



## Forest School at Amington Heath

Forest school is holistic learning through play and exploration, children learn about the environment, how to handle risks and use their initiative to solve problems and to co-operate with others.

Through weekly sessions to our forest school site, every child will access learning and development within the natural world around them.

All learning is linked to mini-adventure key objectives and sessions created to enhance learning in all curriculum areas.

Every child will succeed through inspirational, stimulating, hands on experiences, developing their self-esteem, confidence and responsibility.

### What is Forest School?

The philosophy behind Forest school is to promote education in an outdoor environment. Encouraging appreciation and awareness of the learners' surroundings to promote a holistic approach to learning.

A non-assessment approach to learning is key within a Forest School program to help enhance the learners' resilience, self-esteem and confidence.

Using the outdoor environment learners are able and encouraged to take responsibility for the natural world.

There are 6 principles that under pin the Forest School ethos.

1. **Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment.**
2. **Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support and develop the relationship between learner and the natural world.**
3. **Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.**
4. **Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.**
5. **Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.**
6. **Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.**

## Aims and Objectives

To promote opportunities for learning in an outdoor environment. Forest School is a long term process with regular opportunities to achieve. Building on each session to promote confidence and skills in a range of areas using multi senses. Giving the learner the freedom to build on their own skills and interests while taking controlled risks.

Using a variety of tools and equipment we aim to enhance learners' confidence and self-esteem while they are able to explore the natural world.

Each session will build on the skills gained and are designed to build on an individual's innate motivation, positive attitudes and /or interests.

The session will be child led and focused on play and choice as this is an integral part of Forest School learning process.

The forest School program is designed to expose children to a dynamic environment while giving them the choices and freedom to explore and develop their own natural skills.

Each session will also end with a reflection period, ensuring learners and practitioners can understand their achievements, develop emotional intelligence and plan for the future. This is hugely beneficial with regards to the current concerns over child mental health.

## Managing Forest School

### Roles and Responsibilities Policy and Procedure

The Forest School leader is responsible for the overall management of Forest School within the setting. This includes:

- Reviewing and updating relevant policies and procedures within the hand book
- Carry out, review and update risk assessments
- Ensure all staff involved are aware and are following all relevant policies and procedures
- Engage with all adults involved in Forest School to ensure they have read and understand all the relevant risk assessments
- Carry out all site and risk assessments and ensure all findings are communicated to all participating adults/children
- Maintain a vital communication link with parents of children partaking in Forest School to ensure all medical needs are met and appropriate clothing is worn
- Communicate with class teachers to ensure the needs of the children are met especially if they are on the SEN register or have any child protection concerns/needs
- The Forest School leader and adult will carry the correct first aid kit as stated in the First Aid Policy and Procedure. Forest Leader to hold valid 'Outdoor First Aid' and 'Paediatric First Aid' certificates
- Forest School leader will always carry emergency contact details (including any medical/allergy needs) as well as a mobile phone
- All adults partaking in Forest School must hold an up to date DBS.
- Ratio of a minimum of 2 adults for every 15 children, with the exception of early years where 1 adult per 5 children is required
- Weather conditions will continually be monitored by the Forest School leader to ensure the safe running of activities. If deemed necessary, then the Forest School leader will move from the forest area to an open space (in severe wind conditions). Cancellation of Forest School should be the last option, when conditions are too risky and not safe for both adults and children (please refer to weather policy). Forest School should be enjoyed in all weather conditions so the communication between parent and child is paramount to ensure the child has the correct protective clothing
- Regular safety inspections are carried out on both site and equipment by Forest School leader, as laid out in Health and Safety Policy, Risk Management and Assessment policy, Tool Procedure and Risk Assessment Procedures

### Risk Management and Assessment Policy and Procedure

At Amington Heath Primary School, the health and safety of both pupils and staff is paramount. In order to ensure the safety of the above, the Forest School leader will ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out for all tasks, activities, locations and work activities that present a significant hazard in their areas of responsibility.

This is done by –

- ✓ Identifying the hazard
- ✓ Decide who might be harmed and how
- ✓ Evaluate/assess the risks and decide on the precautions to control the risks
- ✓ Control the risk
- ✓ Record and implement findings

The Forest School leader is responsible for the site risk assessment and will communicate the findings to the head teacher/pupils/staffs and parents by completing a general risk assessment form (HSF19). The Forest School leader will ensure that the risk assessments are recorded accurately, including the dates of review.

In addition to the site risk assessment, the Forest School leader is responsible for producing the following risk assessments which will be available and communicated to all relevant staff/pupils and parents kept in the risk assessment folder in the staffroom.

- Daily site check
- Individual tool risk assessments
- Use of rope/cord
- Fire(campfire)
- Kelly/Storm kettle
- Collection of natural materials
- Shelter building
- Leaving the ground(climbing)
- Group and individual (shy, boisterous, lacking confidence)

Before each Forest School session, a daily site check will be completed by the Forest School leader and communicated to all relevant parties. Activity risk assessments will be checked and completed. Forest School leader will select and provide PPE for staff and pupils ensuring that the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations are met.

The monitoring and reviewing arrangements are the responsibility of the Forest School Leader and communicated to the Senior Leadership team. Risk assessments should be reviewed annually or following significant changes or if there is reason to suspect it is no longer valid e.g. after an accident.

#### [Code of Conduct for Adults at Forest School](#)

Every adult is required to read and follow all Forest School policies and procedures prior to any session.

All risk assessments must be read by all adults prior to session.

All adults will be responsible to ensure the pupils enter and exit in a responsible manner using the path provided.

The Forest School leader will work with children to set their boundaries and all adults are expected to re enforce the boundaries set by the group.

The 6 principles of forest School will be referred to and followed by the Forest School leader and any other adults.

All adults are required to hold a valid DBS Check.

## Health and Safety

### Health and Safety policy and procedure

The responsibility of Health and Safety at Forest School is that of the qualified Forest School Leader. In line with Amington Heath Primary School's Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy, all final policy and procedures will be agreed by the head teacher, Senior Leadership Team and (supported and monitored by the governing body).

In line with the Health and Safety at work act, the Forest School Leader will manage the Health and Safety needs of both pupils and staff partaking in any sessions.

The main considerations relevant to Forest School will be –

- ✓ Managing risk assessments and communicating all findings with staff and pupils.
- ✓ Ensuring all safe working practises and policies are in place to safeguard pupils and staff.
- ✓ Implement emergency procedures – including accident procedures for both pupils and staff. All staff will be given a copy of emergency procedures prior to sessions.
- ✓ The Leader will ensure all kits are correctly stocked and carry essential items complying with the First Aid Policy. Any adult holding a valid paediatric first aid certificate can administer first aid if needed.
- ✓ Forest School leader will make appropriate changes to policy and procedures where necessary.
- ✓ Regular tool inspections to be carried out and maintenance provided by Forest School Leader complying with tool maintenance procedures.
- ✓ Forest School leader will ensure all participants are provided with safety equipment needed to fulfil their role as assisting adult or pupil. Safety gloves are readily available in both adult and child sizes.
- ✓ In line with COSHH 2002, the findings of the site risk assessment will be shared and discussed with all adults involved to ensure safe practise and that boundaries are used in Forest School areas where necessary.

### Communication

The head teacher will communicate with all staff in weekly meetings held on Friday morning and Monday evening where Health, Safety and well-being issues are discussed. The Forest School leader will pass on any concerns or issues via these meetings as well as prior and after each Forest School session.

Monitoring of Health and Safety at Amington Heath is carried out by the head teacher and governing body. Team audits for Health and Safety and revision of risk assessments are held in Autumn term and annual audit for Staffordshire county Council are held in Spring term and resulting action plan addresses any outstanding issues.

## Emergency Procedures

### In the event of an accident /incident

Prior to every Forest School session all adults will be briefed on what to do during an emergency and will have read the emergency procedure.

In the event of an emergency, a whistle will be blown alerting all pupils to stop and gather with an adult at the fire circle to wait further instructions. The Forest School leader will assess the situation and ensure the rest of the group are free from danger and are supervised by assisting adult.

If Forest School Leader becomes injured or ill, the assisting adult will take charge and use the emergency mobile to call the school office for another first aider to attend. The below procedures will then be followed.

### Minor injuries

First Aid will be administered by Forest School Leader. If needed, due to severity of injury, then the assisting adult will accompany the rest of the group back into the main building to await further instructions. An accident form will be completed and phone call will be made to parent/carers if child needs to be collected.

### Serious injuries

In serious cases where an injury or illness cannot be treated on site, the Forest School Leader will administer emergency first aid while the assisting adult calls the emergency services using the emergency phone carried in essentials kit. The assisting adult will remove other pupils back to the main building and instruct the school office to call the pupil's emergency contact while the Forest School leader waits with the injured party for the emergency services. A member of staff inside the main building will be instructed to meet the ambulance and direct them to the incident.

If pupil needs to go to the hospital, then the Forest School Leader will accompany the pupil keeping an open line of communication with the parent/carers until they reach the hospital.

All staff are required to inform the Senior Leadership team and Office manager of any accidents which are then recorded on the official accident report forms. The person responsible for reporting accidents to the health and safety executive (under RIDDORS) is the head teacher.

Emergency contact numbers

999 – Ambulance/Fire Brigade

School office -01827337465

Forest School Mobile – 07427447149

*Forest School leader will always carry an essential kit list containing: First Aid kit, welfare kit (wipes, hand sanitizer, carrier bag). Register, medication for individuals and emergency mobile.*

### First Aid policy and procedure

In accordance with the Health and Safety (first aid) regulations 1981, the Forest School Leader and assisting adult must hold a valid paediatric first aid certificate and Forest School leader will hold a valid outdoor first aid certificate.

- Acting as first responders to any incidents; they will assess the situation where there is an injured or ill person, and provide immediate and appropriate treatment
- Sending pupils home to recover, where necessary

- Filling in an accident report on the same day, or as soon as is reasonably practicable, after an incident
- Keeping their contact details up to date
- Ensuring that an ambulance or other professional medical help is summoned when appropriate

During every Forest School session, there will be in the immediate vicinity (under bench in fire circle) a water proof bag containing essential kit and first aid kit specific to Forest School.

It is the responsibility of the Forest School leader to check and restock the first aid kit before any session. An emergency mobile phone will be located in the essentials kit should an incident require it.

#### Kit List

- A leaflet with general first aid advice
- Regular and large bandages
- Eye pad bandages
- Triangular bandages
- Adhesive tape
- Safety pins
- Disposable gloves
- Antiseptic wipes
- Plasters of assorted sizes
- Scissors
- Cold compresses
- Burns kit
- Water
- Tweezers
- Cling film
- Water proof ground sheet

Before carrying out a Forest School session it is vital that any prior medical issues are known.

Parents should have completed a medical administration form for the sessions which should be kept confidentially within the first aid kit. Adults should be made aware of medical needs, such as the use of an epi pen or inhalers, where appropriate. Individual medicines should be kept in a box with the medical consent form, clearly labelled with the child's name.

#### Fire Procedure

The use of fire, Kelly kettle and cooking is an exciting and essential part of Forest School delivery. It enables the pupils to take controlled risks and build on their responsibility. It is however, vital that all adults and pupils are aware and educated about the safety procedures when dealing with camp fires and storm kettles.

#### Safety rules

- ✓ Only adults will light the fire
- ✓ Use only the fire circle for fires and Kelly kettle
- ✓ Check the weather is suitable
- ✓ Check that any debris is removed
- ✓ Children to wear long sleeve tops and trouser
- ✓ Hair to be tied back
- ✓ No entering the fire circle unless instructed by an adult

- ✓ Seating area to be at least 1 body length away
- ✓ No playing in the campfire zone
- ✓ Fire kit to be in within arm's reach of an adult
- ✓ Fire gloves to be worn

Due to the potential risks involving fire it is essential to consider the following –

#### Location

- ✓ Check for any overhanging trees
- ✓ Remove any debris from the fire circle
- ✓ Raised fire pit will be used at Amington Heath
- ✓ Kelly Kettles will only be used on a flat surface

#### Seating arrangements for adults and children

- ✓ The benches surrounding the fire circle are to be used for children, these comply with being 1.5-2 metres away from the fire
- ✓ Children only enter fire circle when instructed by adult and position themselves in a kneeling position
- ✓ If instructed by an adult a pupil can work one to one with an adult to fuel the fire using a variety of natural material collected

#### Building and lighting a fire

- ✓ The pupils may help the Forest School leader build the fire using material collected but only the Forest School leader will light the fire using a flint and steel
- ✓ Prior to any fire, Forest School leader will alert the fire brigade to let them know there will be a controlled fire

#### Extinguishing the fire

- ✓ All fires must be extinguished at the end of every session
- ✓ The fire will be doused in water and stirred to ensure it has cooled and extinguished completely
- ✓ We must leave no trace of a fire
- ✓ At least 5 litres of water must be at hand during every fire session as well as a bucket with wet tea towels in
- ✓ Disposal of the ash must be done when the ash is totally cooled and can be sprinkled in the surrounding woodland to add nutrients to the soil

#### Kelly Kettle

Using a Kelly kettle should follow the same safety rules as above as well as ensuring the following

- ✓ The spout must be opposite the blow hole
- ✓ Shout 'hot kettle' when taking off the flames
- ✓ Lifting kettle off flames by using the handle at 90 degrees and using the chain to pour safely
- ✓ Refuel from the side of the top hole and flip it in
- ✓ Only the Forest School leader will pour from the Kelly kettle

### Food Safety Policy and Procedure

Campfire cooking is a fun and exciting opportunity for pupils. We will encourage pupils to take responsibility for this once the ground work of fire lighting and management has been cemented. Forest School leader will hold a valid food hygiene certificate.

There will be many opportunities for pupils to cook on the camp fire whether this be toasting, boiling, frying or simmering.

### Rules to follow when cooking

- ✓ Fire gloves to be worn when handling hot pans
- ✓ Hands to be washed before handling food
- ✓ Forest School leader will check all food is in date
- ✓ Allergies will be checked against any food being cooked
- ✓ A designated area for washing pans and cutlery will be available
- ✓ Only pupils instructed by the Forest School leader must enter the fire circle to cook
- ✓ Pupils must adopt the kneeling stance when cooking

### Sanitation procedure

Children are encouraged to go to the toilet before each session however, if deemed necessary, then the pupils are able to access the main building where toilets are available.

There will be a handwashing facilities available next to the main fire circle for children to wash their hands when needed such as, touching unfamiliar things and cooking.

Forest school leader will carry with equipment a bucket, water, hand sanitiser and towels.

### Weather Policy

Forest School can take place in dry and wet weather. It is the Forest School leader's responsibility to ensure communication is sent out to staff and parents in relation to the appropriate clothing and foot wear required for sessions.

The only exception where Forest School will not be permitted to take place is when there are strong winds present resulting in falling deadwood. This is anything from Beau ford score 7 (38mph) and above. It would be the Forest School leader's discretion whether to move to an open outdoor space if available or to cancel the session.

Sessions will be adapted depending on weather. Forest School is designed to take place in all weather conditions providing the appropriate clothing is worn and sessions are adapted depending on weather. In thunder and lightning, it is advised to move to an open space as long as it is not directly overhead. In which case the Forest School session will be cancelled.

### Lost Child Procedure

In the event of a missing child the Whistle will blow to alert the children to gather at the fire circle. The Forest School leader will do a head count and check against the register. The assisting adult will stay with the children at the fire circle while the Forest School leader does a sweep of the area. If child is not found the assisting adult will go and check the main building and notify the head teacher and office manager. Forest School leader will stay by fire circle with other children.

Once the main building has been searched and no child found the Head teacher will call the police and the Forest School leader will notify parent/carers.

### Loose Dog/Member of Public Procedure

In the event a dog or member of public is seen on the school site then the whistle will be blown alerting children to gather at the fire circle with the adults.

Forest School leader will do a head count and register.

If deemed a threat then the Forest school leader will alert the school via phone and then call the police. The children are to stay with the adults until situation is resolved.

### Tool Usage/Storage/Maintenance

Using tools is an important part of Forest school and it enables children to develop new, practical skills that help them develop self-confidence. It develops fine motor skills as well as giving them a sense of responsibility when managing their own risks.

Tools for Forest School activities can only be used if an appropriate risk assessment has been completed. Please see Tool Risk Assessments.

Tool talks will be given by Forest School Leader at the start of any activities involving tools. They will be given information about the dangers of miss-use and the Forest School leader reserves the right to exclude a child from activities if tool procedures are not being followed and the child or others are deemed at risk.

The children will be shown how to stand, hold, pass and use the tool safely including using the correct PPE.

In first tool sessions ratio will be 1:1 child/adult rising to 3:1 Child/adult once children are comfortable with each tool being used.

There will be a designated safe zone where the tool bag/box will be kept during sessions. When not in use, tools are locked away in lockable box/bag and kept behind a locked door (outside storage cupboard).

Only Forest School leader or assisting adult can remove tools from bag.

Tools are to be maintained in good working order and to be regularly checked by Forest School leader prior to every tool session.

Before arriving at the site all tools being used will be counted by Forest School leader and another adult and recorded and signed for on relevant tool logs in each tool bag/box.

Tools must be returned to the bag/box when not in use and locked.