

Whitnash Primary School

'Learning, growing and succeeding together'

Forest School Policy and Guidance



Contents

Daily Procedures

After Session Debriefs

Emergency Procedures (accidents/injury, lost child)

Procedures For Unexpected Events (reporting, lock down, extreme weather, fire drill, loose dogs)

Health & Safety (behaviour, safe tool use, campfire use)

Health & Safety (Child protection)

Current Legislation (Manual Handling, Children's Act, Health & Safety At Work Act, RIDDOR)

References

Daily Procedures

1, Staff, assistants and any parent helpers should be briefed and given access to lesson plans and risk assessments and briefed on any health and safety issues. They should also be briefed on emergency procedures.

2, A site sweep should be conducted before any F.S session. Hazards such as dog or cat mess, fallen debris or litter should be removed from site.

3, Ensure head teacher, class teacher and office manager have a timetable of F.S sessions so know when the woodland is being used.

4, Ensure first aid kit and any medicines ie inhalers and epipens are taken on site during lessons and are accessible to all staff and helpers.

5, Children should be toileted before a lesson and also checked that they have appropriate clothing and footwear.

6, A quick weather check to confirm no dangerous conditions.

After Session Debrief

After lessons check

- All children are accounted for and safely returned to the classroom where they should wash their hands.
- The site looks the same as before ie no equipment or resources left behind
- If there is any litter
- All fires have been extinguished
- Tools have been cleaned/sharpened/stored safely

- First Aid kit and any medicines returned
- Any accidents have been reported

Finally the class teacher should be given any necessary feedback regarding children's behaviour, injuries etc and notes recorded in terms of evaluating how the session went.

Emergency Procedures

At least one member of staff will be first aid qualified so can deal with less serious issues on site with the first aid kit. A mobile phone and first aid kit should be taken with staff during sessions.

In cases of a more serious incident the following procedures should take place.

- A designated adult should ring 999 and proceed to the school office to report incident and arrange for parents to be contacted whilst first aid is given. Additional information should be given to phone operator regarding injury.
- If only two staff are leading session the school office will arrange a member of staff to collect the rest of the class and bring them back into school.
- Head Teacher to be informed of incident

In cases where injuries might be serious but not critical the following should happen

- With skin or eye irritation from a plant sterile, water should be applied
- If a child has eaten a poisonous plant they should go to A & E immediately.

Lost Child Procedure

Children are shown the boundaries in which they can explore and the site is not open to the public, however if a child is found to be lost the following procedure should be followed.

First 5 minutes

When a child is found to be missing, one member of staff remains with the rest of the group whilst another member of staff searches the woodland, playing field and checks toilets and classroom.

After 5 minutes

If the child has not been found after the above has been carried out alert the school office and head teacher who will send reinforcements to help look for child.

After 20 minutes

If after 20 minutes the child has not been found the police and the child's parents should be called.

The rest of the children should remain at base camp until the police arrive.

Procedures For Unexpected Events

Reporting

Forest school leaders must report any significant injury or accident in the accident book. They must also report near misses and use the information within the context of future risk assessments.

Lock Down

If the school goes into lock down staff will remain outside and wait for instructions via mobile phone.

Extreme Weather

Sessions will be aborted in the case of thunderstorms or high winds and children will return to school. However this should be rare due to the weather check prior to session.

Fire

In the case of a fire drill the children will assemble in the playground as usual. If the fire is in the woodland children will be evacuated through the nearest exit.

Loose Dog

Children should be guarded by one member of staff and should wait together at base camp whilst the other member of staff deals with the dog.

Health & Safety

Behaviour

Good practice in a FS session should ensure that all children know where they can go in the woodland and why good behaviour is essential to their safety and wellbeing. A good routine for the children to follow is to discuss the ground rules on staying safe. Reiteration of the following rules each session should aid positive behaviour

- Always walk in the forest, never run
- Carry sticks downwards so as not to poke or injure anyone
- Don't put anything in your mouth when at Forest School
- Respond immediately to the designated signal
- Look after the woodland

Safe Tool Use

When introducing safe tool use, the following must be adhered to

- Tools must be checked before the lesson to ensure they are in good working order.
- Clear instructions and demonstration must be given on how to use a tool.

- Correct positioning and safe working space clearly demonstrated to children.
- Correct equipment such as work gloves and appropriate work surface checked.
- Appropriate staff ratios adhered to and staff briefed on safe tool use beforehand.
- Tools should be stored appropriately after the session ie in a dry, secure unit and also checked should they need sharpening or cleaning.

Campfire Use

When lighting fires

- A bucket of water (5 litres) should be carried to the site.
- Clear instructions given to staff and helpers in terms of safe distance and sensible behaviour.
- Staff ratios adhered to and that one member stays with the fire throughout.
- Check no overhanging branches or shrubbery are near the fire.
- Ensure clear passage for everyone entering and exiting the campfire area and that emergency procedures are discussed in case of evacuation.
- When campfire cooking ensure that children and staff have washed their hands thoroughly.
- All fires are extinguished correctly.
- Neighbours are given prior warning of campfires.
- Only Forest School Trained adult should plan and deliver campfire activities.

Health & Safety & Child protection

- Whitnash Primary School's safeguarding policy must be followed at all times and can be accessed from the school office.
- Staff must report any issues or concerns in regards to child protection.
- Permission must be requested from parents to use any photos for FS displays.
- A first aid kit must be onsite at all times and there must be one qualified first aider attending sessions too. Any medicines and medical consent forms must be included in the kit.
- Recommended items for the first aid kit are listed (see attachment)
- A member of staff must accompany a reception child back to school if they need the toilet and the FS leader informed. Year 1 and above children may go to the toilet unaccompanied but must still inform the FS leader.
- A site sweep before a session plus a risk assessment for all activities will also be

undertaken. Copies of risk assessments will also be kept in the school office

Current Legislation

Manual Handling

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) (MHOR)

The Regulations define manual handling as:

"...any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or bodily force".

The load can be an object, person or animal.

The MHOR 1992 set out a clear ranking of measures for dealing with risks from manual handling, these are:

first : avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable;

second : assess any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided; and

third: reduce the risk of injury so far as is reasonably practicable.'

These guidelines should be taken into account especially when children are den building and carrying branches. Children should be encouraged to work together when lifting logs or branches and closely supervised. This advice should also be noted when staff are carrying equipment into and out of the woods.

The Children's Act

The Children's act 1989 & 2004 aims to ensure that children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted. Local authorities, schools and parents are dutybound by this act. In relation to Forest School provision the following should be adhered to

- Any concerns regarding child protection should be reported to the headteacher
- Inclusion and equal opportunities incorporated into all sessions
- Sufficient staff to pupil ratios
- All staff and helpers should have a CRB check.

Health & Safety At Work Act 1974

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA) lays down wide-ranging duties on employers. Employers must protect the 'health, safety and welfare' at work of all their employees, as well as others on their premises, including temps, casual workers, the self-employed, clients, visitors and the general public.

This legislation is legally binding so headteachers and forest school leaders must take responsibility for staff and pupils on site. The following can be seen as necessary to help uphold this legislation.

- Risk assessments for the site and activities
- Ensuring emergency procedures are in place
- Ensuring staff and pupils are wearing appropriate/warm/protective clothing
- Providing safe and well maintained tools and equipment
- The provision of adequate toilets and washing facilities.

RIDDOR

RIDDOR is the reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations 2013 and this legislation 'puts duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises (the Responsible Person) to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences (near misses).

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/>

The responsible person would be the Forest School Leader in this case and they would have to report any injuries/diseases/accidents or near misses in the accident book. Records must be kept for at least three years. The following cases need to be reported

- fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes;
- amputations;
- any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight;
- any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs;
- serious burns (including scalding), which: cover more than 10% of the body; or cause significant damage to the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs; any scalping requiring hospital treatment; any loss of consciousness caused by head injury.

References

<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/forest-school-emergency-action-and-procedure-6203323>

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

Pediatric First Aid Workbook (Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service, Coventry)

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/> and Incident reporting in schools (accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/edis1.pdf>

Date: September 2018