



FOREST SCHOOL

Date of Policy/Reviews	Author(s)	Approved by Gov. Body	Signed	Date for Review
Nov 18	Kate McGinn			Nov 19

Forest School Policy

Contents

1. Aim
2. Environmental Considerations
3. Health and Safety considerations
4. Risk Assessments
5. Child and Vulnerable Persons
6. Consideration for Equality and Inclusion
7. Cancellation Procedure
8. Evaluation Procedure
9. Our Vision
10. Daily Operating Procedure
11. Staff Ratios, Roles and Responsibilities
12. Communication Strategies
13. Emergency Procedures
14. Toileting Procedure
15. Lost Children Procedure
16. Procedure for Tool Use
17. Procedure for Fires
18. Procedure for Cooking
19. Safeguarding Policy Addendum
20. Disclosures Policy Addendum
21. Health and Safety Policy Addendum
22. Behaviour Policy Addendum
23. Assessment and Monitoring Policy Addendum

Aim

We aim to give children and practitioners a shared understanding of the ethos of a Forest School experience. This powerful approach enables young children to be independent, resilient, self-motivated, courageous, considerate, and sets them up for life long learning. It particularly supports the development of self-esteem and self-confidence and gives opportunities for children to develop a greater understanding of themselves and how they fit in the world around them. Forest School also offers children the opportunity to understand and care for the natural world around them, and consider factors which contribute to the welfare of all living things in their natural habitat.

There are many important issues to be considered here and we aim to remain true to the Forest School ethos and approach.

Environmental Considerations

Forest School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos. Wherever possible, environmentally friendly products and recycle materials should be used when appropriate. Good practice should be modelled by adults showing children that the world in which we live in should be cared for. Involving children in site checks and planning environmental games will help support this.

Health and Safety Considerations

The Forest School programme will support young children to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will even encourage early risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

Risk Assessments

Detailed risk assessments for: the collecting of natural materials, the Forest School site, group management, fire and outdoor cooking and individual risk assessment of all tools to be used must be available prior to any Forest School session.

Child and Vulnerable Persons

The Forest School Leader and practitioner should regard their duty of care when working with young persons as extremely important. To ensure all individuals (children, workers, volunteers) are safe and protected we strongly recommend the following:

- Everyone involved in Forest School is fully briefed on health and safety and risk assessment of sites and activities. Staff and volunteers should be made aware of the relevant academy policies and ensure that they follow them.
- Members of academy staff will have Child Protection Training.
- The Forest School Leader will have an enhanced level CRB check. It is strongly recommended that any regular volunteer attending Forest School should also have this. Where a volunteer does not hold a current CRB certificate then they should not be left unsupervised with children.
- Vulnerable groups are those under the age of 18 and those people of all ages with a disability or with a diagnosed mental health problem.

- Any concerns about a child's physical or mental wellbeing should be shared with the academy's named Child Protection Person, so that the academy's child protection policy can then be followed.
- We regard safety and good practice as extremely important and it is the responsibility of individual staff and volunteers to ensure general safety during working.
- Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Any concerns should only be shared with those who need to know such as the Forest School Leader or Class Teacher who can then ensure the correct channels are then informed.

Considerations for Equality and Inclusion

In Forest School sessions all persons should be treated equally.

We aim to and are committed to the following:

- providing a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
- including and value the contribution of all children and adults to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- make inclusion a thread which runs through all of the activities of Forest School;

The legal framework for this guidance is:

- Race Relations Act 1976;
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986;
- Children Act 1989; and
- Draft SEND code of practice April 14.

Cancellation Procedure

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

- Staff illness – which prevents staff / child ratios being met.
- Severe weather conditions.
- Any situation that poses a health and safety risk.

In the event of this situation arising we recommend that:

- Cancellation decisions are made as soon as possible and that the academy, staff and volunteers are contacted via telephone.

We will endeavour to run Forest School sessions whenever possible.

Evaluation Procedure

In order to develop the Forest School program and to ensure good practice is maintained a number of evaluation tools are recommended. Evaluation of activities undertaken.

1. Evaluation of session – looking at what dispositions and attitudes are being developed.
2. Evaluation from children.
3. Evaluation from all staff involved in Forest School.

Our Vision

At Rosehill we are committed to providing our pupils with the best quality learning experience we have available, and as such we encourage all children to take part in Forest School, as a means of enhancing and extending their learning in a natural environment.

We believe that Forest School aids the holistic development of our pupils, improving social skills, speaking and listening skills, writing, problem solving and motor skill development.

We encourage the use of our outdoor learning spaces to develop our pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world around us, and the impact we have on its sustainability.

We will provide a safe and caring environment in which pupils can express their creativity and learn to work as a team, learn about woodland management and take calculated risks. The safety of our pupils is always our foremost concern and we will ensure that each activity is planned, executed and assessed to the highest standards.

Daily Operating Procedure

- Leader to share the lesson plans with all adults attending the session.
- Children to be brought into the classroom and the register to be taken.
- Children to be sent to get their Forest School clothing. Any child not having the appropriate clothing can borrow from academy stores.
- Children to carry their outdoor footwear outside and put on underneath the shelter.
- Leader to lead children across playground towards the entrance of Forest School site in a straight line and chanting.
- Children to form a circle outside FS site and one child to be chosen to count everyone in.
- Leader to lead children to Base Camp Fire Pit where they will all wait to be told to be seated.
- Leader to remind children of rules/risk assessments for the session.
- Other adults to follow leader's instructions as to where to position themselves.
- Leader to use the 'Wolf Howl' call, for children to return to the fire pit.

EMERGENCY RECALL WILL BE TWO BLOWS ON A WHISTLE

- At the end of every session children are given the opportunity to evaluate the session.
- Leader to lead children back to school where they will remove their outdoor footwear before entering school and returning to their classroom to get changed.

Staff Ratios, Roles and Responsibilities

All Rosehill Forest School site is on the same site as the academy.

Staff ratios to children will be:

- Foundation—1:8
- Key Stage 1—1:8
- Lower Key Stage 2—1:15
- Upper Key Stage 2—1:15

Other adult roles are listed below:

- Safeguard the children
- Take an active role in the session
- Report any concerns to leader
- Report any hazards to leader
- Discreetly observe the children as per the focus of the sessions and report to Leader
- Familiarize themselves with the planning for the session and the outcomes intended
- Know the location of the 1st aid kit
- Bring and wear suitable clothing

Children's roles are to:

- Bring appropriate clothing
- Follow safety rules
- Take an active part in and enjoy the session
- Evaluate their experiences

Communication Strategy

Class Teachers

The Forest School leader is responsible for evaluating each session and feeding this information back to the Class Teacher where relevant.

Any behavioural issues will be dealt with by the Forest School leader but fed back to the Class Teacher for their information.

The Class Teacher will be responsible for acquainting themselves with the procedures and protocol and understand their roles and responsibilities when participating in Forest School sessions.

The Forest School leader will familiarise the Class Teacher with the planning for the session ahead. The Class Teacher will feed any observations back to the Forest School leader at the end of the session so that planning for the next session can be informed.

Site Manager

The Forest School leader will inform the Site Manager of any hazards or concerns about the Forest School site.

The Forest School leader will inform the Site Manager and office staff when a fire is to be lit in Forest School.

The Forest School leader will confirm Fire Safety arrangements with the Site Manager.

The Site Manager will communicate any hazards on the site or around the perimeter before a session commences.

The Site Manager and the Forest Leader are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Forest School site and its perimeter.

The Forest School leader will regularly update the Head Teacher on the progress of the Forest School sessions and will ensure the safety and well-being of the children at all times

Helpers/Assistants

The Forest School leader will introduce themselves to any helpers or assistants before the sessions begin.

The Forest school leader will check the helper/assistant's CRB credentials and log the reference with the academy business manager.

The helper/assistant will be responsible for acquainting themselves with the procedures and protocol of Forest School at Rosehill.

The Forest School leader will familiarize the helper/assistant with the planning for the session ahead. The helper/assistant will feed any observations back to the Forest School leader at the end of the session so that planning for the next session can be informed.

Parents/Carers

The Forest School leader will send letters to parents/carers of children participating in Forest School sessions at the beginning of the school year, informing them of the benefits of Forest School learning and why the academy feels that it is an important aspect of our school curriculum. This letter will outline the necessity of providing appropriate clothing and footwear for these sessions, but that some will be available from the academy should they require it. Parents will also have the opportunity to experience the 'Forest School' and observe their children in the natural environment, through a family fun after school session - which will be held twice, annually.

Emergency Procedures

Rosehill Methodist Primary School - Access through gates at front of the academy on Rosehill Road or access by helicopter on field at front of the academy.

In the event of an accident to a person or persons during a Forest session the following procedure should be followed.

In the case of serious injury:

- The designated First Aider is to provide emergency First aid to the accident victim using items from the First Aid Bag on site, whilst another adult is sent to get help from the main building. This may include dialling 999 and informing parents/carers or spouses (if adult).
- The other pupils in the Forest School session are to be called together using a two whistle warning.
- (as previously instructed) at the exit, counted out and led back to the main building.
- Access to the playground will be provided by office staff to allow an ambulance to gain entry, if necessary.
- The designated First aider will stay with the accident victim at all times and report to ambulance staff if necessary.
- The designated First aider will fill out the accident book in academy.

In the case of minor injury:

- The designated First Aider is to provide emergency First aid to the accident victim using equipment from the First Aid bag at the scene.
- Adults will supervise the other pupils and help them to remain calm and away from the accident victim.
- The First Aider will accompany the accident victim into the main building after treatment and report the incident to the office staff who will call parents or monitor the victim accordingly.
- The First Aider will fill out the accident book and provide an accident form for parents informing them of the injury and treatment received.
- The first aider will return to the Forest School session.

Toileting during Forest School

All children to be given the opportunity to go to the toilet before the session begins.

Foundation and KS1

An adult to accompany the child to and from the Forest School site. Leader to be informed when they leave and when they return.

KS2

Children do not need to be accompanied but need to inform an adult when they leave and upon return.

Lost Children Procedure

If a child goes missing the following procedure needs to be followed:

- If a child cannot be located after all children are back inside the fire pit circle, and '1,2,3 Where Are You', game has not revealed them, a search of the Forest School site will take place by an additional adult taking part in the session, without alarming the other children.
- Office staff are to be contacted by mobile phone or an additional adult going into academy to check inside and then check the signing out book for taking children home.
- If failure to locate child after above procedures, then the Head Teacher (or Senior Management in HT's absence) will be notified and the Academy's Emergency Plan will take immediate effect.

Procedure for Tool Use

- All tools are to be kept in a padlocked box in a padlocked shed at the rear of the academy. Keys to the shed are kept in the Academy Office and keys to the toolbox are kept by the leader in her classroom drawer.
- Leader to complete a Risk Benefit Assessment before using any tools.
- All tools to be checked by Leader before the session begins to ensure their safety and good condition.
- Ratios for using tools are 1:1 at all times.
- Only Leader or Level 3 qualified practitioner to lead tool use.
- Leader to demonstrate how to use tools in the first instance before any child or additional adult is allowed to use them.
- Tools must be used in appropriate areas.
- Leader will ensure tools are packed away safely and securely at the end of each session.

Procedure for Fires

- All fire lighting equipment to be kept in a labelled metal tin in a padlocked shed at the rear of the academy. Keys to the shed are kept in the Academy Office.
- Leader to complete a Risk Benefit Assessment before using fire.
- Area and fire lighting equipment to be checked by Leader before the session begins to ensure they are in good condition.
- Leader or additional adult to be next to fire pit at all times when fire is lit.
- Leader to ensure all additional adults are aware of location of First Aid Kit containing burn gel and emergency plan in case of extreme injuries.
- Leader to review safety rules of fire pit before lighting fires in the session.
- Fire Blanket, watering can and additional bucket of water to be on hand near the fire at all times.
- One child at a time (when invited by the leader) must stoke the fire and use appropriate fire gloves. Only the leader to cook and demonstrate safety principles at all times.
- Leader to ensure that fire is completely out before leaving Forest School site.

Procedure for Cooking

- Leader to complete a Risk Benefit Assessment before using fire and cooking.
- Area and fire lighting equipment to be checked by Leader before the session begins to ensure they are in good condition.
- Leader or additional adult to be next to fire pit at all times when fire is lit.
- Leader to ensure all additional adults are aware of location of 1st Aid Kit containing burn gel and emergency plan in case of extreme injuries.
- Leader to review safety rules of fire pit before lighting fires in the session.
- Fire Blanket, watering can and additional bucket of water to be on hand near the fire at all times.
- Only leader to stoke fire and use equipment to cook and heat water on, demonstrating safety principles at all times.
- Leader to use an ovenproof glove to touch pots and pans.
- Leader to ensure that allergies and dietary requirements are met before cooking any food.
- Leader to ensure that food is of a good quality and from a reputable retailer.

Safeguarding Policy Addendum

All adults working with or on behalf of children in Forest School sessions have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Included in these responsibilities are:

- The Forest School leader will hold a Level 3 Practitioners qualification in order for them to lead Forest School sessions.
- The Forest School leader will ask parents for permission for their child to take part in Forest School at the beginning of every school year. This form will detail any specific health issues or dietary requirements of each child, as well as up to date contact numbers in case of emergency.
- The Forest School leader will ensure the correct adult to child ratios at all times.
- Only adults with an up to date and enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check will be allowed to participate in Forest School sessions.
- All adults will ensure the confidentiality of all children at all times.
- All adults will be provided with relevant information on a need to know basis about individual children whilst participating in Forest School sessions to keep them vigilant to any specific needs.
- All adults will report any hazards to the Forest School leader immediately.
- All adults will be aware of the emergency procedures specific to Forest School and will carry out these procedures if necessary.

Disclosures Policy Addendum

In the case of a child making a disclosure during and Forest School session, the adult will:-

- Listen to the child and let them speak in their own words.
- Not ask leading questions.
- Never promise the child that they will not tell anyone.

- Speak to the Forest School leader immediately after the disclosure and ask to see the Safeguarding officer. If disclosure is made to the Forest School leader, then they need to speak to the person directly responsible for Safeguarding issues in the academy—Assistant Head Mr. David Whiting immediately after the session.
- Write down everything disclosed using the child's own words and give to the Safeguarding officer.
- Ensure confidentiality of child at all times.

Health and Safety Policy Addendum

In addition to the academys generic Health and Safety procedures, Forest School Health and Safety guidelines will include: -

- The Forest School leader will ensure that there are up to date risk assessments and risk benefit assessments for each activity undertaken in Forest School and placed in Handbook.
- The Forest School leader will ensure that all adults are familiar with Health and Safety procedures during Forest School sessions.
- A qualified First Aider will participate in each Forest School session.
- The correct adult to child ratios will be adhered to.
- A daily risk assessment will be carried out by the Forest school Leader before the sessions take place.
- Forest School will not take place in weather likely to cause harm—lightning or high winds.
- Children and adults will be wearing appropriate clothing and footwear for each session.
- Children and adults will be using appropriate safety equipment during Forest School sessions.
- The Forest School Leader will ensure that the First Aid kit is up to date and appropriately stocked.
- All participants will be advised of the rules and regulations surrounding Forest School sessions and will be made aware of any hazards present at the beginning of each session

Behaviour Policy Addendum

In addition to the general Behaviour Policy adopted by Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy the following guidelines during Forest School sessions are as follows:

- All participants will be made aware of the behaviour expected of them during the Forest School sessions.
- Adults will model appropriate behaviour at all times.
- All participants will be made aware of the rules regarding Forest School sessions.
- All participants will be given an initial 'time out' period if they break the rules.
- Any participant exhibiting behaviour deemed dangerous or likely to cause harm to themselves or others will be removed from Forest School sessions by a member.

- In the event of the removal of a participant from a Forest School session, the parents will be informed by telephone by the Forest School Leader as soon as the session is finished.
- All adults will report any inappropriate behaviour to the Forest School Leader immediately.

Assessment and Monitoring Policy Addendum

During Forest School sessions the following addendum on Assessment and Monitoring will apply:

- All adults will ensure confidentiality of children at all times.
- All adults will report any problems seen during monitoring to Forest School Leader
- All assessment and monitoring data collected will be for the purpose of evaluation of Forest School impact.
- All assessment and monitoring data collected will be for the sole use of the academy.
- All assessment and monitoring data collected will adhere to the academy's Assessment and Single Equality Policy.
- All adults will aim to deliver a high quality education in a friendly, supportive environment whilst promoting the ethos of Forest School learning throughout the session.