



QUEENSMEAD PRIMARY ACADEMY

Forest School and Outdoor Learning
Procedure 2023

We believe this procedure should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the Academy ethos and enables consistency and quality across the school.

Queensmead Primary Academy Aims:

We want our school to be a place where we are safe: to learn, have fun and work hard. A place where we are kind and mindful of everyone and have positive attitudes for our bright futures.

Related Documents

This procedure is related to the following legislation;

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999
- Education & Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- School Premises (England) Regulations 2012.

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (DfE)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years. Statutory Guidance for Organisations Who Work with and Support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (DfE) and (DoH).

Guiding Principles and ethos:

We recognise the importance of Outdoor Learning and Forest School experiences as we feel it makes a major contribution to children's development. We also agree that children will be 'missing out on important learning opportunities if quality outdoor provision is not available to them.' (Margaret Edgington – The Great Outdoors)

As a result, all children have access to Forest School sessions throughout their time at Queensmead.

Our Forest School ethos is based on the Forest School principles which are:

1. Forest School is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.

2. Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a lifelong relationship between the learner and the natural world.
3. Forest School uses a range of learner-centered processes to create a community for well-being, development and learning.
4. Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
5. Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
6. Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners, who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

In order for all children to take part in activities and to fully experience outdoor learning and Forest School, we must have in place effective safety procedures.

- We recognise our responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and will take all responsibly practicable steps to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions (on the school premises and during school-sponsored activities), equipment and systems of work for all our pupils, school personnel and visitors to the school.
- We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children as the safety and protection of children is of paramount importance to everyone in this school.
- We work hard to create a culture of vigilance and at all times we ensure what is best in the interests of all children.
- We recognise that the safety and protection of pupils is the responsibility of all school personnel and volunteers.
- We believe that we must report and investigate all injuries for the safety of the children in our care.
- We all have a responsibility to ensure equality permeates into all aspects of school life and that everyone is treated equally irrespective of the protected characteristics.
- We want everyone connected with this school to feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.
- We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that are connected with this policy.

Aims:

- To have in place effective procedures to ensure children's safety when experiencing outdoor and Forest School activities.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this procedure.
- To work with other schools and the local authority to share good practice to improve this procedure.

Responsibility for the Procedure:

Role of the Principal

The principal will:

- Work in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this procedure
- Ensure risk assessments are:
 - In place and cover all aspects of this procedure
 - Accurate and suitable
 - Reviewed annually
 - Easily available for all school personnel
- Ensure good practice is shared throughout the school
- Work closely with the coordinator and agencies supporting the delivery
- Provide leadership and vision in respect of equality
- Ensure school personnel/volunteers have received the relevant Forest School training such as health and safety, first aid, child protection and safeguarding
- Monitor the effectiveness of this procedure by:
 - Monitoring learning and teaching through observing lessons
 - Monitoring planning and assessment
 - Speaking with pupils, school personnel and parents
- Monitor the effectiveness of this procedure by speaking with pupils, school personnel and parents
- Celebrate the effort, success and achievements of pupils and school personnel.

Health and Safety

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- The school Health and Safety policy is adhered to
- All other linked policies and procedures are adhered to and are available to all school personnel
- All risk assessments are in place and up to date
- All accidents are investigated and reported
- All tools and safety equipment are maintained and safe to use
- First aid equipment is in place and adequately maintained
- Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear are worn at all times
- Sunscreen and hats are worn during hot weather
- Hand-washing and good hygiene procedures are followed during and after sessions.

Sustainability

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- Flowers and plants are not trampled or picked unless relevant for an activity
- Insects and other wildlife may be studied, but always returned to their habitat
- Materials for activities such as den building and crafts are sustainably sourced from the environment, and students are taught to find suitable materials to use
- All manmade materials used are removed from the site at the end of the session
- Children and supporting adults are taught and apply the 'leave no trace' ethos
- All users of the Forest School areas work together to ensure they remain free of litter and safe to use
- Activities to support site maintenance, biodiversity and sustainability are built into Forest School sessions on a regular basis.

Behaviour

Expectations for behaviour differ in Forest School in comparison to lessons in the classroom.

These changes may manifest in the following ways:

- Children will have more opportunities to work collaboratively and will be encouraged to communicate throughout
- Children are encouraged to be explorative, and if their ideas and explorations lead them to a new version of the activity, this is to be encouraged
- If children display behaviours that are dangerous or unkind, the school's behaviour policy will be implemented

If concerns of bullying are raised, these will be dealt with in line with the school bullying policy.

Risk Assessments

The Forest School leader will:

- All risk assessments have been undertaken and are up to date
- That the outdoor learning area is checked before each session
- Children are told never to approach an unknown person or animal in the outdoor area.

Emergency Procedures

The Forest School leader will:

- Deal with all emergencies
- Ensure first aid is immediately administered to a casualty
- Immediately inform the Principal if further medical treatment is required
- Ensure parents are informed if first aid has been administered to their child
- Ensure parents are immediately contacted if their child has received a head injury
- Ask parents or a nominated person to come to school and check their child
- Log and report any incident
- Take regular headcounts to ensure they have all children.

In the event of illness of the Forest School leader, children will be brought back into school by supporting adults.

Toilet Facilities

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- All children have access to the toilets during Forest School sessions on site
- If Forest School is taking place on the playing field, all students use the toilet before going across
- No child is denied the use of the toilet
- Hand washing facilities are in place.

Fire Safety

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- All campfires are lit in fire pits in designated areas
- All campfires are not left unattended
- Forest School personnel are only permitted to light fires
- Fires are lit only using natural tinder, kindling and fuel, and ignited with a fire steel
- Flammable liquids are not used in the fire lighting process
- All sticks and logs must be placed and not thrown onto the fire
- A fire bucket containing 5 litres of water and a damp cloth must be at hand during all fire lighting sessions
- All fires must be extinguished with water at the end of an activity session
- All supporting adults must read and sign the fire activities risk assessment
- When a campfire is in use, children must have permission from an adult to gain access to the area. Children must always remain seated until given permission from an adult to move.
- The burns kit, first aid kit and water will be always in reach
- Children to sit a minimum of 2 metres away from the fire circle
- Children do not cross the fire area, and if leaving the fire circle, they will step out and walk around.

Eating and Drinking

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- Children do not eat any fruit or berries found onsite unless specifically told by an adult it is safe to do so
- Children only eat or drink foods linked to a topic and prepared by school personnel or under direct supervision
- The dietary needs and allergies of participants are known by all school personnel.

Cooking

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- All equipment is thoroughly clean before sessions

- All food is kept in airtight containers
- The dietary needs and allergies of children are known by all school personnel
- Children must wash their hands before handling food or drink
- All equipment is washed at the end of a session
- Food waste is disposed of correctly.

Hand Tool Safety

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- All hand tools are well maintained, and inspected before each session
- All hand tools are securely stored, and inventory is kept at the start and end of each session
- Staff to read and sign the risk assessment related to hand tool use
- All children are given a tool talk at the start of the session which outlines safe practice and uses for the relevant tools
- All tool use will be supervised by the Forest School lead.

Outdoor Equipment

The Forest School leader will ensure:

- All outdoor equipment is checked before each session
- Repairs are carried out immediately, or if this is not possible the equipment will be taken out of use until it can be repaired
- All outdoor equipment must be annually maintained.

Role of Supporting Adults

Supporting adults will work under the direction of the Forest School lead to:

- Encourage and support children taking part in activities
- Provide tailored support to some students who may need it to be able to properly access Forest School provision
- Support the implementation of safety procedures in line with the Forest School policy and appropriate risk assessments
- Identify any areas of training which may be appropriate to support their understanding and role within Forest School
- Ensure children are appropriately dressed for the weather.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this procedure via:

- School website
- Staff handbook
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops

- School events
- Written communications with home such as weekly newsletters and app messages
- Annual report to parents
- Information displays
- Email.

Equality Impact Assessment:

Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. This procedure has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy:

The practical application of this procedure will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator or the Principal.

Linked Policies:

- Food
- Health and Safety
- Medical and First Aid
- Parental Involvement
- Pupil Discipline and Behaviour
- Risk Assessment
- Risk Management
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- School Security
- Supervision of Pupils
- Volunteer Helpers.