



Forest School Handbook

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Our Forest School and Health and Safety

1. What happens at our Forest School?

Our Forest School aims to enhance the children's learning in an outdoor environment. We will provide opportunities for the children to engage with nature, learn new skills and discover the world through outdoor play. The learning will be child led with the teachers acting as facilitators. Forest School has a holistic approach to child development having an overall positive impact on the children.



2. Who is responsible? Are we insured?

At Early Days we have 2 Forest School leaders, Steven Crandles and Joe Crandles, who are responsible for the planning and delivery of forest school sessions. In addition, all staff who take part are trained to consolidate the work done by our leaders. We are fully insured to take the children to the woods for our Forest School programme.

3. How do we manage risk?

We believe that children need to be exposed to an appropriate level of risk. The children and the leaders constantly risk assess. The Forest School leaders do a termly overall site risk assessment. They also do a daily risk assessment to check any changes that have occurred to the site. Additionally, the children are involved in the risk assessment process which makes them more aware of how to stay safe. All activities within Forest School are risk assessed individually (See appendix 1).

4. Are we first aid trained?

Both of our Forest School leaders have done a two day outdoor first aid course as well as

a paediatric first aid course. All other staff have completed paediatric first aid training.



5. What do we do in an emergency?

In the event of an accident the Forest School leader stays with the casualty. One administers first aid while the other phones 999 to call an ambulance and explain where we are and receive direction. The other member of staff will gather the children and keep them safe. Parents will be informed immediately. If a casualty needs to go to hospital one of the leaders will accompany them while the other leader takes the children back to nursery.

Access to our Forest School site is from 69a Braids Road and is near the house at the end of Hermitage of Braid.

6. Toileting

Children are encouraged to use the toilet before leaving nursery. An area will be designated for toileting near the site and a tarpaulin will be erected to allow privacy. All toileting will be supervised. Children will be given a choice and if they are not comfortable toileting outside there is also access to toilets a short walk from the site. Water and wipes will be provided for hand washing.

7. Parental Consent

Parental consent must be given before your child takes part in any Forest School activities.

8. Tools

All tools have a detailed code of conduct and strict rules on how they are to be used. All tool use is supervised. Tools are only used where appropriate. We use whittlers, secateurs, loppers and bow saws. All these tools, apart from the whittlers, are supervised at a 1:1 ratio. The whittlers are supervised at a 1:3 ratio. Please see our Tool Use risk assessment for more detailed information.



9. Making Fires and cooking

The Forest School site will have a designated fire area. This area is sectioned off by logs that are also used as seats. The fire will be constantly supervised. The fire site has strict guidelines that staff and children must follow e.g. no running, hair tied back etc. Please see our fire risk assessment for more detailed information.



We will be eating hot food while out in the forest. This will include various pre-made hot

lunches, making bread, toasting marshmallows, vegetable skewers and hot chocolate etc. Hand washing facilities will be available on site. We will not be cooking raw meat. All food will be transported in appropriate containers.

10. Transport

The children will be transported to the Forest School location by minibus or people carrier. All drivers are fully insured and have PVG's in place. Children will be dropped off near the site at the end of Hermitage of Braid.

11. Lost or Missing Children

In the unlikely event that a child goes missing we follow these procedures-

- A whistle will be blown and one member of staff gathers the children and ensures they are safe.
- An immediate search of the vicinity takes place by remaining staff.
- If the child is not found immediately a call is made to the nursery management who inform the police and the child's parents.

12. Equal opportunities

Our Forest School aims to demonstrate through its work that it positively values and respects children of all ethnic origins/racial groups, religions, cultures, linguistic backgrounds and abilities. Children of both sexes are positively encouraged by staff to participate in all activities.



13. COVID-19

We keep up to date and in line with current government COVID guidelines. For more information see

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Daily Operating Procedures

1. Before we go

- Check the weather- Forest School will be cancelled in adverse weather conditions
- Check children are appropriately dressed
- Equipment check- well maintained and in good working order
- Emergency contacts and first aid kit

- Risk assessment completed – with note of staff:child ratios, if ratios cannot be maintained Forest Schools will be cancelled
- Food and pastoral care bag

2. When we are there

- Dynamic risk assessment
- Regular head counts
- Designated high risk areas
- Discuss safety with the children

3. After the session

- Register taken
- Plenary of session

- Ensure all the equipment is accounted for and stored appropriately
- Clear site and leave it as we found it
- Maintain equipment
- Staff evaluation of session



Safe Guarding Children and Confidentiality

1. Staff

- Our Forest School only uses staff from Early Days Nurseries. All staff have a PVG and have the appropriate child protection training. We work in specifically ratios of 1:4.

2. Child Protection and Confidentiality

- The Forest School follows the nursery's Child Protection Policy (see Appendix II) and Confidentiality Policy (see Appendix III)



Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Behaviour

- Forest Schools has a positive impact on children's behaviour. In the case of negative behaviour the nursery's behaviour policy will be adhered to (see Appendix IV)

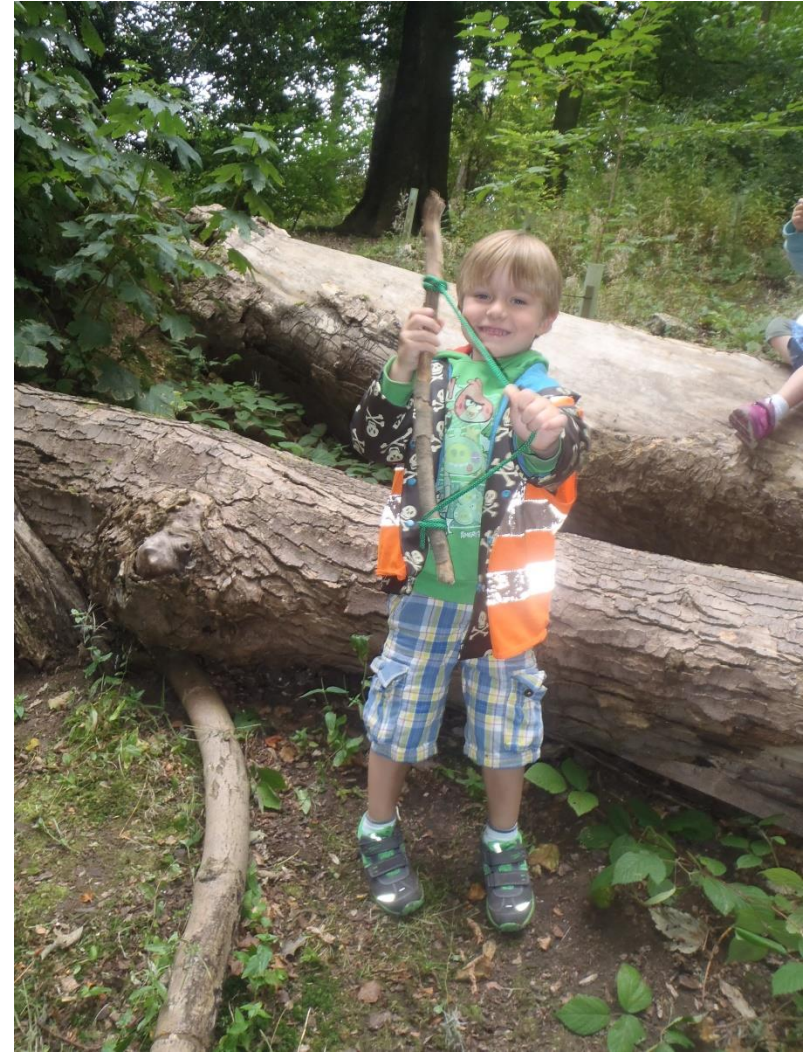
2. Bullying

- Bullying is not tolerated and the nursery's Anti-Bullying policy will be followed in any instance (see Appendix IV)

I'm exploring and discovering!



I'm inventing and problem solving!



Appendix I – Risk Assessment

Activity: Bow Saw

Benefits of Experience/Activity:

(Complete if there are final risk levels of medium or more)

Activity/Experience	Risk	Risk Level	Control Actions	New level
Sawing wood thicker than 6cm	Cut to hands, legs	High	<p>Designated tool area Tools not passed hand to hand-set on the ground Tools don't leave the tool area Saw horse must be used to keep supporting hand away from blade The child holds the side of the saw with the hand guard The users leg on the working side should be back Supporting hand should be placed on the opposite side of the saw horse to the saw The saw should be pulled toward the body with a smooth action. When working in pairs the saw is only to be pulled Blade guard in place when saw is not in use Explanation of 'blood bubble' Work with Forest School Leader to ensure safety precautions are followed. Ratio 1:1</p>	Low

Activity: Fire/Cooking

Benefits of Experience/Activity:
 (Complete if there are final risk levels of medium or more)

Activity/Experience	Risk	Risk Level	Control Actions	New level
Fire making and Cooking	Burns	High	Establish a safe fire area Establish rules of fire area with the children (no running, loose clothing fastened and hair tied back, must be invited into the fire area by an adult, leave and enter by the designated exits, put sticks into the fire but none come out etc.) Fire has a 1.5m surround of logs recognised as the Danger Area An additional no run area will be marked outside the fire area Water to extinguish the fire kept in vicinity First aid kit with appropriate resources Children should be seated in the fire area unless adding fuel or cooking The fire will be supervised by a Forest School Leader at all times After the fire is extinguished the ashes will be spread by hand to	Low

			ensure they have been completely extinguished	
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Activity: Kelly Kettle

Benefits of Experience/Activity:

(Complete if there are final risk levels of medium or more)

Activity/Experience	Risk	Risk Level	Control Actions	New level
Boiling water/fire making	Burns	High	<p>Place the kettle in the designated fire area with funnel facing into the middle of the fire area with stopper out on a flat area ensuring the kettle is stable</p> <p>Once the fire is lit the kettle is placed on the base again ensuring it is steady Fuel is added down the chimney from the side ensuring no part of the body is above the flame Only adults may lift the kettle when the water is hot. This should be done with two hands on the handle ensuring the hand does not go directly above the chimney or spout. To pour the water the chain should be pulled to achieve the correct angle to allow the water to be poured slowly and accurately. This should also be done without the hand going directly above the chimney or spout.</p>	Low

			Children should be seated if they are in the fire area at all times during this process	
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Activity: Loppers

Benefits of Experience/Activity:
(Complete if there are final risk levels of medium or more)

Activity/Experience	Risk	Risk Level	Control Actions	New level
Cutting sticks up to 6cm in width	Cuts/amputation	High	Designated tool area Tools not passed hand to hand-set on the ground Tools don't leave the tool area Explanation of 'blood bubble' A steady safe stance with legs at least shoulder width apart. Cut wood below head height. Ensure the cutting end is well away from all body parts.	Low

			Ratio 1:1	
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Activity: Secateurs

Benefits of Experience/Activity:
 (Complete if there are final risk levels of medium or more)

Activity/Experience	Risk	Risk Level	Control Actions	New level
Cutting sticks up to 1cm in width	Cuts/amputation	High	<p>Designated tool area</p> <p>Tools not passed hand to hand-set on the ground</p> <p>Tools don't leave the tool area</p> <p>Explanation of 'blood bubble'</p> <p>User should be on one knee with non-dominant knee forward. Secateurs in dominant hand maybe with support from leader. The stick they are cutting should be held in the non-dominant hand at least 10cm from the blade (Approx 2 children's hand widths)</p>	Low

			<p>Ensure the cutting end is well away from all body parts.</p> <p>Ratio 1:1</p>	
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Activity: Whittling sticks

Benefits of Experience/Activity:
 (Complete if there are final risk levels of medium or more)

Activity/Experience	Risk	Risk Level	Control Actions	New level
Whittling a stick	Cut to hands, legs	High	<p>Designated tool area</p> <p>Tools not passed hand to hand-set on the ground</p> <p>Tools don't leave the tool area</p> <p>Initially use potato peelers instead of knives</p> <p>Explanation of 'blood bubble'</p> <p>On one knee</p> <p>Stick in same hand as leg that's forward</p> <p>Hand holding stick behind work area</p> <p>Whittler cutting away from the body in a smooth gentle but firm motion</p> <p>If whittler gets stuck don't force it</p>	Low

			Work in pairs to ensure safety precautions are followed. Ratio 1:3	
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Appendix II – Child Protection Policy



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Early Days Nursery School adheres stringently to the Child Protection Guidelines as dictated by the City of Edinburgh Council. All staff should be familiar with the guidelines book and at all times must refer any concerns to the named personnel in Child Protection. At Melville Street this is Laura Crandles.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS

1. Child tells you about possible child abuse
2. *Listen* to the child’s story
3. Follow these guidelines - no closed questions must be asked:

To Establish...	You could ask....	Don’t ask...
What	What happened?	Did he/she...?

Where	Where did it happen?	Did he/she come to your bedroom?
Who	Who did it?	Did Daddy/Babysitter/John do it?
When	When did it happen?	Did it happen last night?
How/Why	Avoid these questions – they require judgement from the child and may induce self-blame	

Record and sign and date your notes.

4. Report to your manager
5. Manager contacts Social Work or Police if it is assessed that the child may be at risk
6. Manager may ask community child health for advice
7. Social Work, Police and Health discuss what next step will be eg. Investigation, interviews, medicals.
8. Decisions made by Social Work and Police about involving the parents.
9. Follow up with relevant professionals; possible case conference.

Essential contact numbers are attached. (Extracted from 'Child Protection Procedures' folder produced by Edinburgh and Lothian Interagency)

Policy to be reviewed in February 2012.

Child Protection Guidelines are held in the staff room and all staff must be aware of the contents and refer to them as necessary.

REMEMBER,

CHILD PROTECTION IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERYONE!!

Appendix III – Confidentiality Policy



CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

To meet the needs of all the children in our care it is important to share information with parents and with one another in order to support the child's development. It may also be necessary in some circumstances for the nursery to seek the help and advice from outside professionals. If this action is taken the parent's permission will first be sought.

Any information and knowledge will be on a need to know basis and will be kept confidential.

All members of staff must agree to respect nursery's confidentiality policy and sign a copy of this document to indicate their agreement.

Appendix IV – Behaviour Policy



Positive Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy

- Early Days Nursery School promotes a positive behaviour policy.
- All children will be valued and cared for.
- Encouragement, praise and the promotion of self worth are key features of our philosophy.

However, unacceptable behaviour included within the context of our policy includes any form of racist comments, verbal bullying or swearing. Any unacceptable behaviour by a child will be dealt with by nursery staff in the following way:

- An immediate verbal response to the action.
- A gentle explanation to the child as to why the behaviour was unacceptable.
- If unacceptable behaviour persists, the child will be withdrawn from the activity/group for a short period.
- If necessary, a child may be taken to another room to calm down.
- Parents will be informed if we feel that a child's behaviour is particularly worrying.

- Nursery staff and parents will work together to promote wanted behaviour.
- Everybody – nursery staff and parents, will be consistent in their approach to behaviour management.
- When behaviour persists, parents will be consulted as to input from an educational psychologist.

We will follow these procedures in a way that is appropriate to the maturity of the child and the misdemeanour.