

Weather Policy

Last Review Date: September 2023



We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Forest school is all about playing outdoors in all weathers. There is no such thing as bad weather: just bad clothing!

At Willow Banks Forest School, we believe that children should experience learning in their environment no matter what the weather, however responsibility must also be taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and adults.

'Poor Weather Conditions' are considered as snow, rain, wind, thunder/lightning storms and heat.

- It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to check local weather information before preparing/leaving the school building.
- The Forest School Leader will discuss the weather conditions and safety implications with staff prior to any visit to the woodlands.
- During outdoor sessions the Forest School Leader is responsible for deciding if a session should be discontinued due to poor weather.

The reasons for continuing/ceasing a session are detailed below:

Snow:

Continue - If the snow has settled and children have arrived with suitable clothing for a session in the snow.

Cancel - Snow is still falling, freezing and slippery conditions

Rain:

Continue - Light rain, children are wearing suitable clothing.

Cancel - Heavy rain, unsuitable clothing, ground becomes too slippery or localised flooding

Thunder and lightning

Continue - Low rumbles of thunder, clear skies.

Cancel - Rumbles of thunder grow louder. Any visible lightning bolts

Wind

Continue - Light Wind

Cancel - High wind, danger of falling branches and trees

Heat

Continue - Medium heat, children wearing sun protection. Keep in shaded areas. Offer water regularly.

Cancel - Too hot. Risk of sun stroke and heat exhaustion

Before starting Forest School, parents are informed of our forest school approach and are reminded to ensure their children bring appropriate clothes to school for the session.

Before going outside, the Forest School Leader ensures that children and adults are wearing weather appropriate footwear and clothing.

In the event that the weather conditions worsen during a Forest School session, all children and adults will return to the school building where they will partake in an alternative indoor activity.

If the weather becomes extreme and there is a risk of flooding or heavy snowfall and there is a possibility of not being able to access the site safely by car. Sessions will be stopped early to allow for parents/carers to be contacted and travel arrangements to be made for all students to leave early. Once all students have been safely collected, staff will be directed to make their way home immediately.

Staff and parents will be kept updated by the forest school manager of a school closure during extreme weather (snow and localised flooding) by phone, text, email, and social media. At least 1 hour before the first session of the day is due to start.