



Badbury Park Primary

Forest School Policy

Rationale

“Forest School is an inspirational process, which offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees. Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education.” (Forest School Website)

Badbury Park’s Forest School is about exploring and experiencing the natural world through practical activities. The children go out in all weathers, all year round, exploring and learning from the seasons and changes in the environment. The children’s interests along with the varied natural resources in the woodland are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development, within the premise of play. Forest School builds on a child’s innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risk, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.

We are very lucky at Badbury Park to be able to offer all our children the opportunity to experience the benefits of Forest School. The children develop skills in a wide range of activities including fire lighting, cooking, tool work, den building, games and craft. This will take place in our school grounds once on our main school building site. In Year 1 Forest School sessions will take place off site in the surrounding countryside and at Richard Jeffries Museum.

Aims and objectives

Our Forest School learning environment provides opportunities for children to:

- Develop self-esteem
- Develop self-confidence
- Form positive relationships with others
- Develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others
- Learn to cooperate and work with their peers and adults
- Develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety
- Learn specific skills which link into the curriculum
- Develop knowledge and appreciation of the natural world and a forest environment
- Develop learning skills to support their learning across all other areas of the curriculum

Teaching and learning style

The learner-centred approach of our Forest School interweaves with the ever-changing moods and marvels, potential and challenges of the natural world through the seasons to fill every Forest School session and programme with discovery and difference. Yet each programme does also share a common set of principles, aimed at ensuring that all learners experience the cumulative and lasting benefits that quality Forest School offers.

At Forest School all participants are viewed as:

- equal, unique and valuable
- competent to explore & discover
- entitled to experience appropriate risk and challenge
- entitled to choose, and to initiate and drive their own learning and development
- entitled to experience regular success
- entitled to develop positive relationships with themselves and other people
- entitled to develop a strong, positive relationship with their natural world

Both staff and volunteers act as facilitators supporting children to follow their own interests, learn new skills, take risks and participate in activities appropriate to the individual's needs either physical, emotional or social. They develop their life skills and Forest School specific skills e.g. tool skills in a progressive way.

Inclusiveness in Forest School

We believe that all pupils should be able to have equal access to Forest School. This enables children to develop a sense of worth and well-being. Each child's individual needs will need to be assessed when planning activities and individual risk assessments will be submitted when necessary.

Environmental Considerations and Conservation

One of the principles of our Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. The children are taught respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both children and adults are encouraged to respect their environment and to be aware of conservation issues of the woodland around them.

We aim to promote respect for wildlife and our woodland environment. This will be achieved partly through detailed long-term, medium-term and lesson planning. Careful reference will be made 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.

Site

Session will take place on the school field or at The Richard Jefferies Museum nearby.

Health and Safety

In the first instance please refer to Blue Kite Trusts Health and Safety Policy.

The Forest School Leaders and other practitioners regard their duty of care when working with pupils as extremely important. Safe practice is reinforced through regular reminders.

For the safety and protection of all individuals – children, staff and volunteers - we ensure:

- Everyone involved in Forest School is briefed on health and safety and risk assessment of the site.
- Staff and volunteers are made aware of the Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Policy, SEND Policy and Behaviour Policy. This is undertaken as part of induction and orientation of all staff and volunteers. Staff and volunteers must undertake to adhere to the guidance contained within all these policies.
- All members of staff at Badbury Park Primary School undertake Child Protection training. Any concerns are reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL to ensure the school's child protection policy can then be followed.
- The Forest School Leaders and other school staff delivering sessions all have an enhanced level CRB check.
- Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear must be worn at all times. During winter months pupils are expected to wear sturdy footwear or wellington boots, hats scarves, gloves and waterproof outerwear. Sunscreen and hats should be worn in the summer months.

Assessing and Reducing Risk at our Forest School

One of the reasons for introducing Badbury Park is to encourage children to take risks. At our Forest School we undertake a range of activities which contain a theoretical degree of risk. Through careful supervision, full training and good practice, we aim to ensure that accidents are avoided and that risks are reduced to manageable and acceptable levels.

In Year 1 Forest School sessions will take place off site in the surrounding countryside and at Richard Jeffries Museum. When carrying out Forest School at Richard Jeffries Museum, their risk assessments will be utilised.

The Forest School Leaders will carry out risk assessments at the beginning of each term which will take account of seasonal changes. In addition, a risk assessment will be undertaken before each session by the Forest School Leaders who will assess the area for any dangers.

We will have full written risk assessments in place for:

- Site
- Weather conditions and general welfare
- Group
- Individual
- Buildings and shelters
- Rope and String
- Fire
- Food
- Water
- Collecting natural materials
- Being off the ground
- Blindfolds
- Billhooks
- Saws
- Penknives and Potato peelers
- Mallets

The Risk Assessments will be saved on the school server and in the Forest School section of the Risk Assessment Folder stored in the Headteacher's Office. Written Risk Assessments are the starting point for our safe practice and procedures in Forest School. They are constantly reviewed and regularly updated in order to reflect the safest practice possible at Badbury Park.

Risk assessments have been created for travelling to and from all Forest School sites alongside site specific risk assessments. All staff and volunteers should read risk assessments before participating. All sessions are run by a qualified Level 3 Forest School leader with additional staff and volunteer support to match appropriate age and activity related ratio. Dynamic risk assessments are made during sessions due to changes such as weather and environment changes.

Fire at Forest School

If a fire is lit at our Forest School, it is always supervised by a Forest School Leader. Fires will never be left unattended. Safe fire practice is always adhered to. There will always be a water bucket, fire gloves and fire blanket next to the fire.

Children are taught and reminded of the fire circle rules from their first visit to Forest School. These are:

- Stand behind the logs
- Step over and sit down on the logs
- Stand up, turn around and step over the logs
- Walk in a clockwise direction around the fire circle Keep the area around the fire circle free from debris
- NEVER cross the fire circle
- When near the fire, always use the respect position

Cooking and Eating at Forest School

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

- Open fire cooking is only permissible in the designated areas
- The respect position should always be used when near the fire
- Everyone should wash their hands before handling food and drink
- All food is stored in appropriate containers
- Only clean equipment is used
- Any dietary requirements are noted and catered for
- Food will be cooked correctly
- All equipment and waste is cleared away

Tools

- The safety of all participants is of paramount importance.
- Participants ensure that tools are used safely by adopting the following:
- Tools are stored correctly in school and checked after each session.
- Rules are set out clearly at the beginning of the tool use session.
- Leaders ensure that tool talks are given before any tools are used.
- Children are supervised at all times whilst using tools of any description. Inappropriate use of tools will not be tolerated and will result in immediate withdrawal from the task.

First Aid

Level 3 Forest School Leaders are qualified in outdoor first aid. A First Aid Kit is always available on the Forest School site. It is the Forest School Leader's responsibility to ensure that the First Aid Kit is brought onto the site at the commencement of the session and returned to school after each session.

In cases of minor injury, such as cuts and grazes the Forest School Leader will administer first aid and complete a first aid note for the injured person to take home.

Emergency Procedures

It is vital that emergency procedures are adhered to. These are in place to safeguard pupils and adults alike. If a serious incident takes place, it will be essential to carry out an investigation promptly.

Should a serious incident or accident occur, the Forest School Leader will ensure the safety of other participants by adopting the '1, 2, 3 – Where are you?' call. Participants will be made aware of this procedure for calling everyone together in initial sessions of Forest School.

In cases of emergency the Forest School Leader or other trained adult will administer first aid to the casualty. They will inform the school office who will alert parents and/or emergency services if necessary. They will inform the head teacher if the incident requires further medical treatment.

If an accident occurs to a pupil, member of staff or visitor that requires help in addition to first aid e.g. Fire, Ambulance and Police then the LA must be informed of the circumstances as soon as possible. An accident form will be completed and a copy faxed to the LA.

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); the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) must be informed. These notifications are a legal requirement.

The 'Accident Report Form' requires a written statement to 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 Headteacher. A copy will then be sent to the LA. The original form will be kept in school.

Monitoring learning

During the session both children and staff reflect on their learning this is then used to inform the next steps for the following session. Observations are fed back to each class teacher.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Forest School Leaders hold a fully recognised Level 3 Practitioners qualification; have fully enhanced CRB and outdoor first aid qualifications. Forest School Leaders have the overall responsibility for:

- Safety and risk assessment
- Planning of sessions, evaluation and feedback
- Liaising with school staff and governors
- Administration of first aid
- Responsibility for first aid kit, accident book, etc.
- Supervision of tool use
- Supervision of fires and cooking area
- Understanding the needs of children with SEND
- Emergency procedures

Volunteers and trainees

With support from the Forest School Leaders volunteers and trainees are responsible for:

- Modelling good practice
- Supporting and talking to pupils to extend their learning as appropriate
- Additional support when Forest School leader is supervising tools or fire activities
- Additional delegated jobs

Equal Opportunities

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. We believe that any contributions made by staff, volunteers and participants in our sessions will be listened to and appreciated.

Please read this policy alongside the Forest School Handbook and risk assessments and lesson plans.

Signature of Chair Date:

Signature of Headteacher Date 09.09.22

Signature of Forest School LeaderDate: