

### Forest School Policy

<b>Formally adopted by the Governing Body of Blue Sky Federation</b>	
<b>On</b>	February 10 <sup>th</sup> 2021
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	<i>Sam Lee</i>
<b>Executive Head Teacher</b>	<i>Laura Watts</i>
<b>Last updated</b>	February 2021
<b>Review</b>	February 2023

#### **Aims**

By producing and adopting this policy for Forest School, we aim to give all children and practitioners a collective insight into the ethos of Forest School.

#### **Forest School**

Blue Sky Federation adopts the full principles and criteria for good practice set out by the Forest School Association. Please refer to the Forest School Association for a full list of the Forest School Principles <http://www.forestschoollassociation.org>

Forest School builds on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves. The Forest school learning environment provides opportunities for children to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, build on their resilience and to form positive relationships with others, to develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others, to learn to cooperate and work with their peers and adults and to develop strategies in order to take risks within clearly defined boundaries of safety.

Forest School is about exploring and experiencing the natural world through practical activities. The children's interests along with the varied natural resources in our woodland are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development, all in the guise of play. The children go out in all weathers all year round, (other than high wind and the threat of lightening) exploring, learning and being aware of the natural rhythm of the changing seasons.

#### **Environmental Considerations and Conservation**

One of the principles of 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 their environment and to be aware of conservation issues of the woodland around them.

The aim is to promote respect for wildlife, which will be achieved through detailed session plans, evaluation and careful reference to our woodland management plan and ecological impact

assessment. If appropriate, reclaimed, recycled and sustainable resources will be used to maintain and develop our forest school site.

### **Health and Safety Considerations (Please also refer to Federation's Health and Safety policy)**

The health and safety of the adults and children is paramount at all times throughout any activity and session. Safe practice is reinforced through regular reminders. The Forest School programme provides children with opportunities to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own learning. Whilst being independent in their learning, they will develop early risk assessment strategies and understand that their actions have consequences.

The Forest School Leader will carry out risk assessments at the beginning of each term which will take account of seasonal change. In addition, a daily risk assessment will be undertaken before each forest school session.

The Forest School Leader and other involved practitioners regard their duty of care when working with young persons as extremely important. To ensure all individuals (children, workers, and volunteers) are safe and protected the following is recommended:

- Everyone involved in Forest School is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of sites and activities.
- Staff and volunteers should be made aware of the school's Health and Safety, Child Protection, Equal Opportunity and First Aid policies and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them.
- All members of staff undertake Child Protection training. Any concerns are reported to the school's named designated safeguarding Officer, to ensure the school's child protection policy is followed.
- The Forest School Leader delivering sessions will have an enhanced level DBS check, as will other members of staff attending Forest School.
- Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear must be worn at all times by both adults and children (e.g. lots of warm layers and waterproof jacket in winter, sunscreen and hats during hot weather)
- We adhere to the school's Safeguarding Policy at all times.

### **Fire**

Fire is always supervised by the forest school staff when lit and is never left unattended. Safe fire practice is always adhered to. A watering can full of water, fire blanket and burns kit will always be by the fire. Children will be taught and reminded of the fire circle Green Guidelines from their first visit to Forest School.

- Stand behind the log
- Step over and sit down on log
- Stand up, turn around and step over log
- Children are not allowed to cross the circle or step into the circle unless invited by an adult supervising the fire
- If moving from one area of the fire circle to the other, they must go round the outside
- We only walk near to the fire circle, never run, jump or swing

### **Food**

Forest School Leaders and other adults are aware of the following when cooking and eating at Forest School:

- Everyone should wash their hands prior to handling food and drink.
- All foods are stored in air tight containers or containers with lids where appropriate
- Only clean equipment is used.
- Everyone is aware of any special dietary needs of the participants who have food allergies and any medication and copies of care plans will be in the Forest School Leaders folder and first aid bag
- Food will be cooked thoroughly and hygienically.
- All equipment and waste is cleared and taken away.

## **Tools**

There is an inventory of tools which are stored correctly in school and checked after every session. Children will have 1:1 adult supervision when using tools that are age appropriate. Tools must NEVER be left with a child without adult supervision.

When tools are not in use they must be placed back from where they came from by an adult and secured.

Green Guidelines and how to be safe are set out clearly at the beginning of each session. Persistently bad behaviour will result in withdrawal from task. If group behaviour is deemed volatile or inappropriate, all tool work will discontinue with immediate implementation.

## **Dealing with strangers, members of public and loose dogs**

Children will be informed to never approach anyone or animal in the forest area. If they do view a member of the public or dog, they must inform a Forest School adult. The Forest School leader will request the owner to keep dog on lead. Do not approach dogs.

## **Kit Bags**

### **Contents of a basic kit are:**

- Full first aid kit including burns kit
- Non antiseptic wet wipes
- Fire starting kit
- Fire Blanket
- Spare clothes
- Bin bags
- Scissors
- String / rope
- Camera / iPad

### **Forest School Leader folder**

- Mobile phone
- Session plan, with specific activity
- Risk Assessment for the day
- Observation Sheets
- Site plan if relevant
- Emergency contact for children, staff and volunteers
- Pen and accident forms (in first aid bag)

## **Bum bag contents**

The bum bag contains tools and must be kept round the Forest School practitioners waist at all times

- Scout knife in sheath
- Bradawl
- Folding saw
- Secateurs
- Small soft toy
- Pen
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Plasters
- Protective gloves
- Medi wipes
- Burns gel
- Eye Wash
- Hair bands

## **Emergency Procedures**

### **In case of injury to adults or children**

- Forest school leader to administer first aid to the casualty
- Ensure the safety of the remainder of the group
- Give instruction to Forest School assistants regarding support of whole group
- Alert emergency services if necessary
- Inform head teacher if incident requires further medical treatment
- Inform parents
- Seek further aid if required

Refer to emergency contacts below:

### **Emergency Phone Numbers**

The nearest available phone is School Office (unless listed otherwise on site emergency information form).

**EPS - 01263 761365**

**NPS – 01263 579396**

**Forest School Leader carries their mobile phone.**

### **In the case of an emergency contact**

Fire Ambulance Police **999**

If an accident occurs to a pupil, member of staff or a visitor that requires help in addition to first aid i.e. Fire Ambulance and Police then the LA must be informed of the circumstances as soon as possible. In the event of serious injury (this includes amputation, serious burns, acute illness, fracture, loss of sight or consciousness, or if detained in hospital over 24 hours, or death) In addition to the LA, the Health & 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 LA. Copies of the 'Accident Report Form' will be filed in line with school processes. 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.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The **Forest School Leader** will have a fully recognised Level 3 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 and additional external partners as appropriate e.g Dr Harrison (Harrison's Wood), Mr Anderson (River Mun/Grove site), Northrepps Parish Council, National Trust
- Safety and risk assessment including pre-checks (site and kit)
- Register and medical details/ parental permission forms
- **Minimum staffing ratio of 1:4**
- 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, any activity kit or clothing is appropriate
- Supervision of tool use and all tool kit security
- Understanding any SEN of the group/individuals and pastoral needs of group
- Emergency procedures
- Evaluations

## **Volunteers and Assistants will**

- Be allocated roles and responsibilities as part of the session
- Model good practice
- Take active part in the Forest School session, such as Forest School name and supporting activities.
- Support, talk with and listen to children, extending independent learning as appropriate
- Observe and make notes when appropriate
- Prepare session equipment required
- Clear away session equipment
- Clean and store equipment responsibly, safely and hygienically

## **Insurance**

Insurance for activities is included within the school's policy. Other sites will be expected to have public liability insurance and a copy will be held in the Forest School folder.

## **Equal Opportunities**

**Please refer to Blue Sky Federation's Equal Opportunities policy**

All people 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.

The legal framework for this guidance is:

In loco parentis

Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

Health and Safety (first Aid) Regulations (1981)

Children Act (1989)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulations (1992)

Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) (1995)

The Protection of Children Act (1999)

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (2002)

Children Act (2004)

Race Relations Act 1976

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

Sex Discrimination Act 1986 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

### **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 to inform future planning.

**For a full outline of policies and processes at Forest School at the Blue Sky Federation please refer to the Forest School Handbook, a copy of which is kept at each school.**