



Wesley Methodist Primary School

Forest School Policy

Shine like stars as children of God

Policy Review Details	
The Induction policy will be reviewed in line with the policy review schedule	
Date of issue: January 2024	
Headteacher Signature	Rhys Jones
Governor Signature	
Date of next review: Spring 2027	

Our Vision

Wesley Methodist Primary School aspires to be a Christian family where all stakeholders work towards ensuring that our children “shine like stars as children of God” Phillipians 2:15.

We aim to promote the value of self, others and the environment.

Underpinning of our vision

The vision of Wesley Methodist Primary School is underpinned through our use of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit to ensure that we all have a secure understanding of the importance of our roles within our community and how to be good citizens that support and enable all to flourish. The use of these values support our vision's aims and gives our children a daily mission to uphold these through their attitudes and learning behaviour.

Our curriculum is developmentally responsive which actively engages all in learning skills in a context; integrative – directing children to connect learning to daily lives; and exploratory – enabling children to discover their abilities, interests, learning styles, and ways that they can make contributions to society.

Safeguarding Statement

At Wesley Methodist Primary School, we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We work to provide a safe and welcoming environment where all children are included, respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. The procedures contained in the Safeguarding Policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors.

Contents

1. Aim
2. Environmental Considerations
3. Health and Safety considerations
4. Risk Assessments
5. Child and Vulnerable Persons
6. Consideration for Equality and Inclusion
7. Cancellation Procedure
8. Evaluation Procedure
9. Our Vision
10. Daily Operating Procedure
11. Staff Ratios, Roles and Responsibilities
12. Communication Strategies
13. Emergency Procedures
14. Toileting Procedure
15. Lost Children Procedure
16. Procedure for Tool Use
17. Procedure for Fires
18. Procedure for Cooking
19. Safeguarding Policy Addendum
20. Disclosures Policy Addendum
21. Health and Safety Policy Addendum
22. Behaviour Policy Addendum
23. Assessment and Monitoring Policy Addendum

1. Aim

At Wesley we recognise the importance of Forest School and the role it plays in all of our children's education. It supports our vision of 'Shine Like Stars as children of God' through an inspirational process that encourages and promotes the holistic development of all of our children. Our Forest School ethos inspires creativity and opens up opportunities for all children to foster a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. The children are given the opportunity to investigate, explore and take risks in this safe environment at their own pace and interest through a well-planned and engaging child centred approach, which is nurtured and facilitated by the qualified Forest School leader. Children are given time to be reflective within their learning and how they manage to self-regulate themselves socially or during activities, which is a vital skill for all of our children.

Children will be able to learn a range of practical skills such as cooking, fire lighting, tool use and crafts. Children will learn that they can succeed and gain a feeling of self-worth. We are all equal in the Forest School environment.

There are many important issues to be considered here and we aim to remain true to the Forest School ethos and approach.

2. Environmental Considerations

Forest School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos. Wherever possible, environmentally friendly products and recyclable materials should be used when appropriate. Good practice 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. We support the work completed by the Woodland Trust by promoting the planting of trees within our green space to further enhance our forest school area.

3. 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.

4. Risk Assessments

Detailed risk assessments for: The Forest School site, group management, fire and outdoor cooking and individual risk assessment of all tools to be used must be available prior to any Forest School session.

*The forest school leader will carry out, a daily risk assessment -prior to any session.

5. Child and Vulnerable Persons

The Forest School Leader should regard their duty of care when working with young persons 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, and risk assessment of sites and activities. Staff and volunteers should be made aware of the relevant academy policies and ensure that they follow them
- Members of staff will have Child Protection Training
- The Forest School Leader 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 academy's named Child Protection Person, so that the academy's 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 then informed

6. Considerations for Equality and Inclusion

In Forest School sessions, all persons will be treated equally.

We aim to and are committed to the following:

- providing a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
- including and value the contribution of all children and adults to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- make inclusion a thread which runs through all of the activities of Forest School;

The legal framework for this guidance is:

- Race Relations Act 1976;
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986;
- Children Act 1989; and
- Draft SEND code of practice April 14

7. Cancellation Procedure

There may be times when Forest School sessions have to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. These could 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:

- Cancellation decisions are made as soon as possible, and all pupils and parents will be effectively informed.

We will endeavour to run Forest School sessions whenever possible.

8. Evaluation Procedure

In order to develop the Forest School program and to ensure good practice is maintained a number of evaluation tools are recommended. Evaluation of activities undertaken.

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

9. Our Vision

At Wesley, we are committed to providing our pupils with the best quality learning experiences we have available, and as such, we encourage all children to take part in Forest School, as a means of enhancing and extending their learning in a natural environment.

We believe that Forest School aids the holistic development of all our pupils by improving social skills, speaking and listening skills, writing, problem solving and motor skill development. In addition, the benefits of developing and supporting the growth of a healthy body and mind are encouraged too. Forest school offers many opportunities for children to improve and develop self-regulation, their resilience to different situations and self-esteem. Furthermore, much research has gone into the health benefits forest school can provide, and has been proven to help boost children's immune systems.

We encourage the use of our outdoor learning spaces to develop our pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world around us, and the impact we have on its sustainability.

We will provide a safe and caring environment in which pupils can express their creativity and learn to work as a team, learn about woodland management and take calculated risks. The safety of our pupils is always our foremost concern. We will ensure that each activity is planned and assessed to the highest standards.

10. Daily Operating Procedure

- Leader to share the lesson plans with all adults attending the session
- Register to have been taken before any session begins, by class teacher/TA
- Forest school leader to count all children in at start of session, to confirm group number. Children are to practise counting themselves in before going to the forest area
- Children to come dressed ready for forest school. Children can bring their outdoor footwear and waterproofs in a plastic bag to then change in to before their session. Any child not having the appropriate clothing will not be able to take part in the session.
- Children to put their outdoor footwear on underneath the shelter or inside their classroom before the session begins
- Leader/teacher/ta to lead children to the entrance of Forest School. This is to promote routine and transition from indoor learning to outdoor learning. Route may be changed dependant on risk factors (refer to daily risk assessments)
- All children/Forest School leader/staff to count everyone in
- Leader to lead children to Base Camp Fire Circle where they can sit ready for introduction

- Leader to remind children of rules/risk assessments for the session. Play reminder rule games, secure knowledge of boundaries
- Other adults to follow leader's instructions as to where to position themselves.
- Leader to use the '1,2,3 Where are you?' for children to stop, show where they are and to walk the fire circle
- Classroom specific medication (epi pen) and inhalers (of given class) to be brought out by the teacher/TA and forest school first aid kit will always to be taken to every forest school session
- Safety checks carried out prior to every session, every day by the Forest School leader
- Leader to make sure all children and adults present are suitably/appropriately dressed
- Leader to check 2 main items are accounted for to take to every session (children learn the importance of these items too) 1, water (First Aid bucket) 2, First Aid bag
- At the end of every session children are given the opportunity to evaluate the session and are counted back in
 - Leader to lead children back to school where they will remove their outdoor footwear (counted again) before entering school and returning to their classroom to change – if muddy/wet from a session. The Forest School leader will then hand over the children to Teacher/TA.

EMERGENCY RECALL - TWO BLOWS ON A WHISTLE All children and staff establish an understanding, at the start of every session, of the agreed meeting points during that session for the '1, 2, 3 Where are you?' and 'whistle' (emergency) call – and the procedures to follow these calls, to maintain safety within the group- at all times. The meeting point will be at the Fire Circle.

11. Staff Ratios, Roles and Responsibilities

Staff ratios to children will be:

2:20 at a maximum unless agreed prior to session by the Head teacher where a ratio for a full class session may be 3:30.

Other adult roles are listed below:

- Safeguard the children
- Take an active role in the session

- Facilitate children's learning
- Promote independence
- Report any concerns to leader
- Report any hazards to leader
- Discreetly observe the children as per the focus of the sessions and report to Leader
- Familiarize themselves with the planning for the session and the outcomes intended
- Know the location of the First Aid Kit
- Bring and wear suitable clothing

Children's roles are to:

- Bring appropriate clothing
- Follow safety rules
- Respect the environment and each other
- Evaluate their experiences
- Develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them
- Be themselves and grow!
- Identify their own -and others- needs

12. Communication Strategy

Class Teachers

The Forest School leader is responsible for evaluating each session and feeding this information back to the Class Teacher where relevant.

Any behavioural issues will be dealt with by the Forest School leader but fed back to the Class

Teacher for their information.

The Class Teacher will be responsible for acquainting themselves with the procedures and protocol, and understand their roles and responsibilities when participating in Forest School sessions.

The Forest School leader will familiarise the Class Teacher with the planning for the session ahead. The Class Teacher will feed any observations back to the Forest

School leader at the end of the session so that planning for the next session can be informed.

Site Manager

The Forest School leader will inform the Site Manager of any hazards or concerns about the Forest School site.

The Forest School leader will inform the Site Manager when a fire is to be lit in Forest School.

The Forest School leader will confirm Fire Safety arrangements with the Site Manager.

The Site Manager will communicate any hazards on the site or around the perimeter before a session commences.

The Site Manager and the Forest Leader are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Forest School site and its perimeter.

The Forest School leader will regularly update the Head Teacher on the progress of the Forest School sessions and will ensure the safety and well-being of the children at all times

Helpers/Assistants

The Forest School leader will introduce themselves to any helpers or assistants before the sessions begin.

Helpers/assistants will be CRB checked as per school guidelines and agreed by the Head teacher.

The helper/assistant will be responsible for acquainting themselves with the procedures and protocol of Forest School at Wesley and sign and date the sheet in the front of the handbook once read.

The Forest School leader will familiarize the helper/assistant with the planning for the session ahead. The helper/assistant will feed any observations back to the Forest School leader at the end of the session so that planning for the next session can be informed.

Parents/Carers

The Forest School leader will send letters (or/and use school web site/class dojos) to parents/carers of children participating in Forest School sessions, at the very start of every child's journey at Wesley. This is to ensure that all caregivers are aware, of the

learning outcomes in which Forest School can provide, and why the academy feels that it is an important aspect of its school's curriculum.

This letter will outline the necessity of providing appropriate clothing and footwear for these sessions, but that clothing and footwear will be available from the academy - should they require it.

Whenever possible, community involvement in the maintenance/gardening of forest school, will be encouraged to promote unity and wellbeing within our community – organised by the forest leader. Again, no extra adults are needed, as stated before.

Head teacher must always be informed (site manager too) of any planned events/activities before they can commence.

13. Emergency Procedures

Wesley Methodist Primary School - Access through gates at front of the academy on Forth Road or access by helicopter on field at front of the academy.

In the event of an accident to a person or persons during a Forest session the following procedure should be followed.

In the case of a minor injury:

- The designated First Aider is to provide emergency First aid to the accident victim using equipment from the First Aid bag at the scene.
- Adults will supervise the other pupils and help them to remain calm and away from the accident victim.
- The First Aider will fill out the accident form (as used in school) and provide the child with an accident band as per school policy. Parents will be notified if needed and the nature of the injury and treatment given.
- Mobile phone to be used, to contact school for another member of staff to collect the injured child (if needed). Office staff or the member of staff who collected the child will contact parents (if needed) or escort child back to class for monitoring
- If the child is able to continue with the session after receiving first aid (plaster needed or TLC needed) the forest school leader will risk assess the benefits of the child continuing with the session

In the case of a serious injury:

- The designated First Aider is to provide emergency First aid to the accident victim using items from the First Aid Bag on site; whilst another adult escorts the rest of the group back to school (pupils in the Forest School session are to be called together using a two-whistle warning)

- Children to be counted out and led back to the main building
- School to be informed straight away of incident via phone - this may include dialling 999 and informing parents/carers or spouses (if adult). In severe cases leader to immediately dial 999 and inform school
- Access to the Forest School site will be provided by office staff/site manager to allow an ambulance to gain entry/or as close as possible, if necessary
- The designated First aider will stay with the accident victim at all times and report to ambulance staff if necessary
- The designated First aider will fill out the accident book in academy
- In the case of a group encounter with stinging insects, the office is to be informed straight away (mobile), 999 to be dialled immediately, and parents contacted

Fire Alarm

Upon hearing the school fire alarm the Forest School leader will blow on the whistle twice to alert the group of an 'emergency'. The group will meet the Forest School leader at the Fire Circle. Children will be counted and escorted to the Key Stage 1 playground where they will line up along the edge of the playground closest to Forest School.

14. Toileting during Forest School

All children are encouraged to use the toilet before each session (adults included)

The forest school washing facilities are provided throughout the forest area for cleaning of hands, along with hand sanitisers placed throughout the forest. Spare clothing will be available in case of any accidents!

Children can access school toilets via the Key Stage 1 playground door. Children **MUST** inform an adult and **MUST** walk and will be instructed to do so, the importance of this is explained.

15. Lost Children Procedure

If a child goes missing, the following procedure needs to be followed:

- If a child cannot be located after all children are back around the fire pit circle (arranged area), and '1,2,3 Where Are You', game has not revealed them, a search of the Forest School site will take place by an additional adult taking part in the session, without alarming the other children

- Office staff to be contacted by TEAMS to check school premises and then check with the office regarding any children that have left school with a parent/carer.
- If failure to locate child after above procedures, then the Head Teacher (or Senior Management in HT's absence) will be notified and the School's Emergency Plan will take immediate effect.

16. Procedure for Tool Use

- All tool equipment is kept in a padlocked toolbox; the toolbox is stored and locked in the outdoor classroom located to the rear of the School. Keys to the classroom are kept with the forest leader at all times and a spare set with the site manager
- All tools checked by Leader before the session begins to ensure their safety and good condition.
- Ratios for using tools are 1:1 or 1:2 dependant on tools being used
- Only Leader or Level 3 qualified practitioner to lead tool use.
- Leader to demonstrate how to use tools in the first instance before any child or additional adult is allowed to use them.
- Tools must be used in appropriate areas. (Blood bubble – away from others, safety talk)
- Leader will ensure tools are packed away safely and securely at the end of each session.
- Leader to clean tools and teach children the responsibility of this too

17. Procedure for Fires

- All fire lighting equipment is kept in a padlocked toolbox; the toolbox is stored and locked in the Key Stage 1 sluice room. Keys to the sluice room are kept with the forest leader at all times and a spare set with the site manager
- Leader to inform the site manager when and where a fire is to be lit
- Area and fire lighting equipment to be checked by Leader before the session begins to ensure they are in good condition
- Leader or additional adult to be situated close to fire pit at all times when fire is lit (rule of never leave a fire unattended)
- Leader to ensure all additional adults are aware of location of First Aid Kit and emergency plan in case of extreme injuries and protocol of this

- Leader to review safety rules of fire pit (for all) before lighting fires in the session
- Fire Blanket, a bucket of water and additional water to be on hand near the fire at all times
- Children (when invited by the leader) can stoke the fire and use appropriate fire gloves. Only the leader to demonstrate how to cook and follow the safety principles at all times
- Leader to ensure that all fires are completely extinguished before leaving Forest School site
- When using the Kelly Kettle above procedures to be followed
- Fire square to be used and taught at **ALL** times for safety
- All zippers, id badges, loose clothing and hair should be tied back to limit the contact with the fire
- Area free from overhanging, low branches

18. Procedure for Cooking

- Area and fire lighting equipment to be checked by Leader before the session begins to ensure they are in good condition
- Leader or additional adult situated close to fire pit, when fire is lit
- Leader to ensure all additional adults are aware of location of First Aid Kit and emergency plan in case of extreme injuries and protocol of this
- Leader to review safety rules of fire pit before lighting fires in the session
- Fire Blanket, watering can/container, plus additional bucket of water to be on hand near the fire at all times
- Only leader to stoke fire (children may be invited at leaders discretion) and use equipment to cook and heat water on, demonstrating safety principles at all times
- Leader to use an ovenproof glove to touch pots and pans (fire resistant glove)
- Leader to ensure that allergies and dietary requirements are met before cooking any food
- Leader to ensure that food/drink is of a good quality and from a reputable retailer

- Leader to ensure that clean water for drinking is available for all involved at forest school sessions

19. Safeguarding Policy Addendum

All adults working with or on behalf of children in Forest School sessions have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Included in these responsibilities are:

- The Forest School leader will hold a **Level 3 Practitioners qualification** in order for them to lead Forest School sessions along with an up to date **outdoor first aid** qualification
- The Forest School leader will inform parents (via a letter/school web site/class dojo's) about Forest School at the start of every child's journey at Wesley. This letter will detail reminders to parents to report any specific health issues or dietary requirements their child/children may have to the school , as well as up to date contact numbers in case of an emergency – this data can then be accessed by the Forest School leader
- The Forest School leader will ensure the correct adult to child ratio is followed at all times and amend/risk asses any given activity in accordance to adult to child ratio
- Only adults with an up to date and enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check will be allowed to participate in Forest School sessions
- All adults will ensure the confidentiality of all children at all times
- All adults will be provided with relevant information on a need to know basis about individual children whilst participating in Forest School sessions to keep them vigilant to any specific needs
- All adults will report any hazards to the Forest School leader immediately
- All adults will be aware of the emergency procedures specific to Forest School and will carry out these procedures if necessary

20. Disclosures Policy Addendum

In the case of a child making a disclosure during and Forest School session, the adult will:-

- Listen to the child and let them speak in their own words
- Not to ask leading questions
- Never promise the child that they will not tell anyone
- Speak to the Forest School leader immediately after the disclosure and ask to see the Safeguarding officer. If disclosure is made to the Forest School leader, then they need to speak to the person directly responsible for Safeguarding issues in the School, immediately after the session
- Write down everything disclosed using the child's own words and give to the Safeguarding officer
- Ensure confidentiality of child at all times

21. Health and Safety Policy Addendum

In addition to the School's generic Health and Safety procedures, Forest School Health and Safety guidelines will include: -

- The Forest School leader will ensure that there are up to date risk assessments and risk benefit assessments for each activity undertaken in Forest School and placed in Handbook
- The Forest School leader will ensure that all adults are familiar with Health and Safety procedures during Forest School sessions and have signed and dated the enclosed sheet in the handbook
- Children will be taught the 'no pick no lick rule'. The forest school leader will encourage and teach children how to risk assess, given that the forest area is a natural and organic environment and different to an indoor setting
- A qualified First Aider will participate in each Forest School session
- The correct adult to child ratios will be adhered to
- *A daily risk assessment will be carried out by the Forest school Leader before the sessions take place (this can be hand written or logged as dates)
- Forest School will not take place in weather likely to cause harm—lightning or very high winds
- Children and adults will be wearing appropriate clothing and footwear for each session

- Children and adults will be using appropriate safety equipment during Forest School sessions
- The Forest School Leader will ensure that the First Aid kit is up to date and appropriately stocked
- All participants will be advised of the rules and regulations surrounding Forest School sessions and will be made aware of any hazards present at the beginning of each session

22. Behaviour Policy Addendum

In addition to the general Behaviour Policy adopted by Wesley Methodist Primary School the following guidelines during Forest School sessions are as follows:

- All participants will be made aware of the behaviour expected of them during the Forest School sessions
- Adults will model appropriate behaviour at all times
- All participants will be made aware of the rules regarding Forest School sessions
- All participants will be given an initial 'time out' period for reflection if they break the rules
- The Forest School leader will then sit with the child after their 'time out' and discuss the impact of their behaviour (on themselves/group/leader/staff)
- Any participant exhibiting behaviour deemed dangerous or likely to cause harm to themselves or others will be removed from Forest School sessions by a member of staff
- In the event of the removal of a participant from a Forest School session, the parents will be informed by the Forest School Leader as soon as the session is finished or upon collection at the end of the day
- All adults will report any inappropriate behaviour to the Forest School Leader immediately

23. Assessment and Monitoring Policy Addendum

During Forest School sessions the following addendum on Assessment and Monitoring will apply:

- All adults will ensure confidentiality of children at all times

- All adults will report any problems seen during monitoring to Forest School Leader
- All assessment and monitoring data collected will be for the purpose of evaluation of Forest School impact
- All assessment and monitoring data collected will be for the use of the School and forest school leader
- All assessment and monitoring data collected will adhere to the School's Assessment and Single Equality Policy
- All adults will aim to deliver a high quality education in a friendly, supportive environment whilst promoting the ethos of Forest School learning throughout the session