



Gainsborough Primary School

Forest School Health and Safety Policy

2018



Handbook Review

Date of review	Signed by	Comments



Vision Statement

Forest School is an ethos which encourages the development of children's emotional and physical development through outdoor play, activities and exploration in a woodland environment. At Gainsborough Primary School, we will be helping to children to connect with and learn through their local environment; Wick Woodlands. The philosophy of Forest School is to encourage and inspire individuals of any age through positive experiences and participation in engaging and motivating achievable tasks. These tasks, amongst other things, will set out to develop:

- Confidence
- Independence
- Self-esteem
- Resilience
- Problem Solving
- Ability to establish boundaries for risk taking
- Communication and language skills
- Physical development

Hackney Forest School is a new and innovative outdoor teaching and learning experience, offering rich and varied activities in a natural environment to children and families.

Hackney Forest Schools



Rules of Forest School:

- Stay within the forest school boundary unless instructed by an adult
- Do not pick anything growing
- Do not put your fingers or anything else in your mouth
- Look after your forest school

The countryside code:

There are five sections of The Countryside Code which we need to consider when doing Forest School:

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people



Forest School Routines

Procedures to be carried out before each session:

- A thorough sweep of the site will be done before each session to check for any litter, glass, animal faeces, etc. Any such items should be collected using plastic bags and disposable gloves.
- A written record will be kept of each sweep. This should state whether any hazards were found and how they were dealt with.
- Trees will be checked for any broken or dead branches which may fall.
- Check that there are no dead twigs, etc., protruding at eye level.
- Weather conditions will be checked and if there are high winds or a thunder storm then Forest School will have to be cancelled.

Session Plan:

- Put on appropriate Forest School kit in classroom (waterproofs, wellies, etc.)
- Walk to our Forest School entrance (Wick Woodlands via school bridge).
- Discuss things that can be seen on the way.
- Walk to base camp.
- Count children.
- Sit down to discuss rules / any safety issues.
- Children are introduced to a new activity (one per week; each new activity is built into every session thereafter). If appropriate, they are shown the area that this activity will take place and the range of activities available (existing activities located in the same place).
- Children choose activity (more directed in earlier sessions).
- Children may be offered hot chocolate or a snack. Self-selected snack/drinks on offer – ensure wet wipes are available for cleaning hands first.
- Whole group game - time permitting.
- Children go back to base camp to reflect on and discuss what they enjoyed during the session.

Specific session plans will be drafted each session and put on file.

Procedures to be carried out at the end of each session:

- Clear everything away.
- Ensure any fires are completely extinguished.
- Collect and count equipment back in.
- Count all children and adults to make sure all are accounted for before leaving.
- Exit Forest School site and return to school. Change clothing back at setting.
- Feedback to significant adults; giving observations and/or opportunities to use Forest School learning in the classroom.



Legislation and Health and Safety Procedures

Forest School sessions will consider the responsibility to maintain the Health and Safety of all adults working in the area in line with the Health and Safety Work Act 1974: all children working in the area under the Children's Act 1989 and seek to ensure the Every Child Matters values are upheld.

The main considerations relevant to Forest School sessions are detailed below:

- Adults (Forest School helpers) will be asked to read the Forest School handbook; particularly the risk assessment, at the beginning of each session.
- The Forest School Leader will carry out a Forest School site assessment (safety sweep) immediately prior to the session and notify Forest School helpers of any changes in conditions from the general risk assessment.
- The Forest School Leader will inform the Forest School helpers of the activities and inform them of any special safety considerations.
- To ensure staff and pupil safeguarding, any accidents and incidents will be reported and reviewed to determine whether they could have been avoided and appropriate changes to procedures or policies will be made if necessary.
- The Forest School Leader is a qualified First Aider. They will have a first aid kit every session and administer first aid if necessary. In the event of more serious incidents, see 'Emergency Procedures' pages.
- To support the Forest School Leader in maintaining care for the health and safety of pupils and staff, Forest School helpers are asked to actively manage risks by reporting them or removing them when possible or safe to do so. All
- People attending the Forest School session are required to wear the appropriate clothing to carry out Forest School activities safely. For guidance, see the 'Clothing List and Equipment List'.



Essential Equipment List

- Register with emergency numbers / contact numbers
- Medical forms
- Mobile Phone
- Newspaper
- Matches
- Wet wipes
- Protective gloves
- Sun screen
- Plasters
- Bandages
- Scissors
- Water bottle with water for drinking / washing
- Thermal wrap sheet
- Pamphlet on hypothermia and first aid
- Container for inhalers
- Carrier bag for dirty / wet clothing



Clothing List for Everyone

- Woolly hat / sun hat
- Gloves
- Jacket / Waterproof coat
- Fleece / Sweatshirt
- Long trousers
- Spare socks
- Appropriate shoes / wellies / boots
- An emergency change of clothes
- A carrier bag for dirty / wet clothing

A set of spare all in one waterproof suits and wellies will be provided by the school.



Sun Policy

- Ensure the children have plenty of fresh drinking water on site
- Children are wearing caps or hats
- Children have sun screen on
- There is plenty of shade available. A tarpaulin is erected to create shade if not.
- Time outside is kept to a minimum.

Travel Policy

The children will leave the classroom; exiting through the classroom door and out through the Reception playground. Children will walk through the main playground to reach the gated school bridge. School staff will need to enter a pincode to unlock the gate and this will need to be locked after the last child. Children and adults will walk over the bridge to reach the other side of the canal. From here, children will walk along the canal (northwards) for about 5-10 minutes to reach the opening of Wick Woodlands. Children and adults will access the site at the opening closest to school (under the bridge). Any deviation from this route will be recorded in a risk assessment and shared with all Forest School helpers prior to leaving.



Forest School Medical Information Form

Child's Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Contact Name and relationship to the child	
Home address	
Phone Numbers	Home Work Mobile
Doctor	Address Phone

Has your child had any of the following:

Illness	Comment	Medication needed Please specify
Asthma / Bronchitis		
Sight / Hearing Difficulties		
Heart Condition		
Diabetes		
Epilepsy		
Allergies: e.g. pollen,nuts, materials		
Has your child ever been stung by a wasp / bee? If yes, what was the reaction?		
Date of last tetanus injection		

Signed:

Date:



Risk Assessment, Risk Benefit Analysis & Risk Management of the Forest School Site

Forest School at Gainsborough Primary School			Forest School Leader: Sian White		
Site: Wick Woodlands					
Period: April – July (Summer Term); every Friday afternoon					
Adults attending: Sian, Gazala (class teacher), Betty (Nursery Officer) + a minimum of 4 parent volunteers					
Children attending: Register list					
Specific needs (allergies, medical):					
Hazard	Risk Severity High/Moderate/ Low	Likelihood High/Moderate/Lo w	Who is at risk?	Risk Benefit	Risk Management
Roads	High	Low – no public roads walked. Roads surround site – distance 0.5 miles from base camp.	All	Road safety	Create boundaries – explain rules each session. Ratio 1:4. Walk in pairs to site (adult on outside). Base camp in centre of woodland.
Steps	Moderate	Low	All	Access over canal – journey to FS. Sights of canal.	Railings are high – children in pairs. Adults dispersed along line.
Railings	Low	Low – getting stuck	Children	Use of bridge – direct access	Railings are high – children in pairs. Adults dispersed along line.
Bridge	Low	Low - falling	Children	Use of bridge – direct access	High railings, wide and shallow steps.
Open water	High	Moderate	All	Children in local environment. Learn canal safety. See different wildlife.	Children walk furthest away from canal. Base camp site 0.2 miles from open water. Boundaries.
Needles	High	Moderate	All	None	Safety sweep – protective gloves / grabber. Sharpie box – buy.
Glass	High	Moderate	All	Children learn risk management – stand still, call an adult.	Safety sweep. Remove.
Dogs	Moderate	Moderate	All	Children can learn calmness around animals (some may not have come into contact with animals) – use outside of FS. Learn x factor.	Use x factor. If persistent, FS Leader to call children back to base camp.



Dog faeces	Moderate	Moderate	All	Being outdoors in an open space (wouldn't encounter in school). Learning not to touch – no licky.	Children learn no licky. Rules of forest school repeated each session.
Cyclists	Moderate	Low	All	Walk to FS along the canal rather than an A road.	Route to FS is busy – children in pairs on one side.
Public Access	Moderate	Moderate	All	Using a public and large outdoor space. Being in nature – flora and fauna diversity – rather than school grounds. Learning stranger safety.	School phone – contact in case of emergency. Children within boundary. Repeat rules each session. Children not to talk to strangers. FS Leader to move children if necessary.
Berries	Moderate	Moderate	Children	Seeing flora variety – making observations, asking questions, seeing nature.	Learn no picky no licky rule.
Branches	Moderate	High	All	Being in woodland. Learning through nature. Creating dens / habitats / necklaces with sticks.	Safety sweep – remove branches at eye level. Check trees for climbing.
Rubbish (plastic)	Low	High	All	Being able to use a public, large wooded area.	Remove all rubbish from safety sweep and bag. Take bag away from site.
Ditches / tripping	Low	Moderate	All	Being able to use a public, large wooded area.	Making adults and children aware of pre-empted ditches following sweep / weekly route. Proper footwear to be worn.
Slippage	Low	Moderate	All	Being able to use a public, large wooded area. Freedom to explore a different environment. Being out in different seasons.	Proper footwear – leader to manage
Stings / Nettles	Moderate	Moderate	All	Being able to use a public, large wooded area. Seeing different plants and learning about them. Seeing wildlife / minibeats.	Seasonal nettles – will be removed during sweep. First aider on site.



Sun stroke	Moderate	Low	All	Being out in all seasons. Observing changes over time.	Canopy over site provides shade. Walk 5-10 minutes. Children to wear hats. FS Leader to minimise session in very high heat. Take water. First Aider always present.
Public pitches	Low	Moderate	All	Being able to use a public, large wooded area.	Identify before going out on FS session. Move site over (still within Wick) if safe to do so – must know alternative area well (close proximity) and do a thorough sweep. Reiterate rules and make sure children know boundary. Extra vigilance of adults in boundary – show visually. Adapt plan if necessary. Return to school if necessary.
Bug bites	Moderate	Moderate	All	Being able to use a public, large wooded area. Being in nature.	Clothing FS leader to ensure all are adequately dressed – covered arms and legs. Inform parents of bites.
Missing child	High	Low	Children	Outdoor learning, rich learning opportunity outside of school, independence, exploration, problem solving, developing bond with nature, freedom, learning boundaries.	Follow emergency procedures.



Safety Sweep Evidence

Before each Forest School sessions there will be a safety sweep of the Forest School site to look for and assess immediate risks. All safety sweeps will be recorded and filed by the Forest School Leader.

Safety sweeps will be recorded and stored in the Health and Safety folder.

Date:	Time:	Weather:
Name of Forest School Leader:		

Checklist	Yes/No	Comments
Fallen branches		
Low branches		
Protruding thorns		
Brambles / nettles		
Slippery areas		
Broken glass / needles		
Vandalism / intruders		
Weather effects		
Standing water		
Boundary line / fence		
Base camp		
Tool area roped off		
Emergency rucksack		
Equipment ready		
Spare clothes		

Other hazards identified:
Action taken:



Risk Management of Tools and Equipment

Risk Management of Sharp Tools:

- Equipment will be checked at the beginning of each session
- Tools such as knives should be kept in a locked box
- Tools should only be used in a clearly designated area
- Children should be using tools in a low supervision ration (1:2 for knives, 1:6 for peelers).
- When children are using tools they should be sat with nobody close to them (blood bubble rule).
- Children should know that if they enter the tool area, they must proceed with caution; not entering the blood bubble.
- Knives and peelers should be used away from the body and children should be sat in a steady balance.
- Bow saws and pruning saws should always be used with a glove on the non-sawing hand.
- Tools should be cleaned before they are put away.
- Tools will be counted back at the end of the session.

Risk Management of Other Tools:

- Equipment will be checked at the beginning of each session
- Tools such as trowels should be used appropriately and in designated areas.
- Although children will not be as closely supervised, the expectation is that children will use the equipment will be used appropriately. This will be monitored by Forest School helpers.
- Children should be aware of others if using tools and vice versa.
- Tools will be counted back at the end.

Risk Management of Other Equipment:

- Equipment will be checked at the beginning of each session for safety.
- Although children will not be as closely supervised, the expectation is that the children will use the equipment appropriately.
- Equipment will be counted back at the end.
- Damaged and broken equipment will be removed and eventually replaced.

No tools should be taken out of Forest School during the session.

All tools should remain in the designated tool area during the session.



Specific tools

Penknife (Year 2+) and Peelers (EYFS+):

- Must be used with the Forest School Leader.
- Always sit down when using the penknife / peeler.
- Ensure penknife is closed and locked when not in use.
- Open the penknife away from you, sitting down with plenty of room around you.
- Always use the penknife away from your body.
- Always ensure the children are supported when using the penknife on a 1:1 or 1:2 ratio, depending on age and experience.

Bow saw (EYFS+)

- Ensure guard is in place when not in use.
- Must only be used with the Forest School Leader.
- Always use in the designated tool area.
- Using the bow saw with the saw horse where possible.
- Talking with the children about the way you should use the bow saw.
- Ensure safe storage and safe handling in Forest School.



Emergency / Incident Procedures

Major Accident

- Forest School Leader to call 999.
- Other adults (staff and helpers) to get children back to base camp and organise return to school.
- Adult 1 to go to site entrance and direct the ambulance.
- Adult 2 sent to raise alarm at the office (contact child's parent/carer)
- Incident recorded on a major incident form and reported to the LA.

Minor Accident

- Forest School Leader to decide whether to administer First Aid or to delegate to helper 1 (if First Aid trained).
- Incident recorded in log book.
- School First Aid procedure followed (notifying parents e.t.c.)

Missing Child

- Forest School Leader returns children to base camp.
- Adult 1 begins looking for missing child.
- Adult 2 reports to the school office and gets back up support.
- Forest School Leader to follow school procedures when a missing child is off site – call the police at the Forest School Leader's discretion.
- Forest School Leader to occupy the remaining children – keeping them calm – until the issue has resolved.
- All remaining adults to be searching.

Lock down

- In the event of a lockdown at school, follow school procedures. Stay in room with blinds down if one continuous whistle is heard and do not leave until advised to do so by a member of senior management.
- In case of an event off the school premises, children to hide and keep quiet. Forest School Leader to contact 999 and the school office.

Evacuation: General and Fire

- If appropriate and safe to do so, Forest School Leader to return children briefly to base camp.
- Once assembled, children should be swiftly directed to the nearest safe exit and walk towards school. Adult 1 to remain at the back of all children and adults.

Note: Fires are not currently permitted in Wick Woodlands (local authority).



Designated Person Responsibility

Role of the Forest School Leader

- A risk assessment will be written by the Forest School Leader each term. This includes activities and use of tools.
- A safety sweep will be carried out by the Forest School Leader each session. They will ensure the risk assessment is signed and dated.
- Plan, lead and facilitate learning; sharing session plans with staff.
- The Forest School Leader will plan and evaluate each session; sharing findings with staff as necessary.
- Administer First Aid if required / delegate to a trained First Aider.
- Ensure everyone is wearing the correct clothing.
- All tools used during a Forest School session will be overseen directly by the Forest School Leader.
- The Forest School Leader will communicate the rules / expectations of each session to the Forest School helpers and children.
- The Forest School Leader is responsible for safeguarding children during Forest School sessions (see Legislation and Health and Safety).

Forest School helpers (staff and parents) role:

- All adults should make themselves aware of procedures and emergency procedures.
- Liaise with Forest School Leader over the session plan.
- Be a non-interruptive aid to learning, to scaffold a child's learning.
- Make observations of children as directed by the Forest School Leader.
- Take evidence of session and observations.
- Help with snacks / drinks.
- Be a positive role model.
- Toileting children according to procedure.
- Reporting any concerns (medical, safeguarding, e.t.c.) to the Forest School Leader immediately.



Forest School Helper Job Card

You are adult helper number:
Thank you for volunteering at our Forest School session today! It is an important part of your role in Forest School to facilitate learning and observe children; enabling them to learn independently and to make their own choices.
Roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please observe the children and take photos to document their learning.• Please ensure children stay within the designated boundary.• Please facilitate learning; mirroring what children do and praising them (please don't interrupt or lead children's learning).• Please be a positive role model.
Incident procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Major – Adult 1 please go to the site entrance and direct the ambulance. Our location is Wick Woodlands (Capital Ring entrance by the canal). This is surrounded by the B112 road, the A12 and Eastway. Our postcode is E9 5ND. Adult 2 please call the school office and raise alarm (office to contact child's parent) and get support.• Minor – please report to the Forest School Leader.• Evacuation – please leave Forest School behind the children.
Toileting Considerations: All children have been given the opportunity to go to the toilet before leaving; therefore it is unlikely they will need to go during the session. If a child really needs to go, a school member of staff can take them back to school so long as the remaining numbers of adults:children are in ratio. The Forest School Leader must be notified if someone leaves the site and notified when they return. <i>No tools or equipment should be taken from the Forest School site.</i>
Activity station/s:



Insurance Requirements

Please see the school's insurance certificate. This includes information about activities held off site.



Ecological Impact and Three Year Sustainability Plan

Year 1	
Objectives	Proposals / Action Plan
Establish base camp	Identify a site. Get site permission from the LA. Send information and obtain a service level agreement. Ensure nobody else is using the same site / is able to share.
Establish areas and make them safe	Consider best area to use – tree varieties, noise, public access, visibility etc. Remove dead branches at eye level. Remove hazards. Clean space thoroughly. Repeat weekly in sweep. Create areas in spaces that haven't already been significantly damaged by footfall.
Create boundaries for areas using rope / ribbons / adults	Ensure routines and rules are clearly established. Children know they need to stay in the boundary and be seen by an adult at all times.
Identify flora and fauna in area	Make a guide specific to Wick Woodlands – resource for children.
Manage growth	Monitor growth in area. Coppice if necessary.
Session Planning	Build opportunities for children to identify flora and fauna and learning opportunities to detect damage and offer solutions. Build awareness, care and consideration. Rotate trees for climbing each term.
Minimise impact of using site	Clear rubbish, take all plastics etc away, weekly site sweep. Avoid going out in extended, torrential rain – footfall damage.

Year 2	
Objectives	Proposals / Action Plan
Rest areas	Rest site areas to minimise impact of footfall (flora) and encourage fauna to return.
Growing	Spring 2019 – planting opportunities (sapling / bulbs). Apply to Woodland trust for 30 free trees (if possible). Create boundaries around new growth (incorporate into session planning – children's involvement).
Create animal habitats	Encourage return of fauna – minibeasts etc. Leaving logs alone – leaving areas of dense leaf fall. .
Develop area within school playground to encourage growth (linked to school playground project)	Create a natural space within the school grounds. Foster wildlife and plant growth.
Start and maintain coppice cycle	Look for plant decay and remove. Coppice trees to encourage growth. Rotate trees for climbing.
Wildlife	Minimal disturbance. Take away all traces (litter, tools etc).



Year 3	
Objectives	Proposals / Action Plan
Change areas	Move base camp and station areas to encourage re-growth in previously used site.
Dead wood	Over collection may limit leaf litter and decomposition cycle (habitats for fauna). Keep dead wood on site and dismantle all dens etc. Replenish with wood from elsewhere – contact tree surgeons.
Weather	Avoid using site in heavy rain – footfall increased.
Trees	Continue coppicing when necessary. Protect newly planted trees and more vulnerable species. Rotate tree climbing.
Growing	Continue growth – planting and protecting new growth.
Wildlife	As above.



Appendix/Links to School Policies

[Insurance policy](#)

[Lock down policy](#)