



**Forest School**  
December 2023

**FOREST SCHOOL  
QUEENSGATE FOUNDATION PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Policy Review**

This policy is reviewed in full by the Governing Board on a two-yearly basis.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Board on: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

It will be reviewed again December 2025.

**Approved**



Signature: .....Head Teacher

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023



Signature: ..... Co-Chair of the Governing Board

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

**Policy control**

Date	Amendments / additions	Reason
Nov. 2020	Amalgamation of all Forest School Policies into one policy	Avoids duplication
Nov 2022	Photos, videos and rewards to be uploaded to Class Dojo now instead of Tapestry.	We do not use Tapestry anymore.
<b>Now 2023</b>	Section 1 updated	Now using Dojo instead of Tapestry

## **Forest School Procedures**

### **Daily**

#### **1. Before the Session**

The Forest School Leader will check that there are enough adults for the session to run and that the weather conditions allow it to take place. Parents are informed of when their child is going to attend their Forest School session through the class newsletter via Class Dojo.

All volunteers to sign in at the school office on arrival.

The equipment required for the session will be assembled, checked, loaded onto the trolley. All staff will be aware of which group of children are going to The Patch and which school member of staff. All children will be registered by their Class Teacher who will check that they have had sun cream applied where necessary. The children will then go to the toilet and put on welly boots and either waterproofs and warm clothing or sun hats. A small supply of spare kit is available.

The children will then be lined up at the classroom door and the Forest School Leader will call the names of the children to check the correct children are lining up, if any children are missing at this point the Leader will check with the Class Teacher in case they are absent from school on that day. The Forest School Leader will then count each child and inform each adult so that everyone is aware of how many children we will be taking. The children will also be told how many children are in the group as 'our magic number;' this will be displayed on the RSD classroom door and referred back to at the end of the session.

Once all of the adults are also dressed appropriately and have been to the toilet we will leave the school building with one adult at the front and one at the back of the line and the other adults in-between. The adult at the front will lead the way to The Patch and the other adults are responsible for making sure that all children remain in the line and that no other children join the line.

Before the end of the session the tools will be checked by the Forest School Leader to ensure no items are missing. All items must be located before returning to school.

#### **2. After the Session**

The children will be lined up at the entrance of The Patch and counted before returning to school.

The Tool Box will then be locked in the shed.

The trolley will be emptied and returned to the EYFS shed. Any rubbish will be disposed of and washing up done in the EYFS sink.

All volunteers to be thanked for their time and signed out at the school office.

Photos and videos will be uploaded onto Class Dojo.

#### **3. Environmental Impact and Assessment**

At Queensgate Primary Forest School we aim for all our children, staff and volunteers to promote a high level of respect for the natural environment. We will purchase products that have been assessed for having a lower impact on the environment. Our aim is to minimise waste, increase and encourage recycling and the reuse of materials and to support a wider respect for our planet. 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 the site we will ensure that litter is collected and disposed of responsibly.

Queensgate Primary School holds environmental sustainability as a core value. We understand that the choices we make as consumers adds up to a large part of our footprint and we take this into account when making our purchases. As far as possible we will buy items which have the smallest impact on the environment with minimum packaging.

The condition of our site will be monitored through observations, discussions and regular photographs throughout the year. If at any point we feel that our practise is having a negative impact on our site we will implement the appropriate changes. For example if the use of water in the mud kitchen causes the ground in that area to become too wet we will limit the use of water until the ground dries out.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Collecting Wood	Dead wood is important to any natural area's ecology as it has a variety of uses, from homes for bugs to beds for fungi, therefore a lack of it can have a detrimental effect on any woodland habitat.	Bring required fire wood to each session and collect only the minimum amount of additional wood if required. Reserve specific areas for dead wood conservation.
Fires	Changes in soil chemistry can lead to increases in PH levels, carbon, phosphorous, etc. which can be harmful to some plants, whilst other essential nutrients may be depleted. Fire can travel underground to roots even after appearing to be extinguished.	Fixed locations for fires. Dispose of ash responsibly. Ensure that all fires are extinguished fully before leaving the site.
Cooking	Food waste may attract animals to the site.	Maintain the 'leave no trace' attitude and dispose of any unwanted food in a bag to be taken away.
Tree Climbing, Shelter Building & Swings	Damage to trees.	Restrict these activities to suitable trees that will tolerate them.
Collecting Natural Materials	Damage to plants.	Explain to the children the types of plants it is best to pick and discourage this activity where possible. Ensure leaves or flowers are taken from fallen parts where possible.
Toilet Use	Wet wipes contain plastic. Human waste entering waterways.	Children will use the toilet before leaving the school building and will be informed that there is not a toilet on 'The Patch'.

#### **4. Behaviour**

In addition to the school's Pupil Behaviour and Discipline Policy:

During a Forest School session the children will be encouraged to follow the Queensgate code in the same way that they are in school. Rewards can be added to Class Dojo by a member of the Forest School team. Forest School sessions will never be used as either a reward or a sanction. Our sessions are a core part of the children's education, in the same way as a maths or literacy lesson.

#### **5. Food Safety**

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

A Risk/Benefit Assessment will be completed for any activity involving the preparing and/or consuming of food items. This will include attention to the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of any food items to prevent growth of bacteria and food contamination. Milk and other ingredients will be stored at correct temperatures prior to the session and checked to ensure they are in-date and not subject to contamination. A cool box will be used to transport and store any ingredients requiring refrigeration prior to use. All utensils will be checked to ensure they are clean before use and waste food will be disposed of responsibly.

When food items are to be consumed during a Forest School session, clean water with an ecologically responsible soap in a bowl will be provided for hand-washing. Children and adults will be required to wash their hands immediately prior to preparing any food items and/or eating.

All medical records must be checked to ensure that no food item or ingredient is given to a child or adult with an allergy to it.

Cooked food will not be re-heated.

## 6. Emergency

In the event of Injury:

At Queensgate Foundation Primary School the safety of our children is paramount. At least one member of staff will be a qualified first aider and all staff have access to the first aid kit. Our first aid kit includes:

- Latex Gloves
- Bandages
- Burns gel
- Burn dressing
- Dressings
- Scissors
- Cotton wool
- Antiseptic wipes
- Sterile water
- Cling film
- Disposal sack for medical waste

It would be very unusual to administer medication to a child while on The Patch, ideally this will be carried out either before or after a session. If however we were to do so we would follow the school's procedures stated in the Health and Safety policy and update the medical records on immediate return to school

If anyone sustains an injury or illness which cannot be treated by First Aid on-site and requires medical assistance: In serious cases, the Emergency Services should be contacted using the mobile phone carried by the Forest School Leader, then the school will be notified. The school office will be responsible for contacting the injured party's emergency contact.

The rest of the group will be supervised away from the incident and if in danger, will be moved to safety.

One member of staff from school will meet the ambulance at the school entrance/gate and direct the crew to The Patch.

In minor cases, the Forest School Leader will arrange to contact the injured party's emergency contact so that they can be collected and taken to the hospital, doctor or home, as appropriate.

### Emergency Contact Numbers

Ambulance/Fire Brigade: 999

School Office: 01983 292872

School Post Code PO32 6PA

Ambulance Access- either through the main school or via the gate on Whippingham Rd, the key for this gate will be needed from the main school office in this instance.

**Grid Reference: SZ 51070 94301**

## 7. Fire

All fires must be extinguished at the end of a session and whenever possible, all fuels should be burnt off to ash. At the end of the session, the fire must be doused down with plenty of water using a watering can. Any large build-up of potash, from several fires, need to be dispersed when it has totally cooled, preferably the following day. It should be finely scattered throughout The Patch to enable natural decomposition.

When having a fire the following equipment will be available:

- Flame retardant gloves
- Fire Blanket
- Bucket of water
- Hair bands

## 8. Lost person

If at any point it seems possible that either a child or adult is missing from the group the Forest School Leader will call for everyone to regroup around the fire area. The Forest School Leader will then count the children and adults

to find out for certain if anyone is missing. In the unlikely event that anyone is missing the Forest School Leader and another adult will proceed to look for the missing person. In this instance the main road would be the first immediate danger. The rest of the group will stay with the remaining adults to play calm games around the fire area. If the missing person is not found within 5 minutes the emergency services will be called followed by the school office. Once the missing person is found we would discuss the importance of staying within 'The Patch' boundary, initially we would do this with the individual but it will also be as a group. We would then expect the session to continue as planned.

## 9. Data Protection

All information regarding the children from each group are on SIMs; hard copies are stored in pupil files in the reproduction room. Any medical information will be shared with the staff members and volunteers on a 'need to know' basis. There will be no need to carry any personal information regarding the group as the Forest School Leader and the other Queensgate staff member will know the children very well. Both the Forest School Leader and the Queensgate staff member have up to date training on General Data Protection Regulation. This is the new regulation about protecting people in the modern society.

## 10. Sanitation

All members of the group are encouraged to use the toilet before the session. Hand sanitiser will be available throughout the session and will be encouraged before consuming any food or drink.

## 11. Tools & PPE

Tools are used with children with 1-1 adult supervision only.

The Forest School Leader is responsible for overseeing safe use and maintenance of all tools and PPE.

A list of the items stored in the tool boxes are attached to each tool box and used as checklists to ensure that all items are returned safely at the end of each session.

The Tool Boxes are kept locked in the shed.

Hard hats are used as Personal Protection Equipment when the tree harness is being used. Hard hats are necessary for the learner in the harness and the adults in charge of the ropes.

Risk-benefit assessments are completed for all activities involving the use of tools.

## 12. Weather

At Queensgate Primary Forest School we believe that...

### **'There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing'**

Queensgate Primary Forest School sessions will go ahead in all weather conditions with only two exceptions:

- Strong winds that make The Patch area hazardous for use due to falling debris
- Very wet and cold conditions where hypothermia is a real possibility

If a session is cancelled due to very cold or windy weather the children will remain in the classroom and all members of staff will be notified as soon as possible.

Exposure to the elements is part of the magic of nature and therefore an integral part of our Forest School sessions. During inclement and or cold weather we will erect temporary shelters to enable us to take shelter. These shelters will consist of large and small tarpaulins and suitable rope for securing.

The Forest Leader is responsible for checking local weather conditions on the morning of a Forest School session. There is no such thing as bad weather...however, wind can be a dangerous element in a wooded area due to potential falling limbs, branches etc. Therefore keeping up to date with the weather forecast is vital.

All children will be kitted up in appropriate clothing before leaving the classroom e.g. Water proof salopettes, gloves, wellies, waterproof jacket and sunhats if required. All year round the children will wear long sleeved tops and trousers and closed toed shoes or boots. This is partly so the children are comfortable in any weather situation but also to protect them from stinging plants, insects, ticks etc. Adult helpers are advised to be appropriately dressed and where possible wellies/hats/gloves/spare socks and additional coats will be found if necessary. Planned activities will be very flexible and able to be adapted due to weather conditions. In cold weather children will be more encouraged to be more active.

In the summer the trees on The Patch will provide some shade from the sun but we will also erect shelters using tarpaulins if more sun protection is required.

### **13. Code of Conduct for Adults at Forest School**

The adults are expected to follow the Queensgate code which is, we all:

- Listen to teachers, adults and other children
- Being polite
- Being gentle
- Being helpful
- Looking after ourselves, other people and our school, inside and outside
- To make sensible choices
- Remember to say sorry if necessary
- Always tell the truth
- Be proud of ourselves, our uniform and our school

This code was designed to keep everyone happy and safe. It is very important that both the children and adults follow the Queensgate Code at all times.

### **14. Complaints Procedure**

The adults strive for the best possible practise, but if something goes wrong, it is important that we are told. Any complains should be discussed with the Forest School Leader or the Headteacher. An appointment with Mrs Sillito (Headteacher) can be made through the school office. All complaints will be dealt with according to the Queensgate Complaints Policy which can be found on the school website: [www.queensgateprimary.co.uk](http://www.queensgateprimary.co.uk)