

KATHERINE SEMAR INFANT SCHOOL
Forest School Health Safety & Wellbeing Policy

Ratified by Head Teacher: September 2014

Last Reviewed: September 2024

To be reviewed on: September 2026

Introduction

The health, safety and welfare of all the people who work or learn at Forest School are of fundamental importance. We aim to provide a safe, secure and pleasant environment for everyone. The Forest School Health and Safety policy is in addition to the school's Health and Safety Policy. Forest School is led by Level 3 qualified Forest School practitioners.

A safe and healthy environment

In order that Forest school sessions are run safely, the following procedures will be in place:

- * There is a high ratio of adults to children.
- * The Forest School Leader and all adult helpers at Forest School are DBS checked.
- * The Forest School Leader has an Outdoor Paediatric First Aid Qualification. Other staff may also have a First Aid Qualification.
- * Forest School is backed by relevant working documents, which contain all the policies and procedures required for running Forest School and which establish the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.
- * All policies and procedures will be read regularly by the Forest school Leader, staff and any adult helpers. Any changes and alterations will be made where necessary.
 - * The Forest School leader is a reflective practitioner and sees themselves, therefore, as a learner too.
- * The Forest School Leader will carefully plan and assess Forest School sessions, taking careful consideration to children's needs and requirements.
- * The Forest School leader will establish, maintain and evaluate appropriate procedures, policies and risk assessments.
- * The Forest School Leader will provide information for parents and adult helpers who will support Forest School sessions. This information will include what Forest Schools is, why it is so beneficial and how it will be led safely.
- * The Forest school leader will ensure all equipment is being used safely and all adult helpers have access and are up to date with the tool safety procedures (see Forest School handbook).
- * Risk assessments will be carried out by the Forest School Leader (see below).

Risk management and risk assessments

Risk-Benefit management is a fundamental part of life and is a skill needed for young people's safety and well-being. The Forest School Leader and all adults have a duty of care towards young people. We have responsibility not only to keep young people safe, but also to enable them to learn to manage risks for themselves. Risk management is all about identifying the benefits and any possible risks of an activity or site and managing to prevent any significant chance of harm.

Procedures for Forest School activities:

Children will be encouraged to climb, balance, dig, and travel across and through water. These activities include more risks than usual. It is important to carry out risk benefit reports to manage those possible risks.

Some general Forest School rules have been set for the children's safety:

- * Sticks and twigs may be used within their imaginative play. These must be no longer than the children's arm length. They are not allowed to be used to hit others directly on their body.
- * Children are allowed to climb. When climbing the height should be no higher than when they are standing with their arm in the air.
- * When climbing, no adult should assist them as this may prevent the children knowing a safe route to climb back down.
- * Children are able to walk through and play with water and mud when wearing appropriate clothing.
- * Children must wear appropriate clothing at all times.

Forest schools manage four types of risk assessments:

- * **Generic Site** — this should take into account all four layers within a woodland and general users of the woodland.
- * **Generic Activity/Experiences** — this should take into account all the aspects of activities/experiences, including creative experiences, games and tool use. Once correct procedures, such as safe tool use has been established these generic activity risk assessments become part of the standard operating procedures.
- * **Daily** – includes weather, wild factors and any changes noted on the day. This can include assessments on individuals attending the session. This should be carried out by the forest school practitioner prior to a session. The children should be encouraged to conduct a generic site risk assessment with their practitioner on arrival at the site and before entering the designated area.
- * **Ongoing Dynamic** — involves professional judgements during the session in response to changing situations.

First Aid

All Forest School leaders are Outdoor Paediatric First Aid trained. A first aid kit will be taken to the woodland site every Forest school session.

Contents for emergency / First Aid kit

A First aid kit is kept for any incidents which may occur within the Forest School sessions. The First Aid kit should be checked and replenished after every use. A logbook is completed after any incidents; to record the injury, how it happened, how it was dealt with and who it was seen by.

The kit should contain the following items:

- * Gloves (in sealable bags, which can then be used for safe disposal of soiled items)
- * Clean water (for washing out wounds or eyes)
- * Plastic bags (for disposal of any waste items e.g. gloves)
- * Swabs
- * Plasters
- * Accident book
- * Mobile phone – adult helpers should all carry a mobile phone and numbers have to be exchanged amongst adults prior to session. Mobile phone signal must be checked prior to Forest School sessions (see risk assessment).

Other essential items

- * Welfare kit (wet wipes, hand gel, healthy snacks, and drinking water)
- * Medication for individuals
- * Emergency fire kit
- * Accident, Serious Incident/Emergency Procedure

Accident procedure

- * Child is assessed by trained outdoor first aider and treatment is given as appropriate.
- * Accident log book is completed and parents/carers are informed on return to school.

Serious incident Procedure

- * Child is assessed by first aider and first aid is administered as appropriate and emergency services are called by her as seen fit. Office informed (on site) and additional support sought.
- * If needed the additional helper will walk towards point of vehicular access in order to direct emergency services to site.
- * Forest School Leader to stay with casualty and rest of group.
- * Serious incidents are logged in the serious incident log book and the school and parents/carers are informed as soon as this is possible.

As standard practice, all serious incidents are formerly reviewed with the Headteacher and any involved adults, in order to review our practice and provide quality assurance.