

Buckshaw Primary School



Forest School Policy

September 2022

*At Buckshaw we aim to prepare our children for their future
by raising aspirations and developing resilience within a
happy, safe and caring environment*

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Buckshaw Primary School aims to utilise woodland areas available to our pupils, both onsite and in the local community, to create a programme of outdoor learning in line with the six guiding principles of UK Forest School education. Our aim is to extend the children's personal experiences and improve their capacity for learning by supporting them to take risks, learn new skills and develop an inquiring mind. At Forest School our children will be supported to explore, play and develop their imagination by creating personal learning opportunities and pursuing their interests in a natural setting.

Our Forest School will aim to encourage a sincere respect for living things and understanding that we can enjoy our life to the fullest without harming the world around us. Reducing our footprint and improving areas of the setting to benefit wildlife are important principles of our Forest School and will educate children to live in this world, where adapting our behaviour to meet the challenges of climate change is essential. Awareness of our effect on others, of how we relate to both the environment and the people around us, will be central to creating a positive community of learning.

RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

Forest School Handbook

Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding Policy

SEND Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Medical Policy

Sun Protection Policy

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021

Children Act 2004

RIDDOR Accident Reporting 2013

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Forest School Leader is responsible for establishing a positive community of learning. They plan activities informed by the process of observation, adaptation and review to further the development of participants. The Forest School Leader monitors participants' progress and adapts sessions to promote learning. They are responsible for keeping children safe from harm by upholding safeguarding procedures and good practice. They ensure the environment is safe, completing appropriate site risk assessments and activity risk-benefit analysis. The Forest School Leader works with stakeholders to manage the Forest School site sustainably and enhance biodiversity. Supporting adults are also responsible for upholding safeguarding procedures and good practice, working with the Forest School Leader to provide appropriate levels of supervision and one-to-one support.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Forest School Leader and supporting adults operate in accordance with our school SEND and Equal Opportunities Policy. Forest School sessions are tailored to the individual needs of every child, ensuring all participants are able to take an active role, working towards achievable targets. A positive community of learning is established in every Forest School session, where participants celebrate each other's differences and allow each other to grow as unique individuals. Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that all children are included and able to participate in activities.

BEHAVIOUR

The Forest School leader and supporting adults operate in accordance with our school Behaviour Policy. If the Forest School Leader determines that the behaviour of participants places their own or others' safety at risk, they will be accompanied back to the school building. Participants follow a clear code of conduct in sessions, set out in the Forest School Handbook, to ensure the safety of themselves and others. The rules set out in the handbook are regularly discussed, modelled and rehearsed with participants using methods appropriate to their age and stage of development.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our Forest School programme operates under a ratio of one adult to six children in KS1 and a ratio of one adult to eight children in KS2. Where a need for additional supervision is identified, for example to support children with challenging behaviours, a supporting adult joins the group. An additional adult is also required when using tools. Walkie-talkies are used to communicate with staff inside school when the Forest School Leader requires additional support.

All Forest School practitioners follow the health and safety procedures set out in the Forest School Handbook with regards to hygiene, including handwashing, litter and waste, pond dipping, food and drink, toileting, personal clothing and Personal Protective Equipment. The Forest School Leader ensures participants have appropriate clothing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to remain safe and well outdoors. Children are educated about how to dress appropriately, make good clothing choices and use PPE correctly. Forest School practitioners follow the guidance outlined in our Sun Protection Policy to ensure pupils are sun safe.

The Forest School Leader is trained to minimise the chance of injury (minor & serious) when leading outdoor activities in a wild and natural environment. Site risk assessments are carried out daily, as are activity risk-benefit assessments. Forest School practitioners continually assess and mitigate risks posed by the environment and activities throughout sessions. Participants are encouraged to take supported risks to increase their resilience and self-belief. Each risk is fully assessed and tailored to each child's needs and development.

Forest School sessions may be cancelled due to circumstances including unsafe weather conditions, staff absence and other occurrences that pose a health and safety risk. Where wind speeds are above five on the Beaufort Scale, sessions are moved out of the woodland

to a safe location. The Forest School Leader will cancel or end sessions early in severe weather conditions such as storms or extreme cold, or if participants are struggling with conditions.

In the event of a serious accident or emergency, steps are taken in accordance with the School Emergency Plan and procedures outlined in the Forest School Handbook. The Headteacher or Designated Senior Person (DSL) must be informed of an incident as soon as possible so that they can initiate the School Emergency Plan.

FIRST AID

All Forest School staff members are qualified in Pediatric First Aid and the Forest School Leader is additionally qualified in Outdoor First Aid. Forest School practitioners store and administer medications in line with our school Medical Policy. All staff are trained in administering specific emergency medications when participants in the Forest School group are known to require them. Buckshaw Primary School's first aid training needs are reviewed on an annual basis, and when any changes occur, to ensure the provision remains adequate.

First aid boxes and medicines

A fully stocked first aid kit is taken to every session and stored in a clearly identified, accessible location. The Forest School Leader replaces any first aid materials used at the end of each session. Emergency medications (including insulin injectors, epi-pens) are stored out of reach of the children but are easily accessible to staff. All staff are made aware of children's medical conditions and the location of emergency medicines. Medical information including copies of allergy sheets and care plans are stored in a folder with the First Aid kit.

Procedure for minor First Aid incidents

Staff administering first aid must wear appropriate PPE including disposable gloves and an apron. Staff must wash their hands before and after treating cuts or wounds. In the event of a non-emergency first aid incident the following steps are taken.

One staff member

- Assess the situation for danger and make it safe.
- Instruct other children to stop activities and sit down.
- Call for assistance on the walkie-talkie.
- Administer necessary first aid, ensuring all participants are safe.
- When help arrives, ask adults to supervise other children.

Two staff members

- Assess the situation for danger and make it safe.
- Alert additional staff and ask them to supervise other children.
- Administer necessary first aid.

Recording and reporting First Aid treatment

All accidents that require a "bumps and bangs" note are recorded in an accident book recording the following information: person's name, date, class, treatment of injury, teacher informed and signature of the First Aider. Accident reports are completed by staff members who witnessed the incident and administered First Aid. All accident books and the near-miss record book are kept in the school office and are available to all staff upon request.

There are three accident report books:

Pupils – minor accident book (non-reportable accidents)

Adults – accident book (non-reportable)

Reportable accidents – LCC accident forms serious enough to require paramedic attention and/or resulting in serious injury such as a bone fracture

Parents and guardians of children in KS1 are informed of any treatment administered by a First Aider in a letter ("bumps and bangs" note) that is handed to them at the end of the school day. Parents and guardians of children in KS2 are informed of minor injuries (such as grazes, bumps) on a wristband worn by the child. Parents and guardians are contacted by telephone earlier in the day if deemed necessary and in all instances of a head injury.

CHILD PROTECTION

Buckshaw Primary Forest School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the physical, mental and emotional welfare of every pupil. Our Forest School works in accordance with a whole-school preventative approach to managing safeguarding concerns, ensuring that the wellbeing of pupils is at the forefront of all action taken. We recognise that no single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who encounters them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. All Forest School practitioners operate in line with the policies and procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

LOST CHILD PROCEDURE

A register of children and staff present in each session is taken before entering the woodland and before pupils return to school. Head counts are completed at regular intervals throughout the session. Children are taught to respond to the call 'one, two, three, where are you?' with the answer 'one, two, three, here I am!' so that staff can easily locate them. Children are taught to make their way to the central picnic bench when they hear the Forest School Leader's whistle. If a child is discovered to be missing in school grounds the following procedure is followed:

- All participants are gathered to the central picnic bench.
- 'One, two, three, where are you?', is repeated and the whistle used again.
- A supporting adult is released to search the area for five minutes.
- If the Forest School Leader is alone, an additional adult is called on the walkie-talkie to complete this search.

- If the missing child is not found in the five-minute search, the Forest School Leader returns the other children to school via the route taken at the start of the session and checks that the missing child has not returned to their classroom.
- The Forest School Leader and supporting adult then check the wildlife garden, toilets and any other locations visited in Forest School sessions for the missing child. Contact is maintained with school by walkie-talkie.
- If the child cannot be located, the school office is informed who will organise supporting staff to assist.
- The headteacher will be informed of the situation at this point and enact the School Emergency Plan as appropriate.
- All communications and actions are logged by the Forest School Leader to assist in the response.

When conducting Forest School sessions in a location outside of school, a register of children and staff present in each session is taken before leaving school, when arriving at the site, when leaving the site and when arriving back at school. Head counts are completed at regular intervals throughout the session. Children are instructed to make their way to an agreed meeting point when they hear the Forest School Leader's whistle. If a child is discovered to be missing from the location of an off-site visit the following procedure is followed:

- All participants are gathered to the agreed meeting point.
- 'One, two, three, where are you?', is repeated and the whistle used again.
- A supporting adult is released to search the area for five minutes.
- If the missing child is not found within five minutes, the headteacher or Designated Senior Person is immediately informed of the situation and enacts the School Emergency Plan as appropriate.
- Some staff members supervise the main group whilst other adults search the area until assistance arrives.
- All communications and actions are logged by the Forest School Leader to assist in the response.

TOOLS

A code of behaviour for safe working with tools is established and regularly reinforced with participants. This is part of a culture of safe practice that is upheld by all members of Forest School. A tool session begins by constructing a safe working area:

- The tool area is clearly established, with logs set out as workstations and the toolbox clearly positioned.
- All participants are made aware of the boundary of the tool using area.
- Participants engaged in tool use wear high visibility vests.
- The tool working area is kept tidy and clear of trip hazards/ debris to prevent falls.
- The First Aid kit is placed for easy access.

- Other participants are positioned further than 'an arm plus a tools length' away from the tool user in all directions.

Safe use of the tool is then demonstrated by the Forest School Leader, who names the tool, its purpose, parts, the PPE required to use it safely and how to safely transport it. The Forest School Leader then models how to use the tool, demonstrating correct body position and technique. The children are then invited to try using the tool themselves with support from an adult. A safe adult to child ratio is always in effect. When participants have finished with the tools they are cleaned, checked and securely stored. The removal and return of tools to the toolbox is recorded on a sign out sheet noting the date and time. Information including procedures and ratios for specific tools are outlined in the Forest School Handbook.

ENVIRONMENT

Every adult and child participating in a Forest School session is expected to treat the environment with respect. Our Forest School sets out a clear expectation to participants that they learn, play and enjoy nature without harming other living things. The environment is returned to the state in which we found it at the end of each session according to our 'leave no trace' policy and children are instructed on how to mitigate their own impact by leaving wildlife areas undisturbed, taking responsibility for litter and caring for trees. Forest School sessions aim to improve the environment by developing areas for wildlife in accordance with our long-term management plan to increase biodiversity on the site. Policies pertaining to the removal of litter and other measures to maintain ecology are outlined in the Forest School Handbook.

MONITORING OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually in September 2022 or earlier if any legal changes occur or new government legislation is released pertaining to the contents of this policy. This document will also be reviewed in the event of any incident that may occur.

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Reviewed and amended by: Ruth Crowder (FSL)