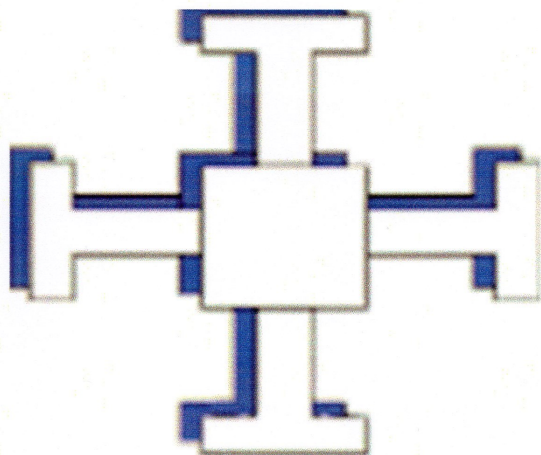


# Christ Church C of E Primary School

## Forest School Handbook



### Section 1: Introduction

Christ Church Primary Forest School was established in September 2012. The idea grew from the new Headteacher and staff's desire to provide a curriculum to reflect the naturally stunning area in which the school is situated, as up to that point, it had not been used to its full potential.

The Forest School ethos is one that provides holistic development for our children. It helps them to develop a life-long love and understanding of the natural environment whilst developing self-esteem, confidence and social skills through carefully planned activities. Children are able to excel in all areas of their personal, academic and spiritual development.

The philosophy which underpins the forest school movement is to encourage and inspire individuals of any age from 3 upwards, and any groups, through mastery of small, achievable tasks in woodland environment, to grow in confidence and independence so that they are able to develop a sense of self-worth. Children will acquire new skills as they are ready for them so that activities can maintain a degree of challenge and excitement, whilst remaining safe and controlled.

Research has shown Forest School to be inspirational, opinion changing and challenging. It raises expectations and develops insights into individual learning styles and schemas. Forest School embraces a nurturing approach to learning through support and development of self-esteem of the children.

## Daily Procedures

Before any Forest School session, a site sweep needs to be carried out to ensure the area is safe. All adults assisting need to be informed of the learning intentions and be provided with a session plan. The First Aider to be responsible for the First Aid kit.

Prior to departure for the Forest School site, all children need to change into suitable clothing and footwear and go to the toilet.

Staff and children will leave the classroom and walk along the path to the Forest School site. When on the Forest School site, a safety talk will be given.

Children are counted prior to leaving the classroom and are then counted again when you are sat in the forest to ensure all children have reached the forest area with the class.

Any fires will be ignited in the designated area with boundaries clearly marked out. Children are not allowed to cross the camp fire area and must walk around the outside at all times. Fire safety equipment (see Fire Policy for details) to be prepared by Forest Leader, who will also supervise the fire at all times.

Any tools will be used in the designated area under Forest School trained adult supervision. Correct safety clothing to be worn. All tools kept in a tool bag or other appropriate container and carried safely to site. (See Tool Policy for appropriate ratios).

If a child needs to leave the Forest School site to go to the toilet, they will either have a buddy or an adult, depending on age and ability. A pass will be provided for each child by the Forest School Leader.

At the end of the Forest School session, any tools are to be counted in and cleaned ready for the next session then put away safely. Any fires are to be safely extinguished (see Fire Policy for details).

Head count of children to be carried out before leaving the site.

Children will walk back to cloakroom, wipe down waterproofs if worn, change footwear and store appropriately.

## Emergency Procedures

### Accident/Incident

Everyone will be briefed in what to do in case of emergency. A whistle will be blown as a signal to stop what you are doing, children will find the nearest adult, be silent and wait for instructions. The Forest School Leader will assess the situation, the nature and extent of the injury/accident. They will ensure that the rest of the group are safe from danger and are adequately supervised. They will attend to the casualty, giving first aid if necessary. An incident report will be completed later.

In cases of serious injury that requires medical assistance, the Forest School Leader will dial 999 and another member of staff with the Forest School party will notify a member of the SLT, who will then notify parent/guardian.

The Forest School Leader and SLT member will stay with the injured party whilst other staff take the rest of the children back into school. The gate will be opened and the barrier lifted up ready for admission of any emergency vehicles to ensure prompt access.

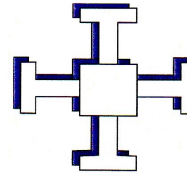
A member of staff will meet the ambulance and direct them to the incident site.

If the injured child is taken to hospital, one member of staff will go with them and the child's parent will be updated about the situation by the staff remaining at school.

In minor cases, the Forest School Leader will arrange to contact the parent of the injured child so they can be collected and taken to the hospital, doctor or home.

### Lost child

In the event of a child missing during the head count, children will remain with the Forest School Leader whilst assisting adults alert other staff and search school grounds, which has secure boundaries.



## Health and Safety Policy

The Forest School Health and Safety Policy is an addendum to the School's Health and Safety Policy and does not change the school's position on health and safety matters set out in the original document.

In order that Forest School sessions may be run safely, the Forest School Leader will ensure that at least one appropriately qualified first aider is on-site. They will also establish and maintain a safe and healthy environment by:

- Establishing, maintaining and evaluating appropriate procedures, policies and risk assessments, as set out in the Handbook.
- Ensure the provision of sufficient information and instruction for all adults so that they can contribute to their own health and safety and that of the children they are working with.
- Establish and be utterly familiar with, all emergency procedures including the reporting and recording of procedures.
- Ensure that risk assessments and site sweeps take place before children are permitted on to the site. Risk assessments will be held in the master Forest School file, located in the staffroom.
- Investigate any accidents and use information gathered to inform future risk assessment and policy making.
- Teach all members of the party to maintain their own and others health and safety by involving them in the risk assessment process at appropriate opportunities.
- Maintain the legal adult-child ratio.
- Ensure that safety equipment is in good working order and is used appropriately. Forest School Leaders assume responsibility for the maintenance of the First Aid Kit and any tools brought into the Forest School camp.

### A. What is First Aid ?

First aid is an initial encounter with a casualty where the first aider, after making sure of his or her safety, provides assistance to the casualty.

### B. Who is responsible for first aid ?

Minor first aid, e.g. a graze to knee, small cut on finger etc. can be administered by any responsible adult, i.e. member of staff and then reported to a first aider. However, more serious cases, e.g. a bump to the head, large cuts etc. must be referred to a first aider immediately.

\*A first aider is someone who has undertaken the first aid at work course and holds a valid certificate, i.e. within three years of training.

Treatment given is at the discretion of the named first aiders, however in very serious cases in situations when an ambulance is required or a child requires immediate medical attention or needs to be sent home then the final decision is to be undertaken by the line manager, i.e. head teacher or senior staff member.

### C. Legal Requirements

The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 (SI 1981 No.917) place requirements on employers only in respect of their employees. When making provision there is no obligation on employers

to take account of persons who are not their employers, such as pupils in schools. However, the Approved Code of Practice, First Aid at work, Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 and Guidance (Health and Safety Executive, COP 42, 1990, ISBN 0 11 885536 0), suggests that employers "whose premises are regularly attended by such persons may, however, wish to make some provision for them.

#### **D. I Accident reporting procedure in school.**

All accidents/minor incidents that occur during school hours 08.45 - 15.15 and after school clubs 15.15 - 16.15 must be reported on one of the schools accident forms that are to be sent home the same day. Location of first aid forms are in the LEARNING MENTORS OFFICE.

#### **E. Equal Opportunities**

Every pupil at Christ Church CE Primary School will have equal access to the school First Aid Policy regardless of race, colour, creed, ethnic origin, age, ability, sex or disability.

#### **F. Review**

This policy will be reviewed regularly.

#### **Food Safety**

1. Forest School sessions on-site (i.e. those lasting a maximum of 1 ½ hours)

will adopt a nil-by-mouth policy with the following exceptions:

- a. Hot drinks made in storm kettles for the group.
- b. Drinks and foods which link to the Forest School activities. In such cases, the Forest School Leader will be responsible for checking that no member of the group has any listed allergy to any of the products; if they have, the Forest School Leader will use their discretion as to whether a substitute product or different activity will be most appropriate.

2. Children to wash hands prior to preparing and consuming any food.

#### **Fire Safety Policy**

Campfires and the use of kelly kettles are an important part of Forest School and are used in many sessions. Christ Church CE Primary School aims to ensure that all children and adults participating in Forest School sessions with fires and/or kelly kettles will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

##### **Location**

- Only previously agreed areas will be used for campfires. This is currently the large log circle near the entrance to the Forest site.
- Campfire areas are enclosed by logs to prevent the spread of fire.
- Kelly kettles are only used on flat ground and any woodchip or leaf litter must be brushed away before use. The place to use Kelly kettles has been designated in an open area between Mope's House and the story bench.

##### **Positioning of Children and Adults**

- Fire areas are surrounded by seating logs at least 1.5 metres from the fire pit.

- When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area without permission.
- When allowed to access the campfire, children must walk around the outside of the seating logs and wait for permission to step over. Once permission has been given, they must sit ensuring legs are drawn into the log and not outstretched.
- Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.
- Children will be taught how to change seats by standing, stepping over the log and then walking around the outside of the seating area. They must never cross the inner area.

### **Safety and Responsibility**

- Only adults are permitted to light fires, unless children are under the direct supervision of the Forest Leader.
- Fires are lit using cotton wool, petroleum jelly and flint and steel.
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- No plastics are to be burnt.
- If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one to one adult supervision.
- Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire.

### **Extinguishing**

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
- Forest School Leaders should ensure that any large remains of wood, especially when using a long log fire, are separated from one another.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.
- Large build ups of potash, from several fires, need to be dispersed. This must only be done when it has totally cooled, preferably the following day. It should be finely scattered

throughout the woodland to enable natural decomposition. This will be done by the Forest School Leader.

### **Kelly (storm) kettles**

- Only adults are to light the fire in the fire pan unless children are directly supervised by the Forest School Leader.
- The kelly kettle must be placed on flat, clear ground, between Mope's House and the story bench. Children must be seated at least 1.5 metres away from the storm kettle.
- Children can feed the fire with one to one supervision but they must have been shown how to do so safely. (Stick held at the end and dropped in from the side; hand should never be placed over the top of the kettle).
- Fuel should burn itself out, but if it doesn't it must be extinguished with water.
- Kelly kettles should never be boiled with the cork in.

### **Hand tool safety policy**

Using small hand tools is an important part of Forest School as it enables children to develop new, practical skills that help them develop self confidence.

Hand tools are to be maintained in good order by the Forest School Leaders and will be inspected after each session to ensure safety. Children and adults will be taught how to handle tools properly and to treat them with respect.

Whilst using hand tools the staff to child ratio is increased.

- Tools will only be used in the designated tool area, a clearly marked space with a log boundary situated 4m north-east of fire circle.
- Children must ask permission before entering the tool area.
- No more than 2 children allowed in the tool area at any time.
- Staff to child ratio for KS2 1:2 for bow saws, 1:1 for bill hooks and 1:4 knives. For Foundation Stage and KS1 all ratios 1:1.

- Tools will be kept in the Forest School tool bags and only removed by the Forest School staff or volunteers.
- Running with tools is prohibited.
- Pointing with tools is prohibited.
- Bill hooks should not be swung and should be wrapped in cloth when not in use.
- Bow saws must have a blade guard on them when not in use. Blade guards to be removed and put back only by Forest School staff, TAs or volunteers until children have been shown how to do this properly and safely.
- All tools must be counted back into the tool bag at the end of the session.

To assist the Forest School Leader in teaching children to maintain their own and others' health and safety.

To report accidents or hazards to the Forest School Leader immediately.

To take responsibility for making themselves aware of safety issues, such as the whereabouts of the First Aid kit.

To provide their own suitable outdoor clothing and footwear.

### **Responsibilities of the Children**

To take personal responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety of others.

To listen to and follow safety information given to them.

To wear appropriate clothing and footwear to Forest School sessions.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Responsibilities of the Forest School Leader:**

To plan and lead all Forest School activities.

To ensure that planned activities are within the capabilities of the children taking part, amending plans to provide an inclusive curriculum in its broadest sense.

To take responsibility for discipline during Forest School sessions.

To have an up to date First Aid qualification.

To carry out regular risk assessments.

To ensure all Forest School policies are regularly reviewed and that review is informed by observations and developing knowledge of the Forest School setting, taking into account any changes that may occur.

### **Responsibilities of Accompanying Staff and Parent Helpers**

To take an active role in Forest School activities and assist with any discipline issues within the group.

To assist with the Forest School Leader in ensuring equipment meets safety standards and to report any concerns about the state of equipment immediately.