

Family Zone Forest School Collaboration



Handbook

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Introduction

The Family Zone Forest School Community is a new initiative to develop an area wide Forest School campus across North Manchester.

Forest School is an ethos shared by many schools across the UK, it is an inspirational concept, offering children and young people regular opportunities for outdoor learning; helping to foster an understanding of nature and the environment, develop confidence and build resilience as well as complimenting classroom learning. In addition, it offers unique opportunities for children to explore, take risks, work together, and experience freedom and physical challenge. Many children in this area do not experience this informally because families are conscious about safety; higher than average crime levels in the area serves to heighten the anxiety of parents to keep children under close supervision, often indoors.

Abbott Community Primary School, Collyhurst Nursery, Holy Trinity, Manchester Communication Academy, Saviour, St Chad's, St Edmunds, St Malachy's & St Patrick's primary schools as well as local business HMG Paints, are all working together on an area wide Forest School campus which will include nature trails, running water, growing spaces, fire pits and performance spaces.

The sites will be a shared resource across the area with 20 trained Forest School Practitioners able to deliver sessions in line with the forest school curriculum during the school day, with exchange days in place allowing staff and students to experience all that each site has to offer. During weekends and school holidays the site will be open to the wider community with a programme or organised family activities.

We have taken a collaborative approach to creating this handbook as the policies and procedures will, for the main be uniform across the whole of the campus, with the exception of each site having their own individual risk assessment.

We hope that everyone using the Forest School, whether it be for structured learning or fun, family activities, will enjoy the experience and take something away with them.

Forest School Staffing

All Staff and helpers will have an Enhanced CRB Disclosure Check

Ratios

Foundation Stage – 1:5

Key Stage 1 – 1:8

Key Stage 2 – 1:15

All Forest School sessions will be delivered by qualified Level 3 Forest School Practitioners

Health and Safety at Forest School

Health and Safety at Work Act (HASWA)

The HASWA outlines the responsibilities of employers (in this case, the Forest School Leader) and of employees (being adults working with the group). The main considerations relevant to Forest School sessions are detailed below.

Employers must	How this will be done
Tell you about risks to your health and safety	Adults will be asked to read the risk assessment(s) at the beginning of the session.
Tell you how to do your job safely.	The Forest School Leader will introduce the adults involved to the activities and inform them of safety considerations
Ensure that safe working practices and appropriate policies are in place to safeguard its staff and users.	Ensure that safe working practices and appropriate policies are in place to safeguard its staff and users. Adults will record accidents and incidents, and review whether they could have been avoided. The Forest School Leader will make appropriate changes to procedures and policies, as necessary.
Inform you how to get First Aid	The Forest School Leader will have a First Aid kit and will administer First Aid
Tell you what to do in an Emergency	Staff will be given a copy of the Emergency Procedures at the start of their involvement in Forest School
Provide you with any protection you may need to fulfil your role	Relevant safety equipment (e.g. gloves, hard hats) will be given to anybody who needs it
Take care of their own health and safety and that of people who may be affected by what they do (or don't do)	Adults must actively manage risks by reporting, reducing, or removing them where possible, providing it is safe to do so.
Co-operate with others on health and safety, and not interfere with, or misuse, anything provided for health, safety or welfare	Follow the Health and Safety advice given during the session by the Forest School Leader, or seek advice if uncertain. Nobody should interfere with safety equipment, such as the First Aid Kit, other

Risk Management Policy

The Forest School aims to develop children's self-esteem, independence and motivation to learn in a safe environment. In order that these aims can be met, the Forest School Leader will:

- Consistently apply the five-step approach to risk assessment for all Forest School activities:
 - Look for hazards.
 - Decide who may be harmed and how.
 - Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing controls are adequate or whether more should be done.
 - Record findings, including daily amendments to standing risk assessments based on site visits or observations.
 - Review assessments on a regular basis (or if circumstances change, which may affect the rigour of the assessment) and revise if necessary.
- Carry out Site Risk Assessments on each site where Forest School activities will take place on a seasonal basis
- Daily pre-visit checks will be carried out by the Forest School Leader on sites to be used prior to a day's activity, as near to the start of the activity as is reasonably practical. The findings will be recorded on the Daily Risk Assessment form.
- Complete an Activity Risk/Benefit Assessment for every activity to be undertaken at Forest School.
- Ensure all staff and volunteer helpers have read the relevant Site and Activity Risk Assessments prior to a session.
- Cancel activities if, in the opinion of the Forest School Leader, weather conditions such as high winds or the threat/occurrence of electrical storms make work outdoors unsafe.
- Inform staff, volunteers and children of potential hazards and methods of working in order to minimise their risk further.
- Involve staff, volunteers and children in risk assessment, as appropriate, as part of learning.
- Ensure legal guidelines regarding off-site activities, such as adequate insurance and parental permission are met.
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers and children are aware of the emergency procedures for the Forest School site.
- Be responsible for teaching children adequate skills in order to keep themselves safe, particularly in relation to the use of hand tools and fire.

- Ensure children and adults will have access to drinking water during sessions.
- Ensure a nil-by-mouth policy is adopted in all Forest School sessions, except for food cooked as part of a fully risk-assessed Forest School activity.

Emergency Action Plan

A Parental/Guardian Consent Form (see appendix) must be completed at the start of the Forest School programme.

This form provides up to date medical information and emergency contact details for the participant in case of an emergency.

Every person involved in Forest School sessions, including staff, children and volunteers, must have a medical form, which will be kept in a folder in the school office

During Forest School sessions all leaders will carry a charged mobile phone with credit and which will have emergency contact numbers programmed in. These will include the school, local emergency services and any other relevant parties.

A copy of the emergency procedures card (see copy below) will always be in the emergency folder, along with consent forms (if applicable), in the welfare bag. The bag and folder will be taken on site at every session. Consent forms will then be stored in school .

Emergency Procedures

Site Name:	Abbott Community Primary School Livesey Street Manchester M40 7PR
Nearest A & E:	North Manchester General Hospital, Delaunays Road, Crumpsall, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M8 5RB. A&E - 0161 624 0420
Amend as necessary for individual sites	

The following procedures should be implemented for Forest School sessions:

In case of a medical emergency (i.e., serious injury, poisoning or illness)

The Forest School Leader will co-ordinate the emergency procedure.

Stage One

Any adult who witnesses or is involved in an emergency, such as a serious injury or suspects him/herself or another person to have a serious illness, should immediately alert the Forest School Leader /delegated First Aider.

The Forest School Leader should:

- Raise the alarm to other leaders/adults.
- Assess the situation – is it safe for you to approach?
- Appoint someone to take responsibility for the rest of the group.

Stage Two

The assisting adult will gather children away from the casualty but nearby so the group remains together. The assisting adult will ensure the other children are safe and then will be available to support the Forest School Leader if necessary. The assisting adult should call the school office from a mobile phone carried by the Forest School Leader to request for back up support. When able to do so the children will return to school

The Forest School leader should:

- Protect the casualty and others from danger – is there anything you need to stop/change to reduce further incident?
- In the event of a serious incident if the fire is lit, it should be extinguished by an assisting adult. Any tools will be gathered and put in a safe place. Resources and other materials will be left.

Stage Three

The Forest School Leader will decide what action is appropriate and put this into effect.

The Forest School leader should:

- Check vital signs.
- Delegate person to get folder containing consent & medical information form.
- Delegate group supervision and contact **emergency services – 999 or 112.**
 - Speak slowly and clearly.
 - Describe incident and give patient description/current status.
 - Advise of location.

Stage Four

The assisting adult will then phone the school office to keep them updated on the situation, explaining that an ambulance has been called. The school

office/staff will provide extra assistance to organise the movement of the Emergency Services.

The Forest School Leader should:

- Administer First Aid if applicable.
- Delegate direction of emergency services.
- Remain with the patient from the moment they are made aware of the incident so that any symptoms can be effectively monitored and reported.

Stage Five

Extra assistance will arrive and will organise the movement of the Emergency Services (if appropriate).

The remaining group should make their way back to school.

The Forest School Leader should:

- Complete hand-over procedure with delegated group supervisor before the group departs from the site.
- Delegate a person to contact the child's parents using the details on the child's consent form.

Stage Six

Incident / accident report will be completed and recorded by the Forest School Leader. This should be photocopied and given to the school/child's parents. If required a RIDDOR form should also be completed.

Safeguarding Policy

Please refer to school policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures
School Designated Person is Phillippa Wilson.

This handbook recognises the following duties of care to young people or those considered vulnerable:

- Listen to children and respect their wishes, do not impose upon them.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of any child.
- Be mindful of the welfare of all children.
- Act in a manner suitable for a role model at all times, ensuring language and behaviour are appropriate.
- Work with an awareness of Child Protection issues at all times.
- Take appropriate action if it becomes clear that anyone has physically, emotionally or sexually abused a child.
- Report any evidence or reasonable suspicion of a child having been physically, emotionally or sexually abused to Child Protection Officers within the local authority system.
- Ensure that other adults do not put any child at risk through their actions or expectations by placing a child in a position where health and safety is at risk.

The Forest School sessions will follow each school's individual safeguarding policy.

Behaviour

The behaviour of the children within the Forest is the class teacher/member of staff and the Forest School leader's responsibility. The school's behaviour policy should be followed at all times. (please see appendix)

Forest School Rules and the Countryside Code

Participants are encouraged to be involved in making decisions about their environment and safety; however, there are a few rules that the learners will be made aware of at the start of their involvement in Forest School sessions. Behind each rule, there is a range of learning opportunities that will encourage learners to engage with and understand these rules. They are:

Respect the environment

This will involve learning how our actions may affect the living things around us. This may be achieved by encouraging participants to distinguish living things from dead and agree that nothing alive should be picked or destroyed.

Stay within the Forest School boundary

Boundaries will be identified during the first Forest School session and participants will be guided around the site to ensure they are aware of where they are permitted to play, explore and investigate. Children are not allowed to leave the site unless directed by an adult

Respect other people

At Abbott Forest School, we aim to create a feeling of belonging and unity. In line with our school behaviour policy we expect all individuals to respect their peers, their belongings and their creations. Many activities delivered at Forest School aims to promote team building, communication and social and emotional development.

Looking eyes, Listening Ears

As our Forest School sessions are delivered in a woodland setting, there are numerous natural hazards. Each site and activity is risk assessed but individuals are encouraged to risk assess their surroundings and activities themselves. Using their eyes to watch where they are going and their ears to listen to safety guidelines will ensure they have a fun and safe experience at Forest School.

Risk Assessment

There are 9 sites across the collaboration and whilst all of the risk assessment procedures will be very similar, due to the differences of the sites, each school will have their own individual risk assessment included as an appendix.

Fire Policy

Campfires are an important part of Forest School and are used in many sessions. St Chad's School aims to ensure that all children and adults participating in Forest School sessions with fires will do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

Location

- Only the fire square in the centre of the log circle will be used.
- Campfire areas are enclosed by logs to prevent the spread of fire.

Positioning of Children and Adults

- Fire areas are surrounded by seating logs at least 1.5 metres from the fire pit.
- When the campfire is in use, children are not permitted to access the area without permission.
- When allowed to access the campfire, children must walk around the outside of the seating logs and wait for permission to come in. Once permission has been given, they must sit; ensuring legs are drawn into the log and not outstretched.
- Once seated around the campfire, the children must remain seated until directed by an adult to move.
- Children will be taught how to change. They must never cross the inner area.
- 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: they are advised to turn their head to one side, placing their hand across the face, to close their eyes and count to 30.
- If there is a clear wind direction, seating in the line of smoke is to be avoided.
- There will always be plentiful supplies of water for emergencies in the fire pit area and the first aid kit will include the appropriate equipment for dealing with scalds and burns

Lighting and keeping fires burning

- Only adults are permitted to light fires. This will usually be the Forest School Leader.
- Fires are lit using fire lighting blocks, newspaper and matches or a strike stick.
- 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 from the side of the fire.

Extinguishing fires

- All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session.
- Water should always be to hand during campfire sessions.
- Forest School Leaders should ensure that any large remains of wood are separated from one another.
- At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with water and stirred until all smoke and steam has ceased.
- Large build ups of potash need to be dispersed. This must only be done when it has totally cooled. It should be scattered throughout the woodland.

Tool Policy

Forest School uses the following tools with the children;

- Bow Saw
 - Knife
 - Billhook
 - Loppers
 - Wooden mallets
-
- Tools are used with children with mostly a 1:1 adult supervision only. In some circumstances, this might be 1:2. The Forest School Leader is responsible for overseeing safe use and maintenance of all tools.
 - Before any tools are used, a tool talk must take place so all learners are aware of how the tool is used safely.
 - A list of the items stored in the Tool Bag and Tool Box is available.
 - These lists are also attached to the Tool Bag and Tool Box and used as checklists to ensure that all items are returned safely at the end of each session.
 - The Tool Box, which is made of steel and contains sharp tools such as knives and axes is kept locked at all times.
 - The Forest School Leader is responsible for the safe-keeping of the key.
 - The Tool Bag and Tool Box are kept locked in the Forest School Room when not being used at Forest School sessions.
 - Gloves are also available as Personal Protection Equipment when needed.
 - Tool-specific Safety Information Sheets are included below.

Tool	<u>Billhook</u>
Picture	
Use	Splitting Wood
How	One Person should hold the bill hook with one hand firmly on the handle and pinching the hook with the other. The blade should be placed at the top of the log to be split. The second person will use a mallet to strike the top of the bill hook and drive the blade into the wood.
Stand	Stand with the hook next to your leg with the blade facing down and the hook facing forward
Walk	Walk with the hook next to your leg with the blade facing down and the hook facing forward
Pass	With the hook and blade facing down hold the top of the tool and pass the handle towards the other person
Placed	On the floor on top of its sheath. Hook and blade facing inwards and handle facing forwards
Gloves	No gloves are worn when using a bill hook
Maintenance	Sharpen using a sharpening stone
Cleaning	Use a cloth and oil to remove dirt and moisture from the blade
Storage	Store it a waterproof toolbox or container. Check the tool is clean and dry before storing and ensure the sheath is covering the blade
Ratio	1:1
All tools must be used 2 arms and a tool length away from anyone else except your partner.	

Tool	Bowsaw
Picture	
Use	Cutting wood thicker than a two pence piece
How	<p>Explain that the bow saw needs to be used by 2 children. One holding the handle, the other holding the guard. When starting, the children need to put their hands through the middle of the saw to make sure the wood doesn't move. With a partner, saying "to me to, to you" to get a rhythm of forwards and backward motion, then allowing the other to pull.</p>
Stand	Stand with the saw next to your leg with the blade facing down
Walk	Walk with the saw next to your leg with the blade facing down
Pass	Keep the blade facing down, turn the handle to offer to the other person.
Placed	Beside you: On a clear space/tool mat where it will not hit other hard objects with blade facing in and handle facing out or leaning against a nearby tree.
Gloves	No gloves on the tool hand. Glove on the helper hand.
Maintenance	Difficult to sharpen due to shape of cutting edge. Keep spare blades in toolbox in case one needs changing.
Cleaning	Use a cloth and oil to remove dirt and moisture from the blade.
Storage	Store it a waterproof toolbox or container. Check the tool is clean and dry before storing and ensure the sheath is covering the blade.
Ratio	1:1 or 1:2
<p style="text-align: center;">All tools must be used 2 arms and a tool length away from anyone else except your partner.</p>	

Tool	Sheath Knife
Picture	
Use	Cutting string and Whittling
How	Blade facing away from you on the outside of your body. Keeping wood between you and the knife.
Stand	Put in the sheath until hearing a click. Stand holding the handle with the blade facing down.
Walk	Keeping the sheath as close as possible to your leg.
Pass	Holding sheathed part, offer handle to another person
Placed	Put in sheath until hearing a click and place next to you with the handle facing forwards and the blade inwards.
Gloves	No glove on tool hand. A glove can be worn on the helper hand.
Maintenance	Sharpen using a sharpening stone
Cleaning	Use a cloth and oil to remove dirt and moisture from the blade
Storage	Store it a waterproof toolbox or container. Check the tool is clean and dry before storing and ensure the sheath is covering the blade.
Ratio	1:1
<p style="text-align: center;">All tools must be used 2 arms and a tool length away from anyone else except your partner.</p>	

Tool	<u>Loppers</u>
Picture	
Use	Cutting wood thinner than a two pence piece.
How	Open safety catch and use like scissors.
Stand	Stand with one hand on the bottom arm, one on the top arm and the blade facing forwards
Walk	Walk with one hand on the bottom arm, one on the top arm and the blade facing forwards
Pass	Hold centre of arms and offer handles to another person
Placed	On the floor, next to you with the handles facing forwards and the blade behind you.
Gloves	No gloves are worn when using loppers
Maintenance	Sharpen using a sharpening stone
Cleaning	Use a cloth and oil to remove dirt and moisture from the blade.
Storage	Store it a waterproof toolbox or container. Check the tool is clean and dry before storing. Check the safety catch is engaged.
Ratio	1:1
All tools must be used 2 arms and a tool length away from anyone else except your partner.	

Tool	Mallet
Picture	
Use	Banging stakes and wooden pegs into the ground.
How	Hold handle and hit froes, axes or gauges into wood.
Stand	Stand with one hand holding the mallet, close to your leg.
Walk	Hold handle of tool next to leg with head facing downwards
Pass	Hold top of tool and offer the handle to the other person
Placed	On ground or surface with handle facing backwards. Or return to designated place.
Gloves	No gloves on tool
Maintenance	Remove any loose bits of wood
Cleaning	No need to clean
Storage	Store in large water proof and air tight container
Ratio	1:2
<p align="center">All tools must be used 2 arms and a tool length away from anyone else except your partner.</p>	

Toileting Policy

Explain Toileting Policy to parents, carers, staff and children.

Before the start of the sessions children and staff should be toileted.

A rucksack with hand wash or hand wipes, nappy sacks/plastic bags, potty, toilet tissues, wipes and or nappies should be taken –tarpaulin for screen as required .

Any used toilet tissue, paper or nappies should be bagged up and taken back to school after the session.

On arrival a designated “Wee Tree” should be located. It should be away from any water course to prevent contamination. If necessary, a modesty screen can be made using a small piece of tarpaulin.

All adults supporting Forest School sessions should be DBS checked to enable toileting.

Cancellation Policy

The Forest School session will take place at the usual site in all weathers except for high winds or where there is a risk of an electrical storm. In high winds (force 4 increasing to force 5 or more), Forest School will take place on the school playing fields, away from the trees. Where there is the risk of an electrical storm, Forest School will be cancelled.

The Forest School session will also be cancelled if the minimum ratio of 1 adult to 5 children cannot be achieved. Forest School will also be cancelled if the Forest School Leader is absent.

Parents will be advised of the cancellation via a notice outside their child's classroom door for them to read when they drop their child off.

Staff will be advised when they arrive at school and will be redeployed to other classes, as required.

Lost Child Procedure

If it is discovered that a child or adult is missing from the group, the situation will be taken very seriously from the outset and the following emergency procedure will be implemented:

- The Forest School Leader shall be informed immediately.
- Activity for the rest of the group shall be suspended in order that up to two members of staff, including the Forest School Leader if appropriate, may be released to conduct a search which shall last no more than five minutes.
- The remaining children will be given a low risk activity to complete, within the Camp area by the remaining adults, being mindful not to increase any anxiety in the group.
- If, after the five-minute search, the child has not been located, the Forest School Leader will phone 999 and alert the police.
- The School Office will be informed so that they can contact the child's parents or adult's emergency contact and inform them of the situation.
- Staff should corroborate details of the situation, including last known position of the missing child or adult and any timings. These will be recorded in the Accident Book carried in the Emergency Rucksack.

Clothing Policy

No person will be permitted to go to Forest School without appropriate clothing that will protect them from extremes of heat or cold, keep them covered to reduce the likelihood of cuts and scrapes, that fits appropriately for comfort, and that meets any religious requirements.

1. Warm base Layers (i.e. vest, long sleeved top, jumper, jogging bottoms.
2. Coat/fleece & or Waterproof coat.
3. Hats/Gloves if cold. Sun hat if warm.
4. Thick socks or two pairs of medium thickness.
5. Wellies or sturdy walking boots which keep their feet dry.

For health and safety reasons children who do not have the appropriate kit will not be able to take part in our woodland activities on that day.

Food Policy

All Forest School sites maintains high food hygiene standards in relation to the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food.

- All foods used will be washed and prepared prior to visiting the Forest School area, and will be carried in a clean, air-tight container
- We will never re-heat any food
- Trays will be used to transport cutlery
- Staff will be fully aware of any child's allergies and/or dietary requirements
- Clean water and anti-bacterial hand wash will be available at all times
- Left-overs will be disposed of immediately
- Each child will have their own water bottle clearly labelled
- No meat will be cooked in the forest area
- Fresh fruit and vegetables will be encouraged
- Sugary snacks will be kept to a minimum

Equal Opportunities

The Forest School actively promotes the inclusion of all children and adults into Forest School sessions, and will endeavour to ensure that the opportunities for learning, development and participation are available to everyone, irrespective of race, gender, ability, religion, sexual orientation or age.

The Forest School will follow the school's Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policy.

Daily Operating Procedure

Before the Session

- A Session Plan will be completed, considering observations, interest areas and learning points from previous sessions. All adults will read the Session Plan form prior to the session.
- Activity Risk/Benefit Forms will be completed/updated for each planned activity. All adults will read the forms relevant to a session before it starts.
- All staff will have read the latest Site Risk Assessment, which will be relevant to the current season.
- The Forest School Leader will check that enough adults are present for the session to go ahead and that the weather conditions allow it to take place.
- The Forest School Site will be visited and the Base Camp area set up (seating, fire pit and additional safety logs for Early Years sessions).
- A Daily Risk Assessment will be completed.
- The equipment required for the session will be assembled, checked, loaded and taken to the Forest School site.
- All children will be registered by their Class Teacher. They will then get changed for Forest School in the Forest School Room, go to the toilet and apply sun cream, where necessary.
- The Pre-Session Checklist will be undertaken;
 - Medication
 - Fresh drinking water
 - Forest School Keys
 - Emergency Phone
 - Happy Bag – Including First Aid Kit
 - Emergency Contact Details and Consent Forms
 - Session Plan and Risk Assessment
 - Relevant Resources

During the Session

- A headcount check will be undertaken on arrival at Forest School and whenever the group is brought together.
- Risks will be continually assessed and appropriate action taken to reduce or remove any risks found.

After the Session

- A headcount check will be undertaken at the end of the session, before returning to school.
- If the Tool Bag and/or Tool Box have been taken to the site, the contents will be checked by the Forest School Assistant to ensure no items are missing.
- A further headcount check will be undertaken as the children arrive at the KS2 playground and on entry to the Forest School Room, where they will get changed.
- A Session Evaluation will be completed by the Forest School Leader, along with any observational records that will be useful to the Class Teacher.

Signature Page

I confirm that I have read the Forest School handbook and I agree to abide by the policies and procedures it contains.

