



Forest School

At Linton Primary
School





7. Fire Safety for Forest School

- We always use a fire pit to set our fire in and our fire will only be lit in the fire circle.
- The area will be clear and will be checked for any low hanging vegetation before the fire is lit.
- The fire area is surrounded by seating logs which are at least 1.5 metres away from the fire pit.
- When the fire is lit the children are not permitted to access the area immediately surrounding the fire unless invited to by a member of staff.
- Children will be shown how to change seats or leave the fire circle by standing up, turning around so that you are facing away from the fire and walk forwards.
- Children must never cross the inner area.
- Children will demonstrate moving away from the fire safely before the fire is lit.
- Once seated around the fire the children must remain seated until directed to by an adult to move.

Fire lighting

- Training has been provided to the Forest School Leader regarding the way to construct and light the fire.
- Fire will be lit using a fire steel, cotton wool and natural tinder.
- Adult helpers will be encouraged to have a go to light the fire if they wish to.

Safety and responsibility

- A fire blanket, bucket of water and burns kit must be sited close to the fire at all times.
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- Sticks/ wood must not be thrown on the fire.

Extinguishing

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of the session.
- Whenever possible all fuels must be burnt off to an ash before the fire is extinguished.
- At the end of the session the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased. When totally cooled the mixture should be scattered throughout the woodland to enable natural decomposition.

6. Weather Policy for Forest School

- Weather will be monitored via weather forecast and radio stations prior to Forest School sessions.
- Weather will be assessed the morning of Forest School sessions and at lunchtime during pre-site check.
- The Beaufort scale will be consulted on windy days. If the conditions are too high on the scale the session will be cancelled (only one session has been cancelled since September due to storm conditions).
- All children will be provided with appropriate clothing according to the weather (waterproof suits, wellies, hats, scarfs and gloves)
- Spare clothes will also be available if needed.
- Parents will be advised on what to dress their children in on Forest School days.



Contents of Handbook

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1. What is Forest School?

Forest school is a fun, creative and inspirational process which provides all learners with regular sessions in the great outdoors. Forest school inspires individuals of any age to explore the natural world first hand in all weathers, through the changes of the seasons, developing a personal and hopefully life lasting connection to nature and a healthy respect for the natural world.

What happens in Forest School?

Following a lightly structured series of objectives, the learner is given many opportunities to investigate the area, working independently or collaboratively as they decide. Trained practitioners support all learners during their time in the outdoors, adapting sessions when necessary and observing the interests of the individuals, supporting and scaffolding their learning where needed, but letting their experiences be completely learner-led. Forest School Practitioners ensure all sessions maintain the learner's curiosity and support their development holistically. They provide opportunities for the learners to assess and take risks that are appropriate to them.

How does Forest School help my child?

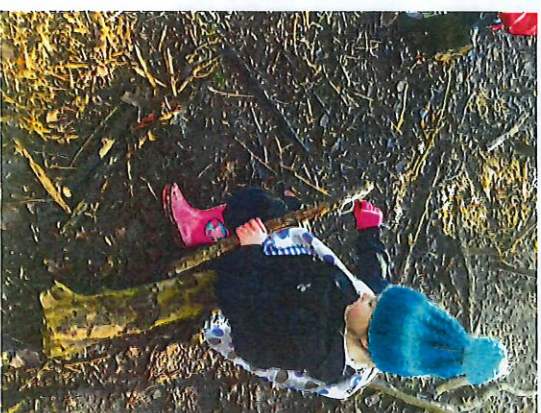
Here at Linton, we believe and have seen that Forest School encourages children to:

- Develop personal and social skills
- Work through practical problems and challenges
- Use tools to create, build or manage
- Discover how they learn best
- Pursue knowledge that interests and engages them
- Learn how to manage failures
- Build confidence in decision making and evaluating risk
- Develop practical skills
- Understand the benefits of a balanced and healthy lifestyle
- Explore connections between humans, wildlife and Earth
- Regularly experience achievement and success
- Reflect on learning and experiences
- Develop their language and communication skills
- Improve gross and fine motor skills
- Become more motivated



5. Tool Policy for Forest School

- We may use the following tools with children: peelers, bowsaws, Loppers, Palm/hand drill
- The Forest School Leader is responsible for overseeing safe use and maintenance of all tools.
- Risk assessments are carried out for all activities using tools (to be found in the Forest Schools Planning Folder).
- All Forest School tools and safety equipment will be kept in a locked tool box on site on the school premises
- Tools must be checked to make sure they are safe before every session. Check:
 - All screws and bolts are tight
 - Tools are clean
 - Blades are sharp
 - Saw blade cover is still on and protecting the blade
 - Safety catch on the loppers work
- After every session tools will be cleaned and returned to their safe place.
- If any tool becomes damaged it will be disposed of in a safe way and new equipment will be brought.
- If a bowsaw blade is no longer cutting effectively the blade is to be replaced.
- If a person receives a cut from any tool, a qualified first aider is to administer first aid and if necessary the emergency services are to be called or person to be taken to A and E.





- Find an inner sense of peace/become more mindful
- Improve their concentration skills

4. Health and Safety Policy for Forest Schools

- There must always be a Level 3 trained Forest School leader on site at all times (Claire Pett or Kathryn Brunt- volunteer).
- Level 3 Forest School Leaders to hold outdoor paediatric first aid qualification.
- Leader will be responsible for running all Forest School sessions and activities.
- Forest Schools gives encouragement to engage in potential hazardous activities (using tools and lighting an open fire) in a safe and secure environment using Forest School procedures under competent leadership.
- Ensure all equipment is suitable for its intended use and maintained in the correct way.
- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the procedures in case of an accident.
- The school will provide the correct clothing for all children attending Forest Schools.
- Leader to give activity description/ safety talk before activity commences.



2. Our Forest School Code of Conduct



Entering the Forest
We will enter the Forest respectfully and know that when at Forest School specific expectations are in place. We will explore, investigate, learn and play in a manner that will not damage our Forest environment. We understand that we share our Forest School with plants and animals and that when we are in our Forest School we are sharing the environment with them.

Boundaries

Before each session begins children are made aware of how far that they can explore and of any fixed boundary markers. If children move to explore hidden areas an adult should also move into the cover deep enough to be able to see the children but allowing the children the freedom to explore independently. If you lose sight of a child shout '1,2,3, where are you?' The children have been taught to respond '1,2,3, I'm here'



Lighting a fire

When lighting a fire the Forest School leader will take control of the operation and all accompanying adults will be briefed before we start. A lit fire will not be left unattended at any point. A fire may not be lit until it has been confirmed to all that our fire safety equipment is in place. All fires will be made in a fire pit.

At the Fire Circle

An open fire will be lit in a fire pit. A fire circle using log sitting stools may be established around the perimeter, 1.5m from the fire pit. No one may enter the fire circle perimeter unless invited to do so by an adult. There may be no running past the fire circle. No items must be carried and placed within the fire circle unless by an adult. If you wish to move around the fire to a new stool you must step out of the circle and walk around the outside of the log circle. Even when the fire is unlit we will treat it as if it is lit.



Using Tools

All tools have their own clear code of conduct for correct use which will include specific protective equipment, correct use of a





Digging

Children can dig in the mud and are encouraged to use the mud to make and create natural art. Children may carefully move soil to look for insects and their habitats



Eating and Drinking

Nil by mouth policy for anything found in the Forest, unless this activity has been specifically planned for during the session (e.g. blackberry picking). Children must be reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses.



Carrying and Transporting Materials

Children are encouraged to roll, lift, drag and pull materials, either by using their hands or by using ropes. We encourage safe lifting by bending our knees and keeping our back straight. Safe lifting should always be modelled by adults. Heavier objects should be rolled, lifted or carried by more people working together.

specific body posture, and consideration of the appropriate types of activity that each tool may be used for.



Collecting wood

Wood is collected for fire lighting purposes. It is collected in different thicknesses - matchstick sized, pencil sized, thumb sized and wrist sized. This is a good mathematical activity involving sorting and matching. Sticks may also be collected for creating pictures and patterns.



Rope and String Use

We encourage children to have their own ideas and take resources for the children to use. This includes rope and string in case the children would like to make swings or a rope bridge. An adult will help as needed, modelling appropriate knot tying and modelling how to talk through ideas and decisions.



Leaving the Site

We work according to the ethos 'leave no trace' that we were in the forest as much as is reasonably possible. All rubbish will always be removed. If the children have made/ created something with natural materials they can leave them in the Forest or take them back to school with them



3. Risk Management

- Constantly apply the five step approach to risk assessment for all Forest School activities:
- Look for hazards
- Decide who may be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing controls are adequate or whether more should be done
- Record findings, including daily amendments to standing risk assessments
- Review risk assessments on a regular basis and revise if necessary
- Carry out site risk assessments on site where Forest School session will be carried out (annually)
- Daily pre visit checks will be carried out by Forest School leader prior to the children arriving. Findings will be recorded on daily risk assessment (to be found in Forest School planning folder).
- Complete a tools risk assessment for the use of tools during sessions (to be found in Forest Schools planning folder).
- In the event of high winds and extreme weather conditions Forest School will be postponed.
- Inform staff, volunteers, helpers and children of potential hazards and methods of working in order to minimise the risk.
- Involve staff, volunteers, helpers and children in risk assessments when appropriate as part of learning.

