



Moat Hall Primary Academy FGT



Handbook

Forest School Leader: Hayley Reed-Jones

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INTRODUCTION

Moat Hall Primary Academy FGT Forest School

Forest Schools are a unique way of using the existing school grounds to create an atmosphere where children can develop independence and self-esteem. By exploring and experiencing for themselves the natural world around them, they can reclaim that sense of wonder on discovering why, how, when, and where.

Forest Schools originated in Europe in the early 20th century. The Forest School model originated in Scandinavia and involves children and young people attending a local woodland environment to learn on a regular sustained basis. The children learn to walk, run, balance, climb, scramble and swing. They learn about their environment and how to look after it through play, as well as how to respect each other's personal space. (Joyce, 2004: 4). A key element of this was child led educational process that supported their social, emotional and physical development.

In 1993, a group of childcare students visiting Denmark on an exchange programme witnessed the benefits of outdoor learning, which looked at air, fire, water and earth. They observed groups of children cooking on open fires, listening to storytelling, exploring at their own level. They climbed high onto trees on rope ladders and swings, whittled sticks with knives, alone. (Trout, 2004:16) They brought the idea back to Bridgewater College and applied the initiative at their early years Excellence Centre to great effect. There were benefits to the children's pride, confidence and well-being, which were addressed in the Every Child Matters agenda (Dept. for Ed, 2004), several years before that work was published.

Since then the concept has grown with Forest Schools spreading throughout Britain. A major organisation to recognise the importance of Forest School's was the Forestry Commission. In 2002, they stated 'access to green space is not just about "the environment". For young children there is perceived to be a great benefit in teaching most subjects in the natural environment.' (O'Brien and Tabbush 2002) As a result, the Commission are committed to supporting Forest Schools in the whole of the UK.

Scotland and Wales with support from their regional governments are funding projects, revising the OCN courses and supporting research. In England 2003 saw the environmental charity, Green Light Trust, based in Suffolk launch Forest Schools across the east of England. County Councils are now recognising the value of Forest School, with Oxford, Worcestershire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk to name but a few, all are active supporters with environmental advisors and trainers. Many Wildlife trusts around the country are getting involved in providing training and research. In Sussex, charities are now run training courses with Sussex Wildlife Trust promoting a personal level of support for trainees since 2005, experienced providers of environmental education promoting the reconnections between people and the natural environment.

Forest School Staffing

Hayley Reed-Jones Forest School Award Level 3 Leader
And TA (see list of Tas on FS timetable)

School Forest School Mission Statement

- ♣ To provide ways of acquiring useful life skills in an outdoor environment.
- ♣ To provide a safe environment in which children can take risks, make choices and initiate their own learning.
- ♣ To help children appreciate, comprehend and show ownership for the natural environment.
- ♣ To develop self-esteem, tenacity and a positive outlook to learning through the completion of, achievable tasks.
- ♣ To meet the needs of children with differing learning styles.
- ♣ To develop group working and social skills.
- ♣ To enable children to be independent, self-motivated and considerate.
- ♣ To be genuine to the forest school ethos and approach.
- ♣ To cultivate a secure, happy and welcoming environment.
- ♣ To provide stimulating and varied learning activities appropriate to the child's needs and phase of development.
- ♣ To help each child foster self-esteem, confidence, independence, self-control and interpersonal skills.
- ♣ To provide an opportunity for individuals to develop, to learn and to have fun with deep meaningful play.

Forest School Principles

- ♣ Forest school is for everybody.
- ♣ Forest School sessions are about developing risk awareness.
- ♣ Forest school is a process which builds on an individual's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.
- ♣ Forest school is organised and run by qualified Forest School Leaders.
- ♣ Forest school maximises the learning potential of local woodlands through frequent and regular experiences throughout the year.
- ♣ Forest school helps everyone to understand, appreciate and care for the environment.

Our Forest School Code of Conduct

Our code of conduct is relevant to all participants, adults and children. It has been established to create a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Boundaries

During children's first Forest School session, physical boundaries will be explored. This will enable children to recognise any no-go zones for activities. Each group of children will work together to generate some rules for safe and happy learning. Children will be taught what rules are expected of them and will be asked to respect and follow these throughout their Forest School experience. They will be taught that the Forest School Leader will call out 'sticky feet' or a whistle blow will mean they must gather back to the Leader.

Entering the Forest School site

At Forest School we learn to respect the Forest area and world around us. When we enter the Forest site we will learn and become aware that we share the space with birds, animals, plants and trees. We need to work in a way that will not damage or harm anything.

Toileting

Children will always be encouraged to use the toilets before a session starts. If a child needs the toilet during a session, a teaching assistant will take the child/children back into school. They will enter the KS1 door with a supervised adult.

The Fire Circle

To ensure the safety of all, no one is allowed to walk or run inside the fire circle even if there is no fire lit. We use wooden benches and log stumps to mark out our circle and to sit on. If anyone wants to move around the circle or change places, they must step out of the circle and walk around the outside. The fire is kept within a wooden square in the centre of the circle. The square is made of four separate logs. Children may only be

invited to approach the square for fire lighting practice or for cooking but only under adult supervision.

Fire Lighting

A fire may only be lit if our fire safety equipment is present and correct. The Forest School Leader will always take the lead during fire lighting. All teaching assistants will be briefed prior to a fire lighting session to set out protocols and procedures. Every teaching assistant is first aid training as is the Forest School Leader. A lit fire will NEVER be left unattended. Open fires will only be lit in the fire square or in the raised fire pit.

Collecting wood

Wood is collected for fire lighting from the school field, KS1 forest area or from the Woodland Trust. We look for four different sizes of wood: matchstick, pencil, thumb and wrist sized. We will always try to use freshly fallen wood to protect and preserve natural habitats for mini-beasts and fauna.

Sticks and stones

Throwing sticks and stones is not permitted at Forest School. Children are taught that they may pick up sticks shorter than their arm. The Forest School Leader will model the correct way to carry a stick. This will be carrying the stick pointing downwards to undertake any activities. Longer sticks must be dragged behind them. Stones can be dropped but children must check what is underneath before dropping them.

Collecting natural materials

Natural materials are collected for crafts, habitat building, art, sculpture and woodland activities. It is important for us that children are encouraged to look for the materials themselves. However, Forest School Leaders will supervise to check that nothing harmful is collected and gathered. Children are NOT allowed to eat anything gathered when foraging.

Carrying large/heavier materials

Children will be taught how to lift, roll drag or pull heavier materials safely using hands or ropes, keeping a straight back and bending their knees. Team work will be encouraged. If a log or stone is too heavy the children are taught to ask a Forest School Leader to assist them.

String, ropes and knots

Children will learn four useful knots. They will explore the different uses of these. Forest School Leaders will supervise activities where ropes are tied to trees for tarpaulin or shelters. Safety tape will be used if and when ropes are considered to be in dangerous locations. Children will also be shown how to use ropes and string to move or carry materials safely.

Digging

When exploring the forest environment, children will be permitted to carefully move logs or stones to look for mini-beasts, taking care not to harm the creatures or to damage their habitat. They may dig under the soil using their fingers or small sticks. Trowels may be used but children will be taught to use these carefully in order to ensure they don't hurt or damage any wildlife but. Children may not use tools to dig deep holes. They will have opportunities to dig deeper when undertaking planting activities.

Pond access

There is one pond within the Forest School site and we are able to enjoy this area while we are encouraged to think about pond life, flora and fauna living in this environment. Close adult supervision and high adult to child ratio supports our safety here.

Using tools

Children will be given a tools talk before they are permitted to use any tool during Forest School. They will be taught the correct way to use tools in a safe environment. This will include the use of safety equipment, like gloves. The children will also be taught about correct posture and awareness of others around them. Tools will have a marked zone for their

use. The zone will be marked by a rope. All tool use will be under strict supervision with the Forest School Leader.

Tree climbing

Climbing trees is a good opportunity for children to learn to manage their own risks. They will be taught and shown how to climb safely, checking the ground below for sharp objects and looking for a safe path of ascent and descent. Children will be shown which trees are suitable for climbing. Trees will be alternated to ensure the trees are looked after and to maintain safety. Children are allowed to reach their own limits to a maximum of 1.5 metres. Adults will always supervise tree climbing activities and ensure that children are wearing appropriate clothes and shoes. The Forest School leader will assess the trees to check for rotten or broken branches. This will take place on the daily site check.

Eating and Drinking

Children will bring their water bottles with them outside to ensure they stay hydrated throughout their Forest School session. Soapy water and wipes will be provided for hand washing before eating or drinking any snacks during Forest School. This will include food the children have cooked on the fire. Food allergies will be recorded as part of the risk assessment for the cooking activity. A conversation with the children's teacher about allergies and their medication will occur prior to any Forest School sessions taking place.

Clothing

Forest School takes place in all weathers apart from very high winds, so we all need to dress warmly in old clothes that are appropriate for the weather conditions as we are likely to get wet and muddy throughout all the seasons. Long sleeves and trousers are required. Sun cream needs to be applied in hot weather conditions.

Leaving the site

A time of reflection will take place after each Forest School session. All personal belongings from the children and Leaders must be taken away, any craft created can be taken home, and the site must be left clean and tidy ready for the next group. The forest area must be left how it was found.

Environmental Impact

We care about our woodland areas and understand that any activity carried out here will have an impact on this environment. We wish to keep this to a minimum and have a Woodland Management Policy in place. Continuous assessment and appropriate action and management will help keep the impact to a minimum and allow the enjoyment for all. (See full woodland impact assessment).

Policies for Forest School

The following policies are the minimum requirements for the safe running of Forest School activities. They are in addition to the main school and academy policies and do not replace them. All members of staff and volunteer helpers have a duty to follow these policies and should be familiar with their contents.

Health and Safety

Moat Hall Primary Academy adheres to its Health and Safety Policy. Full details can be accessed through reading the policy, but a brief summary is given below:

We ask you to be responsible for your own health and safety and the health and safety of others who may be affected by what you do.

We ask you to take individual responsibility to follow health and safety procedures and work in accordance with instruction and training you have received.

You must co-operate with supervisors and managers on health and safety matters.

You must not misuse or recklessly interfere with anything provided to protect your health, safety and welfare.

We ask that you promptly report any unsafe conditions or practices.

You must use work equipment and personal protective equipment in accordance with instruction and training you have received.

We ask that you support us in achieving our health and safety targets.

You must play your part to maintain a safe and healthy workplace.

The health and safety of the children during Forest School session will be the responsibility of the Forest School Leader. Risk assessments must be completed and monitored regularly and amended where applicable. This is to ensure the health and safety of all learners involved. Individual forms for each child must show parental consent to undertake Forest School activities. A form must also be filled out regarding any allergies a child may have and treatments required.

Risk Management and Risk Assessment

Risk-Benefit management is a fundamental part of life and is a skill needed for young people's safety and well-being. The Staff have a duty of care towards young people. However, this certainly does not mean not trying something new. Therefore, we have responsibility not only to keep young people safe, but also to enable them to learn to manage risks for themselves. Getting ready – Managing Risk (From Council for Learning outside the Classroom) Risk management is all about identifying and managing any significant chance of harm.

Forest schools conduct four types of risk assessment:

Generic Site — this should take into account all four layers within woodland.

Generic Activity/Experiences — this should take into account all the aspects of activities/experiences, including creative experiences, games and tool use. Once correct procedures, such as safe tool use has been established these generic activity risk assessments become part of the standard operating procedures.

Daily – includes weather, wild factors and any changes noted on the day. This can include assessments on individuals attending the session. This should be carried out by the forest school leader prior to a session. The children should be encouraged to conduct a generic site risk assessment with their leader on arrival at the environmental area.

Ongoing Active — involves leaders' judgement during the session in response to changing situations.

As Forest School Lead I will ensure dynamic risk assessments take place to ensure risks and hazards are identified. Once identified I will ensure that these risks are appropriately managed.

Environmental impact- There is a change to the conservation policy. I have created a three year management plan and ecological impact assessment. (See plan and assessment)

First Aid

Hayley Reed-Jones holds a current First Aid work certificate, issued by ITC. She is responsible for all aspects of health and safety and will carry out all medical equipment checks as detailed below.

Contents for emergency / First Aid kit

The kit needs to be regularly checked and re-stocked. An accident book is also present and will be completed as necessary. The kit should contain the following items, paying due consideration to the size of the group:

- Gloves/Antiseptic wipes
- Micro-pore tape/wound closures
- Accident book
- Tough cut scissors/Tweezers
- Swabs /plasters /Eye wash
- Burn Ease (Large and small)
- Bandages (cotton, in various sizes)
- Triangle bandages

Safety pins/Cling film/gaffer tape 8
Insect repellent

Emergency procedures

Medical information and emergency contact details for all in group are available in School Office, including adult helpers and leader of sessions. Mobile phone – adult helpers should all carry a mobile phone and numbers have to be exchanged amongst adults prior to session.

Other essential items

Welfare kit (wet wipes, warm soapy water, biscuits, and drinking water)
Medication for individuals/Bruise treatment/Insect treatment
Emergency fire kit
Accident, Serious Incident/Emergency Procedure

What to do in an accident

Child is assessed by trained outdoor first aider and treatment is given as appropriate.
Accident log book is completed and parents/carers are informed on return to school.

What to do in a serious incident

- ♣ Child is assessed by first aider and first aid is administered as appropriate and emergency services are called by Staff as seen fit.
- ♣ Office informed (on site) and additional support sought.
- ♣ The additional helper will walk towards point of vehicular access in order to direct emergency services to site.
- ♣ Forest School Leader to stay with casualty and rest of group.
- ♣ Serious incidents are logged in the serious incident log book and the school and parents/carers are informed as soon as this is possible.
- ♣ As standard practice all incidents where the emergency services had to be called out are reviewed with Mrs King (Head-teacher) and any involved adults' in order to review practice and provide quality assurance. (See also Legislation section).

Emergency procedures

- Injury to TA: The role of the FSL will be to ensure the group of children is managed effectively in a case where the TA has been injured. The session will have to stop immediately if they require first aid. The FSL will ring the office to request Jacqueline Cooley or Kate Hutton to come and assist. However, if an injury cannot be treated by first aid then Emergency Services will be contacted and children taken back to class with office staff.
- Injury to FSL: The role of the FSL will be to lead the TA to stop the FS session immediately. Follow the same protocol as above.
- Weather policy- Use the Beaufort scale and level. Where the level is deemed too high the session must be cancelled. If electrical storms are forecast, Forest School will be cancelled immediately. Where thunder and lightning begins, Forest school sessions will also be cancelled immediately.

Weather Checks and other considerations

Use a local forecast. It is good practice to assess the site prior to taking children out. Try and leave cancellation as late as possible.

Below is a short outline of conditions that may lead to a cancellation of a session:

A rough guide is no entry to woods in winds of force beyond 7.

In windy conditions keep a watchful eye on the surrounding tree branches, especially, boundary trees.

Be aware that it is possible for tree limbs and branches to drop on any day. Check children's clothing before start of any session on cold days.

If the children are getting too cold either warm them up through exercise, shared shelter, sitting by the fire or going inside.

In hot weather, shade shelters will be available. Appropriate clothing must be worn in hot temperatures. Activities on offer should be appropriate to the temperature. Children to apply sun cream before the session if required. Children should bring their water bottle to each session and drinking water will be available.

In the case of rain, a shelter will be made available – 4 tarpaulins can be hung for both rain and sun protection. Appropriate clothing should be worn, so that sessions can continue. The session will be cancelled if excessive rain occurs or the route to the forest is not deemed safe enough.

Cancellation Procedure for a timetabled session

Having conducted a daily site risk assessment or in cases of severe weather where it is obvious that a session cannot take place inform Moat Hall Academy Staff accordingly of the cancellation. Children will then attend normal class lessons.

Sanitation Procedure

FSL will ensure any litter is picked up prior to the session. FSL and TA to wash hands before and after the session. Lead by example.

Children are toileted before leaving school building. They must also wash their hands and dry them thoroughly.

Children can return to School in pairs or accompanied as necessary. After visiting the Forest area, children must again wash their hands and dry them.

Food safety

All children will have a letter sent home regarding allergies. A consent form will need to be signed by each child's parents/carers before they are permitted to take part in Forest School sessions. Medical forms will be monitored by Forest School Leader prior to Forest School sessions taking place.

Meat will not be cooked as Level 2 Food Hygiene certification is required. Only if Level 2 Food and Hygiene training takes place will meat/fish be cooked with the children on a fire during Forest School sessions.

The FS Leader, TA and children will follow the sanitation procedure before any cooking takes place. (Please see risk assessments for (Fire use).

- Children will be taught they should only eat food provided by an appropriate adult whilst at a forest school session.
- Snacks brought by the children may be consumed whilst on forest school sessions; staff will ensure no berries & nuts from the forest are consumed.
- Children will be provided with a snack during forest school sessions to ensure no one is hungry.
- Only the FS leader or TA may use knives for cutting food & children may use wooden butter knives to prepare their own snack.
- Adults will ensure children's hands are clean before eating, using the school hand washing basins.
- During cold weather, we make warm drinks in Kelly/storm kettles from commercially available products such as hot chocolate. This will be

supervised by a member of staff and they will make sure the drink is at a suitable temperature to be safe for the children to drink.

Parental Awareness and Consent

Parents/carers are given an outline of planned activities of the session and will be given information about what children should wear. Parents/carers will give consent for attendance at Forest School prior to sessions if out of school hours. This contains individual's details, such as contact address and phone number, medical history and doctor's contact number and address.

Use of Photographs

Parents/carers at Moat Hall Primary Academy have given their consent for photographs to be taken. There are only very few children who are not to be photographed. Check this list prior to sessions.

Safeguarding Children Procedure

Please follow Schools Safeguarding policy – available online and in Office. Below is a brief outline.

Who is responsible?

Any concerns should be communicated to Forest School Leader as soon as possible. They will then follow the standard procedure of informing

Possible signs:

Injuries (bruising, bruised eyes, fractured or broken bones, burn or bite marks)

Continuous "accidents"

An unlikely (or no) explanation for an injury

A continual pattern of accidents or injuries

A child saying that something is hurting

Behavioural indicators include:

A child who is very reluctant to return home

A child who is resistant to going home with one family member

Self-harm, self-destructiveness

Persistent aggression or violent play

Sudden shift in moods / withdrawn

Dealing with disclosure:

Disclosure refers to a child talking about what happened, where, when, and with whom. If a child wants to tell you about something which is clearly both sensitive and difficult, it is important that you are able to make it possible for them to do so, particularly as this may be the first time they have attempted to talk about their experience.

Do:

- ♣ Remember that it is not your role to establish proof or gather evidence.
- ♣ Make time to listen to the child.
- ♣ Try to avoid the need for the child to repeat possibly embarrassing details *Only ask open-ended questions – do NOT lead.*
- ♣ Be honest about the implications of confidentiality; the child must know that you will have to pass the information on to get them the help they need.
- ♣ Allow the child to lead the conversation.
- ♣ Take the child seriously, acknowledge that they were right to tell, and are not responsible for what happened.
- ♣ Make notes as soon as possible after a disclosure.
- ♣ What to report in the event of concerns.

Any concerns should be communicated in as much detail as possible to Forest School Leader who will then follow Policy Procedures as soon as possible.

What happens if staff are accused?

If staff are accused the process described above must be observed and followed up by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Activities and Games at Forest School

General Safety

All Forest School sessions are carefully planned, and risk assessed by the leader. Forest School is a long-term child-led, educational process that promotes, observes and explicitly supports the social, emotional and physical development of children in a woodland environment.

Games and Activity Safety/Forest School Ethos

All games and activities are risk assessed by the Leader, see appropriate activity.

“Key to supporting the child’s progress is an acknowledgement of the role of the Leader as a “significant other” who can encourage the development of self-esteem through appropriate matching of activity to a child’s preferred learning style. The development of the role of the “significant other” occurs through the long-term relationship that is built up over the duration of a Forest School programme. This relationship is founded on the twin principles of risk and trust. The successful matching of activities to a learner’s preferred discovering style occurs through continual detailed observations and evaluation of a child’s learning and behaviour over the duration of a Forest School programme.” Forest Schools (Knight, 2013)

Tool Safety and Tool Operating Procedure

The Forest School Leader is responsible for the safe usage and maintenance of all tools. Tools are always checked and counted before each session, at the end of a session the tools are re-counted and the tools are maintained as outlined below. Safety boots should be worn at all times by adults using tools. Children may need to wear safety boots for certain activities. This will be identified in the activity risk assessment. Tool training and assessment of individuals should always take place prior to working with

tools. Always risk assess tools, working area and activity. Establish a clear script for passing tools, as outlined under use of loppers and secateurs below and establish clear rules for accessing tools.

Guidance on Knife and tool use

- ♣ Correct and safe use of all sharp tools will be demonstrated to all staff and children.
- ♣ Tools will be counted out and back.
- ♣ All children will be supervised closely by leader and assessed for competency to use such tools.
- ♣ Tools should be kept in a designated safe area when not in use and not left unattended.
- ♣ All knives will be left closed or sheaved immediately before and after use.
- ♣ Walking around with unmasked tools will not be permitted.
- ♣ Safe working distances, suitable ratios and competence in abilities will always be adhered to.
- ♣ Suitable boots/shoes and outdoor clothing will be worn. Including the use of helmets during felling operations.
- ♣ Gloves suitable for the tasks will be provided and must be worn.
- ♣ Designate a specific zone for those using knives.
- ♣ When knives are out, explain that we always carry a knife with sheath firmly on.
- ♣ Always pass knife in the demonstrated manner.
- ♣ Explain to learners that they are not permitted to pass or carry knives. Only the FSL can do pass or carry knives.
- ♣ Keep in sheath when not in use.
- ♣ Leader to count out and back.
- ♣ Ensure all children have had demonstration before use, including how to grip, body positions, working area, and leader to assess individual's competency and knowledge of knife drills.
- ♣ Knife work is supervised and distraction free.
- ♣ Each person to sit well out of reach of others and establish "Arm Reach" procedure.

Fire Protocol including Fire management and Safety

- ♣ Establish a fire area and train young people how to approach and leave before lighting a fire.
- ♣ Site your fire carefully; avoid tree roots, peat soil & deep leaf mould, rough ground etc.
- ♣ Always clear to bare earth.
- ♣ Don't light in windy or tinder dry conditions.
- ♣ Have at least 1.5m between fire surround and seating logs.
- ♣ Seating logs should have emergency escape routes between them.
- ♣ Keep fires approx. 4m from any shelter built from easily combusting materials.
- ♣ If a shelter is designed to have an integral fire, establish safety rules and multiple exits before use.
- ♣ **Never** leave a fire unattended.
- ♣ Fix fire surround and seating to avoid accidents.
- ♣ Have water and fire blanket available to extinguish the fire.
- ♣ Also hang a fire blanket near the fire.
- ♣ Have a bucket full of fresh water for immersing a burn.
- ♣ If young people have fires restrict flame height to equivalent of your knee. Reduce smoke with dead wood. However, explain the importance that dead wood has on our environment. Dead wood is a valuable source and used for habitats in woodland areas. It is best to prepare seasoned wood to be burnt to reduce smoke.
- ♣ Always ring Staffordshire Fire Service on 01785 898888 before lighting a fire to inform them that a controlled burn is about to happen. Explain how long you will be doing this for and ring them once you have put the fire out.

Camp Fire Cooking Procedure

Risk assesses working area and activity.

Food hygiene regulations should be followed.

Carry antiseptic wipes or soap and water for hand washing

Split open food and check it is cooked before consumption.

When cooking with a stick use green wood and remove bark before cooking using a knife or potato peeler and scraping action.

Do not re-heat cooked food.

Avoid foods that need a lot of fat to cook in case of pan fire.

Tuck in long hair, roll up or fasten loose clothing.

Inform parents/carers of planned activity.

Check group does not suffer from food allergies or that other reasons, such as religious reasons, do not permit individuals to handle or consume certain food types.

Lost or Missing Person Procedure

- ♣ Children are instructed that they must stay within eye sight of adults.
- ♣ They know to immediately to gather around the adult if the whistle is blown three times.
- ♣ In the event of a suspected lost or missing person the whistle is blown three times. The session will be stopped and the children will be gathered by the TA.
- ♣ A five-minute interval is immediately timed by Forest School Leader as they search for the missing child.
- ♣ If the missing child is not found within this time frame then the FSL will ring the police.
- ♣ School Office to be informed immediately by mobile phone or responsible child as Office is on site and within 100 Metres.

Positive Behaviour

Forest School behaviour expectations

- ♣ Listen when adult is talking.

- ♣ Take turns when talking with your peers, listen to what they have to say.
- ♣ Keep to the Forest School boundaries agreed with Leader .
- ♣ Be aware – keep yourself safe – look around you – take care.
- ♣ Keep your friends safe too .
- ♣ Use Forest School language – kind words and always be polite.
- ♣ Be patient with each other, everyone learns at different rates .

When behaviour becomes challenging reference will be made to Moat Hall Primary Academy Behaviour Code (Good to be Green) as agreed by the Staff, Parents and Children. Behaviour that the Forest School Leader deems dangerous will result in child being excluded from the session immediately.

Equal Opportunities

The Moat Hall Primary Academy (Forest School) Equal Opportunities Policy includes:

All children will be given the opportunity to participate in all Forest School Activities regardless of age, ability or gender.

The Forest School programme promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging children to develop a sense of self-sufficiency.

All children will be respected and their individuality and potential recognised, valued and nurtured. Forest School activities and the use of Forest School equipment will offer children the opportunity to develop in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination.

Children with exceptional needs will be admitted to the Forest School programme after consultation between parents, School Staff and Forest School Leader. The Forest School programme will recognise the wide range

of special needs of children and will consider what part it can play in meeting these needs.

All children should be adequately dressed to ensure that they are able to take part in all Forest School activities; therefore, the Forest School programme will supply appropriately sized personal protective equipment e.g. work gloves, hard hats, and fire mitts when required.

Daily Operating Procedure

What to do before each session

- ♣ Forest School Leader to check that all risk assessments are in place, particularly the daily risk assessment and carry out appropriate tasks.
- ♣ Check phone signal.
- ♣ Check appropriate clothing, group aware of hazards.
- ♣ Forest School Leader to ensure that there is correct staff/child ratio and that all staff are familiar with this handbook.
- ♣ Register to be completed by Forest School Leader.
- ♣ Forest School Leader to complete equipment check prior to each session.

What to do during the session

- ♣ An ongoing risk assessment of the weather, behaviour, safety, and activities will be carried out by Forest School Leader.
- ♣ Head count.

What to do after the session

- ♣ Final head count.
- ♣ Site must be left with no rubbish or equipment or remains of campfire.
- ♣ Tool check must be completed.
- ♣ Reflection time, closing circle and evaluations to be completed.
- ♣ All resources returned and stored in Forest School Shed/garage

Volunteer/Staff Check List

Name	Position	DBS	Handbook Read	Signature

Risk / Benefit Analyses

While there are risks that must be considered, there are also a wide range of potential benefits that can be gained by those involved. Recognition that taking risks is an important part of the learning and development, it still needs to provide a safe and supportive environment in which the children can learn about the risks. Consequently, a risk/benefit analysis will be used in the assessments for the activities.

The Moat Hall Primary Academy Environmental Area Risk assessment will include:

All significant hazards will be identified, action taken or precautions put in place to reduce the risk to a safe level.

All staff in the area will have access to the ongoing risk assessments and will be made aware of their duty to report any other hazards or potential hazards that they think the leader should be made aware of.

There are 5 steps to a risk assessment

- 1) Look for the hazard, windblown trees, litter and flood water.
- 2) Decide who might be harmed and how.
- 3) Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or need amending.
- 4) Record the finding.
- 5) Review and revise as necessary.

Insurance

Staffordshire County Council and its staff are all insured to carry out Forest School activities on the Moat Hall Primary Academy site providing all the risk assessments and procedures are adhered to.

Legislation

Ensure that all equipment involved in accident or incident is retained in an unaltered condition in case it is required by any investigators. Do not focus on who is at fault. In all cases keep a careful written record of all the facts, events and times retain this record, and if possible take photographs. Interviews only with witness present. Report incidents in the first aid log.

Incidents resulting in admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours or resulting in and injury preventing a person working for three or more days afterwards need to be registered with RIDDOR within 24 hours 0845 3009923 Or 03453009923.

First aid kits to be replenished and checked every 6 months. Any incidents or near miss must be subsequently investigated by Head teacher and existing controls amended as necessary.

Hazardous Plants and Fungi

Part of the risk assessment will be to identify any particularly hazardous plants and point them out to the children and adults in attendance. The sap and hairs from some plants can cause rashes and blistering when in contact with the skin, or after the skin is exposed to sunlight. Most rashes are caused by stinging nettles; this plant is well known and distinguishable and will be pointed out.

Serious poisoning from the ingestion of leaves, berries or fungi rarely occurs, even when curious children are involved. However, ingesting even small amounts of some species can cause nausea, vomiting, and stomach cramps; and large amounts are potentially fatal. Consequently, the Forest School Leader will disallow all children from foraging and eating anything that has not been agreed safe.

If a member of any group is exposed to hazardous plant or fungi, so that they have a reaction the leader must be informed and appropriate first aid administered. If the nature of the reaction is deemed more serious, the appropriate emergency procedures will be taken.

Biting & Stinging Insects

Insect bites and stings can be common, in spring and late summer, and usually cause some minor irritation. In rare cases, people can have a serious allergic reaction that requires immediate medical treatment-if this is the case then the emergency procedure will be followed and the first aider will take charge. Any prior knowledge to suggest that a particular individual will have an allergic reaction the Forest School Leader will be informed, and a check of any self- administered medication (in date) will be carried out.

Ticks are known to occur in the area and appropriate advice and checks will be given.

Safe Lifting

Forest School activities are physically demanding for the children and staff. Sometimes heavy objects, tree trunks etc are moved and carried. It is wise to be aware of best practise, to avoid back injuries and manual handling principles are followed:

Think and plan where and how object is to be moved.

Keep load close to waist and the heaviest side next to body.

Adopt a stable position feet apart.

Take a good hold.

Avoid bending your back.

Avoid twisting.

Keep head up and look ahead.

Clear path/put load down if you need to adjust it/ Move smoothly.

Loose dog

All children will be informed to never approach an animal in the forest area. Look for the dog's owner and ask them to keep their dog on the lead. In an emergency, do not approach the dog from the front, do not have eye contact with the dog, stand still and look upwards.

If a loose dog enters the Forest School area the following procedure will be followed:

1. Before the session starts the children will have been told never to approach animals and shown how to behave if there is a loose dog, for example, stand still with arms across their chest and turn away from the dog.
2. The child/children who see the loose dog are to inform the Forest School Leader immediately.
3. The Forest School Leader will, if and when possible, position themselves between the group and the dog.
4. The Forest School Leader will look for the dog's owner and ask them to keep the dog on its lead.
5. If they are trespassing, the Forest School Leader will advise them of this and ask them to leave the grounds immediately.
6. If the dogs' owner cannot be located, and the dog is threatening the group (an emergency situation), the Forest School Leader will position themselves between the children and the dog and move the children away to a safe area. Any first aid should be administered. The police should then be contacted advising them of the stray dog and requesting their assistance if necessary.
7. The Forest School Leader will then fill in an incident report.

Loose member of the public

All children will be informed to never approach anyone that is unknown to them in the forest area.

If an unknown person enters the Forest School site before, during or after a Forest School session the following procedure will be followed:

1. Before the session begins the children will have been told never to approach strangers whilst attending the Forest School session.
2. The child/children who see the stranger are to immediately inform the Forest School Leader.
3. The Forest School Leader will, if and where possible, position themselves between the group and the stranger. Then the Forest School Leader will approach the stranger in a friendly manner and ask them who they are and what they are doing there.
4. If they are there for legitimate reasons connected with the Forest School session, the Forest School Leader will advise them to stay with the Forest School Leader. The Forest School Leader's role will be to ensure that the stranger is aware of the risks and procedures involved within the session.
5. If they are there for legitimate reasons not connected with the Forest School session, the Forest School Leader will ask that they keep away from the group while the session is running.
6. If they are trespassing, the Forest School Leader will advise them of this and ask them to leave the grounds immediately, making contact with the police as necessary.
7. The Forest School Leader will then complete an incident report.

Complaints

All complaints must be recorded in writing. A complaints or comments form should be made available for adults or participants to enter their concerns in. All Forest School staff at Moat Hall Primary Academy should view these comments as constructive and an aide to creating a better service for the children. If a parent or carer or child has a complaint or concern their first point of contact should be the Forest School Leader. If the adult or child is not happy or satisfied by the outcome or feel they are unable to talk to the Forest School leader then they should take their concerns to the Head Teacher.