



Forest School Policy

What is Forest School?

Forest School provides a unique opportunity for children to learn in an outdoor woodland environment. Children 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. We follow the six principles of the Forest School Association as closely as possible:

Principle 1: Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

Principle 2: Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners. This will closely reflect the EYFS curriculum in looking at the development of the child as a whole, and every unique child as an individual.

Principle 4: Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves

Principle 5: Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice. The Forest School leader will keep up to date with relevant information through membership with the Forest School Association, attending the local FSA group, and attending appropriate training.

Principle 6: Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning, with play at the heart of forest school. Sessions will be planned, observed and evaluated to the needs of individual learners and the group as a whole.

Risk Benefit Assessment:

All sites and activities used for Forest School will be subject to robust dynamic risk-benefit assessment, in liaison with landowners and site managers where possible. Full risk-benefit assessment will be carried out termly or after severe weather by trained Forest School staff. Daily site checks will be carried out before every session.

Forest School Staffing & Group sizes

All sessions will be led by at least one Level 3 qualified Forest School Leader and supported by capable nursery staff, who are aware of the procedures and risk assessments. All supporting staff will be aware of the Forest School handbook, will read essential information including risk assessments and emergency procedures, and be informed about the ethos of Forest School and how the sessions will run. Sessions will run at a minimum ratio of 1:5 Adult:Child. More staffing/volunteers may be needed depending on the needs of the group or individuals within a group. Group sizes will not normally exceed 15 children.

EVOLVE/Educational Visits Policy

The Federation has adopted an Educational Visits Policy, and our Forest School programme forms part of the school's strong commitment to Learning Outside the Classroom outlined in this policy. Forest School visits will be recorded on the Buckinghamshire Council EVOLVE system and will include all attendees, staff and volunteers; an event specific plan for Forest School; copies of risk assessments, and communications with parents. These EVOLVE records will be approved by the Executive Head Teacher.

Consents

Parents/carers will be required to sign a Forest School consent form, following briefing and information being provided to them about Forest School. This consent will include general permission for participation in Forest School, emergency contact details and medical information/consent. The EHT and Forest School leader will both have a copy of this information, and the Forest School Leader will ensure this information is taken to site, with up to date registers.

Communication Policy

There are many different parties involved in running an effective forest school. Please see attached appendix 1: Communication Policy which outlines how we do this.

Child Protection Policy

The Federation has adopted a Child Protection Policy, including managing allegations against staff which will also apply to Forest School. All adults must read this policy and be aware of what is expected of them in relation to child protection within the setting. All staff must be aware that any disclosures or incidents must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and kept confidential.

Equal opportunities

All children will have the opportunity 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.

Lone working

There are occasional times when staff may need to work alone or out of core school hours at Forest School. For example, when attending site early to carry out daily site checks, when remaining with equipment to avoid theft or to remain with a child or group in an emergency situation. In this circumstance the member of staff will follow the Lone Working Procedure in Appendix 2.

First Aid

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

Accident or Injury

There is an Accident and Injury Policy and Procedure specific to Forest School due to the nature of our location and outdoor woodland environment – see appendix 3.

Safety and Behaviour

Safety is at the heart of our forest school sessions, and sessions will start with safety briefings appropriate to the group and participants. 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 (see Appendix 4:Lost Child Policy & Procedure). 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. All adults will speak to the children in a calm and professional manner, and be sensitive of their needs. 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 we will follow the adopted Behaviour Policy for the federation.

Lockdown

If a nursery site goes into lockdown during a forest school session, the Forest School Leader will be informed and all children will remain at Forest School and not return to nursery unless the Forest School Leader has been notified that it is safe to do so. If children are walking back to nursery from Forest School, then they will return to a safe place such as The Rye and await further instruction.

Lost Child

We will follow the Lost Child Policy and Procedure outlined in Appendix 4.

Travel Policy - Getting to the site

Drop-off: Parents/carers will be asked to drop their child to a meeting point near the site, the child will be registered and left with the Forest School staff.

Collection: Parents/carers will collect their children from the meeting 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.

30 hours children: Children staying all day at nursery will return to nursery on foot. The children will be escorted to and from 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.

Clothing policy

Forest School will take place in all weathers, except extreme weather (thunder, lightning, high winds, severe cold, very heavy rain). Children must wear suitable clothing and footwear for learning and playing in an outdoor environment. Long trousers and long sleeved tops to 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. Waterproof jackets and trousers and spare clothing will be provided. Children are advised to wear old clothes which can get muddy and always long sleeves/trousers whatever the season.

Weather	Clothes
COLD (autumn/winter/spring)	• Long sleeved tops (2-3 layers) and fleeces • Leggings/thermals/warm tights under trousers • Hats and gloves • Wellies with warm, thick socks/2-pairs of socks • A warm, waterproof coat • Waterproof trousers if they have them (if they don't we will provide these)
HOT (late spring/Summer/early autumn)	• Thin long sleeved tops (layers are good – they can always take one off) • Thin long trousers (not shorts) • Sun hat and labelled sun cream • Wellies or sturdy shoes/trainers (not sandals) • A waterproof coat • Waterproof trousers if they have them (if they don't we will provide these)

Ticks

Ticks are becoming an increasing problem in this area and forest school participants carry the risk of Lyme's Disease if bitten by an infected tick. Our policy is to mitigate the risk of being bitten by wearing long sleeved trousers and tops, and to be vigilant regarding checking for ticks. Staff are advised to wear tick/insect repellent.

Toileting

A toilet bag will be provided at every forest school session which will include warm running water, soap, paper towels, anti-bacterial hand gel, anti-bacterial wipes, disposal bags and toilet paper.

If they require the toilet during the session:

- An area will be designated as the toilet area, which can be made private if required by the child.
- A 'potette' will be available. Any solids or toilet paper waste will be treated as human waste and will be double bagged, placed in a nappy container and disposed of back at nursery in the yellow bin, in line with COSHH requirements.
- 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.
- Children will always wash their hands after toileting.

Tool use

Tools may be introduced and used on forest school sessions appropriate to the child's interests and ability. These may include saws, drills, knives and hammers. A tools risk benefit assessment will be carried out.

Fire, Food & Cooking

Sitting around a campfire listening to stories is one of the special aspects of Forest School. The children attending Forest School will be taught the 'Fire Safety Rules'. This will be done through discussion and the playing of circle games. We will always check for flints when having a fire on the ground, and leave the forest as we found it. The weather conditions may mean that a fire is not possible (high wind, heatwave). A risk benefit assessment will be carried out specifically for fire.

A Food and Cooking Policy can be found in appendix 6. It is the parents/carers responsibility to inform the Forest School leader of any allergies their child may have when they consent to Forest School and this will be checked by the Forest School Leader and nursery staff. 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. Food may be provided or cooked at Forest School on the campfire. Forest School staff will hold a Level 2 Food Hygiene qualification. Dietary requirements will be respected and catered for wherever possible. A risk benefit assessment will be carried out for cooking on the fire.

Site Management and Ecological management Plan

A three year site management plan and ecological assessment will be carried out for each site and renewed on a three yearly basis.

Risky Play

At Forest School we will actively encourage risky play within safe parameters.

Stones - Children are able to collect and play with stones. We may undertake flint knapping. stones are useful for mark making also. Children will be encouraged to never throw stones.

Sticks - Children can carry sticks and will be encouraged to use sticks as tools not weapons. Longer sticks can be dragged or carried with a child at both ends "*walking the dog*". Sticks must not be thrown, nor should children be allowed to pull them from living trees. Heavier branches can be rolled, dragged or carried by more people as a team.

Climbing - Children are allowed to climb trees at forest school. The Forest School staff will check climbable trees as part of the risk benefit assessment, including checking the ground below for sharp objects and 'climbing trees' for deadwood, loose and rotten branches. Children are allowed to explore to their own limits, with adults near enough to help and support, but far enough away to not be invasive. Children should not climb higher than supervising adults arm reach or chest height. We never assist a child to climb up, as this would not grow their self esteem. We will encourage a child to find their way back down independently even if they feel they can't.

Rope and string - Rope and string will be used regularly at Forest School. We will encourage connecting and transporting materials using rope or string and making structures such as dens. Children will be reminded of rope safety (tripping, not tying around each others necks).

Cancellation

There may be times when Forest School sessions have to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. These may be:

- Staff illness which prevents staff/child ratios being met or appropriate trained staff being present
- Severe weather conditions/change in weather conditions at site – various factors are taken into account in assessing weather impact at site, including wind direction and wind gust, tree condition in the forest school site. A dynamic risk benefit assessment will be carried out on the day and outlined in the site risk benefit assessment.
- A significant change in the site such as forestry operations or storm damage
- Any situation that poses a health and safety risk, such as rough sleepers in the site
- A decision will be made by 8:30am and parents will be informed by 08:45 am by mobile phone text update. For afternoon sessions, parents will be informed by 12:30pm of cancellation.

Complaints

If anyone wishes to make a complaint about any aspect of Forest School, in line with the Federation's Complaints Policy they can:

- Report their complaint to the Forest School Leader
- Report their complaint to the Head Teacher
- Inform the Governing Body in writing if they feel their complaint has not been resolved.



Appendix I: Forest School Communication Policy

We believe it important to inform the following people when a series of Forest School sessions is taking place. The following table shows how this will happen.

Who?	How?
Head Teacher (HT) Forest School Leader (FSL)	- The HT will be informed when and where Forest School sessions are taking place. - The HT will liaise with the FSL and staff to agree a register - HT will sign off risk assessments and EVOLVE - HT will be aware of all planning and evaluation of sessions - HT will approve all essential equipment required for FS - The HT will have access to all Forest School documentation - A copy of the Forest School handbook will be kept in the office. - The HT will have access to all photographic evidence on Class Dojo or Tapestry - Forest School will be included on School Displays. - Feedback on FS will be provided during weekly staff meetings
Nursery Staff	- Verbally during weekly staff meetings, ongoing conversations and feedback sessions - Through observations and photographic evidence/tapestry/Dojo - Letters to parents/carers with dates and kit requirements and Info Leaflets - Through documentation and forms such as children's consent forms. - Forest School handbook available in the office - School displays.
Governors	- In Governing Body meetings. - Through discussions with the HT - Policies, letters, planning and photographic evidence, EVOLVE. - Forest School handbook available in the office - Evaluation forms and feedback, School Development Plan
Parents and Volunteers	- Letter/leaflet introducing Forest School and or an information briefing - Consent letters/forms - Through school displays, observations and photographic evidence. - Evaluation forms and feedback.
Children	- Individual or group discussions, such as during circle time. - Photographic evidence, School displays, observations. - Ongoing conversations and feedback sessions.
Site owners/site managers/local community	- Site agreement, including ecological management plan - Updates regarding any site issues - Emails/letters with photographic evidence/thank you note - Discussions on site/notice board during FS sessions - Social media (e.g Booker Woods facebook page) - Contact with local conservation society e.g. Booker Common Preservation Society.
Others	- Verbal discussions/Letters/Publicity.

Typical timeline for Forest School by Term

Before term starts add our Forest School information and consent form to the Nursery welcome pack and forms children have to sign when they register at Nursery.

Weeks 1-3

- Obtain landowner consents, county hall insurance details (FSL) | April renewal each year
- Carry out site visits and full termly site/group Risk Benefit Assessment – must be signed (FSL/HT)
- Undertake any site management required – this might include establishing a fire circle, litter collection, removal of dead or low hanging branches, bramble removal. (FSL)
- Stock check all Forest School kit and replace any items damaged or faulty. (FSL)
- Check first aid and burns kits are all in date and order as necessary. (FSL)
- Run a drop-in information workshop for parents. (FSL)
- Check and update all adult medical consent forms. (FSL)
- Brief new members of staff with RBA/Handbook/emergency procedures/FS ethos
- Update activity risk assessments (tools, fires, swings etc) (FSL)
- Agree and create children's register based on age, confidence level etc. (HT/staff to liaise with FSL)
- Update leaflet, letter and child medical consent forms. (FSL)
- Send FS pack to selected children – with one week response for handing in consent form. (office support)

One week before FS starts

- Chase consent forms (office support)
- Based on consent forms returned and confirmed register, create a mobile phone contact group for FS (Office support)
- Input students on to EVOLVE system (FSL) – note that EVOLVE needs to already have children transferred from SIMS to EVOLVE for visits to be added and when new children start, it needs to continually be kept up to date.
- Purchase consumable items for FS (marshmallows, biscuits etc) (FSL/supporting staff)
- Forest School starts on site in minimum 6 week blocks. (FSL/Supporting staff on site)

Other elements:

Annually (winter)

- Update Forest School Policies and handbook as required.
- Look at ongoing improvement/accreditation/evaluation

Weekly outside of session time

- update Tapestry or DoJo with observations
- Cleaning and disinfecting equipment
- planning and preparation of materials for sessions (FSL)
- a text reminder to be sent before FS session, the content of which to be checked with FSL/HT before it is sent (Office support)

Per Block of Forest School

- evaluation and review with children, families, staff
- Send a FS Bulletin/newsletter (FSL)



Appendix 2: Lone Working Policy, Procedure and Risk Assessment

Introduction

The school recognises that there are occasions when teaching, or forest school staff may be required to work alone or in isolated situations. This may mean an increased risk to the health and safety of that individual. This policy sets out the approach to identifying these risks and managing them.

Definition

A lone worker is someone who spends some or all of their working hours working alone. This may occur during normal working hours at an isolated location within a forest school woodland site, or working outside normal school hours. Lone working is deemed to be working in a situation where there are no other people who could reasonably be expected to give immediate assistance in the event of an accident or emergency.

Policy

The policy of the school is that lone working should be avoided whenever possible. In practice, this means that occasionally a Forest School leader or member of the team could be working alone on an occasional basis. Such as carrying out site checks first thing before a group arrives, staying with equipment to avoid theft, waiting with a child who is dropped off early or a late collection and remaining with a child or group in the event of an emergency.

Risk Assessment

The Headteacher ensures that a Lone Working Risk Assessment for forest school has been undertaken and that the member of staff is aware of the content. A risk assessment for any further staff who wish to work alone should be completed as required. The following factors are taken into consideration:

- Risk of accident and injury. All lone working situations are fully risk assessed
- Health and fitness of any individual working at Forest School
- Equipment. No tool work will be carried out alone.
- Working at height. Working at height is never undertaken when working alone.

Procedure

In order to minimise the risks from lone working, the following measures are taken:

- Headteacher to agree to any forest school staff working alone or outside normal school hours.
- All forest school staff to be fully aware of the Lone Working Policy, Procedure and Risk Assessment.
- Staff ensure that someone is aware that they are working alone, their location and either give them an expected time of return or keep in regular contact.
- Staff should establish their own checking in and out system with either family, friends or work colleagues. It is advised that lone workers provide a relative or friend with a telephone contact point (Headteacher's emergency phone number) to call if the lone worker fails to return home at the expected time.
- Mobile phones can provide a level of security and peace of mind, but are not solely relied upon. If carrying a mobile phone, staff check the battery charge level and signal strength. It is carried at all times.

- Lone workers should consider working with a colleague if at all possible.
- Lone workers do not confront or challenge members of the public, unless they are sure it is safe to do so.
- Staff should not work alone if they have any medical conditions that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness. This will be assessed through the Forest School Adult medical consent form by the Forest School Leader and EHT.
- Only agreed tasks are to be undertaken such as staying with equipment and high risk activities are not carried out i.e. working at height, or with tools.

It is the responsibility of all staff to adhere to the lone working procedures and to report any difficulties, failure of equipment or general concerns on health and safety to the Forest School leader and Headteacher. If members of staff fail to follow procedures designed to protect their safety, this could result in a disciplinary matter as they will have contributed to their injury. Staff should be proactive in bringing to the attention of the Headteacher any aspect of work related risks which may occur when working alone.

Further Information

Further information on lone working can be found in the HSE publication “Working Alone”.
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>

Reviewing the Lone Working Policy

This policy will be reviewed biannually by the Headteacher and Governing Body. The risk assessment will be reviewed annually by the Forest School Leader and Headteacher. Changes will be made to ensure that the Policy is relevant and up to date.

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR: Lone working at Forest School			
Establishment: Growing Together Federation	Assessment by: Amy White	Date: July 2024	
Site: Keep Hill Woods & Booker Hill Woods	Manager Approval:	Date:	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Lone working Working offsite alone in dynamic woodland setting Sites are public woodland	Staff Injuries from falls, trips, fallen/low branches such as cuts/abrasions/fracture/muscular skeletal and other physical injuries Serious incident such as heart attack, loss of consciousness or stroke Accident/injury/incident/medical emergency when alone with delayed assistance in an emergency due to remote nature of site Getting lost on site Dog attack Physical assault/verbal abuse/abduction from member of public Using equipment/setting up equipment which may cause	- Full site risk benefit assessment is regularly carried out by more than one member of the team on site to identify site hazards and mitigate risk - In most circumstances due to higher risk staff will not to be required to work alone - Reduce time spent working alone so far as is reasonably practicable. - All staff to be familiar with lone working procedure - Mobile phone available, charged and switched on. - Agreed schedule – times and location of visits to be known. - Staff are empowered to leave situations when they perceive imminent risk to their personal safety. - Staff assess unexpected risks on arrival (eg. Evidence of rough sleepers using site, dogs, storm damage etc.) and assess suitability - Contact point always available in school office - Personal safety training if necessary - Regular supervision and arrangements for debrief/feedback from forest school staff. - Tool work is not to be carried out when alone. - Working at height is not be carried out when working alone.	Ensure all Forest School staff are aware of the procedures and risk assessment.	FSL/ HT	Ahead of Forest School sessions starting up again.	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
	injury such as tool work/saws etc.					
Staff at greater risk due to personal circumstances	Lone working staff who are pregnant, disabled, have medical conditions or are on medication, who are inexperienced. Injury and ill health.	- All Forest School staff asked to disclose details in confidence of any medical condition, medication, etc. which might affect their safety at work through adult medical consent form - Individual staff risk assessments conducted as required (based on medical consent form – this to be agreed between the forest school leader and Executive Head Teacher)	FSL and EHT/DHT to agree whether any member of staff requires individual risk assessment or to be advised not to lone work due to higher risk.	FSL/HT	Every term when staff are selected.	



Appendix 3: Accident and Incident Policy and Procedure for Forest School

Aim

The aim of this policy is to outline procedures to deal with any incident or accident related to children or staff during Forest School. Our sessions are fully risk benefit assessed and safety is at the heart of forest school.

Staff training

All Forest School Leaders will hold an up to date Outdoor Paediatric First Aid qualification (renewed every three years) and other nursery staff will hold Paediatric First Aid qualifications. All staff will be fully aware of the procedures in the event of an emergency.

Medical information and consent

The Forest School Leader will obtain and hold medical details, consent and emergency contact information for every attendee, staff or child, at forest school on site in the emergency handbook.

Our first aid kit

First aid kits are regularly checked by the Forest School Leader and re-stocked as necessary. All staff can access the first aid kit in the safety sack at all times.

Recording and reporting accidents

All accidents that occur during a Forest School session will be recorded on an accident monitoring form which will be carried on site in the Emergency Handbook. Minor accidents (eg. grazed skin, minor bumps to head) will be treated during the session and parents/carers informed upon collection. Parents/carers will be asked to read and sign the accident form in the usual way.

Procedure in the event of an injury or medical emergency at forest school

In the event that the Forest School Leader is injured the supporting staff will take responsibility for the group and follow the procedure.

- The Forest School leader will assess the injury and decide to either treat or call for medical help.
- The Forest School Leader will ensure the safety and wellbeing of the other children/adults is maintained, by delegating responsibilities to other supporting staff.
- If it is a minor injury the Forest School leader or qualified supporting staff will administer first aid.
- If an injury has been sustained that is more serious and requires medical help the Forest School leader will be responsible for ensuring a call to 999 for an ambulance is made and implement the emergency procedure.
- The Forest School leader or appropriately qualified members of the supporting team will administer emergency first aid as required, ensure that the injured person is kept comfortable until the emergency services arrive and follow any instructions of the emergency services.
- The Forest School leader will ensure information is recorded on the monitoring form held in the emergency handbook which can be handed over to the emergency services.
- The Forest School leader will inform the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher will inform the parents/carers of the child about the incident.

- If the Headteacher is unavailable the Forest School leader will inform the parents/carers.
- Should an injured child be taken to hospital a member of staff will accompany the child until his/her parents/carers arrive.
- The Forest School leader will record the accident, ensuring that the date, time and circumstances are clearly recorded.
- The Headteacher will inform the Governing body and agree responsibility for reporting to relevant authorities (RIDDOR).

Other major incidents:

Death of a child/adult

In the unlikely event of a death at Forest School the Forest School leader will ensure that the following steps are taken. If it is the Forest School Leader who is the subject of the major incident the supporting staff will take responsibility for the group and follow the procedure.

- The police are immediately informed.
- The serious incident card and emergency procedure is followed.
- The Headteacher is informed.
- The Headteacher will contact the parents/carers concerned.
- If the Headteacher is unavailable the Forest School Lead will make contact with the parents/carers.
- The group will be taken to a safe area such as base camp, the fire site or common and kept as calm as possible.
- Parents/carers will be called by the school office to collect children from Forest School as soon as possible. Adults will stay with them until they are collected.
- The Forest School leader will record the time, date and circumstances of the incident and report to the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher will inform the Governing body and report any RIDDOR requirements.

Violent attack/assault on a child/adult

If a child or adult is attacked or assaulted whilst on Forest School an offence will have been committed. If it is the Forest School Leader who is the subject of the attack the supporting staff will take responsibility for the group and follow the procedure.

- The Forest School Leader will contact the emergency services for assistance
- Follow the serious incident card and emergency procedure.
- Ensure the group is as safe as possible by moving them to a safer area and ensure that the children are kept as calm as possible.
- Inform the Headteacher
- The school office will inform the parent/carers and request they collect their children from forest school. Adults will stay with the children until they are collected.
- The Forest School Leader will be responsible for recording the time, date and circumstances of the incident.
- The crime will be reported and the crime number recorded in the incident book
- The Headteacher will inform the Governing body and deal with any RIDDOR requirements.



Appendix 4: Lost Child Policy & Procedure for Forest School

Aim

We aim to keep all children safe during Forest School sessions and will take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of the children. In the event that a child goes missing from Forest School we shall follow the procedure.

Procedure ahead of Forest School starting

- The Forest school leader and Headteacher will hold an up-to-date register of all the children and adults attending the session and copies of their consent forms.
- The Headteacher will know the location, date and times of the Forest School session (recorded on EVOLVE).
- The Headteacher will know the venue and mode of transport.
- The Forest School leader will take to site a register of all attendees contact details, consent forms, a mobile phone with charged battery and signal checked, emergency handbook and first aid kit.
- All supporting staff and volunteers will have a safety briefing and be familiar with the procedures ahead of a sessions starting.
- Children may receive some training on road safety, boundaries and keeping safe at Forest School before attending, appropriate to the group needs.

Boundaries

Children are always made aware of how far they can explore before a session begins. A variety of techniques may be used including:

- Walking the boundary with the children, noticing prominent features and allowing them to help establish where it should be
- Using a rope to establish the boundary at a height clearly visible to the children, with the children helping to choose where the rope should go.
- Using red stop hands or similar symbols to mark the boundary, pinned upon trees/boundary features as a reminder to the children of where our site ends. These may be the children's own hands, which they have drawn around and helped cut out before we go.
- We teach the call and response game: '*I, 2, 3, where are you?*' The child should reply '*I, 2, 3 I'm here*'. This will be introduced to them through a game and practised many times.
- We may use a whistle to bring all children back to base camp and children will learn to follow this procedure.

During the session

- The Forest School Leader and supporting staff will carry out regular head counts of the group and be vigilant regarding the Forest School boundary.
- Children will be reminded of safety during the session including being able to see one of the adults at all times, what to do if they hear the emergency whistle, how to return to base camp, stranger danger and how to behave if a dog approaches them.
- Any child with difficulty understanding the boundary or a tendency to wander/run off may be assigned a 1-2-1 member of staff to help supervise
- No child will leave the session without the permission of the Forest School Leader and only to a known parent/carers.

Missing child:

If a child goes missing from Forest School

- If it is thought a child is missing, a headcount will be taken, the emergency whistle will be blown, all the children will return to base camp and the register will be checked.
- The Forest School leader will inform all adults present and an immediate thorough search of the area will be made, ensuring that all other children remain supervised and safe throughout.
- Staff will call “1,2,3 where are you?” and the missing child’s name for 10 minutes while searching for the child.
- The Forest School leader will talk to the other adults to establish who saw the child last, how long ago, who the child was with and what the child was doing
- The Forest School leader will contact the Headteacher if the child is not found after 10 minutes.
- The Headteacher will contact the police and the critical incident team and will await instructions from the police.
- The Headteacher will contact the child’s parents/carers.
- During this time, adults will continue to search for the missing child, whilst another adult waits with the group at base camp.

The police will want to know

- Where the incident happened – exact location
- When was the child last seen – how long have they been missing
- The next of kin of the child
- A detailed description of the child, including age, sex, physical description and the clothes they are wearing.

Review

- The Headteacher and Forest School leader will take written statements from all the adults present at Forest School.
- The Headteacher will record the incident on an incident report form detailing:
 - The date and time of the incident
 - What staff & children were in the group
 - When the child was last seen in the group
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing
- Advice from police
- The Headteacher will inform the Governors, the local authority and any other relevant bodies (with reference to the Federation’s Lost Child Policy)
- The risk benefit assessment and policy/procedure will be reviewed.



Appendix 5: Forest School Emergency Procedure

At times we may need to implement emergency procedures if any of the following occur at Forest School:

- A sudden change in weather conditions/adverse weather including: High winds (Force 5 or above), extreme heavy downpours, thunderstorms and extreme cold or heat
- An incident in the woods, where we will take advice from the Police as to whether it is safe for Forest school to go ahead/continue
- Fallen tree in the woodland
- Wild or dangerous animal
- Abusive or threatening behaviour
- Fire/Flood
- Lockdown at our main nursery site
- Sudden sickness/illness of any member of the Forest School group, adult or child
- An accident affecting a member of the group
- An incident regarding the wellbeing of a member of the public, where there is no one else available to assist.

Measures in place before forest school starts

- Full termly risk assessments and daily site checks will be carried out.
- Mobile phone (charged and signal checked), first aid bag, emergency handbook containing all emergency procedures, contacts and registers/consent forms will be carried on site
- Information regarding forest school will be recorded on EVOLVE via an Event Specific Plan so that the date, time, location and group details are all available to the Executive Headteacher and local authority.
- Detailed location information will be recorded and carried for the forest school site using National Grid Reference and What Three Words.

Procedure

- The Forest School Leader will bring the group together using the emergency whistle if needed, ensuring all children and adults are present and are accounted for by carrying out a headcount and checking the register
- The Forest School Leader will ensure group is safe and the emergency services (as appropriate) have been summoned if required
- The Forest School Leader will delegate a responsible adult to take care of the uninjured members of the group if required
- The Forest School Leader will lead the group out of the woodland site as quickly as possible by the quickest and safest route with one adult leading the group out of the woodland and the other at the back of the group. The group will go to the designated meeting point which will be outlined in the Site/Group Risk Benefit Assessment woodland evacuation plan specific to the site.
- The Forest School Leader will contact the Headteacher and procedures will be implemented to enable parents to collect their children from this location.

- A log of actions/conversations should be maintained by the Forest School Leader or designated person in charge of the group (record date, times, locations, observations and any actions taken).
- The Headteacher will follow the incident procedure for off-site incidents contained in the Education Visits Policy, including implementing any emergency plans and gaining authority for activating emergency procedures with the local authority.

Example woodland site emergency plan:

The woodland site is at: Keep Hill Wood

Address:

Keep Hill Wood Local Wildlife Site
High Wycombe
(nearest postcode HP11 1DY off Warren Wood Drive)

Rendezvous point: On main bridleway connecting Warren Wood with the Pines Estate, adjacent to the fire site.

Emergency Vehicle Access: Via bridleway entrance between Lime Avenue and Warren Wood Drive. Access road is steep, but accessible with a 4x4 vehicle. **Grid Reference SU 8762 9209.**

Mobile Phone Signal: Signal is normally good across the site. Checked at each session, in emergency dial 112, which enables emergency services to pick up GPS signal. Nearest landline at properties on Keep Hill and Warren Wood Drive.

What3Words app: ///breath.catch.soil. Fire site: ///spine.worry.mostly

Grid reference for woodland site area: Grid Reference: SU 8733 1993

Nearest A+E: Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury HP21 8AL. 01296 315000.
Minor Injuries Unit: Wycombe Hospital. Queen Alexandra Rd High Wycombe, HP11 2TR.
01494 526161

First Aiders: Amy White, Supporting nursery staff.

School office: 01494 521941

Headteacher: Zoe Staines, 07966 550306.

Site managers: Chiltern Rangers, Kingsmead Depot, 60 Fennels Rd, High Wycombe. HP11 1SL

Site manager emergency access: Chiltern Rangers Office: 01494 474486, Ops Director (Tony Speight): 07931 575367



Bucks Council: Serious Incident Action Card for the Group Leader (Sept 2021)

- Summon emergency services if appropriate
- Provide first aid / prevent further injury
- Account for all party members including staff
- Delegate a responsible adult to take care of uninjured members of the party
- Instruct no-one to talk to media and secure inappropriate use of mobile phones or email and social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.)
- Activate the emergency procedures by calling

01183 589 332 (+441183 589 332 if calling from abroad)

(This is the Bucks Fire and Rescue Control Room number) **YOU MUST REQUEST THAT THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL'S DUTY RESILIENCE OFFICER IS PAGED. If unsuccessful call 07738 501 318 (BC Resilience team back-up phone).**

Be prepared to provide the following information which will be passed to the duty Resilience Office for Buckinghamshire Council by Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

- The complete telephone number which we can call you on (including national /area codes etc.)
- your name
- the name of your school /party
- the nature of the emergency

Ensure you leave this information before any further discussion takes place, in case you are cut off.

If possible, also provide:

- your location
- further details of the nature of the incident
- any other contact numbers that can be used

In order that you can be contactable at all times and to enable you to lead and coordinate all necessary actions you should delegate party leadership to the Deputy Leader.

Log-keeping:

A copy of the Incident Record sheet can be used to note down the information Record:

- further and full details of the incident, how and why it happened so far as can be established at this stage
- all action taken and conversations held

You should not make any public statements about the incident without prior agreement of a statement with the Council's Incident Control Team.

Ask those in the group to write individual statements of what they saw / heard in relation to the incident

Depending on the circumstances some or all of the following actions may be required:

- Retain all equipment involved in an accident or incident in an unaltered condition - unless it is required by the police
- Begin to make appropriate arrangements for those not injured to return home immediately
- Arrange any support for the staff and injured in hospital
- Obtain necessary documentation from the medical authorities e.g. death certificates, medical certificates indicating how injured may travel home, and case histories including x-rays

- Retain receipts for all expenditure connected with the incident.

Contacts

Buckinghamshire Council Emergency Number	Tel: 01183 589 332 (Ask for Buckinghamshire Resilience Team) If unsuccessful call 07738 501 318 (BC Resilience team back-up phone).
Outdoor Educational Advisor	Mike Harwin Tel: 07890 395 028 Email: mike.harwin@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
County Educational Visits Coordinator	Tracey Erasmus Tel: 01296 383030 Email: tracey.erasmus@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Outdoor Learning teacher / specialist provider of onsite LOfC and INSET / Lead for Bucks Outdoor Network and Forest Schools	Julie Lloyd-Evans Tel: 07561 710590 Email: LearningWithoutWalls@outlook.com
Swimming Adviser	Mandy Carey Tel: 01296 388222 Email: acarey@ahs.bucks.sch.uk Website: http://www.avtp.co.uk/school-swimming/
All about Plants (Mapping of plants in your school grounds)	Dr Karen van Oostrum Tel: 07910 684339 Email: Karenjvano@outlook.com
EVOLVE website	www.buckscvisits.org
Health & Safety	HR Service Desk Tel: 01296 382233 Email: hrrservicedesk@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Insurance	Rachael Ruddy Tel: 01296 383197 Email: rachel.ruddy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk Or Sue Clowe Tel: 01296 531168 Email: insurance@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Transport	Graham Groom Tel: 07885 622175 Email: graham.groom@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Resilience Team	Andy Fyfe Tel: 01296 382937 Email: andy.fyfe@buckinghamshire.gov.uk



Appendix 6: Fire, Food & Cooking Policy at Forest School

Forest School Food and Cooking Policy and Procedure

Cooking around a campfire is one of the special aspects of Forest School. The Play Safety Forum highlights that fire is a play tool and learning tool, in their publication 'Managing Risk in Play Provision'. Children and staff are engaged with all aspects of the fire at Forest School, from collection of tinder and fuel, to preparation, ignition, maintaining and putting out of fire in an age appropriate way. Children and staff are engaged with all aspects of the food cooking, from preparation to heating/cooking, serving and eating.

Fire does have some challenges, due to small incidents having potentially unacceptable consequences. However, good group management and vigilance can reduce the likelihood of these risks to an acceptable level. Cooking on an open fire requires good skills and responsibility and can be a life-long skill. A risk benefit assessment will be carried out specifically for fire and cooking on a campfire, and these will be regularly updated.

The Forest School leader will hold Level 2 Food hygiene qualifications and ensure that good hygiene practices are adhered to and all fire safety rules are followed. A risk benefit assessment will be prepared before a cooking activity is carried out at Forest School. The children attending Forest School will be taught the 'Fire Safety Rules'. This will be done through discussion and the playing of circle games. We will always check for flints when having a fire on the ground and leave the forest as we found it. The weather conditions may mean that a fire is not possible (high wind, heatwave).

Preparation:

- Check ahead for allergies and individual eating practices. (vegetarian, halal meat, gluten free) before purchasing food
- Ensure all those involved in food preparation have washed their hands
- Ensure children wash their hands before handling food and eating.
- Remind everyone how we behave near fires and the fire circle safety rules.
- Follow the safe siting and lighting of a campfire rules.
- Ensure there are not too many people cooking around the fire at once.
- Ensure the food preparation site is away from the fire area.
- Ensure heatproof gloves are available and used for handling pans/popcorn makers etc.
- Have water available and a burns kit for treating burns if necessary.
- Have fire control equipment nearby: water, plunge bucket, fire proof gloves and a fire blanket.

During cooking:

- Place everything you need within easy reach – including cooking pots, utensils, food and water.
- Make sure the fire is ready for cooking on – burning well to create enough heat.
- Ensure all children kneel when cooking on the fire.
- Make sure all pans are placed on a sturdy base when on the fire and fire gloves are used.
- Be extra vigilant if cooking with hot oil.
- Make sure preparation areas are clean, antibacterial wipes/spray can be used.