



Forest School Policy

Deanshanger Primary School

'The best classroom and the richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky' Margaret McMillan

Aims and objectives

Forest School offers an opportunity for the children and adults present to learn within an outdoor environment. It offers a holistic and creative approach to learning and allows the participant to understand more about the environment and to take supported risks. This powerful approach enables young children to be independent, self-motivated, courageous, and considerate and sets them up for lifelong learning. It particularly supports the development of self-esteem and self-confidence.

We aim to remain true to the Forest School ethos and whole school approach to learning -

- To empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing their minds and bodies to thrive.
- To promote an enjoyment of energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of well-being that it brings, including opportunities to develop gross motor skills.
- To provide a safe and secure environment so that they can learn to take managed risks
- To provide high quality learning experiences. We aim to ensure that pupils acquire:
 - The ability to work effectively as individuals and in groups.
 - The ability to talk about, record and evaluate their work and share their experiences with others through different mediums.
 - A sense of achievement and self-worth, responding to challenges with enthusiasm and enjoyment.
 - A real breadth of experiences in the school setting.

Why we have Forest School sessions at Deanshanger Primary School

With an amazing and well developed tree, plant and wild life laden area on school grounds, we have recently developed Forest School. Our staff started their training in January 2017 and our first sessions officially started in September 2017. Children in Foundation Stage have weekly sessions whilst Year 1-6 have sessions on alternate weeks.

With the increase in technological advances, children's learning and play is often strongly supported by computer games, TV, Apps and using social media. Whilst recognising that this has its place, we also see the huge benefits of connecting children with nature and having time away from our rapidly advancing technological world. It is also our opportunity to enrich learning outside the 'formal' curriculum with subjects measured by data and Ofsted.

Through Forest School teachers and support staff are in a unique position to:

- Observe, assess and record outdoor learning, ensuring that there is adequate provision for children to extend their learning through cross curricular planning and next steps approach. This ties in directly with the International Primary Curriculum and our Artsmark journey.
- Encourage children to become confident, independent learners.
- Enable children to work both individually and co-operatively outside.
- Enable children to appreciate the beauty of nature; encouraging them to use a variety of natural resources.
- Help children to take responsibility and care for the outside environment and resources within it.
- Encourage children to respect their environment and to care for living things
- Encourage children to be confident in questioning what they see and find.
- Provide a holistic learning environment where children are encouraged to use all their senses to support their learning.
- Ensure planning supports all learning styles and preferences.
- Be spontaneous and flexible to learning opportunities that arise in responding to and extending children's interests.
- Help children to be aware of and develop their social skills and emotional development.

The pupils will:

- Learn about and understand the changes in their surroundings and environment by using all their senses.
- Generate ideas for example, through looking, talking, drawing, modelling, exploring and playing.
- Use tools correctly and safely to make products / artefacts, recognising the need for choosing appropriate.
- Link areas of learning from the classroom to the outdoors and have practical opportunities to consolidate learning.

Daily procedures to ensure health and safety

The Forest School team take full responsibility for these in conjunction, where necessary, with the site supervisor.

- Carry out pre-session checks and ensure all members of staff attending the session are familiar with the relevant risk assessments of the natural environment including seasonal factors such as sun, high winds, rain.
- Ensure any equipment required is on site before the session starts.
- Ensure any tools to be used are in good working order.
- Ensure the first aid kit is stocked and on site.
- Notes for any allergies/special requirements for all attending are available.
- Any medication that maybe required e.g. epipens/inhalers are brought up to the session by the teacher.
- Ensure that both walkie talkies are charged and that the office are aware of which class are attending that session at that time.
- Head count all children and adults on entering the forest school area.
- Check all participants and staff are wearing suitable clothing and footwear.

Behaviour expectations

Our school behaviour policy will be followed in Forest School however the following behaviour is expected from all children:

- Listen when an adult is talking.
- Take turns and be patient with each other.
- Keep to Forest School Boundaries.
- Keep you and your friends safe.
- Use Forest School language, kind words and always be polite.

Beginning of the Session

- The Forest School Leader will discuss health and safety with all those participating at the beginning of each session. It will be reiterated how important it is to think about their own and others safety.
- The Forest School Leader will continually assess the weather conditions and act accordingly if they become adverse.
- All boundaries will be defined and all those taking part will be made aware of these.
- All activities and outcomes for that session will be explained.

End of the session

- Count back in any equipment used and ensure it is cleaned before it goes back into storage.
- Clear the site of any rubbish and dispose of it correctly.
- Extinguish fires accordingly.
- Before leaving the site advise all participants to wash their hands on their return to the school building.
- Ensure that all necessary records are complete e.g. accident book and pass duplicate sheet to teacher to pass to relevant parent.
- Head count each participant off of the site.

Equal opportunities

In Forest School sessions all persons should be treated equally in accordance with the school Accessibility Plan and Equality Scheme.

We aim to and are committed to:

- Providing a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.
- Including and value the contribution of all children and adults to our understanding of equality and diversity.
- Make inclusion a thread which runs through all of the activities of Forest School.

The legal framework for this guidance is Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations Amendment Act 2000; Sex Discrimination Act 1986 and Children Act 1989.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an accident, injury or illness to participant or staff:-

- Keep calm and assess the situation to decide what needs to be done.
- Call down to the office, explain what is happening and ask them to call the emergency services. Ask them to notify parents/family.
- Ensure that other children and staff are kept calm and away from the accident/injury site.
- Once settled ensure all the relevant paperwork is completed.

Minor accidents/injury

- These will be dealt with on site by the designated first aider generally the Forest School Leader.
- A record will be made and a duplicate passed onto the parent/carer.
- A suitable first aid kit will be carried on every session, including wipes, tissues etc.

Sanitation

- Ensure all participants have used the toilet before coming to the forest school site.
- The Wrap Club toilets will be used if required.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Children and adult participants will be asked to provide their own waterproof trousers, coats and sensible footwear. This must be worn each session.
- Gloves will be provided as and when required and will be stored safely and fit for purpose ready for the next session.
- Children will take their school water bottles to Forest School.
- Sun cream will be recommended in the hotter months.

Fire Safety

- The Forest School Leader and Forest School Assistants will be responsible for the fire at all times while it is lit.
- The session plan will ensure that the Forest School Leader and Forest School Assistants are available to be responsible for the fire.
- Ensure clean water (5 litres minimum), a clean bucket and towel are at the site.
- The necessary equipment for lighting fires must be stored in a suitable container.
- Ensure suitable precautions are taken to prevent the spread of fire in extremely dry and/or windy conditions.
- All adults and children are able to apply the log circle rules.
- Ensure the fire is extinguished successfully before leaving the site.

Tool Safety

- All tools should be stored on site and fit for purpose.
- They should be cleaned and sharpened after each use and logged back in.

- The ratio of adults to children will ensure the Forest School Leader and Forest School Assistants are able to supervise the tool use.

Food Safety

- A cool bag box must be kept specifically for food used.
- Any raw meat and fish must be stored separately from anything cooked.
- Hands must be washed before preparing the food.