Forest School

Handbook

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Forest School

What is Forest School
Forest School was originally a Scandinavian concept, created to counter a lack of indoor space for pre-school children. In 1993, a group of nursery nurses from Bridgewater College in Somerset visited Denmark to develop an understanding of their Early Year's settings. The staff were impressed with the focus on outdoor learning through play and the child centred approach to activities.
When the staff returned to England, they started to implement what they had seen into their own setting at the college crèche. The staff noticed the children became more creative and were able to scaffold skills and ideas. The nursery nurses were spurred on from the success and created their own version of Forest School. Two years later, in 1995 Bridgewater College created its first programme and qualification in Forest School. This was specifically offered to Early Years practitioners and turned out to be very popular. Following on from this initial success, popularity grew across The United Kingdom and in 2000 The Forest School Alliance and many local authorities introduced Forest School.

The Ethos of Forest School
The ethos of Forest School is based on a fundamental respect for children and for their capacity to instigate, test and maintain curiosity in the world around them. It believes in children's right to play, the right to access the outdoors, the right to access risk and the vibrant reality of the natural world. A wealth of research supports the beliefs and benefits of Forest School for children.

Forest School at Overleigh St Mary's CofE Primary School
At Overleigh, the children only access the woodland area during our Forest School inspired sessions. During these sessions, the children can explore the woodland (a safe and risk assessed area), this includes making obstacle courses, den building, using a range of tools, digging, messy play in the mud kitchen, relaxing in a swaying pod or hammock, playing games and playing with and around natural resources, such as leaves, flowers, sticks and trees. This type of play helps children to assess and manage their own risk as well as use their imagination to create games. The possibilities are limitless!

We are passionate about encouraging Outdoor Learning and Forest School at Overleigh and the aims of the sessions are to inspire, encourage, motivate and engage the children. Sessions are a process which is built upon and should encourage holistic development, confidence and skills, such as risk management and a knowledge of the environment.

Our site/map
Our Forest School inspired sessions take place in our woodland area, which is partly located on the school's playing fields and partly located on a part of the playground (see maps below).
Our site is still in development.

Google Maps/Satellite image of Overleigh St Mary's CofE Primary School, Old Wrexham Rd, Chester CH4 7HS

Picture of our Forest School site

Provision

Forest School inspired sessions will be offered throughout the school year to all year groups (from Nursery to Year 6) on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. The sessions will last for approximately 1 hour each. There are currently 15 classes at Overleigh but only 12 Forest School sessions per week. This means we have to offer our Forest School inspired sessions on a rotation basis to give all children the opportunity to experience Forest School. We endeavour to rotate the classes in such a way that throughout their time at Overleigh, all children get to experience Forest School in the different seasons. In addition to Forest School, we encourage outdoor cross curricular learning throughout Overleigh St Mary's CofE Primary School. Each half term, some sessions will be forest school inspired sessions, and some sessions will be outdoor learning sessions.

Roles and Responsibilities

Forest School at Overleigh St Mary's CofE Primary School is carried out with an adult to child ratio of 1:30. The ideal Forest School ratio of 1:8 is not possible due to staffing. Additional adult support will be provided to those children who have a disability or SEN needs. In practice, most sessions are staffed on a 1:15 adult to child ratio. A separate activity risk assessment has been completed for each activity (see Risk Assessments) by the Forest School Leader. All staff and helpers supporting the Forest School leader are DBS checked. All staff and adults involved in Forest School, are required to read this handbook, appropriate risk assessments and understand to comply with the safety guidelines prior to taking part in any Forest School sessions. It is the responsibility of each adult to familiarise themselves with their role prior to the Forest School sessions. All adults attending Forest School should remain flexible in their approach, whilst also ensuring their duties are met. All adults are responsible for monitoring behaviour and safety.

Outlined below are the responsibilities of the Forest School Leader and/or any other staff/helpers.

FSL	FSL or Adult 2	FSL or Adult 3
○ Ensure a working and fully charged radio and mobile phone are taken out on each session ○ Perform Daily/Session safety check ○ Administer or call for first aid ○ Complete observations throughout ○ Ensure First Aid and Burns Kit are taken outside ○ Ensure a laminated copy of the FS Handbook is taken outside ○ Lead sessions	○ Ensure class medication box is taken outside ○ Help prepare (hot) drinks and snacks during sessions (when applicable) ○ Help to wash up ○ Ensure good handwashing practices throughout each session ○ Take children to the toilet/change children when needed ○ Provide verbal observations to the FS leader ○ Actively help during sessions. If not sure how, ask!	○ Refill water buckets before/during sessions when needed ○ Help children use the handwashing facilities ○ Help hand out drinks and snacks (when applicable) ○ Ensure all children are wearing appropriate footwear and clothing before leaving school

Communication
To enable the successful operating of Forest School, key stakeholders (Head teacher, Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Governors, and Parents) will be informed of the aims, objectives and outcomes in a variety of ways periodically throughout the year.

Environmental impact
Part of Forest School is teaching children about caring for the environment and sustainability. Good modelling of sustainability is key in ensuring that children develop an understanding of the importance of it, not only in relation to Forest School, but to the wider world – past, present and future. Through Forest School, it is hoped that children will develop a relationship with our site, understand what grows and lives there and how we can sustain and look after our site. Where possible, children should be encouraged to take part in small conservation tasks such as planting trees, protecting wildflowers and building mini beast hotels. We have a woodland management plan in place, with objectives to minimise the impact of our activities on the site. We aim to balance the benefits the woodland provides to our children with care for the natural environment. The site continues to be developed during the 2024-2025 school year and we are hoping to finish our outside classroom facility by adding on a welly storage area and an awning to the front.

Forest School rules
- ✓ All our school rules apply in Forest School.
- ✓ We stay within the Forest School area.
- ✓ We walk in forest school.

- ✓ We don't put anything in or near our mouths.
- ✓ We don't swing in the pods or hammocks. We don't push each other on the rope swings.
- ✓ We follow our stick rules i.e.:
    - You measure sticks on your arm (elbow to top of fingers). When the stick is shorter than your arm, you can hold it in your hand and walk around with it. Longer sticks must be dragged behind you.
    - Sticks that are wider than your wrist can't be used for den building.
    - Sticks only hit on sticks.
- ✓ We follow our tool rules i.e.:
    - Always remember your safety/blood bubble when using tools.
    - We look after our tools/equipment.
    - We use our tools and equipment sensibly and always put these back safely when finished.
- ✓ We are respectful to plants and animals.
- ✓ We don't pick any plants, leaves or flowers unless we are told we can.
- ✓ We look after ourselves and clean our hands after touching plants or animals, after going to the toilet and before having our snack.
- ✓ We always stop what we are doing and come back when we hear the whistle blow.

Code of Conduct
The children are aware of the FS rules. The children know to immediately stop what they are doing and gather around the FSL if the whistle is blown. Children will always be made aware of how far they can explore before a session begins.

Picking up and playing with sticks
Children will be allowed to carry and play with sticks shorter than their arm's length (elbow to tip of finger) and thinner than their wrist. We only hit sticks on sticks. Longer sticks can be dragged, carried vertical or with a child at both ends. Sticks must not be thrown, nor are children allowed to pull them from living trees.

Tree climbing
Note: Currently tree climbing is not allowed at the Forest School site.
A risk assessment will be carried out before tree climbing can happen in any session. Areas below climbing trees must be checked for sharp objects and the tree checked for loose branches. Children may only climb designated trees and only one child per tree. Children are not to climb higher than their own height and branches must be wider than their arm to climb on (this will be taught). Unsafe or tempting trees are to be marked with a hazard tape.

Rope and string use
Children will be encouraged to connect and transport materials with rope or string but prevented from tying up other children or themselves! If a child has a good idea and wants, for example, to try and build a rope swing, we do help them and use the opportunity to model appropriate knot tying. All string and rope must be collected up at the end of the session.

Carrying and transporting materials
Children are encouraged to roll, lift, drag and pull materials either by hand or using ropes. The safe way to lift, by bending your knees and keeping your back straight will be modelled by all adults. Heavier objects will be rolled, dragged or carried by more people.

Digging
There will be a designated area for digging. Children will be shown how to look after the tools. Children will be shown how to look carefully for insects and their habitats and look after them when they have found them.

Collecting Wood
Wood can only be collected from the ground layer of our woodland.

Requirements and Equipment

Equipment needed at Forest School

FSL bag		Base Camp		Campfire	
Forest School Handbook Class list and Allergy Lists Additional medications First Aid Kit Radio Phone Sun protection lotion Wet wipes Tissues Gloves Bin bags Whistle		Log circle and benches Tarpaulin Ropes Handwashing facilities		Old paper Cotton wool buds Fire lighters Kindling Wood Fire pit Wafters Gloves Burns Kit (incl. burn gel) Fire Blanket Cling film Lidded fire bucket with clean water	

Drinks & Snack		Continuous provision/play		Tool use and activities	
Water bottles children Water bottle + cups Snack Thermos flask Coffee/tea/hot choc/sugar Milk Marshmallows (veg option) Spoons Washing up facilities		Tires and planks Hammocks and pods Tarps, ropes, mallets Mud kitchen, pans, spoons Tuff tray, magnifying glasses, bug pots, books, ID-sheets Small world play Spades/trowels for digging area, water bowl, sponges, brushes		These are dependent on each individual session and will be listed on the session plan.	

Clothing Requirements/PPE

“There’s no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing”
All parents/carers have been informed about the Forest School dress code through email and/or central messaging system and the newsletter. Ideally all children must wear a t-shirt or long-sleeved top and full-length trousers or leggings, no matter the season. Children must wear sturdy shoes or

wellies. Parents/carers have also been asked to supply a waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers or a puddle suit if they have them. We have invested in rain suits for the nursery children. Parents/carers are also responsible for providing and applying an all-day sunscreen to their children prior to them attending school, in line with the usual school practice.
In summer, light layers are recommended and sun hats. In winter, multiple layers are advised including hats, scarves and gloves.

First Aid Bags/Equipment

First Aid Kit	Burns First Aid Kit
1 Bandage, Conforming 2 Bandages, Triangular 1 Dressing, Burn 2 Dressings, Eye Pad 2 Dressings, Finger 2 Dressings, HSE Medium 2 Dressings, HSE Large 1 Foil Blanket, Adult 6 Gloves, Pair 1 Guidance Leaflet 40 Plasters, Wash proof Assorted 1 Resuscitation Face Shield 1 Shears 1 Tape, Microporous 20 Wipes, Cleansing 3 Eye pad dressings, no. 16 Eye wash	2 Bandages, Conforming 2 Burn Dressing, 2,5cmx5cm 2 Burn Dressing, 10cmx10cm 6 Burn gel, Sachets 3.5g 2 Eye wash, Pods 20ml 1 Foil blanket, Adult 1 Gloves, Pair 1 Guidance Leaflet 3 Plasters, Burn Large 2 Plasters, Burn Small 1 Shears 1 Tape, Microporous
Expiry Date: 05/2025	Expiry Date: 10/2025

Policies and Procedures

Note:
Overleigh St Mary's CofE Primary School has many additional policies, which will be adhered to, alongside these policies during Forest School sessions within our woodland. All Overleigh St Mary's CofE Primary School's policies can be found on the school website under School Information-School Policies, see: http://www.overleighstmarysce.cheshire.sch.uk/page/school-policies/10191.

Legislation considered for policies
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
Children Act 2004
RIDDOR
Disability Discrimination Act 2005
Race Relations Acts 1976 & 2000
Sex Discrimination Act 1986
Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

Implementation
Risk assessments, good practice, Forest School activities, rules for tools and fire etc. can all be found in this handbook, which contains everything you need to know about our Forest School sessions, for example: procedures, risk assessments, environmental impacts etc. A laminated Forest School handbook is taken into the woodland on each visit, this contains vital information needed for each session which includes procedures in the event of an emergency, etc.

Minor and Major Injuries
The Forest School leader (Karen Hoekstra) has undergone Emergency First Aid at Work training. Date: 02/09/2022. All staff attend a tri-annual First Aid at Work skills update/refresher course.
At Overleigh St Mary's CofE primary school, multiple staff members have obtained Emergency and /or Paediatric First Aid and they can be called upon whenever necessary.

Minor accidents
In the event of a minor incident or injury, the FSL will perform first aid on site, e.g., cuts and grazes, minor burns, small bumps or bruises, etc. The FSL will radio through to school to ask for assistance, if required, for someone to monitor the group before performing first aid. The accident will be recorded in line with usual school policies in the Minor Accident Report Book and a copy will be held in the Forest School First Aid Book.

Major Accident
In case of a major incident or injury, a qualified First Aid staff member will perform first aid. The FSL will radio through to school to ask for assistance. If required, the FSL will ring the emergency services using their mobile phone. A staff member from school will come out and take the other children back to school. The FSL/First Aider will stay with and keep monitoring the injured child. The office staff will go and locate the ambulance if needed and bring ambulance and paramedics to the casualty. Office staff will follow procedure and contact child's parents/carers. The FSL/First Aider will explain to paramedics what first aid has been given and accompany the child to hospital if necessary. After the event, the FSL will write up the accident in the Major Accident Report Book. The FSL will inform the management team and, if needed, complete a RIDDOR form. The FSL will also review the risk assessment and make any required changes.

Missing/Lost child

The forest school site is located within the school grounds and has fences and gates all around. Children are counted before, during sessions at regular intervals and afterwards. Children are instructed that they must stay within eyesight of the FSL. The children know to stop what they're doing when the whistle is blown and immediately gather around the FSL. In the event of a suspected lost or missing child the FSL will gather all children and count them. If a child seems to be missing, the FSL will immediately make note of the time, ask for assistance, and inform the school office by radio or mobile phone. A search will be made for the missing child as soon as possible, parents and authorities will be notified at the appropriate stage, and a high level of care is maintained to the other children while procedures are followed.

- The FSL will check the register to confirm the child came to forest school.
- A quick search of surrounding areas will take place.
- While the initial search is made, the FSL will make enquiries of all adults to establish the last sighting and time, clothes that the child was wearing, and the mental state of the child (happy, upset etc.).
- Office staff will telephone the police and report the situation and follow their advice.
- The parent or carer will be contacted.
- Telephone lines should remain as free as possible so that messages are not delayed.
- The activities for the remaining children will continue as normal and staff not involved in the search will give the children proper attention.

Fire Procedure

Campfires are an important part of Forest School and are used in many sessions. The Forest School leader is wholly responsible for the lighting of the fire. A fire should never be left unattended – with an adult at the fire at all times. A fire square/triangle will be created to ensure the fire is secure. A fire will not be lit unless all fire safety equipment is present. Children will not run near a fire and children will be asked to sit on the seating provided around the fire circle 1.5 metres from the fire. If children wish to move seats, they must leave the fire circle and walk around. Nothing should be thrown into the fire, and no one should reach over/across the fire at any time. A full risk assessment must be made before a fire is lit.

<u>Location</u>

- Only the designated site will be used for campfires. This site will be sited away from low canopy branches. The FSL to ensure no dead trees are nearby and could fall onto the fire circle.
- A fire square/triangle will be created to ensure the fire is secure.
- FSL to check soil, ensuring this is not too dry. FSL to pick up any leaves and other combustible materials around the fire to prevent the fire from accidentally spreading.
- FSL to ensure measurements and distances are correct.

<u>Positioning of Children and Adults</u>

- Fire areas are surrounded by seating at least 1.5 metres away from the fire pit.
- For younger children, an additional circle/barrier will be put in place between the fire pit and seats to ensure children stay a safe distance from the fire pit.
- FSL to establish ground rules with the children.
- When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area immediately surrounding the fire without permission.
- Children will be taught how to change seats by standing up, stepping back and then walking around the outside of the seating area. They must never cross the inner area.
- Children must walk around the outside of the seating area and sit down on one of the seats provided. A fire will not be lit with a group until all children have demonstrated that they do this at all times.

- Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.
- The FSL to explain cooking sticks can be used and explain distance will be 1 meter so no hands will be near the fire**.** The 'respect position' should be used when kneeling by the fire. The FSL will hand out PPE gloves and fire cooking sticks to children.
- Long sleeves and trousers must always be worn.
- Children are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire.
- Advice on the appropriate way for dealing with smoke will be given to the children.
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.
- If wind direction is variable, the leader should rearrange the seating if possible.

Fire Lighting

- Training has been provided to the Forest School Leader regarding the way to construct and light a fire. FSL will wear correct PPE and use fire gloves.

Safety and Responsibility

- The FSL to establish an assembly point and check telephone signal in case of emergencies.
- A fire blanket, bucket of water, Burns Kit and cling film must be sited close to the campfire.
- Before lighting any fire, the FSL will check the local weather forecast as windy conditions may blow burning embers for significant distances.
- FSL to ensure there are no trip or slip hazards.
- Only adults are permitted to light fires, unless children are under the direct supervision of the Forest School Leader.
- Fires are lit using a fire steel, cotton wool, paper, tinder and wood. A fire lighter or waterproof matches may be used in extremely wet conditions.
- No flammable liquids are to be used to light or accelerate fires.
- No plastics are to be burnt.
- If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with one-to-one adult supervision.
- Sticks/wood must be placed, not thrown, from the side of the fire. The hand should never go over the fire.
- The fire will never be left unattended.

Extinguishing

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- Whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash.
- The Forest School Leader should ensure that any large remains of wood, especially when using logs, are separated from one another.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until cool, and all smoke and steam have ceased.
- The ash should be scattered around the woodland to decompose by the FSL.
- There should be no trace of the fire left behind.

Emergency fire procedure

- If the fire got out of control and the FSL was not able to extinguish it.
- The FSL will remove children from the surrounding area.
- The FSL will radio through to school to ask for assistance. If required, the FSL will ring the emergency services using their mobile phone. A staff member from school will come out and take the children back to school.
- The office staff will go and locate the fire engine and bring the fire engine and firefighters to the

location of the fire.

- FSL to stay a safe distance from the fire and explain to fire crew what has been used.

Post event

- The FSL to write up accident in Accident Book.
- The FSL to review the risk assessment and make any required changes.
- The FSL to inform management team.
- If needed, the FSL will complete a RIDDOR form.

Daily Operating Procedure

Prior to any FS session	FSL to check weather forecast. FSL to check equipment, including First Aid kit. FSL to check drink and snack supply. FSL to check medical forms and re-familiarise with medical conditions if necessary. FSL to check permissions. FSL to check ratios are in line with guidelines. FSL to complete Daily/Session safety check record of site.
Before we go	All children to go to the toilet FSL to check children are correctly dressed. FSL to give out any spare clothing. FSL to complete FS register and perform headcount.
Arrival on site	FSL headcount children. FSL to welcome children into base camp/fire circle and recap rules of Forest School. FSL to discuss expectations and possible sanctions. FSL to (re-)introduce areas.
During session	FSL to ensure rules are adhered to. FSL to headcount on regular intervals.
End of session	FSL to call all children back together as a group using their whistle. FSL to perform headcount. FSL and children to tidy up. FSL to collect and count in equipment.
Arrival back in school	FSL to headcount children. FSL to feedback back to class teacher.
After session	FSL to clean equipment and put away in the Forest School storage area. FSL to review plans and annotate any reflections, observations and implications for future sessions.

Parental permission and information
All parents/carers will be notified when their children are due to have Forest School sessions. If parents/carers do not want their children to take part, they must let school office staff know, who in turn will inform the FSL and class teacher. The class teacher will arrange other provision for these children during Forest School sessions.
Any medical information is taken from parents/carers when children start school at Overleigh St Mary's CofE Primary School. It is the parents/cares' responsibility to update school of any updates and/or changes. This information is shared with the FSL. FSL and assistants must be aware of each child's medical needs. A copy of the medical conditions and allergy list is kept with the Forest School Handbook. Any additional medications, such as Epi Pens and inhalers are kept in a clearly labelled box in each class and this box comes out to each Forest School session. Parents of children who are on regular medication have filled in a medication request form, which can be found in the medical file in school.

Food Preparation Policy
Eating represents a social time for children and adults and a time to refuel and take stock of the session. If food is provided by Forest School, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. We aim to meet the full requirements of Ofsted's Care Standards on Food and Drink (Standard 8). Staff who are involved in preparing food or snacks at Forest School will have completed a Food & Hygiene course and hold a valid certificate.
Before any child attends school, we find out from parents what their children's dietary needs are, including any allergies, through permission forms and the school's allergy list. All staff and volunteers are fully informed about individual children's dietary needs. Children receive only food and drink which is consistent with their dietary needs and their parents' wishes, as per form. Staff are aware of the dietary rules and requirements of various religious groups, to which children and parents may belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and are aware of possible food allergies. We take this information into account when providing food and drinks. We always have fresh drinking water available for children on site. Children know where they can get a drink and that they can ask for water at any time during the session/day.

Manual Handling
Forest School activities can be physically demanding for the children and staff. Some heavy objects, such as logs, tree trunks etc. may be moved and carried. So, it is wise to be aware of best practise, to avoid back injuries and manual handling principals are followed:

- Keep load close to waist and the heaviest side next to body
- Think and plan where and how object is to be moved
- Adopt a stable position feet apart
- Take a good hold
- Avoid bending your back
- Avoid twisting
- Keep head up and look ahead
- Clear path/put load down if you need to adjust it/ Move smoothly
- Work within a team if the object is too heavy to lift.
- Use rope and a secure knot to drag a branch if needed.

Inclusion, Equality and Diversity
All children will be included with all activities and no form of discrimination will take place; reasonable adjustments will be made to make it inclusive for all. Inclusion is a thread which runs through all Forest School activities regardless of a child's ability, disability, gender, race, culture, etc. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and

belief, and sexual identity. We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.
The Protected Characteristics that apply are:

- Promoting equality and making services and employment accessible to all
- Treating people fairly, regardless of their race (colour; ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Gender and gender identity
- Sex or sexuality
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Disability
- Age

We will ensure all children are treated fairly and with respect by their peers and by the range of adults that work with them, including teachers, leaders and volunteers. All Forest School activities are planned to be open to all children, no matter their need and they are designed in a way so every child can be successful in their activity. Overleigh St Mary's CofE Primary School has an Equality Policy and a Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Policy, which will be adhered to during our Forest School sessions.

Weather

The Forest School sessions will run throughout all seasons. The Forest School site will not be used if the conditions are deemed too dangerous. Prior to each session the Met Office Weather Forecast will be checked to determine the forecasted conditions for the day as well as an onsite check, if conditions allow. In accordance with Overleigh St Mary's CofE Primary School's Health & Safety Policy the site will not be used in severe weather conditions, including wind (over 6 on the Beaufort scale and over 25mph wind gust), lightening/thunderstorms, and extreme cold (sustained temperature of -4 degrees Celsius for duration of session).
In hot weather conditions, precautions should be implemented to avoid illness or injury caused by heat such as heatstroke, heat exhaustion or sun burn. Appropriate clothing, in line with the weather conditions such as cold weather or hot weather, must be worn by all attending the Forest School session. Sun cream must be applied prior to attending the session and topped up accordingly in hot weather conditions. Water will be provided in hot water conditions and a hot drink will be provided in cold weather conditions.
Our new container/outdoor classroom will provide shelter from rain and sun. If we cannot access the container for any reason, a tarp will be erected on site. This will be erected by the Forest School Leader and/or assistant. The tarp and attaching materials are to be checked for any signs of wear or tear that may deem it unsafe. The decision as to whether the Forest School session can go ahead based on weather conditions remains with the Forest School Leader.

Toileting and Handwashing

All children will be asked to use the toilet facilities within the school building prior to any Forest School session. If a child requires the toilet during a Forest School session, the Forest School Leader will use their radio to ask for assistance if required. This is to ensure that maximum numbers of staff remain available to support Forest School activities. Staff escorting children to the toilets, should encourage good handwashing at all times.
Forest School leader is to ensure that handwashing facilities are available on the Forest School site, providing water, soap and a towel. It is essential that eco-friendly soap is used on site – to minimise ecological damage. Children and adults must wash their hands properly after activities and before and after snack, preferably using the wash basin on site and/or anti-bacterial wipes/gel. At the end

of the session, on return to school the adults and children must all again wash their hands using the indoor wash basin and soap facilities.

No Touch, No Taste

Due to the nature of the environment, there will be things on site that may cause health problems to those who access the woodland. These may include:

- Species such as Fungi. These are often present in the woods in the autumn season and some types -if touched or ingested- may cause skin irritation or poisoning.
- Although no poisonous plants have been identified in the woodland, they still may be present based on the season and can cause skin irritations or poisoning if ingested.
- As some berries are poisonous, children and adults are advised not to pick berries or put them in their mouths unless given permission to by an adult (such as blackberries)
- Animal faeces may also be present whether wild animal or a domestic one such as cats and dogs. This can also cause health problems to people if touched or ingested.

To minimise the risk of associated health problems there remains a 'No Touch, No Taste' policy to deter children and adults from touching flora and fauna that is not familiar to them. To protect the natural environment and help to prevent the declination of certain flora/fauna species the act of picking wildflowers will not be allowed. If there is an abundance of flowers such as common daisy, dandelion, or buttercups the children may be able to collect a limited amount under the supervision of the FSL. Children and adults are reminded to wash their hands after activities and prior to snack when in the woods to minimise the risk of health problems.

Photography

Parents/carers at Overleigh St Mary's CofE Primary School have filled in a consent form for photographs to be taken. There are very few children who are not to be photographed. FSL to check photography consent list prior to sessions. There are some pupils whose pictures cannot be shared on the school website or outside of school. Photographs taken can be used for educational purposes (within the school). Photos must only be taken using the school camera or tablets.

Safeguarding

Please note this is an OUTLINE OF CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES, our full safeguarding policy can be found in school and on the school website; all school staff have access to this.

Staff:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Allow the child to talk freely
- Reassure the child but not make any promises which might not be possible to keep
- Not promise confidentiality – it might be necessary to refer to Social Services
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not his or her fault
- Reassure the child and stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Listen rather than ask direct questions
- Ask open questions rather than leading questions
- Do not criticise the perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told
- Identify concerns and record on an internal record form
- Pass on concerns to appropriate designated safeguarding lead, or in absence to the deputy safeguarding lead or in absence to the LA.

It is fundamental that children's basic needs are met before any learning can take place (Maslow's Pyramid of Hierarchical Needs). Therefore, staff will ensure that children have the following:

- Warmth – correct clothing provided

- Food – healthy snacks and/or meals provided
- Drink – water / hot drinks available
- Safe – individuals feel safe both physically and emotionally

This will be ensured by making sure children are well prepared for Forest School and they will only attend with known adults. Where necessary, a social story and/or visual timetable will be provided to Forest School for those children who require one.

Behaviour policy

Please note this is an OUTLINE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY, our full behaviour policy can be found in school and on the school website; all school staff have access to this.

All Forest School staff should maintain the standards of behavioural management as seen on a day-to-day basis at Overleigh St Mary's CofE Primary School but must remain aware of the Forest School ethos. Please follow the lead of the Forest School Leader at all times and ensure that the children are maintaining a suitable level of appropriate behaviour at all times, whilst being given the opportunity to explore and play with more freedom than they may normally be allowed. Forest School lends itself to a constructivist approach – it is a learner led environment and this should be embodied when supporting or leading a Forest School session. If a child behaves in an unsafe manner during Forest School, they will miss the following week forest school session. All children will be risk assessed on the day and it is the responsibility of the class teacher to inform the Forest School leader of any adverse behaviour leading up to point of leaving for a Forest School session. Both the class teacher and the Forest School leader must make the decision as to whether or not the child in question is safe to attend the Forest School session.

Tool Safety and Tool Operating Procedure

Tools are used at Forest School for management of the site. There will also be opportunities for the children to use tools. The Forest School Leader is responsible for the safe usage and maintenance of all tools. Tools are always checked and counted before each session. At the end of each session the tools are recounted, and the tools are maintained (see appendices for Tool Inventory and Tool Maintenance sheet). Tool training and assessment of individuals should always take place prior to working with tools. The use of tools, tool area and activity will all be risk assessed prior to any session. The following processes must be adhered to when using tools:

- Always use the appropriate tool for the appropriate job.
- Always check tools are in good working order before use.
- Ensure a safe 'blood bubble' zone is in place when using tools.
- Always follow correct safety stance when using tools.
- Participants must wear correct Personal Protective Clothing when using tools.
- Forest School Leader to provide demonstration of tool use.
- Always adhere to correct ratios when children are taking part in tool use.
- Ratios are 1:1 initially but can increase at discretion of Forest School Leader.
- Children must be supervised at all times.
- Tools must be cleaned appropriately after use and stored in toolbox and locked in shed.
- Always use the Tool Inventory at the end of each session to ensure all tools are accounted for prior to storing.
- Only Forest School Leader has access to tools.
- Tools to be stored in appropriate storage.

For more information about individual tools used at Forest School, their use, maintenance and storage see NACHPUFM in appendices.

Health and Safety

Forest School sessions by their nature encourage children to develop their own risk management skills and we will support them to become responsible for themselves and others around them.

Children will be reminded of rules and safe play if they are considered too dangerous. Ratios within the woodland area remain the same as indoors as we are still on the school premises (1 adult to 30 children and any additional support for those children who require it). Risk assessments will be carried out before each visit and for the use of all tools and equipment. Dynamic risk assessments will be in place to cover other eventualities. The Forest School Leader will assess weather conditions regularly and will evacuate the area if they become too extreme. All children and adults will wear appropriate clothing depending upon the weather conditions. An open fire risk assessment will be carried out before a fire is allowed and protection procedures followed. A Forest School Leader will be present at all times and children will be reminded of safe practice. The school has a Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy etc. to enhance aspects of health and safety.

Insurance

The children Act 2004 and the Health and Safety Work Act 1974 place a number of legal responsibilities on the school. Overleigh St Mary's CofE Primary School has insurance cover appropriate to its duties under this legislation, including Employer's and Public Liability Insurance. Responsibility will in most cases rest with the school, but staff will take reasonable care, both for themselves and other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
(Copy of school insurance available at school office)