

Forest School Health and Safety Handbook

Phone number: 07955 691721

Site Grid Reference:TL018038

Site Postcode: HP30LY

What three words: Event. Follow. Labels

**Vision statement**

Our aim is to advance the education, and promote the wellbeing of children in a safe, secure and stimulating outdoors environment. The Forest School ethos supports children to develop self-esteem, independence and confidence through outdoor child-led play in nature. This is exactly in line with what our Montessori environment provides in our indoor setting. Our aim therefore is to, through the use of Forest school sessions, carry this over to an outdoor environment. Forest School takes an holistic approach to learning and development and offers a mixture of learning the skills of problem solving and creativity as well as some more specific bush craft style skills (e.g. knot tying, tree climbing, fire lighting and tool use). At Forest School we aim to foster a deep connection and love of nature, through play and observations through the seasons in our beautiful woodland. The children are given time and space to explore and discover things for themselves alongside ‘knowledgeable others’, and our Forest school leader. Our Forest School sessions are child-led and aim to meet the needs of individuals to ensure that children grow in self-confidence, as well as developing their physical, emotional, cognitive and social skills.

**The Forest School ethos and principles**

The Forest School ethos has 6 principles (reviewed in 2011 and published by the Forest School association https://www.forestschoolassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/) and these are:

• FS is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visit; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.

• FS takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

• FS uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.

• FS aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

• FS offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

• FS is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

**Rules of Forest School**

In the first Forest School session, children become involved with the setting and understanding of the Forest school rules ensures their safety. At the beginning of every session a quick recap of the rules is reinforced by the children. These rules are as follows:

Keep everything out of your mouth including your fingers and hands – no pick no lick.

Stay within the boundary rope, we don’t go over it, we don’t go under it.

Do not throw anything

Drag sticks behind you

Care for nature – do not pick anything and leave the forest as we found it

Care for each other

Ask an adult before you use a tool and follow the tool rules

Always wash hands following a session.

Have FUN!

**The Countryside Code**

This applies to all persons wishing to use the countryside for any purpose not just for Forest School sessions. It is broken into sections but very broadly covers the following:

**Be safe and plan ahead**

**Leave gates and property as you find them**

**Protect plants and animals and take your litter home**

**Keep dogs under control**

**Consider other people**

We will observe the countryside code during all of our Forest school sessions. More detailed information can be found here:

**https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/1014038/countryside-code-summary.pdf**

**All Aspects of Sessional Procedures for Forest School**

The activities undertaken during sessions will differ, but the basic structure of each session will be the same and follow a set format:

**Setting Up**

1. Carry out a session risk assessment of site and advise/act accordingly

2. Collect necessary equipment and restock first aid where necessary

3. Meet and register group

4. Check phone signal

**Session Opening**

1. Introductions of any new faces

2. Make the group aware of new hazards or medical considerations

3. Check that they are all wearing suitable clothing and footwear

4. Take the group to the location

5. Form an opening circle

6. Describe or walk the boundaries for the day

7. Engage children in the development of rules and guidelines for the day 8. Describe the day’s activities

**During the Session**

• Visually check all equipment before use

• Check on pastoral needs of group

• Conduct a head count, as needed

• Ensure appropriate personal protective clothing is worn

**Closing the Session**

1. Extinguish any fires properly

2. Count any tools used into their bag

3. Remove structures

4. Check for litter etc.

5. Collect the equipment

6. Form a closing circle

7. Conduct some type of evaluation with the group (questions, talking stick or drawing)

8. Walk the group to the edge of Forest school

9. Bid farewell to and thank the wood/site.

10.Thoroughly check equipment

11. Complete the appropriate evaluation forms

**Legislation and Health and Safety Procedures**

Relevant Legislation:

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Children’s Act 1989

Equality Act 2020

Liability Insurance as provided by Birnbeck and Morton Michel. See Below Insurance section for policy details.

There are particular issues relating to the woodland, the specialist tools used there and with lighting fires which are not included in the Little Seeds Montessori standard Health and Safety policy and for which this document is an addendum.

Forest school sessions offer learning opportunities for children and young people. Part of their purpose is to encourage participants to face new challenges and to learn to take reasonable risks. In order to do that safely, the adults involved must know their role and ensure that the necessary risk assessments are carried out regularly and thoroughly.

Risks can rarely be eliminated entirely, but they can be reduced to a minimum without unduly limiting opportunities for children to explore and learn. Objectives of the document:

• To identify the roles of those involved in Forest Schools, with respect to Health & Safety.

• To identify safety procedures so that they can be carried out effectively and without difficulty.

• To identify suitable and sufficient risk assessment processes to ensure that risks are adequately controlled.

• To develop effective communication systems throughout the setting.

• To ensure that all those involved in Forest School are aware of all relevant Health & Safety documents.

• To develop effective inspection/monitoring procedures to ensure compliance with Local Authority Health & Safety requirements.

Health and Safety Organisation. Statement of Aims:

Forest School sessions offer learning opportunities for children and young people. Part of their purpose is to encourage participants to face new challenges and learn to take reasonable risks. In order to do that safely, the adults involved must know their role and ensure that the necessary risk assessments are carried out regularly and thoroughly.

The following guidance for adults and children must be clearly understood by all concerned. The Legal Framework. (Health & Safety At Work Act 1974 and Regulations 1992) Employers must:- 1. Assess the risk of activities. 2. Introduce measures to control those risks. 3. Tell their employees about the measures they have introduced. 4. Follow LEA Guidance on Educational visits and journeys for arranging school visits (but decisions about visits are usually delegated to the owner).

Employees must:- 1. Take reasonable care of their own and others’ health and safety. 2. Co-operate with their employers over health and safety matters. 3. Carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions. 4. Inform the employer of any serious risks. 5. Act in accordance with the teacher’s common law duty (as a reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances). 6. Follow the written procedure for arranging school visits, including obtaining the head teacher’s prior approval.

Responsibilities. School /organisation- staff 1. Must ensure that the owner is provided with the information and details as above. 2. They must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group, follow the instructions of the Forest School Leader and help promote positive behaviour. 3. Ensure an appropriate ratio of adults: children. 4. Ensure that adults have details of the school contact and that they and the contact have details of the emergency procedures. 5. Ensure that adults have details of children’s medical or special educational needs. 6. Observe the guidance for teachers and other adults. 7. Consider stopping the visit/activity (notifying the Forest School Leader) if they consider any risk unacceptable.

Forest School Leader The Forest School Leader should have the overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit. The leader should:-

• Follow the health and safety guidelines and policies.

• Undertake a comprehensive risk assessment.

• Clearly define each group supervisor’s role and ensure all tasks have been assigned

• Be familiar with the site.

• Be aware of child protection issues

• Ensure that adequate first aid provision is available

• Undertake the planning and preparation for the visit, including briefing group members.

• Review activities and advise staff where adjustments may be necessary

• Ensure that staff/adults are aware of what the visit involves.

• Observe the guidance for staff and other adults.

Additional Adults/Volunteers Other adults should be clear in their roles and responsibilities. They must:

• Do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group.

• Not be left in sole charge of children. Follow the instructions of the forest school leader and teacher adults and help with the control and discipline.

• Speak to the leader/adults if concerned about the health and safety of children at any time during the visit

• Observe the guidance for teachers and adults.

Children. The group leader must make it clear to children that they must:

o Follow the instructions of the leader and any other adults.

o Look out for anything which might be a threat and tell an adult about it.

Attendance at Forest School by children and young people whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger (to themselves or to the group) will be reviewed, and strategies put in place to allow them to participate wherever possible.

Parents. The Forest School Leader/teacher should:

• Provide both written information and briefing sessions to help parents decide whether their child should go on the visit.

• Tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit.

• Invite parents to support Forest School sessions as a volunteer if they wish.

Parents will need to:

• Provide the teacher with emergency contact numbers

• Sign a consent form

• Give the teacher information about the child’s emotional, psychological and physical health.

**Supervision**

Children will be fully supervised by at least four members of staff from the setting, Including a Forest School Leader. Additional helpers may accompany the group and will be taken through a Forest School health and safety. Although adults are not left alone with children and young people, it is essential that adults who regularly help as volunteers are police checked. Usually a group will be no larger than twnety children and an appropriate ratio of adults to children will be observed accordingly. The number of adults to children will be increased if necessary to accommodate larger groups and children with special educational or other needs.

**Firesite**

Normally a designated area for fires will be present within a Forest School site. Seating will be arranged for the children to sit on at a safe distance from any fires lit. The children and young people will be encouraged to walk around the designated area at all times and they will not approach any fires unless specifically supervised to do so. Water will always be available to safely extinguish fires and the fire site will be designed to reduce the risk of any spread of fire.

**First Aid:**

All staff have paediatric first aid qualifications. A First Aid Kit, along with relevant emergency equipment, which will always be readily accessible. There

will also be a mobile phone on site and in the event of a serious accident the emergency procedures will be followed.

**Weather Conditions**

Assessments of weather conditions will be taken prior to a visit and if the weather is too extreme the session will be cancelled. If the weather deteriorates suddenly during a session, the adults will decide whether to leave the site, use alternative accommodation or return the children to the setting. When windy and there is a danger of falling branches, the children will be taken to an alternative setting or the session will be cancelled. The children are asked to bring Wellington boots and suitable warm/waterproof clothing. If possible the setting will provide them with any missing essential items. The nature of woodland means that Forest School sites are quite sheltered and most will have a shelter on site. Children will experience hot, cold and wet weather but this will harm no –one if they are properly dressed. If cold, they will be more active in order to maintain warmth. In extreme heat, care will be taken to stay in the shade and plenty of water for drinking will be available.

Ground Conditions may present a higher risk and these will be assessed and dealt with accordingly, for example mud or steep slopes. Discussions will take place on how to safely access/cross/use such areas.

**Vegetation**

The areas of woodlands used are checked for toxic plants and children will be instructed not to pick or eat any plants. Areas of nettles, brambles and other potentially harmful plants will be cut regularly to open up areas for access, but some areas will be left uncut to support dependant wildlife.

**Using Tools/Lighting Fires**

Participants will only be involved in using sharp tools/fire when the Forest School Leader deems that they are confident and competent at working in the woods. When tools such as potatoes peelers are used the children will always be appropriately supervised.

Fires will only be lit in the designated areas and not more than once per term. The Children will be appropriately supervised and instructed in how to behave safely around a fire. Children will always be in sight of an adult. Proper instructions will have been given and safety issues discussed prior to the use of any tools. Where appropriate, children will use safety and protective gear such as gloves etc.

**Forest School Leaders Personal Safety**.

When working alone, ie when carrying out visual checks prior to site visits, a mobile phone will be carried and the relevant authorities will be made aware of their intentions and whereabouts. The setting where a Forest School Leader is expected will contact the relevant authorities if they do not appear within a reasonable period after the agreed time, and cannot be reached on their phone. Whilst in the woods with the children, the Forest School leader will always be within sight of another adult.

**Essential Equipment**

We aim to provide children with resources and equipment which help to consolidate and extend their knowledge, skills, interests and aptitudes.

We provide a sufficient quantity of equipment and resources for the number of children and equipment and resources which promote continuity and progression.

We provide natural and recycled materials which are in good condition and safe for the children to use.

We check all resources and equipment regularly and repair and clean, or replace any unsafe, worn out, dirty or damaged equipment.

We plan the provision of activities and appropriate resources so that a balance of familiar equipment and resources and new exciting challenges is offered.

The Following equipment will be taken to every Forest School session:

Register with emergency contact details for all children.

Medical Forms

Mobile Phone to use in emergency

First Aid Box

Accident forms

Incident log

Emergency Procedure

Toileting kit

Wet Wipes

Protective Gloves

Sun Cream

Water Bottle with water for washing hands.

Water Bottle for drinking

Sleeping bag/survival bag

Thermal Wrap sheet

Map of Woodland area

Pamphlet on Hyperthermia and First aid

Container for inhaler and/or epipens

Carry Bag for dirty/wet clothing

Small amount of spare clothes

**Clothing**

Parents/carers – We value and recognise the effort it takes to ensure your child comes prepared, so that they can get the most out of Forest School sessions. In particular, this means making sure they are appropriately dressed. It can be hard to predict just how many layers a child will need but it is always colder in the shaded woods. Please see below for our requirements.

Your other crucial role is to embrace the mud! Please do not send your child in their best clothes as they will almost certainly get dirty during the session!

**Layers**!

• THE best way to keep warm.

• add one more than you (We can always remove a layer but once cold, it can be hard to warm up)

**Waterproof trousers**

• Essential!

• Standard ‘thin’ pair in summer for protection

• Ski trousers ideal in winter OR extra layer under trousers

• All-in-ones not advised for potty/toilet users 7

**Trousers**

• Full length for protection

• Extra pair of leggings/tights/thermals under normal trousers in cold weather

**Warm socks**

• Wellies get very cold!

• Extra pair of wool/ fleece/ fluffy socks inside wellies (Normal socks in wellies are not warm enough for cooler weather)

**Waterproof coat**

• Preferably with a hood

• Thick and warm in winter (or use an extra fleece layer)

**Warm hat**

• Preferably covering ears.

**Mittens/Gloves**

• Thermal and waterproof (Knitted gloves get damp and do not keep little hands warm enough during the colder months. Don’t worry about mittens limiting finger movement as the cold is much more limiting!)

**Tops**

• ALWAYS long sleeves, all year (to minimize risk from stinging nettles and biting insects etc)

• At least 3 layers under coat in winter (eg. top, jumper, fleece and coat, or 'base layer', top, warm jumper and coat) Waterproof boots

**Footwear**

**Wellies** are essential! (Alternatives include snow boots and walking boots) Please Note! In summer, wellies, waterproof trousers and light long sleeves are still essential, to protect from thorns, nettles, ticks, insect bites etc. Please also send a sunhat in hot weather, particularly for the walk to and from the site.

**Other relevant legislation:**

Children’s Act 1989 as referred to in Safeguarding policy

Equality Act 2010 as referred to in Equality policy

**Sun Policy**

Your child must be supplied with a sun hat, preferably that covers the ears.

Sun cream must be applied before arrival at pre-school on Forest School days (Wednesday).

Sun cream must be sent in with your child for later applications

Please do sign a consent form allowing further application of sun cream to your child.

Although we do spend time in the shade under trees we do walk to and from Forest school and will not always be in a shaded area so adequate sun protection is essential.

**Travel Policy**

Parents/carers will drop children off at a Little Seeds Montessori pre-school at the usual time on a Wednesday morning. Children will then be transported to and from the Forest School site on foot.

The following procedures will be followed:

• The group will be given a reminder about safe walking before leaving the school site (outward) and before leaving the destination (return). The children will walk using the grab and go walking rope that we use for other pre-school outings. All children will be required to walk with one hand attached to the rope at all times.

• The Forest School Leader will assume a position at the front of the line and all children will be asked to stay behind Leader

• A second member of staff will assume a position at the rear of the line. Two further staff members will walk at evenly spaced points along the walking line.

• If it is necessary to cross the access track for cars a member of staff will stand in the track to stop any traffic and ensure safe crossing.

**Medical and Emergency Contact Details**

Completed medical forms will be required for every child and adult wishing to attend Forest School sessions. Where this is not received the child/adult will not be able to attend the sessions. The form can be viewed below and is available through the general information page of the pre-school website. We will ask for emergency contact details of someone who can be easily contacted if there should be a need.

Medical forms and a separate register of emergency contact will accompany all Forest school sessions.

Forms can be downloaded from the Little Seeds Montessori website general information page.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Child’s full name |  | |
| Date of Birth |  | |
| Home Address |  | |
| Phone numbers | Home  Work  Mobile | |
| Doctor | Address  Phone | |
| Contact name and relationship to child |  | |
| Illness | Comment | Medication needed - specify |
| Asthma/Bronchitis |  |  |
| Sight/hearing difficulties |  |  |
| Heart Condition |  |  |
| Diabetes |  |  |
| Allergies, e.g. pollen, nuts etc |  |  |
| Date of last Tetanus injection |  |  |
| Have you ever been stung by a bee? If so describe the reaction. |  |  |

**Adult Form**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Full name |  | |
| Date of Birth |  | |
| Home Address |  | |
| Phone numbers | Home  Work  Mobile | |
| Doctor | Address  Phone | |
| Emergency contact name and relationship to you. |  | |
| Illness | Comment | Medication needed – specify |
| Asthma/Bronchitis |  |  |
| Sight/hearing difficulties |  |  |
| Heart Condition |  |  |
| Diabetes |  |  |
| Allergies, e.g. pollen, nuts etc |  |  |
| Date of last Tetanus injection |  |  |
| Have you ever been stung by a bee? If so describe the reaction. |  |  |
| Any other medical conditions |  |  |

**Risk Assessment and Risk Management of the Site**

A full and comprehensive site risk assessment will be conducted prior to the first visit to any new site. This will be done by the Forest School Leader and, if possible, in conjunction with a member of staff from the site setting. This risk assessment will be reviewed termly. A visual check (safety Sweep) will be undertaken immediately prior to every session. Individual generic risk assessments will be used for the use of tools and some activities/actions. Individual activities will be risk assessed previously by the Forest School Leader. Ongoing risk assessments will take place at various times during a visit – this normally consists of judgements and decisions made as the need arises, which will then be recorded after the visit. Risks can be minimised, but they cannot be eliminated altogether, and health and safety concerns need to be balanced against the potential benefits of any activity. Children, young people and adults will suffer the occasional bumps, cuts and bruises which are a part of everyday life. The application of common sense will ensure that everyone is as safe as they can be, whilst enjoying all the physical and intellectual challenges of Forest School

**Risk Assessment Form for Forest School Site**

Description of the site: Area is owned by private resident and enclosed by fences and gates. The site is used by the owner and the pre-school. Large fauna cannot access the area, however smaller fauna such as cats, hedgehogs, foxes and rabbits can enter. The site is a small broadleaved woodland with a mixture of flora including ferns, bramble and nettles. There is no access for vehicles into the woodland area. The area has no running, still or boggy water sections. One side of the woodland has residential properties and one has a public right of way.

|  | Hazard | Harm | People at risk | existing measures / new measures | who will do it ?  when? |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0 | Walking to Forest school site | Car collision when crossing road. | Children | Staff to manage road crossing. All children attached to walking rope. Teach safe road crossing. One staff member to stand in road in front of children crossing to slow motorists. | All staff. |
| 1 | nettles and brambles | stinging | all | make children aware, clear pathways and main play areas. Children to wear long trousers. | FS Leader - prior to visit |
| 2 | berried flora | poisoning | children | inform all children not to pick or eat berries. Wash hands before eating. | FS leader/all staff - on visit |
| 3 | tree roots and stumps | tripping | all | inform all to take care in woods, clear walkways of bramble roots. | All - on visit |
| 4 | tree branches | branches falling, children falling. | all | pre-visit & continuous risk check, remove hanging dead wood. Remind children of risks. | FS leader -prior to & on visit. |
| 5 | sticks | hitting | children | inform children of rules, use a stick no longer than your arm, no hitting. | All staff - on visit |
| 6 | faeces | contamination | all | pre-visit & continuous risk check, remove and discard safely. | FS leader/all staff-prior to & on visit. |
| 7 | debris / rubbish | glass, drug use, metals. | all | pre-visit & continuous risk check, ask children not to pick up rubbish, inform an adult if they find something, adult to remove safely. | FS leader and all staff -prior to & on visit. |
| 8 | fire | burns, out of control. | all | Trained staff present at all times, safety procedures followed. Children instructed towards safety around the fire. | FS leader and all staff -prior to & on visit. |
| 9 | perimeter fence & gates | escape of children or injury on fence. | children | ensure all gates are closed and main gates are locked. Monitor children’s ability to stay away from barb wire fence. | all - on visit |
| 10 | Mushrooms and fungi | poisoning | all | inform all children and adults to look only, no touching. | all - on visit |
| 11 | bees, wasps, adders. | stings and bites | all | check area for nests, avoid contact, first aider always on site, seek medical aid (999) if anaphylactic shock or adder bite are present. | all - on visit |
| 12 | tools | cuts, grazes. | all | tools stored away from premises, used on a one to one basis, \**separate risk assessment for each tool available in Forest School handbook*, strict supervision, correct use of tools. | All - on visit |
| 13 | boundaries | escapees | children | children informed of boundaries, staff supervise the boundary. | All - on visit |
| 14 | ropes and swings | falls | children | check quality of ropes & knots. first aider on site at all times. | All - on visit |
| 15 | trees | falls | children | first aider on site at all times, support children to manage their own risks. | All - on visit |

| Emergency Arrangements | |
| --- | --- |
| **Serious Accident:** Seek additional adult help, provide first aid, call ambulance 999, inform parents (next of kin). Return all other children to the pre-school if possible, keep them calm, read stories, sing songs etc. Write up accident report form, inform assess risk assessment and make new adjustments for future.  **Minor Accident**: Provide first aid, complete accident report form, inform parents (carer), assess risk assessment and make adjustments for future.  **Weather change**: Make dynamic risk assessment, seek shelter or return to classroom. | |
| Safety Advice |
| **Clothing**: long trousers and long sleeves, warm clothing in cold weather, waterproof clothing in wet weather. Safety gauntlets at fire, work wear gloves for using tools and collecting rubbish. Spare clothing available in the classroom for emergencies.  **Communications**: Mobile phone or walkie talkies, member of staff to use land line in classroom.  **First Aid**: woodland first aid kit to be taken for each visit. **Food and Drink**: wash hands before eating, sit for eating and drinking, take snack and drink for full sessions, take cups, wet wipes and kitchen roll. **Children’s safety advice**: remind children of rules being outside.  **Staff safety advice**: Staff to discuss any worries before entering the site before each session and decide if it is safe to enter as a team. Consider weather, environment, state of site etc. |
| Further Comments |
| The overall hazard rating for the site is low as long as health and safety guidelines are followed.  \*Forest School Handbook contains the operational plan for Forest School sessions. |

\*Review site assessment form and update termly or before should incidents or changes occur.

| Signature | Role | Date |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Angie de Mink | Forest School Leader | 28/12/2021 |
| Angie de Mink | Health & Safety Officer | 28/12/2021 |
| Date for Review |  | 28/01/2021 |

**Dynamic Risk Assessment**

Forest school risk assessment has to be an ongoing process. We have dynamic risk assessments that take account of changeable conditions such as weather, site conditions and other things as highlighted below that can change quickly and need to be assessed at a particular Forest school session.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Risk | To whom | Risk Level | Action to be Taken |
| High Winds | All attendees | High | Session to be postponed. If already on-site return to pre-school. |
| Extreme heat/cold | All attendees | Medium to High | Session to be postponed. If already on-site return to pre-school. |
| Fire | All attendees | High | Emergency evacuation procedure to be followed as per emergency evacuation policy. |
| Wasp/bee swarm | All attendees | High | Session to be postponed. If already on-site return to pre-school. |
| Stranger | All attendees | Medium | Judgment to be made as to level of risk and need to end session. |
| Large fallen branches or lose branches | All attendees | Medium to High | Judgment to be made as to level of risk and need to end session. If branches can be cleared safely session may continue |
| Flooding | All attendees | Medium to High | Judgment to be made as to level of risk and need to end session. |
| Injury to Forest school leader | Forest school leader | Low | First aid procedure to be followed by uninjured staff present. Rest of session to be cancelled. Children and remaining adults to return to pre-school setting. |
| Missing Child | All children | Low to medium | Refer to missing child policy.   * Gather children and adults. * Designated staff member to collect bag with register and emergency contacts. 2 staff members to do head count and register. * Designated staff member to contact emergency services and then child’s emergency contact. * Remaining staff and adults to sweep area and attempt to locate child. * Staff with children to reassure and calm any upset or worried children. * Remain at site until emergency services arrive and child’s emergency contact. * Other children to be returned to setting. * Record incident. |
| Fire | All attendees | Low to medium | Refer to Fire evacuation policy. The same procedure will be followed.   * Gather children and adults using emergency 1,2,3 come back to me. * Designated staff member to collect bag with register and emergency contacts. * Count gathered children and adults. * Remove to meeting point. * Do register * Contact emergency services * Contact children’s emergency contacts * Return to setting as soon as possible. Record incident.   The meeting point will the front door of The Old Vicarage.  Practice fire evacuation/evacuation to be completed termly. |
| Evacuation of Site | All attendees | Low to medium | The same procedure will be followed as for fire evacuation except for contacting the emergency services unless this is necessary for some reason. |
| Minor/major accident | All attendees | Low to medium | Refer to accident and injury pre-school policy. |
| Lockdown | All attendees | Low | See below |

In the case of injury to any attendee this will be recorded in our accident record as with any accident that occurs during a pre-school session.

Other incidents to be recorded in the incident book as with other incidents occurring during a pre-school session.

Lockdown:

In the unlikely event of a lockdown situation arising a similar procedure will be followed as for emergency evacuation.

The Children will be counted in and gathered towards our walking rope. The emergency services will be contacted.

If it is possible for us to secure safe refuge outside/at the Forest School site we will do so otherwise the children will be removed to the nearest point of safety/building that we are able to safely enter and wait until the need for lockdown is over.

The register will be taken.

The children’s emergency contact will be contacted and asked to collect their child when it is safe to do so.

**Safety Sweep of Site Before Each Session**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date:** | **Time:** | **Weather:** |
| **Name of Forest School Leader:** | | |
| **Checklist** | **Yes/No** | **Comments** |
| Fallen Branches |  |  |
| Low Branches |  |  |
| Protruding Thorns |  |  |
| Brambles/nettles |  |  |
| Slippery Areas |  |  |
| Broken Glass/needles |  |  |
| Vandalism/Intruders |  |  |
| Weather Effects |  |  |
| Standing Water |  |  |
| Boundary line/fence |  |  |
| Base Camp |  |  |
| Tool area roped off |  |  |
| Emergency rucksack |  |  |
| Spare clothes |  |  |
| Equipment ready |  |  |
| Other hazards indentified: | | |
| Action taken | | |
| Signature | | |

**Risk Management of Tools**

**Using Tools/Lighting Fires**

Children will only be involved in using sharp tools/fire when the Forest School Leader deems that they are confident and competent at working in the woods. When tools such as potatoes peelers are used the children will always be appropriately supervised and instructed in their use.

Fires will only be lit in the designated areas and not more than once per term. The Children will be appropriately supervised and instructed in how to behave safely around a fire. Children will always be in sight of multiple adults. Proper instructions will have been given and safety issues discussed prior to the use of any tools. Where appropriate, children will use safety and protective gear such as gloves etc.

General rules for tool use:

Each tool used has a specific risk assessment completed prior to Forest School sessions.

Tools are stored in a locked box at pre-school and during Forest school sessions when not in use.

Children are never allowed to walk around with tools

Tools are kept clean and ready for use.

Children will always be supervised when using tools

There is a designated site just for tool use during each session where tools are to be used.

**Potato Peeler Risk Assessment**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | To Whom | Level of Risk | Type of Risk | Risk Management | Benefit |
| Potato Peeler | All attendees | Low to medium | Sharp end of peeler could cause injury if stabbed into body parts or fallen onto. | Peelers to be kept in locked box when not in use. Children to be instructed in safe use of peelers and supervised when using. | Children become independent and responsible in safe use of peeler for a range of uses eg. Peeling food items and wood items. |

**Fire Strike Risk Assessment**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item | To Whom | Level of Risk | Type of Risk | Risk Management | Benefit |
| Fire Strike | All attendees | Low to medium | Children using this unsupervised could cause a fire. | Item to be kept in locked box when not in use. Children to be instructed in safe use of and supervised when using. | Children may become independent and responsible in safe use of Fire strike for the purpose of lighting a fire. |

**Designated Person for Each Session**

The Designated safeguarding lead for each session is Angie de Mink.

Each staff member attending Forest school sessions is given specific roles to ensure that nothing is left to chance. Staff members are given laminated job cards prior to each session so that each individual is aware of their own responsibility.

Forest School Leader - The Forest School Leader should have the overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit. The leader should:-

• Follow the health and safety guidelines and policies.

• Undertake a comprehensive risk assessment.

• Clearly define each group supervisor’s role and ensure all tasks have been assigned

• Be familiar with the site.

• Be aware of child protection issues

• Ensure that adequate first aid provision is available

• Undertake the planning and preparation for the visit, including briefing group members.

• Review activities and advise staff where adjustments may be necessary

• Ensure that staff/adults are aware of what the visit involves.

• Observe the guidance for staff and other adults.

Additional Adults/Volunteers Other adults should be clear in their roles and responsibilities. They must:

• Do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group.

• Not be left in sole charge of children. Follow the instructions of the forest school leader and teacher adults and help with the control and discipline.

• Speak to the leader/adults if concerned about the health and safety of children at any time during the visit

• Observe the guidance for teachers and adults.

Children. The group leader must make it clear to children that they must:

o Follow the instructions of the leader and any other adults.

o Look out for anything which might be a threat and tell an adult about it.

Attendance at Forest School by children and young people whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger (to themselves or to the group) will be reviewed, and strategies put in place to allow them to participate wherever possible.

Parents. The Forest School Leader/teacher should:

• Provide both written information and briefing sessions to help parents decide whether their child should go on the visit.

• Tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit.

• Invite parents to support Forest School sessions as a volunteer if they wish.

**In the event of an emergency:** Each laminated job card will delegate roles to be taken in the event of an emergency. The overall responsibility for taking control in such situations stays with the Forest School leader but each adult with play a role in aiding management of emergencies. E.G. one staff member will be responsible for contacting the emergency services, another 2 will be responsible for providing first aid where necessary, another staff member will be responsible for attaching children to the walking rope and taking the register. The Postcode for emergency services is HP30HS

**Toileting Considerations**

Toilets/Hand washing. There are no toilets on the Forest School site. We do take a toilet tent with us to ensure privacy should a child need to use a toilet. Children are asked to use the toilet prior to departure for a session but will be allowed to use designated areas of the wood and told how to do so with due care and consideration to hygiene, care for the environment and personal privacy. This will always be accompanied by and in view of the adults attending the session with the child’s dignity and privacy protected. Sessions only last a maximum of two hours – and in practice most complete the session without the need to go. There is no running water, but for each Forest School session there will be a container of water on site. Hand wash, towels and antiseptic wipes will also be available.

Staff ratios will not be affected by the children’s need to go the toilet. Any toileting area will be in sight of all staff members in attendance, there will not be a need for individual or teams of staff members to move to areas that are out of sight of other staff members or removing them so as to effect staff ratios.

**Insurance**

Morton Michel: policy number PGP2000348

**Ecological Impact**

There are many ways that running a Forest School programme can affect the ecology of the site these can be in a negative or positive way. The most positive impact is the fostering of a love of nature in our next generation, through their knowledge and love of nature, the ecological impact of the next generation can be a gentle one. Creating a sense of responsibility in younger generations towards their environment can only have lasting and positive effects on that environment.

Potential ecological impacts created by use of Forest School sites can be multiple and long lasting but having an awareness of these can also mean that measures can be put into place to manage or lessen the negative effects. Potential areas of impact are discussed briefly below:

Walking/ running and playing in the woods: can create compacted earth/ creating pathways Reduction in biodiversity/ fauna and flora growth.

Fire Damage to soil or heat damage: fires ca change the pH of the soil (especially if ash is left behind) which can be harmful to plants, and can cause mineral depletion. Risk of fire spreading if left or not properly extinguished

Cooking/ eating: can result in litter dropping from food remains or packaging that may attract animals to the site that aren’t usually there.

Collecting natural materials/ deadwood: can cause damage to plants and or habitats/ loss of food for wildlife if acorns/ seeds collected and removed. Damage to plants/ trees if branches/ leaves/ flowers removed. Deadwood is important habitat for many creatures and bed for fungi.

Climbing trees: can cause damage to tree branches/trunk or plants on the forest floor.

Making shelters/ rope swings: can result in trampling on flowers and plants on the forest floor Damage to trees by use of ropes/ risk of breaking branches.

Toilet: Used toilet paper will have an ecoglocial impact. Wetwipes contain plastic and are not provided for use at our sessions but may be brought onto site by parents and require careful disposal.

**3 Year Sustainability Plan**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** |
| Establish Base Camp | Rest Areas | Move Areas |
| Choose site for Fire Pit | Move base camp and fire pit | Check continued sustainability of current site, can it be used without long term negative impact. |
| Set up site boundary | Alternate path taken to site | Source other potential sites. |
| Take seasonal pictures | Review pictures/assess impact | Before move consider the need for planting/regenerating current site. |
| Clear overgrown areas/paths | Replenish resources – bring in sticks etc | Assess overall impact of use on current site, can measures be taken to minimise impact on future sites? |
| Chose suitable sites for hammocks/rope swings etc | Assess damage to trees – is this activity sustainable long term | Before moving site ensure all non-native items brought in for Forest school use are removed to enable the site to return to its state prior to use. |

**Links to Schools Relevant Policies**

All relevant policies can be found on the Little Seeds Montessori website on the general information page https://www.littleseedsmontessori.com/fees

Safeguarding policy

Emergency evacuation

Lost child

Behaviour policy

Equality

SEND policy

Food and Drink policy

Confidentiality policy

**Declaration or Review**

**I have read and understood:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date of Review** | **Signed by & Date** | **Comments** |
| 24/3/21 | Angie de Mink 24/12/21 |  |
|  |  |  |