



## Forest School Handbook – Policies and Procedures

Approved	25/10/24
To be reviewed	29/1/27
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Signed (Proprietor)	S Playford

## 1.Aims

Little Kinvaston School aims to use our large outdoor space to offer the children an insight into the Forest School ethos. This approach to outdoor learning encourages children to become independent, use their imagination, take appropriate risks within boundaries and initiate learning for themselves.

Forest School is a holistic approach to learning, incorporating children's individuality and develops their skills for lifelong learning. It can cover many areas of learning, including the emotional and spiritual aspects of learning where self-esteem and self-confidence can grow and positive relationships with peers can be formed.

Forest School explores the outdoors and the natural environment with practical, useful activities all year round. It develops peer learning with the adults providing support and enabling activities to take place. The child's interest will be at the heart of any activity.

To minimise the risks from our Forest School Programme an individual risk assessment is carried out for each individual activity. Young people will be taking part in activities new to them so staffing ratios and PPE should be carefully considered during the risk assessment process.

## 2. Equality and Diversity

All children will be included with all activities and reasonable adjustments will be made to make it inclusive for all. Inclusion is a thread which runs through all the Forest School activities regardless of a child's ability, disability, gender, race, culture, etc.

### Code of Conduct for adults

The Little Kinvaston's Code of Conduct for adults is as follows:

**Respect the Little Kinvaston School Ethos:** Forest School Leader and support staff are to be kind, be safe, be resilient and be me (the best version of themselves).

**Respect Nature:** Forest School Leader and support staff are expected to treat the natural environment with respect. This includes not disturbing wildlife, damaging plants or littering.

**Be Safe:** Forest School Leader and support staff must demonstrate good practice, safe use of tools and good behaviour.

**Work with Inclusivity and Respect:** All forest school users should be treated with respect and inclusivity. Ensuring a supportive and non-discriminatory environment.

**Be Responsible:** Forest School Leader and support staff are responsible for the supervision of forest school users, ensuring students stay within designated areas and boundaries and follow safety procedures.

**Be Prepared:** Forest School Leader and support staff must be prepared to provide a inspiring and enriching experience. Forest School activities should be well-planned. Risk assessments completed and signed prior to sessions. Forest School Leader should also be prepared for changing weather conditions and have contingency plans.

**Encourage:** Forest School Leader and support staff should encourage students to explore, investigate, and learn through child led activities and experiences.

**Be Professional:** Forest School Leader and support staff should model professional behaviour, be punctual, be prepared, and follow Little Kinvaston School's policies and procedures.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

**Forest School Leader will have the overall responsibility for:**

- Risk assessments for each session, pre-visit site checks and continuous safety monitoring.
- Planning for sessions, differentiation for individual children's needs according to the age, stage of development of the children, season and weather
- Ensuring that once on-site rules are followed and continue to risk assess during the session.
- Ensuring necessary equipment is taken into woodland.
- Wearing clothing that is appropriate for the Forest School activities.
- Administration of first aid and checking first aid kit.
- Supervision of fire use, following procedures set out in this document.
- Supervision of tools use, cleaning and storing.
- Organising emergency procedures.
- Modelling good practice throughout the session.

**Staff will:**

- model good practice throughout the session.
- carry out delegated roles and responsibilities.
- extend children's learning where appropriate by asking extending questions.
- support children to manage their own risk.
- remind children of rules and boundaries.
- be aware of dangers within Forest School and always monitor levels of safety.
- support the Forest School leader to run the sessions.
- read and understand the policies, procedures and risk assessments and sign to say they have done so.

**Parent Helper/Volunteers will:**

- Comply with the contents of the Forest School Handbook.
- Wear appropriate clothing.
- Be a positive role model.
- Assist the Forest School Leader and other staff in keeping the children safe and supporting with activities as directed.

- Report any safeguarding concerns to the Forest School Leader

#### 4. Ratios

At Little Kinvaston Schools the maximum number of pupils per session is 16. The minimum required number of adults is 2. One of the adults will be the Forest School Leader who will hold an accredited Level 3 Forest School qualification.

Knife use ratio is 1:1 initially, under the supervision of the Forest School Leader; thereafter at the discretion of the Forest School Leader depending on the level of competence of the learners.

Fire-lighting will operate on a 1:1 ratio. Campfire cooking, including the use of toasting sticks, requires a 1:1 ratio, although the Forest School Leader can use their discretion depending on the age and competency of the learners.

#### 5. Weather

Forest School sessions will go ahead in all weather conditions however, there are some occasions where it may not be safe or practical to go ahead with a planned session due to extreme weather:

- In the case of extreme temperature determined by a met office amber weather warning
- In the case of extreme cold of below '0' a session will be cancelled. If it is near to this, we will ensure pupils are appropriately dressed, sessions will be made shorter and activities will be planned to ensure children are kept moving.
- In the case of a thunder or lightning storm

In the case of high winds of 25mph or more determined by the Met Office online the Forest School Leader will undertake activities away from trees or move activities inside. The Forest School Leader will assess the trees following the wind and seek the advice of a professional tree surgeon if required.

The Forest School Leader must observe the weather forecast and fire severity index making sure the conditions are safe to have a controlled fire. Wind <25mph and FSR <medium – high.

#### 6. Food Safety

At Little Kinvaston School there will always a staff member present with food hygiene training when food is being handled and prepared. They will be responsible for:

- Monitoring food preparation, transport, and storage.
- Be aware of any children with food allergies/intolerances.
- Ensuring hands are cleaned thoroughly and any cuts/grazes covered in the correct manner (blue plaster or ideally gloves) before handling and preparing food.

- Ensuring food is stored in clean containers and transported in a cool bag to and from the site, with any clean utensils and cooking pans required.
- Storing raw meats separately to any other foods.
- Checking all 'use by' dates on foods before eating.
- Providing water for cooking will be provided in cleaned sealed storage container.
- Teaching pupils how to cook food safely following the activity risk assessment and fire procedure.
- Checking all food is fully cooked before eating.
- Clearing away and cleaning up.
- Ensure ALL food not eaten or cooked will be placed in black bin bags and disposed of in the school bin at the end of the session by one of the adults.
- Checking to ensure there is no food traces to avoid vermin being attracted to the area.
- Ensuring all utensils and pans will be washed at the station in hot soapy water and stored away correctly.

If meat or fish are being cooked, the Forest School Leader must hold a certificate in Food Hygiene Level 2.

## 7. Conservation

Little Kinvaston School will promote environmental awareness and care for our environment. Conservation issues and sustainability will also be supported.

Practical steps will be taken to ensure the conservation of our site including but not limited to:

- Remove all litter and debris we take into the woodland and have regular litter picks to remove other refuse which is in the area.
- Minimise the amount of smoke and noise produced during Forest School sessions.
- Dead and fallen branches will be removed, cut down and stored in the log store and used as fire wood.
- During the winter months, large stones and logs will be left alone to avoid disturbing hibernating creatures.
- There will be areas created where wood is allowed to rot to encourage insects to thrive.
- Wild flowers will be allowed to grow and children encouraged to enjoy them growing rather than pick them
- The hedgerow around the edge of the woodland will be maintained to encourage small wildlife to live in the woods.

Little Kinvaston School will implement our 3-year conservation plan and Ecological Impact Assessment to support the conservation of our site and uphold the conservation needs laid out in this policy.

## **8. Risk Management and Assessment**

### **8.1 Risk Assessments**

Little Kinvaston follows the risk versus benefit risk assessment procedure. To complete this procedure, the Forest School Leader must first establish and clearly define what the benefits are to the individual for running a certain activity. The Forest School Leader will need to identify and list perceived hazards to the individual. Next the Forest School Leader will need to state the amount of risk that that hazard will have on an individual without any control measures to mitigate the risk (low, medium or high). After that the Forest School Leader will state a list of control measures that will be put in place to help mitigate that risk level. Finally, the Forest School Leader will then state the perceived risk level when the measures have been put in place. The control measures should have some limiting effect on the risk level. See image below.

<b>Identified Hazard</b>	<b>Risk of:</b>	<b>Risk Rating (before control measures)</b>	<b>Control Measures (reducing the risk)</b>	<b>Risk Rating (after control measures)</b>

The Forest School Leader will ensure that risk assessments are completed for all activities being undertaken at Forest School. All staff taking part in Forest School sessions will agree to read the relevant risk assessments. Risk assessments will be reviewed annually by a Forest School Leader and revise where necessary. Reviews will not be limited to annual reviews and if circumstances change that effect the rigour of the assessment, then the relevant policies and risk assessments will be reviewed and amended.

### **8.2 Emergencies in the event of an accident or incident**

In the event of an emergency of an accident or injury during Forest School activities Little Kinvaston follows the following procedure.

#### **Injury to child**

The Forest School Leader or TA will stop the current activity and group the children together by use of sticky feet (calling all children back to an agreed spot). The TA will make a headcount and report the emergency/accident/any discrepancies to the school by radio. The school will then provide more staff support. The TA or Forest School Leader will take appropriate measures if they need to move the group away from the casualty in case of

distress to the group and to provide privacy to the casualty. The TA or support member of staff will then take charge of the group and act as appropriate.

The Forest School Leader will assess the situation and administer any first aid that is required to the casualty. A situation report will be made to the school office via radio. If emergency services are required, this will be stated by the Forest School Leader and a call will be made via the Forest School Leader of the school office.

The Forest School Leader is to stay by the side of the casualty until the injury has been treated or a suitable handover to other staff/emergency services has been completed.

After the incident the Forest School Leader will record the emergency/accident in the accident book and a separate incident form if required.

Contact to the child's parents/carers will be made via the Forest School Leader or the school office to inform of the emergency/injury.

### **Injury to Adult**

The uninjured adult will then become **lead** and will stop the current activity and group the children together by use of sticky feet (calling all children back to an agreed spot). The lead member of staff will make a headcount and report the emergency/accident/any discrepancies to the school by radio. The school will then provide more staff support. The lead member of staff will take appropriate measures if they need to move the group away from the casualty in case of distress to the group and to provide privacy to the casualty. Once the school has provided more staff to support, they will designate a member of staff to take charge of the Forest School group and act as appropriate.

The lead member of staff will assess the situation and administer any first aid that is required to the casualty. A situation report will be made to the school office via radio. If emergency services are required, this will be stated by lead member of staff and a call will be made via themselves of the school office.

The casualty's next of kin will also be contacted via the school office if necessary, depending on the situation.

### **8.3 Lost child**

If child becomes lost during a forest school session. The Forest School Leader or TA will group the children together via sticky feet (calling all children back to an agreed spot) and preform a headcount. The Forest School Leader and TA will identify who is missing via class list if required and a report will be made to the school office via radio/phone to inform of a missing child. The school will then provide more staff to support the Forest School Leader.

The TA will then take lead of the group and act as appropriate. The Forest School Leader and any additional staff that has been sent to support will then spend a maximum of 10 minutes looking and scanning for the missing child. Situation reports will be made to the school office to inform of progress. If the child cannot be found the Forest School Leader or school office must contact the emergency services to report of a missing child.

Once the report to the emergency services has been made, staff involved in trying to locate the child are to continue their efforts until a handover to the emergency services is made. Situation reports must be made to the school office every five minutes.

The school office is then to contact the child's parents/carers to inform of the situation and then to provide updates as and when needed.

After the incident the Forest School Leader will complete an incident form and clearly state what happened during the activity.

#### **8.4 Loose dog or member of the public**

##### **Member of the public:**

If a member of the public is encountered during an activity, then the Forest School Leader must speak to the member of the public, inform them of the activity and politely explain the situation and ask them to leave if appropriate. During this time the TA will briefly take charge of the group, inform the group not to speak to the member of public and act as appropriate, continuing the activity or calling sticky feet and taking a headcount and moving the group to a suitable area, away from the member of public.

If the member of public doesn't leave then the Forest School Leader will need to inform them of the safeguarding risks, not speaking to the children or taking photographs etc. The Forest School Leader must then contact the school via a mobile or radio to inform of the situation. The school will then provide additional staff to support. If the member of public is causing a nuisance or acting in a threatening way the Forest School Leader is to call the Police and report the situation. The TA/support staff or Forest School Leader must then decide if they need to end the forest school activity and return to school.

If the member of public leaves, then the Forest School Leader and support staff to continue the planned activity as normal. The Forest School Leader should notify the Police of the change of circumstances. All staff to monitor the situation just in case of a reappearance of the member of public.

##### **Loose dog:**

If a loose dog is encountered during an activity, then the Forest School Leader must intervene if it is safe to do so. The Forest School Leader must make a dynamic risk assessment and choose whether to call sticky feet, perform a headcount and move the group to a safe area or intervene with the dog and/or owner. The Forest School Leader will inform the group of the situation, tell the group to remain calm and quiet and wait for further instruction.

If the Forest School Leader intervenes with the loose dog the TA or assistant staff will briefly take charge of the group, continue the activity as planned or perform a headcount and move the group to a safe place. During this time the Forest School Leader will speak to the dog owner if present and ask for the dog to be placed on a lead due to the risk with children nearby. If the owner complies then the activity is to continue as normal.



If there is no owner, then the Forest School Leader is to do what they can to keep the group safe. If there is a way to divert the dog and it is safe to do so, then this will be the best course of action. If the dog is persistent or is of a threatening temperament the Forest School Leader must call the local dog warden in the area and ask for advice/support.

If the loose dog causes injury to a child or adult, then the Forest School Leader or TA must follow injury procedures outlined in our emergencies in the event of an accident or incident.

In either case the Forest School Leader will need to call/radio the school to inform of the situation and ask for advice if needed.

## **8.5 Daily**

The daily procedure for Forest School is as follows:

### **Before**

- Complete a site check.
- Make the necessary changes if any from completing the site check. Removing hazards etc.
- Set out a tool circle if applicable.
- Collect and count tools if applicable
- Prepare and replenish First aid kit.
- Prepare clothing and PPE.
- Make sure radios/mobile phones are charged.
- Make sure and consent forms and letters to parents are completed and returned to the school office.
- Make sure the appropriate risk assessments are completed and read by all staff.
- Make sure all supporting staff are aware of the policies and procedures and have signed to say they understand.
- Gather information regarding medical or behaviour issues etc and plan accordingly.
- Brief staff of the session objectives and learning activities.

### **During**

- Take a register/head count.
- Provide a safety brief an introduction outlining the session objectives, activities and child led learning options.
- Highlight any risks or hazards as appropriate.
- Start a discussion/thought for the day activity.
- Complete a warm up activity as appropriate.
- Complete a structured activity.
- Facilitate free play for others.
- Direct staff and students as appropriate
- Manage behaviour issues as appropriate
- Perform multiple sticky feet head counts

- Facilitate student self reflection time, learning journal etc.
- Count tools in if applicable.

### **After**

- Facilitate the students hygiene procedures – washing hands and returning PPE/clothing
- Handover students to next lesson/end of the day procedures etc
- Store tools/resources in their correct and secure locations.
- Secure/tidy/make safe Forest School area as appropriate.
- Forest School Leader to evaluate session and make changes if needed.
- Make plans for future sessions.
- Make changes to risk assessments etc
- Complete first aid/ accident forms/behaviour logs etc
- Make any follow-ups on any concerning behaviours or incidents encountered during the session

## **8.6 Fire use**

Little Kinvaston's fire use procedures are as follows:

### **Location**

The Forest School Leader is to make sure that the location of the fire is safe, legal, secure, and fit for purpose. The Forest School Leader must have the landowner's permission to use the site. The Forest School Leader must make sure that the soil or area used as a fire location and is safe to use. The area needs to be as flat and clear as possible paying attention to overhanging objects. The fire circle needs to have clear exits, free from obstruction.

### **Preparation**

The Forest School Leader must observe the weather forecast and fire severity index making sure the conditions are safe to have a controlled fire. Wind <25mph and FSR <medium – high. The Forest School Leader must have adequate fire PPE (fire blanket, fire gloves and water etc). The Forest School Leader must prepare and gather the fire pit, tinder, kindling and wood. The Forest School Leader must make a call to the local fire service and inform them of a controlled burn – stated date, time and location etc.

### **Fire Management**

The Forest School Leader must model safe fire safety and management: making sure the fire is fit for purpose, model safe feeding of the fire, model safe working distances and correct behaviour and procedure around the fire. The Forest School Leader must make sure trip hazards are limited and be aware of the behaviour of the children around the fire and act as appropriate. The Forest School Leader must always supervise the students and the Forest School Leader must never leave the firepit while a fire is lit.

## Safety

The Forest School Leader must ensure that children are kneeling around the firepit. When sitting they must be at least 1.5 metres away. There is to be no running around the fire and the fire must only be approached when instructed to by the Forest School Leader. Children are only allowed to feed the fire when instructed to by the Forest School Leader and this will strictly be one at a time. The Forest School Leader must ensure the firepit area is kept clear from trip hazards. PPE must be placed by the Forest School Leader in an accessible area 1.5 away from the fire.

### Extinguishing the Fire

It is best practice to allow the fire to die down. If the fire is needed to be extinguished, then the FS is to gently pour or sprinkle water on the fire to 'paint it black' to extinguish the ashes and embers. The fire will turn from a grey to a black colour. The Forest School Leader is to stir and stab the debris to break the fire up. The Forest School Leader must then assess the heat of the fire using the hand heat test. If it is still hot pour/sprinkle more water on the debris and retest. Once fully extinguished the Forest School Leader must dispose of the ash appropriately and then make sure they 'leave no trace' of the fire. Finally, the Forest School Leader is to contact the fire service to inform that the fire is extinguished and safe.

### 8.7 Tool use

Little Kinvaston's tool procedure is as follows:

- Tools are the responsibility of the Forest School Leader.
- Tools must be stored in a tool bag and a secure locked area. Except for knives and peelers.
- Knives and peelers must be counted out and in and stored in a locked metal box in a secure area. Any discrepancies must be reported to SLT as soon as possible.
- Tools must be maintained and checked before and after sessions by the Forest School Leader. Maintenance, cleaning and servicing must be carried out as appropriate.
- All staff involved in forest schools must read and sign risk assessments policies and procedures prior to activities.
- Forest School Leader to provide a 'Tool Talk' – A tool talk must be given to the group or individual using the tool for the first time. The tool talk must contain: a brief description of the tool, its use and safety precautions.
- Forest School Leader to demonstrate the tool use and safe handling.
- The Forest School Leader must supervise the students using to tool and observe and instruct correct tool use.
- The Forest School Leader must collect the tools at the end of the session and complete tool counts as necessary.
- The Forest School Leader must secure and store the tools at the end of every session as stated above.
- The Forest School Leader must maintain and inspect the tools before and after the sessions. Replacing and disposing of damaged and unsafe tools.

## 8.8 Clothing and PPE

Little Kinvaston will provide PPE and clothing to its Forest School users.

The PPE available is as follows:

- Gloves
- Goggles
- Hardhats
- Dust masks
- Wellies or work boots

The clothing available is as follows:

- Full-length work overalls
- Full-length wet weather overalls if needed.

Fire pit PPE

- Fire gauntlets (fireproof gloves)
- Fire Blankets
- Water containers – to extinguish fires etc

## 8.9 Sanitation

During forest school sessions, users will have access to toilet and handwashing facilities as and when needed. The Forest School Leader will also have bottles of hand sanitiser and antibacterial wipes in their kit bag.

In relation to litter, the Forest School Leader will assess the impact/hazard of litter during the daily site checks and will respond appropriately.

**Litter** will be collected by use of a litter picker and disposed of in the school's general waste.

**Animal Faeces** will be collected by use of doggy bags and disposed of in the school's general waste.

**Sharps** will be cordoned off and the relevant authorities will be contacted to dispose of them due to the risk of infection and disease.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- › Positive Behaviour and Relationships
- › Staff Code of Conduct

- › Health and safety (including First Aid and Administration of medication)
- › Fire Safety Policy