



# Saint George's Church of England School Primary Phase

## Forest School Policy



**Approved by:** Full Governing Body **Date:** March 2022

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**Next review due by:** March 2023

## **Our Aim**

At Saint George's Church of England Primary Phase, we feel that it is important to develop links between emotional intelligence, self-esteem, positive behaviour and motivation. We believe that Forest School greatly supports the well-being of children. They are able to learn new skills and knowledge in order to continue developing their learning and development over time. Children will gain a sense of belonging and a love for learning which we hope they will take with them into other areas of their education.

## **What is Forest School?**

Forest School is an educational approach to outdoor play and learning. It encourages and inspires individuals through positive learning experiences. Children take part in child-initiated play, exploration and learning activities. Adults will observe children and build on skills and knowledge to accelerate their learning further. Children will develop in self-esteem and confidence.

Forest School supports social and emotional development through play in a natural environment. It supports the physical development of children through active games, tasks and problem-solving activities. Forest School helps to build self-confidence and self-esteem in children. They build relationships and develop language and communication skills.

## **Forest School Activities**

Forest School activities may include;

- Den/shelter building
- Nature and wildlife identification
- Singing
- Problem solving activities
- Nature arts and craft
- Teambuilding activities
- Respect for our natural environment
- Music making
- Campfire building and lighting
- Making hot drinks and food on the campfire
- Physical challenges such as obstacle courses
- Senses activities such as smelling and touching

## **Forest School Rules**

At the start of each Forest School session, children will be made aware of the rules and expectations that they need to follow, in order to remain safe. Our Forest School rules are as follows;

- We must stay within the Forest School boundary.
- When the whistle blows, we stop and walk back to our meeting point.
- We do not eat anything we find in our Forest School area.
- No walking through the fire square.
- We must dress appropriately for Forest School sessions.
- During Forest School we care for living things and take care of our Forest School environment. We do not pick living flowers or plants.

## **Forest School Leader**

Our Forest School Leader is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the group during each Forest School session. They must risk assess the site and all activities before and during each Forest School session.

Other adults will help the Forest School leader during each session. Adults may support the Forest School leader with activities and observations with the children. Adults will keep children safe. They will support children's learning and development. Adults will praise good behaviour and allow children to explore freely without adult interruption, unless needed.

## **Procedures**

### **General Health & Welfare**

- All staff to be aware of the general welfare of children. Young children get cold very quickly so additional clothes should be available along with the emergency blanket and survival bag. Hot drinks and high calorific snacks should be available on cold days. Forest School sessions should be quickly aborted if children are starting to get too cold.
- Allergies and medical information sheets will be brought to each Forest School session. Inhalers and EpiPens will be named and be kept in an easily accessible box by the meeting point.
- First Aid kit and medical recording sheets will be kept by the meeting point for easy access.
- On hot days children will wear hats and sun cream should be applied to children before coming to school.

- The Forest School Leader will have a current certificate in Paediatric First Aid and is to take responsibility in case of any accidents and emergencies. Accidents will be reported to parents using the appropriate accident/medical forms and contacted prior to the child going home, if required.

## **Weather**

- The Forest School Leader will keep a close eye on the weather conditions and cancel or shorten sessions if necessary.
- Forest School sessions will be cancelled in high winds and extremely cold temperatures. After ice and snow the site should be carefully checked for hazards. The site will also be checked for fallen branches after high winds and storms.

## **Clothing**

- All children are to wear sensible footwear, ideally wellies or snow boots. No sandals, clogs or other open shoes to be worn during sessions. Socks are to be worn to protect legs.
- Children to wear long trousers and long sleeves to protect their arms and legs from scratches and stings.
- During cold and damp weather children to wear waterproof tops and trousers. Staff to assess whether they think the children are wearing sufficient layers of warm clothing and advise as necessary.
- Children to wear sun hats or caps during hot weather and hats and gloves in cold weather.
- Spare clothing to be provided by the school if a child does not have the appropriate clothing.

## **Food and Drink**

- Forest School Leader to organise snack during the session. Sharp knives for cutting fruit to be kept with blade cover on in secure box. Hot Chocolate kept in vacuum flasks and staff are responsible for checking the temperature before children drink it.
- Drinking water to always be available. Used cups to be placed in bag and returned to school for cleaning after use.
- Staff to ensure that children clean their hands thoroughly with wipes and antibacterial wipes before eating or drinking anything.
- Forest School Leader is responsible for preparing any hot snacks on the fire. Children are not to touch hot pans and kettles. The Forest School Leader is responsible for hygienic

preparation of food in line with current Health and Safety regulations. The Forest School Leader is responsible for ensuring food is thoroughly cooked and at an appropriate temperature when given to the children.

### **Fire Safety**

- The Health and Safety Policy shall be followed and risk assessments put in place before fires are lit during a Forest School session.
- Fires shall only be lit by the Forest School Leader and only within the designated fire pit area.
- The fire pit area shall be developed by the Forest School Leader. The logs used for seating must be at least 2m away from the fire pit area and the area will be within a fenced area to prevent other children from wandering into the area.
- The children will stay behind the log benches for safety. A fire will only be lit with a group if the Forest School Leader feels all the group understand and will be able to follow all the safety rules and guidelines.
- Before using the fire pit area, the Forest School Leader will check the area for hazards. It is always to be kept clear from trip hazards.
- The fire will always be lit by a flint. It will be kept small and manageable. The Forest School Leader will always be responsible for the fire, from when it is lit and will never leave a lit fire.
- There will always be plentiful supplies of water for emergencies in the fire pit area and the first aid kit will include the appropriate equipment for dealing with scalds and burns.
- All people feeding the fire will be shown how to sit and behave sensibly at all times.
- Pans and kettles will only be removed from the fire by the Forest School Leader using a flame proof glove. They will make sure the children are aware of the dangers of touching hot pans and will always ensure that food and drink given to children will be at an appropriate temperature.
- All waste from the fire area will be collected and returned to the school to be disposed of at the end of each session.
- The fire will be spread out and left to die down and then doused with plentiful amounts of water before the group leave the Forest School. The Forest School Leader is responsible for ensuring that the fire is out and the area is left safe before leaving the site.

## Refuse Disposal

- All food waste to be returned to school in a tied black bag, to be disposed of in the appropriate bin. No food is to be left at the Forest School site to discourage rodents.
- All toilet waste i.e. paper and wipes are to be returned to school for disposal in the appropriate bin.

## Tool Use

- The Health and Safety Policy will be followed and risk assessments put in place before tools are used at Forest School.
- Tools are to be stored in a secure shed at the main school. They are to be transported to each session in the tool box on the trailer. An inventory of the tools in the box is to be checked at the beginning and end of each session to ensure that no dangerous tools are left at the Forest School site.
- The Forest School Leader is responsible for cleaning and maintaining the tools after each use. Any defective tools are to be removed immediately and replaced before they are used again.
- All tools will be kept in the tool box whilst not in use in the Forest School. The children are not to have access to the box, tools are to be removed and put back in the box by a responsible adult who ensures the fastenings are always kept closed.
- Tools will only be introduced to the children by the trained Forest School Leader. This will always be done by using the recommended tool talks and demonstration by the Leader; they will only be used when the Forest School Leader feels that the children understand how to use them safely.
- The tools will always be used in the designated tool area in the Forest School. The Forest School Leader will make sure that this area is always kept clear of dangers and trip hazards and that the group understand the need to walk sensibly around this area.
- Potato peelers will be one of the first tools used by the children. These can be used in groups of four with the Forest School Leader, to remove bark from sticks, known as 'whittling'.
- The bow saw will first be introduced to the children with a trained adult on one end with the child having the end with the handle; most children will always use the saw like this. If some children get confident with using the saw like this and the Forest School Leader feels that they can progress, two children can use the saw, with the Forest School Leader closely supervising them. Only one saw shall be out and in use at a given time.
- The loppers will be used with one child and the Forest School Leader helping them position them and squeeze them together.

- One child will use the pen knife at a time. The children will only use the pen knife when sitting down on a log stump and only in a 1:1 situation with the Forest School Leader guiding them.
- The Bill Hook is only to be used by the Forest School Leader because of the age of the children.