

Flash Ley Forest School Policy

Aim

Forest School is an inspirational process that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through, hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with flora and fauna.

Forest School will provide a wide range of opportunities that will enable each learner to flourish, grow and develop into healthy, confident individuals, promoting social and emotional wellbeing with a balanced approach to holistic development. This enable children to become better learners in the classroom, and to help them develop more positive attitudes and behaviours.

Teaching

Each group of pupils enrolled in forest school at Flash Ley will undertake a 6 week (6 sessions) assessment period, To allow them to familiarise themselves with forest school attitudes, expectations and to allow the forest school practitioner to assess the needs of the pupil group.

Parents

Parents will be informed that their child/ren will be involved in the forest school program. They will agree to their child's participation, and will agree to ensure their child attends forest school with suitable clothing, footwear and a snack,

Pupil Participants

Pupils will be selected to participate in the forest school program. Pupils who are selected will be those who will benefit most from the forest school approach, specifically in regards to self-esteem, self-confidence, positive classroom behaviour and developing an 'I can' attitude.

Risk Assessments

These will be carried out before visiting a new area of the woods and for the use of all tools and equipment. The Forest School Leader will assess weather conditions regularly and will evacuate the area if they become too extreme. All children and adults will wear appropriate clothing depending upon the weather conditions. An open fire risk assessment will be carried out before a fire is allowed and protection procedures followed. A Forest School Leader will be present at all times and children will be reminded of safe practice.

Risk Assessments will include:

- The site of the Forest School
- Individual Risk Assessments for tools (bill hook, bow saw, mallets, knives)
- Open Fire
- Rope and string
- Shelter building
- Collecting natural materials
- Needs of specific children

First Aid

All staff within the pre-school are qualified first aiders and will administer the care needed, the Forest School Leader has an enhanced first aid certificate to specifically cover outdoors. Ensure the safety of all other children within the group and the possible need to evacuate them indoors. Seek emergency help if needed. There will be a first aid kit taken into the woodland area and extra first aid equipment is located within school. Contact the parents and complete the accident report forms, contact HSE if it is a serious accident. Ensure all staff are aware of medical conditions of the children and inhalers, epi pens etc. are taken into woodland.

Use of Tools

Children and adults will be trained in the use of each tool before they use it. Tools will be counted in and out and checked against an inventory. Tools will be stored safely and kept out of the reach of children. They will be cleaned after each use to prolong their life, broken and damaged tools will not be used. Children and adults will be informed of rules, safety and how to use before they use. Tool use will be on a ratio of one to one.

Use of Fires

A Forest School Leader must always be present when a fire is lit and must never be left unattended. There must always be water and a fire blanket available to extinguish the fire.

Children will be reminded of the fire pit procedures at each and every visit.

Walk behind the log seats and stand behind the log.

Step over and sit down on the log seat.

Stand up, turn around and step over the log.

Children are not allowed to cross the inner circle (adults should be role models of this).

Environment:

Wherever possible environmentally friendly products and recycled materials will be used. Flash Ley Primary School will promote environmental awareness and care for our environment. Conservation issues and sustainability will also be supported. The woodland will be maintained to ensure the survival of all native flora and fauna and new flora will be introduced if needed. We will remove all litter and debris we take into the woodland and have regular litter picks to remove other refuse which is in the area. We will be caring towards our neighbours and try to minimise the amount of smoke and noise produced. Brambles and nettles will be removed from the main pathways but will be allowed to grow in other areas of the woodland. Branches at eye level and below on the main pathways will be removed to avoid injuries for people entering the woodland unsupervised (without the Forest School Leader), they will remain on all other trees. Dead and fallen branches will be removed, cut down and stored in the log store and used as fire wood. During the winter months large stones and logs will be left alone to avoid disturbing hibernating creatures. There will be areas created where wood is allowed to rot to encourage insects to thrive, wild flowers will be allowed to grow and children encouraged to enjoy them growing rather than pick them. A hedgerow will be introduced around the edge of the woodland and maintained to encourage small wildlife to live in the woods.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Forest School Leader: will have a level 3 Forest School Leader qualification, CRB enhanced disclosure and an outdoor first aid qualification.

Forest School Leader will have the overall responsibility for:

Risk assessments for each session, pre-visit site checks and continuous safety monitoring.

Planning for sessions, differentiation for individual children's needs.

Ensuring necessary equipment is taken into woodland.

Administration of first aid and first aid kit.

Supervision of tools use, cleaning and storing.

Organising emergency procedures.

Staff/ students / volunteers: will model good practice throughout the session, carry out delegated roles and responsibilities, extend children's learning where appropriate by asking extending questions, support children to manage their own risk, remind children of rules and boundaries, be aware of dangers within Forest School and monitor levels of safety at all times, support the Forest School leader to run the sessions.

All adult helpers will be required to read and sign the Flash Ley Forest School Handbook.

Monitoring of policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or before should any incidents arise or laws and policies change.