Forest School Handbook

Stoneydelph Primary School

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**Forest School Procedures**

**Risk Assessment Procedure**

The Risk Assessment procedure at Stoneydelph Primary School ensures that all children stay as safe as is reasonably possible at all times during their Forest School sessions. It also allows them to experience an appropriate level of ‘risk’ which is an integral part of their learning, development and enjoyment of the sessions. We plan activities and write the Benefit risk assessments taking into account both the benefits and risks to the children. These are working documents, that may be amended over time as a result of different situations- a copy of these assessments is available on site during Forest School sessions.

The ethos of Forest School instils in the children the ability to take measured risks, appropriate to their age and level of development, and to carefully consider any repercussions from their actions.

**Emergency Procedure**

The following procedure will be followed in the case of any emergency during a Forest School session:

* Forest School Leader (Jenny Parry) to be alerted.
* Secure safety of whole group and all activities to be stopped.
* Call together the group, using emergency whistle if necessary (children will have been informed that if the whistle is blown, rather than the duck whistle, then it is an emergency)
* First aider to attend to any casualties. Other adult to ensure other children are safe- head count to ensure everyone is present.
* Call for help from other staff members in school if necessary.
* Record any changes of state in the casualty, and any medication administered where possible.
* Call emergency services. All adults present during Forest School sessions to carry charged mobile phones in case of an emergency.
* Inform emergency contact of the casualty as soon as it is practical.
* Safety of the rest of the group will be maintained by the other adult, away from the scene of the incident if possible. If other members of staff have arrived as assistance, children to return to the classroom.
* Incident report/ First Aid report completed by the Forest School leader after the incident.

**Lost Child Procedure**

The following procedure should be implemented and followed if any person (Child or adult) goes missing from the Forest School Session.

* Carry out whistle/ 1, 2, 3 procedure. This signals that everyone should return to the Forest School Leader.
* Conduct a head count to ensure all other members of the group are present and accounted for.
* One member of staff to stay with the group and await further instructions.
* Remaining staff members to search the immediate area for an agreed length of time eg. 10 minutes. Meet back at the group after the agreed amount of time.
* Anyone searching should have a mobile phone on them with sufficient battery to make a call in an emergency. They should stay in an area which they are familiar with, and be aware of their own safety.
* If the missing person (s) is not found within the allotted amount of time, the group should return to school so that the rest of the group can wait in relative comfort and in safety.
* School staff should be alerted to the fact that someone is missing.
* A second search party should be organised, with as many people looking who know the site and can be freed up from other responsibilities. The people searching should work in pairs, and at least one of the pair should have a mobile phone to make contact if necessary. Search for a specific amount of time, and return to the school reception once that time is up.
* If the person is not found after the second search, and with SMT consent, the police should be called. Depending on the circumstances, it may have been decided to make a police phone call during the 2nd search.
* Searches should be made both in the school grounds, and inside the school. Eg school toilets. Once the incident is over, a full incident report should be completed.

**In the Event of an Accident/ Incident Procedure**

The health and safety of all participants is paramount and is central to everything we do in Forest School sessions.

In the event of an accident or incident, any injuries will be dealt with by a qualified First Aider. Injuries will be recorded in the First Aid book, and where necessary, a bump note sent home to parents/ carers. The First Aid kit is kept in the shed in the garden, which will be accessible and unlocked during each Forest School Session. When the session is taking place on the field, the First Aid kit will be transported in the Forest School Rucksack to the immediate area in case of an emergency. The burns First Aid kit will always be near to the Fire Circle when a fire has been lit. The contents of both First Aid Kits will be maintained by the Forest School Leader.

Any accidents or incidents are reported and investigated by the Forest School leader, who will use the information gathered to inform future Risk Assessments and policies and procedures. The Forest School leader/s will carry a charged mobile phone for use in the case of an incident or accident.

**Loose dog/ Member of the public Procedure**

Forest School Sessions at Stoneydelph Primary School are held on predominantly private and fenced-off land. On the rare occasion that a dog does enter the school grounds, children will be reminded to not approach unknown dogs, and to be a “tree trunk”- meaning that they all stand as still as a tree, put their hands by their sides, and look at their ‘roots’ (feet). One of the adults will then approach the dog, and if the owner is present, request that they put the dog on a lead and remove them from the school site. If the dog doesn’t have an owner then it will be removed from the Forest School area. If that is not an option, then the group will be removed until the dog can be restrained.

If parents or other people make their way around to the Forest School area accidentally or are uninvited, the Forest School Leader will approach them and explain that a session is in place. They will then be asked to leave so that the session can continue. If they refuse, or become aggressive or abusive, then in the first instance the Forest School Leader will call the school office for assistance, and then the Police if necessary.

**Daily Procedures**

In order to ensure the safety of children and adults during Forest School sessions, there are certain checks which need to take place before, during and after the sessions. It is the Forest School Leader’s responsibility to ensure that all of these checks have taken place.

**Pre session checks:**

* Complete site sweep.
* Remove all visible litter and faeces.
* Remove any obvious trip hazards, and mark off areas as out of bounds as appropriate/ necessary
* Chop back any overhanging vegetation from paths and walkways..
* Ensure that risk assessments cover all activities for the day, and amend / update as necessary.
* Set up Forest school circle, including Fire safety kit if a fire is planned.
* Set up hand washing station.
* Ensure all materials and resources needed for your activities are ready and prepared.
* Ensure Forest School rucksack is packed and suitably stocked- including fresh, dated water, First aid kit, duck whistle, fire blanket and emergency procedure information.
* Check that all tools that are going to be used in that session are in good, working order.
* Ensure phone is fully charged for making contact in an emergency.
* Ensure school iPad is charged for taking photos of children for observations/ website/ Dojo etc.

**At the start of the session:**

* Take register and head count.
* Remind children of physical boundaries and that they must stay within these boundaries. Talk about duck whistle and how they must be able to hear that and return to FS Leader on that cue- sticky feet. In the first sessions, play games to establish boundaries/ rules and remind the children of these.
* Remind the children how they should behave, and what they need to do to stay safe on site (see site risk assessment).
* Explain the principles, and need for fire safety. In the first weeks, explain that we will build up to a fire once the children can show that they understand how to stay safe.

**During the session:**

* Be vigilant at all times.
* Continue to head count at regular intervals, and when the children are all together.
* Remind children to stay safe by highlighting potential hazards to them and talking about what to do about them. Children to report any hazards they may spot to the Forest School Leader.
* Take photos and make observations on groups and individual children.
* Deal with any behavioural issues as and when they arise. Use behaviour policy as a basis.

**After the session:**

* Carry out a final head count, and escort the children back to the school building to collect their belongings for home time (items to be left outside for easy collection/ to reduce the need to go back into the building).
* Count and pack up all equipment and resources.
* Clear fire area and make safe. Pack fire pit away once cool.
* Evaluate session and make plans/ notes for the next one.

**Fire Procedure**

Stoneydelph Primary School provides the children with the opportunity to get closer to nature and the outdoors, including learning about fire safety and how to make small fires in Kelly Kettles and other such equipment. Fires are an important part of Forest School learning, and we will aim that every child is able to experience these sessions. Where children are new to Forest Schools, we will build up to holding a campfire (in the fire pit), once we have established rules for the children to follow and to keep them safe. We have a specific risk assessment about campfires which details the procedures in place

We have a log circle around the firepit. Children will be taught how to behave when in the circle, and these rules will always be adhered to, even when the fire is not lit. It will be explained that to move around the circle, the children must always walk, they must walk outside of the logs, and they must carefully walk around the log to sit down. This is to ensure maximum levels of safety when a fire is lit. We will not have a fire until the Forest School leader is satisfied that all of these safety rules have been met.

A fire will only be lit once a Risk assessment has been completed. There must always be a trained adult present when a fire is lit or where there are hot embers remaining- a fire should never be left unattended. The fire pit will be surrounded with logs to provide a clearly marked area for the fire pit. Fires will not be lit close to overhanging branches, or on very windy days. Matches and fire steels will be kept in a tin, and will be counted in at the end of each session.

The burns kit will always be kept close to the log circle when a fire is lit. The fire bucket will always be filled with water and be close to the log circle to ensure there is enough water to put out a fire if it was to get out of control. The fire blanket will also be present and accessible. Long hair should be tied back and ties, scarves and tassles tucked in. There will be no more than 2 children in the fire circle at any one time. If cooking/ toasting then the children should be in a stable position on one knee before they begin. The fire will be reported to the Fire Marshall so as to avoid any unnecessary alarm and misidentification of the fire.

Once the fire has been extinguished, the Forest School leader will check that it is definitely out 30 minutes later to ensure it hasn’t spread.

**Tool Use Procedure**

Once children are settled into their Forest School sessions, and are becoming more confident and aware of the need for safety agreements, tools can be introduced into the sessions. Tool use is taught on a 1:1 basis, and they should be all kept safely together (tool bag) in a designated spot. Tools should always be used for a specific purpose, and the correct transportation method and use should be modelled by adults through tool talks. Tools should be used in a safe space away from other children. Children will be reminded that they should walk when moving tools around the site. Benefit Risk assessments are available for all tools, and are available for parents and carers to read on request.

**Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment Procedure**

No one will be able to participate in Forest School sessions without clothes that protect them from extremes of heat and cold and keep them covered in order to reduce the chance of cuts and scrapes. It should fit comfortably, and also meet any religious requirements. All children are likely to get very muddy, and so parents should be aware of this when deciding what clothes they should wear- This point has been highlighted on the Forest School introduction letter which was sent home to parents and guardians.

**Recommended clothing list:**

* Waterproof trousers
* Waterproof coat
* Long sleeve top and long trousers
* Warm boots and socks- we recommend bringing a spare pair
* Gloves and woolly hat during winter months
* Sun hat during summer months

Different children react differently to different weather conditions and temperatures- although children are expected to be dressed appropriately, these sensory needs also need to be taken into consideration during Forest School sessions to ensure that all children get the most from their learning.

Layers are the best way to keep warm- children can easily take one off if they are too hot, but it is very difficult to warm up once cold.

Any protective equipment required for activities, such as gloves, will be provided by the Forest School leader at the start of the session. All protective equipment will be stored in the shed.

**Sanitation Procedure**

Children will be asked to visit the toilet before they go down to the Forest School area. If children need to go to the toilet during the session, they will be escorted by a member of staff up to the outside toilet by a member of staff. All children will be advised to be careful not to slip or fall if boots are muddy. If one member of staff is removed from the session for toileting purposes, the other member of staff will gather the remaining children in and do a calm activity which isn’t too spread out.

Any litter that is created from Forest school sessions will be disposed of appropriately- any thing that is recyclable will be recycled. Litter pickers will be available for children to explore and use.

Hand washing and washing up facilities will be available during each session. Any solid debris will be removed, and then the water will be disposed of over as wide an area as possible, so that it will evaporate more quickly.

**Accusations/complaints Procedure**

This Complaints Policy is based on the principle that concerns expressed by a pupil or parent should be resolved as quickly as possible without the need to escalate to the formal stages of the procedure. However, where resolution has not been achieved and the person raising the concern is unhappy and wishes to take the matter further, the formal procedure for dealing with complaints will be followed.

The four stages are: • Stage 1 - Informal investigation of a concern.

• Stage 2 - Formal complaint investigated by a member of staff. This stage can be left out at the discretion of the Headteacher.

• Stage 3 - Formal complaint investigated by the Headteacher.

• Stage 4 - Complaint heard before an Independent Complaint Panel.

**Code of Conduct**

Our Forest School Code of conduct is relevant to children and adults, and is framed to provide a calm and nurturing learning environment.

Always try your best, take pride in your achievements

Respect other people – keep words and actions positive so everyone enjoys Forest School sessions

Listen well, follow instructions from staff

Respect property – look after our school and everything in it- leave the environment as you find it

Keep yourself and others safe

Follow our school vision through reflection and mindfulness

Our Forest School Code of Conduct builds upon these values and visions and aims to extend them through developing an understanding and care for the environment and each other.