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*Forest School*

 *Handbook*

Poppyseeds home Limited

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**The Forest School Ethos**

Forest School is a unique educational experience and process that offers children the opportunity to succeed and develop many skills. Children are given the space to explore at their own pace and are encouraged to take risks and manage those risks in a safe environment. Through hands-on learning experiences in a natural environment, children will develop a connection to their surroundings and develop a love and respect for nature and the world around them.

The Forest School concept originated in Denmark, originally aimed at preschool children, where it was found that children who had attended Forest School then arrived at school with strong social and communication skills, having the ability to work in groups effectively, generally had high self-esteem and a confidence in their own abilities. These foundations helped them to raise their academic achievements.

**Forest School at Poppyseeds home**

Children will engage in motivating and achievable tasks and activities through opportunities to work with a variety of tools, the freedom to play and by learning boundaries. Our sessions are guided by themes and projects whilst still maintaining an ethos where children’s ideas, thoughts and imagination and creativity flows and flourishes.

 *‘An outdoor space may have boundaries to keep us safe, but it does not have the restraints of walls and a closed roof. In a Forest School setting the roof is the sky and the sky has no ending!’ T A Dallow*

They will experience the sights, smells, sounds, and feel of a natural setting, whilst building a connection and an understanding for the world around them. Forest School sessions will run throughout the year and in most weathers. *“There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing”. FSA*

A holistic approach sees children as a whole person – physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively, linguistically, morally, culturally, and spiritually. Through this holistic approach, a Forest School, encourages children to:

* Develop personal and social skills
* Work through practical problems and challenges
* Use tools to create, build or manage
* Discover how they learn best
* Pursue knowledge that interests them
* Learn how to manage failures
* Build confidence in decision making and evaluating risk
* Develop practical skills
* Understand the benefits of a balanced and healthy lifestyle
* Explore connections between humans, wildlife, and the earth
* Regularly experience achievement and success
* Reflect on learning and experiences
* Develop their language and communication skills
* Improve physical motor skills
* Become more motivated
* Improves concentration and builds resilience

**Our sessions**

Our sessions are not provided as childcare, but as an educational opportunity with tuition of themed art, craft and nature projects alongside cooking activities. Therefore, we are not obliged to be registered with Ofsted and cannot accept childcare vouchers.

**Staff**

All our sessions are planned and delivered by qualified Forest school leaders; in addition, they hold EYFS qualifications, and are paediatric and outdoor first aid trained,

At our holiday club, the leaders are supported by additional members of staff and may include QTS and University students.

All staff members hold DBS certificates

**Venue**

Afterschool club and holiday club are held on the Forest school site of Roundwood Primary School, Harpenden. In addition, at some of our sessions, we access the local Nickey line nature walk and surrounding fields.

**Insurance**

We hold public liability insurance up to 5,000,000

**Data**

We are registered with the ICO

**What happens at a Forest School session?**

Your child’s Forest School journey is just that, a journey! It is a programme of sessions that build on children’s individual interests and skills. Our afterschool club and holiday club follow weekly/daily themes including art, craft and nature projects alongside cooking activities. All the activities involve tuition guidance, however, there are lots of opportunities for free exploration. No two sessions are ever the same!

At the first session, the Forest School site will be introduced alongside a safety talk, rules, boundaries, and behaviour expectations. A refresher safety talk will take place at the start of every Forest School session after that.

After the safety talk, a Forest School game will be played to get everyone moving and actively involved. This is a great way to begin to stimulate our senses in a new outdoor environment.

There is free time for the children to explore different areas of the site individually or with friends; the list of opportunities is endless and only limited by each child’s imagination. Collaborative play and teamwork will be encouraged alongside risk taking and creative thinking. Adults will help to scaffold the children’s learning whilst embracing their independence.

Focussed activities are supported by the Forest School leader, or the assistant where every child is encouraged to participate to enable development of new skills and new learning. These include the opportunity to use a variety of tools, natural resources and lighting fires.

Before the end of our session, we will follow the Forest School ethos of ‘leave no trace’. All adults and children will tidy the Forest School site ensuring it is put back as we found it.

We will finish our session with a reflection time, where we will sit in a circle and reflect on what we have learnt, areas we have explored and showcase any woodland crafts that we have created.

Throughout each session, the Forest School leaders and assistants will be observing how the children learn and what sparks their interest, whilst scaffolding and supporting their play and learning. This can help to inform planning opportunities of the following session.

**After School Club**

Our after-school club follows the same format as our typical Forest school session; however, a focus will be placed on the craft and cook element of the programme, therefore reduced time will be allocated to free exploration of the site. We will be introducing a selection of tools for the children to use in their crafting whilst experiencing a variety of natural loose part materials. We will teach the safety and respect element of fire; the children will have the opportunity to build, light and cook on an open fire under the safe guidance of the Forest School leader and assistant.

Our after-school club is run in blocks of sessions throughout the year capturing the changes of each season’ each session focuses on the craft and cook element on alternate weeks. The sessions build on the child’s skill progression and their interests of the previous week. The children will bring home their craft makes; however, their cooking will be eaten during the forest school session.

**Characteristics of Effective Learning**

Children need to be motivated to learn. Being motivated enables children to develop a love for learning and to become lifelong learners. Providing an inspiring and diverse environment, rich in space, natural elements, and engaging adults, ensure that the characterises of effective learning can ignite with deep and meaningful learning taking place. Within this rich environment, children can take their learning in any pathway they choose thus developing an independent learner.

This inquisitive environment can spark children’s natural curiosity, excite them to want to play, explore and learn whist offering ‘awe and wonder’ experiences that are unique to Forest School.

‘*learning outside the classroom is about raising achievement through an organised, powerful approach to learning in which direct experiences is of prime importance. It is not only about what we learn but importunately how and where we learn’* (DfES,2006)

**Playing and exploring – engagement**

* Finding out and exploring
* Playing with what they know
* Being willing to ‘have a go’

**Active learning – motivation**

* Being involved ad Concentrating
* Keeping trying
* Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

**Creating and thinking critically – thinking**

* Having their own ideas
* Making links
* Choosing ways to do things

**Playing and Exploring**

Curiosity Engaging Initiating Acting Senses

 Representing Risking Challenge Seeking

 Seeking Exploring

**Active Learning**

**Energy Satisfied Motivated Proud Effort**

 **Focussing persisting Fascinated Challenges**

**Concentrating Process Persevering Trying**

 **Enjoying Involved Attention**

**Creating and Thinking Critically**

Thinking Ideas Predicting Testing Reviewing

 Solving Problems Making Links Planning

Strategies Evaluating Deciding To choose

 Patterns Creating Checking

****Forest School Code of Conduct**

**Entering the Forest School Site**

We will enter the Forest School site respectfully and know that when at Forest School specific expectations are in place. We will explore, investigate, learn, and play in a manner that will not damage our Forest School environment. We understand that we share our Forest School with plants and animals and that when we are in our Forest School, we are sharing the environment with them.

**Boundaries**

Before each session begins children are made aware of how far that they can explore and of any fixed boundary markers. If children move to explore hidden areas an adult will move into the cover deep enough to be able to see the children but allowing the children, the freedom to explore independently. If we lose sight of a child shout ‘1,2,3, where are you?’ The children will be taught to respond ‘1,2,3, I’m here’ through outdoor games that are practised regularly.

**Lighting a fire**

When lighting a fire, the Forest School leader will take control of the operation and all accompanying adults will be briefed before we start. A lit fire will not be left unattended at any point. A fire may not be lit until it has been confirmed to all that our fire safety equipment is in place. Open fires will be built within a fire square. Fires will be lit in a raised metal fire pit. Individual mini fires may be lit in small metal cartons or on oyster shells. These fires will remain small but big enough for the child to toast a marshmallow. Mini fires are under the strict supervision of the Forest school leader and assistant. No child will be left unattended whilst a mini fire is lit. Mini fires will be lit within the fire circle. The respect position will be used when around a lit fire.

**At the Fire Circle**

An open fire will be lit within a fire square. A fire circle using log sitting stools or milk crates may be established around the perimeter of fire square. No one may enter the fire circle perimeter unless invited to do so by an adult. There may be no running past the fire circle. No items must be carried and placed within the fire circle unless by an adult. If you wish to move around the fire to a new stool you must step out of the circle and walk around the outside of the log circle; even when the fire is unlit, we will treat it as if it is lit. Fire risk assessments are in place and available at any time to view.

**Using Tools**

All tools have their own clear code of conduct for correct use which will include consideration of specific personal protective equipment, correct use of a specific body posture, and consideration of the appropriate types of activity that each tool may be used for. There are individual tool use scripts that the Forest School leader follows when introducing a new tool alongside and risk assessments are in place.

**Picking up and playing with sticks**

Children can carry sticks shorter than their arm’s length but are encouraged to think about how close they are to other children. Longer sticks may be dragged or carried with the help of another person when each person is at either end. Sticks must not be thrown. Sticks must not be pulled from living trees.

**Picking up and playing with stones**.

Stones may be picked up and transported. Children often like to make patterns and pictures with them. Stones may not be thrown. They may be dropped but thought must be given to whether it is safe to do so, i.e. what is beneath where I am dropping it?

**Digging**

Digging large holes is not encouraged. Children may carefully move soil to look for insects and their habitats using lolly pop sticks, fingers or small sticks found within the forest school floor, but deep holes should not be made, unless digging in a designated digging pit.

**Collecting wood**

Wood is collected for fire lighting purposes. It is collected in four thicknesses – matchstick sized, pencil sized, thumb sized, and wrist sized. This is a good mathematical activity involving sorting and matching. Sticks may be collected for creating pictures and patterns but should be collected sparingly so as not to disrupt creature habitats.

**Eating and Drinking**

Children should not consume anything found in the Forest school site unless this activity has been specifically planned for during the session (e.g. blackberry picking). Children must be reminded not to put their fingers or hands in their mouths or noses. When having drinks and snacks children will use wipes/soap & water to clean their hands before consumption.

**Rope and String Use**

We encourage the collection and transportation of materials. We do not allow children to tie each other up. If a child has a good idea and wants to tie up something, for example a tarp or a swing, an adult should help them as needed, modelling appropriate knot tying and modelling how to talk through ideas and decisions.

**Carrying and Transporting Materials**

Children are encouraged to roll, lift, drag and to pull materials, either by using their hands or by using ropes. We encourage safe lifting by bending our knees and keeping our back straight. Safe lifting will always be modelled by the Forest School leader. Heavier objects should be rolled, lifted, or carried by more people working together. Safe lifting and rolling risk assessment are in place.

**Toileting**

Children are invited to use the toilets before we leave the school buildings. A mobile camp style toilet positioned in a zipped toilet tent is available within the Forest School site during the session (for certain age groups). Afterschool and holiday club – toilets will be accessed within the school building.

**Behaviour Expectations**

At Forest School, our motto is…

* ‘To keep ourselves and our friends safe
* To love and respect our natural environment’

To ensure we keep to our motto, there is an expectation that all children who come to Forest School come ready to:

* Listen
* Follow the Forest School rules
* Be ready to learn
* Explore and have fun
* Uphold our ‘Code of Conduct’

The Forest School leader will address any behaviour incidents and will be discussed with the parent if applicable. If behaviour incidents are frequent and depending on the severity of the behaviour, the Forest School leader reserves the right to exclude the child from attending the Forest School sessions. The safety of everyone in Forest School is paramount and consistent behaviour incidents will not be tolerated due to the high-risk factor where tools and fire is in use. Children with additional needs may require an individual risk assessment before using tools and fire lighting; please be transparent with us at the booking process. The Forest School Leader will advise.

**Leaving the Site**

We work according to the ethos ‘leave no trace’ that we were in the Forest School site as much as is reasonably possible. Shelters should be taken down; imported materials need to be removed. Very occasionally large items may be left between sessions. All rubbish items will always be removed. If artefacts have been found or made these may be taken off the site with the consent of the Forest School leader. No adults or children to leave the Forest School site unless the Forest School leader has been consulted.

****Fire safety at Forest School**

Having the opportunity to light a fire and experiencing a campfire at Forest School is an important part of the Forest School programme. Fire lighting and campfires will only be introduced once the children have undertaken a fire safety procedures session. They will need to show an understanding of the fire safety rules and demonstrate these procedures and rules, around an unlit fire. Once the Forest School Leader is confident in the children’s understanding, fire lighting and campfires will then be introduced.

**Positioning of children and adults**

* All children and adults are seated on tree log stools or milk crates which have be laid out in a circle and are an appropriate distance from the fire pit.
* Only one person per tree log stool.
* All children must remain seated whilst the fire is lit.
* If the Forest School Leader instructs you to move seats, this will be done by standing up and turning to the side, then stepping out of the circle and walking around the outside of the log circle to a new stool.
* No running within the fire circle.
* The fire pit is surrounded by four logs which is know as the fire square.
* No one crosses the fire square.
* Children and adults can only approach the fire square when instructed to do so by the Forest School Leader only.
* The position to use when cooking at the fire is the respect position.
* **The Respect Position:** During activities, when using tools, lighting fires, and cooking on an open fire. The respect position involves kneeling on one knee. The respect position also enables you to move quickly out of the way if you should need too. When taking the respect position think carefully about where you are kneeling in relation to the job you are completing or the tool which you are using.



**Entering and Exiting the fire circle**

* Children and adults are only permitted to enter the fire circle when instructed to do so by the Forest School Leader.
* The fire circle has an outer boundary, an inner boundary (where the sitting log stools are) and a fire square which contains the fire pit.
* All children and adults enter the fire circle one by one and sits where they are directed to sit.
* No child or adult is permitted to leave the circle, move seated positions, or approach the fire unless instructed to do so by the Forest School Leader.
* When exiting the fire circle, this will be done one by one, by standing up and turning to the side, then stepping out of the circle towards the back.
* No child or adult is permitted to walk across the fire circle to the other side.

**Lighting a Fire**

* Fires can only be lit and overseen by the Forest school leader, with support from additional staff.
* Fires will only be lit in the designated fire pit circle.
* Mini fires can be lit in a designated area, if these form part of a small group fire lighting session. This is to be supervised by the Forest School Leader.
* Fires are only to be lit once the relevant risk assessment is in place.
* A fire first aid kit must be present before lighting a fire alongside a fire blanket.
* A bucket of water must be present close to the lit fire to assist with extinguishing the fire. This must be clearly marked ‘fire bucket’., and not to be used for any other reason.
* **The fire must always be supervised by the Forest School Leader or a designated adult once lit.**
* Only fuel that the Forest School Leader has agreed to is to be put on the fire. Some wood types can result in smoke and/or toxic fumes.
* **NO** lighter fuel or flammable liquids are to be used to light a fire or accelerate a fire.
* **NO** plastics are to be burnt.
* Fires are to be lit using a fire steel.
* If sessions involve children adding fuel to the fire, this must be done with a one-to-one adult supervision.
* If sessions involve children lighting fires, this may be done in small groups. Ratios decided by the Forest School leader depending on the children’s age.
* Sticks must be placed on the fire from the side, not thrown on.

**Extinguishing Fires**

* All fires must be extinguished at the end of the session.
* Douse the fire with water and stir until all the smoke and steam has ceased.
* Wherever possible, all fuels should be burnt off.
* Large build ups of potash need to be dispersed. This must be done when it has totally cooled.
* The Forest School rule of ‘leave no trace’ must be adhered to.

**Storm Kettles (Kelly Kettles)**

* Only adults are to light the fire in the fire pan unless the children are under the supervision of the Forest School Leader during a small group session.
* The Kelly Kettle must be placed on a flat surface.
* Kettles should only be removed from the fire by an adult wearing fire safety gloves.
* For fully operating instructions of the Kelly Kettle, see instructions and safety guidance under the section ‘How to use tools’, in Forest School leader’s handbook.

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 **Safeguarding Policy**

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| Name of Policy | Safeguarding Policy |
| Date of last review | September 2024 |
| Date of next review | September 2025 |
| Compiled by | Tracey Dallow Director of Poppyseeds home LTD |

 **Safeguarding is defined as:** *protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children’s health or development, ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.* (Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE, 2018, p6)

**Introduction:**

At Poppyseeds home LTD we take safeguarding of children very seriously. All our staff and volunteers hold DBS certificates and at least one staff member at each session holds a paediatric and 16 hours outdoor first aid certificate. Our staff and volunteers are experienced in working with children, and most currently teach in local schools. All our staff and volunteers are trained to treat children, parents, and visitors with respect, and we expect that all children, parents and visitors to treat our staff and volunteers with the same level of compassion.

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| **Purpose of a Safeguarding Policy*** To inform staff, parents, and volunteers of their responsibilities for safeguarding children.
* To enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out.
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| **Mission Statement*** Establish and maintain an ethos and culture where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened and responded to.
* Establish and maintain an ethos and culture where staff and volunteers feel safe, are encouraged to talk, and are listened and responded to.
* Ensure that children, where additional needs are highlighted to staff and volunteers are supported appropriately.
* Always ensure appropriate behaviour when supervising children.
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| **Unaccompanied children’s sessions**All children remain the responsibility of the accompanying adult until your child has been signed in and out of the session by the tutor/Forest School leader. As part of our standard booking process, you will be asked in advance via our booking platform if your child has any medical conditions or educational needs /barriers we need to be aware of. Depending on the information you supply to us, may result in a phone call to discuss further with you. All disclosures will be treated as confidential and of a sensitive nature and will only be shared with Poppyseeds staff and volunteers at your child’s session. We are an inclusive setting and do not want any child to miss out on any opportunities, so please be transparent with us. |
| **Disclosures made by a child**We will, * Offer reassurance to the child
* Listen to the child and not ask leading questions
* Record the disclosure on paper away from the child
* Not make any promises of keeping the disclosure secret

If deemed necessary, disclosures will be reported to the Children services on 0300 123 4043 or the child abuse Investigation unit: via 101 this is a specialist team within the police with countrywide responsibility for undertaking child protection investigations or the police on 999. |
| **Intimate care** We do not offer an intimate care policy where we support children using the toilet, and clean body parts. However, we will support your child in times of toileting accidents to minimise upset and distress of the child. This will be in the form of reassurance and encouragement for them to clean themselves and change their clothes. The member of staff will be outside of the toilet area offering support. If you know your child has toileting issues, please discuss these with us in confidence. |
| **Photography** We would like to be able to take photos of the children whilst at our sessions and include them on marketing material, on our social media platforms and on our website. To do this, we must obtain written permission from parents; please fill in your preference on the booking form (workshop and Forest School sessions). Photos will be taken on Tracey Dallow’s phone camara, these will be then uploaded onto a laptop for use on our media platforms. All photos are then deleted from the mobile phone. Poppyseeds home LTD will keep your consent form digitally or in paper form and will only be kept as long as deemed necessary whilst the Image is active.  |

Poppyseeds home LTD reserve the right to update this policy at any time. An updated version will be displayed on our website.

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| Name of Policy | Equality and Inclusion Policy  |
| Date of last review | September 2024 |
| Date of next review | September 2025 |
| Compiled by | Tracey Dallow Director Poppyseeds home LTD |

**Equality and Inclusion policy**

**Introduction**

Here at Poppyseeds home, we believe our active and creative sessions are an opportunity for children and adults to develop their creativity, imagination, develop new skills, new experiences and take time to tune into their creative side. All our attendees should feel valued, respected, and included within an environment where differences are celebrated, and diversity is welcomed.

We believe Poppyseeds home sessions should equip children and adults to enjoy a lifetime love of learning through creative hands-on experiences and opportunities. Through a broad selection of workshops and Forest School sessions we feel we can meet the needs of all learners, in helping to develop their spiritual, moral, and cultural awareness, within a crafting community

Through shared values of politeness, collaboration, honesty, patience, and respect, we aim to create an ambiance for learning which motivates all children and adults to take part and accomplish socially, physically, and creatively. Within a nurturing learning environment where success and effort are valued equally, children and adults should feel confident to make mistakes and be resilient to learn from their errors.

**To achieve this, we will:**

1. Respect the equal human rights of all our attendees, staff and volunteers.

2. Work to promote positive attitudes to disability by enabling all people involved in the crafting community to contribute to and gain full access to all activities.

3. Create an environment where respect and racial harmony mean that all attendees can reach their full potential.

4. Promote gender equality in all aspects of the crafting community by challenging stereotypes, achievement gaps and self-limiting aspirations.

5. Take account of difference (for example, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, social context, vulnerable child status) and help to overcome any barriers to learning to promote achievement and fulfilment in all attendees.

6. Respect the equal rights of our staff, volunteers, visitors, and other members of our crafting community.

**Poppyseeds home LTD is an inclusive setting where everyone is valued**

**1: All attendees are of equal value**

We see all attendees and potential attendees as of equal value:

* whether or not they are disabled
* whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin, or national status
* whatever their gender and gender identity
* whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
* whatever their sexual identity.

**2: We recognise and respect difference**

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook, and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

* disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
* ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
* gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
* religion, belief, or faith background
* sexual identity.

**3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging**

We intend that our policies, procedures, and activities should promote:

* positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
* positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
* mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

**4: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist**

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

* disabled and non-disabled people
* people of different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds
* girls and boys, women, and men.

**Inclusion at our workshops and Forest School sessions**

Here at Poppyseeds home LTD, our workshops and Forest School sessions are for all.

Our ethos is one of inclusiveness and…

* ‘That no one is left behind and everyone can achieve’.

All attendees will have the opportunity to engage in all activities and experiences at Poppyseeds home LTD.

* We will endeavour that people with additional needs (that we have been informed about) can access our workshop sessions and Forest School programme. On occasions, due to the nature of activities taking place with tools and fire in Forest School, the child’s grown up may have to assist and support their child during all or part of the Forest School session.

Poppyseeds home LTD reserve the right to update this policy at any time. An updated version will be displayed on our website.

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**Health and Safety Policy at Forest School**

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| Name of Policy | Health and Safety Policy at Forest School |
| Date of last review | September 2024 |
| Date of next review | September 2025 |
| Compiled by | Tracey Dallow Director Poppyseeds home LTD |

Poppyseeds home LTD is committed to the health and safety of children, staff, volunteers, and visitors whilst attending a Forest School session. Tracey Dallow who is the Forest school leader and the Director of Poppyseeds home LTD is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

**The Forest School Leader holds:**

* DBS Certificate

**Insurance**

* Public liability insurance up to £5 million through Birnbeck Insurance.

**Poppyseeds staff and volunteers**

* All staff and volunteers hold DBS certificates and most teach in local schools.

**Daily Procedures**

To ensure the safety of all children, staff, volunteers and visitors attending Forest School sessions, the Forest School Leader will carry out a visual risk assessment of the Forest School site before each session and will consistently be accessing the risk throughout the session.

**Pre-session checks**

* Ensure a full General Risk Assessment is in place, dated and signed off by the Forest School Leader. (This should be done at least 48 hours before a Forest School Session is to commence).
* Ensure individual Risk Assessments are in place, dated and signed off by the Forest School Leader and parents/child if applicable. (This should be done at least 48 hours before a Forest School Session is to commence).
* Remove any litter and faeces.
* Remove any obvious trip hazards and mark out boundaries if required.
* Check that all necessary equipment, first aid and resources including tools are ready and are in good working order.
* Ensure a mobile phone is charged and accessible for emergency calls.

**At the start of each session**

* Take the register and a head count.
* Revisit the Forest School rules.
* Remind all where the site boundaries are.
* Refresh behaviour expectations.
* Reaffirm we are here to have fun in a safe environment.

**Throughout the session**

* All staff and volunteers should remain vigilant as to where children are and support if necessary.
* Highlight potential hazards and scaffold children to take calculate risks. (Forest School is about taking risks and managing risks).
* Carryout regular head counts.
* The Forest School Leader will be responsible for teaching and supervising small groups whilst working with tools in the designated ‘tool zone’ with the support (if required) by another adult.
* If children are climbing at heights on the stackable crates, the Forest School leader will support and no climbing above 1.5 m.
* If pond dipping is taking place, a ratio of 1-10 will be adhered to.

**At the end of the session**

* All equipment is to be collected in and returned to the designated areas specified by the Forest School Leader.
* Fire (See Fire safety information for extinguishing fires).
* Children will be escorted by the Forest School leader to the designated point for collection by their grown up. Children may walk home by themselves if written permission is obtained from their parent.

**First Aid**

Please see the Accident and Emergency Procedures at Forest School policy.

Poppyseeds home LTD reserve the right to update this policy at any time. An updated version will be displayed on our website.

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**Accident and Emergency Procedures**

The Forest School leader will carry a mobile telephone during each session; to contact parents or to call the emergency services.

Set out below is the Accident and Emergency protocols to follow.

**First Aid Station**

There is a designated first aid station on the Forest School site. This area has an all-weather First Aid sign. Ensure the following is there at the start of each session:

* A chair to sit on
* First aid kit
* Disposable bag for clinical waste
* Disposable bag for waste
* Blanket
* Fresh water
* Wipes and hand sanitizer
* First aid recording book
* All accidents no matter how small must be reported to the Forest School Leader

**Accidents – Administering First Aid**

For minor injuries, the Forest School Leader or designated First Aider can attend the patient on site. Record all incidents in the accident book. For all major incidents, the following protocol must be followed.

**Major Incidents/Accidents**

The Forest School Leader will blow the whistle and instruct a member of staff to escort the children to a safe area.

* Use the mobile phone to call emergency services if applicable
* Ask for an ambulance (see ambulance protocol)
* First aid is to be administered by the Forest School Leader and/or the designated First Aider.
* If possible, make the area around the patient as save as possible
* As soon as possible, record the accident in the accident book and seek advice as to whether other agencies are to be informed.

**Ambulance protocol**

**Call for an ambulance clearly stating the address**

If contacting emergency services, give as much information about the patient and their location as possible:

* Who has been injured?
* What their injuries are
* If they have any medical conditions
* Where on the site the patient is located?
* The directions to the site and the patient
* Do not hang up until you are told to do so by the call taker.

**Missing person procedure**

The following protocol should be instigated and followed by the Forest School Leader responsible for a group in the event of any person (adult or child) going missing from the Forest School session.

* All children will be called back to base camp. (three consecutive whistles indicates the importance of; stop, listen and follow the instructions given)
* The children will be recounted
* The Forest School Leader will instruct a member of staff to stay with the group at base camp.
* The Forest School Leader and staff will search for the missing child
* If the missing person is not found after a search of the area, the Forest School leader will contact the relevant authorities and parents or carers if the individual is still not found.
* A decision will be made regarding ending the Forest School session and calling parents to collect.

**Fire and evacuation procedure**

In the event of a fire that cannot be put out quickly and safely by the Forest School Leader, the following protocol with follow

* Forest School Leader to blow repeated long whistles to alert the group.
* Instruct the group to go to the Forest School meeting point.
* Conduct a head count and evacuate area to the designated fire assembly point.
* Call the emergency services
* Inform the site owner

**Poor Weather Procedure**

There are huge benefits for children to experience being outdoors in all types of weather conditions.

The changing seasons provide unique learning opportunities, with an array of natural resources on offer.

However, there are certain conditions which are deemed to be hazardous, and so for the safety of all Forest School participant’s sessions will not take place under the following extremes:

* High winds
* Thunder or lightning storms
* Extreme cold weather
* Extreme heat

We will use [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk) to inform our judgements on if sessions can take place with reasonable adjustments in place. The Forest School Leader will make the decision to continue or postpone a Forest School session prior to, or during the session if conditions suddenly change or worsen.

Where possible, if an indoor room can be used (if on a school site), then the session may be able to continue indoors with adaptations.

If we must cancel a session due to extreme weather, we will notify you via email and/or telephone. Please see our cancellation details in our terms and conditions.



**Toileting Procedures**

Children and adults will be encouraged to visit the toilet before leaving for the Forest School site.

We have a toilet tent on site with a camping style toilet available for child use only. The tent has a zip door. Hand washing mobile sink unit available with paper towels for drying. (certain age groups) Afterschool and holiday clubs will use the indoor school toilets.

The following protocols must be adhered to ensure the safeguarding of children:

* No adult to enter the toilet tent or toilet block whilst in use
* Only one child in the tent or toilet cubicle at any one time
* Once a child has left the tent, adult to ensure the toileting area is ready for the next user.
* Children will wear high vis vests when going to the toilet block inside school

**Toileting Accidents**

If any child has a toileting accident and change of clothes is required, an adult will ensure the child has privacy to change themselves. If a change of clothes isn’t available, the parents must be called to collect the child.

**Intimate care**

We do not offer an intimate care policy where we support children using the toilet, and clean body parts. However, we will support your child in times of toileting accidents to minimise upset and distress of the child. This will be in the form of reassurance and encouragement for them to clean themselves and change their clothes. The member of staff will be outside of the toilet area offering support. If you know your child has toileting issues, please discuss these with us in confidence.

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**Forest School Kit list**

It is essential that your child comes to their Forest School sessions fully equipped for all weather. Please send old clothes that you don’t mind getting wet, muddy and paint on. It can be a very long session for your child if they are cold and wet!

**Essential Kit list (Autumn and Winter)**

* long-legged trousers (**NO denim)**
* long-sleeved top
* Hiking boots, ski boot or wellington boots (**NO open toed shoes, flip flops or crocs)**
* Warm socks (and a change of socks)
* Waterproof coat and trousers (if sending an all-in-one waterproof suit, please also send a warm coat)
* Warn fleece or jumper
* Thermals (in extreme cold/snow)
* Warm Woolley hat
* Waterproof gloves (ski type gloves)
* Warm thick socks (this item is the most important item on the list! Wellingtons can be extremely cold)
* Water bottle

**Essential Kit list (Spring and Summer)**

Some of the above kit may still be relevant depending on the weather; in warmer months the following may be worn

* Shorts (please do note, that children will be climbing, laying in long grass and kneeling)
* T shirts with a warm jumper
* Sun hat
* Sunscreen applied (staff can not apply sunscreen to your child)
* Waterproof coat
* Hiking boots, wellingtons (**NO open toed shoes, flip flops or crocs)**

**Holiday club in addition to the above kit list;**

* Packed lunch
* Morning and afternoon snack
* Water bottle
* A full change of clothes

As a parent/carer it is your responsibility that you send your child equipped with the essential kit list to ensure they can engage in all Forest School activities. We do not take any responsibility for injury or missed activities due to lack of the essential kit supplied to your child by yourselves.

\***Please note;** if your child is a member of the guiding or scouting movement, you can receive 10% off goods purchased at most outdoor clothing shops. Just show a picture of your child in their guiding or scouting uniform.