

The King's Forest School Handbook



Contents

1. Introduction	Page 3
2. Forest school policy	Page 4
3. Emergency procedures	Page 7
4. Role of the Forest School Leader	Page 8
5. Personal protective equipment procedure	Page 9
6. Tools procedure	Page 10
7. Campfire procedure	Page 19
8. Hygiene procedure	Page 20
9. Rope and string use procedure	Page 21

An introduction to King's Forest School

The idea of developing a Forest School at King's was born when Mrs. Tibbett's asked me if I would be interested in getting involved with leading the group in May 2012, I enrolled on the North Yorkshire Forest School leaders training course and so the adventure began!

The purpose of Forest School is for the students to gain an understanding of the natural environment, whilst developing the Forest School ethos, namely, development of self esteem, confidence and social skills. Through carefully planned activities, students from all year groups at the school take part in Forest School work throughout the year which enables them to excel in all areas of their personal, academic and spiritual development.



The philosophy which underpins the Forest School movement is to encourage and inspire individuals of any age from 3 years upwards, and any groups, through mastery of small, achievable tasks in a woodland environment, to grow in confidence and independence so that they are able to develop a sense of self-worth. Students will acquire new skills when they are ready to use them so that activities can maintain a degree of challenge and excitement, whilst

remaining safe and controlled.

At the King's School, we operate our Forest School on three sites. Well Wood nature reserve in Airedale, the wood in Pontefract Park and our own site which we are developing in our own school grounds.

The freedom of the 'forest' allows the students the opportunity to experience remoteness and a realistic experience in which they are able to practise their skills and further develop their understanding of a woodland environment. The Forest School embraces an entirely different approach through the support and development of the self-esteem of participants.

As part of the sessions we encourage the students to undertake the John Muir award in conservation, this is an internationally recognised award.

Mr J. Gibson

Forest School leader



Caitlin receiving her John Muir award from Mrs. Craig, Co Head Teacher



Forest School Policy

Aim

We aim to give students and staff a shared understanding of the ethos of a Forest School experience. This powerful approach enables young children to be independent, self-motivated, courageous, and 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 recycled materials should be used when appropriate. Good practise 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.

Children and Vulnerable Persons

Forest School Leaders and practitioners should regard their duty of care when working with young people as extremely important. To ensure all individuals (children, workers and 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 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 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

This policy states the means by which the King's School will meet the requirements of the Equality Act (2010). This replaces all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. The policy applies to all members of the school community including staff and learners, in addition to any volunteers working in the school or on the site.

The King's School will adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by not discriminating against learners, staff, volunteers, or any other persons with whom the organisation may be working, on the following grounds:-

Gender, race, disability, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation

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.

- Any situation that poses a health and safety risk.

In the event of this situation arising we recommend that;

Back up sessions should be in place that can be undertaken in school.

We will endeavour to run Forest School sessions whenever possible, however, reserve the right to cancel on the day, informing our client group 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.

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

Policy agreed:

To be reviewed:

Forest School Accident and Emergency Procedures off-site

If an emergency occurs on a school visit the group leader should maintain or resume control of the group overall. They will, however, delegate responsibility when necessary, so all adults accompanying the visit must understand these procedures before the trip begins.

The group leader will:

Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.

Ensure that the entire group is safe, looked after and kept together.

All other adults will be told as soon as possible and allocated roles; roles may be changed as needed.

Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention.

Children's names and medical details will be in the emergency bag.

First Aid box will be on site.

Phone for an ambulance if this is appropriate.

Another adult may be asked to do this.

Ensure that a member of staff accompanies casualties to hospital with any relevant medical information.

In extremes a CRB checked adult may have to take this role.

Inform the school of the name of the casualty and details of their injuries plus action taken so far.

Pass on to school details of nature, date and time, location of the incident.

Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence.

The group leader will give copies of notes and reports to the head teacher.

Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident.

Complete an accident report form as soon as possible.

Forest School Leader

The Forest School leader will plan and run sessions, taking into consideration all the Health and Safety issues that could arise and inform teachers, group leaders or parents clearly of their role. The role of the Forest School leader is to boost and develop children's self-esteem, self-belief and confidence by suggesting small, manageable tasks and ensure that they have time and freedom to learn at their own pace without pressure. They will model appropriate behaviour at all times and encourage children to develop a greater awareness of their own and other's emotional needs. In addition, the Forest School leader will be responsible for liaising with all interested parties, completing health and safety and risk assessments, following policies and procedures, administering any first aid and maintaining the first aid kit, counting equipment in and out and maintaining tools. Forest School leaders will always take into consideration the specific needs of a particular group or individual. The leader will ensure that every child is respected as an individual, that bullying is not tolerated and that the rules and guidelines are followed. In the event of an emergency they will direct the group to safety.

Adult Assistants

Adults assisting the forest school leader need to become familiar with the Forest School Handbook and all procedures contained within it. This will enable them fully support the group leader.

They will take part in pre-session briefings from the Forest School Leader, assisting groups with tasks such as using saws, knives or bill hooks.

They will promote the ethos of forest school to raise self-esteem and confidence as an overarching aim.

Assist in monitoring children when walking to and from Forest School activities, assisting children with their kit, including waterproofs.

Students

Students need to be willing to get involved and try out new experiences. They need to listen to the instructions give by the staff especially regarding Health and Safety for themselves and their peers. Students must show respect for wildlife and the environment. They must respect each other.

Parents

The first thing the parent needs to do is understand what Forest School entails and the benefits their child will gain by attending the sessions. Then give their permission for their child to take part in Forest School. They need to support the Forest School Leader by encouraging their child to take part in the sessions and to appreciate the work that their child completes in the Forest School sessions.

Forest School situation	Personal protective equipment
Winter	Vest or T-shirt, long sleeved top, fleece or thick jumper, thick socks or 2 pairs of thin ones and trousers. Waterproof Jacket, waterproof over trousers, wellington boots, gloves, hat and scarf. Work gloves
Summer	Long sleeved T-shirt, light cotton trousers (arms and legs to be covered in the woodland) socks, good stout safety footwear, sun hat. Waterproof Jacket, waterproof over trousers.
Collecting Natural materials.	Work gloves, long sleeved top to protect arms, long trousers to protect legs, good stout safety footwear.

Using a bow saw	Work glove to be worn on hand holding work piece, no glove on hand holding saw. Long trousers and long sleeved top, good stout safety footwear.
Using bill hook to take side shoots of lengths of wood.	Work glove to be worn on hand holding work piece, no glove on hand holding Bill hook (to avoid bill hook slipping from grip). Long trousers and long sleeved top, good stout safety footwear.
Camp fire cooking	Non-flammable/fire resistant clothing made from natural fibres, good stout safety footwear. Hand wipes, antiseptic hand wash soap towel. Plenty of water for hand washing and fire safety. Fire blanket.
Walking the woodland	Either winter or summer clothing as above and good stout safety footwear.
Transporting logs	Work gloves, long sleeved top to protect arms, long trousers to protect legs, good stout safety footwear. Length of rope to use for dragging logs.

**Tool Use,
Campfire,
Hygiene
And
Rope and String
Procedures**

Tool	Bow Saw 
Purpose	Cutting wood
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Cutting wood, making tools, shelters.
Safety Equipment or design feature	Hand guard on frame, plastic strip to cover saw teeth.
Personal protective equipment. (PPE)	Work glove for hand holding work piece.
Adult: Child ratio	One to one/one to two if two students are using the saw in tandem.
Transportation	Carry with blade down and cover strip in place.
Working space	Arm plus tool length.
Body stance	If using at ground level, respect position (kneeling on one knee see photo) if cutting a branch feet apart to give a stable stance.
Method of use	 <p>If using in tandem one student holds the handle in the hand guard the other holds the frame on the bend. If right handed both students hold the work piece firmly to stop it from moving with their left hands wearing a work glove on that hand. The work piece is rested on a log of stump to raise it off the ground. The students cut on their pull stroke keeping the saw frame upright in slow fluid movements.</p>
Inspecting	Check to make sure the blade is strained correctly and that the teeth are sharp and none are missing. Ensure the correct blade is fitted for the job being undertaken, wet or dry timber.

Tool	Fixed blade knife. 
Purpose	For modelling and shaping or as a gutting tool.
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	To whittle and make tools
Safety Equipment or design feature	Short strong blade with rounded end so cannot stab.
Personal protective equipment. (PPE)	A work glove can be worn on the hand that holds the work piece.
Adult: Child ratio	One to one
Transportation	Knife carried in sheath at all times when not in use.
Working space	Arms length plus tool length.
Body stance	Kneeling or sitting
Method of use	<div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>Depending on the work being carried out the user should be either sitting on a log or stump or as in the photo kneeling, using the log as a work bench. Always make sure that the log or stump that you are sitting on is safe and will not fall over or roll. if the user is right handed, hold the work piece in the left hand with work piece resting on the log pointing downwards (as seen in the photo) Firmly hold the knife in the right hand and draw it down the work piece away from the body, taking off a thin sliver of wood.</p> <p>If the user is left handed use the same procedure but hold the work piece in the right hand. (a work glove can be worn on the hand holding the work piece)</p> <p>The knife can be used in the sitting position as in this picture, Sit on a log or stump, if the user is right handed,</p> </div>  </div>

	<p>hold the work piece in the left hand with the left hand resting on the right thigh pointing the work piece downwards. Hold the knife in the right hand with the thumb on the back of the blade for control and firmly draw it down the work piece away from the body, taking off a thin sliver of bark or wood.</p> <p>If the user is left handed use the same procedure but hold the work piece in the right hand. (a work glove can be worn on the hand holding the work piece)</p> <p>The students must sit or kneel when working with tools for safety; it prevents wandering about with sharp tools.</p> <p>Please note the knife sheath on the log in the first picture, ready to put over the knife blade when the work is finished!</p>
Inspecting	The knife should be checked before and after use to make sure it is sound and there is no damage to the handle or blade and that it is sharp.
Cleaning and maintenance	The tool should be wiped clean after use and sharpened if necessary by a competent person
Storage	The tool should be securely stored in a dry place when not in use to prevent unauthorized use and damage from rusting.

Tool	Brace and Bit	
Purpose	Drilling/boring holes in wood	
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Making a dead/drift wood Christmas tree	
Safety Equipment or design feature	Swivel grips to avoid blisters	
Personal protective equipment. (PPE)	Work gloves can be worn on hand if some one else is holding work piece.	
Adult: Child ratio	One to one until confident and competent.	
Transportation	Carry with bit pointing down.	
Working space	Arms length plus tool length	
Body stance	Feet apart to give good balance, or kneeling	
Method of use		<p>Make sure the bit is firmly held in the brace chuck. Make a centre mark on the work piece where you want the centre of the hole to be Push the point of the bit into the mark and rotate the brace in a clockwise direction to drill the required hole. There is no need to push the brace as the screw on the bit point will pull the bit into the wood. DO NOT TRY AND USE THIS TYPE OF BIT IN AN ELECTRIC DRILL!</p>
Inspecting	Competent person to check for sharpness of the bit and to make brace rotates freely works.	
Cleaning and maintenance	When finished with the bit should be wiped clean with a damp cloth then lightly oiled to prevent rusting.	
Storage	The tool should be securely stored in a dry place when not in use to prevent unauthorized use and damage from rusting.	

Tool	Flint and steel 
Purpose	Making a spark
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Fire lighting
Safety Equipment or design feature	Good non slip handle to hold steel
Personal protective equipment. (PPE)	None
Adult: Child ratio	One to one until competent
Transportation	In small water tight tin with cotton wool for tinder
Working space	Arms length
Body stance	Kneel on one knee next to the fire being lit.
Method of use	If right handed, hold the steel by its handle over a small ball of cotton wool. Hold the steel in the right hand between the thumb and first finger and draw it down the steel with a slight flicking action to shower sparks on the cotton wool or other tinder being used. If left handed as above but hold in opposite hands. Take care when using cotton wool because it lights very easily.
Inspecting	Visual check for wear and tear
Cleaning and maintenance	Keep clean and dry.
Storage	Store in its watertight tin with other forest school cooking equipment.

Tool	Bill Hook 
Purpose.	For cutting and laying hedges.
Use at forest school (activity ideas)	Dressing poles and logs, splitting wood to making tools, pointing stakes.
Safety equipment or design feature.	Handle to hold bill hook
Personal protective equipment. (PPE)	Work glove for hand holding work piece. Safety foot wear, long sleeves and trousers.
Adult child ratio.	One to one/one to two if two children are working together, EG making a mallet
Transporting.	Blade must be kept covered when not in use, and should be carried blade down. Carrier MUST WALK, NEVER RUN.
Working space.	An exclusion zone of an arms length plus the length of the tool must be maintained all the time the tool is being used (except when two people are working together, EG making a mallet but no other persons will be closer)
Body stance.	Kneeling on one knee is the position to work in. This will be known as the RESPECT POSITION . The knee on the ground being the right knee if the tool user is right handed left if the tool user is left handed.

<p>Method of use.</p>		<p>When using for splitting wood when making a mallet, spatula or pegs the work piece must be placed on a solid wooden surface like a stump or log. The bill hook user will place the blade in the place they want to make the cut holding the hook by its handle and the end of the blade. When they are happy they will give their partner using the mallet the signal to tap the blade edge, I use the command “strike.” After each tap (strike) the bill hook user will check to make sure the blade is positioned to their liking before proceeding.</p>
<p>Inspecting</p>	<p>The blade and handle must be checked to make sure they are securely attached to each other to prevent the blade from flying off in use. The handle should be checked for splits, cracks and splinters. The blade must be checked to make sure it is sharp and that it is in good condition</p>	
<p>Cleaning and maintenance.</p>	<p>When finished with the blade should be wiped clean with a damp cloth then lightly oiled to prevent rusting, the handle also should be wiped clean and occasionally oiled with linseed oil to prevent drying and cracking.</p>	
<p>Storage.</p>	<p>The tool should be securely stored in a dry place when not in use to prevent Unauthorized use and damage from rusting.</p>	

Tool	Vegetable peeler 
Purpose	For peeling fruit and vegetables.
Use at Forest School (activity ideas)	Can be used for whittling and removing bark from sticks to make bark rope.
Safety Equipment or design feature	It has a covered blade that is designed to take thin slices and has no stabbing point. Can be used right or left handed.
Personal protective equipment. (PPE)	A work glove can be worn on the hand that holds the work piece.
Adult: Child ratio	One to four.
Transportation	Carry held downward.
Working space	Arms length.
Body stance	Use in a sitting position.
Method of use	 <p>Sit on a log or stump, if the user is right handed, hold the work piece in the left hand with the left hand resting on the right thigh pointing the work piece downwards. Hold the peeler in the right hand and firmly draw it down the work piece away from the body, taking off a thin sliver of bark or wood. Rotate the work piece in the left hand and repeat until the work piece is clean of bark or is the desired thickness. If the user is left handed use the same procedure but hold the work piece in the right hand. (work glove to be worn on the hand holding the work piece)</p>
Inspecting	Check that the blade swivels freely and is not blocked or rusty.
Cleaning and maintenance	Wipe clean after use, wipe with thin oil or spray with WD40 occasionally to prevent rusting.
Storage	Store with other tools in a secure dry place.

Campfire procedure

<p>Choosing a fire site</p>	<p>Permission must be gained before fire lighting.</p> <p>The fire site should be level with all trip hazards removed.</p> <p>The floor must be earth, not peat or pine needles/dead leaves.</p> <p>There should be no overhanging branches for 5 metres directly above the fire.</p>
<p>Adult to student ratio</p>	<p>The ratio should be one to one when students are tending the fire or using the fire to cook.</p>
<p>Managing the site</p>	<p>The fire must be built inside a 1.5m square made from branches, this is the exclusion zone. No one to enter this area.</p> <p>A 5m walking boundary should be set using logs as seats, these must be fastened down to prevent rolling.</p> <p>An ingress/egress route should be established.</p> <p>Only one person tending the fire at one time, this should be done from the kneeling position to prevent falling on to the fire.</p> <p>People moving around the fire site must walk not run around outside the seats.</p>
<p>Extinguishing the fire and leaving the site.</p>	<p>This should be done by the group leader or another adult. The fire must be completely out and cooled using water. If the site is permanent it should be left tidy. If the site is temporary all traces of the fire should be removed, ashes scattered over a wide area and the site returned to as near as possible to its original state.</p>
<p>Health and Safety</p>	<p>A fire blanket will be placed at the fire site in an easily accessible position and all staff are trained to use it. Water is available to extinguish flames and cool burns.</p> <p>A first aid kit is available at all times and there will be at least two members of staff present that are first aid trained.</p>

Hygiene procedure

Toilet	<p>Students should go to the toilet before leaving school, but at both off school sites toilet facilities are close by.</p> <p>At Well Wood permission to use the toilets at the local social club has been given.</p> <p>At Pontefract park there are public toilets in the car park.</p> <p>Students will be accompanied to the toilet by an adult.</p>
Cooking	<p>Water, hand wash, wipes, gloves and paper towels are carried in the forest school kit.</p>

Rope or string use procedures

<p>Rope or String use</p>	<p>When using rope or string in forest school it should be made clear from the start that tying each other up is not acceptable and can be very dangerous. Make the students aware of friction burns from rope or string. Any structures build using ropes or sting should have the knots checked by an adult to make sure they are safe and secure.</p>
<p>Rope swing;</p>	<p>Examine rope to see if the rope is frayed, badly damaged or not suitable. If so replace the rope. Check the swing site and tree; inspect the tree. Is the branch or tree dead or rotten? Is there evidence of fungal growths? Is there a risk of crashing into the tree or support?</p> <p>Fall Height; measure the fall height from the end of the rope at its highest likely swing point. OK if 2 metres or less.</p> <p>Fall Zone; Check the fall zone for hazards such as sharp objects, rocks or if the fall zone is over deep or fast flowing water. Are there other trees around the site that are dead, rotten or blowing over? Does the tree or location have value that could be seriously harmed by the activity?</p> <p>Knot; make sure that a suitable knot is used to secure the swing to the tree and that it is securely fastened, test the swing with an adult first.</p>