

Carlton in Snaith Community Primary School



Forest School Handbook of Policies and Procedures

To be read by all adult leaders, volunteers and
visitors of Carlton in Snaith Forest School
sessions

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Introduction & Background

The Carlton in Snaith Community Primary School handbook contains information, policies and procedures relating to the running of Forest School sessions in a safe and enjoyable way.

The Handbook is to be read by all staff and volunteers working for or with Carlton in Snaith Community Primary Forest School prior to participation. The Handbook is subject to review and immediate review if an accident indicates the need for this.

Staff

Jon Watson is Headteacher at Carlton in Snaith Community Primary School. Melanie Hammond is our Forest School Leader. She has completed her ITC Level 3 in Paediatric First Aid (QFC) and the L3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership. She has been DBS cleared DBS001558857943. The Carlton in Snaith Forest School is covered under NYCC County Insurance Scheme.

Mission Statement

We value the opinions and beliefs of all individuals through open communication and, through Forest School, we strive to be creative, curious and confident learners.

Our Ethos

We believe everybody should have regular, long-term access to a woodland or natural environment which provides them with inspirational and challenging outdoor learning opportunities. Forest School offers a learner centred approach, where children can learn through self-directed play and exploration. Participants of the Carlton in Snaith Community Primary Forest School sessions will be given the opportunity to develop their curiosity, confidence, self-esteem, creativity, empathy, communication skills, awe and wonderment, knowledge of the natural environment and ability to assess risk.

Analyses of Managing Risk

We believe that while there are risks that must be taken into consideration, there is also a large variety of potential benefits that can be achieved by all taking part. We also recognise that whilst taking risks we want to provide a supportive and safe environment where children can learn about risk taking and personal challenges. As a result of this, we will use a risk/benefit assessment of our activities and Forest School site.

Communication

Communication is a key part of running Forest School. Such communication is keeping vital people informed and updated. These people and the feedback required include; Evaluations of sessions to Jon Watson, Headteacher; Informing neighbours and surrounding businesses of the activities involving fire/smoke; Permission forms and individual updates for parents/carers of children taking part; regular newsletters to inform the whole school, children, parents and staff who are not aware of how Forest Schools operate; fundraising letters to local business, for vital equipment needed for the children to enjoy Forest Schools in the future.

On site Hygiene

All participants taking part will be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water provided, before eating food and after all sessions before returning into class.

School toilets will be available to use and participants will be reminded of toilet hygiene.

Activities

Our activities will depend on the ability and experience of the children and will be tailored accordingly to ensure all are included. Examples of the Forest School activities will include:

- Woodland management and nature exploration
- Building dens and other structures
- Fires and cooking
- Games and imaginative play
- Natural crafts
- Using tools such as knives and saws
- Scavenger hunts and adventure

Key Policy Statements

Environmental Policy

We aim for all our children and staff to engage a high degree of respect for the natural world and encourage all to be involved in decisions about their environment and safety.

We aim to ensure that, where possible, the Carlton in Snaith Community Primary Forest School purchases products that have been assessed for having a lower impact on the environment. By operating in a way that minimises waste, optimises recycling and promotes the reuse of materials we hope to demonstrate and encourage a wider respect for the environment, as well as understanding that all produce and waste is linked to the health of our planet as a whole.

On site activities such as fires will follow practices that minimise impact on wildlife through being mindful of what is burnt and how any residues are disposed of. Before leaving a site we will ensure that litter is collected and disposed of suitably.

On site Risk Assessment Procedure

A risk assessment will be carried out prior to each session, and at various intervals throughout the year. Jon Watson (Head) will be provided with a copy of the risk assessment prior to an activity. Changing weather conditions will be taken into consideration when carrying out an assessment. The steps to assess risk are as follows:

Look for the hazards such as trees blown over, litter and animal faeces.

Agree who might be harmed and how this could happen

Evaluate the risks/conditions and agree if previous precautions are adequate or need improving.

Record findings.

Review assessment and change if necessary.

Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure

Most emergencies can be resolved by the leader providing first aid on the spot or removing the group from potential harm. If, in the event of a serious incident, emergency services will be contacted if required and the following procedures used:

Secure safety of whole group from further harm. Stop all activities if safe to do so. Gather whole group to be removed from area back to class.

Forest School first aid leader to remain with any casualties when school staff removes rest of group.

Emergency services contacted as necessary by school office, school playground gates to be unlocked for emergency vehicle.

Safety of remaining group will be dealt with by school staff away from incident.

Next of kin to be informed asap by school office.

Incident report/First Aid book to be completed on site if possible. Reports to be completed whenever an Emergency Procedure is carried out, even if no one was actually harmed but potentially could have been.

First aid kits must be checked regularly and restocked. Stock checks to be carried out every 6 months. Any incident to be evaluated and existing procedures reviewed.

Lost/Missing Person Procedure

We take the potential for a lost or missing child very seriously and at Carlton in Snaith Community Primary School there are boundary fences and locked gates. However if playing an adventure game, a child may wander into another part of the school grounds not designated to the Forest School site. This can be prevented by:

Encourage children to explore their surroundings but also be responsible for their own safety, therefore encourage staying 'close' to the rest of the group.

Set boundaries will be discussed with children, if going beyond these boundaries; it will be done with a leader and rest of the group together.

A head count will be taken before activities commence and if needed at various points in the session, then last thing prior to session ending.

In the event of a missing person, the group will be called back to a designated place by an agreed signal. Time will be noted.

The Forest School leader will immediately start searching for missing child calling continually.

If missing child is not located within 5 minutes, Jon Watson (Head) will be informed and emergency plan may come into action.

Tool Use Procedure

As a range of tools will be necessary, practical skill and self-confidence will be developed, this will be carried out within sessions with as little risk as possible. This can be achieved by the following procedures:

It will be the Forest School Leader's responsibility to check and ensure all tools are fit for each session.

Safety talks and demonstrations will be given prior to any tools being used in a session.

Each group will be closely supervised until the Leader believes they are competent enough for limited supervision.

A designated area will be agreed to keep tools when not in use.

All sharp tools will have protection covers replaced when not in use.

Ratios and safe working perimeters must be adhered at all times.

All knives will be counted out and in.

Knife work will be supervised at ALL times.

Suitable safety clothing i.e. footwear and gloves will be worn for such activities.

Fire Procedure

Fires and kettles are used frequently and are an important part of Forest School sessions. Carlton in Snaith Community Primary School aim to deliver these sessions with as little risk of harm as possible. Fires will only be used in designated areas. The aims include:

Children will learn the importance of collecting dead wood for fires and the effects on the habitat.

The use of dead wood will reduce smoke inhalation; children will be encouraged to find less smoky areas.

Fires will ONLY be lit in designated areas.

Children lighting fire will be supervised at all times using appropriate materials and equipment.

Guidelines and safety talks will be given prior and during these sessions including how to move around whilst there is a fire.

A lit fire will not be unsupervised at any time.

All relevant safety equipment will be used and on hand if required, i.e. gloves, burns kit and water.

Fires will be extinguished and all traces removed safely at the end of these sessions.

Child Protection Policy

It is the policy to safeguard the welfare of all our children by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm, and includes protection from radicalisation and extremism. If any of these protection issues are of concern, Jon Watson (Head) will be informed and Safeguarding procedures followed. The Forest School aim is to:

Always respect a young person's right to personal privacy.

Always provide access for young people to talk about any concerns they might have.

Always treat everyone with respect.

Always provide an example you wish others to follow.

Always include all children regardless of age, sex, religion, class, Ethnic Origin, family status or disabilities.

Behaviour Policy

Carlton in Snaith Community Primary School believe that by creating the right conditions, this will be vital in reducing challenging behaviour. In order to do this we will:

Reward positive behaviour and not dwell on negative.

Plan small achievable tasks to prevent 'fails'.

Discuss safe areas for 'reflection time'

Sanctions to be given after 3rd warning i.e. remove tools for a length of time, reduce time for activity/free time

Agree on mutual behaviour guidelines.

Create a positive atmosphere.

Separate behaviour from the child as a person.

Group rewards given.