

Westhead Lathom St James'
CE Primary School



Forest School Policy

Last Reviewed Date: Spring 2020

Next Review Date: Spring 2023

Issue	Date	Author/Editor	Revision Notes
1	Spring 2020	Clare Glover	Original Policy documents copied into new format, with header, footer and version control. Policy reviewed and updated to ensure reflects current policy and practice.

Mission Statement: Our School Now

Our school provides a secure, caring, stimulating and challenging indoor and outdoor environment that promotes a love of learning. Our children, parents, families, staff, governors and community work together to enable each child to become a happy, healthy, well-balanced individual in preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

The ethos of the school is based on the Christian ideals of commitment, responsibility and respect and love for Jesus Christ, self and others. We are committed to working in partnership with all of those involved in our children's development to lead our children towards tolerance, understanding, justice, and sensitivity to the needs of others and appreciation of the world around them.

Our motto "Enjoy, Respect, Learn, Achieve"

Vision Statement: Our Vision for the Future

'A curriculum that is challenging, inspiring and engaging; in which all pupils flourish spiritually, creatively and academically to become confident young people.'

'With God's power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or imagine.' Ephesians 3:20 New Century Version (NCV)

Aim

We aim to give children, staff and volunteers a shared understanding of the Forest School ethos.

The Forest School learning environment enables children to develop their independence, self-confidence and self-esteem and encourages children to form positive relationships and work co-operatively with others.

Forest School is very much child-led and staff should respond to each child's interests and ideas.

Our Forest School is led by a qualified Forest School Leader (Level 3)

Health and Safety

See separate Health and Safety policy

Safeguarding

The guidance set out below is reflective of our whole school [Safeguarding policy](#) which can be found on the school website. All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect children.

- Forest School leader, support staff and any volunteers will have existing DBS check.
- School staff will have up to date Child Protection training.
- Staff and volunteers are made aware of the implications of physical contact with pupils.
- Photographs only to be taken by staff.
- Any concerns about a child's well-being or a disclosure will be reported to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead via correct school reporting procedures.
- Confidentiality to be maintained at all times.
- All staff should be aware of the Health and Safety Policy and Forest School site risk assessment.

Inclusion and Equality

Forest School is for all children and is flexible to the individual needs of each child who attends sessions.

We aim to:

- Provide a secure Forest School environment where children can flourish and contributions are valued.
- Treat all children equally.
- Make inclusion a thread that runs through all Forest School activities.
- Ensure that children can participate successfully in Forest School sessions, whatever their need or ability may be.
- Provide resources that expand children's horizons, communication skills, general knowledge and understanding of the World around them.
- Ensure that each child is helped to feel secure, to experience success, to develop self-esteem and to learn a range of cognitive, social and physical skills in an environment in which they feel valued and comfortable in.

Forest School is for all

Cancellation

There may be times when Forest School may have to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. These include:

- Adverse weather conditions that pose a risk of safety, for example strong winds exceeding 25mph.
- Staff or volunteer absence-affecting adult/child ratios.
- Any situation that poses a health and safety risk.

Environmental

Children are taught to respect their environment at all times.

Wherever possible, recycled and sustainable materials will be used when appropriate.

Good practice will be modelled by adults demonstrating to children that the World in which we live in should be cared for.

Sustainability

It is important to consider the impact that sessions may have on the Forest School site to ensure the resources that the area provides are available for children year after year.

Long term environmental management is paramount and consideration should always be given if anything is to be removed from the site.

Ecological impact assessment of the site will be undertaken to inform of any impact the sessions are having on the site.

Emergency Procedures

Refer to Forest School Health and Safety Policy

Learning and Development

Forest School represents an alternative teaching and learning environment that is complementary to the indoor classroom and provides an opportunity for active learning in a woodland environment. It involves children visiting the area over an extended period of time.

Routines are learnt and repeated each week providing stability and a sense of security, all important for effective learning.

Risk taking is encouraged and children learn to manage risks to an acceptable level of safety. Understanding risks and knowing how to deal with them is an important part of the Forest School ethos.

Adults are observers and facilitators rather than leaders and directors and follow the child's lead.

At the end of each session, children can be given the opportunity to reflect on what they have achieved in the session and share it with others in the group.

Roles and Responsibilities

FOREST SCHOOL LEADER

- To plan and lead Forest School sessions.
- To ensure all participants are dressed correctly.
- To carry out risk assessment.
- To do a safety sweep of the site prior to any sessions.
- To help maintain the Forest School environment.
- To ensure tools are safe to use.

ACCOMPANYING STAFF

- To take an active role in Forest School activities.
- To help with the supervision of children to ensure they remain safe.
- To report hazards or incidents to the Forest School leader.
- To assist the Forest School leader in ensuring that equipment meets safety requirements.

VOLUNTEERS

- To take an active role in Forest School activities.
- To report hazards or accidents to the Forest School leader.
- To help with the supervision of children to ensure they remain safe.

CHILDREN

- To listen to and follow safety advice given.
- To take some responsibility for their own safety and that of others.