



DOVEDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ONE Academy Trust



Dovedale Primary School Forest School Handbook





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Aims and Objectives

What is Forest School?

Forest school is an inspirational process that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem. This is achieved through hands-on learning experiences in an environment or woodland with trees. Learners are entitled to experience appropriate risk and challenge. They are also entitled to initiate and drive their own learning and development. For more information see the Forest School Association website at: <http://www.forestschoollassociation.org/>

Aims of Forest School

We believe everyone should have regular access to a natural environment which provides them with inspirational and challenging outdoor learning opportunities. The children will be in a safe environment where they can succeed, create, use and apply skills to the outdoors. Forest School offers a child-initiated approach, where children can learn through self-directed play and exploration. The children who take part will be given the opportunity to develop their curiosity, self-esteem, creativity, empathy, communication skills, knowledge of the natural environment and ability to assess risk. They will have the opportunity to understand, learn and respect the natural world around them.

Objectives

Our main objectives are to produce confident and capable children who:

- Are independent and resourceful
- Are happy and care for each other
- Do lots of outdoor physical activity
- Are gaining confidence and improving their practical skills
- Have good ideas and like to find out new things
- Can make choices and take responsibility
- Know when it is safe to take risks
- Understands, take care of and appreciates the natural environment

Roles and Responsibilities

Forest School Leader

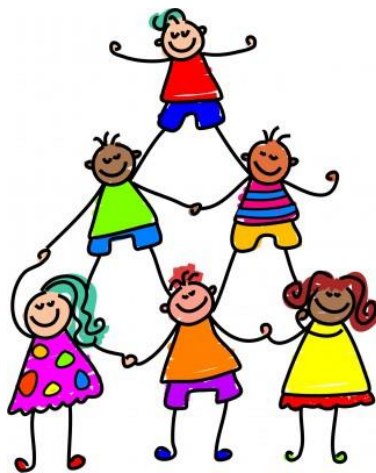
The Forest School Leader will:

- Plan and run sessions
- Suggest small, manageable tasks to support children's self-esteem and confidence
- Ensure that children have time and freedom to learn at their own pace without pressure
- Provide clear guidance and expectations to adults and children
- Ensure the safety of children and adults whilst on our school Forest School site
- Carry out risk assessments, safety checks of the school site prior to sessions
- Count equipment and tools in and out as well as maintain tools
- Take into consideration the specific needs of a particular group or individual
- Direct the group to safety in an event of an emergency

Teaching Assistants/Parent Helpers

Adults assisting the Forest School Leader will need to:

- Become familiar with the Forest School Handbook
- Assist groups with tasks and partake in activities
- Promote the ethos of Forest School to raise self-esteem and confidence
- Assist with making sure children have the appropriate clothing
- Ask open ended questions



Operating Procedures

What will happen?

Once the children are in appropriate clothing to take part in Forest School (checked by Forest School Leader and supporting staff), the class will walk to the Forest School site located on the school grounds. Each session begins around in a circle, where we talk through the safety rules for working outdoors and about respecting each other. For each session we have a lesson plan which includes small, manageable tasks and activities alongside a list of tools which will be available. The tasks and activities are used to support the children's self-esteem and confidence to use the outdoor environment. Children are also encouraged to become independent learners to explore their own interests and to attempt new ideas.

Tasks and Activities

Forest School tasks and activities are diverse and numerous. They will also depend on the ability and experience of the children taking part. Examples of Forest School activities include:

- Woodland management and nature exploration
- Building dens and other structures
- Team and group games
- Scavenger hunts and adventure
- Sensory activities
- Natural crafts
- Art and sculpture work
- Using tools
- Fires and cooking
- Rope and string work



Equipment

In addition to tools suited to the planned activities, the Forest School Leader will always have an emergency bag with them. The contents of the bag will vary depending on the time of year and weather conditions. There are of course also essential items that should be carried out for every session.

Essential equipment

- First Aid Kit
- Group List/IPad for register
- Medication for individual children (if required)
- Risk Assessments (assessable)
- Hand Gel, Baby Wipes

Other Possible Equipment

- Tools (Scissors, Gloves, Magnifying glasses, String, Identification book/cards)
- Sun Cream
- Sun Hat
- Water
- Plastic carrier bags

When Lighting a Fire

- Fire Blanket and Fire Gloves
- Water buckets
- Fire First Aid Kit
- Fire Steel
- Cotton Wool
- Matches
- Newspaper



Clothing



What do the children need to wear?

For cold/wet weather

- Wellington boots or appropriate walking boots
- Waterproof clothing
- Coat
- Warm Socks
- Jumper/fleece
- Hats and gloves

For warm weather

- Wellington boots or appropriate walking boots
- Long trousers to cover legs
- Waterproof coat/jacket
- Sun cream
- Sun hat

Medical Information

This information is kept by the school office and the Forest School Leader will be informed of any medical information about the individuals taking part in Forest School.



Accident Procedures

A first aid kit will be on site at all times and a first aid burns kit will also be on site when lighting a fire. If accidents do occur during Forest School sessions the Forest School Leader is first aid trained and the school's accident procedures will be followed. A written note is made of any accidents in the school's accident book.

Policy Summaries

Food Preparation

Children and staff are required to wash hands before eating. The Forest School Leader and all staff will be informed of any allergy's children may have. Children will not be allowed to swap food with others in case of food allergies.

Inclusion

Children with Special Educational Needs are integrated into mainstream classes and included in all the activities arranged by the school, providing that it is practicable for the pupil concerned and compatible with the efficient education of other pupils. The Governing Body will ensure that appropriate provision will be made for all pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Safeguarding Statement

Staff at Dovedale believe strongly in providing a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, moral and physical development of every child. We recognise that the welfare of the child is paramount and recognise that all children, regardless of religious belief, disability, gender and racial heritage should be protected from all types of harm and abuse. We will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Adopting rigorous child protection procedures for staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information regarding child protection with parents, staff, relevant agencies and volunteers