

# HALESBURY SCHOOL



## FOREST SCHOOL POLICY

Policy for the attention of			
Audience	Key Audience	Optional Audience	Additional/Notes
Senior Leadership Team			
Teachers			
Teaching Assistants			
Administrative Staff			
Curriculum support			
Lunchtime Supervisors			
Site Manager			
Cleaners			
Governors			
Parents			
Website			
Local Authority			

Responsibility of	
Review frequency	
This version agreed	September 2019
Next review date	September 2020



## Halesbury School Forest School Policy

### Statement of Intent

Halesbury School aims to use its natural outdoor woodland area to offer the children an insight into the Forest School ethos. This approach to outdoor learning encourages children to become independent, learn to work with others, use their imagination to solve problems, take appropriate risks within boundaries and initiate learning for themselves.

Forest School is a holistic approach to learning, incorporating children's individuality and develops their skills for lifelong learning. It can cover all six areas of learning, including the emotional and spiritual aspects of learning where self-esteem and self-confidence can grow and positive relationships with peers can be formed.

Forest School explores the outdoors and the natural environment with practical, useful activities all year round. It develops peer learning with the adults providing support and enabling activities to take place. The child's interest will be at the heart of any activity. Halesbury School has many additional policies which will be adhered to alongside this policy during Forest School sessions within our woodland and garden areas.

### Legislation considered for policy

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Race Relations Acts 1976 & 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Children Act 2004

### Implementation

Risk assessments, good practice, Forest School activities, rules for tools and fire etc. can all be found within the Forest School program folder which contains everything you need to know about our Forest School sessions, for example, procedures, risk assessments, environmental impacts etc. The program folder is kept on site at the woodland location, this contains vital information needed for each session which includes procedures in the event of an emergency etc.

**Equality and Diversity:** All children will be included in all activities and no form of discrimination will take place. Reasonable adjustments will be made to make it inclusive for all. Inclusion is a thread which runs throughout the Forest School activities regardless of a child's ability, disability, gender, race, culture, etc. Halesbury School is an inclusive Special needs school and have policies of Inclusion and Special Educational Needs and an Equality and Diversity Policy which will be adhered to during Forest School sessions.

**Health and Safety:** Forest School sessions by their nature encourage children to develop their own risk management skills and will support them to become responsible for themselves and others around them. Children will be reminded of rules and safe play if they are considered too dangerous. Ratios within the woodland area remain the same as indoors as we are still on the school premises (1 adult to 8 children or with an Early Years Professional 1 adult to 13 children). Risk assessments will be carried out before each session to check the site for



hazards and for the use of all tools and equipment. Dynamic risk assessments will be in place to cover other eventualities. The Forest School Leader will assess weather conditions regularly and will evacuate the area if they become too extreme. All children and adults will wear appropriate clothing depending upon the weather conditions. An open fire risk assessment will be carried out before a fire is allowed and protection procedures followed.

A Forest School Leader will be present at all times and children will be reminded of safe practice. The pre-school has a Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy etc. to enhance aspects of health and safety

Risk Assessments will include:

- The site of the Forest School
- Individual Risk Assessments for tools (bill hook, bow saw, mallets, knives)
- Open Fire
- Rope and string
- Shelter building
- Collecting natural materials

### **First Aid**

All staff administering first aid within the school will be qualified first aiders and will administer the care needed. Ensure the safety of all other children within the group and the possible need to evacuate them indoors. Seek emergency help if needed. There will be a first aid kit taken into the forest school area and extra first aid equipment is located within the main school first aid room. Parents will be contacted and an accident report forms will be completed. If it is a serious accident HSE will also be contacted. Emergency procedures are within the Forest School folder. Staff will be aware of any specific medical conditions' pupils have as well as if they require items such as inhalers, epi pens etc.

### **Use of Tools**

Children and adults will be trained in the use of each tool before they use it. Tools will be counted in and out and checked against an inventory by a member of staff. Tools will be stored safely in a locked metal cabinet inside Mr Allsop's class room and kept out of the reach of children. Only members of the Forest school and Senior staff team will have access to the key. They will be cleaned after each use to prolong their life, broken and damaged tools will not be used and be discarded of appropriately. Pupils will only be permitted to handle and use one tool at a time, specific for that activity.

### **Use of Fires**

A Forest School Leader must always be present when a fire is lit, and the fire must never be left unattended. There must always be a full bucket of water available to extinguish the fire as well as a fire blanket. Fire/heat proof gloves will be used when tending to the fire.

Children will be reminded of the fire pit procedures at each session.

Walk behind the log seats and stand behind the log.

Step over and sit down on the log seat.

Stand up, turn around and step over the log.

Children are not allowed to cross the inner circle (adults should be role models of this).

Only one child will work with the forest school leader at the fire at a time.



## Environment

Wherever possible environmentally friendly products and recycled materials will be used. Halesbury School will promote environmental awareness and care for our environment. Conservation issues and sustainability will also be supported. The woodland will be maintained to ensure the survival of all native flora and fauna and new flora will be introduced if needed. We will remove all litter and debris we take into the woodland and have regular litter picks to remove other refuse which is in the area. We will be caring towards our neighbours and try to minimise the amount of smoke and noise produced. Brambles and nettles will be removed from the main pathways but will be allowed to grow in other areas of the woodland. Branches at eye level and below on the main pathways will be removed to avoid injuries for people entering the woodland unsupervised (without the Forest School Leader), they will remain on all other trees. Dead and fallen branches will be removed, cut down and stored in the log store and used as fire wood. During the winter months large stones and logs will be left alone to avoid disturbing hibernating creatures. There will be areas created where wood is allowed to rot to encourage insects to thrive, wild flowers will be allowed to grow, and children encouraged to enjoy them growing rather than pick them. A hedgerow will be introduced around the edge of the woodland and maintained to encourage small wildlife to live in the woods. Any problems with the site or trees will be reported to Mr Kerry Wools the Site Manager.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Forest School Leader will have the overall responsibility for:  
Risk assessments for each session, pre-visit site checks and continuous safety monitoring.  
Planning for sessions, differentiation for individual children's needs.  
Ensuring necessary equipment is taken into woodland.  
Administration of first aid and first aid kit.  
Supervision of tools use, cleaning and storing.  
Organising emergency procedures.

## Staff/Students/Volunteers

They will model good practice throughout the session, carry out delegated roles and responsibilities, extend children's learning where appropriate by asking extending questions, support children to manage their own risk, remind children of rules and boundaries, be aware of dangers within Forest School and monitor levels of safety at all times, support the Forest School leader to run the sessions.

## Monitoring of policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or before should any incidents arise or laws and policies change.

Date	Authorised Signature	Review Date