



Brookside's Forest School Policies and procedures

1. Health & Safety

The Pre-School aims to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff, children, visitors, and other individuals who may be affected by the Pre-School's activities. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and their associated Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) and guidance will always be complied with. Health and safety are a huge part of the forest school ethos, procedures are embedded into everything that we do. We work hard to ensure that children learn health and safety procedures and why they are necessary. Procedures are demonstrated for the children, taught through games and main safety procedures are recapped each session.

Children wear high visibility vests and 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 here'. This has been introduced to them through a game and practiced many times.

Children are taught safety rules and boundaries are made clear. Whilst children begin their first few weeks of forest school sessions there will be clearly marked boundaries using blue rope on the ground. This will be gradually extended to a wider area. Once trust is built the forest school leader may remove the rope.

The site must always be left as it was found. If artefacts are made using 'found' materials these may be taken off site. Shelters should normally be demolished, and imported materials taken back to pre-school at the end of each session.

2. Staffing

The Forest school sessions will be led by the following staff members.

Forest School Leader

Name: Michelle Hughes

Role: Pre-school Manager/ Forest School leader

Qualification: Level 3: Certificate in Leading Forest school

Other qualifications: BA (hons) in early Childhood studies,

Paediatric first aid, ITC Forest School First Aid Certificate.

Name: Leanne Moriarty

Role: Pre-school Deputy Manager / Forest School Leader

Qualification: Level 3: Certificate in Leading Forest school (in training), Qualified early years practitioner

Name: Emma Forbes

Role: Practitioner / Forest School Leader

Qualification: Level 3: Certificate in Leading Forest school (in training), Qualified early years practitioner

3. Insurance

The Children Act 1989 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, place several legal responsibilities on the Pre-School. Therefore, the Pre-School has insurance cover appropriate to its duties under this legislation, including Employer' and Public Liability Insurance. Our current insurance which covers forest school is with Michael Morton Insurance. The insurance company has strict specifications for forest schools to ensure that children are closely supervised during high-risk activities. These measures have been incorporated into our risk assessments.

4. Clothing

To ensure that the children are sufficiently protected from the weather and the forest environment we require children to be wearing appropriate clothing and footwear. Clothing will get muddy, so old clothes are more suitable. Children need to have long sleeves and long trousers in both winter and summer. This is particularly important in the summer to protect from tick bites, sun burn, stinging nettles, and thorns.

5. Suggested clothing.

- waterproof coat
- Waterproof trousers or all –in-one
- Fleece/sweatshirt
- Thermal underwear/leggings
- Long trousers and long-sleeved top (in all weather conditions), several layers during cold days)
- Thick socks
- Wellies or waterproof walking boots.
- A spare change of clothes and a carrier bag for dirty/wet clothing
- Hat, scarf, and gloves (not mittens) (weather permitted)
- Sun hat, sun cream and insect repellent (weather permitted)

- Hair tied back in hairband or a plait.
- Spare clothes including socks and a carrier bag for any dirty clothes.

6. Personal Protective Equipment

- Tight fitting work gloves offer tactility, so are more suited to activities such as whittling.
- Rigger gloves are sturdier and will offer more protection so more appropriate for a child who is being supported to use a bow saw for example.
- Hi visibility vests are worn with the pre-school logo on.
- Fireproof gloves are worn by the adult whilst lighting and maintaining fires.

7. Weather

The Forest School Leader to keep a close eye on the weather conditions and cancel or shorten sessions if necessary. Sessions should be cancelled in high winds and extremely cold temperatures. The site should also be checked for fallen branches after high winds and storms. After ice and snow the site should be carefully checked for potential hazards.

8. Loose Dogs

Brookside pre-school's forest school site sits directly next to a public field and woodland area. Many of the local dog walking companies use the area to walk groups of dogs together as well as the public.

Brookside Pre-school recognizes that no dog is completely trustworthy and therefore ensures the safety of the children and staff in the following ways:

for dog walkers

- Children attending the nursery are made aware that they should not approach or touch any dog on site unless they are told it is safe to do so by the adults they are with.
- When going on an outing staff carry out a risk assessment, which will involve what to do when encountering dogs.
- Children are told not to touch or call dogs to them.
- If a dog/dogs looks unfriendly staff will ask children to turn away from the dog with their arms crossed. If the dog appears to be out of control, staff will politely ask the owner to put the dog on a lead whilst they pass the children.
- Children are told not to run to or from a dog.
- When passing dogs on the walkway, staff keep children close and to one side of the path.

Any incidents involving a dog or dog owner are reported to the local dog warden on **Tel: 01614744207.**

Where the outcome of this is not satisfactory the police will be contacted. Call 101 to report incident.

9. Toileting

- Children are sent to the toilet at pre-school before setting off to the site.
- Children are taken by a staff member to a designated part of the woods to do a wee (away from passing public) which offers a little privacy but is still visible to the other staff member for safeguarding.
- If a child needs a poo, then they are taken to use the toilet at pre-school.
- All hands to be cleaned with antibacterial gel after toileting.
- Staff to wear disposable gloves when helping children with toileting.
- Used tissue and gloves to be put into a nappy bag and tied up. This will be disposed of in the clinical waste bin on return to pre-school.

10. First Aid/accident procedure

In the event of an emergency, the following procedure will be followed:

- The area will be secured and made safe.
- First aid will be administered by the Forest School Leader or a first aid qualified assistant.
- The Forest School Leader will stay with the casualty and monitor their condition.
- The forest school leader will assess the seriousness of the injury and will promptly decide if it is necessary for emergency services to be called. If an ambulance is called the child's parents will be called straight after. In the case of an accident involving a staff member, the staff members next of kin/emergency contact person will be contacted.
- An assistant will gather the children for a headcount and keep them calm.
- For a more minor injury, it may be decided by the forest school leader that the child/staff member can have first aid administered and continue with the session.
- If the child needs to be seen by a medical professional but the injury does not require an ambulance, then the child's parents/guardians will be called to arrange collection straight away. In the case where a staff member is injured and needs to go home, the pre-school will be contacted to come and cover ratios.
- In the event of an injury to the Forest School Leader, first aid will be administered by another qualified first aider using the same procedure described above.
- An accident report form will be completed and signed by staff and parents. Serious accidents, injuries or near misses will be reported to RIDDOR and Ofsted by the manager.

11. Tool use and storage

- The Health and Safety Policy shall be followed, and risk assessments put in place before tools are used at the Forest School.
- Tools are to be stored in a secure, padlocked shed at the pre-school. An inventory of the tools in the box is to be checked at the beginning and end of each session to ensure that no dangerous tools are left at the site.
- The Forest School Leader is responsible for cleaning and maintaining the tools after each use. Any defective tools are to be removed immediately.
- All tools should be kept in the toolbox whilst not in use in the Forest School. The children are not to have access to the box, tools are to be removed and put back in the box by a responsible adult.
- Tools should be counted at the end of the session to ensure that none have been left at the site.
- Tools should only be introduced to the children by the trained Forest School Leader. This should always be done by using the recommended tool talks and demonstration by the Leader; they should only be used when the Forest School Leader feels that the children understand how to use them safely.
- Tools will be kept in a locked toolbox within the designated tool area.
- Potato peelers should be one of the first tools used by the children. These can be used in groups of 2 with the Forest School Leader, to remove bark from sticks.
- The bow saw should first be introduced to the pre-school children with a trained adult on one end with the child having the end with the handle; most children will always use the saw like this. If some children get confident with using the saw like this and the Forest School Leader feels that they can progress, two children can use the saw, with the Forest School Leader closely supervising them. Only one saw shall be out at a given time.
- The loppers shall be used with one child and the Forest School Leader helping them position them and squeeze them together.
- Only one child can use a knife at a time. The children will only use the knife when sitting down on a log stump and only in a 1:1 situation with the Forest School Leader guiding them.
- The Bill Hook is only to be used by the Forest School Leader due to the age of the children.

12. Fire safety

- The Health and Safety Policy shall be followed, and risk assessments put in place before fires are lit at the Forest School.
- Fires will be lit by the trained Forest School Leader only.
- The fire pit area will be in a suitable area away from trees and bushes, also away from public walk throughs. Log seats need to be at least 2m away from the fire.
- The children will walk behind the fire circle. A fire will only be lit with a group if the Forest School Leader feels that the group understand and will be able to follow all the safety rules. As the children are very young, only one child will be allowed to be in the fire pit area at a time with the Forest School Leader.

- There will always be a supply of 10 litres of water available. There will be a designated fire bucket with a cup for scooping within reach of the fire.
- The first aid kit includes burn gel and appropriate equipment for dealing with scalds and burns.
- Before using the fire pit area, the Forest School Leader will check the area for hazards. It is to be always kept clear from trip hazards.
- The fire will always be lit by a flint and steel. It will be kept small and manageable. The Forest School Leader will be always responsible for the fire that it is lit and will never leave a lit fire while children are in the area.
- All people feeding the fire will wear fireproof gloves and be shown and expected to always use the respect position.
- Pans and kettles will only be removed from the fire by the Forest School Leader using a fireproof glove. They will make sure the children are aware of the dangers of touching hot pans and will always ensure that food and drink given to children will be at an appropriate temperature.
- The fire will be spread out and left to die down and then doused with water before the group leave the Forest School. The Forest School Leader is responsible for ensuring that the fire is out properly, and the area is left safe before leaving the site.

13. Security

- A completed register must be taken to all Forest School sessions. Regular head Counts should take place. The pre-school Policy for lost children should be followed if a child is missing.
- Children should be gathered together if anyone wants to bring a dog through the Forest School site.
- All staff are responsible for watching for members of the public entering the Forest School site. Anyone who is behaving suspiciously should be immediately reported to the police.
- In the case of an intruder behaving suspiciously, the intruder will be challenged and asked to leave politely. If a child is involved, then the police should be called, and the child/children involved should be removed from the situation and made to feel safe. Follow the pre-school's School's critical incident procedure. Parents/guardian should be briefed asap.

14. Welfare and wellbeing

Welfare and wellbeing are a huge part of the forest school ethos. young children get cold very quickly so additional clothes should be available along with the emergency blanket and survival bag. Hot drinks should be available on cold days as well as snacks and fresh drinking water will be always available.

Essential Items for our 'happy bag': Outdoor First Aid Kit, Medical information and emergency contact details of all children and staff in the group, Risk assessments, Mobile phone, Clean water,

Emergency whistle, Emergency bivvy bag, Accident sheets, Medication/inhalers for individuals clearly labelled, Roll mat and blanket.

Other Possible Items: Wet wipes, hand gel, nappy sacks and toileting things, sun cream, spare clothing; thermos of hot water, chocolate/sugary food, burns kit, fire blanket, emergency fire kit, knife.

- The Forest School Leader must have a current certificate in paediatric outdoor first aid and is to take responsibility in case of any accidents and emergencies. Accidents should be reported to parents on an accident form that are used in the main pre-school sessions.
- Any serious accidents, reportable diseases incidents or near misses involving staff or children should be reported to RIDDOR and Ofsted by the manager immediately after the session.
- The child details list should be brought to each Forest School session. This list gives emergency contact details for all parents, details of allergies and medical conditions. Inhalers should be kept in an easily accessible box.
- On hot days children should wear hats and sun cream in line with the pre-school's current policy on sun cream. All parents have signed a consent form for wearing sun cream, so staff should re-apply when necessary.

15. Risk assessment

Risk management is an important part of Forest School. It is concerned with the identifying risks of harm and is based on the likelihood of an incident occurring and the severity of any injury or harm if it does.

The different types of risk assessment used:

Site assessment

Assesses the risks associated with the Forest School site itself. Each layer of the woodland site is assessed at least once each half term and more frequently following adverse weather conditions.

Daily assessment

This is carried out before the start of each Forest School session and includes a review of the site and current weather conditions.

Activity assessment

An assessment of each planned activity will be carried out before the activity takes place. This will include activities using tools or fire.

Ongoing risk assessment

This is on-the-spot assessment carried out continually during each session to take account of changing situations such as a change in weather conditions or a change in planned activities. All risk assessments are recorded, and current risk assessments are carried in the Happy Bag.

16. Food Hygiene

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating during our forest school sessions.

- All staff hold a level 2 certificate in food hygiene.
- Staff who prepare and handle food understand the food safety and hygiene practices (Food Standards Agency 2011)
- All staff follow the guidelines of Safer Food, Better Business.
- The member of staff who prepares the food and washes their hands with wipes and antibacterial hand gel before they start. Hair is tied back.
- Food is stored at correct temperatures and is checked to ensure it is in-date and not subject to contamination by pests, rodents, or mould.
- Fresh drinking water is always available to the children.
- We are registered as a food provider with the local authority Environmental Health Department.
- All utensils, crockery etc are clean and stored appropriately.
- We do not cook or provide meat at our pre-school, mostly cold snacks are provided, however we do bake and cook snacks over the fire.
- A clean surface is used to prepare snacks.
- We teach children not to eat anything found in woods, such as berries or seeds. We remind them about fingers and hands in mouths and noses.
- We ensure children use wipes to clean their hands before eating their snack.
- Hand gel is always available for children and staff.

17. Reporting of food poisoning

Food poisoning is reportable where.

- Children and/or adults have been diagnosed by a GP or hospital doctor to be suffering from food poisoning and where it seems possible that the source of the outbreak is within the setting, the manager will contact the food Standards Agency by completing an incident report form at www.food.gov.uk/contactbusinessesreport-safety-concern/report-a-food-safety-incident
- The Pre-school manager will comply with any investigation into the cause of the illness outbreak.
- Any confirmed cases of food poisoning affecting two or more children looked after on the premises are notified to Ofsted as soon as reasonably practicable, and always within 14 days of the incident.

18. Safeguarding

The EYFS Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements (2014) require every setting to have a safeguarding policy and procedure that is in line with the guidance and procedures of Stockport Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) and that includes an explanation of the action to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

Section 11 of the Children Act (2004) places a statutory duty on local authorities and other organizations providing services for children and families to make sure that they carry out their work in a way that considers the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Brookside pre-school keeps the needs and best interests of children at the centre of everything we do. We aim to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in our care by.

Providing a safe learning environment that builds their confidence and self-esteem:

- Where children's physical safety is protected
- Where children can talk and are listened to
- Where children do not experience bullying, harassment, racism, or any other form of discrimination.
- Where children's medical and health needs are met.

All staff hold an enhanced DBS check and always follow the pre-schools main Safeguarding policy and procedures.

19. Inclusion and SEND.

This policy is written in response to the SEND code of practice 2014 part three of Children's and Families Act 2014.

We welcome all children attending our setting over the age of 3 years old to book a place on our Forest school sessions. There is a charge for the sessions due to the running costs. However, if we feel that Forest school will benefit a child's development and they receive Early years pupil premium (EYPP), Disability allowance funding (DAF) or Enhanced provision funding we may use this to cover the costs for that child to enable them to attend.

We recognise that each child is special and an individual. With our emphasis on 'the unique child' 'positive relationships' 'the enabling environment' and 'learning development' we believe that each child can become a competent learner. Each child should have the opportunity to meet their potential by learning through play and exploration. The staff carry out observations and weekly session planning is tailored to the individual needs of each child.

Special Educational Needs and Disability – a Definition: We recognise the DfES definition of Special Educational Needs – 'a child has a special educational need if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her.'

Children with special educational needs or disabilities will not be excluded from the opportunity to attend forest school unless it was deemed that the risks to the child's health would significantly outweigh the benefits. An individual risk assessment will be carried out in partnership with the child's parents to consider the risks and how they can be safely managed. It may be agreed that the child can attend with 1:1 support or with their parent.

20. Behaviour management

The staff of Brookside Pre-School believe that children flourish best when their personal, social, and emotional needs are met in an environment where there are clear and developmentally age-appropriate expectations. These positive behaviour expectations are reinforced through interactions with caring adults who are good role models and show children respect and value their individual personalities.

It is our aim to encourage all children to:

- Develop an understanding of what is right and what is wrong.
- Understand the effects their words and actions can have.
- Consider the needs and feelings of others, in their words and in their actions.
- Take responsibility for their behaviour and attempt to make amends when things go wrong.
- Develop self-discipline.
- Respect the need for boundaries and respond to behavioural expectations.

During forest school sessions we aim to work towards a situation in which children can develop self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement. We offer an environment where children learn to respect themselves, other people and their surroundings and can learn from and make mistakes without fear of any consequences.

Strategies for dealing with unwanted behaviour.

- At forest school we place an emphasis on consistent, positive praise which is given to children demonstrating independent work, teamwork, positive behaviour, and displaying effort and resilience.
- We Encourage and reinforce, acceptable and kind behaviour towards each other, the environment and the equipment used.
- Forest school practitioners act as a good role model for positive behaviour.
- We separate the behaviour from the person.
- Promote appropriate discussion and reflection on behaviour and supporting coping mechanisms.
- Help children understand the potential consequences of their behaviour for example what could happen if we did not use a knife safely.
- Forest school practitioners promote what we should do rather than what we should not do. We hold back from saying 'don't do.....' or 'stop doing.....' and replace this with opportunities for discussions e.g. 'Have you thought about what could happen if....' or 'perhaps we could try....'

21. Missing child

Children will always be made aware of how far they can explore before a session begins. We have many preventative measures in place to ensure that the risk of a child going missing is low.

- If we are unable to see all the children, shout '1, 2, 3, where are you?' The child should reply '1, 2, 3, I'm here.' This will have been introduced to through a game and practised many times.
- Regular headcounts are carried out throughout the day and communicated to the whole team.
- A head count is always carried out on arrival at the site and before the children return to Preschool.
- Children are taught boundaries which are initially marked with a red rope within a short distance from the log circle. Boundaries will be gradually extended as trust is built to ensure that children stay within sight and a safe distance from adults.
- If a child cannot be seen and has not responded to 1,2,3 where are you? We will immediately blow the whistle which signals for the children to come back to the fire circle or to the nearest adult.
- A roll call and headcount will be carried out against the register to establish which children are present. All children will be kept together and supervised by one staff member whilst the other staff member searches for the missing child.
- The children will be asked where they last saw their friend playing or if they know where the child is. The staff member will contact the pre-school and ask for another adult to come and help search. Manager to be informed if not already present.
- If the child has not been located within 10 minutes, the situation will be treated as an emergency. The most senior member of staff present will contact the Police to report the incident and the child's parents or carers.
- Whilst waiting for the police, staff will continue to search for the missing child within the immediate area. Once the Police arrive, the staff would follow instructions from Police.
- A full investigation and report will be carried out by the Manager.
- We would notify the Safeguarding Children Unit at SMBC on 0161 474 5657 and inform Ofsted on 0300 123 1231 as a missing or lost person would be deemed a breach of our Safeguarding policy.

22. Rope and string use

Children will be encouraged to connect and transport materials but prevented from tying it around other themselves or other children! If a child has a good idea and wants, for example, to try and build a rope swing do help them and use the opportunity to model appropriate knot tying.

Children must always be closely supervised when using rope and string. All string and rope must be collected up at the end of the session.

Staff should help children to assess whether the tree is strong enough to hold the weight of the activity without damaging the tree or potentially causing an accident.

23. Lifting

The children should be encouraged to roll, lift, drag and pull materials either by hand or using ropes. Manual handling techniques should be modelled by adults- bending knees and keeping your back straight when lifting. Heavier objects will be rolled, dragged, or carried by more people.

24. Leaving the site

The site must always be left as it is found, dens should be demolished, and any imported materials or equipment will be taken back to pre-school at the end of each session.

- Clear away everything- equipment, foraged materials, dens, fire residue and cover up any traces of our presence on the ground by covering back over with leaves etc.
- Ensure if used that the fire is completely extinguished
- Count all the tools back into the storage bags and boxes.
- Count children and adults and ensure that all are accounted for.