

Great Barton CE Primary Academy



Forest School Handbook



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2. Statement of ownership

This handbook has been written by Mrs Abigail Bonsall February 2023.

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4. Learning and Development

Forest School at Great Barton CE Primary Academy endeavours to promote children's holistic development

Forest School sessions support the vision of the school.

#Growth During Forest School sessions, children are given opportunities to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the natural world, as well as growing in confidence. New skills are taught by a qualified Forest School leader.

#Respect Children are taught to respect each other and the environment. Looking after the environment, including the equipment, is one of the three Forest School agreements which is recapped at the start of every session.

#Enjoy Each session is child-led, allowing all children to make choices and follow their interests. Children have the opportunity to be fully immersed in outdoor play.

#Achieve All children are given support and encouragement to help them achieve and experience success. Achievements are regularly celebrated during reflection time and as part of log-circle discussions.

#Team Children play team games, work in pairs to safely use tools, collaborate in order to light camp fires and build dens. Turn taking and listening to one another is modelled by the adults and is essential during log-circle discussions.

The role of the adults is to observe children's play and listen to discussions in order to support planning of future activities.



5. Health and Safety

Staff and helpers:

Sessions are staffed by a minimum of two members of school staff at all times. One of the two Forest School Leaders will be present at all times and both leaders hold up-to-date qualifications in outdoor first aid and Level 3 Forest School qualifications. Safe tool use will be taught by the qualified Forest School leader and tool activities will be supervised by the qualified leader at all times.

All school teaching staff have read and signed the Forest School handbook. Any new member of staff will read the handbook as part of the induction process.

All additional Forest School helpers (parent helpers/governors) are asked to read the handbook to familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures at Forest School.

Risk management and risk assessment:

The qualified Forest School leaders are responsible for carrying out risk-benefit assessments for the planned for activities.

Risk-benefit assessments are undertaken to identify hazards and associated risks. Actions are put in place to reduce the level of the risks. The Forest School leader will consider the benefits of each planned for activity and will carefully consider how the activities will contribute to the holistic development of each child whilst keeping them as safe as possible.

Risk-benefit assessments will be reviewed by the Forest School leader annually or with a change of groups.

Prior to sessions commencing a site check will be carried out in order to identify and manage any changes to the environment, such as litter or fallen branches. All four layers of the site should be considered.

Dynamic risk assessments – at the time of the session – will be carried out at the time of need by all attending adults, with helpers liaising with the Forest School leader.

First Aid:

Both Forest School Leaders hold up-to-date outdoor first aid qualifications.

The main first aid kit can be located easily in the black and red Forest School rucksack.

The Forest School leader is responsible for replacing any used first aid kit.

An additional burn kit is taken separately to all sessions where a camp fire is planned.



Medication and medical needs:

Class teachers will take responsibility for specific medical needs and medication needed by members of their class. Class teachers will carry epi-pens or inhalers to Forest School sessions. They will liaise with Forest School leader regarding any change in medical condition as necessary.

Emergency and incident procedures:

In the event of an emergency, the lead for the session will assess the situation and administer first aid as necessary. Where the lead is using tools with children, they may ask the class teacher to carry out the first aid in their place. An additional adult may be required to accompany the other children away from the incident, in order to give the children receiving treatment privacy and in order to give the first aider space.

A first aid letter will be completed by the first aider, handed to the child or the parent/carer wherever possible.

Wherever possible, the Forest School lead, or class teacher, will speak directly to the parent/carer as soon after the session as they are able to.

Lost or missing child procedure:

A head count of the children will be carried out at the start and end of every session. Additional head counts can be carried out at the log circle seating area.

If a child is missing whilst visiting the on-school site, Happy Wood, an additional adult will leave the group in order to search the toilets and classroom whilst the class teacher and Forest School lead remain on site. If the child is not located, the Headteacher will be informed.

If a child is missing whilst visiting the off-site wood, Downing Wood, the emergency whistle will be blown, all children will return to the log circle for a head count. They will remain seated here with one adult, whilst the additional adults search the site and surrounding area. If the child is still not located, the rest of the class will return to the school with two adults (due to the crossing of roads), whilst one adult will remain at Downing wood. The school office will be telephoned immediately as will the police.

Hygiene:

A washing up bowl, warm soapy water and a hand towel will be taken to Happy Wood.

Anti-bacterial hand gel will be taken to Downing Wood.

Before any food, drink or cooking, hands will be washed.



6. Daily operating procedures

Before the session:

The Leader will have carried out a risk-benefit assessment and a site check.

Activities will be planned for and all equipment will have been collected, checked and packed prior to the start of the session.

The class teacher and leader will ensure that all children are dressed appropriately before leaving the classroom (long sleeves, long trousers, wellingtons or boots, coats, hats and gloves in cold weather and long hair tied back).

The class teacher will collect any inhalers or epi-pens.

Children will have been given opportunities to go to the toilet.

During the session:

The children will walk to Happy Wood/Downing Wood, led by the Forest School leader. The children will enter the site and stand outside the log circle until they are invited to step inside and sit down. Each session will begin with a recap/discussion about the Forest School agreements.

Whole group games or activities will be led by the Forest School leader and supported by additional adults.

Tool activities and camp fire will be led by the lead.

Each session will involve a mix of games, tools, free play and reflection time. Tools will be used within the log circle and children will only enter the circle once they have been invited to do so.

After the session:

Following a headcount, the class teacher will lead the class back to school/class. The Forest School leader is responsible for checking the site to ensure it is left as it was found and that all tools and equipment have been gathered in.

Once back at school/ children have returned to the classroom, the Forest School leader will return equipment to the correct places and will complete a reflection, identifying what they have observed during the session.

If any first aid has been carried out, paperwork is completed and a copy is given to the child/parent.



7. Safeguarding children at Forest School

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads for Great Barton CE Primary Academy are Mrs Claire Ratley (headteacher), Mrs Jane Green (deputy headteacher) and Mrs Suzanne Deeks (SENDCo).

If a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse it important that you:

- Do stay calm and listen carefully
- Do reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Do not investigate or ask leading questions
- Do let them know that you will need to tell someone else
- Do not promise to keep a secret
- Do inform the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible
- Do submit an online report using CPOMS without delay
- Do not include your opinion without saying it is your opinion
- Do refer without delay



8. Equality at Forest School

The primary aim of Forest School at Great Barton CE Primary Academy is to enable *all* children to take part as fully as possible, developing their self-confidence and independence, recognising their strengths and encouraging them to reach their full potential.

At Forest School we will take the following steps to advance equality of opportunity:

- All adults are expected to be role models for equal opportunities, treating all adults and children in a fair and respectful manner, irrespective of age, gender, race, religion, ability or sexual orientation
- All adults are expected to identify and challenge prejudice or stereotyping
- Bullying or prejudice related incidents must be dealt with effectively and reported to the head teacher and class teacher
- Reasonable adjustments must be made to ensure that the environment and activities are adapted to suit the age and abilities of all children

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to share any information with the Forest School lead about a child's disability so that adaptations can be made when planning sessions.



9. Behaviour at Forest School

The Forest School leader and all helpers will use a positive approach to behaviour at Forest School sessions. Encouragement and praise are used to help children to follow the school's golden rules, which are:

- Be respectful
- Be honest
- Be ready to learn
- Be safe

All adults model respectful verbal and non-verbal behaviours at all times. When positive behaviour, such as showing kindness or respect to others, is seen verbal praise/smiles or DOJO points can be awarded. Children can also be nominated for the pupil of the week award in Friday "Greatness" assemblies.

Sanctions may be applied for low level disruption, such as a verbal warning. Further disruptive and poor behaviour can result in a child's name being moved off the green and onto the amber when back in the classroom.

If a child's behaviour becomes unsafe at Forest School an adult can ask the child to sit out of an activity and should take the time to explain to the child why their behaviour has resulted in this.

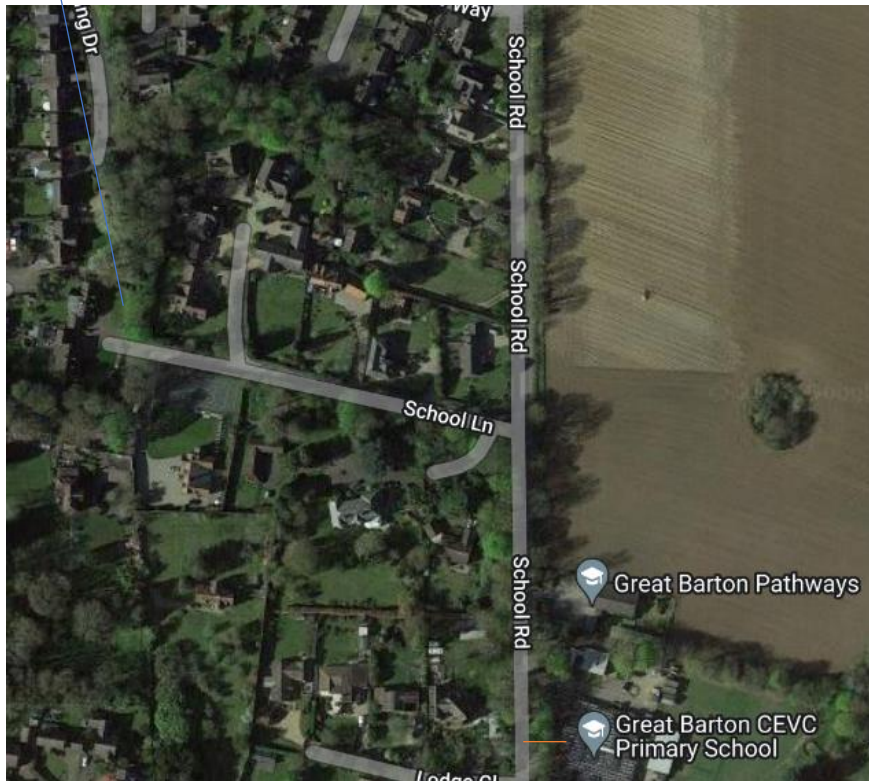
Wherever possible, the adult should listen to the child and should model an alternative and better choice for behaviour.

The three Forest School agreements are designed to encourage positive choices for behaviour. They are:

- I look after myself
- I look after others
- I look after the environment

10. Map of sites


Downing Wood entrance




Happy Wood entrance




Tool procedures

Bow saw	
Introduction:	This is a bow saw, used to cut wood too thick to cut using loppers. It can be used for felling trees, making tools and making wood cookies.
Description:	<p>This is the handle, this is the blade, this is the cutting edge, this is the cover.</p> 
Transportation:	To transport the bow saw, hold the handle at your side with the blade pointing down at the ground (like a handbag).
Position:	<p>If no saw horse is available place the log on two parallel logs on the ground, making a track.</p> <p>Stand or kneel. If kneeling, the knee furthest from the saw should be up and the other down on the ground.</p> <p>If standing, ensure both feet firmly and securely placed on the ground. Ensure a perimeter around you approximately the length of your arm, referred to as a blood bubble. Ensure no one walks into this space.</p>
Use:	Before use check blade for rust or bent or missing teeth. If safe, begin by making three initial cuts to make a groove, then use a push and pull motion.
Storage:	After use clean debris off blade using gloved hand. Use white spirit to clean when necessary. Return safety cover after use. Store in bah with blades facing away.
Additional PPE:	<p>Long hair tied back. Long sleeves and trousers. Glove on helping-hand only.</p> <p>Hard hat and steel toe boots used for tree felling.</p>


Mallet

Introduction:	This is a mallet. It is used for striking tent pegs into the ground. It can also be used for crafts such as printing leaves onto fabric.
Description:	This is the head. It can be rubber or wooden. The flat end is for striking. This is the handle. 
Transport:	Carry at your side, holding the handle with the head down towards to ground.
Position:	Kneel, the knee furthest from the mallet should be up and the other down on the ground. Ensure a perimeter around you approximately the length of your arm, referred to as a blood bubble. Ensure no one walks into this space.
Use:	Carefully remove from tool box. Hold using handle. Strike top of tent peg or lay leaf and fabric on flat wooden surface, ensuring hands and fingers and heads are clear of where you will strike. Glove worn on helping hand only.
Storage:	Store in tool box
Additional PPE:	Long hair tied back. Long sleeves and trousers. Glove on helping-hand only.


Fixed blade knife

Introduction:	This is a fixed blade/ sheath knife. It is used for whittling, carving and cutting.
Description:	This is the handle. This is the sheath. This is the blade. This is the cutting edge. 
Transportation:	When walking around in the woods, the sheath should always be on, the handle is held and the blade facing down. When passing, use a gloved hand to hold the sheath and pass the handle to the receiver. When needing to place the knife down, put it onto a mat or lean against a tree, the blade should not be on the ground.
Position:	Sit on a stable tree stump with knees together. Ensure a perimeter around you approximately the length of your arm, referred to as a blood bubble. Ensure no one walks into this space. Wear a glove on the helping hand only.
Use:	Always move the knife in a downwards motion moving away from your body. In the correct position, the knife is at a 45-degree angle. Never wear a glove on the hand holding the knife and always tuck your thumb away.
Storage:	Always check the blade before use for damage or rust. The blade can be cleaned using white spirit. Clean any debris off with a gloved hand. Knives with blades longer than 3 inches MUST be locked away. They should be stored in the locked box with the sheaths on.
Additional PPE:	Long hair tied back. Long sleeves and trousers. Glove on helping-hand only.

Bypass Loppers

Introduction:	This is a bypass lopper. It is used for cutting branches 10p piece in diameter.
Description:	<p>These are the handles. This is the blade. This is the cutting edge.</p> 
Transportation:	Hold the bottom handle at hip height. When passing, pass the handle to the receiver. When laying down, put on mat. Keep blades of the ground.
Position:	Ensure feet positioned firm and well balanced. Ensure a perimeter around you approximately the length of your arm, referred to as a blood bubble. Ensure no one walks into this space.
Use:	Can be used to cut wood no larger than 10p in diameter. To operate place a hand on each handle, position the branch between the cutting edges and push the handles together.
Storage:	Always check the cutting edges before use for damage or rust. The blades can be cleaned using white spirit. Clean any debris off with a gloved hand. Store in bag or box with blades facing the same way.
Additional PPE:	Long hair tied back. Long sleeves and trousers. Glove on helping-hand only.

Secateurs

Introduction:	These are secateurs. They are used for cutting smaller twigs, smaller than a penny.
Description:	<p>This is the blade. This is the cutting edge. This is the safety catch. These are the handles.</p> 
Transportation:	When walking in the woods, close and lock the safety catch. Hold at your side, next to your legs with the blade facing downwards. When passing, use a gloved hand to hold the blade and pass the handle to the receiver. When not using, place on a mat. Keep the blade off the ground.
Position:	Ensure feet positioned firm and well balanced. Ensure a perimeter around you approximately the length of your arm, referred to as a blood bubble. Ensure no one walks into this space.
Storage:	Always check for damage before use, check the nut is secure and not too tight/loose. Clean debris with a gloved hand. Clean with white spirit.
Use:	Can be used to cut wood no larger than a penny in diameter. To operate, release the safety catch, place a hand on each handle, position the branch between the cutting edges and squeeze the handles together.
Additional PPE:	Long hair tied back. Long sleeves and trousers. Glove on helping-hand only.