



Forest School Handbook



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Forest School Ethos Statement

Forest School is an inspirational educational ethos that focuses on developing children's personal, social and emotional development through regular outdoor experiences. The ethos of Forest Schools is to allow children the time and space to develop skills, interest and understanding through a range of activities which provide practical, hands-on experiences in a natural environment.

Aim of Forest School

To develop the social and emotional well-being of children through play in a natural and safe outdoor environment.

To support the physical and mental development of children through games, creative tasks and problem-solving activities.

To promote and encourage decision making.

To build self-confidence and self-esteem in children.

To give children the skills and tools to succeed elsewhere in their lives.

To develop and promote HEART values, happiness, empathy, achievement, respect and trust.

Example of activities that may take place at Forest School

Example of types of activities that may take place at Forest School

- Den/ shelter building
- Campfire building and lighting*
- Making hot food on the campfire*
- Bush craft – Working with Forest school tools*
- Nature and wildlife discovery, observation and appreciation
- Nature and wildlife identification
- Learning about code of conduct and respect for the countryside

- Problem solving activities
 - Physical challenges (e.g. obstacle courses)
 - Teambuilding activities
 - Child initiated play
 - Nature Art and Craft work
 - Music making
 - Campfire storytelling
 - Collaborative games and activities
- *Under close adult supervision

Forest School Rules

Wear suitable clothing and footwear

No running in the Forest School area

Do not enter the fire circle area unless invited by an adult

Listen and respect each other around the fire circle

Do not pick anything that is still growing

Wash hands before and after Forest School

Keep hands out of mouths

Report any accidents or injuries to the Forest School leader

Role of the Forest School leader

The FS leader will be responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the children.

The FS leader will assess the site and weather conditions before every session to ensure suitability for the day's activities.

Through observation and evaluation, the FS leader will develop and plan activities to reinforce the aims of FS as outlined above.

The FS leader will be a good role model to all participants.

Role of adult helpers and volunteers at Forest School

To support the Forest School leader with tasks such as head counting and ensuring children stay within the designated area.

It is important adults alert the Forest School leader immediately if a child is missing, seriously hurt or misbehaving in a way that could lead to others getting hurt.

All adults to praise good behaviour and allow children the freedom to explore and play without adult interruption whenever safely possible.

Before going to FS area, check that children are wearing clothing and footwear appropriate for the weather and time of year.

To assist keeping the children healthy and safe by helping them to recognise and avoid hazards such as harmful plants, germs, trip hazards etc.

To support children's learning and development as modelled by the Forest School leader.

Support the children's learning and development through answering questions and responding to activity cues without 'over influencing' the activity.

Safeguarding

Feniton Church of England Primary School is committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all our children in school. We believe that pupils have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment which includes the right to protection from all types of abuse; where staff are vigilant for signs of any pupil in distress and are confident about applying the/our safeguarding processes to avert and alleviate any such problems.

Safeguarding is about ensuring that everyone is safe from harm – safe from bullying, safe from people who could abuse, safe from discrimination or harassment – and that we all feel safe in our environment.

Any safeguarding incidents at FS will be reported using a 'purple form' to the Head of School who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. A full child protection and safeguarding policy and procedure can be found on the school website: [Safeguarding - Feniton Church of England Primary School](#)

The FS leader and all staff members have an enhanced DBS check. All adult helpers/volunteers at FS will be asked to read the safeguarding children leaflet. Adult helpers/volunteers will not be left alone with children. [OVF-Safeguarding-Visitors-Feniton-leaflet-2020.pdf](#)

Photographs will only be taken on a school device and shared to the school website or via google classrooms with correct permissions from parents. A copy of the school data protection policy can be found here. [OVF-Data-Protection-Policy-Spring-2019.pdf](#)

The FS area is situated inside the school grounds, which are fenced, gated and accessed only by an entry system linked to the school office. Children are made aware of the boundaries at the start of each session, which may be different at each session depending on the activity.

Health and Safety

Feniton Primary School complies with all of the following relevant legislation with regards to Health and Safety.

Health and Safety at Work Act

RIDDOR 1995-Reporting of Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regs 1995

COSSH 2002

Childrens Act


First Aid at Work Regs 1989

Personal Protective Equipment Regs

Food Safety Regs 1995

Risk Assessment

The following Risk Assessment highlights the main risks found on the Forest School Site. The RA will be reviewed annually.

	Establishment/Department: Feniton C of E Primary School	Establishment Risk Assessment	RA21 Appendix 1
	Address : Station Road, Feniton, EX14 3EA		
Person(s)/Group at Risk Pupils and Staff		Date assessment completed: Date to be reviewed:	
Activity/Task/Process/Equipment Forest Sessions		Assessor(s): TB/RK	
Control measures in place <i>Additional measures or actions not included in this column below should be put in the assessor's recommendations at the end of this document</i>			
Fire Pit Burns or scorches from windblown embers or flames	Do not light the fire if too windy. 2 buckets of water near the fire pit at all times. Adult lights the fire pit BEFORE start of session and stays with the fire. Adult extinguishes the fire with water AFTER the children have left the area. KS2 children involved in the activity of lighting a fire will be under the direct supervision of an adult. Children enter the area by walking around the seating logs, then step over the log to sit down. Children leave the area by standing up, stepping over the log, then walking back to school. Long sleeved tops, trousers and sturdy shoes to be worn around the fire by children and adults. Long hair tied back		
First Aid Cuts and grazes Burns and scolds Stinging and biting insects	The forest sessions first aid kit to be taken out for every session. RK responsible for checking and restocking supplies. An accident/incident log book to be kept in first aid box Bucket of fresh cold water near fire pit at all times.		

	<p>A qualified emergency first aider to attend each session (paediatric qualified first aider to attend for FSU children).</p> <p>Children and adults to wear long sleeved clothing, trousers and sturdy shoes.</p> <p>4 Emergency First Aiders in school (October 2020)</p> <p>6 Paediatric First Aiders in school (October 2020)</p>
<p>Food Preparation Consumption of hot food. Gastroenteritis from food borne pathogens.</p>	<p>Children will be briefed on safety at the beginning of each session.</p> <p>Children to sit on seating logs.</p> <p>Children will wash hand immediately prior to each session and before eating.</p> <p>Toasting sticks to be held upright resting on the ground when not in use.</p> <p>For larger groups, every other child to have a stick then swap.</p> <p>Children to count to 20 before removing hot food (e.g. marshmallow) to allow it time to cool.</p> <p>Under no circumstances are children to eat food off the stick.</p> <p>Ensure that the stick does not protrude through the food.</p> <p>HC holds The Food Hygiene Certificate (Jan 2020)</p> <p><i>See Food Technology section on RA21</i></p>
<p>Harmful Plants Brambles, nettles, holly, berries, ivy and fungi</p>	<p>All children to be shown how to identify harmful plants. <i>See RA21 appendix 1</i></p> <p>Children to be told to look and NOT touch.</p> <p>Children to wash hands immediately if they accidentally touch any harmful plant.</p> <p>Nil by mouth rule, including fingers.</p> <p>Wash hands prior to leaving the forest session area and then thoroughly upon return to the classroom and before eating.</p>
<p>Safeguarding Arriving and leaving the forest school areas</p>	<p>FS Lead and teaching staff to be DBS checked.</p> <p>Remind the children about the boundaries and not going out of the designated areas. Head count on entering and leaving the forest session areas.</p> <p>Adults to be aware by walking around to ensure that they know where children are within the forest session areas at all times.</p> <p>Additional adults must advise the leader if they escort children to the toilet.</p> <p>KS2 children to ask permission to go to the toilet independently and an adult to note when they return.</p> <p>Adult helpers/volunteer to read safeguarding leaflet before session and not to be left alone with children.</p>
<p>Safeguarding - Stranger Danger Members of the public using the playing field area</p>	<p>Ensure the children are aware of any voluntary helpers.</p> <p>Children aware that all visitors should be wearing a red visitors lanyard.</p> <p>Children to be briefed on NOT talking to members of the public.</p> <p>Regular head counts by staff.</p>

<p>Slips and Trips Slipping on soggy areas becoming damp Protruding roots Eye level branches,</p>	<p>All to be reminded about the importance of walking in the forest session areas. Fallen debris in the areas used for forest sessions to be checked by leader prior to session. Discuss with children the need to look more closely where they are walking. Warn children and adults to take care, check eye level when walking and do not push others. Inform teacher in charge of forest sessions (Mrs Baker-Bruce) of any protruding branches/ brambles at eye level. Devon County Council tree survey carried out 3/8/2020 CB has undertaken tree maintenance course – 9/1/2020 and inspects trees between DCC tree inspections.</p>
<p>Tools Outdoor knives, bow saws, wooden mallets, hand drills, fire steels, frying pans and kitchen cooking pots</p>	<p>Tools checked by FS lead to ensure fit for purpose before each session. Tools are numbered and counted in and out of session. Safety demonstration/reminder to take place at start of each session. Tools to be used with adult supervision at all times and locked in toolbox/FS storage area when not in use. Bow saw: One child to stand either side with both hands on each end of saw. Wood held in place by a child either end of saw horse. Knives/peelers: Ensure adequate space (blood bubble) around each user. No more than 8 participants with knives/peelers at one time. Frying pan/cooking pot: To be placed on a secure, level grill over fire. Fire gloves to be worn at all times when handling cooking equipment. Handrills: Item being drilled must be secured using clamp.</p>
<p>Weather High temperatures/low temperatures resulting in heat exhaustion/extreme cold adults and children Wind causing debris in eyes and falling branches.</p>	<p>Drinks to be taken to forest areas, seek shade if necessary. Sunhats to be worn as required. Adult helpers and parents/carers of pupils are informed of the activity and requested to provide suitable clothing as required. Staff will check weather conditions prior to session. Cancel session as necessary. Group leader to check for hanging dead wood prior to session and if possible, remove prior to session. If required rope off areas. Cancel session if necessary. First aid kit and clean water always available on site.</p>

A copy of the completed assessment to be kept on file and copied to the Health & Safety Co-ordinator

The FS leader holds an up to date paediatric first aid certificate and has also completed a 16 hour ITC Forest School first aid course. The first aid kit is situated under the FS leader chair, which contains an additional burns kit. An accident/incident book is kept with the first aid kit to record any injuries, accidents or incidents at FS. Two buckets of fresh water are situated around the fire pit area-one for dousing the fire and the other for treatment of burns.

In the event of a serious accident, an adult will alert the school office who will call an ambulance on 999. What3words for the FS area is approvals.sparkles.handrail.

Children will be taught the 'tools down' command and will know to stop what they are doing immediately and wait silently for instructions. The 'tools down' drill will be practiced regularly.

Evacuation Procedure

If the fire alarm is activated, all participants to stop what they are doing immediately and line up in silence by the path. Adult to do head count before leading children to assemble on the main playground. FS lead to douse the fire immediately before joining class on playground.

Environmental Policy

We recognise that by using the FS area on a regular basis, we may have some impact on the environment. A three-year management plan is in place to reduce negative impact and will be reviewed annually.

Children are encouraged to take care and respect the environment. Pathways into and out of the FS site are alternated frequently to avoid wearing down areas and to avoid seasonal growth such as wildflowers.

Wood used for the fire and craft activities will be local and come from a sustainable/renewable source.

A site survey will take place before each session to check for hanging dead wood, litter, glass and animal faeces. At the end of a session, the site will be left clear of litter with the fire fully extinguished, leaving 'no trace'. The site will have a natural break every 6 weeks at half term and school holidays.

Equality and Diversity

Feniton Primary School is committed to the idea that there should be equal opportunity for all children irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. During FS sessions, children will:

- Feel secure, respected and know that their contributions are valued
- Appreciate and value the differences they see in others.
- Are taught in groups or given one to one tuition to allow them to experience success
- Experience teaching that allows for a range of different learning styles
- Are set challenging targets that allow them to succeed
- Participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs.

A full copy of the school equality policy can be found here:

[OVF-Equalities-Policy-May-2021.pdf](#)

Bullying is not tolerated at Forest School. The school anti-bullying policy can be found here:

[OVF-Anti-Bullying-Policy-Spring-2021.pdf](#)

Complaints Procedure

Complaints regarding any aspect of Forest School are taken very seriously. If a complaint is made, the first (informal) stage is a school resolution. This should take place as soon as possible, either face to face or by telephone. If the complaint is still unresolved, a formal school investigation will take place. If the outcome of a formal school investigation is unsatisfactory, an appeal to the Board of Governors can be made. A full copy of the school complaints procedure can be found here:

[OVF-School-Complaints-Procedure-Summer-2021.pdf](#)

In the event that a complaint is very complex, and matters are still unresolved, The Department of Educations complaint procedure can be found here:

<http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>