Forest School
Handbook
Forest School Ethos


What makes a Forest School Session different?

1. It is fun
2. The area is left as natural as possible
3. The children visit on a regular basis
4. They negotiate and learn to abide by standards of behaviour and respect each other and the environment
5. The children learn to understand and manage risk
6. There is a high adult:child ratio of 1:5 and 1:1 for tool work
7. Observations are carried out and learning styles more easily identified
8. Children initiate their own learning and planning is built around children’s interest in previous sessions
9. Links well to the E.Y.F.S
10. Led by a qualified Level 3 School Practitioner (Sam Inglis)
Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it's stupid.

Albert Einstein
Code of Conduct

This code of conduct briefly summarises how I will work, values and ethics. It is supported by more detailed policies and procedures in the section following this code.

1. Compliance

I will comply with all necessary legal requirements, for example holding a current Enhanced DBS certificate, Health and Safety regulations, Child Protection, and Public Liability Insurance.

2. Competence

I will hold all necessary certificates and complete training to ensure that I am competent to fulfil the work required. This would include such things as Forest School Leader Level 3, Emergency First Aid as a minimum.

3. Child Protection

As a Creative Practitioner working with children I aim to provide activities that will encourage learning and developmental opportunities and assist them to develop new skills within a safe environment. Developing procedures and guidelines will help minimise the potential for abuse and create a positive environment for everyone involved.

4. No-Harm Principle

No activity will aim to result in harm of any sort to the participants, adults or children. This will be supported through Child Protection and Health and Safety policies and procedures kept within our setting.

5. Beneficence

Children and young people will only be invited to participate in activities where there are benefits to the experience.

6. Mutual Trust and Respect

I support and embrace a policy of equal opportunities. I will endeavour to develop mutual trust and respect with all participants, both children and adults, through impartiality and open and clear communication. All activities will acknowledge and promote the children’s voice.

7. Transparency

I will aim to ensure that there is a transparency in my practice, including my approach, planning and decision making through clear and open communications.
8. **Shared Authorship**

My creative practice is based on a partnership approach with the children and other practitioners. This means co-constructive learning, supporting participants to develop their own work, not imposing my ideas or outcomes on the participants, and ensuring the participants have a voice in the work.

9. **Confidentiality**

Everything is confidential. I can reveal which happens in a project if the participants (or their parents/carers) consent, or if the law says I must.

10. **Consent**

People will participate only if they give their consent, without being forced, coerced or manipulated into doing so.
**Forest School Routines**

**Procedures to be carried out before 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 and will state if hazards were found and how they were dealt with. Can be located in filing cabinet at the setting.

- Trees will be checked for broken or dead branches which may fall.

- Check of the weather conditions. If it is unduly windy or a thunderstorm is imminent or has commenced then it will not be advisable to carry out a Forest School session.

- Register will be taken and retained

- Equipment will be checked before each use.

**Session Plan:**

Session plans will follow the procedure noted here:

- Ongoing risk assessment and headcount

- Dressing for Forest School, clothes, wellies etc. and toileting

- Walk to area discussing things to be seen on the way/meet Owl

- Discuss safety issues of the day.

- Walk to Base Camp

- Sit down, reminder of rules and safety issues again

- Discuss activities

- Select snack using wet wipes to clean hands first

- Discussion of session and feedback allowing children to choose to feedback

- Return to setting to remove clothing

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

- Headcount

- Clear everything away

- Clean any tools used/check them

- Walk back to setting and change
Rules of Forest School

- Look after your Forest School
- Do not pick anything growing
- Do not put your fingers or anything else in your mouth
- Stay within the boundary of logs, we don't go over it, we don't go under it

The Countryside Code

We must look after our Forest School and the countryside. Here are some things we must remember to help us respect, look after and protect it:

- Be safe, listen to instructions, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect the natural habitats of plants and wildlife and take litter home with you
- Keep dogs under control
- Remember and consider other people who use the countryside

Legislation and Health and Safety

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Children’s Act 1989
- Liability Insurance (provided by Royal and SunAlliance)
- Normal Laws
  - Disability Discrimination Act
  - Race Relations Act
Health and Safety Policy

- We will not run Forest School sessions where there is a possibility of extreme wind and/or lightning.
- We check for dead branches and complete tree safety checks particularly to mature poplars.
- We check for and remove overgrown nettles.
- We ensure the site is acceptable for that day’s activities. Includes 4 levels of woodland structure.
- A breakdown of the risks associated with the activities planned for the session. And outdoor first aid qualifications.
- All tools and equipment used have separate policies and procedures, as does fire lighting, with correct protocol.
- The use of personal, protective equipment is used when deemed necessary by risk assessments.
- First Aid kit is taken into Forest School and holds Level 3 practitioner paediatric and outdoor first aid qualifications.
- The children leaving the required adult will toilet before main building and if during the session, an accompany them.
back to the Pavilion.

We have fresh water in Forest School sessions but will also use wet wipes and antibacterial hand wash.

Snack will be prepared before leaving Pre-School and will be transported in airtight containers.

Normal hand washing before snack

Children will take own named water bottles to the Forest School with them.

Level 3 Practitioner will have communication radio with her to contact main building in an emergency.

Medical forms will be taken to Forest School

A dedicated Accident Book will be taken to Forest School

Otherwise, normal procedures will be followed as set out in standard Policies and Procedures

Insurance cover

We have public liability insurance and employers' liability insurance. The certificate for public liability insurance is displayed on our noticeboard.

Our full Health and Safety wording is available to view on the website at www.chilboltonpreschool.com and at the setting

Safeguarding Policy

We have a robust safeguarding policy covering, amongst other things, hiring of staff, how to deal with suspicions of abuse, what do if you suspect abuse from a member of staff, how to complain etc.

Physical safeguarding in respect of Forest School is covered under Health and Safety above.

A full copy of this wording is available on the website at www.chilboltonpreschool.com and at the setting.

Forest School leader takes reporting books to each and every forest school session. Details are transferred to main setting reporting books on return.

Policy statement

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Our safeguarding policy is based on the three key commitments of the Pre-school Learning Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.
Key commitment 1
We are committed to building a ‘culture of safety’ in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

Key commitment 2
We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2006).

Key commitment 3
We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

Behavior and Learning Policy

Policy statement
Our setting believes that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.
Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. This is a developmental task that requires support, encouragement, teaching and setting the correct example. The principles that underpin how we achieve positive and considerate behaviour exist within the programme for promoting personal, social and emotional development.

- Forest School sessions work within and support the EYFS in terms of both behaviour and learning
- We have a designated member of staff responsible for behaviour and learning.
- Children are made aware of the rules and boundaries of Forest School at the start of each and every forest school session
- Forest school sessions implement positive language and praise small tasks

**Tree climbing Policy**

- Tree climbing is encouraged based on “value judgement” where the forest school leader identifies the benefits, considers the risks, reviews the response and reaches a judgement
- Adults must always be present when children are climbing trees
- No child is permitted to climb higher than the adults present can reach
- Forest school staff will regularly check the trees climbed to ensure they are not dead/may break.

**Equal Opportunities Policy**

*Valuing diversity and promoting equality*

Our setting is committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity for all children and families. We aim to:

- provide a secure and accessible environment in which all our children can flourish and in which all contributions are considered and valued;
include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
provide positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles and diverse family structures, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people;
challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions;
make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of the setting; and foster good relations between all communities.
We develop an action plan to ensure that people with impairments can participate successfully in the services offered by the setting and in the curriculum offered.
Our environment is as accessible as possible for all visitors and service users. If access to the settings is found to treat disabled children or adults less favourably then we make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled children and adults. We do this by:
making children feel valued and good about themselves and others;
ensuring that children have equality of access to learning;
undertaking an access audit to establish if the setting is accessible to all children;
making adjustments to the environment and resources to accommodate a wide range of learning, physical and sensory impairments;
making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities, e.g. recognising the different learning styles of girls and boys;
creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance;
 differing the curriculum to meet children’s special educational needs;
helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable;
ensuring that the curriculum offered is inclusive of children with special educational needs and children with disabilities;

Food

We work in partnership with parents to ensure that dietary requirements of children that arise from their medical, religious or cultural needs are met.
We help children to learn about a range of food, and of cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating, and to respect the differences among them.

A full copy of our Equal Opportunities wording is available on the website at www.chilboltonpreschool.com and at the setting.
Emergency and Accident Procedure

Our accident book:
- is kept safely and accessibly;
- is accessible to all staff and volunteers, who know how to complete it; and
- is reviewed at least half termly to identify any potential or actual hazards.

Ofsted is notified of any food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on our premises and any injury requiring treatment by a general practitioner or hospital doctor, or the death of a child or adult as soon as possible or at least within 14 days of the incident occurring.

Local child protection agencies are informed of any serious accident or injury to, or the death of any child while in our care and we act on any advice given by those agencies.

When there is any injury requiring general practitioner or hospital treatment to a child, parent, volunteer or visitor or where there is a death of a child or adult on the premises, we make a report to the Health and Safety Executive using the format for the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences.

Dealing with incidents

🌳 A Forest School member of staff will radio the main setting to report the incident/accident and normal preschool procedure for calling emergency services will be followed.
If necessary, extra staff will attend the forest school area to take children back to the main setting.
At least 2 members of staff will stay with the casualty.
Forest School Leader holds outdoor first aid qualification.
Accident book completed and notifiable incidents reported to the relevant bodies.
In the event a child eats a poisonous plant
- Do not make them sick
- Take them to hospital/doctor with sample of the plant
- Note the time of eating and any symptoms - they may be hours later
- Complete accident book.
In the event of skin/eye irritation by plant
- Wash effected area with clean water
- If in doubt, seek medical advice with sample of plant.
- Complete accident book

We meet our legal requirements for the safety of our employees by complying with RIDDOR (the Reporting of Injury, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). We report to the Health and Safety Executive:
- any accident to a member of staff requiring treatment by a general practitioner or hospital; and
- any dangerous occurrences. This may be an event that causes injury or fatalities or an event that does not cause an accident but could have done, such as a gas leak.
- Any dangerous occurrence is recorded in our incident book. See below.

Information for reporting the incident to Health and Safety Officer is detailed in the Pre-school Learning Alliance’s Accident Record publication.

Critical Incident

A critical incident is a traumatic incident that could result in death or serious injury to a child or staff member. It is important to manage the incident effectively and support all those affected after the incident has occurred.

Procedure

The Manager will take the lead in managing any critical incident which may occur. In the Manager’s absence the Deputy Manager will take the lead.

At the time of the incident
- The Manager/Deputy will allocate someone to contact emergency services
- Where possible the Key-worker (the most familiar to the child and therefore of most comfort) will stay with the child.
- The Manager/Deputy will contact the parents.
- The Manager/Deputy or other allocated person, as the situation dictates, will manage and reassure the other children.
- If necessary contact will be made with the EECU for support and advice
- The Manager/Deputy will agree a formal statement for the parents and ensure that all parents receive an effective communication.
- With the support of the EECU the media will be advised (if approached) in a manner which ensures consistency.

After the Incident
The Chairperson/Manager will notify Ofsted (no later than 14 days after the incident)
Local Social Care will be informed (0845 603 5620)
The Administrator will inform the Insurance Company
The Manager will update the Local Development Team
The Manager will update and debrief the staff
A report will be written using clear language and details
The Administrator will review the policies and procedures to see if anything can be learnt from the incident.
Counselling for those involved will be considered with advice and pointers from insurance company, GP’s and Local Development Team.

On-going Issues

Child/parent staff distress, long-term training needs, insurance claims, Social Care or Police Investigations are all possible issues arising out of a critical incident. The Local Development Team is able to support the Setting in dealing with any of these issues.

Missing Child

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The forest school leader radios the main setting, first to check that the child has not returned there and if not, the incident recorded.
- The setting leader contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The setting leader contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- The setting leader contacts the chairperson or owner and reports the incident. The chairperson or owner comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management committee where applicable.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The setting leader together with the chairperson or representative from the management committee or owner speaks with the parent(s).
- The chairperson and management committee or owner, carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
- The date and time of the report.
- What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
- When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
- What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
- The time it is estimated that the child went missing.

- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children’s social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed

**Essential Equipment List**

- Register with emergency numbers/contact numbers
- Medical Forms
- Radio (for communication with main setting)
- Newspaper
- Matches
- Wet Wipes
- Protective gloves
- Sun cream
- Plasters
- Bandages
- Scissors
- Water bottle with water for drinking/washing
- Thermal wrap sheet
- Map of woodland area
- Container for inhalers
Clothing List

- Carry bag for dirty/wet clothing
- Woolly hat/sun hat
- Gloves
- Jacket/waterproof coat
- Fleece/sweatshirt
- Long trousers
- Spare socks
- Stout wellies/shoes/boots
- An emergency change of clothes and a carrier bag for dirty/wet clothing

Ecological impact of Forest School

Forest School is at risk of ecological impact so we put in place some rules to minimise the impact of the site. We are aware of the typical ecological structure of the woodland and we promote respect for the environment and woodland. In particular, at Forest School we operate within a strict framework of policy to ensure the woodland is used sustainably.

- We make sure any flora/fauna used for Forest School activities are put back where they were found so as not to disturb the wildlife.
- We create bird feeders to encourage new species of birds.
We plant trees and plants throughout the year a Forest School

We vary the boundaries

We work with our Management Plan and also alongside Wherwell School’s Management Plan.

Every effort will be made to provide suitable conditions for the conservation of range of habitats and communities present on the site.