



The child is made of one hundred.

The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.

A hundred.

Always a hundred
ways of listening
of marveling, of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds to discover
a hundred worlds to invent
a hundred worlds to dream.

The child has
a hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine.
The school and the culture
separate the head from the body.
They tell the child:
to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and at Christmas.

They tell the child:
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine.

They tell the child:
that work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream are things
that do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child
that the hundred is not there.

The child says:
No way. The hundred is there.

Loris Malaguzzi

Contents

Principles.....	4
Ground Rules.....	5
Health and Safety.....	6
Emergency Action Plan	7
Lost Children	8
Risk Assessments	9
Clothing.....	11
Practical skills.....	12
Safeguarding Children and Confidentiality during Forest School	13
Communication Strategy	14
Complaints Procedure.....	16
Appendix 1 - Tool Safety for adults' use	17
Appendix 2 – Information to go on ID tags.....	18

Principles

Here at St Mary's Infant School, through The Hazel Tree, we will be following the Forest School Association Principles, which are:

- *FS is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.*
- *FS takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.*
- *FS uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.*
- *FS aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.*
- *FS offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.*
- *FS is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.*

Ground Rules

Respect for Yourself

At all times, the first person you need to look after is you. From tools and fires to the woodland itself, there are plenty of risks to navigate. Even though each session will start with a reminder of the risks in the setting, it is up to YOU to keep yourself safe.

Encouraging Positive Behaviour

We want to allow the greatest potential for each participant's forest school experience to be transformational and therefore wish to welcome each participant from an open and unbiased viewpoint with regards to their behaviour and abilities. Whilst recognising that it is useful to have previous information about participants' needs, we hope that the greater freedoms offered by a forest school environment will allow for a more flexible interpretation of positive engagement.

De-escalation

If a situation arises in which participants are behaving in a way that threatens the safety of the group, the forest school leader will ensure that the steps of "Peaceful Problem Solving" are taken:

1. **READY** – Make sure that learners are calm and ready to discuss the events.
2. **STEADY** – Learners take it in turns to explain what happened, how it has affected them and discuss ideas of how the situation can be resolved.
3. **GO** – Try out the learners ideas of resolution.
4. **REPLAY** – Learners discuss how the situation can be prevented in the future.

Respect for Others

Not only do you need to be aware of yourself in your surroundings, you need to be aware of your peers and the adults. When carrying sticks, be aware of where both ends of your stick are. When carrying tools, children will follow the procedures shown by the Forest School Leader.

Respect for Nature

Learning about our environment and how we impact on it when we use it, can help to create a sense for sustainability and increase respect for all living things. At The Hazel Tree we encourage people not to pick from living plants and only use what was freely given by Nature itself. Our sessions will always have an impact on the environment! To keep this impact as low as possible we will always remove anything we brought to the site as well as de-installing any sculptures, art or shelters we created. By doing this you can learn about our environment and how we change it by using the area for our wildwood adventure. Together we can find out how to minimise the impact we have and even how to help the area to grow.

Health and Safety

'Play is a key element in children learning to appreciate, assess and take calculated risks, which is fundamental to the development of confidence and abilities in childhood.'

Children's Play Council, 2000

The opportunity for children to learn and develop outside of the classroom is something we at St Mary's Infant School are in a fortunate position to offer.

Children will be able to enhance their communication, friendship and practical skills without having to travel to a Forest School site away from school. The following policies are established and regularly adapted to ensure each and every child is safe.

Equipment taken on EVERY Forest School session

- First Aid Kit
- Emergency procedures
- Risk assessments
- Means of communication (mobile phone– checked in working order and that receives signal)
- Where necessary, medication for individuals (Clearly labelled and staff trained to administer it and parental consent received)
- Wet wipes
- Protective gloves
- Blanket
- Carrier Bags

When making fire we will also need

- Burns kit
- Bucket
- Watering can
- Hot chocolate and snack
- Matches
- Vaseline
- Cotton Wool
- Fire blanket

The burns kit will include

- Burns gel
- Burns dressing
- Cling film
- Eyewash/Woundwash pods
- One pair of fire retardant gloves
- Microporous tape

Emergency Action Plan

Before entering the site, all adults will be informed of their roles should there be an emergency. This will be shown on a laminated card with different coloured cords around their necks to make it obvious to the children what each adult's role is. Each adult will be clearly labelled as Leader, Assistant, Visitor 1.

In the case of an injured child

- Secure area and make safe.
- FS Leader to carry out first aid and remain and monitor casualty.
- Visitor 1 to call emergency services and give location. Will then call St Mary's School office, who will in turn call parents of injured party. St Mary's school will then send another adult to come to Cogges to help walk children back to school.
- FS assistant to gather all other children, do a head count and safely take the children away from the area. When another member staff has arrived, take children back into school.
- FS Leader to stay with injured party until further assistance arrives.

In the case of an injured Adult (assistant/Parent/ Visitor)

- Secure area and make safe.
- FS Leader to carry out first aid and remain and monitor casualty.
- FS assistant/Visitor 1 to call emergency services and give location.
- FS assistant/Visitor 1 to gather all other children, do a head count and move away from area.
- FS assistant/Visitor 1 to take call school to request another adult to come and take children safely back into school. Office Manager will then call adult's next of kin
- FS Leader to stay with injured party until further assistance arrives.
- All injuries will be reported to the Headteacher.

In the case of an injured FS Leader

- Secure area and make safe.
- FS Assistant to carry out first aid and remain and monitor casualty.
- Visitor 1 to call emergency services and give location.
- Visitor 1 should gather all other children, do a head count and move away from area.
- Visitor 1 to take call school to request another adult to come and take children back into school.
- St Mary's office will call adult's next of kin.
- Visitor 1 and Member of Staff to take children safely back to school.
- FS Assistant to stay with injured party until further assistance arrives.

Lost Children

This is unlikely on our site as children, risk assessments covering all eventualities. If, however, a child is lost, the procedure would be:

1. Recall rest of group and do a headcount.
2. FS Assistant and Visitor 1 commence immediate search of vicinity, while Leader stays with group.
3. If child isn't found within 10 minutes, FS Assistant will inform Office Manager to call the police.

Risk Assessments

A SITE risk assessment is undertaken each half-term. A DAILY risk assessment and check is made prior to every Forest School session at our Forest site and is shared with all adults prior to entering the site.

In addition, an ACTIVITY risk assessment will be established prior to any activity that may require it. These will include: whittling, cutting wood, shelter building, fire lighting, use of kelly kettles, cooking on an open fire, and use of any other tools.

Specific additional risk assessments will be undertaken for children whose medical condition or whose behaviour requires them.

The risk assessment process is detailed below

- We look for potential hazards.
- We decide who might be at harm.
- We think about how harm may occur and the worst outcome that we could face.
- We evaluate the current level of risk.
- We decide on a course of action or set of precautions that will be put in place to minimise the potential risk.
- We then re-evaluate the level of risk once our course of action and precautions have been put in place.
- We create a risk assessment and collate them in the Forest School file.
- We inform all adults with accompanying the group and require them to sign each relevant risk assessment to show that they have read and understood the assessments.
- We will share risks with the children and sometimes ask the children to assist in the risk assessment process to make them aware of the risks involved.
- We regularly monitor and review each risk assessment, half termly and when action is required.
- If the risk is unacceptable – whether it be prior to the session or during the session (e.g. adverse weather conditions, uncontrollable fire etc. – it is our decision to find an alternative place to continue the lesson.

All this information will then be used to create an annual site risk assessment ready for the following year.

Hygiene

If cooking is taking place outside, children will need to wash their hands using anti-bacterial soap, with hand-gel only being used as a last resort. There will be a cleaning table set up by one of the adults, with one area for washing away dirt and one area for rinsing. Children will be encouraged to wash their hands thoroughly for a minute before rinsing in order to get rid of all bacteria. Children will then use paper towels to dry their hands.

Tree Climbing

Children will be encouraged to climb trees if they want to. Insurance dictates that no child can climb more than 1.5 metres off the ground. In their first session, children will be informed of this, using the rule of thumb that they can't climb higher than their own height.

Children will have to inform an adult when they intend to climb a tree and adults will remind them of the height they can climb.

Daily Safety Procedures

	Before session	During session	After session
Check First Aid and Burns kit	✓		✓
Check hand tools	✓		✓
Check appropriate risk assessments are in place for specific group/activity	✓		
Check site for hazards	✓ Weather forecast	✓ On arrival	✓ Check for litter

A site visit must be undertaken by the group leader or other member of school staff before each session to check for hazards. Risk assessments are required to be read, reviewed and carried in the first aid bag so that they are accessible by all adults.

Clothing

St Mary's Infant School with the The Hazel Tree, provide Forest School as an area of the curriculum that will be carried out throughout the year. This means that we work on the principle "there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes!"

Wearing the correct clothes during Forest School sessions provides protection from the range of weather that we are faced with (hot, cold, wet etc). Wearing appropriate clothing also ensures that learners are covered up and therefore reduces the risk of scrapes and scratches. No person will be permitted to enter the Forest School setting if they are wearing inappropriate clothing.

Useful clothing for Forest School

- Waterproof Trousers
- Waterproof coat with a hood
- Long sleeved t-shirt
- Sweatshirt / jumper
- Full length trousers
- Wellington Boots
- Warm socks (and a spare pair)
- Gloves and a wooly hat (cold weather)
- Sun hat and sun cream protection (hot weather)



At school we do have a small supply of spare clothes.

Parents must be aware that learners are likely to take some of our mud home with them!

Practical skills

Tools

Tools are all counted in and out and are kept in a safe place. Children must never be allowed to help themselves and when tools are used the adult child ratio will be 1:1 (*There is one exception to this – when using peelers for whittling the ratio can be 1:3*). Tools are given out for a purpose and all adults will model their correct use, storage and transportation. The Forest School leader is responsible for the maintenance and checking of all tools and equipment to be used at Forest School, prior to their use. Tools are used in a designated area within the site, well away from other active children and only walking is permitted when carrying them. The Forest Leader is responsible in training the children in how to use the tools and equipment safely and appropriately.

Fire

Fires must only be lit after a risk assessment has been carried out and they must only be within the fire circle area.

Before even going near a fire, the Leader will demonstrate how to create a fire, the three elements which make a fire (heat, fuel and oxygen) and how to safely distinguish the fire using a watering can. The fire will always be lit either within the fire circle, which will be clearly designated by logs surrounding the circle. Also explained will be the safety aspects involved in making a fire and the implications of not following the rules. Children will also be informed of the benefits of knowing how to make a fire. When making a fire, small groups will always be supervised by an adult.

When the fire is lit, nothing, besides what is being cooked, is allowed within the fire circle. No one walks within the fire circle and nothing is ever thrown into the fire. There will always be a plunge bucket full of water close by, as well as burns kit in the vicinity of the fire, in case of accidents. These rules will all be shared with the children prior to making the fire. Fire proof gauntlets should be kept at the fire area to allow adults to pick up hot items. The fire is always put out properly by a leader or volunteer or children who are appropriately supervised.

Ropes

When building shelters, children will get the chance to use their knowledge of knots with rope or string. While learning about knots, children will discuss how to use rope safely and the implications of ill-use.

When tying rope or string to make shelters, children need to make sure that they have safe footing before starting to do any tying, to prevent injuries from falling. If the children need to tie their shelter higher, someone in their small group will need to ask their supervising adult for assistance.

Safeguarding Children and Confidentiality during Forest School

All safeguarding issues will comply with the school's safeguarding policy.

Adults who partake in Forest School sessions will be DBS checked prior to entering the site. Adult helpers MUST sign and date a form to show that they have read and understood this handbook and the risk assessments appropriate to the session in which they are helping. They must sign and date the form stating that they comply with the general operating procedures for Forest School (code of conduct).

Confidentiality

Adults working within Forest School need to appreciate that when children feel comfortable and content, they may be moved to disclose information which they might have otherwise kept to themselves. Parents and other helpers at Forest School are required to keep information about the children confidential. If you have any queries or concerns, please contact your child's teacher in the first instance.

Equal opportunities

Within our Forest School site, just like throughout The Hazel Tree, no young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of: Age, Class, Sexuality, Ethnic origin, nationality or race, Family status, Disability, mental or physical ability, Religion or Political Belief. We also believe all who wish to work in, or volunteer to work within the forest school unit have an equal chance to do so as long as they have all the legal safeguarding checks.

Communication Strategy

School Staff

We want all learners, staff and parents to share the Forest School vision and principles. It is therefore important that all Staff understand what Forest School is, the benefits of Forest School to the learner's development and safety implications. James Hazel will explore the concept of Forest School with staff members as part of a staff meeting. The Forest School Handbook and related documents will be available for all staff and parents on the school website. James Hazel is the Forest School Leader and should be the first point of contact for queries and questions.

Office Manager and PE Coordinator

Any health and safety issues concerning the Forest School site will be fed back to the Office Manager and the PE coordinator. All risk assessments will be kept in a file in the staffroom and will be accessible to the Office Manager, the PE coordinator and to Cogges Farm. James Hazel as Forest School Leader will discuss all arrangements with the Office Manager and the PE coordinator.

Parents

It is important that Parents understand what Forest School is, our Forest School vision and principles. Parents will be sent the Forest School Handbook prior to their child's first Forest School experience so that they have a good understanding of all aspects of Forest School. Class teachers will send a letter home to inform parents when their child will be visiting Forest School and what clothing/equipment they will need to bring to school. Medical forms will be sent to parents, children will not be permitted to enter the Forest School site if the Forest School leader does not have the up to date medical information. The learner's achievements and activities will be shared and celebrated with parents via a child's scrapbook, which they will get a chance to fill in at the end of the sessions. The school will look into creating a Forest School section on the school website. The Forest School leader, assistants and learners will update this section with photographs.

Parent Visitors

It is unlikely that parent visitors will be required with The Hazel Tree. If this changes, policies and procedures will be shared with Parent Visitors via the Forest School handbook which will be presented to Visitors during a meeting with the Forest School leader. During this meeting the Forest School Leader will also share the Forest School vision and principles, the Visitors must agree to the principles and vision in order to attend the Forest School sessions. Visitors will be involved in a discussion before the Forest School session so that they are fully aware of their role, they will also have a laminated card explaining what their role is. Visitors will be involved in the risk assessment of the Forest School site and will be made aware of relevant health and safety information. The Forest School Leader will also share any relevant medical information with the parent helpers. Visitors will each have a copy of the emergency action plan and will be fully aware of their role within the plan.

Sign-off Sheet

I confirm that I have read a copy of this Handbook and agree to abide by the policies and procedures it contains.

Date	Name	Organisation	Signature

Complaints Procedure

For any complaints, please download our Complaints Policy from the website. The link can be found below:

<http://www.st-marys-witney.oxon.sch.uk/useful-info/policies>

Travel Policy

Forest School sessions shall be carried out at Cogges Farm. All children must stay behind the Forest School Leader when walking to the site. A second and third member of staff shall walk behind all the children. Risk assessments will be completed by Julie Atkinson.

Landowner Agreement

A landowner agreement is unnecessary as Cogges Farm have allowed us to procure their premises.

Insurance Requirements

Please refer to Oxfordshire County Council Guidelines. The Forest School Leader has individual Public Liability Insurance to carry out Forest School sessions.

Appendix 1 - Tool Safety for adults' use

Fixed-blade Knife

General information/Safety rules/Transportation

Fixed-blade knives are used for whittling and to perform a power cut. Knives should always be folded when not in use or when carrying. Never wear a glove on working hand and never cut towards yourself. Keep the holding hand as far away from the blade as possible but always maintain control of material to allow cuts to be safe. Cut away from yourself and down towards the ground with minimum force. Always assume safe position.

How to conduct a tool safety check

Check that there are no cracks in the sheath. Visually look for any signs of denting, rust etc. Check for sharpness. The whole blade should look dark, draw a thumb sideways at right angles. The blade should feel rough. Use the knife to further test it's sharpness. Check that the handle and attachment are adequate and do not wobble.

How to maintain, clean and store the tool

Clean the knife with a rag. Rust is more likely to appear on a high-carbon blade and needs to be sanded off. On return from side make sure that the knife and guard are dry. Sharpening stones can be used or a kitchen knife tool. When using kitchen knife tools the knife may need to be replaced more often. Make sure the blades are sharp, because they are safer sharp – set up your learners to succeed.

Appendix 2 – Information to go on ID tags

LEADER

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY: Administer First Aid and stay with injured party.

LOST CHILD: Keeps rest of the group safe. If not found in 10 minutes, calls police.

ASSISTANT

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY: Ensures all other users are safe taken back to school.

(If injury to LEADER: Administer First Aid and stay with injured party.)

LOST CHILD: Commence immediate search of vicinity.

VISITOR 1

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY: Use LEADER's phone to call emergency services. The calls Office Manager to request another adult to bring children safely back to school. Office Manager to inform parents. Keeps other children safe.

LOST CHILD: Commence immediate search of vicinity.

VISITOR 2

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY: Assists ASSISTANT in ensuring children return safely to school.

(If injury to LEADER or ASSISTANT: Ensures all other users are safely taken back to school.)

LOST CHILD: Commence immediate search of vicinity