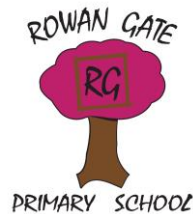


# ROWAN GATE PRIMARY SCHOOL



## FOREST SCHOOL POLICY

### POLICY REVIEW

This policy has been reviewed in line with the following: (Reviewer please tick box)

a) Ensuring the policy is up to date and meets mandatory requirements

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b) Ensuring the policy is fit for purpose and that practice adheres to the policy.

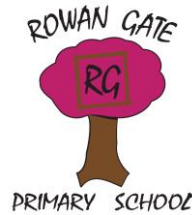
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*Reviewed and Updated in November 2016 .....*

*Print Name .....Berni Westley .....*

***Policy will be reviewed again in November 2017.***

# ROWAN GATE PRIMARY SCHOOL



## FOREST SCHOOL POLICY

### Introduction

Forest School is a unique method of outdoor education that allows children to develop confidence, independence, self-esteem plus awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.

This is achieved by setting small achievable tasks. The child is never put in a position where he / she will fail so success is attained. It is a child centred and child led programme that provides the opportunity for the children to use their personal learning style to complete their chosen tasks.

We are very fortunate to have the use of a Forest School site at Glamis Woods in Wellingborough – a short minibus ride away from school.

### Aims of Forest School

- To provide children with experiences that encourage an appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.
- To learn to respect and care for their own local environment.
- To abide by rules and set standards of behaviour.
- To work co-operatively in groups and to respect each other.
- To develop children's self-esteem and self confidence through the setting of small achievable tasks.

### Description

- The Forest School takes place within school time and in most weather conditions.
- The school will inform parents of the visits using a permission letter.

- The permission letter will ask parents / carers to ensure the children bring suitable clothing to change into for Forest School.
- The class teacher will check that the children are suitably clothed with waterproof coats, trousers and boots.
- The sessions will vary in duration.
- The variety of activities are totally inclusive, thus catering for all ability levels.
- The children are taught a number of woodland skills through practical, hands on activities. They may also learn how to light fires safely.
- The children may learn how to care for and safely use of a wide range of tools. This is a tightly supervised activity on a 1:1 ratio of adult to children. It is introduced gradually.
- The children are encouraged to listen carefully to instructions and to take responsibility for their actions. This is achieved by games that also encourage respect for the environment.

## **Resources**

- The Forest School leader is trained and experienced to deliver Forest School sessions and holds an up to date First Aid certificate. The Forest School leader responsible for organising and running all Forest School sessions.
- The school uses the school minibus to transport the children to and from the site. It is fitted with seat belts and carries a First Aid kit. Staff travel on the bus with the children.
- The Forest School site is council owned and has a full public access and liability insurance.

## **The role of the Forest School Leader**

- The Forest School leader's priority is the safety of the children at all times. The Forest School leader will carry out a detailed safety check before each session and comply with health and safety risk assessments.
- The Forest School leader will ensure that all documentation is relevant and up to date.
- The Forest School leader will carry an emergency pack at all times.

- The Forest School leader is responsible for all equipment used in the Forest School session and will ensure that it is checked before use and returned to the resource area after use.
- The Forest School leader will ensure that parents are informed of any incidents that may occur during a session, e.g. trips, falls, stings, etc.

## **Environmental Impact**

Forest School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos. Wherever possible, environmentally friendly products and recycled materials are used. Good practice is modelled by adults showing children that the world in which we live in should be cared for.

## **Health and Safety**

The Forest School programme will support children in developing responsibility for themselves and others. It will even encourage early risk management strategies that will ensure that children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

- A site risk assessment has been carried out and a copy is held in the Head teachers file.
- The Forest School leader has an up-to-date certificate in First Aid and is in charge of first aid arrangement.
- A first aid kit is taken on all visits.
- In the case of an accident requiring further assistance, an emergency contact form is carried with a mobile phone.
- The form contains emergency contact numbers and directions for emergency services. The school will contact the parents.
- Fires are a valuable part of the Forest School experience but will only be lit according to the procedures attached.

## **Child Protection**

- Forest School sessions are led by a trained Forest School Leader, supported by members of staff and parent volunteers where appropriate.
- Everyone involved in Forest School is fully briefed on health and safety and the risk assessment of sites and activities.

- Staff are made aware of the relevant school policies and procedures and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them
- All school staff have current CRB checks.
- Any concerns about a child's physical or mental well-being should be shared with the school's named Child Protection Person, so that the school's child protection policy can then be followed. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times.

## **Equality and Inclusion**

In Forest School sessions everyone is treated equally. We aim to provide a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.

## **Behaviour**

At Forest School we operate within the Behaviour Policy of the school. The school know where the site is, so if necessary another member of staff could come to the site to assist with a situation.

## **Communication**

Times and dates of visits are agreed between staff at the school before the sessions take place. Information is sent home to parents before the start of a series of visits.

## **Cancellation**

Forest School sessions may have to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. For example staff illness, adverse weather conditions, any situation that poses a health and safety risk.

This policy was updated in June 2015 and will be reviewed again in June 2016.

# **Procedures for Lighting a Fire at Forest School**

## **Before lighting a fire at Forest School:**

- The Head Teacher must agree this activity can be done.
- The local council has been informed that fire lighting may take place and it is in agreement.
- The Forest School leader makes sure the children have a secure knowledge of log circle safety (not crossing the circle, walking in the vicinity).

## **When lighting a fire:**

- A trained person will take responsibility for the fire. This will be their sole responsibility during the session. They shall be responsible for lighting it, manning it while it is burning and putting it out at the end of the session.
- The fire shall be contained within the agreed area.
- The ground around the agreed area shall be cleared of any flammable material.
- The area above the agreed area will be checked for low overhanging trees.
- A large container full of water will be placed beside the fire to put it out and deal with burns. There is access to a brook for more water if needed.
- While the fire is being lit, the children will be engaged in activities elsewhere.
- The flames of the fire should never reach higher than the knee.
- The fire will be extinguished before the session ends.
- NO fires will be lit during peak fire risk periods.

## Emergency Procedures

The Forest School leader must ensure that the adults are familiar with current risk assessment and emergency procedures at the start of each session. Groups must stay within the agreed boundaries which will ensure they are within earshot of each other.

Emergency information is kept in the Forest School bag, along with a mobile phone and First Aid kits.

In the case of a major injury:

- Keep calm. The children are more likely to remain calm if the adult appears to be in control. If necessary and safe to do so, remove the danger, or the person from the danger.
- Call outloud “123, Where are you?” Stay with the casualty whilst the children make their way back to the log circle or the safest area. A member of staff will take responsibility for the children while the Forest School leader stays with the casualty.
- The Forest School leader will carry out the necessary First Aid, whilst delegating someone to call for further assistance if necessary. If assistance is required, an adult will be delegated to meet them at an arranged place, according to the Emergency Services information.
- Whoever has called for further assistance will also call the school to inform them of what has happened. The incident must be reported in the accident book and a copy given to the school office.

## Minor Injuries

- All minor injuries must be recorded in the accident book and reported to the leader.
- First Aid (including plasters) must only be applied by a member of staff with a current First Aid certificate.
- The Forest School leader will always carry a mobile phone.

## Emergency Information

Rowan Gate Primary School      01933 304970  
The emergency services      999  
Location – Glamis Woods, The Promenade, Wellingborough.

# **Forest School Guidance for Assistants**

All assistants must read a copy of the Forest School Policy document and be conversant with the ethos of Forest School. Before joining our Forest School team please read the following guidance carefully.

## **Before Leaving School**

- Check all the equipment against the session list if asked to by the Forest School leader.
- Ensure all the children are appropriately clothed (waterproofs and wellingtons) and have visited the toilet.
- Know how many of your children are attending the Forest School session. Do a regular head count during the session.
- Assist with the transportation of equipment to the mini bus.
- Accompany the children, in an orderly fashion to and onto the mini bus.
- Ensure all the children have seat belts on.

## **Arrival at the Site**

- On arrival, assist the children off the mini bus and then check for any items left on the mini bus.
- Accompany the children into the woods.
- Assist with the transporting of the equipment to the site.
- At all times be alert and aware and co-operate with the Forest School leader.

## **In the Woodland**

- Encourage and support the children during activities as requested or directed by the Forest School leader.
- Allow the children the time and space to solve any problems and encourage independence by giving constructive suggestions rather than showing them how or taking over a task.



- Assist the Forest School leader (or designated person) with any cooking, snacks or drinks that may be needed.
- Be vigilant for any potential dangers and inform the Forest School leader immediately of any accidents, then assist as directed.
- Assist in clearing the site and transporting equipment back to the mini bus.
- Accompany the children back to the mini bus and assist with boarding if necessary. Ensure all are seated with belts on.

### **On return to School**

- Assist the children getting off the mini bus safely.
- Check that nothing has been left on the mini bus.
- Accompany the children back to the classroom.
- Assist the children with clothing.
- Assist in checking the equipment back in as directed by the Forest School leader.