



## **FOREST SCHOOL: VOLUNTEERS POLICY**

### **The Role of the Forest School Volunteers:**

We welcome parents and helpers into school and value their input into the education and experiences of our children. Parents and other helpers have a wealth of strengths that they can bring to the classroom. We want to make them feel welcome in our school and valued in whatever they can offer. All doors are open to parents. (In this Policy, the term Parents encompasses grandparents, relatives and other helpers from the community. Where the term Classroom is used in this policy, this is in its widest possible sense and includes all learning environments, including the outdoors).

#### **Purpose:**

- To welcome parents into school and give them the opportunity to contribute to the lives of the children.
- To ensure that parents are not put in positions of responsibility or supervision that are unsuitable for them.
- To ensure the safety of the children when working with different adults.
- To allow parents to assist staff in their day to day running of the classroom.
- To ensure that appropriate supervision of parents in school takes place.
- To promote the school's open door policy to parents and the larger community.

#### **Guidelines:**

All parents should be treated the same in whatever classroom they are working in and staff should feel that parents are benefiting the children's education. This policy clarifies the different roles parents can undertake and the safety measures that should be adhered to ensure the well being of all the children in the school.

The role of parents is very important in our school. It is positive that our school is open to parents and that parents feel they can offer something to the children. Organising parents in the classroom and being clear about their role and work will benefit the children and give all adults a clear sense of purpose of direction. The more support the children have while they are in school can only be of great benefit to them.



**Forest School Volunteers (FSV):**

Whilst the role of Forest School Volunteers (FSV) and their use to support learning shares all of the points covered above, the school recognises that responsibilities placed on FSVs in the outdoor environment are often more rigorous than might be found at other times.

It is important that FSVs understand that they cannot be passive adults, but that they have a responsibility under the guidance and direction of the Forest School Leader to ensure guidelines, policies, risk assessments and procedures are followed consistently all the time. They should be reassured that ultimate responsibility rests with the Forest School Leader but that by becoming a FSV there will be an expectation for them to contribute actively in the wellbeing and safety of the group.

## Forest School Volunteer Guidelines

**Policy**

When parents offer to help in Forest School, Forest School staff may wish to consult the above policy document for guidance.

**Discussion**

The Forest School Leader will endeavour to arrange to meet with the parent at a mutually convenient time to discuss what they may be expected to do in the Forest School. Generally, duties will include the following activities:

- Becoming familiar with the Forest School Handbook and all procedures contained within it
- Take part in any pre-session briefings from the Forest School Leader
- Assisting groups with non-hazardous tasks such as shelter building, free play, backwoods cooking preparation.
- Promoting the ethos of forest school to raise self-esteem and confidence as an overarching aim
- Assist in monitoring children when walking to and from Forest School Activities.
- Assisting children with their kit, including waterproofs.

Parents will only be considered Forest School Volunteer (FSVs) when they have read and signed that they agree to policies and procedures contained within the Forest School Handbook.

**Review and dialogue**

It is important that the FSV is comfortable in what they are doing, so they are encouraged to seek further advice or assistance from the Forest School Leader whenever instructions are unclear to them.



## Police Checking (CRB)

All regular Forest School Volunteers will be CRB checked before / during the initial weeks of helping in Forest School. **Those who are waiting to receive clearance will not be asked to work in 1:1** situations with a child. A full register of those who have been CRB checked is held in school.

**Comment [JA1]:** Confirm about offsite

**Comment [JA2]:** Will check with Diana next week

When supporting in Forest School, all FSVs must wear appropriate identification. The Forest School Leader will introduce them to the group at the start of session briefing.

## General guidelines for Forest School Volunteer

All FSVs should sign in at the office upon arrival before going to the Forest School 'Classroom'. FSVs must get a Visitor ID tag and wear it visibly over outdoor clothing throughout the session.

FSVs must never allow themselves to be in a one to one situation with a child.

FSVs should understand that disciplining the children must take place within the ethos of Forest School. If children behave poorly, they should seek the Forest School Leader's intervention immediately.

FSVs must not enter the children's toilets or assist with in-forest toileting at any time. If they feel there is a problem with a child when using the toilet, they must seek a member of staff to deal with the situation.

FSVs must not administer any medication to children, including creams. This is the role of the first aid staff.

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