



**Thriftwood**

Specialising in Business & Enterprise

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# Forest School Policy

December 2018

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Forest School is an integral part of the school curriculum and its contribution to the development of “the whole child” is highly valued.

## **Aim**

We aim to give children and practitioners a shared understanding of the ethos of a Forest School experience. This powerful approach enables children to be independent, self-motivated, courageous and considerate.

It sets them up for life-long learning and particularly supports the development of self-esteem, self-confidence, team work and resilience.

Forest School provides an opportunity to explore and experience the natural world through practical activities. Children go out in all weathers, except in extreme circumstances, such as gales and lightning, to explore and learn from nature, the seasons, environmental changes and simply being outdoors.

Forest School makes use of natural woodland resources to stimulate creative thinking and develop problem solving skills.

## **Environmental Considerations**

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

## **Role of the Adult**

Forest School Leaders and any other adults supporting learning need to understand the ethos of Forest School. The adults’ role is largely concerned with facilitation rather than direct teaching or the imparting of knowledge. All adults should encourage and support pupils, guiding pupils into self-discovery, and modelling skills and language where appropriate. They should allow appropriate risk-taking and

reflection of pupils' actions. Observing pupils is an important part of the process and all adults need to be familiar with the needs of the individuals and what information they are to focus on.

### **Evaluation Procedure**

In order to develop the Forest School programme and to ensure good practice is maintained a number of evaluation tools are used.

- Informal evaluation of sessions and the activities undertaken
- Observation of individuals' social interaction and behaviour and their emotional and physical health, well-being and development
- Evaluation/feedback from pupils, parents/carers and adults involved in Forest School

### **Health and Safety**

Our Forest School programme will support pupils in developing responsibility for themselves and others. It will even encourage early risk management strategies that will ensure that pupils start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

Everyone involved in Forest School should familiarise themselves with relevant policies, including health and safety, risk assessment of sites and activities and adhere to the guidance contained in them. 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.

Our Forest School sessions are either within our onsite wildlife area or in our small woods which is close by. There will be a minimum staff ratio of 1:7 children; to include a qualified Level 3 Forest School Practitioner. All sessions and activities will adhere to the recommendations in the Forest School risk assessments. A school visit form will also be completed which considers individual's needs and behaviours as well as transport, contact details, group numbers and ratios. Forest School first aid kits are taken each session and often supplemented with a 'safety sack' containing other items for ensuring the welfare of the group. Emergency procedures are in place and are practised regularly.