



# *Moreton CE Primary School*

*Growing Together in Faith, Knowledge and Love.*

## **Forest School Handbook**

To be read by all Forest School leaders, assistants and helpers.

Written by Becky Barros

Site address *Harlow Road, Moreton- Grid ref TL 53336 07596*

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## **2 AN INTRODUCTION TO FOREST SCHOOL**

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### **2.1 FOREST SCHOOL PRINCIPLES**

1. Forest School is a long-term process of regular sessions, and follows the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.
2. Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a lifelong relationship between the learner and the natural world.
3. Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.
4. Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
5. Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
6. Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners, who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

### **2.2 FOREST SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

*During our forest school journey we may*

- *Make dens*
- *Build things*
- *Create art*
- *Climb trees*
- *Use woodland tools*
- *Build fires*
- *Cook (eat and drink)*
- *Investigate*
- *Look after and manage the woodland*
- *Play games*
- *Use ropes*
- *Tie knots*
- *Sing*
- *Spend time reflecting and listening.*

### **2.3 VISION STATEMENT**

At Moreton we aim to offer each participant the opportunity to develop holistically, learn new skills and build both self-esteem; self-confidence and an appreciation and knowledge of the natural world through a supportive small group environment.

## **3 SITE**

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### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Moreton Primary School has been kindly given permission by the Schwier family to use a small wooded area on their private farmland laying at the back of the school premises. The wood is classed as a young plantation and has a mixture of broadleaf deciduous trees. Among the species of trees found in the wood are: oak, maple, hazel, aspen and birch. Although there is a feeling of seclusion the site is close to the school and easily accessible via public footpaths through the fields or by vehicle if need be. The wood stands on land that formed part of local gravel quarry. Once the quarry was closed the pits were filled in and landscaped, forming the fishing lake and wood. The site had exposures of Kesgrave sands and gravels, overlain by a small thickness of boulder clay.

### **3.2 SITE INFORMATION**

*Forest school site entrance A- Grid ref TL53485 07351*

*Bi-way entrance for vehicles – Harlow Road, Moreton- Grid ref TL 53336 07596*

### **3.3 TREE SAFETY POLICY**

The school will have the site regularly surveyed by a qualified tree surgeon. With permission from the landowner. trees will be felled if needed or marked with a ribbon identity tag if in need of monitoring or attention in the Autumn. The trees will be regularly monitored by the Forest school leader particularly after high winds.

### **3.4 TRANSPORT**

*We will travel on foot by a public footpath.*

### **3.5 ENVIRONMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Please see management plan document

### 3.6 MANAGEMENT PLAN

Please see management plan document.

## 4 DAILY PROCEDURES

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### 4.1 PRE- SESSION

- Carry out a site check daily before the session to identify any hazards.
- Weather check refer to section 5
- Ensure all equipment is clean and in good working order.
- Resources are available on site
- Have session plan and specific risk assessment available.
- Ensure that ratios are correct.
- Ensure children are appropriately dressed and have water bottles.
- Ensure any helpers have read handbook, session plan, risk assessments.
- Check first aid for supplies.
- Letter sent home to parents to inform about FS content and clothing required.

### 4.2 SESSION

- Introduce children to session
- Talk about the areas in use and any out of bounds.
- Discuss rules of FS-
- \*Do keep yourself safe
- \*Do keep others safe
- \*Do look after our forest school and natural world.
- Give a brief outline of session (recap what they were hoping to do from previous weeks)
- Make on going assessment on weather conditions
- Ensure all children are accounted for during session
- Observe children and activities that are being used

### 4.3 END OF SESSION

- Check tools back in
- Finish with a circle time- what did you enjoy? What would you like to learn next?
- Ensure no rubbish is left on site
- Walk back to school site (if off site)
- Help children to wash hands and change clothing, if required.
- Debrief with other adults

### 4.4 POST – SESSION

- Reflect on the session
- Record any observations and notes
- Record any incidents

## 5 WEATHER

### 5.1 WIND POLICY

Forest School will be cancelled at Beaufort scale 8- however leading staff will make a judgement about whether the session takes place on the school site or at our designated forest school site.

### 5.2 TEMPERATURE POLICY

Shade shelters will be available in hot weather.

Appropriate clothing must be worn in hot and cold temperatures.

Activities on offer should be appropriate to the temperature.

Children to apply sun cream before the session if required.

Children should bring their water bottle to each session and drinking water will be available.

Scale	Description	Miles Per hour	Effects	Risk
0	Calm	0-1	Smoke rises	Blue
1	Light air	1-3	Smoke drifts	Light Blue
2	Light breeze	4-7	Leaves rustle	Light Green
3	Gentle breeze	8-12	Twigs move	Green
4	Moderate breeze	13-18	Leaves and small branches sway	Light Yellow
5	Fresh breeze	18-24	Small trees sway	Yellow
6	Strong breeze	25-31	Large branches sway	Light Orange
7	Moderate gale	32-38	Whole trees in motion	Orange
8	Fresh gale	39-46	Twigs break off trees	Red-Orange
9	Strong gale	47-55	Branches break off trees	Red
10	Whole gale	56-64	Trees uprooted	Red-Orange
11	Storm	65-74	Widespread damage	Pink
12	Hurricane	75+	Devastation	Purple

Session time will be adjusted for extreme temperatures (hot & cold)

### **5.3 THUNDER AND LIGHTNING POLICY**

Sessions will be cancelled if thunder and lightning is forecast.

Session will be immediately cancelled if thunder and lightning begin.

### **5.4 RAIN POLICY**

A shelter will be made available – 4 tarpaulins can be hung for both rain and sun protection

Appropriate clothing should be worn, so that sessions can continue.

The session will be cancelled if excessive rain occurs or the route to the forest is not deemed safe enough.

## **6 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

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### **6.1 IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT, INJURY OR ILLNESS**

In the case of an emergency (non life threatening and after 999 call has been made if necessary)

Call the school. 01277 890255

Explain the situation and inform them that an ambulance has been called.

Ask for assistance in bring the children and equipment back to school.

Forest School Leader has a working mobile

Administer first aid. To be carried out by trained first aider-who is to stay with injured party.

Another adult helper to gather the rest of the children together and take them away from the accident scene. Keep children busy to distract and keep calm, for example given them jobs such as clearing up equipment and stacking the trolley, washing cups, tidying the area etc.

**If ambulance called-** an adult helper to stay by the entrance to flag and guide the ambulance in. Children can help if not distressed and of suitable age by forming a chain of communication to guide services in.

Forest School accident form to be completed and information transferred in to school's record log (according to policy.)



## 6.2 FIRST AID

### First aid procedure

In accordance with **Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981** – Forest School leaders/ assistants and helpers are required to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to enable first aid to be given to participants that are injured or become ill.

A first aid kit will be carried to all Forest School sessions. It will be contained in an obvious first aid bag and will be kept in an easy to reach place that is known to all supporting adults.

The first aid kit will contain the following:

- Foil hypothermia Blankets
- Hydrogel Burns Dressings
- Safety Pins
- Large Sterile Dressings
- Medium Sterile Dressings
- Triangular Bandages
- Eye Pad Dressings
- Alcohol Free Wipes
- Adhesive Dressings
- Nitrile Gloves (Pairs)
- Adhesive Tape
- Finger Dressings
- Resuscitation Face Shield
- Conforming Bandages
- Scissors

In accordance with **Reporting or Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995** – the Forest School leader/ assistant will report of any work-related death or injury lasting over three days, diseases or dangerous occurrence that may not have resulted in reportable injury, but which clearly could have near misses

- OFSTED should be notified of any significant injuries within 14 days

First aid will be given in school by named first aiders. First Aid will be given in in school or first aid will be bought to the casualty if required.

Injuries and accidents should be recorded in the Forest School log

## 6.3 LOST CHILD PROCEDURE

Should a child be found to be missing the following procedure is carried out:

- All children are called back to home base using the 'come on in' call and there is a head count to double check numbers. The time of regroup is noted down.

- Children are calmly asked if they have seen the child, where and when they last saw them. This will help focus the search.
- One adult will stay with the group, and if they are calm and sensible this group can help in the search for the missing child. They will do this by using the '1, 2, 3, where are you?' However, should the group become upset or their behavior deteriorates due to the circumstance, the school will be called and asked to collect the group while the search continues.
- If the child is not found within 5 minutes the school office will be called and the emergency plan will come in to effect.
- The school office will become the base for coordinating the search.
- Should the police need to be called a designated adult will remain at the site until they arrive.
- A report will be filed to the head teacher. The Benefit/Risk assessment will be reviewed and amended accordingly.

## **7 HEALTH & SAFETY**

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In accordance with **Health & Safety at Work Act 1974** and **Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999** - Forest School leaders/ assistants have a duty to provide and maintain a safe and healthy working environment with risk assessments and procedures laid down for serious and imminent danger.

### **7.1 RISK ASSESSMENTS**

Becky Barros, Gina Moran, Sarah Anderson and Julie Coles are responsible for the implementation and following of procedure for any risk assessment. A risk assessment will be created and signed off before any new activity is started etc. Risk assessments including risk benefit and analysis can be found on the school staff server, in the Forest School folder and in the school's risk assessment folder.

- Each activity will be risk assessed prior to the Forest School session and introduced before the activity
- Activities repeated do not need to be reintroduced

- Children who become proficient in a skill can guide other children to learn the skill (zones of proximal development).
- Use the Forest School ethos to suggest activities and allow children the choice of participation.

## 7.2 FIRE RULES & REGULATIONS

Children will be asked questions about fire safety to enhance their understanding and will be taught what is needed to light a fire – **permission, fuel, air, ignition and water!**

Procedure of starting a fire, what is in place, adult to child ratio, resources needed etc.

# Fire Checklist - in a fire bowl



### Site

- Sheltered area, from direct wind blow.
- Above is clear by minimum 8ft.
- Ground below fire bowl is bare and flat.
- The surrounding area is free from trip hazards.
- Correct seating area, minimum 1.5 metres from fire bowl.

### Kit:

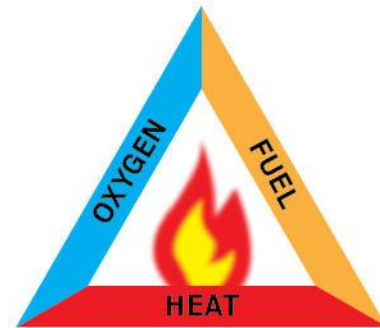
					
Fire Bucket	Bucket Cover	Clean Water	Burns Kit	Fire Blanket	Fire Gloves

### Personal Safety:

- Loose, long hair tied back.
- Sleeves rolled up.
- Loose clothing and jewellery secured.
- Fire gloves are worn for handling hot objects.

### Essentials to light the fire:

- Ignition: Fire striker.
- Tinder: Cotton wool, newspaper.
- Kindling: Small match-stick width twigs. Silver birch ... etc.
- Fuel: Pencil thickness, thumb thickness, wrist thickness.



### Rules of the fire area:

- Enter and exit the seating area by walking outside the seating circle.
- Ensure adult to children ratios are adhered to.
- Safe stance – kneel in front of the fire (one knee up, one knee on the floor).
- Ensure the fire is full extinguished at the end of the session – by fully dousing the fire bowl with water.
- Leave no trace.

### 7.3 CLOTHING AND PPE

- Personal protective equipment is an additional control when other controls don't minimize the risk adequately

#### Summer/Warm Weather Kit

Sturdy shoes/trainers

Waterproof boots

Long trousers/ light jogging bottoms (protect against scratches, sunburn and stings)

Lightweight long sleeved top

Lightweight waterproof jacket

Sun hat

Sun cream

NB. Wellies are advisable even in hot weather.

#### Winter/Cold Weather Kit

Waterproof boots & Thick socks (essential)/Waterproof walking boots

Long trousers/thick jogging bottoms (protect against scratches and stings)

Waterproof trousers (protect against wet and wind)

Long sleeved top

Fleece/Jumper  
Waterproof jacket  
Warm hat  
Gloves

NB. Additional layers like vests/long johns/leggings if weather is particularly cold.

- In accordance with **Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992**
  - personal protective equipment is to be supplied and used whenever there are risks to health and safety that cannot be adequately controlled in other ways.
- Risk assessments will inform what PPE is needed such as working gloves etc.
- Spare sets of waterproofs will be available.

#### 7.4 MANUAL HANDLING

##### **Manual Handling in Forest School**

- Correct handling techniques must be followed to minimise the risks of injury. A variety of injuries may result from poor manual handling and staff must all be aware and adhere to the school's manual handling policy.
- The Forest School Leader and assistants are responsible for modelling safe manual handling to the children and assessing their age and ability whether it is safe and appropriate for them to move loads such as logs or rocks, due to the weight, size and shape, taking into consideration factors such as weather conditions.

#### 7.5 TOOL PROCEDURES

Using a range of tools will be necessary in many activities and is important in developing new practical skills that help develop self-confidence. The following guidelines are to be followed:

- Tool use will be outlined to the helpers and children in a “tool talk” prior to starting the activities.
- Tools should all be kept in a separate place that is not accessible by unaccompanied children
- tools should all be used in the tool use area ( usually the log circle)
- Sharp tools should be kept in a lockable container and counted out and back in at the end of the session
- Only adults who have been trained by the leader and shown to be competent should support children using tools.

- Hand tools e.g. knives and peelers should be used in the correct position – sitting down, knees bent and apart, elbows on knees, glove on non-tool hand and cutting away from the body.
- Blades should never be moved towards any part of anyone’s body when tools are being used.

Details of individual tool use can be found below:

**Axe:** We do not currently use an axe but if we add it to our tool collection we will complete a tool procedure assessment.

**Billhook:**

For splitting wood or cutting or shaving wood.

Wipe with oily cloth after use. Oil blade regularly. Sharpen using sharpening stone and water.

-Ensure hook is covered when in storage.

Place cover on or hold handle just below blade next to leg with blade facing backwards

Secure wood. Hold axe in place. Use mallet to tap the axe into the wood to split it.

No glove needed. Long trousers and feet covered.

Ensure blade does not move towards any body parts.

**Bowsaw/Pruning Saw/Hacksaw**

- Saws should be kept in a tool bag.
- 1:1 ratio
- Only to be used after being shown how
- If using a bowsaw to cut up a fallen branch, use a cutting horse to stabilize the wood. Draw the saw towards yourself a couple of times, to create a groove, then use the whole length of the blade to smoothly cut back and forth. The adult can support by holding over the child’s hand if using a pruning saw or by holding the other end of the bow saw to help the child push and pull the blade.
- Glove to be worn on nonworking hand
- Bow saw/pruning saw to be carried at hip height with blade covered or folded away

- Maintenance- clean after use and ensure blade is folded away or covered by guard. Replace blades when required.

### **Mallet:**

Is used to provide a force to tools that split wood. To hammer wooden pegs into ground

- Check the head is securely fixed on the shaft, check for splits.
- Hold handle of tool next to leg with head facing downwards.
- Hold handle and tap firmly onto tool or wood.
- Kneel on the floor or sit on log to use
- Store in tool bag
- Glove to be worn on non working hand.

### **Potato peeler**

Peelers can be used to strip back small twigs and branches (whittling). There are various styles so the children can work out which one suits them best.

- The peelers will be kept in the toolbox.
- 1:3 Ratio (1:6 Year 5/6)
- Only to be used after being shown how (adults and children).
- Glove on non-working (non-tool) hand.
- Position - Sitting down on log in log-circle facing towards firepit. Either knees bent and apart, elbows on knees and hands in the middle or with both knees together to the side and hands over the top the same way as the knees. Strip away from the body ensuring they have enough working space to carry out this activity safely.
- Peelers to be carried pointing down.
- Maintenance, wipe clean and dry when finished with – replace when worn out.

### **Sheath Knives**

Children must be supervised **1:1** when handling a knife unless stated otherwise

- Wipe clean the knife after use and place in cover and lockable bag
- Peelers & Butter knives-can be used to strip back small twigs and branches. A glove must be worn on the non-working hand. The action should be to peel away from the body. The child should sit on a log with knees at a right angle and with elbows resting

on knees. They then strip away from their body ensuring they have enough working space to carry out this activity safely.

## **Loppers**

Forest School leader to supervise use on a 1:1 ratio to begin with

- Loppers can be used to cut branches from finger size to 50p diameter
- Loppers must be carried closed at hip height and by holding the lower arm, so the blades stay closed whilst moving around the site
- The branch should be placed firmly as far as possible into the back of the blades (beak) both hands are then used to close the handles and to cut the branch. Gloves do not need to be worn as both hands will be on the end of the handles away from the cutting blades
- Children can be helped to cut branches by the adult placing their hands on top of the child's hands and helping them to cut the branch
- Loppers will be stored in the tool bag and locked away after each session
- Maintenance-clean after use and use a diamond file to sharpen blades, use in a circular motion at a 20-degree angle. Check all moving parts and handles for general wear and tear

## **Palm Drills (for making holes)**

- These will only be used after a demonstration from an adult
- Children should not run when carrying palm drills
- Drills should be used whilst seated or standing still
- A glove must be worn on the nonworking hand
- An adult can assist a child to apply pressure
- Drills will be stored in the tool bag/box, counted in at the end of each session and locked away after session finishes



## **Secateurs**

- Secateurs should be kept in a tool bag and only used after a demonstration by an adult
- Secateurs can be used to cut branches and twigs up to finger size in diameter
- They must be carried in a gloved hand with the blades facing down and locked shut
- The twig should be placed firmly as far into the blades as possible and cut using a scissor motion. A glove must be worn on the non-working hand
- The safety lock must be used when the tool is not in use
- The secateurs must be stored away in the tool bag / box after use and counted in at the end of the session and locked away.
- Maintenance- the same as loppers, using a diamond file

## **7.6 COOKING AND FOOD HYGIENE PROCEDURE**

### Consumption of food

We may be cooking various items on the fire; including: crumpets, marshmallows, popcorn, nachos, damper bread along with other items.

Prior to the forest school session staff will note any allergies or food intolerances, all attending staff will be aware of this.

Children will wash hands with water and soap before consuming any food item.

When cooking on the fire we will:

- Ensure all safe procedures are undertaken.
  - Store necessary items in a cool bag with cool blocks.
  - Adults and children will wash hands with water and soap.
  - Food to be prepped on a raised surface.
  - Max of 4 people, including adults, at the fire.
  - Children will kneel when cooking on the fire, adults to kneel or one knee on the ground.
  - Gloves will be worn when using tongs.
  - Children will only eat whilst in the log circle they must not walk around eating.
- Children must identify food with adult before picking/touching (any food that is picked will be washed back at school before eating).

*Children will bring their own drinking water bottles to the session.*

## **7.7 TOILETING/ SANITATION AT FOREST SCHOOL**

Toilets to be used before session

If necessary child to have a 'wild wee' in a discrete location.

Tissues and nappy sacks will be taken and any solid matter collected.

Antibacterial hand gel will be used and readily available.

If on site, during session child to go back into school to use toilet

## **7.8 DOGS, & MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

- The site is open to public and dogs, and is along a public footpath, although it is rare to see anyone aside from the Forest School there. There is signage at the entrance to the site explaining that we use the site regularly.
- In the event of unwanted attention from a passer-by occurs, the leader will step in and assure member of public that if they wish to raise concerns, issues, they should contact school.
- If approached by a dog, children will be a 'standing tree' and not respond to the dog, a grown up will step in if necessary.

## **7.9 HAZARDOUS PLANTS & FUNGI**

Part of the risk assessment will be to identify any hazardous plants and point them out to the group so that all members are aware of the dangers

Forest school leader will identify common poisonous plants and fungi to children teach them how to identify them and to avoid them.

Common hazardous plants that can be found stinging nettles, brambles, berries and fungi.

## **7.10 BITING & STINGING INSECTS**

Insect bites and stings can be common, particularly in spring and summer and usually cause only minor irritation, part of the forest school consent form will contain agreement for the topical use of antihistamine cream or piriton where necessary (parental agreement will be sought). Children are advised to wear insect repellent.

In rare cases children can have a serious reaction in which case the leader will engage with the first aid procedures laid out in the school policy including calling 999

If any children are known to have a serious reaction to bites and stings this will be identified in the risk assessment.

## **8 SAFEGUARDING**

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It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to safeguard our pupils. Where there are specific risks a separate assessment will be carried out and shared with staff and volunteers. See school safeguarding policy in addition.

### Consent forms

**In loco parentis** - Duty of care for those responsible for the care, custody and control of the children to take the same care that a reasonable, prudent and careful parent/ guardian would take in the same circumstances

### Equality

In accordance with **The Children Act 2004** – Forest School leaders/ assistants have a duty of services to work to together to ensure that every child, whatever their background or circumstances, to have the support they need to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve through learning, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

### Child Protection

In accordance with **The Protection of Children Act 1999** – all Forest School leaders/ assistants/ helpers will be DBS checked dated within 5 years and at the current home

address and must sign and date a form to show they comply with this Health & Safety Guide to Forest School

### Disclosure

Appropriate steps will be taken where concerns arise regarding the safety of a participant. Concerns will be reported to a designated safeguarding person and we will ensure that disclosures are responded to sensitively and appropriately, in line with current best practice.

## **9 INSURANCE**

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All pupils are covered by the school's insurance for educational visits. Please contact office manager for further details.

## **10 DESIGNATED PERSON RESPONSIBILITIES**

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Forest School Leader: Becky Barros

First Aider: Becky Barros, Gina Moran (Both trained Pediatric first aiders)

## 11 APPENDIX

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### 11.1 INCIDENT LOG SHEET (IN CONJUNCTION WITH OUR HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY)

Complete the form for every accident leading to injury, violent or aggressive incident, ill health, disease or near miss

Date and time of incident:

Location:

Person injured or subject  
to aggression:

Was the incident:

- A near miss
- An accident leading to injury

- Ill health/ disease
- A violent or aggressive incident

What happened?

Was anyone else involved?

Was anything damaged?

Name the person completing the  
form

Date of completing this form

## 11.2 HANDBOOK AGREEMENT

I confirm that I have read a copy of this Handbook and agree to abide by the policies and procedures it contains.

Name	Organisation	Signature	Date