

LEAVENING COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



# FOREST SCHOOL POLICY

**Member of staff responsible:** Jess Milson

**Review Date:** January 2024

**Headteacher:** Sian Mitchell

**Chair of Governors:** James Robinson



## **Leavening Community Primary School Forest Schools Policy**

### **Aim**

We aim to give children and practitioners a shared understanding of the ethos of a Forest School experience. This powerful approach enables young children to be independent, self-motivated, courageous, considerate and sets them up for life long learning. It particularly supports the development of self-esteem and self-confidence. There are many important issues to be considered here and we aim to remain true to the Forest School ethos and approach.

### **Environmental Considerations**

Forest School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos. Wherever possible, environmentally friendly products and recycle materials should be used when appropriate. Good practice should be modelled by adults showing children that the world in which we live in should be cared for. Involving children in site checks and planning environmental games will help support this.

### **Health and Safety Considerations**

The Forest School programme will support young children to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will even encourage early risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others. For example, if children spot litter on the ground (unless it's a sharp object), staff encourage them to pick it up and put it in the bin, as this teaches them that actions have consequences and they are responsible for looking after their environment, and they need to keep other animals safe too.

### **Child and Vulnerable Persons**

Forest School Leaders and practitioners should regard their duty of care when working with young persons as extremely important. To ensure all individuals (children, workers, volunteers) are safe and protected we strongly recommend the following :-

- Everyone involved in Forest School is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of sites and activities. Staff and volunteers should be made aware of the relevant school policies and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them
- Key members of staff will have Child Protection Training and will have a named Child Protection member of staff.
- Forest School Leaders delivering training will have an enhanced level CRB check. It is strongly recommended that any regular volunteer attending Forest School should also have this. Where a volunteer or member of staff does not hold a current CRB certificate then they should not be left unsupervised with children.
- Vulnerable groups are those under the age of 18 and those people of all ages with a disability or with a diagnosed mental health problem.
- Any concerns about a child's physical or mental wellbeing should be shared with the schools named Child Protection Person, so that the schools child protection policy can then be followed.

- We regard safety and good practice as extremely important and it is the responsibility of individual staff and volunteers to ensure general safety during working.
- Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Any concerns should only be shared with those who need to know such as the Forest School Leader or Class Teacher who can then ensure the correct channels are then informed.

## **Considerations for Equality and Inclusion**

In Forest School sessions all persons should be treated equally.

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 valuing the contribution of all children and adults to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- making 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;
- Children Act 1989; and
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

## **Cancellation Procedure**

There may be times when Forest School sessions have to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. These may be :-

- Staff illness – which prevents staff / child ratios being met.
- Severe weather conditions e.g. heavy winds, thunder and lightning, icy/slippery ground.
- Any situation that poses a health and safety risk.

In the event of this situation arising we recommend that :-

- Cancellation decisions are made as soon as possible and that the school, staff and volunteers are contacted via telephone.

We will endeavour to run Forest School sessions whenever possible, however reserve the right to cancel on the day, but will aim to inform all staff involved and the children as soon as possible.

## **Evaluation Procedure**

In order to develop the Forest School program and to ensure good practice is maintained a number of evaluation tools are recommended. Evaluation of activities undertaken.

1. Evaluation of session – looking at what dispositions and attitudes are being developed.
2. Evaluation from children.
3. Evaluation from all staff involved in Forest School.

**Policy agreed: January 2023**

**To be reviewed: January 2024**