



Forest School at Sharley Park

We believe that children develop most when they are 'learning by doing', when they are given responsibility, work in teams, take acceptable risks and think for themselves.

Education should be all about experiences because that is when learning is optimised. Benjamin Franklin could not have phrased it better when he said:

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn".

Children who attend Forest School are given the opportunity to develop their curiosity, confidence, self-esteem, creativity, empathy, communication skills, knowledge of the natural environment and ability to assess risk.



Forest Friends Forever

Aims

We aim to give all children an insight into the ethos of Forest School. Forest School builds on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning. The Forest School learning environment provides opportunities for children to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, to form positive relationships with others, to develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others, to learn to cooperate and work with their peers and adults and develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety. The setting allows the children to engage with the natural environment. Forest School is about exploring and experiencing the natural world through practical activities.

During the sessions the children have the chance to develop;

Self esteem

Confidence

Social skills

Language and Communication

Motivation and concentration

Physical skills

Knowledge and understanding

Health and Safety survey of Forest School site

The health and safety of the children is our primary concern.

The school Health and Safety Policy will be adhered to.

<http://www.sharleypark.derbyshire.sch.uk/policies/>

Also risk assessment of the Forest School area is always carried out prior to our visit.

Risk Management

Risk management is all about identifying and managing any significant chance of harm.

Significance is determined by two factors:

- * The likelihood of an accident or incident happening.
- * The severity of injury or harm if it does occur.

Forest schools conduct four types of risk assessment:

- Generic Site — this should take into account all four layers within a 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 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
- Ongoing Dynamic — involves professional judgements during the session in response to changing situations.

All risk assessments are checked and signed by the head teacher - Mrs Stevenson.

First aid

Jo Hollingworth holds a current Outdoor First Aid certificate, being responsible for all aspects of health and safety and carries out all medical equipment checks.

PPE and safety equipment required for working outdoors

Full First Aid Kit including plasters, bandages, sterile water, sterile wipes, plastic gloves, bag to dispose dirty tissues and debris, antiseptic wipes and micro-pore tape.

Also include survival kit.

Register with children's names and contact numbers.

Mobile phone fully charged.

Inhalers and medicine for children if required.

Relevant medical information and emergency contact numbers for all children

Piritor for any child with an allergy.

Risk assessment for the day

Parental consent forms.

Accident Policy

Keep a record of accidents and first aid treatment in an accident log. Tell parents of any accidents or injuries sustained by the child while in your care and any first

aid treatment given. Make sure the carer or parent signs the accident log book when they collect the child. Use individual sheets for each child to ensure confidentiality. Use safety gloves when dealing with blood, saliva or any other body fluids. Make every effort to contact parent or carer. Make sure the First Aid Kit has everything the outdoor first aid course suggests. Be aware of the procedures for calling an ambulance.

Activities

Our activities will depend on the ability and experience of participants. Examples of Forest School activities include:

- Site management and nature exploration
- Building dens and other structures
- Fires and cooking
- Games and invitations for imaginative play
- Natural crafts
- Using tools, such as knives and saws
- Scavenger hunts and adventure
- Seasonal celebrations



Tools, Fires & Activity Guidance

Tool Use Procedure

Using a range of tools will eventually become part of site based activities and will become an important part of our work as it enables participants to develop new practical skills that help develop self-confidence. We aim to ensure that all

children participating in sessions with tools do so safely and with as little risk as possible.

The following guidelines are to be followed when using tools:

- The forest school leader will check all tools are fit for continued use before the session
- Only tools that are in safe working order shall be supplied for use
- Correct and safe use of sharp tools will be demonstrated to all staff and participants
- Tools should be counted when handed out and counted back in again when finished
- All groups are to be supervised closely by leader until deemed competent to work with limited supervision
- Tools should be kept in a designated safe area when not in use - none should be left unattended outside this area
- All knives will be closed/ sheaved immediately after use
- Saw guards will be replaced immediately after use
- Walking around with open/ unmasked tools will not be permitted
- Safe working distances and suitable ratios must be maintained at all times

All group members will wear suitable boots/shoes and outdoor clothing for the activity they take part in.



Guidance on Knife Use

Designate a specific zone for those using knives

Always carry knife with sheath firmly on

Always pass knife with sheath firmly on and in demonstrated manner

Always keep knife in sheath when not in use

Leader to count knives out & back in

Ensure participants have had demonstration before use (& leader is confident of participant's ability) including grip and body position

Knife work is always supervised by a responsible adult

Each person to sit within correct range of others

Fire Procedure

Fires and the use of storm kettles will become part of Forest School sessions. We aim to ensure that all children participating in sessions with fires and/or storm kettles will do so safely.

- Leader will explain to participants the importance of using only dead wood for fires and also of the importance of dead wood as a habitat
- Smoke inhalation will be reduced by burning dead wood. Those in smoky areas will be encouraged to move to less smoky areas
- Fires will only be lit in suitable defined fire circle
- Participants will only be allowed to light fires under direct supervision of a trained leader using suitable materials and equipment
- All participants will be given clear guidelines about how to behave and move around the area when the fire or kettle is lit
- A lit fire will be supervised by an adult at all times, as will all cooking activities
- Related safety equipment, including heat-proof gloves, a fire blanket, a burns kit and water will be kept within close range of fires
- All fires should be fully extinguished and all traces removed at the end of a session.



Food Hygiene & Eating

All participants will be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or antibacterial gel, which will be provided, before eating food.

During some sessions, we may cook items such as hotdogs, potatoes, vegetable kebabs, popcorn, soups or marshmallows over the fire.



Policy for 'How to Leave Work Areas Clean & Tidy'

Cooking Area:

All pots and pans must be washed up after each session. Separate chopping boards should be used for specific jobs, Cups, plates, cutlery must be washed up and put in appropriate storage area. Any sharp utensils must be washed up by an adult or supervise this activity. Sharp utensils must be accounted for and stored in a safe, secure place. The washing up area must be left clean and tidy. Water should be emptied and all cleaning liquids should be stored appropriately. All food should be removed and stored appropriately. Cloths should be kept clean and replaced when required. All waste should be recycled properly or composted. No rubbish should be left on site. Before leaving our site we will ensure that any litter is collected and disposed of suitably in order to adhere to our 'Take only photos, Leave only footprints' motto.

General Session Safety

Clothing for Forest School

Cold Weather Clothes:

Sensible walking shoes that are preferably waterproof

Wellies or boots.

Warm socks in the winter.

Warm under garments

Hard wearing trousers.

Snug long sleeved T/shirt.

Sweat shirt/jumper.

Good winter coat.

Full wet weather gear, coat and trousers. (Provided)

Hat.

Gloves.

Change of clothes.

Bottle of water.

Warm Weather Clothes:

Sensible sturdy close toed shoes.

Wellies

Socks.

Light weight trousers.

Light weight long sleeved T/shirt.

Sun hat.

Sun cream.

Bottle of water.

Toileting

- Encourage everyone to use the toilet before coming on site.
- If children need the toilet during a session, they will be escorted back into school by an adult as the site is within the school grounds.

Safeguarding

It is our responsibility to ensure the safety of children whilst in our care. We are committed to creating an environment which is safe.

The school safeguarding policy and procedures will be adhered to during all Forest School sessions (See policy)

Parents are given an outline of the planned activities and access to the Forest School handbook via our website. Before children attend, parents complete a generic full parental consent. This contains individual's details, such as contact numbers, medical history and any specific requirements.

Permission is also requested for children to have photographs/video footage taken whilst participating in Forest School for monitoring and evaluation purposes and suitable use in publications for leaflets, newsletters and the school website. Where permission is refused, we will aim to avoid photographing and videoing that child.

Policy for volunteers and students

All adults, volunteers and students must be CRB checked if they are to attend Forest School. Volunteers and students will always be working with the trained Forest School leader and will never be left alone with any child or given responsibilities that they have not had adequate training in. All volunteers will have the chance to read the 'Forest School Handbook' and become familiar with the everyday running of Forest School.

Equal Opportunities

The Sharley Park Forest School Equal Opportunities Policy is in addition to the school policy.

<https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/sharley-park-community-primary-school/UploadedDocument/5565933f0fb3424789718962117bf4e5/EqualOpps%20DiversityandDiscrimination2014.pdf>

Children will be given the opportunity to participate in Forest School activities regardless of age, ability or gender.

- The Forest School programme promotes children's rights to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- All children will be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured. Forest School activities will offer the children the opportunity to develop in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination.
- Forest School will recognise the wide range of special needs of children and will consider what part it can play in meeting these needs.
- All children should be adequately dressed to ensure that they can participate fully in Forest School activities.

Positive Behaviour

Forest School behaviour expectations

(In line with the school behaviour policy)

<https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/sharley-park-community-primary-school/UploadedDocument/154590c7c1b244978a4ebe7bb9fced/BehaviourPolicy2014-2015.pdf>

- Listen when adult is talking
- Take turns when talking with peers and listen to what they have to say
- Keep to the Forest School boundaries agreed with Leader
- Be aware – keep yourself and others safe - look around – take care.
- Use Forest School language – be polite and always use kind words
- Be patient with each other, everyone learns at different rates

If behaviour becomes challenging keep consistent with whole school approach. Should it escalate, give a warning/choice. Failing this, child will be returned to class. Behaviour deemed dangerous by the Forest School Leader will result in the child being excluded from the session immediately.

Safety Sweep

Date:	Time:	Weather:
Name of Forest School Leader: Jo Hollingworth		
Checklist	Yes/No	Comments
Weather effects		
Vandalism		
Low branches		
Fallen branches		
Protruding thorns		
Nettles/brambles		
Slippery areas		
Broken glass		
Standing water		
Boundary fence		
Tool area roped off		
Litter		
Equipment ready		
Other hazards		

Risk Assessment of Forest School Site

Date assessed _____ Signed _____

Hazard	Potential Harm	Existing measures/ New measures	Who will do it? When?	Risk Level L, M, H
Very cold, hot, wet or windy weather	Exposure and dehydration, hypo/hyperthermia	Advise all to wear appropriate outdoor clothing. Wear sun cream and sun hat if very hot. Leave the site in high winds with falling branches. Area under leaning trees or loose branches to be cordoned off.	JH to assess the weather prior to session.	M
Poisonous or thorny plants, berries or fungi	Poisoning, stings, scratches, rashes and sickness, infected wound and damage to clothing	Inform all children of the promise – No picking, no licking. All to be briefed on contact with plants. Keep arms and legs covered at all times. Advise to clean hands before eating or drinking. Advise to wear appropriate clothing.	All adults during each session.	M
Slippery/muddy or uneven underfoot	Sprain, fracture or concussion	Advise group to wear appropriate outdoor footwear. Adults to identify areas appropriate to the access needs of the group. Advise all to walk carefully.	All adults during each session.	M
Tree roots and stumps	Tripping	Inform all to take care on the site. No running reminder applies at all times.	All adults during each session.	M
Tree branches	Branches falling, children falling	Forest School leader sweep. Remove all low hanging branches.	JH Prior to session.	M
Sticks/Stones	Hitting and throwing	Inform children of rules. Use a stick no longer than your arm. No hitting.	JH At the beginning	M

			of each session.	
Faeces	Contamination	During sweep, remove any faeces.	JH Prior to each session	L
Missing child	Exposure, injury, panic and shock.	Walk the boundaries with group. Identify boundaries. Staff familiarise themselves with Lost or Missing Person Procedure	All during each session.	L
Debris / rubbish All adults.	Glass, drug use, metals.	Ask children not to pick up rubbish, but instead to inform an adult if they find something. Adult to remove safely.	Prior to and during each session.	M
Fire	Burns, sparks.	Keep a clear space free from equipment or undergrowth around the fire area. Have extra water available to put out fire. Have burns kit, heat-proof gloves and fire blanket available.	JH Reminder during each session.	H
Food preparation	Food poisoning, allergies.	Check medical forms for allergies. Ensure all food is stored correctly prior to cooking. Ensure all children use hand sanitizer before cooking. Ensure all cooking equipment is clean.	JH and all adults during each session.	M
Stinging and biting insects	Stings leading to allergic response. Tick bite leading to Lyme disease	Brief group on potential for bee and wasp stings and possibility of ticks in the woodland. Check area for nests, avoid contact, first aider always on site, and seek medical aid (999) if anaphylactic shock or adder bites are present. Ask about any history of allergic responses. Ask group to	All adults during session.	H

		check skin for any bites at home and if rash, red halo, or flu type symptoms occur go to doctor. Advice to keep arms and legs covered.		
Tools	Cuts, grazes, amputation.	Tools stored away in locked FS shed. *See separate risk assessment for each tool. Strict supervision, correct use of tools.	JH During each session where there is a tool based activity.	H
Trees	Falls out of trees	First aider on site at all times, support children to manage their own risks. 1:1 ratio during tree climbing.	All adults during each session.	M