






‘Broadening Horizons’

Forest School Policy

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Policy Review Date:	September 2023	Headteacher Debra Bailey	Signed 	Insert Date 20/09/22
Ratified by Governing Body:				
Sue Welford (Chair of Governors)		Insert Signature 	Insert Date 20/09/22	

		
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Rushey Mead Primary School

Forest School Policy

Vision and aims

‘Broadening Horizons’

At Rushey Mead Primary, we have a shared vision for successful learning that effectively enthuses and engages all of our children. Working together as an effective team we foster a lifelong love of learning and an ambition to succeed.

Learning at Rushey Mead is an experience that:

- Gives all children the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to achieve academic success.
- Puts an emphasis on the essential early acquisition of the English language.
- Offers a challenging, engaging curriculum that develops children’s confidence and resilience.
- Helps children to discover and extend their individual talents and strengths.
- Celebrates the rich diversity of the local community and appreciates its enrichment of school life.
- Prepares children for the future by promoting the importance of making a full, active and caring contribution to the lives of others

Aims and Objectives

This policy outlines the aims of Forest School and gives a collective insight into the ethos of Forest School. It outlines the teaching, organisation and management of Forest School implemented at Rushey Mead Primary School. The aims of Forest School are:

- To increase self-esteem, self-confidence and a positive self-image
- To improve social skills and form positive relationships with peers and adults through enabling children to learn to co-operate and work as part of a team.
- To develop language and communication skills
- To improve physical and motor skills
- To improve motivation and concentration, promoting positive attitudes towards learning
- To increase knowledge and understanding of the environment by providing opportunities that enable children to explore and experience the natural world through a range of physical activities
- To enable children to learn how to take risks and develop strategies in order to do so within the boundaries of safety.

The children’s interests are highly important at Forest School and, along with the varied natural resources in the woodland, are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development. The children will attend Forest School in all weathers, all year round, exploring and learning from the seasons and environmental changes. Appropriate clothing will be worn and during high winds it will be considered unsafe to go into the woods.

Forest School Staffing

Forest School Leader: Mrs R Moody
Forest School Leader
BSc (Hons) with QTS
Science and Forest School Coordinator
Paediatric First Aid qualification

Forest School Leader: Miss H Brown
Forest School Leader
BA(Hons) with QTS
RE and Forest School Coordinator
Paediatric First Aid qualification

Forest School Leader: Miss L Smith
Forest School Leader
BA (Hons) Primary Education with QTS
PE Coordinator and Primary Link Tutor
First Aid at Work qualification

Forest School Leader: Miss L Wright
Forest School Leader
BA (Hons) Primary Education with QTS
Year 5/6 Phase Leader
Maths Lead
First Aid at Work qualification

Forest School Leader: Miss G Sarai
Forest School Leader
BA(Hons) with QTS
History and Forest School Coordinator
Paediatric First Aid qualification

Forest School Leader: Mrs K Sheerin
Inclusion Manager
Forest School Leader
PSHE and Forest School Coordinator
Paediatric First Aid qualification

Forest School Leader: Miss S Richards
Forest School Leader
Early Years and Forest School Coordinator
Paediatric First Aid qualification

First Aid

The Forest School Leader is responsible for First Aid and is qualified in First Aid at Work or Paediatric First Aid.

An Emergency First Aid Kit is carried to all Forest School sessions.

Emergency Rucksack Checklist

Medical Emergency Procedures (laminated)

Whistle

First Aid Kit

Thermal Blanket

Survival bag

Toilet Paper in plastic bag

Teddy Bear

Clingfilm

Bite and Sting Relief Spray

Spare socks, hats and gloves (size appropriate for group).

Emergency Fire-lighting Kit

Accident Book Emergency Contact Details and Medical Records

First Aid Kit Checklist

4 x Medium Sterile Dressing

2 x Large Sterile Dressing

2 x Triangular Bandage

6 x Safety Pin

2 x Eye Pad Sterile Dressing

20 x Saline Cleansing Wipes

1 x Adhesive Tape

1 x Hypafix Tape

6 x Disposable Gloves

2 x Finger Sterile Dressing

1 x Resuscitation Face Shield

1 x Hydrogel Burn Dressing

1 x Tough Cut Shears

1 x Conforming Bandage

1 x Tweezers

Environmental Considerations and Conservation

One of the principles of Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage children to appreciate and take care of the world around them. The children are taught about respecting the environment and taking responsibility for the world around them with careful reference to the sustainable management plan and ecological impact assessment.

Health and Safety Considerations

(Please refer to school's Health and Safety policy).

The health and safety of the adults and children is paramount during any activity and session. Health and safety is reinforced through regular reminders to the children throughout the session. Forest School provides children with opportunities to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own learning. As a result of this, children will develop early risk assessment strategies and understand that actions have consequences. They are encouraged to explore and find out for themselves.

The Forest School Leader will carry out risk assessments at the beginning of each term which will take account of seasonal change. In addition to this, a daily risk assessment will be undertaken before each forest school session. Any activities which are planned are also risk assessed. In the event of an accident or emergency the Forest School Leader will give immediate first aid and send a sensible child to the office with a red card as per the school's policy to gain assistance.

The Forest School Leader and other involved practitioners understand that they have a very important duty of care when working with children at Forest School. To ensure all individuals (children, workers and volunteers) are safe and protected, the following procedures are followed:

- Everyone involved in Forest School is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of site and activities and duties/roles at Forest School.
- Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear must be worn at all times, e.g. waterproofs, sun cream and hats during warm weather.
- All equipment and waste must be cleared away at the end of the session.
- Tools must be stored correctly in school and checked off against the inventory after every session. Children will have 1:3 adult supervision when using tools that are age appropriate.
- Rules and boundaries must be set out clearly at the beginning of each session. Persistently bad behaviour will result in withdrawal from task.
- Everyone must wash their hands before handling food and drink.
- All foods must be stored in plastic bags and left in the fridge if necessary prior to Forest School taking place.
- Water must be stored in a safe place and be accessible when children need a drink.
- Everyone must be aware of any special dietary needs of the group. Any medication and copies of care plans will be in the Forest School Leader's bag.

Dealing with strangers and loose dogs

Children will be informed never to approach any animals or people in the forest area. If loose dogs are encountered in the area, an adult helper should look for the owner and ask them to keep the dog on a lead.

Emergency Procedures

The Forest School site is located on the school site.

In the event of injury to adults or children:

- The Forest School Leader will administer first aid to the casualty.
- The Forest School Leader/Adult helpers will ensure the safety of the remainder of the group.
- The Forest School Leader will have a mobile phone on them in the event of an emergency.
- The Forest School Leader will alert the emergency services if necessary and inform the Head teacher if the incident requires further medical treatment.
- The Head teacher will arrange for parents to be contacted.

Emergency Phone Numbers:

The nearest available phone is Schools Office 0116 2661114

In an emergency dial 999

If an accident occurs to a pupil, member of staff or volunteer/visitor that requires help in addition to first aid i.e. Fire, Ambulance and Police then the LEA must be informed of the circumstances. In the event of serious injury (this includes acute illness, fracture, loss of sight or consciousness or if detained in hospital over 24 hours, or death). In addition to the LEA, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) must be informed; these notifications are a legal requirement.

The 'Accident Report Form' requires a written statement be made with reference to the sequence of events, actions taken and responses and times of these actions. Names of witnesses should be recorded. The statement should then be signed dated and given to the Head teacher. It will be photocopied and the original sent to the LEA.

- Copies of the 'Accident Report Form' will be filed in the school office.
- The process outlined above is of vital importance to the enquiry which will surely follow a serious accident and will be critical to any action for damages or compensation.

Toileting Policy

- Children will be encouraged to go to the toilet before leaving school.
- Children will be sent in pairs back to the school premises to use the toilets

Roles and Responsibilities

The Forest School Leader will have full recognised Forest School qualification, DBS and outdoor first aid qualification and have the overall responsibility for:

- planning of sessions including boundaries, activities and ethos;
- liaison with school staff and governors;
- safety and risk assessment including pre-checks (site and kit);
- nominal role and medical details/parental permission forms;
- administration of first aid and responsibility of the first aid kit, write ups in accident book, mobile phone;
- kit security and a signing in/out procedure; ensuring that any activity kit or clothing is appropriate; Each Forest School Leader to be responsible for their own key.
- supervision of tool use and all tool kit security;
- understanding of, and provision for any SEN of the group/individuals and pastoral needs of group;
- emergency procedures;
- evaluations of sessions.

Volunteers and trainees

Under the guidance of the Forest School Leader, volunteers and trainees will:

- familiarize themselves with relevant School Policies;
- follow the School Behaviour Policy in managing behaviour;
- carry out delegated jobs;
- model good practice;
- support and talk to children, extending their learning as appropriate.

Insurance

Activities are covered by the School's Public Liability Insurance.

Equal Opportunities

(Please refer to Rushey Mead Primary School's Equal Opportunities policy).

In line with the School's Equal Opportunities Policy, everyone involved in Forest School sessions will be treated with respect and equality. Our priority is to ensure that children and adults have access to a safe and secure environment, in terms of emotional well-being and safety. We would like everyone involved to believe that any contributions they make to our sessions will be listened to and appreciated.

Fire Risk Policy

Rushey Mead Primary School aims to develop children's self-esteem, independence and motivation and keep children safe wherever they are. Campfires and use of Kelly Kettles are an important part of Forest Schools and are used as part of planned forest school sessions. Whilst using fires or Kelly Kettles the area is clearly set out, the staff to child ratio remains as 1:6 and safety rules are followed ('Log Circle' rules).

Location

- Fires are only lit in the Fire Circle and are enclosed by logs to prevent the spread of fire.
- Kelly Kettles are to be used on flat open ground and leaf litter should be brushed away before use.

Fire Safety

- Fire is always supervised by the Forest School Leader and never left unattended when lit.
- Safe fire practice is always adhered to.
- There should always be a bucket of water next to the fire.
- Children and staff will be taught and reminded the 'Log Circle' rules:
- Children are not allowed bring anything into the fire circle unless directed to and should not throw anything onto the fire.
- Advice on appropriate way to deal with smoke will be given: Turn your head to the side, place your hand across your face, close your eyes and count to 30.
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of the fire should be avoided.
- If the wind direction is variable, the Forest School Leader should rearrange the seating where possible.
- Any accident should be recorded in the school incident book and procedures evaluated.

Fire Safety

- Fires are lit using cotton wool, tinder and a flint and steel.
- Sticks should be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should not go over the fire.
- Fire gloves should be available and used at all times.

Extinguishing

- All fires should be extinguished at the end of each session.
- Water should be poured onto the fire.
- At the end of the session the fire should be doused with water and the remains should be scattered. Water should be poured on until smoke and steam has ceased.

Kelly Kettles

- Kelly Kettles to be placed on a flat, clear surface.
- Children should feed the fire using sticks as directed by the forest school leader
- Kelly Kettles should have the spout facing away from the user and should never be boiled with the cork in.
- Fuel should burn itself out, but if it doesn't it must be extinguished with water (see above).

Tools Policy

Whilst using hand tools two teaching groups will merge together so that two forest school leaders can support the children.

- Staff to child ratio of 1:3 for bow saws, bill hooks, brace and bit and knives.
- Children to work in groups of 3 when working with tools
- Tools to be kept in a Tool Bag and only one type of tool to be removed at any time. Tools to be counted in and out.
- Tools must be used safely and following instruction ('Tool Talk').
- Staff and children should be given a Tool Talk before using any tools. They should be informed of potential risks, hazards and working methods to minimise these.
- Appropriate training and instruction should be given to everyone (including children).
- Everyone should be aware of potential risks and be educated around how to minimise hazards.
- Any accident should be recorded in the school incident book and procedures evaluated.

Clothing and Protective Clothing Policy

- Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear must be worn at all times (long sleeves and long trousers, no open shoes or sandals).
- Clothing should be weather and season appropriate.
- Protective clothing must be worn when using tools or fires.
- Rushey Mead Primary School will provide waterproof outer clothing for children.

Evaluation Procedure

The Forest School Leader will ensure the Forest School programme is progressive, and undertakes to reflect and evaluate each session after completion. The Forest School Leader will reflect and act on evaluations from children and other staff members and volunteers to inform future planning.