



CASTILION PRIMARY SCHOOL

Engage, Enthuse, Empower



Reviewed	Agreed by Staff	Review Date	Committee responsible for review
September 2020	September 2020	When necessary	Learning and Achievement

FOREST SCHOOL POLICY

This policy is fully compliant with the Amadeus Primary Academy Trust's Principles of Curriculum & Assessment.

Rationale

The philosophy of Forest Schools is to encourage and inspire children through positive outdoor experiences. Children will have the opportunity to learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and most importantly to use their own initiative to solve problems and co-operate with others. The children use full sized tools, play, learn boundaries of behaviour; both physical and social, establish and grow in confidence, self-esteem and become self-motivated.

Forest Schools aim to develop:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Regulation
- Intrinsic motivation
- Empathy
- Good social communication skills
- Independence
- A positive mental attitude, self-esteem and confidence

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 wild area around them.

If appropriate, reclaimed, recycled and sustainable resources will be used to maintain and develop our forest school site. Encouraging children to care for the environment is an essential part of the Forest School philosophy. 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. The Forest School Leader will monitor the site so that it does not become overused and an alternative area will be found and risk assessed if necessary.

Legislation and Forest School

Legislation of importance to Forest School includes the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This act makes it a statutory that an employer has a duty to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare at work of their employees (in the case of schools adults and children) and 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 are written with the Health and Safety of all participants in mind; children, volunteers and members of 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 DBS checks for staff and regular volunteers. Routines and procedures are developed with reference to this act and safeguarding practices.

Health and Safety

The Forest School curriculum supports children to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It encourages 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 and a copy is held in the Subject Leader's File. The Forest School Leader has an up-to-date certificate in Outdoor First Aid and is in charge of first aid arrangements. All staff have first aid training. A first aid kit is taken on all sessions. In the case of an accident requiring further assistance, an emergency contact form is kept in the Office and a mobile phone is carried. The school will contact the parents. Fires are a valuable part of the Forest School experience but will only be lit according to the procedures below.

Safeguarding

Forest school sessions are led by a trained Forest School Leader (to be decided), supported by members of staff and parent volunteers. Everyone involved is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of sites 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 staff and regular volunteers have current DBS checks. Any concerns about a child's physical or mental well-being will be shared with our named Safeguarding Officers and a Cause for Concern sheet will be filled in as soon as possible, so that our school's Safeguarding Policy can then be followed.

Equality and Inclusion

During Forest School all persons are treated equally. We aim to provide a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.

Behaviour for Learning

We praise and reward good behaviour using the established school systems. When a child's behaviour threatens the wellbeing of him/herself or others, and he/she does not respond to a verbal warning, s/he may be returned to school.

Risk Assessments and Risk Management

- Risk assessments are in place to cover the following:
- Site Assessment
- Sessions and activities
- Tool use
- Campfire Activities

Safety Sweep and checklists

The Forest School leader will carry out a thorough sweep of the site for hazards and risks before the group enter the site and appropriate measures will be put in place, e.g. the removal of an object, or warning the group of specific dangers related to the site. The safety sweep will be recorded on a safety sweep form and kept in the Subject Leader's file.

Policy and Procedures for Use of Tools and Equipment

Tools and safe use of tools are an important part of Forest School. Their use will be carefully managed by the Forest School Leader with an area of the site set aside for tool use. Introduction to each tool will be by an official 'Tool talk'.

- Good practice will be demonstrated by the Wild at Heart Leaders at all times.
- Tools will be introduced to the children only when the Forest School Leader feels the children are ready.
- All tools will be used on a 1:1 adult to child ratio when using them.
- Risk assessments of tool use are carried out in addition to other Forest School activities and reviewed on a regular basis.
- It is not expected for any other adult attending Forest School to use tools with children, only the Forest School Leader.
- All tools will be returned to the tool bag and locked away at the end of each session. This is the Forest School Leaders responsibility.
- All resources and equipment are checked regularly.
- Any unsafe, worn out, dirty or damaged equipment is repaired and cleaned, or replaced.

Policy and Procedures for Lighting Fires

Before lighting a fire at Forest School, the following should be in place:

- Children must have a secure knowledge of log circle safety
- 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

In addition to the other resources, a large container full of water should be available in case of emergency.

When lighting a fire

- Only a trained Forest School Practitioner will take responsibility for the fire. This will be their sole responsibility for the session. They shall be responsible for lighting it, manning it while it is burning and putting it out at the end of the session.
- The fire shall be contained within the area marked out within the centre of the log circle.
- The ground around shall be cleared of flammable material.
- Check for low overhanging trees.
- Have a container of water beside the fire to put it out and deal with burns.
- The flames of the fire should never reach higher than the knee.
- While the fire is being lit, the children will be engaged in activities elsewhere.
- The fire will be extinguished before the session ends.
- NO fires will be lit during peak fire risk periods.
- All adults are aware of the following when cooking and eating at Wild at Heart:
- Everyone should wipe their hands before handling food and drink.
- All foods are stored in air tight containers.
- Only clean equipment is used.
- Everyone is aware of any special dietary needs of the children who have food allergies and any medication they need.
- Food will be cooked correctly.
- All equipment and waste is cleared away.

The role of the Forest School Leaders

- The Forest School Leader is a trained Level 3 Forest School Practitioner and holds an up to date Outdoor First Aid certificate.
- They are responsible for organising the planning and running all Forest School sessions.

- The Forest School leader has the safety of 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 at all times.
- 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 School leader will keep an accident book and keep parents fully informed of any incidents that may occur during a session, eg, trips, falls, stings, etc.

Forest School Rules

- Keep your hands away from your mouth
- Leave things to grow
- Keep within the set boundaries

Routines and Procedures

- The Forest School Leader will do a sweep of the site prior to the sessions.
- Waterproofs and spare wellies are kept in the Forest School shed.
- Prior to the session children will be toileted, put on their waterproofs. Safety rules will be shared with the group. Children will put wellies on the outside the classroom door and walk in pairs to the site.
- During the session children participate in a variety of activities which are totally inclusive, thus catering for all ability levels.
- They are taught a variety of woodland skills through practical hands on activities. They also learn how to light fires safely.
- The children learn the care and safe use of a wide range of tools. This is a tightly supervised activity on a 1:1 ratio of adult to children. It is introduced gradually in small steps. Children are encouraged to listen attentively to instructions and to take responsibility for their actions. This is achieved by games that also encourage respect for the environment.
- Back at school children will remove wellies out doors or standing on sheeting (if very wet), before entering the classroom.
- After the session, equipment will be washed and stored as appropriate. Waterproofs will be dried and hung on rails. Flasks and water containers will be emptied and cleaned out. Tools (if taken) will be cleaned and locked away in the Forest School shed.

Toileting considerations

All children will visit the toilet before leaving the Classroom. Any children needing the toilet during the session will use the nearest school toilets. KS2 children are able to go unattended, KS1 and FS must be accompanied by an adult.

Monitoring and Review

The curriculum and policies are subject to regular review, responding to statutory requirements and relevant evidence-based advances in pedagogy, educational thinking and technology, reflecting the Trust Principles of Teaching and Learning. Regular curriculum updates are given to Local Governing Bodies.

Signed: Head Teacher

Date:

Signed: Chair of Governors

Date: