



# JOHN WILKINSON NURSERY AND OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS PROVISION

## FOREST SCHOOL POLICY

### AIM

It is our aim to give children, parents/carers and practitioners a shared understanding of the ethos of a Forest School experience. This powerful approach enables younger children to be independent, self-motivated, courageous, and considerate and sets them up for lifelong 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.

### WHAT WE PROVIDE AT FOREST SCHOOL

We provide a safe, challenging learning environment in the grounds of the John Wilkinson School Site. Nursery will provide waterproofs for the Pre-school children only to wear. If children prefer to wear their own set of waterproofs please let the Forest School Leader know – this will not be a problem. The sessions are led by a level 3 qualified Forest School Practitioner. The staff are proactive in ensuring there is a high ratio of adults at a Forest School session regardless of the numbers of children.

### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We actively encourage parents to find out about Forest School Sessions by inviting them to an information evening. They will accompany the staff and children to the Forest school area. Visitors should take their cue from the staff in all respects.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Forest School Leader will assess the weather conditions and the condition of the Forest before the session will start. Adults model how we treat and take care of the environment at Forest School. If the Forest School session needs to be cancelled, we will use the school grounds and playground to ensure children still experience an outdoor session. If the weather is a concern in terms of lightening, then the session will be cancelled and children will remain in the setting.

### 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 these cases, a similar session will run within Nursery grounds promoting the ethos of Forest School.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

Part of the Forest School Ethos is not to remove all hazards or risks. The adults and children need to learn how to manage dangers and risk taking. Part of the risk assessments carried out is to ensure the children and adults are able to carry out activities with realistic control measures in place.

The Forest School leader will complete a general risk assessment of the Forest School site according to the season. There will be another daily risk assessment completed for each of the Forest School sessions.

A risk assessment will also be carried out for individual activities, for example – lighting a fire.

The leader can carry a mobile phone at Forest School in case of an emergency as well as the landline phone. The only camera permitted at Forest School is the settings camera.

## **CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS**

Please see our Safeguarding Policy. While at Forest School a member of staff will always make sure the adult is in clear view.

Sometimes the children need to return to the setting to use the toilet, only the staff members with the correct DBS checks will bring the children back to the setting. Consideration will be given to ratios when 2 year olds attend. In some cases it may be that the whole group returns for someone to go to the toilet, but the leader will make a decision at the time based on their experience and the circumstances.

## **CONSIDERATION FOR EQUALITY AND INCLUSION**

It is our intention to ensure equality and inclusion take place throughout our setting. However due to the natural environment of Forest School there may be challenges present. Due to the individuality of children and families, it will be our policy to work with families. We can do this through communication, home visits and the key person approach. Families will be encouraged to visit our Forest School site where difficulties can be identified and possible solutions discussed. There may be a need to discuss issues with the Head Teacher, so possible funding for equipment, resources or staffing may be sourced.

## **EVALUATION PROCEDURE**

At the end of each Forest School session, the Forest School leader will evaluate the session. This will include a reflective account on the session, what the interests of the children were and if there were any changes needed. From this information the Forest School leader will be able to plan the following week's activities from the children's interests ensuring the Forest School ethos, taking into consideration any feedback from other practitioners and parents/carers.

For instances of a lost child / injured child whilst at Forest School, please see the following policies:-

- **PROCEDURE FOR INJURIES TO CHILDREN, STAFF, PARENTS OR VOLUNTEERS**
- **LOST CHILD POLICY**