

Southborough Primary School

**FOREST
SCHOOL
HANDBOOK**

Countryside Code

At Southborough Forest School we respect and look after our environment. We use it to learn through play and leave the area as we found it. We have read the Countryside Code and follow their key principles: Respect, Protect, Enjoy.

The code has following five key sections:

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs.
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Consider other people.

Our Forest School area is set within our school grounds and many people have been involved in making it safe and useable. The Forest School rules have been put in place to ensure children and adults are safe and we adhere to Bromley Borough's Health and Safety Policy.

Southborough Forest School Rules

- Children are always made aware of how far they can explore before a session begins. If children explore hidden areas, an adult should also go into the cover, deep enough to be able to see the children. If you do lose sight of them, shout **"1, 2, 3, where are you?"** The child should reply **"1, 2, 3, I'm over here"**. This has been introduced to them through a game and practised many times.
- The Forest School area is clearly defined by tape and the children walk the boundary every session, neither the child nor adult should cross this boundary unless directed to do so by the teacher.
- Children know to respond to **"1,2,3, base camp"** and return immediately. Children will be made aware that they must not walk through the middle of base camp.
- **No lick, no pick.** The children are aware that they should not pick, pull or cut live fauna. They should keep their hands away from their mouths at all times. If they do they need to inform an adult immediately who will direct them to the class teacher.
- Children are made aware of dangers of throwing sticks and stones.
- Children will be encouraged to safely climb trees, under the supervision of an adult. Only two children at each time, climbing to the maximum height of the adult's shoulder. Children to be encouraged to help each other climb, pointing out 'safe' footholds. Three parts of the body must be in contact with the tree at any one time, to ensure maximum safety, and 'safe' climbing trees will be identified by Forest School leader prior to session beginning.
- Children are encouraged to make shelters and other objects from dead wood found lying in the Forest School area. Longer sticks must be dragged by one child or carried by one child at each end. Sticks must not be thrown, nor should children be allowed to pull them from living trees.

- Under supervision of the Forest School Leader, pupils will be taught a variety of different knots and ties, and rope safety discussed. They will be able to practise these skills on small bits of wood during Forest School. More experienced children will be encouraged to use knots and ties during den-building and other activities, although if rope and string are put out at beginning of the session, safety issues will be discussed at beginning of the session.
- Children to dig in the designated area within the Forest School boundary.
- Children to be made aware of session activity areas where a higher adult to child ratio has been planned such as whittling and knife skills.
- Children are always invited to use the toilets before we leave the school building. If the children do need to go they will be sent in pairs.
- From time to time there will be an opportunity for children to eat and drink together. All children will have to sanitise their hands with antibacterial gel or wipes if directed by parent.
- Fire building should always be planned into the session, if it is to go ahead, and will never be spontaneous. A safe spot will be chosen, prior to the session beginning, and fires will always happen in the fire pit. All adults to be made aware prior to session beginning. See fire risk assessment.
- The children should be 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 a straight back, should be modelled by all adults. Heavy objects can be rolled, dragged or carried by more people.
- Children to walk calmly to the Forest School site and never walk in front of the lead teacher. An adult should always be at the back. Children are encouraged to help transport any equipment needed and taught how to look after it.
- The site must always be left as it was found. If artefacts are made using 'found materials' they must be left within the boundary. Shelters must be dismantled, ready for the next group. Special permission must be granted for any made artefacts to remain intact.
- Children to only use tools under the supervision of the Forest School leader (see Risk Management of Tools and Equipment section)

Essential Equipment in Forest School rucksack

In addition to sessional tools and equipment, the Forest School Leader will always carry the following equipment in a Forest School rucksack.

- First Aid Kit (regularly checked and re-stocked)
- Medication for individuals (clearly labelled, in date and to be administered by teacher)
- Emergency documents
- Emergency contact details for all in group including adult helpers and leaders
- Risk assessments
- Forest School handbook
- Means of communication (walkie-talkie and mobile phone)
- Clean water
- Emergency whistle
- Accident book
- Spare clothing
- Bin liners

Other possible items – depending on season

- Wet wipes
- Antibacterial gel and wipes
- Fire blanket
- Chocolate/ sugary foods
- Thermos of hot water/ hot chocolate
- Cups

Clothing requirements

Children are encouraged to wear old clothing which covers bare skin, long sleeves even in summer.

- Suitable footwear (sturdy walking boots or wellies)
- Long trousers
- Long sleeved –shirt
- Warm jumper
- Waterproof coat and trousers
- Warm socks, hat and gloves
- Sun hat in the summer

Should children not have the correct clothing the school will provide it for the session. All adults need to also adhere to this policy.

Emergency/Incident Procedures

All Emergency procedures will be managed by the Forest School Leader. She will, however, delegate responsibility when necessary.

What to do in accident

- Child is assessed by trained outdoor paediatric first aider and treatment is given as appropriate.
- Accidents log book is completed and parents/carers are informed at the end of the school day.

What to do in a serious incident

Types of incident

Major/minor accidents

- child is assessed by Forest School leader, first aid is administered as appropriate and emergency services are called where necessary.
- If needed the additional adult will walk towards the point of vehicular access in order to direct emergency services to site.
- School office will be informed via walkie talkie or phone.

Missing Child

- Call '1, 2, 3, base camp'.
- Children to stay at base camp (no child sent to look for missing child)
- Adults to sweep Forest School area to check for missing child.
- If needed the additional adult will walk towards the point of vehicular access in order to direct emergency services to site.
- School office will be informed via walkie talkie or phone.

Evacuation

- Call '1, 2, 3, base camp'.
- Children to stay at base camp until directed.
- Forest School Leader to manage the group.
- Children to walk to designated area.
- Forest School Leader to complete head count.
- If needed the additional adult will walk towards the point of vehicular access in order to direct emergency services to site.
- School office will be informed via walkie talkie or phone.

Incident with Forest School leader

- Designated adult (as agreed before the session starts) to follow above procedures as appropriate.

Risk Assessment and Risk management

A site risk assessment is carried out every week and a daily check made before every Forest School session. Activity risk assessments will be in place if required for activities (wood cutting/shelters etc).

Additional risk assessments will be carried out for individuals for behaviour or medical issues.

All adults will be informed of any changes to the risk assessment before the session starts. A copy of the most up to date risk assessment will be kept in the Forest School leader's rucksack and also a copy given to the school office.

Copies of all risk assessments will be kept for future reference. Please see overleaf for Safety Sweep pro forma.

A full risk assessment will be carried out termly. Please see attached for pro forma, with considerations.

Risk Assessment and Risk Management

A full risk assessment will be carried out termly and the FS leader will complete a safety sweep prior to each session.

Hazards and associated risks	Who may be affected	Risk Rating (LMH)	Control measures	Any further action	Any individual's requirements
Tree branches falling	All members of the party	L	Safety sweep prior to each session and termly risk assessment to remove hanging dead wood. Children to identify risk during boundary walks. Remind children of hazard.	If wind loosens branches then report to FS leader. Area will be cleared and coned off. All children to be made aware of the hazard.	
Stinging nettles and brambles	All members of the party	M	Safety sweep and termly risk assessment. Clear pathways. Make children aware of the hazard and ways to avoid. Children to wear long sleeved tops and long trousers.	First aid if required.	
Using sticks	All members of the party	M	Children to identify risk at the beginning of FS session and decide upon suitable rules to be implemented. When carrying large sticks ensure it is behind them and thumb is over the end of it. Never run, throw or hit with sticks. When moving larger branches children must drag them along the ground behind them.	If child is using stick incorrectly then remind them of the rules. Remove sticks if necessary. If a child is being dangerous then remove from FS.	
Faeces found on site	All members of the party	L	Safety sweep and termly assessment. Identify, remove and discard safely. Identify with children and discuss appropriate	If found during FS session, remove using plastic bag or section off	

			<p>rules associated.</p> <p>Children to understand FS rules – ‘No pick, no lick’.</p>	<p>the area, using a cone or tape.</p>	
Ingesting poisonous flora	All members of the party	L	<p>Safety sweep and termly risk assessments to identify any poisonous flora.</p> <p>Children to be aware of FS rule not to put their hands in their mouth – No pick, no lick.</p> <p>Children to be made aware of poisonous flora in FS.</p> <p>Wash hands before eating snack at FS and upon return to school.</p>	<p>First aid if required.</p>	
Tripping over tree stumps, roots and branches.	All members of the party	M	<p>Safety sweep and termly assessment.</p> <p>Children to identify risk during boundary walks.</p> <p>Children to understand that they must look where they are going.</p> <p>All members of the group to inform each other of tripping hazards.</p>	<p>First aid if required.</p>	
Rubbish and debris in the FS site.	All members of the party	L	<p>Safety sweep prior to each session.</p> <p>Rubbish or debris to be removed safely by FS leader.</p> <p>Children to be aware of FS rule not to put anything in their mouth.</p>	<p>If found then members of the party to inform FS leader who will remove safety, using a plastic bag.</p>	
Bees or wasps in FS site	All members of the party	L	<p>Safety sweep prior to each session.</p> <p>Identify children who previously had an allergic reaction.</p> <p>Children to know how to act if they find a bee or wasp in the area.</p> <p>Medications available for any known members of the party who are allergic to stings.</p>	<p>First aid if required.</p> <p>Medications available for any known members of the party who are allergic to stings.</p>	

Tool use	All members of the party	M	See health and safety booklet for risk management of tools.	If injury occurs follow emergency procedure.	
Child leaving FS	All members of the party	L	FS leader will have a register of the children present on the day. Children will be counted in and out of FS. Adult helpers must be briefed about their roles and responsibilities throughout the session. Children will understand that they are to remain within the boundaries during FS sessions.	See emergency procedures.	
Toilet	All members of the party	L	Children to go before FS session starts.	If a child needs the toilet a member of staff should accompany the child to the toilet.	
Medical requirements	Children with medical needs	L	Permission slips required. Medical forms to be completed and FS leader to carry during FS session. Ensure children have the appropriate medication at school. FS leader to carry medication so it is accessible in essential bag.	In the event of an incident follow emergency procedures.	

Forest School Safety Sweep

Before each Forest School session, a safety sweep will be carried out by the Forest School Leader, to identify and assess immediate risks.

Date:	Forest School leader:	
Potential hazard	YES/NO	Action Taken
Fallen/low branches		
Slippery areas		
Faeces/litter		
Nettles/brambles		
Standing water		
Broken glass/needles		
Vandalism/intruders		
Weather		
Boundary line/tool area		
Emergency rucksack		
Tools		
Additional comments:		

Risk Management of Tools and Equipment

General rules for tool use:

- All tools must have an individual risk assessment.
- Storage of tools will be safe at school. Forest School leaders will have access and be responsible for these tools.
- The storage of tools will be safe in the Forest School. Only Forest School leaders will have access and be responsible for these during the Forest School.
- Never walk around with tools.
- Always make sure they are clean and sharp before using them.
- Only the Forest School leader will use tools with the children.
- A designated area will be used for using tools within the Forest School.
- The tools will never be used at any other time or in any other part of Southborough Primary School.

Potato peeler

- Children must be with the Forest School leader.
- Always sit down when using a potato peeler.
- Open the potato peeler away from you, with plenty of room around you, (use the 'blood bubble').
- Use the potato peeler away from your body.
- Children must be supported when using a potato peeler. A 1:3 or 1:4 ratio will be used, depending on age and experience of the pupil.

Penknife:

- Children must be with the Forest School leader.
- Always sit down when using a penknife.
- Open the penknife away from you, with plenty of room around you, (use the 'blood bubble').
- Use the penknife away from your body.
- Ensure the penknife is closed and locked when it is not in use.
- Children must be supported when using a penknife. A 1:1 or 1:2 ratio will be used, depending on age and experience of the pupil.

Bow Saw:

- A guard must be in place when not in use.
- Must only be used with the Forest School leader.
- Always use the designated area.
- Use the Bow Saw with a sawhorse, where possible.
- Talk to the children about how to hold the Bow Saw. Forest School leader to remove the saw as soon as the cut has been made.
- Ensure safe storage and handling in Forest School

Fire Risk Assessment and Management

Hazards and associated risks	Who may be affected	Risk Rating (LMH)	Control measures	Any further action	Any individual's requirements
Burns and scalds from fire, cooking equipment and hot liquids	All members of the party	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fire bucket ▪ Oven gloves provided ▪ Fire blanket / wet tea towels ▪ Cooking supervised by FS leader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First aider and kit on site 	
Fire spreading	All members of the party	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fire built on clear area, free of leaves. ▪ Fire supervised at all times by FS leader. ▪ Fire pit built carefully and lined with logs. ▪ Fire bucket nearby. ▪ Extinguished 20 minutes before end of session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FS leader to check fire area after session has finished. 	
Trips and falls	All members of the party	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fire square built one body length and a half around fire. ▪ Discuss risks and include no running or walking through the area. ▪ Children to only come into the area once given permission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First aid kit available 	

Forest School Routines

Procedures to be carried out before each session:

- A thorough sweep will be carried out of the site, to check for any danger or hazards. All items will be collected/removed with caution, before the session begins. A written record will be kept of each sweep.
- Trees will be checked for any broken/dead branches.
- Weather conditions will be checked and Forest School will go ahead if it is unduly windy, or there is a thunder storm. If there has been considerable rainfall, it might be that the ground becomes boggy. This will be checked, as part of the sweep, and if part of the ground is considered too boggy, it will be roped off and the children will be made aware.
- Forest School leader to walk boundary prior to session and check that boundary is in place. If not, then boundary needs to be marked out prior to session.

Session plan

- Dress (clothes and wellies)
- Remind children of the general Forest School rules.
- Walk to area, (Forest School Leader leading way) discussing environment using all senses.
- In Forest School, class to sit at Base Camp with Forest School leader, to discuss any safety issues of the day and recap Forest School rules.
- Walk boundary, highlight safety issue and reasons for boundary.
- Rejoin at Base Camp, discuss any potential hazards found. Discuss session activities.
- Carry out session activities.
- Self-select snack/drink, cleaning hands with wet wipes or gel beforehand.
- At end of session, return to Base Camp ('1, 2, 3, base camp!'). Discuss session, allowing children to feedback their activities. In colder months, these Base Camp moments could be ideal opportunity for hot chocolate.
- Leave Forest School as you found it, closing it as you leave. (see ** below)
- Return to changing area and remove additional clothing. Once in the classroom, change into school uniform.

Clear everything away, count tools and equipment back in.

Designated Person responsibility for each Forest School session

Forest School Leader

- Ensure all session procedures are followed as outlined in this document.
- Ensure that all adults are aware of session procedures, risk assessment, carrying out first aid, Forest School rules.
- Ensure that all adults are aware of pupils with any medical needs/special considerations.
- Deliver session, in the role of class teacher for that session (class teacher to be used as additional staff) for duration of the session.
- Carry out first aid, as required.
- Observe children and how they are learning, during session.
- Checking on and ensuring safety of both children and adults within Forest School.
- Supervise any activity involving tools.
- Be responsible for fire-building.

Additional school staff

- Observe children and how they are learning, during session.
- Check on safety of children and other adults.
- Discuss procedures with other adult helpers, as required.

Other adult helpers

- Observe children and how they are learning.
- Check on the safety of children and adults.

Toileting Considerations

Children will be asked to visit the toilet before leaving the main site for Forest School. As Forest School is part of the main school site and the school building can be easily accessed by the children they will be permitted to visit the toilet during Forest School sessions if necessary.

If an adult needs to accompany the child to the toilet, this will only be permitted if the required adult to child ratio can be adhered to.

Insurance Requirements

Southborough Primary School is a Bromley Borough School using an area on the school site and is therefore covered by LBB Insurance.

Travel Policy

The following are the school's procedures regarding travel and would be followed, along with the risk assessment for travel, if we took the children off site.

Procedure for travelling by Coach

Seatbelts	Once seated, all children must fasten their seatbelts. Adults supervisors must check that all seatbelts are fastened and in good working order. Any faulty seatbelts must be immediately reported to the driver and party leader. It is illegal for children to travel without a seatbelt. Children must wear their seatbelts at all times and only unfasten it when directed to do so by an adult supervisor.
Registration	Once all children are seated, the adult supervisors must ensure that all of their group members are present and report back to the party leader before the coach is moving. If travelling on more or one vehicle, each coach will have a list of the children and adults travelling on it.
Motion sickness	Buckets and tissues will be located at the front of the coach and children prone to motion sickness must sit in the seats near the front.
Medication	Where more than one coach is being used, adults carrying medication for specific children must make sure that they travel on the same coach as those children.
Eating/drinking	Children are not allowed to eat or drink on the coach.
Behaviour	Children must behave in a sensible manner throughout the journey and must not shout. They must not gesticulate to other road users.
Litter	No litter must be left on the coach. After the children have left the coach, a designated adult supervisor must check the coach and remove any litter.
In the event of a mechanical breakdown	The party leader will liaise with the driver to ascertain the nature of the problem, how long it will take to resolve and whether the party will need to leave the coach. The party leader will then telephone the school to inform them of the situation. If the party is required to leave the coach, the children must leave in a quiet and orderly manner, as directed by the party leader. If an alternative coach is provided, the children must walk in single file, under the direct supervision of the adults, to the new coach. If the party is required to wait by the roadside, the party leader will remain in their groups under the direct supervision of their group leaders.

In the event of an accident	The party leader will contact the school and, if necessary, the emergency services. Any injuries will be dealt with by qualified members of the emergency services. If the party needs to leave the coach, the children must leave in a quiet and orderly manner and wait in a safe area, as directed by the party leader. A register will then be taken to make sure all children are accounted for. In the event that the party leader is incapacitated, the other adult supervisors must carry out this procedure.
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Legislations and the Health and Safety policies

Legislations:

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

This act attempts to provide a comprehensive system of law to cover the health and safety of people at work. The objectives are:

- To raise the standards of safety and health for all persons at work.
- To protect the client group whose health and safety may be put at risk by the activities of the persons at work.

It is a criminal offence not to comply with its provision.

Employers have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees by:

- Assessing all risks.
- Ensuring emergency procedures are in place.
- Providing adequate sanitary and washing facilities.
- Ensuring that all equipment is safe and in good working order.
- Providing adequate training on substances that may damage health.
- Providing protective clothing.

Employees are responsible for the health and safety of themselves and other people who might be affected by their acts.

Children's Act 1989/2004:

Key areas:

- Ratios areas for activities.
- Equal opportunities.
- Communication with parents and carers.
- Police checks - CRB Forms

Liability Insurance Act

CRB checks

Ecological Impact of Forest School

Impact to consider on Forest School Site in...		
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will use part of the area identified for FS as our 1st site. • In the area we will identify a digging area and tool area to minimise impact on site. • As part of our FS rules, the children will understand the importance of leaving FS as they found it. • The site will be used for 3 sessions a week either in the morning or afternoon; where possible we won't do two sessions in 1 day. • We will develop new areas at this site and monitor the impact. • We will let grass in that area to grow to minimise impact. • During this year we continuously record any changes that take place by taking photographs. • We will also record the flora and fauna found as the seasons change. • We will monitor the impact throughout the year to inform future decisions. • The site will have the school holidays in which to recover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will evaluate the impact the FS has had on our 1st site. • We will assess the damage that the specific area have had on the site and consider moving them so that the flora and fauna can recover. • As second site has been identified to use during this year depending on our assessment of the ecological impact. • We will identify areas for digging and tool use in the 2nd site to minimise impact. • In the 2nd site we will monitor the impact of FS by recording changes noticed or flora and faunas identified as the seasons change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will evaluate the impact that FS has had on our 2nd site and consider the following 2 options; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move back to our 1st site. 2. Use a larger area which combines 1st and 2nd site.