

ST ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



FOREST SCHOOL HANDBOOK



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## **1. The Forest School Ethos**

Forest school is a unique educational experience and process that offers the opportunity to succeed and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands on learning experiences in a woodland environment.

Children engage in motivating and achievable tasks and activities throughout the year and in almost all weathers, with appropriate footwear and clothing. Children will work with tools, play, learn and begin to understand the boundaries of behaviour, both physical and social. They will grow in confidence, self-esteem and motivation whilst developing an understanding of the natural world.

The Forest school concept originates in Denmark, originally at pre-school children, where it was found that children who attended forest school then arrived at school with strong social and communication skills, having the ability to work in groups effectively, generally had high self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities. These foundations helped them to raise their academic achievements.

A forest school encourages children to:

- Develop personal and social problems
- Work through practical problems and challenges
- Use tools to create, build or manage
- Discover how they learn best
- Pursue knowledge that interests them
- Learn how to manage failures
- Build confidence in decision making and evaluating risk
- Develop practical skills
- Understand the benefits of a balanced and healthy lifestyle
- Explore connections between humans, wildlife, and the earth
- Regularly experience achievement and success
- Reflect on learning and experiences
- Develop language and communication skills
- Improve physical motor skills
- Become more motivated
- Improve their concentration skills
- Use their senses to explore the environment around them

## **2. What happens at Forest School**

Typically, small groups of individuals take part in a programme of six weekly sessions lasting about 1 hour 15 mins. The sessions involve practical hands-on activities which aim to build up participants skills, abilities, and confidence week by week.

All sessions are designed and led by a trained member of staff. The participants are encouraged to explore their own interests and therefore initiate and direct their own learning as the weeks progress.

Forest School uses natural resources and activities include:

- Shelter building
- Natural art
- Using knots and lashings
- Fire lighting
- Animal tracking
- Bug hunts
- Tree investigations
- Climbing and balancing
- Woodwork using tools, e.g., making musical instruments, jewellery, decorative items
- Creating bug homes and bird feeders
- Collecting and identifying and sorting materials
- Team games

Most activities are curriculum linked and span a number of subjects.

## **3. Forest School Staff**

Our Forest School is organised by Rachel Ballard who has conducted the L3 award for Forest School practitioners. Pending final assessment and portfolio.

All staff and volunteers have been subject to enhanced DBS checks. All sessions are staffed by a qualified first aider.

## **4. The Forest School site**

Our Forest school is still under development; however, we have a fire square and canopy area with an area that is now much wilder with natural growth. Planting of trees took place a few years ago and these are beginning to develop well.

The site is on our school field and it is monitored for any H&S issues as it develops and grows.

The participants will be encouraged to minimise their impact on the site. This will include.

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- Finding out about the different animals and plants that live in an amongst the trees
- Learning to respect animals' homes
- Careful observation of live animals and insects
- Leaving dying deadwood in place
- Taking all materials and litter with them when they leave
- Ensuring the site is left like they found it.

### 5. Location of Forest School



## 6. Forest School Code of Conduct.

### Entering the Woodland

- We will enter the Forest School respectfully and know the specific expectations are in place.
- We will explore, investigate, learn and play in a manner that will not damage our environment.

### Boundaries

- Children will know where they are able to explore.
- They will respond to a countdown to come back to the fire circle.

### Lighting a fire

- When lighting a fire the FS leader will take control of the operation and all accompanying adults will be briefed before we start.
- A lit fire will not be left unattended at any point.
- All equipment for safety MUST be in place before starting a fire.
- Open fires will be built in the fire square.

### At the fire circle

- Pupils sit 2m away from the fire. Only supervised children may enter the fire circle.
- No running near or around the fire circle. Pupils MUST be able to listen well to instructions.
- We will treat the fire circle as though it is lit at all times so that pupils can respect it appropriately.

### Using Tools

- All tools have their own H&S in use which will include consideration of specific PPE, correct use of a specific body posture, and consideration of the appropriate types of activity that each tool may be used for.

### Picking up and playing with sticks

- Children must carry sticks carefully and know that the stick could damage themselves and others if carried inappropriately.
- Larger sticks and logs can be carried by two or dragged carefully.
- No sticks to be snapped off trees,

### **Picking up and playing with stones**

- No throwing or dropping stones in inappropriate places.
- Children must understand that where stones are left may have a consequence for wildlife.

### **Digging**

- Digging large holes is not encouraged.
- Pupils may carefully move soil to look for insects and their habitats using fingers or small sticks found within the forest.

### **Collecting wood**

- Wood is collected for fire lighting purposes. It is collected in 4 thicknesses, matchsticks sized, pencil, thumb and wrist.
- Sticks should not be removed from the woodland.

### **Eating and Drinking**

- Nil by mouth policy for anything in the area.
- Children to be reminded of not putting their fingers in their mouths or noses.
- When eating or drinking water and wipes should be used to clean hands.

### **Rope and string use**

- Appropriate use of strings and rope only.
- Carrying and transporting materials
- Children are encouraged to roll, lift, and to pull material, either by hand or by using ropes. We encourage safe lifting. Heavier items should be moved using team work.

### **Tree climbing**

- This isn't possible to do with the young trees that we have. The older trees are near the road boundary and would be unsafe to use for this activity.

### **Leaving the site**

- Ethos of 'leave no trace' with the exception of larger items left between sessions. Occasionally artefacts may be taken into school with the permission of the FS leader.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ understand the code of conduct and will abide by this code whilst I am out in the Forest school.

Date:

### **7. Suggested Activities for Forest School**

These should be diverse and numerous and encourage independent learners who are inspired to try out their own ideas and explore their own interests.

Some activities may include:

- Shelter building
- Fire lighting
- Tool use
- Studying wildlife
- Playing team and group games
- Sensory activities
- Tracking activities
- Cooking on an open fire
- Using a Kelly kettle
- Rope and string work
- Art and sculpture work
- Woodland and traditional craft
- Developing stories and drama
- Physical movement

### **8. A possible Forest school session**

1. Put on appropriate clothing to go outside
2. Go through rules and routines and any H&S information before going out.
3. Collect all the resources that we may need
4. Arrive in Forest School and gather to meet in the seating area
5. Review last session and discuss today's session
6. Start session (Various activities that could be done)
7. Halfway through session meet for a drink and a snack. Possible fire lighting for a hot drink using Kelly kettle
8. At the end of the session have a short debrief and pack away tools etc... and make sure the woodland is left as we found it.



### 9. Equipment for Forest School

Leader will always take out an emergency bag. Items will vary depending on activities or times of year but there will be some essential items such as:

Set of spare clothes	Drinking water (in date)
Spare clear bags, bin liners	Sit mats
Wet wipes	Fire striker/cotton wool/kindling
Penknife	Squash/ hot chocolate powder and biscuits
Whistle for emergency	Beakers
Insect repellent	Plastic plates
Washing up bowl and hand wash gel	Disposable gloves
Kelly Kettle and gloves	String and rope
Pen and paper	Tissues and kitchen towel
Fire blanket and bucket	Spare water in jerry can.

### Emergency Procedures Information

Mobile phone	At a glance sheet of medical conditions
Staff handbook an emergency procedures in waterproof folder	Risk assessments

### First Aid Kit

First aid guidance booklet	Disposable gloves
Sterile non-medicated dressings	Safety pins
Triangular bandages	Eye bandage
Cleansing wipes	Eye wash
Space blanket x 2	Instant ice pack
Cling film	Burn cool x 4

### Activities equipment

Wood – variety	Beads
Wool, ribbon, string	Felt pens and charcoal
Scissors	Paint brushes
Wood glue	Masking tape
Cotton sheet	Pots for missing natural dyes
Clay, wooden boards and modelling tools	Sieves
Pestle and mortar	Bug pots, spoons, ID badges

**Tools**

Tool box	Loppers
Bow saws x 2	Work gloves adult and children
Potato peelers	Rope
Tent pegs	Bill hooks
Pruning saws	
Knives (Lockable box)	

**10. Using and storing tools**

All tools counted out and back at the beginning and end of each session. Kept securely when not in use. Children must not be allowed to help themselves. Tools may be used for specific purposes and be modelled by the trained adult for safe tool use. Only walking is permitted whilst carrying a tool.

**11. Information for Teachers**

Teachers will understand the benefits of children experiencing Forest School at St Anthony’s. Here is some information that might be helpful for them to know about Forest School sessions:

- It is safe and supportive for learning and discovery
- Plans linked to NC and risk assessments are in place
- High adult to child ratio
- Monitoring of pupils and their progress will be communicated to class teachers

Forest school leaders have responsibility for:

**Clothing** – that pupils are appropriately dressed, warm clothing and waterproofs. This should be:

- Waterproof trousers
- Waterproof coat with hood
- Long sleeved top
- Full length trousers
- Warm boots
- Warm socks and a spare pair
- Gloves and woolly hat
- Sun hat

**Discipline** – Forest school leaders will deal with behaviour at the time and this may not necessarily be something that needs to be discussed with the class teacher if low level.

Any behaviour that may continue will be dealt with using our behaviour policy and systems.

**Safety and first aid** – FS leader will hold appropriate qualification. FS leader is responsible for all risk assessments and will plan for emergencies

**Cancellation** – We will endeavour to go out in all weathers, however, if there are high winds this may result in a cancellation of a group that day.

## **12. Risk Assessment**

### **a. Food Hygiene and cooking procedures**

Everyone involved in forest school should be involved in food safety and follow the food hygiene rules below if you spot a problem please point out the forest school leader when involved in food and drink preparation you should:

- wash hands before and during cooking
- not handle food if they are ill with stomach problems such as diarrhoea or vomiting
- cover sores and cuts with a waterproof dressing
- avoid handling food where possible and instead use spoons tongues or other suitable implements
- tie her back
- keep food that is waiting to be cooked separate from food that is ready to be eaten
- use separate chopping boards for prepping different foods especially raw and ready to eat food
- prepare food on a suitable surface e.g. chopping board, cup saucepan and not on the ground
- ensure food is cooked thoroughly before serving food should be cooked right through and piping hot in the middle
- not reheat food more than once
- keep utensils clean and regularly wash tea towel and cloths
- store food in clear plastic containers with non-leaking lids
- take all rubbish and food scraps away with them at the end of the session to avoid attracting vermin to the site

### **b. Food allergies and special dietary requirements:**

Participants are asked to state any food allergies and special dietary requirements they may have on their parental consent and medical form this information will be used to plan what food and drink to provide during sessions ensuring that the food and drink provided is suitable for all.

**c. Safe use of tools**

- Keep tools in clean good order
- Check tools are safe to use before the start of each session
- Carry out tool maintenance, cleaning and oiling, once a week
- Do not use with damaged blades or handles or loose bolts or fixings
- When transporting tools do not carry more than can be held securely
- A blunt blade is more dangerous than a sharp one
- Count tools in an out
- Bow soars - use for cutting wood with a diameter greater than a 2 Pence piece
- Wear a glove on the non-sawing , helping, hand, not on the tool
- Use the saw to the side of you and not in front
- Keep your non sawing hand away from the blade when sawing
- Saw with easy relaxed strokes using the full length of the blade. Let the blade do the work- don't force it, especially if it sticks.
- Carry with the frame at your side with the blade facing down like a carrying like carrying a handbag.
- Keep the blade covered when not in use and especially when transporting.
- Ensure the item to be cut is firmly held.
- When using with children- leader and child to kneel on floor with leader on one side of saw and the child on the other both in the respect position the leader guides the saw and the child follows.

**Billhooks- useful cleaving wood**

- Never wear a glove on the hand holding the tool- it makes the handle hard to grip safely.
- Super safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work. Stop if anyone comes too close.
- Hold billhook away from your body and cutaway from yourself.
- Stop if you get tired.

**Loppers**

- Loppers- used for cutting wood with their diameter smaller than a 2 Pence piece always carry with blades closed, and locked if applicable.
- When not in use leave with blades closed, and locked if applicable,
- Do not exceed the cutting capacity of the tool
- Use away from the body and keep hand not holding tool away from the blades
- Children only to use when sitting or kneeling

**Knives- used to whittle small stakes peel bark and cutting string**

- Never wear a glove on the hand using the tool- it makes a handle hard to grip safely. Wear a safety glove on your other helper hand .
- Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you whilst you work. Stop if anyone comes too close
- Hold the knife away from your body and caught away from yourself.

**Potato peelers- use to peel bark**

- Rest the wood you are peeling on the ground or on a bench and not on your leg
- Hold the potato peeler away from your body and peel away from yourself towards the ground
- Keep the hand not holding the tool away from sharp and a potato peeler
- Keep a safe distance from other people and be aware of those around you while you work
- Children only to use when sitting or kneeling- remind them not to move around when using the peeler

**d. Forest School Site Risk Assessment**

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Safety Measures</b>
Trip hazards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uneven ground</li> <li>• Wet slippery surface</li> <li>• Muddy ground</li> <li>• Icy ground</li> </ul>	medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal/visual instruction to walk carefully</li> <li>• Wear appropriate footwear</li> <li>• Mark off area if necessary</li> <li>• Remove obvious trip hazards on pre visit site cheque if possible</li> </ul>
Low branches causing eye injuries	medium	point out location of low branches
brambles, prickly or thorny plants and stinging nettles	Medium	show location of any brambles and stinging nettles and ask children to avoid them
insect bites and stings	low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal visual warning not approach or try to catch bees and Wasps</li> <li>• Monitor site for nest activity and avoid nest sites</li> <li>• Keep arms and legs covered</li> <li>• Check anyone with</li> </ul>

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		severe allergies has their EpiPen and is able to administer it
Tasty looking fruit and berries and fungi	low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• verbal visual instruction that some fruits and berries and fungi are poisonous and should not be eaten</li> <li>• Our hands are washed before eating and verbal instruction to keep hands away from face</li> </ul>
Notes, EG horse Chestnut, Hazel cover acorns	low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• beware of children with allergies</li> <li>• Check anyone with severe allergies has their EpiPen and can administer it</li> </ul>
Harmful litter, eg metal, glass, hyper thermic needles low	low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remove harmful litter during pre-visit site cheque</li> <li>• Point out location of any harmful litter as activity progress is and remove</li> </ul>
Contact with harmful substances- soil	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure hands are washed before eating and verbal instruction to keep hands away from face</li> </ul>
exposure to the elements-rain, wind, snow, ice	low ..	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make sure that children are wearing appropriate clothing</li> <li>• Used tarpaulins for shelter</li> <li>• In extreme cases work indoors and have alternative activities plan</li> </ul>
exposure to the elements-son	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work in shade</li> <li>• Wear hats</li> <li>• Cheque sunscreen is being worn</li> <li>• Provide regular</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>drinks</li> </ul>
High winds	low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>avoid areas with trees- working in Plainfield</li> <li>In extreme cases work indoors and have alternative activities plan</li> </ul>
structural damage to trees	low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>check branches during pre-visit site cheque</li> <li>If areas unsafe, working Meadow or work indoors and have alternative activities plan</li> </ul>
animal faeces	low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>look out for faeces during pre-visit site cheque and remove</li> <li>Point out location of faeces during session so it can be avoided</li> <li>Wash hands thoroughly if anyone comes into contact with faeces</li> </ul>
Fencing perimeter	low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pre session cheques to assess any gaps in the school fence</li> </ul>

### **13. Fire policy**

As part of the forest school experience it is desirable to have an open fire at times within the Woodland to allow the children to enhance their learning and development with some risky activities. Encounters with risk help children to manage their coping strategies and discover and explore the world through real experiences. This policy sets out the guidance to follow to ensure safe practises a thread throughout the activity .

### **Aim**

To use fire safely as part of the forest school experience

### **Method**

Fires must only be lit after a risk assessment has been carried out and they must only be within the fire circle area this includes the use of Kelly kettles. There must always be a trained adult present within the fire circle when a fire is lit or hot embers remain, never leave a fire unattended.

Prior to the fire pit being built the soil or bedrock must have been assessed to avoid a fire being lit on a flammable surface such as peat. The fire should be surrounded by a one metre square of double logs to provide a good barrier to the fire in case a learner losing balance. Pegs should be used to prevent the logs being knocked. Fire should not be lit close to overhanging branches or on a really windy day. There must be an adequate supply of fire water close to the fire pit to ensure there is enough water available to extinguish the fire if it gets out of control. A fire blanket must be brought into the Woodland to wrap around someone if that closed become a light. Fireproof gauntlet should be kept at the fire area to allow adults to pick up hot items.

Before visiting the area, the children should have had the opportunity to ask questions and given information about fire safety. When at the fire circle the rule should be demonstrated for the children to see. There should be no more than two people, adults, and children, within the fire circle next to the fire at any one time the best position for cooking is on one knee combat the respect position, so you can move backwards easily and remain stable. Long hair should be tide back, tassels and ties tucked away in scarves removed.

### **Monitoring of policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually but may also be influenced earlier by new research and government guidelines

### **Kelly kettle**

Forest leader may use this to heat water. Never leave the bung in whilst heating water. This is only to be in place during storage so as to keep the chamber clear from forest debris or insects and minibeasts. Once the fire is going in the Kelly kettle base carefully add the chimney top to it by holding the handle parallel to the ground, and supported on each side by your hands.

When lit do not stand directly over all looks straight down the chimney. Never blow into the top when pouring out the water support the base by holding the bung chain in one hand and the handle with the other. To put the fire out for the remaining water into the base. When not in use all tools will be securely locked away in the tool shed . Tools should be checked and cleaned before they are put away. After only the forest leader



will ensure that each tool is thoroughly cleaned and oiled . Wear and tear will be monitored daily.

#### **14. Health and safety policies and procedures**

Saint Anthony's sets out clear statements of intent regards the whole school's approach to the health and safety of its children, staff and visitors to the school and the school site

Provided below is a list of additional points and measures which relate directly to our forest school sessions.

There is always a high leader to participant Ratio at forest school. The high number of leaders means that participants can safely experience activities like walking across logs blindfolded, lighting-controlled fires and using knives that are usually considered too risky in other situations. It also means that leaders can give individuals one to one attention when needed and to lead small group work.

All activities are thoroughly risk assessed before the start of each session and leaders continue to monitor the safety of the group as activities evolve. There is always a trained first aider present at each session and a written emergency plan to follow.

Participants are also involved in completing their own risk assessments throughout the sessions. This gives them ownership of the process and to help them to be aware of and calculate the risks involved in each activity. They are asked to state what risks and hazards they should be aware of and what steps they can take to reduce or mitigate them. For example they are given flags to mark hazards like brambles and hidden ditches.

#### **Daily procedures**

To ensure the safety of children and adults attending forest school sessions there are certain cheques that need to be made before during and at the end of each session. It is the forest school leaders responsibility to ensure that all cheques are being completed.

This daily health and safety checklist provides a reminder of all daily procedures. This must be used each day.

#### **Pre visit checks**

- Run through the site assessment and amend update as necessary.
- Removal visible litter and faeces
- Remove obvious trip hazards and mark off areas as outer bounds where appropriate
- Caught any overhanging vegetation from paths and boardwalk
- Ensure risk assessments are completed for all activities

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- Erect shelters
- Set up forest school circle
- Set up hand washing station
- Check that the forest school rucksack contains all necessary items including all emergency procedure information a Stockton in date first aid kit fire blanket and dated freshwater
- Check you have all the materials and resources needed for the activities you have planned
- Check that all tools you are planning to use are in good working order
- Check that your phone is in working order has sufficient credit and is fully charged

### **At the start of the session**

- Take register and headcount
- Remind children about physical boundaries use visual clues when needed and that they must stay within these. In the first sessions and at the beginning of each session play a game to reinforce this
- Remind children how they should behave and how to stay safe on site
- Explained the need for and principles of fire safety

### **Throughout the session**

- Remind children of how to stay safe by highlighting potential hazards reminding them of the boundaries and asking them to make an adult aware of any possible hazards that they spot
- Carry out regular headcounts at the start of activities and at break time
- Take photos and make observations of children
- Use de-escalating techniques whenever possible when dealing with behavioural issues

### **At the end of the session**

- Carry out a final headcount in there scored the group but said the school
- Count and pack up all equipment
- Counter pack up all resource is
- Clear fire area and make safe remove ash and cover over the site of fire
- Evaluate the session

### **Adult roles and responsibilities**

- The trained and named forest school leader is always the person in charge of forest school sessions

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- The forest school leader has overall duty of care for the children in their charge. However all adults involved in the forest school session or required to take all response reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe
- All adult helpers must sign and data form to show that they have read and understood this Handbook and the risk assessments appropriate to the session in which they are helping they must sign in date the form stating that they comply with the general operating procedures for forest school
- The forest school leader or assistant will always carry intake first aid kit into the forest at every session the forest school leader or assistant will always carry an emergency bag into the forest for every session
- Forest school leader will ensure that the emergency bag contains essential equipment the forest school leader will always carry a mobile phone and will ensure that there is easy access to a landline if the group is out of range
- In the event of an emergency the forest school leader will ensure that the school Contacts emergency services if contact with the school is lost the leader will contact the emergency services
- The forest school leader will review the risk assessments for before every trip into the schools forest site do you like when tools are used the adult child ratio will be one to one
- There is one exception to this when using pilers for whittling the ratio can be want to
- The forest school leader is responsible for the maintenance and checking of all tools and equipment to be used at forest school prior to their use
- Forest leader is responsible in training the children in how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately the forests
- At the forest leader will be responsible the previous check of the forest school site prior to the forest school session

### **15. Emergency Procedures**

- Secure the group members and keep together in a safe area.
- Assess the incident and prioritise actions/injuries.
- Call an Emergency Services
- Know the grid ref / postcode of your location.
- If necessary offer first aid.
- Seek help from inside the school. Use mobile phone to contact
- Inform next of kin
- Check the rest of the group.
- Pupils not involved in the incident to be removed to a safe place inside the school
- Keep casualty comfortable and warm and reassured that help is on the way.
- Fill out accident/incident reporting form
- Inform Chair of Governors

In the event of the Forest School leader, being involved in the incident/accident then the support member of staff will follow these emergency procedures but will use the charged mobile phone to contact school for help after initially securing the safety of the pupils.

### **Ambulance procedure**

- Call the emergency services that you require on 999 from a landline or 112 from a mobile notify a member of senior management
- Give us much information about the patient and their location as possible
- Who has been injured
- what their injuries are
- if they have any medical conditions
- where on the site the patient is the directions to the site and the patient
- Arrange for someone to stand in the car park and don't hang up until you are told to do so by the caller
- stay calm

### **Missing person procedure**

The following procedures should be instigated and followed by the forest school leader responsible for the group in the event of any person at all a child going missing from the forest school group

- Carry out 123 routine this signals that every child should move to the forest school circle
- Conduct headcount cheque there all other members of the group are present
- Have two members of staff or volunteers stay with the group at the forest school circle and await further instructions
- Send the remaining staff and volunteers to search the immediate area phone agreed length of time eg 10 minutes arrange for them to return to the agreed meeting place at an agreed time
- Ensure that each of the searches has a mobile phone with sufficient credit and battery life searches should stay within an area they know and be aware of their own served safety
- If the person missing is not found in the agreed length of time everyone should walk to the school here the rest of the group can wait in safety and comfort
- Alerts cool stuff to the fact that there is a missing person
- Organise a second search party any staff member who knows the site can be recruited to help this second search. Searches should work in pairs with at least one carrying a mobile phone with sufficient credit and battery life. Arranged for them to search for a specified length of time eg 20 minutes and returned to reception at an agreed time

If the missing persons not found by this second search then the senior management team consent contact the police. The decision may be made to do this while the second search is in progress depending on circumstances

At this point a decision will need to be made regarding the rest of the group in consultation with the senior management team it is likely that once they have changed out of their water crews it would be best for the children to return to normal lessons

### **Areas for search**

- All outside fields and areas
- The school car park
- Toilets within school
- All classrooms and cloakrooms in school
- High school next door

After the incident is over completed full report using the incident report form.  
(Appendix)

### **Fire procedure**

- In the event of a fire that cannot be put out quickly and safely by the forest school leaders blow repeated long whistles to alert the group
- Gather everyone together conductor headcount and evacuate the area to a safe location playground meeting point in case of fire
- Alert senior management team and instruct one person to call the fire brigade and give directions to the site
- Ask a second person to telephone the emergency numbers
- Arrange for someone to stand at the entrance to the school to direct emergency services

### **Camp Fire procedure**

Saint Anthony's provides opportunities for children to get closer to nature and the outdoors through a variety of activities which include learning about fire safety and how to make fires through the use of Kelly kettles. Children may also get the opportunity to light their own fires under wooden blocks or in small metal containers. This will only take place under strict supervision with a one to one adult to child ratio.

All forest school leaders are skilled and practised in fire building and management. Kelly kettles and small fires only will be used and lit in the centre of the forest school circle.

Or forest school activities are rigorously assessed. Sessions are planned in such a way to introduce higher risk activities to children over a period of time this allows leaders to get to know the children in the group other children to learn how to behave responsibly and to build knowledge and understanding of the activity.

### **Boundary setting**

In the first forest school session both physical and behavioural boundaries are agreed with the children. At each subsequent session these boundaries are revisited and reinforced

### **Developing routines - sessions one and two**

- When they arrive at the forest school side children are shown how to sit around the forest school circle step over sit mats tree stumps and sit down
- The need for and principles of fire safety are explained. This will include the rule that when Kelly kettles or a fire or being used in the central circle only one child at a time is permitted to approach the Kelly kettle or fire on instruction from the forest school leader

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- The children are shown how to move around the circle step out of the circle and walk around the outside
- For young children foundation stage and key stage one a game is then played to reinforce this leaders call out different statements that will relate to certain children in the group eg everyone who has Brown hair step outside and move around the circle and so on

In subsequent sessions children will be asked to call how they should behave in the forest school circle. Depending on the behaviour and ability of the group the use of Kelly kettles and or lit fires will usually be introduced in much later sessions .

### **Engendering responsibility**

Through practise these established routines the forest children at forest school will be able to enforce and remind others how to behave. Peers expert responsible behaviour and to do to a degree will be self policing.

### **Forest school leader's daily campfire and use of Kelly kettle and campfire procedures**

To ensure that everyone stay safe on site and that risk is managed effectively forest school leaders will follow a daily campfire and Kelly kettle procedure.

#### **Forest school leaders will:**

- Keep ignited in a safe location
- Ensure there is a supply water soil sand to drowse the fire
- Always carry a fire blanket
- Ascertain the location and size of the fire to be built and plan accordingly including feel stocks
- Carry out pre visit site cheque and risk assessor site and the activity
- Be prepared to abandon the activity in the event of unforeseen circumstances rendering the activity unsafe and have another activity on standby
- Alert fire brigade in advance if necessary to avoid false alarm and misidentification of forest school fires has been uncontrolled
- Douse fires at completion and cheque them after 30 minutes to ensure that they have not spread

#### **When lighting fires forest school leaders will:**

- Not wear loose clothing and tie long hair back and ensure that children have their hair tide back and also have no loose clothing
- Wear gloves
- Allow only one child at a time to help with via construction and approached the fire
- Try to keep away from the smoke

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- Put out the fire with water when finished

### **When using Kelly kettles for school leaders will:**

- Only light a fire in the tray of the Kelly kettle in the centre of the forest school circle
- Kneel on one knee for ease of moving backwards
- Never place a Kelly kettle on the fire without containing water
- Only fill the Kelly with water when cool
- Place the tray of the kettle on a flat surface
- Remove the tray before putting the kettle on the fire
- Keep the spout on the opposite side to themselves and all those
- Remove the kettle from fire when the water starts to boil
- Remove the Kelly kettle from the fire with the handle held vertically using the chain to support it in an upright position

### **Toilets and shelter facilities at forest school line toilet facilities**

There are no toilets at the forest school site. Children attending forest school sessions will be informed in advance of the situation and all children be asked to go to the toilet before they leave school.

Children who need the toilet will go in pairs back into the accessible toilet in school and assisting adult will accompany all children

### **Shelter at the forest school site**

In case of inclement weather a shelter from the elements will be provided at the forest school site this will consist of one or more securely fixed tarpaulins which will provide shade in the summer months and protection from wind rain and snow in the winter.

### **Litter and wastewater procedure**

All waste and litter created by forest school and any waste or litter will be collected for appropriate disposal.

- The forest school leader will provide waste containers
- Always produced or found on site during the forest school session will be placed within the waste containers
- At the end of the forest school session the forest school leader will remove the waste containers for appropriate recycling and disposal

A small amount of waste water is created at forest school from hand washing and washing up. Solid debris is removed from the water disposable in the waste containers will stop the waste water is then disposed in the Woodland over a wide area as possible so it will evaporate quicker.



## **16. Safeguarding children, Confidentiality And forest school**

Everyone at Saint Anthony's has a responsibility in relation to child protection.

We are committed to:-

Taking all reasonable measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of each child or young person in our care

The practise of safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people

Protecting each other from any form of abuse whether from an adult or another pupil

### **Or aims**

- To raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring recording and reporting of concerns and cases
- To provide guidance on recording and dealing with suspected child abuse
- To provide a framework for interagency communication effective liaison
- Sure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay
- To ensure that safe recruitment procedures are operated
- Designed to design and operate procedures which promote this policy and which so far as possible ensure that teachers and those who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations
- To contribute to the operation of appropriate health and safety procedures
- To have regard to and be consistent with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements and guidance

In addition adults working within forest school will need to appreciate it appreciate that when children will feel comfortable and content when their instinct to trust and wrist ache is encouraged they may be moved to disclose information which they might have otherwise kept to themselves any volunteer or member of staff who finds its that a child is telling them something that concerns them should follow the course of actions set out below in simple steps:

- Listen to the pupil but ask no leading questions. Allow the child to lead the discussion but do not press for details
- Keep calm and offer reassurance. At set what the child says without challenge
- Make no promises. You cannot keep a secret. You should make it understood that there are limits to confidentiality at the start of the disclosure
- Inform the DSL or the one of the deputy DSL.

- Keep an accurate written record of the conversation including the date the time the place the conversation occurred in and their essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence keep their records secure on CPOMS.

### **17. Equal opportunities inclusion and forest school**

The mission statement of Saint Anthony's emphasise is the value placed on the individuality of all our children. We are committed to giving each child every opportunity to achieve the highest standards irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background will stop we actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual children or groups of children. We aim to provide all our children with the opportunity to succeed and to reach the highest level of personal achievement.

#### **We will:**

- Ensure equality of access for all children
- Employer range of styles including collaborative learning children can value working together
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education
- Take account of the performance of all children when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- Make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of children

#### **All teachers ensure that our children:**

- Feels secure and know that their contributions are valued
- Appreciate and value the differences in others
- Take responsibility for their own actions
- Participate safely in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs
- Are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success
- Use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds learning styles and linguistic needs without stereotyping
- Have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- Have challenging targets that enable them to succeed
- Are encouraged to participate fully regardless of disability or medical needs

Forest school does mean forest school for all . We do have a stock of extra or weather clothing but asked that both parents and children think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities and to be aware that they are likely to take home muddy and wet clothes after a forest school session. We encourage a

level of risk taking always under close adult supervision and activities actively foster friendships and collaboration between all children and adults will stop forest school activities are always designed to produce success and enjoyment even when this appears to be over transition transitional nature the forest school environment is an environment to which we are all entitled and we strongly believe that the experiences we will have there will linger in the memory for years to come. Children with medical needs or disabilities will be held so that they can take part fully in each forest school session. Those children with challenging behaviour will be risk assessed and may need to be may need one to one supervision but their entitlement to participate in forest school remains the same.

### **18. Risk assessment guidelines**

A site risk assessment is undertaken each week and a daily risk assessment and check is made prior to every forest school session at our forest site

In addition, an activity risk assessment will be established prior to any activity that may require it. These will include whittling combat cutting wood, shelter building, fire lighting and cooking on an open fire and palm drilling

Specific additional risk assessments will be undertaken for children whose medical condition or whose behaviour requires them

### **The risk assessment process is detailed below:**

- We look for potential hazards
- We decide who might be at risk of harm
- We think about how harm maker and the worst outcome that we could face
- We evaluate the current level of risk
- We decide on a course of action or set up precautions that we will be put in place to minimise the potential risk
- We then re-evaluate the level of risk once our course of action and precautions have been put in place
- We create a risk assessment and collate them in the forest school file
- We inform all adults with accompanying the group and require them to sign each relevant risk assessment show that they have read and understood the assessments
- We regularly monitor and review each risk assessment half termly as an action is needed

### **19. Poor weather conditions**

We will not go to forest school if conditions are deemed dangerous such as high winds during thunderstorms or during periods of extreme cold. We will use the BBC weather online forecaster make judgments about the expected condition

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The forest school leader will make the decision to continue with forest school all postponed due to bad weather

When it is wet a shelter will be built immediately by a trained adult so that there is shelter sheltered area that is available from the start that can be used.

### **20. Letter to parents**

Dear Parents/Carers

We have been working towards developing our own Forest school for our pupils at St Anthony's and earlier last year we started developing an area on the field.

The sessions will run weekly on a Thursday afternoon and will be led by Mrs Ballard who has had Forest school training.

#### **Information about forest school**

Forest school is run by trained leaders and aims to build up children's skills, abilities and confidence week by week through practical hands-on activities in the outdoors. It gives them the chance to explore, learn and discover at their own pace in a safe and supportive space.

Forest school uses natural resources to stimulate imagination creativity and investigation

Activities can include,

- Would work using tools E.g making musical instruments jewellery and decorative items
- Natural art
- Fire lighting
- Using knots and lashings
- Shelter building
- Bug hunts

#### **There are many benefits as forest school. For example,**

- Develop physical abilities and help participants to stay active and healthy
- Height and self-awareness and improve emotional and social skills
- Promote cooperative and group working
- Encourage children to take care of themselves and others through appreciation and respect for wildlife and wild places
- Broader knowledge and understanding of the natural world

#### **Safety at forest school**

There is always a high adult to participant ratio at forest school and all activities are thoroughly risk assessed before the start of each session and leaders continue to

monitor the safety of the group as activities progress. There is always a trained first aider present at each session and a written emergency plan.

The forest school sessions will be overseen by forest school leader Mrs R Ballard they will be assisted by Mrs Thornton or Mrs Knowles.

**What your child needs to wear for the forest school:**

The forest school sessions will take place entirely outside in the wooded area (on school field) whatever the weather. We will provide a shelter from the elements what is still important that your child wears clothes that are waterproof and warm and that are okay to get wet and muddy

**Children to come to school in normal uniform and bring with them their Forest School clothes.**

Your child should bring: (Do not worry if you don't have all of the items)

- Waterproof coat
- Waterproof trousers if they own a pair
- Wellington boots or sturdy walking boots
- Comfortable long trousers
- Comfortable warm long sleeve top or fleece
- Long sleeve T shirt
- Thick socks if the weather is cold thermal if possible or two pairs of thinner ones

Please can I ask you to give permission for your child to attend the forest school session.

I look forward to sharing with you what we get up to in our forest school session.

Kind regards

Mrs RM Ballard