



Witton Church Walk C of E Primary School Forest School Policy 2016

'Where Every Door is Opened and Every Gift is Unlocked'

At Witton we are a partnership of school, church, home and community. We create a stimulating and caring environment, grounded in Christian belief and practice, so that all members of our school community feel happy, safe and secure. Time is taken to value and nurture each child educationally, creatively and spiritually. Children and staff are encouraged to aim for 'Everyday Excellence' and believe in themselves in order to achieve their full potential.

Our school works within the recommendations of The Equality Act 2012. Please read this policy alongside and with reference to the Equality, Disability and Community Cohesion Policy 2012.

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1 Introduction

Forest School gives us a unique opportunity to provide our children with an outdoor learning experience that helps develop confidence, teamwork skills, self esteem and independence within the setting of the natural environment.

The whole experience is built around the child; tasks are made to be achievable, with small steps leading to great success. Opportunity is taken for children to lead their own learning wherever there is an option to do so. Sessions contain skill based activities that can be built upon session by session in a safe environment and setting. Time is also provided for children to explore these skills and apply them in their own way under close supervision. A range of learning styles can be catered for which the FS leader can then utilise appropriately for the client group involved.

The Forest school provides the children with a different learning environment from that of the classroom. The different environment and practical nature of the skills give some children an opportunity to shine that they may not otherwise have. There are also many links to the academic curriculum e.g. problem solving, communication, knowledge and understanding of the world around us etc. Forest School gives the children the chance to apply their skills and knowledge in a very real and practical way; they can experiment with their ideas and learn at their own pace. All of this takes place within the safe and supporting environment of the Forest School.

We hope that the range of experiences involved with the Forest School will help children to begin developing a real love and an enthusiasm for the outdoors that they can build upon as they move through life.

2 Our Objectives

2.1 To provide children with a positive learning experience that they will value within the natural environment.

2.2 To help children develop their sense of self worth, team work skills, confidence and independence through the forest school.

2.3 To work cooperatively, showing respect for others and the natural environment around them.

2.4 To provide the children with a safe and secure environment in which to learn and to assess and manage risks for themselves.

2.5 To equip children with skills and knowledge that will keep them safe within the Forest School setting.

2.6 To begin to develop a love of the outdoors and the natural environment.

3 Setting

The Forest School is situated on site at the end of the school field. There is a thin band of well established trees between the field and the boundary fence. This wooded area has been managed by the local authority's grounds maintenance team. To the left of the FS site is the school's conservation garden; to the right is the vegetable garden. There is also another small wooden area beyond the vegetable garden that may be used where appropriate at the discretion of the FS leader.

4 Role of FS Leader

4.1 Create a safe environment for the sessions.

4.2 To manage and risk assess the site (see section 7).

4.3 Risk assess each session (see section 7).

4.4 Manage children's learning effectively taking into account learning styles, providing realistic targets for achievement and developing progression of skills.

4.5 Take the lead in any emergency situation (see emergency procedures).

4.6 To plan each session carefully taking individuals into account so that they can achieve their full potential.

4.7 To set a positive example for all by valuing others and treating them, and the natural environment with the utmost of respect.

4.8 To model best practice within the policies and procedures of the Forest School.

4.9 To ensure policies and practices are up to date.

4.10 To secure and maintain all Forest School equipment.

4.11 To ensure that the Forest School experience is FUN!

5 Impact on the environment

5.1 Forest school has care and respect for the natural environment at its core. Children will be taught to consider their own impact on others and on the natural environment around them. Wherever possible, natural and environmentally friendly resources will always be used. This will be reinforced by the modelling of good practice with regard to care for the natural environment by all participating adults.

5.2 As our site covers a relatively small area, natural resources for use during Forest School sessions is to be sourced from elsewhere and brought on site. Children will be shown what they can and can't do with regard to using the natural resources on site.

5.3 FSL to set up and administer ongoing development plan for the FS area. This is to work on a 3 year programme and is to be evaluated at the end of each 3 year period and a new programme put in place.

5.4 No material is to be collected from the conservation area.

5.5 Rotten wood is not to be used as fuel for fires as this destroys natural habitats.

5.6 At the end of each session the site is to be returned to its original state as it was before the session began.

6 Health and Safety

6.1 The schools current health and safety policy will be adhered to at all times. The health and safety of all those involved in Forest School sessions is our overriding priority at all times. See current H&S policy kept in school office- Ask Tammy Faulkes for location.

6.2 Safe practice will be demonstrated at all relevant points and reinforced with regular reminders. Children will be encouraged to work independently and to assess risks as they go along.

6.3 There will be a continuing dialogue between the children and adults with regard to managing their own risks.

6.4 All activities/ programmes and site to be risk assessed by the FS leader- see section 7.

6.5 In addition to the current H & S policy the following points apply

- * At least one qualified first aider to be on site at all times.
- * All session to be applied using relevant policy and procedures, appropriately risk assessed and evaluated.
- * FSL will ensure that all accompanying adults are appropriately briefed on activities and procedures so that they can contribute towards the H & S of the session.
- * FSL to have a thorough knowledge of all emergency procedures.
- * FSL to ensure that all relevant safety equipment is present for each session and in full working order.
- * FSL to ensure all tools are correctly maintained and in full working order at the beginning of each session. At the end of each session these are to be cleaned and checked ready for the next use. Any damaged or dangerous kit is to be repaired or replaced as appropriate.

- * Site to be risk assessed by FSL prior to each individual session and any relevant changes made.

6.6.1 First Aid

- * School first aid policy to be followed at all times-For a copy see Tammy Faulkes in school office.
- * FSL to be fully first aid trained and this to be kept up to date.
- * Full first aid kit to be kept on site in emergency box- see below for details.
- * All accidents to be logged in forest schools first aid file and in school accident records in line with school policy.
- * First aid kit to include dressings, med wipes, plasters, bandages, supports and separate burns kit.

- * First Aid kit to be checked before each session by FSL-See Risk assessment checklist.

7 Risk Benefit/ Assessment

7.1 School risk benefit policy to be adhered to at all. See current RB policy kept in school office times (See copy in school office- see Tammy Faulkes for location). This runs alongside county RB procedures- see EVC policy and procedures.

7.2 Site to be risk assessed by FSL on a seasonal basis to take into account seasonal changes. Any other unforeseen circumstances (e.g. Site work) to be risk assessed where these effect any session plans.

7.3 Each individual session to be risk assessed by FSL.

7.4 Five steps of risk assessment to be used as a model (HSE website)

- 1- Identify the hazard
- 2- Decide who might be harmed and how
- 3- Evaluate the risks and decide on precaution
- 4- Record findings and implement them
- 5- Revue assessment and update if necessary

8 Communication

8.1 FS leader to carry mobile phone at all times.

8.2 Radio contact with main school building to be maintained during all sessions and to ensure mobile phone contact is available in the event of no radios being available.

8.3 Up to date information about each programme to be given to all parents before sessions commence - permissions to be collected in by FSL including application of burns

gel if required. It will be made clear to parents that if the safety guidelines are not adhered to and the behaviour of their child puts themselves or others at risk then their child will not participate in the sessions.

8.4 Before each programme begins, a preparatory session is to be held with the children giving chance to discuss clothing, behaviour, site zones, programme content etc. and any other issue at the FSL's discretion.

8.5 Adults to communicate with the children in a positive, respectful manner at all times.

8.6 Support staff to be fully briefed by FSL prior to session.

9 Fire safety

9.1 Fire to be attended by an adult at all times.

9.2 Fire bucket, blanket and first aid kit to be on hand by the fireplace at all times. Fire bucket clearly marked.

9.3 Children fire lighting are to be supervised closely by and adult at all times.

9.4 Children are to be shown correct extinguishing procedure and this is to be followed at all times.

9.5 Fireside rules to be followed at all times (See fire lighting procedure)

10 Tool Safety

10.1 Tools to be maintained by FSL and checked prior to each use.

10.2 Tool procedures to be followed at all times (See tool procedure)

10.3 Initial tool skills to be taught 1:1 once skills have been successfully acquired according to FSL- ratios of tool supervision at the discession of the FSL.

10.4 Tools to be kept in tool zone on FS site at all times.

11 Eating Policy

11.1 Children to wash hands before handling food.

11.2 No food to be collected from the natural environment despite the obvious links to FS. This is to be discussed at an age appropriate level, but as there is no safe way of ensuring that children will eat the correct berries or fruit this must be adhered to at all times.

11.3 Any food for sessions to be supplied by FSL from commercially available sources.

11.3 Children to be made aware of the dangers of taking food from the natural environment and its wider impact.

12 Site Hygiene

12.1 Designated washing area to be set up on site- children to be introduced to this and shown how to use this correctly- explanation as to why it is important.

12.2 Children to wash hands thoroughly before any food based activities.

12.3 Children are to use the toilets inside the rear entrance to the school building.

13 Clothing

13.1 Children are to be given a kit list before each programme begins and this is to be discussed during a preparatory session.

13.2 Children must not wear nylon shelled clothing as this constitutes a fire risk.

13.3 Children with long hair are to tie it back before each session begins.

13.4 FSL to check clothing is suitable before each session begins.

14 Safeguarding

14.1 The schools current Safeguarding policy to be adhered to at all times. See current policy kept in school office.

15 Missing Children

15.1 The schools current Lost Child Policy to be adhered to at all times (Copy kept in office – See Tammy Faulkes for location). See existing lost child policy kept in school office.

15.2 Boundaries to school site to be checked and secured by FSL prior to each session to minimise risk of child leaving the site.

16 Equality and Inclusion

16.1 The schools current equality and inclusion policy to be adhered to at all times. See current policy kept in school office (See Tammy Faulkes for location).

16.2 Where the school deems that a child may cause a safety risk to themselves and or others around them, they may be removed from the session as stated in 8.3.

17 Behaviour

17.1 The schools current behaviour policy to be adhered to at all times. See policy kept in school office (See Tammy Faulkes for location).

17.2 Rewards and sanctions to be applied using the whole school traffic lights system.

17.3 If the school deems that a child's behaviour is putting themselves and or others at risk, they will be removed from the session. The head teacher will then be consulted as to their long term inclusion in the remainder of the programme. As stated in 8.3 with regard to parent & school partnership working.

18 Monitoring and Evaluation

18.1 Each session to be evaluated by FSL and any relevant points fed into future sessions.

18.2 All site evaluations to be carried out by FSL.

18.3 FSL to maintain a continuous cycle of monitoring and evaluation of policies and procedures and make any necessary changes.

18.4 FSL to monitor and evaluate development plan annually and make any necessary changes.

19 Insurance

19.1 All FS activities are covered under the current school insurance policy as long as they are carried out by a qualified FS practitioner.

The following policies should be read alongside this:

- **Safeguarding**
- **Curriculum**
- **Behaviour**
- **Health & Safety**
- **Equality & Diversity**
- **SEN**
- **Critical Incident Plan**
- **First Aid**
- **Administration of Medicine**

Copies Kept in School office as detailed in sections above- See Tammy Faulkes (School Admin) in school office for location of documents.

20 Policy Review

20.1 Current policy is a working document and is to be reviewed after each programme of work has been completed. This will ensure that the policy remains relevant and up to date with any changes in circumstance or practice.

20.2 Policy is to be reviewed by FSL and SLT informed of any relevant changes.

21 Daily Routine

21.1 Pre session- Site risk assessment- change plans as necessary

- Tool check/ equipment check
- Complete RA checklist
- Set site ready for session
- Brief any support staff

21.2 During session-monitor risks and adapt as necessary

- Ensure policies and procedures are followed correctly
- Address any issues as necessary

21.3 post session-clean tools

- Check all tool bags are complete
- Fully extinguish any fires on site
- Clear FS site
- Pack all equipment correctly ready for next use
- Return all equipment to FS store cupboard
- Ensure sharps are locked away
- evaluate session to feed into next session plan
- Plan next session in light of previous evaluation and MTP.

22 Weather

22.1 Weather conditions to be monitored prior to session by FSL.

22.2 Weather conditions during session to be monitored by FSL.

22.3 Postponement of sessions due to adverse weather conditions at discretion of FSL.

22.4 FSL to ensure that clothing appropriate to the weather conditions is worn by all children.

22.5 If wind speed is above 20mph or temp below 5 degrees Celsius- head teacher to be consulted as to whether it is appropriate that the session is to go ahead.

22.6 If thunderstorm occurs children to be brought into the school building immediately.

22.7 If wind is above appropriate level- tarp is not to be used- FSL to monitor throughout the session.

22.8 During prolonged periods of several days of heavy rain- session to be postponed due the damage caused by footfall over loose ground.

Procedures

20 Fire Procedures

20.1 Fire Circle Rules

- * No running in the vicinity of the fire circle.
- * Step over the back of the benches to sit down. Children are to remain seated until instructed otherwise.
- * No loose items of clothing and long hair tied back.
- * Fire to be supervised by an accompanying adult at all times.
- * Before fire is lit, red fire bucket must be filled with water and be on hand- children must be clear that this is for fire safety only. Burns kit and fire blanket must also be readily available in the emergency box.
- * Seating to be a minimum of 1.5 metres from the fire place.
- * Strom kettles are only to be lit within the fire area, not in other areas of the site.

20.2 Fire Lighting

- * Decaying wood is not to be used as fuel.
- * Fire wood is to be sourced off site, this can be spread on the floor for the children to pick up and use.
- * Wood must come from the floor only, not from living trees in the area.
- * Before lighting fires under supervision, the children should have been taught the correct preparation methods and procedures in order to work as safely as possible.
- * No fires are to be lit unless they are closely supervised by a qualified FSL.
- * Fires are to be lit using cotton wool or a natural substitute and flints.
- * No flammable substances are to be used to accelerate a fire at any time.

- * Only wood is to be burnt- no man made materials.
- * On site wood supply to be monitored and regulated by FSL.
- * Flames should be no higher than the knee- in the case of a larger cooking fire to be used by a group in the fire circle, this must be controlled appropriately by the FSL.
- * Children are to be shown how to add fuel to a fire safely- this is to be taught by the FSL and should always be done under close adult supervision.
- * Fuel should be placed on the fire and never thrown.
- * All fires must be extinguished using water at the end of each session or use.
- * FSL to ensure that all fires are fully extinguished and any ashes dispersed where appropriate.

20.3 Storm Kettles

- * Children may light the fire in the kettle pan after they have been shown the correct procedure by the FSL. This must always be done under the close supervision of a qualified adult.
- * The storm kettle must be placed on a fireproof plate and the surrounding area cleared of debris to a distance of 1.5m.
- * The cork must always be removed before boiling and the funnel must face the opposite direction from anyone present.
- * When adding fuel the children should hold it at one end and tip it down the funnel taking care to never put their hand over the end of it. This must be demonstrated by the FSL before children can do this under close supervision.
- * Once the kettle has boiled it must only be handled by a supervising adult.
- * Once a fire is lit in the pan both the kettle and the pan must only ever be touched using gloves.
- * Hot kettles should be placed within the fire triangle and left to cool down.
- * When the fire is finished with it must be completely extinguished with water and the fire pan then put into a bucket of cold water to cool down.

21 Hand Tool Procedure

The use of hand tools and the associated skills is an important part of Forest Schools. Children will be taught how to handle, use and maintain tools correctly and above all safely. These skills will be taught to the children on an individual basis by the FSL using the following guidelines.

- * Appropriate tool use is at the discretion of the FSL and head teacher. FSL to consult with the head teacher the appropriate tools for any given group/ programme. Tools will be logged out and in, before and after the FS session. These logs will be checked and signed by FSL, Head teacher or Deputy Head teacher in her absence.

- * Tools must be kept in the designated tool area at all times and used under direct adult supervision.

- * Tools must be checked and maintained after each session by the FSL. Defective tools will be either serviced or replaced.

- * Tools to be kept in toolkit bags when not in use.

- * Children will first be taught which tools are for what which jobs and what constitutes appropriate use.

- * Children will then be taught how to handle, prepare, check and pass tools safely- initial tuition on a 1:1 basis – Once FSL is satisfied that the appropriate skills have been mastered- tool ratios are at the discretion of the FSL.

- * Children will then be shown how to use tools correctly under the direct supervision of the FSL.

- * Children will use potato peelers before moving on to knives- only where appropriate.

- * When using a sheath knife, children must be seated and cut away from the body to the side. This is to be first demonstrated by FSL.

- * Cover to be kept on all hand saw blades when not in use.

- * Knives to be sheathed correctly when not in use.

- * When working with hand tools, the non working hand should be gloved.

- * Hand axes only to be used for splitting- this must be done on a cutting block by two people working together- appropriate procedure to be first demonstrated by FSL.

- * Axes must be forced using a mallet, never swung down on a piece of wood.

- * No running or pointing with hand tools.

- * Wood being sawn must be held on a saw horse or other cutting block, children supporting wood must wear gloves- procedure to be first demonstrated by FSL.

* All tools to be checked and cleaned by FSL at the end of each session.

* Children should be encouraged to consider any risks using tools may present and how they could be addressed.

22 Emergency Procedures

22.1 It is the FSL's responsibility to ensure that attending adults are familiar with the emergency procedure. There should always be at least one other adult present for the session as well as the FSL.

22.2 The FSL will have a mobile phone, contact numbers and all first aid equipment prepared before the session begins. These will be kept in the emergency box which will be kept next to the fire circle. All participants will be made aware of this at a preparatory meeting before a programme begins. SW radios will also be used to make contact with the school building should the need arise.

22.3 In the event of an emergency the FSL will take charge of the situation. All other children are to be called into the fire circle where the other adult will take control of the group and take them back to the main building if required. In this event the other adult will send for at least one trained first aider from the building to come and support the FSL before taking the rest of the group away. The exact plan of action will depend on the nature of the emergency so with this in mind a slightly different course of action may be appropriate; this is at the discretion of the FSL.

22.4 The FSL will administer appropriate first aid where required and delegate someone to get help if this is needed.

22.5 If required the critical incident plan will be followed as in school policy.

22.6 In the event of a significant injury the FSL will record the details of the incident in line with school policy.

22.7 All incidents must be recorded in the accident book and in the event of accidents that fall outside of the minor injury category, SLT informed.

22.8 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

School 01606 43128
Leighton Hospital 01270 255141
Emergency Services 999 or 112

When calling emergency services

Dial 999 Or 112- the following information will be needed

- 1- Telephone number.
- 2- Details of your location (see below)
- 3- Description of the incident.
- 4- Details of the casualty (sex, age, medical conditions etc.)
- 5- Current condition of the casualty.
- 6- Details of any treatment the casualty has been given.

Site Details

Address- Witton Church Walk Primary School
Witton Walk,
Northwich,
Cheshire,
CW9 5QQ

Tel- 01606 288128.

OS Grid reference - [OS Explorer 267- 1:25000 Ref 664738](#)

Emergency services will require access to the site via the gate to the left of the school building through the car park. The gate at the side of school will need to be unlocked and the gates through the football cage opened. The keys are in the school office. In the event of emergency services being called the office must be informed at the soonest possible opportunity so that they can open the gates ready to provide direct access to the site.

Last reviewed September 2016 RG (FSL)