

St Matthew's C.E. Primary School



Policy for

Forest School

*'That the man of God may be competent, equipped
for every good work.'*

Timothy 3:17

Review date September 2023

Vision Statement

Forest School is a motivating educational experience that offers children the opportunity to develop confidence and self-esteem through a hands-on approach in a woodland environment.

Children are inspired by exciting and achievable activities throughout the year in almost all weathers. They will develop an understanding of the natural world, learn to use tools, cooperate and work with their peers and adults, and develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety.

Through regular Forest School sessions, we aim for children to become more self-aware, resilient and empathetic towards others. They will be encouraged to identify and manage emotions independently and take ownership of their learning, motivating them to have a go and learn from their mistakes.

Our aims for Forest School

Through the teaching of Forest School we aim:

- To provide children with experiences that encourages an appreciation, awareness and understanding of the natural world.
- To learn to respect and care for their own local environment.
- To abide by rules and set standards of behaviour.
- To work cooperatively in groups and to respect each other.
- To develop children's self-esteem and self-confidence through the setting of small achievable tasks relevant and of interest to the children.
- To develop resilience in children.
- To promote self-motivation.
- To promote independent and creative learners.
- To encourage children to take managed risks.

Monitoring and Assessment

- Children's confidence, progress and level of independence in Forest School are assessed by the Forest School Leader with input of other adults in support of this. This assessment along with the children's own input, is used to inform future planning and ensure children continue to be challenged and motivated through the Forest School sessions.
- The Forest School Leader will monitor the progress and development of children's skills throughout the school.
- The Forest School Leader will be responsible in helping colleagues to support children during the Forest School sessions.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Forest School Leader

- To ensure the safety of children and adults as they travel to and from the Forest School site.
- Ensure the safety of children and adults whilst at the site.
- Provide clear guidance and expectations to adults and children.
- Carry out a safety check of the site prior to visiting.
- To assess the site on a quarterly basis.
- Carry out a safety sweep before each session

Support staff

- Ensure the safety of children and adults as they travel to and from the Forest School site.
- Partake in children's activities.
- Ask open ended questions rather than directing them to activities/ telling them what to do.

Volunteers

- Assist with carrying resources to and from site.
- Partake in children's activities.
- Ask open ended questions rather than directing them to activities/ telling them what to do.

Ideally there will be a ratio of 1 adult to every 6-8 children. The Forest School leader may have to adapt planned sessions based on adult assistance. Certain activities (such as those using tools) where closer adult supervision would be required, may have to be abandoned / adapted based on available assistance. The Forest School leader will plan and be in overall charge of the Forest School sessions. The Forest School leader will be the first port of call should anyone be unsure of anything concerning activities and expectations in the sessions. Staff helpers will be there to assist the Forest School leader in the delivery of the sessions under the direct instruction of the Forest School leader. Staff helpers and the Forest School leader will be overseeing any volunteers within the sessions ensuring that they are adhering to the Forest School code of conduct and the documentation within the Forest School handbook. Volunteers will be expected to read the Forest School handbook prior to the attendance of their first Forest School session, and will be asked to sign to confirm that they have read and understood the handbook. Volunteers will be expected to follow all of the risk assessments required for that session, and adhere to the policies laid out within the handbook. Volunteers will be expected to assist children within

Forest School sessions and undertake tasks as directed by the Forest School leader. Regular volunteers will be encouraged to have DBS clearance.

Currently, the school are asking all volunteers to take a lateral flow test before attending a Forest School session.

Linked policies

Health and Safety

Equal Opportunity Policy

Accident and Emergency Procedures

Child Protection Policy, Procedure and Safeguarding Guidance

Equality Policy