide an insight into the ethos of Forest School as operated at St Luke's.

Forest School builds on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risk, make choices and initiate learning for themselves. Our Forest School learning environment provides opportunities for children to:

- Develop self-esteem
- Develop self-confidence
- Form positive relationships with others
- Develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others
- Learn to cooperate and work with their peers and adults
- Develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety.
- Learn specific skills which link into the curriculum
- Develop knowledge and appreciation of the natural world and a forest environment.

St Luke's Forest School is about exploring and experiencing the natural world through practical activities. The children go out in all weathers, all year round, exploring and learning from the seasons and changes in the environment. Appropriate clothing will be worn. During high winds or lightening it will be considered unsafe to go into the woods. The children's interests along with the varied natural resources in our woodland are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development, all under the premise of 'play.'

Environmental Considerations and Conservation

One of the principles of our Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. The children are taught respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both children and adults are encouraged to respect their environment and to be aware of conservation issues of the woodland around them.

We aim to promote respect for wildlife and our woodland environment. This will be achieved partly through detailed long-term.

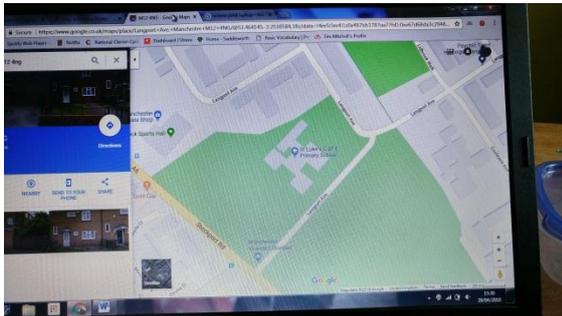
Health and Safety Considerations.

In the first instance please refer to St. Luke's Health and Safety Policy.

The health and safety of the adults and children is paramount at all times throughout any Forest School activity and session. Safe practice is reinforced through regular reminders. The Forest School programme provides children with opportunities to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own learning. Whilst being independent in their learning, they will develop early risk assessment strategies and understand that their actions have consequences. The Forest School Leaders will carry out risk assessments at the beginning of each term which will take account of seasonal changes. In addition a risk assessment will be undertaken before each session by the school Caretaker who will assess the area for any dangers.

The Forest School site at St. Luke's Primary School is situated on the school grounds

Grid Reference: SJ 86044 96416



For the safety and protection of all individuals – children, staff and volunteers - we ensure the following: Everyone involved in Forest School is briefed on health and safety and risk assessment of the site.

Staff and volunteers are made aware of the Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding incorporating Child Protection Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Disability Policy and Accessibility Plan.

This is undertaken as part of induction and orientation of all staff and volunteers. Staff and volunteers must undertake to adhere to the guidance contained within all these policies. Any concerns are reported to the Head Teacher or SENCO, the named Child Protection Officers, to ensure the school's child protection policy can then be followed.

The Forest School Leaders and other school staff delivering sessions all have an enhanced level CRB check. Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear must be worn at all times. During winter months pupils are expected to wear sturdy footwear or wellington boots, hats scarves, gloves and waterproof outerwear. Sunscreen and hats should be worn in the summer months.

Assessing and Reducing Risk at our Forest School

One of the reasons for introducing Forest School to St Luke's is a belief that children are sometimes overly and unnecessarily protected and cosseted from risks and that, ironically, this makes them less safe in the long run. At our Forest School we undertake a range of activities which contain a theoretical degree of risk. Through careful supervision, full training and good practice, we aim to ensure that accidents are avoided and that risks are reduced to manageable and acceptable levels. We have full written risk assessments in place for: Site Weather conditions and general welfare Group Individual Buildings and shelters Rope and String Fire Food Water Collecting natural materials Being off the ground Blindfolds Billhooks Saws Penknives and Potato peelers Mallets All these Risk Assessments can be found on the school server and in the Forest School section of the Risk Assessment Folder stored in the Headteacher's Office. Written Risk Assessments are the starting point for our safe practice and procedures in Forest School. They are constantly reviewed and regularly updated in order to reflect the safest practice possible at St Luke's.

Fire at Forest School

Please see separate document

Cooking and Eating

Cooking and Eating at Forest School Forest School Leaders and other adults are aware of the following when cooking and eating at Forest School: Open fire cooking is only permissible in the designated areas. The respect position should always be used when near the fire. Everyone should wash their hands before handling food and drink. All food is stored in appropriate containers. Only clean equipment is used. Any dietary requirements are noted and catered for. Food will be cooked correctly. All equipment and waste is cleared away.

Tools

Rules are set out clearly at the beginning of the tool use session. Leaders ensure that tool talks are given before any tools are used. Children are supervised at all times whilst using tools of any description. Inappropriate use of tools will not be tolerated and will result in immediate withdrawal from the task.

Dealing with strangers

The site is surrounded by a perimeter fence, keypad entry on gates and is secure by design. However, there is always the possibility of these measures being breached. The following procedures will be adopted: Children will be informed to never approach any person or animal (living or dead) within the forest or school grounds. Staff will look for dog/animal owner and ask for its removal.

If the dog is stray, the situation will be risk assessed and it may be determined by staff that children should be taken indoors until the dog is under control. Children will be told to inform a member of staff who will challenge any stranger on the site.

First Aid Level 3 Forest School Leaders are qualified in outdoor first aid. A First Aid Kit is always available on the Forest School site. It is the Forest School Leader's responsibility to ensure that the First Aid Kit is brought onto the site at the commencement of the session and returned to school after each session. In cases of minor injury, such as cuts and grazes the Forest School Leader will administer first aid and complete a first aid note for the injured person to take home.

Emergency Procedures

It is vital that emergency procedures are adhered to. These are in place to safeguard pupils and adults alike. If a serious incident takes place, it will be essential to carry out an investigation promptly.

Should a serious incident or accident occur, the Forest School Leader will ensure the safety of other participants by adopting the '1, 2, 3 - Come to me' call. Participants will be made aware of this procedure for calling everyone together in initial sessions of Forest School.

In cases of emergency the Forest School Leader or other trained adult will administer first aid to the casualty. They will inform the school office who will alert parents and/or emergency services if necessary. They will inform the head teacher if the incident requires further medical treatment. If an accident occurs to a pupil, member of staff or visitor that requires help in addition to first aid e.g. Fire, Ambulance and Police then the LA must be informed of the circumstances as soon as possible.

An accident form will be completed and if appropriate shared with Manchester City Council. In the event of serious injury (this includes amputation, serious burns, acute illness, fracture, loss of sight or consciousness, or if detained in hospital over 24 hours, or death); the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) must be informed. These notifications are a legal requirement.

The 'Accident Report Form' requires a written statement to be made with reference to the sequence of events, actions taken and responses and times of these actions. Names of witnesses should be recorded. The statement should then be signed, dated and given to the Headteacher, Mrs Ishaq. A copy will then be sent to the LA. The original form will be kept in school.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Forest School Leaders hold a fully recognised Level 3 Practitioners qualification; have fully enhanced CRB and outdoor first aid qualifications. Forest School Leaders have the overall responsibility for: Safety and risk assessment Planning of sessions, evaluation and feedback Liaising with school staff and governors Administration of first aid Responsibility for first aid kit, accident book, etc. Supervision of tool use Supervision of fires and cooking area Understanding the needs of children with SEND Emergency procedures Volunteers and trainees With support from the Forest School Leaders volunteers and trainees are responsible for: Modelling good practice Supporting and talking to pupils to extend their learning as appropriate Additional support when Forest School leader is supervising tools or fire activities Additional delegated jobs

Insurance

Insurance for activities within Forest School are included within the school's insurance policy. Equal Opportunities In the first instance please refer to the school Equalities Policy and Scheme. All people involved in Forest School sessions will be treated with respect and equality. Our priority is to ensure that children and adults have access to a safe and secure environment. We believe that any contributions made by staff, volunteers and participants in our sessions will be listened to and appreciated. Evaluation Procedure The Forest School Leaders have developed a long term progressive plan. They undertake to reflect and evaluate each session after its completion. At the end of each term the leaders meet to reflect on current activities, take into account feedback from all participants and then use this to inform future planning. Policy agreed: To be reviewed: St Luke's Primary School

Sustainability Plan

It is important to bear in mind the ecological impact of running a Forest School in the woodland at St Luke's and with that in mind consideration will be given to the following: Any fire will be contained either within a Kelly kettle which uses very little fuel or within the fire pit which is situated within the centre of the fire circle There will be a maximum of one fire per week to reduce the impact of the smoke disturbing any nesting birds in the upper canopy of the forest The above actions will limit the amount of dead wood that is burnt as it is important for the soil layer of the forest Children will be educated not to pick up anything still growing There will usually be only one Forest School session per week to allow the ground to recover between visits

At St Luke's, the area that has been set aside for Forest School had become over run with rubbish such as wires, crisp packets and glass bottles. The area forms part of the school grounds and with the new school build the perimeter fence has been extended to enclose the whole site including the areas used for Forest School activities.

The Forest School site has been cleared of debris and ground covering brambles, giving the area's trees and bushes the opportunity to recover and develop as a natural woodland area.

Woodland Management Plan

Year 1 Boundary fence erected Coppicing and removal of undergrowth approx. 1/3 of the site Use to form an internal perimeter Staff and volunteers remove rubbish, deadwood and brambles Establish a fire pit and fire circle Lay bark chippings in muddy areas Establish a cooking area

Year 2 More coppicing and removal of undergrowth of ½ the remaining area Leave brambles around part of boundary Begin planting trees around back field perimeter fencing in order to link both parts of the forest into one 'horse-shoe' shape. Build a storage shelter.

Year 3 Clear remaining area as last year Continue further planting around boundary fencing, bringing both sides of the forest together Create a natural pond and meadow in front of the new trees to encourage wild life Erect a log cabin on the meadow to use for storage, teaching and observation of wild life.

Document Control	
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Review	Annually