

Totnes St John's
Church of England Primary School

Forest School Handbook

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1. Health and Safety

All Forest School activities will be in accordance with the School Health and Safety Policy Statement, a copy of which will be found as an appendix to this handbook. The Headteacher will ensure that adequate and appropriate insurance is in place. The FSL will be aware of any limits or constraints placed on activities by the insurance policy.

1.1 Risk management and Risk Assessment

'Safe' risk taking and the development of age-appropriate risk management strategies by the children is an integral part of FS. Risk assessments of the site, activities and children will be carried out by the FSL and monitored by the Headteacher. They will, until further notice, be based on the format provided by the Forest School Training Company. They will be reviewed annually, or as needed, by the FSL and Headteacher. In addition, continuous risk assessments will be carried out during a session. All tool use and fire lighting will be in accordance with the standard operating procedures as outlined in this handbook.

1.2 Staff and Helpers

Staff and helpers: Disclosure Checks

All necessary Disclosure checks will be carried out by the school Administrator in accordance with normal school policy.

Staff and helpers: Induction Training

It is the responsibility of the FSL to ensure that all helpers have appropriate and sufficient understanding of the FS aims, ethos and good practice and that the 'Notes for Volunteer Helpers' are revised annually or as needed.

1.3 First Aid

First Aid: Staffing and Training

At least one supervising adult with First Aid training, including paediatric training, and a current First Aid Certificate, will be present at all times.

First Aid: Equipment and paperwork

- As all FS training will be carried out on-site, a small First Aid kit only will be part of the FS. It will be checked regularly and any missing, unsuitable or out-of-date items will be replaced.
- When FS takes place during the school day, all relevant medical information on participating children and adults will be held in the normal place in school; when outside the school day, a copy of all relevant medical information, together with next of kin contact details, on participating children and adults will be carried in the emergency bag.

1.4 Accidents and Emergencies:

Accidents and Emergencies: Minor injuries

- First Aid will be administered by the most appropriate person: a teacher or a teaching assistant, not necessarily the FSL.
- Whilst First Aid may be administered by the most appropriate person (see above), it will be for the FSL to decide whether the injured child is able to continue with Forest School activities or must return to the school building.
- No injured child will make their way back to the school building on their own; the FSL will decide, based on the nature of the injury and the age, composure and common sense of the child, whether they will be accompanied by an adult or another child.
- If accompanied by another child, the FSL will ensure that the children know to make their way to the School Office and will telephone the School Office to warn them that the children are on their way.
- If the child must be accompanied by another adult, the FSL will telephone the School Office and ask for someone to come to escort the child. If that is not possible the FSL will decide which FS adult will escort the child and will take responsibility for that adult's group of children.
The accident will be entered in the school accident log in the usual way.
- If an adult is injured, the FSL will decide whether it is possible to continue with that FS session.

Accidents and Emergencies: Major injuries/accident

The FSL will call 999 direct from a mobile phone. During school hours, the School Office will be notified immediately, via another mobile phone or by a messenger, and they will contact parents, arrange for appropriate forms to be ready for paramedics etc. Outside school hours, the FSL will assume all these responsibilities.

All other participants will be led away from the accident scene to an appropriate place of safety.

Accidents and Emergencies: Other serious incidents

In all cases the children will be led away from the area to a place of safety - in accordance with the school emergency procedures.

The FSL will arrange for the appropriate agencies to be contacted; normally via the School Office but, if necessary, directly.

Accidents and Emergencies: Reporting of Incidents

If a serious incident needs to be reported to RIDDOR, or any other agency, it will be done in consultation with the Headteacher and the Administrator and will be in line with current school policy.

Any near-miss, accident or emergency will be the subject of review by the FSL and where appropriate a report will be made to the Headteacher.

1.5 Weather Checks and Cancellation Procedure.

The FSL will have obtained an up-to-date weather forecast and carried out a site check. FS will be cancelled if the wind is F5 or above on the Beaufort scale, if the ground is too wet or slippery to be safe or if any other factor takes the risk assessment above the acceptable level of 'low'.

If a FS session needs to be cancelled:

During school hours - the children will return to the normal timetable.

Out of school hours - alternative activities will be arranged inside the school.

1.6 Toileting Procedure

Children will be expected to go the toilet before the FS session begins.

If a child has to go to the toilet during a FS session they will return to school either on their own, or with another child or accompanied by an adult, as appropriate.

If necessary, the FSL will assume responsibility for the group normally supervised by the missing adult.

1.7 Parental Consent

When taking place during the school day, no extra parental consent is required; 'umbrella' consent will have been obtained at the start of the school year/on joining the school.

When taking place out of school hours, parental consent will be obtained following normal school procedures.

1.8 Use of Photographs

Photographs will be taken and used following normal school policy. Any volunteer helpers will be briefed on their use of photography. (See 'Notes for Helpers'.)

1.9 Food Hygiene Procedure

At all times a 'commonsense' policy will be adopted, in consultation with the School Nurse. As a general rule:

A bowl of water and a hand towel will be available.

Hand wipes will be available in the FS equipment bag.

2. Safeguarding Children Procedure.

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects staff and volunteers to share the commitment.

The senior designated child protection officer is Mr Jim Funnell, Headteacher. In his absence it is Mrs Wendy Parr, Trust Safeguarding Lead.

The designated child protection governor is Mr P Mantel, Chair of Governors.

Copies of the Child Protection Policy and the Safeguarding Policy are available from the school office or the school website www.totnes-st-johns-primary.devon.sch.uk

Further information about Safeguarding Children will be found in the 'Notes for Volunteer Helpers'.

3. Confidentiality Policy

All employees of Totnes St John's Primary School will act in accordance with their Contract of Employment.

Guidance for volunteers will be found in the 'Notes for Volunteer Helpers'.

4. Activities and Games

4.1 Activities and Games: General Safety

The safety, of adults and children, is of paramount importance and will, at all times, be the overriding factor in any decision making.

4.2 Activities and Games: Specifics

All games and activities will be appropriate for:

The chronological age of the children; The ability of the children

The available adult:child ratio; The site; The weather.

All adults will be reminded that in FS sessions the completion of any particular game or activity is of secondary importance (see 'Notes for Helpers') and must never be carried out if not safe or not in the best interests of the children.

4.3 Activities and Games: Tool Safety and Tool Operating Procedure

All tool use will be in accordance with school Standard Operating Procedures (attached).

4.4 Activities and Games: Fire Protocol including Fire Management and Safety and Camp Fire Cooking Procedure.

All use of fire will be in accordance with the school 'Safe firelighting and use with children' procedures (attached).

5. Lost or Missing Child Procedure

Adults in charge of a group will hold regular head counts to ensure that everyone is accounted for. (See Daily Operating Procedures.)

If a child or group is found to be missing, the adult helper, if not the FSL, will spend no more than 5 minutes trying to find the child/group, with the other children present.

If the child/group can still not be found the rest of the children will be led back to the designated 'base' for the day and the FSL informed.

The FSL will call all groups together so that a head count can be carried out (in case the child has joined another group).

If the child/group is still missing the FSL will inform the School Office and a decision will be made whether the search is to be continued by the FSL or whether another member of staff is available to take over. In the light of this, the FSL will decide whether the FS session can continue or whether the children must return to the school building.

Normal school procedures for missing children will then be followed.

6. Behaviour/Anti-bullying Policy

Whilst much of what happens in Forest School is distinct and special, it is important that it is happening on the school site and as part of the day. The school behaviour and anti-bullying policies will both apply - the ethos of both is quite compatible with Forest School.

The school anti-bullying policy will apply to all Forest School activities.

The relevant sections are copied here:

6.1 Behaviour

St John's is a Church of England primary school and we value the worth of each and every individual in the school. We aim to provide a supportive and positive environment in which individuals can learn and grow. We recognise that each person is unique and special and believe that everyone should be treated with consideration and respect.

At St John's we have our Core Values:-

Courage
Curiosity
Hope
Respect
Responsibility
Tenacity

In order to maintain these Values there are many things that we must do.

- Try to understand other people's points of view
- Listen carefully and follow instructions.

- Speak politely to each other.
- Always tell the truth and keep our promises.
- Take responsibility for our thoughts, words and actions.
- Treat people kindly.
- Always ask for help when we need it.
- Keep our school clean and tidy so that it is a welcoming place to be.
- Respect other people's property.

Bullying, cheating, deceit, unkindness, racism, irresponsibility and dishonesty are unacceptable at St John's. Our system is based on being positive with the children whenever possible. When children choose the wrong behaviour it is very important that they understand that there are consequences. Forest School helpers will apply the following sanctions when children choose inappropriate behaviour.

1. A verbal reminder of why the behaviour is not acceptable.
2. "Time out" at the edge of the group or in another group.
3. Taken back up to school, to another class.

There will always be an opportunity for the child to reflect on their choice of behaviour with reference to our Values.

6.2 Anti-bullying:

All pupils at St John's can expect:

- To be treated with respect by all members of the school community
- Not to receive any form of physical or verbal abuse
- To have respect for their personal possessions
- To walk to, from and around the school site without any form of intimidation

A bully is a person or group behaving in such a way that prevents a pupil having access to the above. They may behave in a way which might meet needs for excitement, status or material gain. A victim is a person or group that is harmed by the behaviour of others and who does not have the resources, status, skill or ability to counteract or stop the harmful behaviour.

Bullying can occur in both mental and physical forms such as:

- Hitting and kicking
- Ignoring people
- Taking people's belongings
- Forcing people to do things they may not want to do
- Name calling
- Threats and blackmail
- Singling someone out

At St. John's, the victim needs to tell someone they can trust:

- A teacher
- A mealtime assistant
- Their parents
- A classroom assistant
- The Headteacher
- Another known adult

If a child knows of another child who is being bullied they can help by telling one of the above in confidence.

7. Equal Opportunities Statement

In Forest School all persons can expect to be treated equally, in accordance with relevant legal regulations and guidances.

Totnes St John's Forest School - Daily Operating Procedures

Before the session

A site visit and daily risk assessment will be carried out. Specific risks will be recorded only if not covered in standing risk assessments.

Equipment, including tools, will be checked and gathered in a suitable place.

Adults will be briefed (see 'Daily Briefings').

All children will be told to visit the toilet and will have explained to them the toileting procedure for the FS session.

If not already in suitable clothing, children will change using the normal arrangements for their class group; having been told how and where they should when changed and ready.

The office will have been informed of the class attending Forest School that day.

During the session

A head count will be carried out before the children leave the school building/playgrounds.

Head counts will be carried out, formally or informally, throughout the session.

(Adult helpers in charge of a group must ensure that they check their group regularly.)

A safety brief, appropriate to the age group, will be carried out at the start of the session. It will include the geographical boundaries for that session.

At the end of the session.

If a fire has been lit, it will be completely extinguished. This will be checked by the FSL.

Before leaving the FS Area, a head count will be held and all equipment accounted for.

Children will be briefed on the routine for returning to the school building.

Adults will know how and when their evaluation feedback will be given to the FSL.