



Matchborough First School Academy



Outdoor and Forest Policy

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OUTDOOR AND FOREST POLICY

Definition

Outdoor and forest area at Matchborough First School Academy encompasses the Forest School England definition, which states that:

'The Forest is an inspirational process, that offers children and young people opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self-esteem, through hands on learning experiences in a local woodland environment.'

We are fortunate to be able to offer to all children opportunities to experience outdoor and a forest area here within our own setting.

Our aims are:-

- to build the children's independence and self-esteem.
- to combine freedom with responsibility.
- to allow children to experience changing seasons and all weathers
- for the children to discover their abilities without fear of failure or criticism.

We see the benefits of Outdoor learning and the forest area to the children as:-

- Extending their learning through real life experiences and self-initiated exploration.
- Giving them experiences that are enjoyable and rewarding.
- Creating opportunities for them to build on their previous experience
- Offering them a broad curriculum
- Creating opportunities for them to gain more awareness of environmental concerns.

We see the benefits of outdoor learning and using the forest area to the adults as:-

- Offering opportunities to observe children in different situations outside their usual experiences.
- Highlighting strengths and areas for development in planning their activities.
- Illustrating the different learning styles of the children.
- An opportunity to observe individual and group motivation.

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Considerations for Equality and Inclusion

Outdoors and in the forest we aim to treat all persons equally.

We aim to and are committed to:-

- Providing a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.
- Make inclusion a thread which runs through all of the activities carried out in Forest School.

The role of adults outdoors and in the forest

During an outdoor or forest session the adults should always be at hand to support the children in what they are doing. As the main ethos is about promoting self-confidence and esteem, they should at times step back and let the children lead.

Adults are expected to act in an appropriate manner and show respect for the environment thus acting as good role models for the children.

Health and Safety Considerations

Outdoor learning and forest sessions encourages early risk management strategies that will ensure children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and others.

Routines and procedures:

- If you attend the forest, you must have completed a safety sweep before the first session of the day.
- You must put onto the staff board if you are visiting the forest.
- Children must be dressed in appropriate seasonal clothes and footwear, arms and legs should be covered when visiting the forest area. (School has a stock of appropriate clothing)
- You must bring a first aid kit, mobile phone (in case of emergency) and you must count children into the forest and children out of the forest.
- Always come together at the start of the session on the logs to go through the rules of the forest: No running, no picking, no licking and drag your sticks behind you.

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- Teach children the game 1,2,3 Come to me. It is important children learn this game it could help them if they get disorientated and alone in the woods.

Emergency Procedure

- In the event of a serious accident or onset of a serious illness the Adult Leader will telephone for an ambulance without delay.
- Next, telephone school to explain clearly what has happened and if it is a child ask that the child's parents be informed. Request extra assistance for the other children if necessary.
- Ensure someone stays with the child or adult at all times.
- It is vital to keep the other children calm and reassured.

Cancellation Procedure

There may be times when Forest sessions have to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances e.g. severe weather conditions or a situation that poses a health and safety risk.

In the event of such a situation arising the designated Forest Leader/Headteacher will inform staff by writing a cancellation notice on the board in the staffroom.

Evaluation Procedure

In order to develop the Forest Sessions Program and to ensure good practice is maintained evaluation of the following is recommended:-

- Evaluation of sessions and activities undertaken
- Evaluation from children and staff involved in Forest School

Leading Parent Partnership Award

Matchborough First School Academy is committed to working towards, achieving and maintaining standards set by the Leading Parent Partnership Award. The benefits for pupils are the recognition and promotion of enhanced learning at school and home, promoting social and emotional wellbeing through improved school partnerships and supporting improvement in behaviour, attitudes, attendance and achievement.

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