Culcheth Forest School

Handbook

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Acknowledgement of ownership.

This is to acknowledge that the following Forest School Handbook has been written by sole author - Mrs Frances Kenny

Guidance has been taken from the following sources:

* Culcheth Community School Handbook
* Culcheth Community School Policies and Procedures.
* Forest School Handbook written by Author- Nicola Pugh.

The following handbook has been adapted from Forest school Handbook written Nicola Pugh, for the needs of Culcheth Forest School.

The Handbook was written in October 2016 and will be reviewed in October 2017.

The Handbook is a working document and will be adjusted as necessary.

Signed:

Frances Kenny.

# Culcheth Forest School Aims

***Where learning is fun!***

At Culcheth Forest School we intend to enhance children’s learning and development through weekly Forest School sessions. This links directly with our school motto ‘Where learning is fun’. As a school we strongly believe in developing well rounded children who can achieve their full potential. Culcheth Forest School will enable children to become confident and independent learners. The children will be active learners during sessions and many activities will be child initiated. The Forest Leader and Assistant will make close observations to ensure children extend their learning. This will happen during Forest School sessions and through evaluation and planning for new sessions.

Over the six week programme each group will have the opportunity to:

* Achieve a sense of ownership of Culcheth Forest school site and learn to respect and care for their environment.
* Feel Welcome, happy, safe and secure in order for them to progress at their own ability and pace.
* Promote a greater knowledge and understanding of the environment including the animals and plants that inhabit it.
* Develop confidence and self-esteem through learning new outdoor skills, team work and problem solving.
* Experience new challenges and foster life skills including risk taking and problem solving.
* Extend language and develop communication skills through stories, role play, and sharing own experiences, thoughts and interests.
* Work together as a team enabling them, to become resilient learners who are able to persevere.
* Take the lead and initiate, their own learning experiences each week.
* Learn to take risks safely whilst trying new challenges.

# 

**Health and Safety:**

**Staff and Parents**

* Forest school leader to hold and maintain level 3 qualification appropriate to lead and manage forest school sessions including an Outdoor First Aid certificate.
* All staff and parent volunteers will need a current CRB/DBS check in place.
* Staffing Ratio should consist of a minimum 1:8 children basis to ensure sufficient adult support throughout the group.
* Staff/Parent Volunteers will receive introduction to Forest School and training to include School Policies and Procedures. For example, Use of mobile phones, non-smoking policy, and Fire Drill Procedures.
* Children will also have an introduction and safety talk prior to their first Forest School Session.

# Risk management and risk assessment

* The FS Leader will carry out will complete a general site risk assessment initially which will take into account the four layers of woodland. This will identify any potential hazards and be reviewed annually. The site risk assessment to be shared with Head teacher and site manager if any actions need to be addressed. ( Refer to forest school main file)
* The FS Leader will complete a daily risk assessment before each session. This will take into account weather conditions and any new hazards. FS Leader and other adults to watch for potential hazards during sessions and make the FS Leader aware.
* FS leader to provide General Welfare and weather risk assessment for site. This includes any potential hazards to consider and actions currently in place to prevent them. To be reviewed annually unless any significant changes should occur. ( Refer to forest school main file)
* FS leader to complete Risk/Benefit Analysis assessment for each planned activity. These should be shared with all forest school staff and helpers prior to forest school session.
* FS leader to provide relevant tool procedures for example safety guidelines for use, maintenance, safe transportation and storing of tools. (Appendix 2)

**First Aid Procedure**

* All injuries to be treated by a qualified first aider only.
* Ensure all other children are safe (assistant responsible for this)
* FS leader to notify school office by walkie talkie /  **01925 764312,** school to provide further adult assistantand if necessary call for emergency services for injuries when the casualty cannot be moved.
* Minor accidents (including bumped head) will be dealt with following normal school procedure and will be recorded appropriately by qualified school staff.
* All relevant information to be recorded on Pupil Accident Record which is kept within school medical room.
* The leader will carry a mobile first aid kit which will then be kept at Forest School during the session. Staff/parent to complete relevant medical information sheet before session begins. To be updated if required. Parent/Carer contact details for all children in case of emergency and any medical related information such as allergies/dietary requirements will be provided by school.

**First Aid Kit Contents List**

* Dry wipes/Alcohol Free Cleansing Wipes
* Assorted size range of plasters
* Sterile Low Adherent dressing pads-7.5cm x 7.5cm
* Micropore tape
* Triangular bandages-90cm x 127cm
* Assortment of safety pins
* Powder free vinyl gloves/latex gloves
* Sterile Water.
* Thermal blanket x 1
* Vaseline
* Instant Ice Pack
* Burn gel
* Scissors,tweezers

# Accident and Emergency Procedures

Culcheth Primary School

Warrington Road,

**01925 764312**

Key stage 2 playground ( behind Year 3 /4 classrooms see site map appendix 3)

The woodland area is owned and managed by the school

The designated Health and Safety Officer for the above site is Mrs A Dodd.

Nearest vehicle access point: School car park situated off Warrington Road.

Nearest footpath access: Pedestrian access into school via Warrington Road.

Mrs Kenny FS leader is the named first aider during forest school sessions. (Outdoor Paediatric first aid, 2 day course November 2016)

* The Forest School Leader will take full responsibility to assess the situation and deploy assistant roles to the other adults within the group to ensure others in the group are safe.
* FS leader to administer first aid with assistance from the FS assistant and to ensure school office **01925 764312** is informed and emergency services have been called if required.
* FS leader or assistant to retrieve any medication needed by casualty and current medical details of casualty from Emmergency medical bag.(red rucksack)
* School office staff/ senior staff to meet emergency services and accompany to site.
* Forest School leader must complete school accident record as for minor/serious incidents following the incident and any further documents required by school.

The Emmergency procedure is kept in the Emmergency bag ( red rucksack) carried to forest school by FS leader. This bag has a set place to be kept at forest school and all children and adults made aware of it at the beginning of each session. FS leader to carry school walkie talkie/ mobile to contact and keep office informed in case of emergency. Emergency contact details for adults assisting and children’s emergency contact details kept within school office

**Emergency kit bag contents**

* First Aid Kit (Positioned at top of bag)
* Inhalers required.
* 1L of Sterile Water
* Kitchen roll/tissues
* Cling film in addition to burns kit
* Nappy sacks to dispose of clinical waste
* Whistle and torch
* Small comfort toy
* Spare clothing
* Accident book
* Medical information for children and helpers and any additional medication required.
* In addition an Emergency burns kit will be provided during sessions when an open fire will be lit.
* Emmergency numbers

In preparation to attend each forest school session children will change into their own forest school clothes. All children to be checked they are dressed appropriately.

# Fire Safety Procedure

**The Fire Circle:**

* The Fire circle is a fixed area on the site.
* The sitting logs are positioned 1m away from the fire square.
* Children are taught to never cross the fire circle and to step over the sitting logs to the outside of the circle.
* No one will enter the fire circle square unless directed by an adult.
* FS leader responsible for lighting all fires.
* Safety equipment:
* Fire blanket, water in a bucket (at least10 litres) with plastic cup for pouring over burns, watering can for extinguishing fires and burn kits ( first aid bag)

In the event of a fire the following responsibilities will be applied:

* In the event of a fire becoming uncontrolled at forest school the FS leader will ensure all children and adults are evacuated from area to fire assembly point following school fire procedure.
* The school office will be informed by walkie talkie/ 01925764312
* The FS leader will continue to monitor the situation and if necessary call emergency services for assistance.
* In an event of an unplanned fire drill in school FS leader informed by walkie talkie/ mobile and evacuate children following school fire procedure. Fire assembly point is at the front of school.

# Campfire Cooking Procedure

* On occasion at forest school session we will use the fire to cook- marshmallows, damper bread etc.
* FS leader will supervise all cooking activities.
* Children will only cook at forest school once campfire procedures are embedded.

Whilst cooking:

* Children are taught to sit in the respect position with one knee up and the other knee down to allow easy escape from the fire quickly.
* Children will be seated at a designated entrance to the fire and supported with 1:1 adult to child ratio at all times and always with a competent adult.
* Hand washing facilities will be in place and children will be reminded to access independently before eating.
* Special dietary requirements will be considered carefully enabling all children to be catered for. Prior to forest school sessions the forest school leader is informed of any allergies or intolerances to food for all participants.
* No meat will be cooked at Forest school to limit the risk of food contamination and uncooked meat being served..
* All food cooked will be checked by an adult to ensure it is fully cooked.
* Food will be tested for heat by an adult to ensure children do not burn their mouths. Especially important when cooking marshmallows. Children will ‘rest’ these to allow them to cool before consuming.

# Food Hygiene Procedure

* Food will be bought fresh for the session and stored in a clean storage box with lid. Chilled food will be stored in fridge in school kitchen and then in a cool bag at Forest school.
* Hand washing facilities will be provided and children will be encouraged to access this independently.( adult support when necessary)
* Clean hand towels/tea towels, washing up liquid and antibacterial handwash will be provided.
* Children to learn the routine of hygiene safety by washing hands regularly throughout the session.
* Children will work in groups to prepare food for cooking under adult supervision at all times. (1:1 adult to child ratio when using sharp knives or peelers.)
* All utensils including sharp knives to be stored in a box with lid and clearly labelled.

**Lost or Missing Child Procedure**

Once the FS leader has been made aware of a missing child use 123 call and respond ‘where are you?’ call, ensuring all other children can be recalled and head count taken.

Immediate search of area and school by assistant and school office informed so other school staff might assist.

# Procedure for Toileting

* Children will be able to use the Key Stage 2 toilets during Forest school sessions and will ask Teacher/TA permission for using. That person is responsible for checking that the child has returned.

# Parental Consent (including Medical Consent)

* Prior to starting forest school sessions class teacher to check Parent/Carer Permission for attending Local Visits for all children and inform FS leader.
* Prior to Forest school session FS leader to establish permission for photographs from the class teacher. See safeguarding section for further information.
* Class teachers will complete a medical information slip to inform the FS leader of any medical related issues or allergies for each child.

# Confidentiality at forest school

All personal information collected for forest school will be the responsibility of the FS leader. They will hold this information in their possession at all times during forest school and to leave and collect from the school office at the beginning and end of each session. The school office will dispose of any personal information correctly at the end of the groups 6 week sessions.

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# Tool use at Forest School

During forest school sessions children will experience using a range of different tools for a purpose. This provides children the opportunity to master a new skill and learn how something can be made from natural materials. Working with tools promotes development of fine and gross motor skills. It can improve concentration and co-ordination skills. It provides opportunity to take supported risks and develop confidence and self-esteem. To introduce and experience problem solving, develop creativity, sharing own knowledge and ideas with others.

**Guidelines for using tools safely at forest school.**

* Tool procedures and RBAs are followed. (Appendix 2)
* Children will work mainly on a 1:1 adult/child basis when working with tools and progress to 1:2 child ratio depending on tool experience and nature of activity.
* All tools used to be counted at start and end of session.

Tools used at forest school including ratio and function for use.

* Bow saw – Ratio 1:1. Used for cutting/sawing logs and trees.
* Hand Knife – Ratio 1:1 or 1:2 Experienced. Used for whittling/splitting wood and food preparation.
* Hand drill – Ratio 1:1 Used to make a hole in a piece of wood.
* Loppers/Secataurs – Ratio 1:1 Used for pruning/coppicing wood less than 2p piece diameter.
* Anvil Secataurs – Ratio 1:1 assess children’s individual abilities such as hand grip strength. Used for pruning branches for a strong precise cut and coppicing thin branches.

**Storage of Tools including tool maintenance and safety checks.**

* All tools to be stored in either hard boxes or heavy duty bags secured with a padlock and labelled. All Forest School Equipment is stored in the P.E. cupboard within school hall. ( children do not have access to this area)
* Forest School leader to provide the necessary risk/benefit analysis assessments for all tools used during activities. This is in addition to the weekly session plan.
* All tools to be counted at the start and end of each session.
* It is the responsibility of the forest school leader to check each tool is working efficiently prior to start of session and to check again after use.
* It is the responsibility of the forest school leader to check each tool is clean and free from rust or debris, ensure safety covers are attached and stored appropriately.
* The forest school leader will decide if a tool is unsafe to use accordingly and will maintain all tools following the individual tool procedures.

*Please also refer to the individual tool procedures*

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# Transport to and from Site

Children to walk through the school to the Key Stage 2 playground. They follow the path around Year 3 and 4 to arrive at Forest School site.

# Cancellation Procedure

* On occasion forest school sessions may have to be cancelled this would mainly be for two specific reasons. The event of extreme gale force winds and insufficient adult support for the session.
* It is the responsibility of the forest school leader to check the latest weather report prior to a forest school session.
* In the event of strong winds the forest school leader will check the site for danger of broken or fallen branches within the canopy and assess the situation.
* The forest school leader will consult the senior management following decision to cancel the session.
* In the event of inadequate adult support sessions may also need to be cancelled. The school will ensure that this would be the last resort and aim to provide sufficient support from staff members to provide the safe number of adult/child ratios.

# Clothing and PPE

* All adults and children are required to adhere to the basic clothing requirements. Long sleeves and long trousers and shoes/boots with a closed in toe( no sandals) whatever the weather.
* All children will be asked to provide suitable change of clothes for Forest school. Parents will be informed about this in their initial letter explaining their child’s participation. Depending on the season the suggested items will include, waterproof footwear, waterproof trousers, waterproof coat, gloves, hats and jumpers. If a child forgets their clothing they will miss their session and parents spoken to.
* The FS leader will ensure children are provided with protective gloves for pruning and sawing.

# Daily Operating Procedure (setting up)

* The FS leader will carry out daily risk assessment as per procedure. The school will be made aware of any further actions needed to ensure safety of the site is maintained.
* The FS leader will set up the site according to planned activities for the session.
* This will include hand washing facilities if campfire cooking is planned.
* Children will be registered by FS assistant in class. They will have changed into Forest school clothes prior to lunch which will be appropriate for the weather. Children who are not appropriately dressed will remain in class and not attend FS that week.
* FS assistant will bring the children to Forest school where FS leader will be waiting.

**Daily Operating Procedure during the session.**

* Initially the children will sit in our FS circle so that any new risks can be raised and children are reminded of boundaries and behaviour.
* During the session either the FS leader will lead an activity or the FS assistant. The other children are encouraged to engage in child initiated learning using equipment provided for the session. This will allow FS assistant or FS Leader to make quality observations.
* FS leader to record any Dynamic risk assessments needed during the session.

# Daily Operating Procedure( Closing down site)

* The FS leader is responsible for ensuring the site is left tidy, with help from all the children.
* Any tools used during the session to be cleaned and counted back in again.
* At the end of the session a final head count will be carried out and children will be asked to line up. The FS assistant or FS leader escort children back into class.
* The FS leader is responsible to ensure tools are stored securely and returned to the P.E. cupboard. The leader to inform school of any concerns or issues to be addressed before the next session, should any occur.
* Following the session any observations verbal or written are shared with FS leader to inform planning for next session.
* FS leader completes evaluation forms for session.
* FS leader to return confidential file to the school office.

# Safeguarding at Forest School

The class teacher will make the FS leader aware of any children who do not have permission to have photographs taken. The FS leader will use the class Ipad to record photos so that they can be used on the class Dojo and website. The FS leader or any volunteer/ staff member will not post any photographs on social media.

Staff roles and responsibilities (including volunteers)

* All staff/volunteers must hold a current CRB/DBS record.
* Prior to a forest school session staff will be briefed on planned activities and will obtain a copy of the daily session plan including relevant risk assessments.
* Staff and volunteers must always stay in sight of each other. Supervision of children is paramount to ensure children can be seen and heard by a responsible adult at all times.
* Only the FS leader or Assistant can take photographs using the class ipad or FS leader ipad. Parents and volunteers cannot take photographs of children even if they are of their own child.

**Safeguarding, Disclosures and Accusations Procedures**

In the event of a disclosure incident the member of staff should follow school safeguarding policy. Any disclosure by a child at Forest school should be reported to the school Safeguarding officer Mrs A. Dodd. If a disclosure is made to an adult other than the FS leader it should be immediately reported to the FS leader. The child should not be questioned by anyone other than named personal from the school safe guarding team. It is the responsibility of the FS leader to ensure any disclosure is reported at the end of the session.

A disclosure incident form will be completed by the FS leader and brought to the attention of the designated safeguarding officer (Mrs A Dodd)

# Complaints Procedure

* Any complaints or concerns should initially be raised with the FS leader who will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible. If the complaint cannot be resolved by the FS leader it will be referred to the Head teacher, Mrs Dodd.

# Equality within Forest School

Forest school is accessible for all pupils at school regardless of age, gender, background or disability. Adults who support children 1:1 will continue to do so at Forest school. The FS leader will ensure activities are adapted according to the needs of children present.

Exclusions from Forest school will only occur if the child’s behaviour is deemed a risk to themselves or others or they are not suitably dressed for the weather conditions. They will not be excluded due to poor behaviour at school.

**Behaviour Procedure**

FS leader and assistant will model positive appropriate behaviour at all times. Children are expected to follow procedures during Forest school including use of Tools, boundaries and camp fire. Verbal reminders are given. If a child continues to ignore these rules they will be asked to stay with an adult during the session or will not be allowed to be involved in that activity and removed from the risk. All incidents will be logged by FS leader and if necessary Parents will be informed. If children put themselves or others at risk consistently or deliberately they will be excluded from Forest school sessions. Children with particular behaviour needs will be closely monitored and supported during sessions.

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# Appendices

Appendix 1: Daily Site Risk Assessment Form

Appendix 2: Tool Procedures

Appendix 3: Site map

Appendix 4: Staff/Volunteer Personal Information Sheet

Appendix 5: Level 3 Forest School Leaders Certificate

Appendix 6: Insurance certificate.

**Handbook Declaration**

*I confirm that I have read a copy of the Handbook and agree to abide by the policies and procedures it contains,*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Organisation** | **Signature** | **Date** |
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**Insurance Details**

Culcheth Primary school is insured through QBE Insurance.

See attached certificate.