



**Waddington and West Bradford C E Primary School**



## **Forest Schools Policy**

### **Aim**

We aim to give children and practitioners a shared understanding of the ethos of a Forest School experience. This powerful approach enables young children to be independent, self-motivated, courageous and considerate and sets them up for lifelong learning. It particularly supports the development of self-esteem and self-confidence.

There are many important issues to be considered here and we aim to remain true to the Forest School ethos and approach.

### **Environmental Considerations**

Forest School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos. Wherever possible environmentally friendly products and recycle materials should be used when appropriate. Good practice should be modelled by adults showing children that the world in which we live in should be cared for. Involving children in site checks and planning environmental games will help support this.

### **Health and Safety Considerations**

The Forest School programme will support young children to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will even encourage early risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

### **Child and Vulnerable Persons**

Forest School Leaders and practitioners should regard their duty of care when working with young persons as extremely important. To ensure all individuals (children, workers, volunteers) are safe and protected we strongly recommend the following:-

- Everyone involved in Forest School is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of sites and activities. Staff and volunteers should be made aware of the relevant school policies and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them
- Key members of staff will have Designated Senior Leadership (DSL) Safeguarding Training and will have a named DSL member of staff.
- Forest School Leaders delivering training and all staff will have an enhanced DBS check. Any regular volunteer attending Forest School will also have a DBS check and no staff or volunteers will be left unsupervised with children.
- Vulnerable groups are those under the age of 18 and those people of all ages with a disability or with a diagnosed mental health problem.
- Any concerns about a child's physical or mental wellbeing should be shared with the schools named Designated Safeguarding Officer, so that the schools child protection policy can then be followed.
- We regard safety and good practice as extremely important, and it is the responsibility of individual staff and volunteers to ensure general safety during working.
- Confidentiality should be always maintained. Any concerns should only be shared with those who need to know such as the Forest School Leader or Class Teacher who can then ensure the correct channels are then informed.

## **Considerations for Equality and Inclusion**

In Forest School sessions all persons should be treated equally.

We aim to and are committed to:

- providing a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued
- including and value the contribution of all children and adults to our understanding of equality and diversity
- make inclusion a thread which runs through all the activities of Forest School

The legal framework for this guidance is:

- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986
- Children Act 1989
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

## **Cancellation Procedure**

There may be times when Forest School sessions must be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.

These may be: -

- Staff illness – which prevents staff / child ratios being met.
- Severe weather conditions.
- Any situation that poses a health and safety risk.

In the event of this situation arising we recommend that: -

- Cancellation decisions are made as soon as possible and that the school staff and volunteers are contacted.

We will endeavour to run Forest School sessions whenever possible, however reserve the right to cancel on the day, but will aim to inform client group as soon as possible.

## **Evaluation Procedure**

In order to develop the Forest School program and to ensure good practice is maintained a number of evaluation tools are recommended.

Evaluation of activities undertaken.

1. Evaluation of session – looking at what dispositions and attitudes are being developed.
2. Evaluation from children.
3. Evaluation from all staff involved in Forest School.

Policy agreed: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022

To be reviewed: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2024