

WOOD FOLD PRIMARY SCHOOL

FOREST SCHOOL POLICY



Policy written (date):	September 2022
Policy reviewed date:	October 2024
Policy published (including on the website):	October 2024
Next review (date):	Ongoing to reflect practice

Statement of Intent

Wood Fold Primary School aims to use the natural outdoor woodland area to offer the children an insight into the Forest School ethos. This approach to outdoor learning encourages children to become independent, use their imagination, take appropriate risks within boundaries and initiate learning for themselves. Forest School is a holistic approach to learning, incorporating children's individuality and develops their skills for lifelong learning. It can cover many areas of learning, including the emotional and spiritual aspects of learning where self-esteem and self-confidence can grow and positive relationships with peers can be formed. Forest School explores the outdoors and the natural environment with practical, useful activities all year round. It develops peer learning with the adults providing support and enabling activities to take place. The child's interest will be at the heart of any activity.

Wood Fold Primary School has many additional policies which will be adhered to alongside this policy during Forest School sessions:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy

Legislation considered for policy

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Children Act 2004

RIDDOR (Accident Reporting)

Implementation

Our Forest School sessions will be delivered by our Level 3 Forest School leader. They deliver this program following the guidance set out in this document. A copy of all policies and procedures will be taken into the woodland on each visit, this contains vital information needed for each session which includes procedures in the event of an emergency etc.

Each year group has a planned Forest Schools Project for the duration of a half term.

Before the children complete each Forest Schools session, a thorough check of the school grounds is completed. (See Appendix 1- Risk Assessment).

Equality and Diversity: All children will be included with all activities and no form of discrimination will take place, reasonable adjustments will be made to make it inclusive for all. Inclusion is a thread which runs through all of the Forest School activities regardless of a child's ability, disability, gender, race, culture, etc Wood Fold Primary School has an Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy and an Equal Opportunities Policy which will be adhered to during Forest School sessions.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Forest School Leader will have the overall responsibility for:

- Risk assessments for each session, pre-visit site checks and continuous safety monitoring.
- Planning for sessions, differentiation for individual children's needs.
- Ensuring that once on site, rules are followed and continue to risk assess during the session.
- Ensuring necessary equipment is taken into woodland.
- Administration of first aid and checking first aid kit.
- Supervision of fire use, following procedures set out in this document
- Supervision of tools use, cleaning and storing.
- Organising emergency procedures.
- Ensure site is left as it was found after every session

Staff/ students / volunteers: will model good practice throughout the session, carry out delegated roles and responsibilities, extend children's learning where appropriate by asking extending questions, support children to manage their own risk, remind children of rules and boundaries, be aware of dangers within Forest School and monitor levels of safety at all times, support the Forest School leader to run the sessions.

Health and Safety Policy:

Forest School sessions by their nature encourage children to develop their own risk management skills and will support them to become responsible for themselves and others around them. Children will be reminded of rules and safe play if what they are doing is deemed too dangerous. Ratios within the woodland area will be 1 adult to 10 children. All staff and helpers will be DBS checked. Risk assessments will be carried out before each visit and for the use of all tools and equipment. The Forest School Leader will assess weather conditions regularly and will evacuate the area if they become too extreme. All children and adults will wear appropriate clothing depending upon the weather conditions.

An open fire risk assessment will be carried out before a fire is allowed and protection procedures followed. A Forest School Leader will be present at all times and children will be reminded of safe practice. The school has a Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy etc. to enhance aspects of health and safety

Risk Assessments will include:

- The site of the Forest School
- Equipment and Activities
- Open Fire
- Individual Risk Assessments for tools (bill hook, bow saw, mallets, knives), where applicable

Emergency Procedure:

In the event of an emergency the following will happen;

- Emergency Whistle blown
- Children advised to put tools down by other adults in surrounding areas and to await further instructions.
- Forest School Leader to assess situation and remove any hazards.
- Once any hazard has been removed the leader will deal with the incident or follow the first aid procedures in the case of an accident.

Lost child Procedure

- As soon as it is discovered that the head count at any particular moment does not agree with that recorded at the start of that session, the Forest School Leader will be informed, if unaware
- If an immediate recount still shows a shortfall, all activities will be suspended and "1, 2, 3, come to me" call will be used to rally all group members.
- One adult will be released for a five-minute search of the immediate area, whilst another adult occupies the remaining children with a game/song or story. The main aim to prevent anxiety escalating amongst the children, "1, 2, 3, come to me" will be carried out once more.
- If the five-minute search does not discover the missing child/children, the Forest School Leader will take the group back to school, retracing the paths taken earlier. One adult will stay in the area to continue looking, contact will be maintained by walkie talkie.
- If the group and leader cannot locate the missing child/children, and if the searching adult has not found anyone, the school office will be notified to alert any supporting staff to help in the search.
- At this point, the Headteacher will be notified by the Forest School Leader of the current situation. The Headteacher may choose to alert Police and Parents and follow the appropriate policy and process.
- Forest School Staff should immediately make a record of events and timings and last known position of the child/children. These will be recorded in the Forest School incident book.

First Aid Procedure:

- A number of staff within the school (including the current Forest School Leader) are qualified first aiders and will administer the care needed.
- First aid kit will be taken to all sessions and will be checked regularly
- Whilst dealing with a first aid incident, the leader will ensure the safety of all other children within the group by advising other adults present of the situation and ask them to monitor the other children, if alone children will be call to the area that the leader is in and if necessary all children will be taken indoors.

- Seek emergency help if needed.
- There will be a first aid kit taken into the woodland area and extra first aid equipment is located within the school.
- Contact the parents and complete the accident report forms
- Ensure all staff are aware of medical conditions of the children and inhalers, epi pens etc. are taken into woodland.

Behaviour Procedure

The Forest School leader will follow the school's Behaviour Policy, however if the behaviour of an individual, or group of individuals is such that it puts their own and others safety at risk then the individual(s) may be required to return to the school building with an accompanying adult. This will be at the discretion of the Forest School leader.

Weather conditions

Following the Forest Schools ethos of.....'there is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing!' Children are advised to dress warmly and wear waterproofs if necessary. However, there are some occasions where it may not be safe or practical to go ahead with a planned session due to extreme weather;

- In the case of high winds of 25mph or more determined by the met office online.
- In the case of extreme temperature determined by a met office amber weather warning
- In the case of extreme cold of below '0' a session will be cancelled if it is near to this we will ensure children are appropriately dressed, sessions will be made shorter and activities will be planned to ensure children are kept moving.
- In the case of heavy rain.

Food safety and Hygiene Procedures:

Children at Forest Schools are taught a strict NO eating rule, unless it is a specific activity led by an adult to prepare and cook food. Initially, when children are ready they will participate in simple cooking on the fire activities which include; toasting marshmallows/waffles and making s'mores. There is always a staff member present with food hygiene training, when food is being handled and prepared.

Food Preparation, transport and storage;

- Hands will be washed thoroughly and any cuts/grazes covered in the correct manner (blue plaster or ideally gloves) before handling and preparing food.
- Any food needing preparation will be prepared in the school kitchen e.g. bread dough
- Food will be stored in clean containers and transported in a cool bag to and from the site, with any clean utensils and cooking pans required. The box will remain closed in between use with food covered in bags or boxes; to avoid attracting flies and other insects.
- Raw meats will be stored separately to any other foods.
- All 'use by' dates will be checked on foods before eating.
- Water for cooking will be provided in cleaned sealed storage container.

Handling, cooking and eating Food;

- A fresh, clean, bucket of warm soapy water will be available for children to wash their hands before handling food or utensils
- Children are taught how to cook food safely following the activity risk assessment and fire procedure. All food will be checked by an adult to ensure it is fully cooked before eating.
- Children will be asked to sit still around the fire circle or to move to a designated eating area from the fire to keep numbers to a minimum near the fire circle.

Clearing away and cleaning up;

- ALL food not eaten or cooked will be placed in black bin bags and disposed of in the school bin at the end of the session by one of the adults.
- The area is checked to ensure there is no food traces to avoid vermin being attracted to the area. □ ALL utensils and pans will be washed at the station in hot soapy water and stored away correctly.

Use of Tools procedure

- Children and adults will be informed of rules, safety and trained in the use of each tool before they use it. Tool use guidance documents will be carried by the leader during each session and tool use ratios will be at the discretion of the Forest School Leader. Ratios will be set out in the session risk assessments.
- Relevant personal protection equipment will be worn at all times.
- Tools will be counted in and out and checked against an inventory.
- Tools will be stored safely and kept out of the reach of children.
- They will be cleaned after each use to prolong their life, broken and damaged tools will not be used.

Use of Fires procedure

- A Forest School Leader must always be present when a fire is lit and must never be left unattended. There must always be water available to extinguish the fire.
- Fires will be built in a designated fire area: if a tarpaulin is placed above the fire it should be approximately 8 foot above the fire and seating will be at a distance of 1.5 meters. Relevant personal protection equipment will be used bring fire building.
- Children will be reminded of the fire pit procedures at each and every visit.
 - Walk behind the log seats and stand behind the log.
 - Step over and sit down on the log seat.
 - Stand up, turn around and step over the log.
 - Children are not allowed to cross the inner circle (adults should be role models of this).
- The fire box containing fire retardant gloves, first aid kit and fire blanket should be placed close to the fire circle along with a covered bucket of clean cold water.

Environment:

Wherever possible environmentally friendly products and recycled materials will be used. Wood Fold Primary School will promote environmental awareness and care for our environment. Conservation issues and sustainability will also be supported. The woodland will be maintained to ensure the survival of all native flora and fauna and new flora will be introduced if needed. We will remove all litter and debris we take into the woodland and have regular litter picks to remove other refuse which is in the area. We will be caring towards our neighbours and try to minimise the amount of smoke and noise produced. Brambles and nettles will be removed from the main pathways but will be allowed to grow in other areas of the woodland. Branches at eye level and below on the main pathways will be removed to avoid injuries for people entering the woodland unsupervised (without the Forest School Leader), they will remain on all other trees. Dead and fallen branches will be removed, cut down and stored in the log store and used as fire wood. During the winter months, large stones and logs will be left alone to avoid disturbing hibernating creatures. There will be areas created where wood is allowed to rot to encourage insects to thrive, wild flowers will be allowed to grow and children encouraged to enjoy them growing rather than pick them. The hedgerow around the edge of the woodland will be maintained to encourage small wildlife to live in the woods. The forest school area is at the back of the field.

Monitoring of policy:

This policy will be reviewed annually or before should any incidents arise or laws and policies change.

Appendix 1:

Site Risk Assessment
(Forest School/ Early Years Garden/ KS2 Grass Area)

<u>Hazard</u>	<u>Harm</u>	<u>People at risk</u>	<u>Measures to be taken</u>	<u>Responsibility and timescale.</u>	<u>Occurrence</u>	<u>Harm (potential)</u>	<u>Risk potential (occurrence x harm)</u>
Waste/litter	Glass, drug use, metal cans, food packaging.	All	Pre-visit check and continuous monitoring. Children not to pick up rubbish but inform adult if they see something hazardous. Remove and dispose of safely following school procedure for waste disposal.	Leader prior to and during visit	4	2	Low – 8
Animal droppings	Contamination and disease	All	Pre-visit check and continuous monitoring. Sign to say No Dogs on school property. Remove and dispose of safely following school procedure for waste disposal.	Leader prior to and during visit.	2	3	Low – 6
Boundaries	Escaping children. Members of the public	Children	Ensure the gates are closed when in FS area. Ensure safe supervision on way to and from site following guidelines on School Risk Assessment Policy. Inform children of boundaries, staff supervise boundaries when in site. Staff to be aware of members of the public walking along the footpath.	All on visit	2	2	Low – 4
Fences	Broken or loose fences	All	Check fences are intact and safe especially after stormy weather – replace as necessary	Leader prior to visit.	2	2	Low – 4
Trees	Fallen trees	All	Leader with Outdoor First Aid always present. Leaders to support children to manage their own risks and stop when they feel unsafe.	All on visit	3	4	Low - 12
Tree branches	Branches falling, the children falling due to branch breaking	All	Pre-visit check and continuous risk check to look for dead wood hanging in trees, dead branches, and damage to trees. Remove hanging dead wood.	Leader prior to visit and all staff on visits.	3	4	Low – 12

			Remind children of risks. Annual check by Tree Safety Company				
Trees, roots stumps and uneven ground	Tripping and landing on them Falling off stump. Falling over holes in the ground	All	All participants reminded to walk around with care under the trees and uneven parts. Show new participants the exposed roots and inform of any danger. Remind children to take care on tree stump and look before leaping off.	All on visit	3	3	Low – 9
Berries and other seeds on flora.	Poisoning	All	Inform children not to pick and eat any berries without an adult present. Remind children not to put anything in mouths. Wash hands carefully before eating.	All on visit	3	3	Low – 9
Fungi	Poisoning	All	Remind all participants to “Look, don’t touch” at any fungi, toadstools, or mushrooms.	All on visit.	3	3	Low – 9
Nettles, brambles and other weeds	Stings and allergic reaction	All	Make participants aware of nettles and other weeds Keep central play area clear of nettles and weeds All participants to wear long trousers	All on visit	5	2	Low – 10
Bee’s, Mosquitoes, Wasps, and Ticks.	Stings, bites and allergic reaction.	All	Check area for nests – particularly the willow as wasps are attracted to it in June/July Avoid contact with bees/wasps Leader with Outdoor First Aid always present. Call 999 if anaphylactic reaction to sting Children to wear long trousers. Parents reminded to check for ticks after visit.	All on visit	2	3	Low – 6
Fire Lightening	Burns to fingers and hands from the sparks and fire.	All	Safety talk given prior to lighting each fire with reminder of rules for the fire circle, children asked to say / repeat the rules to ensure they have understood them. Water is always available at the side of the fire and sticks etc to be collected before the fire is lit. Gloves used		3	4	Low – 12

			when needed. Children to sit on logs/planks while the fire is lit. Only trained Forest School Leader to light fires with children. School to be informed.				
Cooking	Burns to mouth Burns to hand when handling pan, tinfoil, cooking stick	All	Leader with Outdoor First Aid always present. Cooking on a one-to-one basis or in small group dependant on age and activity. Strict supervision by all staff Children taught safe and correct handling of cooking implements Gauntlets/gloves provided	All on visit	3	4	Low – 12
Pond	Drowning, possible death	All	Children not lean or go under the fence, to stand on the path. FS leader only to conduct pond dipping. Safety talk before and during the activities.	All on visit	2	6	Low- 12
Weather – heavy rain, snow, ice and wind.	Getting wet and cold.	All	Children to be fully clothed with warm clothing and protected with waterproof clothing. Suitable waterproof footwear, wellingtons and walking boots.	Leader prior to visit and during	2	2	Low - 6
Weather - Sunshine	Heatstroke and exhaustion from the sun.	All	Children to have sun cream applied, a hat to be worn, a water bottle to be taken with them. Shade to be provided and rest throughout the session	Leader prior to visit and during	2	3	Low - 10

Occurrence

- 1 – Impossible
- 2 – possible
- 3 – occasional
- 4 – Frequent
- 5 – Regular (3-6month occurrence)
- 6 – common (1-3 months occurrence)
- 7 – continuous

Harm

- 1 – trivial
- 2 – minor
- 3 – lasting more than 3 days
- 4 – major injury to 1 person
- 5 – major injury - several
- 6 – death of 1 person
- 7 – multiple deaths

Risk Potential =

- Occurrence x harm**
- 1-14 = low
 - 15- 24 = medium
 - 25+ = high

Tools and Equipment

General rules for tool use:

- All tools must have additional risk assessment in the Forest Schools Folder.
- All tools to be stored in school in a locked cupboard, with Forest School leader having overall responsibility and access.
- Forest School Leader has responsibility and safe storage of tools at Forest School site.
- A designated area will be used for activities involving tools.
- Adults and children to sit when using tools.
- Never walk around with tools.
- Tools are to be clean and sharp before use.
- Children can only use tools with the Forest School Leader.

TOOL RISK ASSESSMENT (WOOD FOLD PRIMARY SCHOOL)

NAME: Miss Bullen and Mrs Grimshaw

ASSESSMENT DATE: 5.2.24 / 2.9.24

REVIEW DATE: September 2025

ACTIVITY	HAZARD	Who's at risk and how?	Risk Level Without Precautions	PRECAUTIONS To reduce the risk level	Who will do them?	When Before, During or After?	Risk Level with Precautions
Bowsaw	Cuts and grazes to hands and fingers.	All	Medium	-Tool safety talk -safe tool use demonstration -space around tool use -handling and safe storage - observe technique and adjust accordingly	FS lead	Before and during	Low
Hand drills	Puncture wounds and scratch marks.	All	Low	-Tool safety talk -safe tool use -space around tool use -handling and safe storage - observe technique and adjust accordingly	FS lead	Before and during	Low
Fixed Blade Knife / Penknives	Cuts to fingers.	All	Low	-Tool safety talk -safe tool use -space around tool use - handling and safe storage - observe technique and adjust accordingly	FS lead	Before and during	Low
Junior Hacksaw	Cuts and grazes to hands and fingers.	All	Low	-Tool safety talk -safe tool use -space around tool use - handling and safe storage -observe technique and adjust accordingly	FS lead	Before and during	Low

Peelers	Grazes and scratches to hands and fingers.	All	Low	-Tool safety talk -safe tool use -space around tool use - handling and safe storage - observe technique and adjust accordingly	FS lead	Before and during	Low	
Secateurs	Minor gashes, cuts to fingers and hands.	All	Low	-Tool safety talk -safe tool use -space around tool use -handling and safe storage - observe technique and adjust accordingly	FS lead	Before and during	Low	