

Churchstanton Primary School



FOREST SCHOOL HEALTH & SAFETY PROCEDURES POLICY

Approved by the Full Board of Governors of Churchstanton Primary School

Chair of Governors	Mr Jon Wood
Headteacher	Mr Matt Watson
Date Approved	September 2023
Proposed Review Date	September 2024

Health, Safety and Emergency Procedures

In an emergency that occurs on the school site, the Forest School Leader will ensure that the school office contacts the emergency services if required. This will be done in accordance with the School Critical Incident Plan.

In an emergency that occurs off the school site, the Forest School Leader will initiate contact the emergency services if required. At the earliest opportunity the Forest School Leader will ensure that the school is informed.

If an emergency does arise during a Forest School session, a whistle will be blown as a signal to stop. The children will gather with the nearest member of staff, be silent and wait for instructions - The children are made aware of this procedures during safety talks and the procedures is practiced termly. The Forest School leader will assess the situation- the nature, extent of the injury/accident and ensure that the children are safe from the danger and well supervised. First aid will be giving if necessary. An accident report form will be completed.

All Forest School activities will be carried out within the guidelines of Churchstanton Primary School's current Health & Safety Policy.

When planning and executing Forest School activities, the following points must be taken into consideration.

1. All Forest School activities must be led by a qualified and experienced Forest School Practitioner.
2. The Forest School Leader has overall duty of care for the children in their charge. Those helping with the session have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the children and must bring any Health and Safety matters or issues to the attention of the Leader as soon as possible.
3. All adult helpers must be aware of the risk assessment in place for the activity they are assisting in.
4. The Forest School Leader must always carry Essential Equipment in Emergency Bag.

To ensure the safety of children and adults attending Forest School sessions, checks need to be made before, during and at the end of each session. It is the Forest School Leader's responsibility to ensure that all checks are completed.

Prior to each session

- The Forest School Leader will visit the site to ensure the risk assessments are adequate and appropriate. Amend/update as necessary.
- Remove all visible litter and foreign objects.
- Remove obvious trip hazards and mark off areas as out-of-bounds where appropriate.
- Check that the forest school rucksack contains all necessary items (see section on Forest School equipment), including all emergency procedure information, a stocked and in date first aid kit.
- Check you have all the materials and resources needed for the activities you have planned.
- Check that your phone is in working order and is fully charged.
- Check that the walkie talkie fully charged.

At the start of the session

- Take register and head count.
- Discuss the learning task or focus for the session with the children.
- Remind children about physical boundaries.
- Remind children of behavioural expectations and safety guidelines.
- Remind children of how to stay safe by highlighting potential hazards - stumble trips.
- Carry out regular head counts during the activities and at break time.
- Use de-escalating techniques whenever possible when dealing with behavioural issues.
- Take photos and make observations of individual children. - Progress, enjoyment & evidence.
- Remain vigilant at all times.

At the end of the session

- Evaluate the session with the children - discuss what they have learnt, enjoyed and/or find difficult. Give feedback.
- Carry out a final head count and escort the group back to the school building/school.
- Count and pack up all equipment and resources.
- Ensure then area is left as it is found.

12. Risk Assessment Guidelines

A site risk assessment and site check should be undertaken prior to each forest session by the Forest School Leader.

Each Forest School activity undertaken will have a risk assessment completed. This may be either a generic Churchstanton Primary School risk assessment (completed on <https://www.eeclive.co.uk/>) or one specifically written for an activity.

Specific additional risk assessments will be undertaken for children whose medical conditions or whose behaviour requires them.

If completing a risk assessment, a suitably qualified and experienced person should oversee the drafting of the assessment.

The following points are offered as guidelines when completing a risk assessment.

- What could pose a risk or cause harm?
- Who might be at risk of harm? (Pupils, staff, helpers or members of the public.)
- How harm may occur and the worst possible consequence.
- Evaluation the level of risk.
- What can be put in place to mitigate against any harm? (Teach safety procedures, isolate the risk, protect against the risk)
- Re-evaluate the risk once an action is in place.
- Risk benefit analysis

A risk benefit analysis, this is a comparison of the risks involved in the activity and the benefits gained from the activity.

Therefore, there are three elements to consider:

- Hazard - the potential for something to cause harm.
- Risk - the likelihood of the hazard happening.
- Benefit - the positive outcomes of doing/experiencing the activity.

The risk benefit analysis must calculate if the benefits of doing the activity and what the children will gain from it will outweigh the risks associated with it.

Risk assessments need to be reviewed regularly, annually or if any shortcomings are identified during a Forest School Session. It is the Forest School Leader's responsibility to ensure the risk assessments are adequate, appropriate and amend/update as necessary.