



...With full Day Care and Family Services

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## **PINXTON NURSERY SCHOOL Forest Schools Policy**

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## **Introduction**

Forest Schools is a unique method of Outdoor Education that allows children to develop confidence, independence, self-esteem and awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.

It is a child centered and child led programme that provides the opportunity for the children to use their personal learning styles to complete chosen tasks. Thriving to learn all about what they can see, hear, touch, taste and smell. We will encourage problem solving and team building skills through play and use a child's interest to create exciting activities for them as well as understanding that these activities may not always take place. They will leave happy, excited and full of stories to tell at home. They will learn to have a go, take a risk, feel proud and have a sense of belonging.

## **Aims**

- To provide children with experiences that encourages an appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.
- To learn to respect and care for their local environment.
- To abide by rules and set standards of behavior, to work cooperatively in groups and to respect each other.
- Develop children's self-esteem and self-confidence through the setting of small achievable tasks.

## **Environmental Consideration and Conservation**

One of the principles of the Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. The children are taught about respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both the children and adults are encouraged to respect the environment and to be aware of conservation issues of the wild area around them.

Encouraging children to care for the environment is an essential part of Forest Schools. In order to encourage the children to look after the site we will always leave it tidy, and never damage anything growing in it. We will only collect things that are on the ground and leave the area as we found it when we leave.

## **Legislation and Forest Schools**

Health and Safety at work Act 1974 makes it statutory that an employer has a duty to ensure Health, safety and welfare at work of their employees (in the case of schools – Children and adults). Any equipment used by them, and that employees are responsible for the Health and safety of themselves and others they may be affected by their acts. The risk assessments carried out for Forest Schools are written with the Health and safety of all participants in mind: children, parents, volunteers and staff.

The children's act 1989 makes it important to consider adult ratios for all activities, equal opportunities and access, clear communication with parents and CRB checks for staff and regular volunteers. Routines and procedures at Forest Schools are developed with reference to this act and safeguarding practices.

## **Health and Safety**

The Forest Schools curriculum supports children to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will encourage early risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others. A site risk assessment has been carried out.

The Forest Schools Leader has an up to date Paediatric First Aid certificate and is in charge of all first aid arrangements. All staff have paediatric first aid training; A first aid kit is always taken up to the site. The Forest School takes a mobile phone up on to the site in case of emergency to contact the school office and if needed contact emergency services. The school, will contact the parents.

Fire are a valuable part of the Forest Schools experience but will be only lit according to the procedures below.

## **Fires**

\*Please note, we will not be using fires until we have a qualified Forest School Leader to supervise.

- The fire area will be contained within a square shape of logs and within a fire pit.
- The fire will be situated away from low canopy trees.
- The logs will be pegged to stop them rolling.
- Seating logs will be placed in a circle a safe distance away from the fire – 1.5 meters.
- The seating circle will have a clear entrance and exit.
- Walking within the seating circle is not permitted.
- Children will be taught to ask permission before leaving their seat in the fire area and how to leave it safely by stepping backwards.
- The 'respect position' should be used when kneeling by the fire.
- Water will be available to put the fire out and blanket for emergency.
- A fire glove will be worn when using the fire.
- The fire will be lit with a Swiss fire steel.
- The fire will never be left unattended.
- A burns kit is available at all times.
- An unlit fire will always be treated like a lit fire, encouraging good practice at all times.

## **Extinguishing the fire**

All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session. Children will also be invited to help by joining in with the ending ceremony:

Fire must be doused down with water using a cup and a stick, adding water and stirring until all smoke and steam has ceased.

- Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
- The ash should be scattered around the woodland to decompose.

## **Kelly Kettles**

- The Kelly Kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground.
- The Kelly Kettle will be removed from the fire pan by the Forest School Leader.
- The Kelly Kettle must never be heated with the cork in.

- The Kelly kettle steam outlet must be facing away from persons.

### **Cooking Food on a Fire**

- Food hygiene regulations must be followed.
- Hands must be cleaned before eating.
- All food cooked and consumed must be in date.
- An adult will check that food is properly cooked before giving to the children.
- The temperature of the food will be checked before giving to the children.
- No food will be re heated.
- All allergies and dietary requirements will be considered and adhered to.
- If the children are using sticks to toast marshmallows these must be long enough for the children to stand or kneel away from the fire (sticks must be greenwood with all bark removed).
- Food should be placed on or in the fire and removed from the fire using a heat resistant glove. This is always done by an adult.

### **Safeguarding**

Forest Schools sessions are led by a trained Forest Schools Leader and, supported by members of the school staff and parents/volunteers.

Everyone involved in Forest Schools is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of site and activities. Staff and volunteers are made aware of the relevant school policies and procedures and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them. All Pinxton Nursery School staff have a current DBS check.

Any concerns about a child's physical or mental well-being will be shared with the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer and a 'My concern' entry will be completed as soon as possible, so that our schools safeguarding and child protection can be followed. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times.

### **Equal Opportunities and Inclusion**

- In our Forest School, we are committed to equal opportunity for all children and we create an environment in which everyone feels equally valued, regardless of their ethnic heritage, social and economic background, gender, ability or disability.
- We will make every effort to ensure that our activities are accessible to all children and adults by making appropriate changes to the environment, resources and activities. However, there may occasionally be times when we are unable to do this.
- Forest School encourages children to develop positive attitudes about themselves as well as to people who are different from themselves. Children are respected as individuals and given opportunities to participate and succeed regardless of their ability or style of learning.
- Children are asked to attend Forest School session wearing appropriate clothing; some spare clothes are available for children to borrow.

### **Behaviour**

At Forest Schools, we operate within the Behaviour Policy of Pinxton Nursery School. We praise

and reward good behaviour using the established school systems. When a child's behaviour threatens the well-being of themselves or others, and they do not respond to verbal warnings, they will be returned back to nursery. All children have the opportunity to safely access Forest Schools activities in line with their specific needs.

### **Accidents and First Aid**

- All staff have a Pediatrics First Aid certificate and there will always be two members of staff present.
- In the event of illness or injury to any child or adult during a Forest School session, first aid will be administered by a qualified first aider.
- All accidents will be recorded in the Forest Schools Accident book and parents/guardians will be notified verbally at pick up times. Accident forms will be given for head injuries.

### **Emergency First Aid Procedures**

- First aid will be administered by the Forest School Leader or a first aid qualified assistant.
- The Forest School Leader or a first aid qualified assistant will stay with the casualty and monitor their condition.
- An assistant will be asked to call the emergency services, giving an exact location and as much detail as possible.
- An assistant will gather the children for a headcount, keep them calm and call the nursery to alert the head teacher.
- An accident report form will be completed.
- In the event of an injury to the Forest School Leader, first aid will be administered by another qualified member of staff.

### **Risk Assessments**

#### **Site Assessment**

This assesses the risks associated with the Forest School site itself. Each layer of the woodland site is assessed at least once each half term and following adverse weather conditions.

#### **Daily Assessment**

This is carried out before the start of each Forest School session and includes a review of the site and current weather conditions.

#### **Activity Assessment**

An assessment of each planned activity will be carried out before the activity takes place. This will include activities using tools or fire.

#### **Using and Storing Tools**

We will not be using tools without having a qualified Forest School Leader to supervise and they believe the children are ready and able to use tools.

#### **General Rules**

- Tools will be kept maintained and in good order.

- Tools will be inspected before each session.
- Children and adults will not use tools until they have been shown how to use them.
- Tools will be kept in the toolbox or designated area when not in use.
- Tools will be removed from the toolbox only by the Forest School Leader.
- We never run with tools.
- Tools will be counted at the beginning and end of each session.
- Permission to use tools can only be given by the Forest School Leader.
- Permission to use tools may be withdrawn at the Forest School Leader's discretion if the rules are not followed.
- The working area should have sufficient space (at least two arms and a tool away from anyone else except for partner) and be clear of trip hazards.

### **Bow Saw Rules**

- Bow saws must have a blade guard on when not in use.
- Supervision ratios are 1:2
- Bow saws are used to cut anything larger than a 2 pence piece.
- A glove must be worn on the helping hand (children and adult sizes are available).
- Wood being sawn must be supported on a safe cutting bench.
- The crossed hands method must be used to start sawing.

### **Lopper Rules**

- Supervision ratios are 1:2.
- Loppers are used to cut anything smaller than a 2 pence piece.
- Loppers are used with bare hands.

### **Knife Rules**

- Knives must have a sheath on when not in use.
- Supervision ratios are 1:1.
- Knives are always used on the outside of the body and away from the body.
- A glove must be worn on the helping hand (children and adult sizes are available).

### **Billhook Rules**

- Billhooks must have a sheath on when not in use.
- Supervision ratios are 1:2.
- Billhooks are used to split wood and used bare handed.

## The role of the Forest Schools Leader

- The Forest Schools Leader is a trained Level 3 Forest Schools Practitioner and holds an up to date First Aid Certificate. They are responsible for organising the planning and running of all Forest Schools sessions.
- The Forest Schools Leader has the safety of all the children uppermost at all times. The leader will carry out a detailed safety check before each session and comply with health and safety risk assessments.
- The leader will ensure that all documentation is relevant and up to date.
- The leader will carry an emergency pack to include First Aid Kit.
- The leader is responsible for all equipment and will ensure that it is checked before use and returned to the resource area after use.
- The Forest Schools Leader will record accidents in the nursery accident book and keep parents fully informed of any incidents that may occur during a session, e.g. Trips, falls, stings etc.

## Designated Person responsible for Forest Schools – Amy Brooks

### Clothing

Forest School sessions take place in almost all weathers so it is important that everyone (children and adults) are suitably dressed for Forest School activities to ensure that they can fully enjoy and participate.

- It is recommended that long sleeves and long trousers are worn throughout the year to provide protection against sunburn, bites, stings and ticks.
- Layers are the best idea as temperatures and conditions can change significantly during a session.
- Plenty of warm clothing is essential on very cold days.
- Footwear needs to be sturdy.
- Wellies or strong boots are best and remember to add an extra pair of socks in cold weather as cold feet can make you feel particularly miserable.
- Waterproof jackets and waterproof trousers are essential if there is any chance of rain or if the ground is wet, Pinxton Nursery School has a limited supply of these if children need to borrow them.
- Sun hats and sun cream are essential in the summer.

### Poor Weather Conditions

- Forest School sessions will take place all year round and in all weather conditions.
- In extreme weather conditions such as strong winds or thunderstorms, Forest School sessions may be cancelled. In the event of cancellation, a session will be adapted to take place in the in the nursery garden or the nursery room instead.
- In cold weather, the Pod will be used or shelters will be erected and physical activities will be planned to keep children warm.

## Food and Hygiene

- Anti-bacterial wipes, hand cleansing gel and a limited supply of soap and water will be available.
- Wipes will be disposed of in a bag and removed from the site at the end of each session.
- Children will be offered a snack and a drink as usual during the session.
- Children will be asked to wash hands as normal before/after, snacks/meals/toileting etc.
- Children may sometimes be involved in making their own snack.

## Toileting

- Children will be encouraged to use the toilet before leaving the main building, before a Forest School session.
- If children need the toilet during a session, they will be accompanied by an adult to designated area.
- A portable toilet will be available and anti-bacterial wipes will be available for hand cleaning. These will be disposed of in a bag and removed from the site at the end of each session.
- Children in nappies will be changed at appropriate times during the session, away from the group in the Pod. Nappies will be double bagged and taken away from the site for disposal.

## Disposal of Waste

- *General Waste*

A Designated area should be used for waste disposal and all waste taken back into nursery and disposed of.

- *Food Waste*

All food waste should be disposed of in the designated area and taken back into nurseury to be disposed of.

- *Waste Water*

Should be disposed of on site and dispersed evenly around the area. Unless a large amount is left and then this will be taken back into nursery.

- *Recyclable*

All materials should be taken back into nurseury to be recycled.

**Date: Adopted - March 2022**

**Review:**

**Chair of Governors – Nikki Brownbridge**

Version/ Issue	Date	Author	Reason for change