



Forest School Policy

Playhouse Pre-school

Statement of Intent

At Playhouse Pre-School we want staff and children to enjoy the outside safely. We will use the Forest School as an opportunity to educate the children about how to keep themselves safe whilst taking risks.

Aims

By producing and adopting this policy for Forest School, we aim to give all children and practitioners a collective insight into the ethos of Forest School. Forest School builds on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves. The Forest School learning environment provides opportunities for children to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, to form positive relationships with others, to develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others, to learn to cooperate and work with their peers and adults and to develop strategies to take risks within the safe boundaries.

Forest School is about exploring and experiencing the natural world through practical activities. The children go out in all weathers, all year round, exploring and learning from the seasons and environment changes. Appropriate clothing will be worn throughout. During high winds it will be considered unsafe to go into the woods.

The children's interests along with the varied natural resources in the wood land are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development, all in the guise of play.

Environmental considerations and conservation

One of the principles of Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. The children are taught about respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both the children and adults are encouraged to respect their environment and to be aware of conservation issues of the woodland around them.

The aim is to promote respect for wildlife, which will be achieved through detailed session plans, evaluation and reference to the management plan and ecological impact assessments made by Longmeadow School.

It is important to bear in mind the ecological impact of running a Forest School and with that in mind consideration will be given to the following:-

- Children will be educated not to pick up anything that is still growing.
- There will only usually be one Forest school session planned each week to allow the ground cover to recover in between visits.

Forest School sessions will continue in most weather conditions and children should be appropriately dressed. Sessions will not continue in the event of lightning and high winds. The decision to cancel a Forest School session will be based on the Beaufort Scale. We will not use the Forest School site if wind gusts are 32mph or above – scale 7 on the attached wind speed scale.

<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/08/db/74/08db746067d26c9c373afd17fe0054c4.jpg>

Health and safety considerations

Please refer to the Pre-School's Health and Safety Policy.

The health and safety of the adults and children is paramount at all times throughout any activity and session. Safe practice is reinforced through regular reminders. The Forest School programme provides children with opportunities to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own learning. Whilst being independent in their learning, they will develop early risk assessment strategies and understand that their actions have consequences.

The Forest School Leader will carry out risk assessments at the beginning of each term which will take account of seasonal change. In addition, a daily risk assessment will be undertaken before each forest school session.

The woodlands we use are within Longmeadow School grounds. It is necessary to leave the security controlled fenced area and enter the woods by the visitor's car park. The postal address of the school is Longmeadow Primary School, Oaks Cross, Stevenage, Herts SG2 8LT. (Tel 01438 351087).

The Forest School Leader and other involved practitioners regard their duty of care when working with young persons as extremely important. To ensure all individuals (school children, school workers and volunteers) are safe and protected the following is recommended:-

- Everyone involved in Forest School is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of sites and activities. Staff and volunteers should be made aware of the school's Health and Safety, Child Protection, Equal Opportunity and First Aid Policies and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them.
- All members of staff at Playhouse Pre-School undertake Child Protection training. Any concerns are reported to the Manager, the school's named Child Protection Officer, to ensure the school's child protection policy can then be followed.
- The Forest School Leader delivering sessions will have an enhanced level DBS check, as will other members of staff attending Forest School.
- Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear must be worn at all times – (eg sunscreen and hats must be worn during hot weather)

Fire and food

Whilst making a fire and using it to prepare food is an important part of the Forest School ethos, sessions will not regularly include fire making.

However, should it be decided to include fire making in the scheme of work, the Fire will always be supervised by the Forest School Leader when lit and never left unattended. Safe fire practice will always be adhered to. There will always be a bucket with minimum of five litres of water and damp cloth next to the fire. Children will be taught and reminded of the log circle rules.

- Stand behind the log
- Step over and sit down on the log
- Stand up, turn around and step over the log
- Children are not allowed to cross the circle or step into the circle

Forest School Leaders and other adults are aware of the following when cooking and eating at Forest School:-

- Everyone should wash their hands before handling food and drink
- All foods are stored in air tight containers
- Only clean equipment is used

Forest School Policy

- Everyone is aware of any special dietary needs of the participants who have food allergies and any medication and copies of care plans will be in the Forest School Leader's bag
- Food will be cooked correctly
- All equipment and waste are cleared away.
- Marshmallows are allowed if fully melted

Using tools

An inventory of tools will be taken after every session and their condition assessed. Tools will be stored at the school. Children will have 1:1 adult supervision when using tools that are age appropriate.

Rules are set out clearly at the beginning of each session. Persistent bad behaviour will result in withdrawal from task.

Dealing with strangers, members of the public and loose dogs

The children will be informed to never approach anyone or any animal in the area. Adults will look for loose dog owners and ask them to keep their dog on a lead.

Emergency kit bag

Contents of kit are:-

- Full First Aid Kit
- Inhalers/medication for individual children/staff
- Mobile Phone/walkie talkies
- Risk Assessment for the Day
- Non antiseptic wet wipes
- Pen and paper – to record accidents
- Pen knife
- Spare clothes
- Plastic bags
- Scissors

Extra tools and equipment

- Session Plan, with specific activity or craft kit
- Camera
- String and rope
- 1 knife (Forest School Leaders)
- 1 Secateurs (Forest School Leaders)

Emergency procedures

In case of injury to adults or children, qualified adults are to administer first aid to the casualty, whilst ensuring the safety of the remainder of the group. (All Pre-School Staff undergo First Aid Training. Forest School Leader has an Outdoor First Aid Certificate.)

Emergency services should be alerted if necessary. The Manager is to be informed if the incident requires further medical treatment. Information is to be passed to parents and further aid sought if required.

Emergency Phone Numbers

Forest School Policy

- Pre-School Owner – 07817917697
- Pre-School mobile - 07875259692
- Fire, Police, Ambulance – 999 or 112

If an accident occurs to a pupil, member of staff or a visitor that requires help in addition to first aid i.e. Fire Ambulance and Police, then the LEA must be informed of the circumstances as soon as possible.

In the event of serious injury, (this includes amputation, serious burns, acute illness, fracture, loss of sight or consciousness, or if detained in hospital over 24 hours, or death) in addition to the LEA, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) must be informed. These notifications are a legal requirement.

The Accident Report Form requires a written statement be made with reference to the sequence of events, actions taken and responses and times of these actions. Names of witnesses should be recorded. The statement should then be signed, dated and given to the manager. It should be photocopied and the original sent to the LEA.

Copies of the Accident Report Form will be retained by the Pre-School, kept in a folder in the office.

The process outlined above is of vital importance to the enquiry which will follow a serious accident and will be critical to any action for damages or compensation.

Role and responsibilities

The Forest School Leader will have full, recognised Forest School qualification, DBS and outdoor first aid qualifications and have the overall responsibility for:-

- Planning of sessions including boundaries, activities and ethos
- Liaison with preschool owner and staff
- Safety and Risk Assessment including pre-checks of site and kit
- Nominal Role and medical details/parent permission forms
- Minimum staffing ratio of 1:8 for three year olds and 1:5 for two year olds
- Administration of first aid and responsibility for the first aid kit, write ups in accident book
- Supervision of tool use and all tool kit security
- Understanding of any SEN of the group/individuals and pastoral needs of the group
- Emergency procedures
- Evaluations

Other involved adults will have certain delegated jobs. They will be expected to model good practice and support the children, extending their learning as appropriate.

Insurance

Insurance for activities is included within the Pre-School's Insurance.

Equal opportunities

Please refer to the Playhouse Pre-School Equal Opportunities Policy. All people involved in Forest School sessions will be treated with respect and equality. Our priority is to ensure that children and adults have access to a safe and secure environment in terms of emotional well-being and safety. We would like everyone involved to believe that any contributions they make to our sessions will be listened to and appreciated.














Evaluation

The Forest School Leader will ensure the Forest School programme is progressive and undertakes to reflect and evaluate each session after completion. The Forest School Leader will reflect and act on evaluations from children and other staff members to inform future planning.

This policy was agreed by the staff of Playhouse Pre-School Broadwater

Adopted on 13th January 2014 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed on 6th November 2025 by Z. Munford

WIND SPEEDS				
Scale	Description	Miles per hour	Effects	Risk
0	Calm	0-1	 smoke rises	
1	Light air	1-3	 smoke drifts	
2	Light breeze	4-7	 Leaves rustle	
3	Gentle breeze	8-12	 Twigs move	
4	Moderate breeze	13-18	 Leaves and small branches sway	
5	Fresh breeze	18-24	 small trees sway	
6	Strong breeze	25-31	 Large branches sway	
7	Moderate gale	32-37	 Whole trees in motion	
8	Fresh gale	39-46	 Twigs break off trees	
9	Strong gale	47-55	 Branches break off trees	
10	Whole gale	56-64	 Trees uprooted	
11	Storm	65-74	 Widespread damage	
12	Hurricane	75+	 Devastation	