

New Marston Health and Safety Handbook for Forest School

What is Forest School?

Forest School is a holistic learning process that aims to raise every child's self-esteem and self-awareness by encouraging students to face challenges and take reasonable risk. Each session will be run by a qualified Forest School Leader and can be linked to the National Curriculum.

Forest School offers all children the opportunity to achieve and develop their confidence through a kinaesthetic, hands-on learning experience in an outdoor environment.

Forest School:

- Is for all children aged 3-11
- Builds on positive attitudes to learning
- Allows children to take risks and make their own choices
- Supports children to understand, appreciate and care for the natural environment

Rules for Forest School

- Look after our Forest School area
- Do not pick, touch or eat anything without adult supervision
- Stay within the boundaries of the Forest School
- Listen for the whistle and return to the group when it is heard
- Always abide by the school's behaviour policy
- Follow the safety tools talk
- Depending on activity, a ratio of at least 1 adult to every 9 children will be upheld. During sessions that require the use of tools or an open fire, a ratio 1 adult to every 5 children will be adhered to.
- All adult helpers (volunteers and staff) will have an up to date DBS check or risk assessment by the school.

Clothing

Children and adults attending Forest School will need to wear;

- Wellington boots or walking boots
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- Long trousers, not jeans as this will become heavy when wet
- Socks
A top that covers arms such as a jumper, jacket or long-sleeved t-shirt
- Waterproof jacket and trousers when in poor weather or colder months

Procedure before each session

- A site sweep is to be carried out before any session can begin
- Items found to be safely removed and disposed of
- Trees to be checked for any broken or low branches
- Check weather conditions
- A headcount to be undertaken
water to be taken to Forest School site to wash hands before and after session

Procedure during each session

- Appropriate clothing and footwear to be worn
- Safety talk to be held before any session can begin
- Reminder of what is expected/the rules
- A headcount to be undertaken
- Hands to be washed during change of activity if that includes using foodstuffs, cooking or eating

Procedure after each session

- Gather feedback from children
- All rubbish to be collected and disposed of and all tools cleared away
- Check site is safe and ready for next use
- Secure area and lock gate
- All tools to be put in locked shed on upper playground
- Hands washed before leaving Forest School and entering school building
- A headcount to be undertaken

Toileting

Children will be encouraged to use the toilet before a Forest School begins. If the toilet is needed during a session, 2 children will go together, reporting back to the Forest School Leader upon return. As the Forest School site is on school grounds, children are familiar with the locality of toilets.

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Rules for tools

- Tools always to be kept in lockable shed on upper playground when not in use
Individual risk assessment in place for use of each tool
- Tools to be kept clean and sharp

Pen knives – Kept in locked box and counted in/out before and after use. Always sit down when using knives use cutting away from the body.

Bow saw – Guard to be on when not in use. Safety glove to be worn on supporting hand. Procedure for use and carrying shared with children and to be adhered to.

Kloppers – Kept closed when not in use. Procedure for use and carrying shared with children and to be adhered to.

Mallets – To be used appropriately

Reporting accidents and near misses

- Medical Policy to be followed
- Forest School Leader to keep a record/log book of all accidents and near misses that occur within Forest School and will report these back to relevant parties including class teacher and parents/carers.

Ropes, shelters and dens

- To be removed when finished
- To rotate use of trees to protect from damage
- Check sturdiness of ties before use and suitability for activity

Open pit fire

- Children to enter the circle when invited by an adult
- Children to walk around the outside of the circle
- Do not cross the fire pit
- Fire to be extinguished at the end of use
- All traces of fire to be removed once cool
- Fire gloves to be worn by anyone placing wood on to the fire

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First Aid

- First Aid kit will be available during all Forest School sessions
- Medical needs and medicine taken to Forest School site

- Forest School leader is a qualified first aider

Precaution in case of emergency

Mobile phone to be carried by Forest School leader

- Register of children to be taken
- Forest School leader to carry whistle to gain attention of group when needed
- Lockdown – Should the school go into lockdown whilst a session is being held at Forest School, a whistle will be blown for children to gather together at a designated point. A headcount will take place and the session will be ceased. If it is safe to do so, children will be escorted into the school building however if this is not possible, the group will remain at the Forest School site and call 999.

Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child goes missing, the Forest School Leader will inform all adults present and contact the school office by phone. The Forest School Leader and management will then follow the school's missing children policy.

This policy runs in conjunction with and adheres to; [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#),
The
Children Act, RIDDOR (Accident Reporting), LEA guidelines, DBS checks and New Marston
School Policies including the Medical Policy, Photography Policy, Behaviour Policy and
Safeguarding Policy.