



Intack Primary School
Forest School Information, Policies and
Procedures Handbook
2025-2026

Intack Primary school is committed to working with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety and protection of our Children...

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Introduction to Forest School

Forest School has been defined as 'An inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults regular opportunities to achieve, and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands on learning experiences in a woodland environment' Institutes for outdoor learning and council for learning outside the classroom (2002).

Forest School was originally created in Scandinavia, and was primarily delivered to children in early years. The ethos of forest school is to deliver a positive experience for all learners and to empower positive attitudes, self-confidence and to have a holistic approach to learning.

The philosophy which underpins the learning of Forest Schools is for children and young people to investigate, test and maintain curiosity in the world around them outdoors. A woodland environment is a dynamic way of learning, this approach allows children to learn from first hand experiences, through regular and sustained opportunities to explore and experiment outdoors.

Forest School sessions are planned by the Forest School Leader, however, the lessons are created by observing and understanding learner's interests and learning styles from all the learners participating in sessions. At the same time the learners should be challenged within the tasks which will therefore continue to build skills, independence, self-confidence, team work and the ability to work independently, as well as being happy in their setting.

With this ethos being considered, the Forest School at Intack Primary School will aim to:

- Promote self-confidence and self esteem
- Create a holistic learning approach
- Develop a love for the outdoors and the learning that can take place in this setting
- Create independence for learners or promote working as a team
- Expect a high standard of behaviour, which is continued within the classroom. To ensure that sessions are safe, fun and enjoyable
- Provide well planned, resourced lessons to provide positive learning environments

Rules of Forest School:

- Children must stay within the boundaries of the setting
- children must stay in the view of an adult at all times
- Ask an adult before using tools and follow the tool rules!
- Respect for ALL trees, plants and animals
- Always have fun and smile!

Fire Safety Policy

Forest School sessions will always ensure that the safety of the participant is paramount and therefore any fires will be done as safely and with as little risk as possible. We ensure to follow the 'Forest School Safety Policy' at all times to minimise any risks which could occur in the result of using a fire pit in the school grounds.

The Forest School at Intack Primary School will adhere to the fire policy which can be found on the school website and in the school office.

Health and Safety

In addition to the included tool use policies, Risk Assessments have been conducted of the Forest School site, for any tools which may be used, and potentially risky activities, including use of a fire and shelter building.

The role of the Forest School Leader will:

- Inform Forest School participants (leaners and staff) about any potential risks to health and safety.
- Inform staff how to carry out tasks safely, by introducing adults to the activities and inform them of any relevant risk assessments and safety considerations.
- Ensure that the safety of all participants is safeguarded at all times, including recording of any incidents and near misses, and investigation into whether they could have been avoided.
- Ensure any injuries are treated with appropriate first aid. First Aid kits will be kept within the Forest School are during a session; trained adults will administer first aid, and record this in an accident book to inform all relevant parties.
- Inform you what to do in an emergency. Staff will be given a copy of the emergency procedures at the start of their involvement in Forest School Sessions.
- Provide participants with protection and equipment they may need to fulfil their role

First Aid

The Forest School leader is trained in Outdoor First Aid (September 2018) and is responsible for first aid during Forest School sessions. There will always be a First Aid Kit, Accident Book, Burns Kit and Fire Blanket within the Forest School Sessions. When incidents occur, staff will follow the emergency procedures outlined in this booklet, which follow accident procedures outlined by the school.

Accident and Emergency Procedures

All participants (leaners and staff) will be briefed around what to do in an emergency.

A whistle will be blown, indicating that all participants must stop what they are doing immediately and gather with a member of staff, be silent and await instructions (in a daily Forest School session a whistle will not be blown apart from an emergency incident). The situation will then be assessed by the Forest School Leader ensuring the rest of the group are safe from danger and adequately supervised.

Minor injuries will be treated on site with the First Aid kit by the Forest School Leader or a trained first aider who is within the Forest School session. Incidents will be noted down and further followed up with an accident form will be completed as soon as possible and kept within the school setting for future reference.

If the FS Leader has been injured, an assistant will take the walkie talkie to get in touch with the office, the children will be lined up and taken back indoors once another member of staff comes outside to support the FS leader.

For injuries which cannot be treated by a Frist Aider on site:

- In less serious cases, the Forest School lead will speak to the school office, via walkie-talkie, who will then contact emergency contacts on behalf of the learner, so then they can be taken to their GP or gain further medical attention
- In serious cases the emergency services will be contacted using the emergency phone carried by the Forest School Leader. Thereafter the office will be contacted by the Forest School Leader and parents/guardians will then be contacted
- The rest of the group will be taken from the incident and taken to safety with appropriate staff
- The school office will await the arrival of the Emergency Services and ensure they have access via the school yard and around the site by foot. if required, an additional staff member who is trained in first aid will also assist when required
- In an emergency the rest of the learners will be taken to safety by another member of staff
- The school office will ensure site is clear for the emergency services and all gates and footpaths are accessible to the forest school site

- If the injured person is taken to hospital , one member of staff will accompany them, the school office will be updated, as well as the member of staff (updates from parents/guardians)

Requesting attendance by the emergency services

Dial 999 and request the relevant Emergency Services (Ambulance/fire). The following information needs to be given:

- Emergency Mobile Number: 07969239702
- School office Number: 01254 52815
- School post Code: BB1 3HY
- Emergency Vehicle Access: Front staff carpark, Back entrance carpark

In the event that the Forest School Leader is absent, the member of staff taking over will follow the above emergency procedures and take charge if a situation arises and will contact a first aider within school. A record of all accidents will be recorded, as well as near miss incidents.

Safeguarding

The Forest School at Intack Primary School will follow the schools safeguarding policy which can be found on the school website and in the school office. During Forest School sessions all members of staff are responsible for health and safety of all the learners and other staff members around them. This includes ensuring that:

- The environment around the Forest School site is safe and suitable for children to work in safely. A pre site sweep will be completed daily to ensure it is safe for learners and staff
- The children are given the relevant skills to work in safe way and use the tools correctly as well as being supervised appropriately by an adult
- If any safeguarding issues arise they will be reported, following the safeguarding policy
- All staff involved in Forest Schools are DBS checked and attend regular safeguarding training.

Confidentiality

All staff must adhere to confidentiality which is outlined in the staff handbook.

Medical and personal information

- Adults supervising children during Forest School sessions will be informed about the medical needs of any learners within the group as and when needed. All this information will be kept in the school office and in classrooms when necessary
- In case of an emergency, the school office will inform any parents or guardians if required as they hold contact information
- First aid will only be administered by staff members who are trained in this. Forest school leader will know who is trained in this
- Any adults who attend Forest School sessions will inform the Forest School Lead of any medical conditions they have and these will be kept confidential

Video and Photo Permission

- Only school i-pad's and cameras will be used for the recording of evidence during sessions
- Each child will have a permission slip for allowance of photos/videos which can be taken in school and this slip is signed by their parent or guardian. The Forest School Lead will be aware of any limitations prior to sessions.

Observations

Staff members will carry out observations on learners during Forest School sessions and these will be recorded and kept within school and remain confidential to that child and their family.

Equal opportunities and Inclusion

Forest School sessions will always promote inclusion of all children and adults into each activity, to help enhance their learning and development. This will not discriminate learner's gender, age, race ability or sexual orientation. The Forest School leader will ensure that activities are suitable for all learners to participate in, however if it is judged that an activity cannot be carried out safely by a particular learner the activity should be adjusted to their needs. Forest School is a child led experience and wherever possible the children will be allowed to follow their own interests.

Forest School sessions will follow the Intack Primacy School SEN and Inclusion Policy which can be found in the school office and on the school website.

Behaviour

Forest School sessions will follow the behaviour policy at Intack Primary School. Children taking part in Forest School sessions will be aware of boundaries and rules which have been set to adhere to. Respectful, positive and respectable behaviour is expected throughout all sessions and activities will aim to develop children's positive behaviour. Praise and encouragement will be paramount to promote good behaviour during Forest School sessions. Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Communication Policy

- Clear communication is essential between staff and pupils for Forest School sessions to run smoothly. All taking part in sessions must listen carefully to the rules and boundaries set and instructions to follow.
- All adults will receive a copy of this handbook, including any policies which link with this one. Risk assessment copies should be viewed for the relevant tasks or surroundings which appropriate to them.
- The forest school leader will have an emergency mobile phone and walkie talkie to contact the relevant members in case of emergencies.
- Parents will be informed about Forest School sessions and can enquire about this with questions to answer if needed.
- Accidents or incidents will be recorded and noted down, as well as passed onto the office if a parent needs contacted.

Missing Child Procedure

During any school sessions the priority that underpins the work we do is ensuring all pupils are safe. If a child is missing it is vital that we follow the emergency procedures which are implemented as the situation will be taken very seriously. The emergency procedure which will be followed is:

- The Forest School Leader will be informed immediately
- Activities will be suspended and the rest of the children will complete a simple activity whilst the remaining adults and Forest School lead conduct a search for the missing child, however this will last no longer than 5 minutes.
- If a child is still missing after five minutes RC and FH need to be informed who will provide further instructions.

Forest School sessions

The Forest School leader is the only member of staff able to provide FS sessions, assistants are not able to provide sessions even if they have been planned by the FS leader.

Prior to the session:

- The Forest School Leader will complete session plans. This will be created from interests which have been observed by staff and learning points from previous lessons. All the adults will read the session plan prior to the session taking place.
- Activity risk assessments and site sweeps will be carried out and completed prior to the sessions taking place. All staff will read the most recent risk assessments or the relevant risk assessment which interlinks with the sessions that day.
- The Forest School lead will check that the staff to pupil ratios are correct and weather conditions are suitable for learners. (1:7 staff, learner ratio).
- Equipment required for the session will be collected, checked over and taken to the site.

During the Session:

- The Forest School Leader will carry out a register and head count at the start of each session
- Risks will continuously be monitored throughout the session and any actions will be taken as necessary
- Headcounts will continuously be carried out throughout the session.
- If tools are used regular checks will be collated and checked thoroughly to comply with the safety rules.

Sessions will always have the same basic structure:

- Greeting – Reminder of the rules, health and safety, outline of the session
- Activity - Adult directed games/experiences which will lead into their own initiated activities when necessary
- Snack – soap and water will be available for hand wash or access to toilet facilities to do so there
- Activity – Time for child initiated discovery (independently or to share to group)
- Circle time – time to review feelings after session and review session

After the session:

- A headcount will be carried out when returning children to classes
- If tools have been used, the contents will be checked back into box and maintained as necessary
- All equipment will be returned to located container

- Forest School leader will complete any observations which will be useful to plan for following sessions and to share with the class teachers

Forest School clothing

Forest School sessions will take place in all weathers, providing it is safe to do this. The clothing which will be worn by learners and staff is extremely important. School will provide external clothing for children to wear which will include waterproofs and wellies to be worn over relevant clothing for the weather.

Toileting Procedures

All children will be given the opportunity to use the toilet before they go out to participate in an activity. There will always be access to toilets during a Forest School session, the toilets will depend on where the session is taking place, children will be told which toilets are accessible before the session starts and will be able to go to that toilet independently and return back to the session sensibly. As they leave their name will be written down and crossed off once they are back.

Cancellation Procedure

Forest School sessions will take place in all weathers except in torrential high winds, the risk of an electrical storm or if the Forest School grounds are not in a condition which is safe enough for all participants. Other grounds of the school will be checked and if the location can be moved, the session can move sites if appropriate to do so. Forest School sessions will be cancelled if the correct ratio of adults to children cannot be met in the absence of the Forest School Lead.

The Environment and our Impact

Developing respect for the natural world is a great part of the Forest School ethos, and therefore will be key to how Forest School sessions are led. On site all activities will be carried out with the thought of protecting wildlife and the environment by minimising any impact that activities could have on them.

We will minimise impact by:

Fires

- Fires will be lit in a fire pit bowl to reduce the impact it has on the site grounds and wildlife
- Ash will be scattered well to leave minimal visual trace of a fire being lit
- All fires will be fully extinguished before the site is left

Collecting fire wood

- The amount of fires being lit and the amount of wood used will be kept to a minimum to reduce the need to find dead wood
- Areas of which the wood has been taken from will vary to avoid impact on habitats
- Habitats will not be touched when finding wood

Cooking

- Any food waste will be disposed of away from site so the biodiversity of the site is not affected and a mess is not created

Shelter building and tree climbing

- These activities could damage trees. Suitable trees, which are a suitable size and growth will be chosen to do this

Collecting Natural Materials

- Wherever possible children will be instructed to use the fallen leaves and plants for activities and not pick the living plants and leaves around us
- Children will be spoken to about this before sessions and reminded during sessions

Insurance

The School Insurance Company has been advised and notified of the Forest School sessions which will be taking place and activities which this involves such as fires. Relevant risk assessments have been completed to adhere to the insurance.