

# **BOWERDEAN & MAPLEDEAN NURSERY SCHOOL & MAPLEDEAN CHILDREN'S CENTRE**



## **Forest School Policy**



**UNCRC: All children should be taught to respect and take care of the earth, the flowers, the trees, the rivers and the seas. (Article 29)**

### **What is Forest School?**

Forest School provides a unique opportunity for children to learn in an outdoor environment. Children will be able to engage in experiences that allow them to be creative, take measured risks and learn new skills helping them to keep healthy and have a respect for nature.

“It is essential for our children to have quality time amongst Nature, for their mental, physical and spiritual development. Children have a deep green affinity to nature, they are internally wired up to learn and play with their environment.” (I love my World – Chris Holland)

### **Risk assessment:**

All Forest School sites will be risk assessed before becoming part of Forest School. The site will be risk assessed before each session and ongoing risk assessments will occur during the sessions. (See risk assessments in the handbook)

Forest School sessions will be led by: Mrs Hubbard  
Mrs Laffan  
Mrs Wetherell

### **Group size & Staffing:**

8 – 15 children.

There will be 1 adult to 4 children.

- The Forest School Leader
- Supporting teacher / teaching assistant
- Parent / carer helper(s)

The Head teacher and Forest School leader will have all parent/carers contact numbers. The Head teacher and Forest School leader will have the medical details of each child.

Sessions will be planned and delivered by trained Forest School leaders. Supporting helpers will include nursery staff and parent/carers helpers. All supporting staff will read the Forest School handbook and be informed about the ethos of Forest School and how the sessions will run. Parents/ carers will be requested to sign a health and safety disclaimer and that they have read the policies involving Forest School.

### Training of staff:

The Forest School leader will keep up to date with relevant information of Forest schools and attend the local cluster group.

Training of supporting teachers / teacher assistants will be achieved:

- Through staff meetings, discussions and photographic evidence
- Through watching Forest School in action in other settings via the internet
- Through visiting other Forest School groups
- Through reading information leaflets.

### Parent/carer information:

The parents/carers of the children invited to take part in Forest School will be informed of the details of where the sessions will take place and who is leading those sessions. (See communication strategy in the handbook)

### First Aid:

There will be a qualified paediatric First Aider on all Forest School sessions. All Forest School leaders will carry a First Aid kit and a fully charged mobile phone. The First Aid kit will always be available at the base camp and all adults will know where it is.

### Equal opportunities:

Children will be invited to attend Forest School. All children are eligible for Forest School and it is open to children with a range of abilities. No child will be excluded on the grounds of disability and provision will be made to ensure each child has equal opportunity to engage in Forest School activities.

### Injured or ill child:

All the children will be made aware of where the base camp has been set up and that they need to go there when requested by an adult. The Forest School leader will inform the Head teacher. The Head teacher will telephone the parent/carer concerned and inform them about their child's injury/illness. The parent/carer will be asked to collect their child from the Forest School session at the drop-off point.

If the Head teacher is unavailable the Forest School leader will inform the parent/carer.

If the injury is serious an ambulance will be called and a member of staff will go with that child to hospital and stay with them until their parent/carer arrives. (See the 'Accident and Injury Policy' in the handbook)

### Injured or ill adult:

The Forest School leader will follow the 'Accident and Injury Policy' in the handbook. If she is unable to do this for any reason the supporting teacher/ teaching assistant will assume this responsibility.

### Safety and Behaviour:

The children will have a safety briefing at the start of each Forest School session. All the children will be made aware of the boundaries of Forest School and the expected behaviour that is necessary to keep them and others safe. If the Forest School leader feels that a child's behaviour is causing him/her or others to be at risk they may be requested to cease attending the sessions.

### Managing behaviour:

Forest School is a learning environment where all children can achieve and be successful. The role of the adult is to support the children and follow their interests and not to direct and 'tell' the children what to do. Adults will need to be sensitive and have an awareness of when their presence is welcomed or if the child is having a quiet moment to themselves. All adults will speak to the children in a calm and professional manner. Negative remarks are not appropriate. Supporting adults will follow the examples set by the Forest School Leader. Adults will support each other when managing behaviour and if unsure how to deal with a situation seek advice from the Forest School Leader.

### Inappropriate language:

Inappropriate language, swearing will not be tolerated by adults. Children who use inappropriate language at Forest School will be reminded that they are not to use this type of language during their time at Forest school

### Confidentiality and Disclosures:

All adults to be aware that they are expected to respect children's confidentiality and must not reveal to any one (except the Forest School leader) conversations that they may hear during the sessions. Adults must not reveal any medical history or special circumstances that may be revealed during Forest School sessions.

All adults to be aware that any disclosures must be reported to the Forest School leader and kept confidential.

### Accusations against adults:

Any accusations against adults must be reported to the Head teacher and/or the Forest School leader.

### Complaints:

If any one including supporting adults at Forest School or a parent/carer wishes to make a complaint about any aspect of Forest School they can:

- Report their complaint to the Forest School Leader.
- Report their complaint to the Head Teacher.
- Inform the Governors in writing.

They can support this complaint in writing. If they feel the matter has not been resolved they may put their complaint in writing to the Governors of the School.

### Lost Child:

The children will be taught strategies to help keep themselves safe. Games such as “123 Where are you? 123 Here I am” will be played to help children know what to do if they become out of site or separated from the group.

The group will be taken to the base camp with a member of staff and a thorough search will be made for the child.

The Headteacher will be informed.

The Forest School leader will inform the police.

The Head teacher will inform the parents/carers.

(See the ‘Lost Child Policy’ in the handbook for details of what to do in the unlikely event of losing a child)

### The sessions:

Forest School sessions will be planned and evaluated. The leader will record the children’s interests and skills and this knowledge will help to inform the following week’s planning. Observations of the children will take place recording how the children are learning and the new skills they are developing.

### Photography:

Photography is a useful tool for recording the learning that is taking place during a Forest School session. It also helps the children recall their learning experiences and provides opportunities for the children to ‘talk’ about their activities and accomplishments. The children will be encouraged to take photographs. Parents/carers will be requested to give permission for any photographs that may be taken whilst taking part in Forest School.

Ecat (A national strategy)

‘Every child a talker’ a strategy to promote language development will be encouraged during Forest School sessions.

SEAL (A national strategy)

‘Excellence and Enjoyment: social and emotional aspects of learning’ a strategy to encourage emotional intelligence within children will be incorporated in to the learning targets within Forest School planning.

### Getting to the site:

#### Drop-off:

Parents/ carers will be asked to deliver their children to a specific safe place near the site. Parent/ carers will make sure they leave their child with a Forest School leader and that their child has been registered.

### Collection:

Parents/carers will collect their children from the drop-off point at the time requested.

### Uncollected children:

Parents will be contacted by phone. If contact is unable to be made the child will walk back to nursery school with the Forest School leader.

### Walking:

The children will be escorted to the Forest School site by the shortest and safest route. The children will be accompanied by at least 3 adults. The walk may involve crossing roads, walking along pavements and through the park.

### Collection:

The children will return to nursery in the same way.

### Clothing:

Forest School will take place in all weathers. Children will be expected to wear suitable clothing and footwear for learning and playing in an outdoor environment. Long trousers and long sleeved tops will avoid scratches, sun burn and insect bites. Keeping warm and dry is essential for children to enjoy the experiences that Forest School has to offer. Water proof jackets and trousers and spare clothing will be provided.

### Snack time:

It is the parents/ carers responsibility to inform the Forest School leader of any allergies their child may have. Hot chocolate and snacks may sometimes be provided. Children may be asked to bring their own snack/ drink in a clearly labelled bag. The children will be able to wash their hands before their snack. Drinking water will be taken on each Forest School session.

### Toileting:

A member of staff will be responsible for toileting.

All children will be encouraged to use the bathroom before attending Forest School. If they require the toilet during the session:

An area will be marked as the toilet area.

A potty will be available. (Deposits to be buried with 'toilet' trowel)

Wipes will be available. (Placed in a nappy pack and taken back to school to dispose of later)

Children will be taught that it is alright to go to the toilet outside **if** there is no where else to go and that they must remember to treat the natural world with respect and consider other people.

### Tool use:

Tools may be introduced and used on forest school sessions. These may include saws, drills and hammers. The children will be taught how to use these tools safely and all adults involved in the session will read and refer to the tool safety guides in the handbook.

### Fire- lighting:

Sitting around a camp fire listening to stories is one of the special aspects of Forest School.

“Fire has a unique capacity to transform even the coldest day into a special moment, bringing people together when outdoors.” (Go Wild – J Schofield & F Danks)

The children attending Forest School will be taught the ‘Fire Safety Rules’. This will be done through discussion and the playing of circle games. All the adults will read the fire safety rules in the handbook.

### Food and Cooking:

(See ‘Food and cooking policy in the handbook)

### Site Management and Sustainability.

Please see ‘Site Management Policy’ in the handbook.

It is expected that there will be minimal impact upon the site and to reduce this impact regular checks will be made to ensure that the site is not overused. It is hoped that other sites will be established to prevent the overuse of one site.

All adults and children will be expected to:

- ✚ Respect the site and not break or damage plants and trees.
- ✚ Respect the creatures that live there and observe them without causing them harm.
- ✚ Leave the site clean and tidy.