



Forest School Policy

Review of Policy	New Policy Autumn 2023
Members of staff responsible	Forest School Lead
Policy History	Ratified
People involved	Forest School Lead Head Teacher
Signed by Chair of LGB	Christine Robertson
Date	18/1/24
Date for Review	Spring 2027

Forest School Policies and Procedures

At Wyvern Academy we are committed to the importance of daily outdoor play and physical development in all children.

Forest School is great opportunity for children to develop and experience the outdoors in the most natural way possible. We will endeavour to make our forest school accessible to all of our children to use as freely and independently as is safely possible.

The Forest School will provide a wealth of natural resources which help children to develop in a variety of ways, including independence, exploration and investigative skills, risk taking and self-esteem all of which support children to develop skills for now and the future.

Children are provided with both adult-led and child-initiated opportunities to enable children to learn and practice new skills, knowledge and behaviours from the environment.

Wyvern Academy will ensure all areas are safe and secure through close supervision and the use of robust risk assessments and safety checks. The Forest School Leader and Staff are informed of the importance of these procedures and are trained appropriately to ensure these procedures are followed effectively. The Forest School Leader and accompanying practitioners will also have full knowledge of, and will pay regard to the contents of the academy's risk assessments relating to Forest School.

1. Missing Child from Forest School

In the unlikely event of a child going missing within/from the Forest School, the following procedure will be implemented immediately:

- The Forest School leader will inform the Head Teacher immediately and all staff present will be informed. Some staff will be deployed to start an immediate thorough search of the outdoor environment, then the school building, followed by a search of the surrounding area, whilst ensuring that some staff remain with the other children so they remain supervised, calm and supported throughout.
- The Forest School Leader alongside the Head Teacher will then follow the academy's lost child procedure.

2. Accident and First Aid in Forest School

- The Forest School Leader must hold an up to date outdoor first aid qualification alongside an up to date paediatric first aid certificate. Staff accompanying pupils alongside the Forest School Leader should be familiar with pupils individual medical needs and carry their emergency medication according to their individual medical protocol and intimate care plan.
- The Forest School Leader is responsible for reporting accidents, incidents or near misses onto the school database promptly naming any staff who were witnesses to the incident. The Forest School leader should inform the class teacher, SLT and parents.

- In case of more serious injury the Forest School Leader will inform the School Office who will phone the emergency services, Head Teacher and Parents. Deploy extra staff to Forest School site if appropriate, the remaining pupils will be escorted back to school by Forest School staff.
- The Forest School Leader will review the accidents weekly for any possible patterns to be identified e.g. an accident occurring in the same place. Any patterns will be investigated and addressed if necessary by the Forest School Leader.
- The Forest School Leader has access to a First Aid kit and a Burns Kit will be located in the Forest School environment at all times.
- The academy's policy and procedures for accidents and first aid will be followed at all times by all practitioners.

3. Forest School's Fire Safety Procedure and Emergency Evacuation Procedure

- During all campfire activities the Forest School Leader will ensure that there is a bucket of water next to the fire in case of emergency. A burns kit and fire blanket must be immediately available at all times, and flammable material must be removed before the fire is lit.
- The Forest School Leader and accompanying practitioners have full knowledge of, and will pay regard to the contents of the academy risk assessments relating to lighting a campfire (See Forest School Handbook risk assessments section).
- It is the Forest School Leader's responsibility to maintain the safe use of the campfire and that the fire is kept under control at all times.
- The Forest School Leader is the only adult who may light a campfire or lead an activity involving the fire. Any practitioner or assisted child who is involved with the lighting and maintaining of the camp fire, must at all times wear protective gloves of the appropriate size. All practitioners involved in any activities involving the camp fire must have their hair tied back at all times. Whilst a campfire is lit, the Forest School Leader must not at any time leave the fire unsupervised for any reason, even if there are other adults present.
- At the end of a campfire activity it is the Forest school Leader's responsibility to extinguish the fire in a safe way by using the bucket of water already at the scene. The fire must be completely extinguished and there is no detectable heat rising from it.
- In the event of a fire becoming out of control the Forest School Leader will take responsibility for organising the safe evacuation of all children and adult's present in the Forest School area to the academy's designated fire assembly point (The car park), and alerting the Head Teacher immediately of the situation via walkie talkie. The academy will then follow its Fire Evacuation Policy and Procedure.

4. Forest School Allergies, Allergic Reactions and Medication Procedure

- Prior to the session staff will be made aware of the signs and symptoms of a possible allergic reaction in case of an unknown or first reaction in a child. These may include a rash or hives, nausea, stomach pain, diarrhoea, itchy skin, runny eyes, shortness of breath, chest pain, swelling of the mouth or tongue, swelling to the airways to the lungs, wheezing and anaphylaxis.
- The Forest School Leader and accompanying practitioners have full knowledge of, and will pay regard to the contents of the academy's risk assessments relating to the outdoor environment.
- The Forest School Leader and accompanying practitioners have full knowledge of and will pay regard to the contents of the academy's Medication Policy and Procedures document and the Procedure for the use of inhalers/hand held medication. For some children their inhaler/medication may need to be immediately accessible during a Forest School activity, in which case it will be safely stored in a container alongside the first aid kit to enable all first aid trained practitioners to administer if necessary.

5. Forest School's Safe Use and Maintenance of Tools

- The Forest School Leader and accompanying practitioners have full knowledge of, and will pay regard to the contents of the academy's risk assessments relating to the outdoor environment and use of tools and equipment.
- Activity Risk Assessments are completed by the Forest School Leader for all activities involving the use of tools.
- At the beginning of an activity the Forest School Leader will demonstrate and explain the safe use of the tools required to complete the activity planned for that session. This is called a 'Tool Talk'.
- Any practitioner or child using a tool as part of an activity must wear a glove on their non-tool hand at all times, and will be supervised on a one to one ratios with the Forest School Leader providing the correct level of support for the duration of the activity.
- The Forest School Leader will be responsible for the maintenance and cleaning of all tools.
- The Forest School Leader will wear appropriate protective equipment as necessary when carrying out tool maintenance and will follow the methods they developed from their training.

6. Manual Handling in Forest School

- Correct handling techniques must be followed to minimise the risks of injury. A variety of injuries may result from poor manual handling and staff must all be aware and adhere to the academy's manual handling policy.
- The Forest School Leader is responsible for modelling safe manual handling to the children and assessing their age and ability whether it is safe and appropriate for them to move loads such as logs or rocks, due to the weight, size and shape, taking into consideration factors such as weather conditions.

7. Forest School Food Activity Management

- The Forest School Leader and accompanying practitioners have full knowledge of, and will pay regard to the contents of the academy's policy and procedures for children who have allergies and allergic reactions.
- It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader when carrying out a food activity to maintain the fire and the cooking of the food. The Forest School Leader will supervise staff and children who assist with the cooking. When doing so they must be wearing protective gloves.
- When children are preparing or handling food using tools such as knives it is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to ensure they are using them safely and correctly on a one to one ratio.
- A risk assessment will be completed before each activity involving cooking on the campfire.

8. Litter and Disposal of Waste from Forest School

- When in Forest School it is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader and accompanying practitioner to demonstrate the correct way to dispose of litter and waste to and children. They should also be made aware of why it is important to do so, encouraging children to care for their own environment.
- Children should be encouraged to tidy up after themselves and dispose of their own litter in a designated spot. This will be a carrier bag or big bag provided by the Forest School Leader who will dispose of it appropriately at the end of the activity.
- Items that are suitable to compost will be placed in the compost site within Forest School. It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to maintain the compost area.

9. Privacy

Within Forest School, it is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their families and we will do so by:

- Ensuring that all staff, volunteers and students are aware that information is confidential and only for use within the academy
- Ensuring staff do not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs
- Ensuring any concerns/evidence relating to a child's personal safety are kept in a secure, confidential file within the academy and are shared with as few people as possible on a "need-to-know" basis. If, however, a child is considered at risk, the academy's Child Protection Policy will override confidentiality.

13. Forest School Safeguarding Procedure

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, for the sake of this policy is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. (Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015') Within the forest school environment and the nursery as a whole, we support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's health and development.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the academy's Child Protection Policy.

We strive to ensure Forest School is a child led experience; the children are encouraged by practitioners to follow their own interests. All practitioners should demonstrate to the children respect for each other and their Forest School environment, encouraging children to do the same.

Whilst in Forest School we will ensure that opportunities for learning and development are available to all.

The Forest School Leader and accompanying practitioners also have full knowledge of and will pay regard to the contents of the academy's Equality Policy.