

Outdoor Learning
Policy

‘Together we unlock potential and learn for life’



This policy was approved by the Governing Body of Moor First School at their meeting on:

SignedChair of Governors

SignedHeadteacher

Review Frequency: Every 3 years
January 2028

Next Review:

Aims:

Objective:

This policy is intended to address the need for a structured approach to the teaching of outdoor learning (including forest school and orienteering). It provides expectations for teachers and pupils and guidance for parents.

Our aim is to provide children with experiences that encourages an appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment of Biddulph Moor and Beyond. We want children to learn to respect and care for their own local environment and learn to be Citizens of the world. As a school we aim to develop children's self-esteem, self-confidence and problem solving through the setting of outdoor learning tasks. This starts in our Early years and progresses through school so that year 4 children are prepared for transition.

Forest School

Forest School is a unique method of Outdoor Education that allows children to develop confidence, independence, resilience, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment. This fully supports our Mission Statement: 'Unlock Potential and Learn for Life'. Forest School is a holistic approach to learning, incorporating children's individuality and develops their skills for lifelong learning. It can cover many areas of learning, including the emotional and spiritual aspects of learning where self-esteem and self-confidence can grow and positive relationships with peers can be formed. Forest School explores the outdoors and the natural environment with practical, useful activities all year round.

All children receive a dedicated hour per week – additional to PE lessons to take part in forest school sessions.

Orienteering

At Moor First School, we understand the importance of learning outside. We have just installed an amazing cross-curricular orienteering course across the school grounds. The children will have the opportunity to progress in orienteering skills from understanding symbols, to holding and setting/orientating the map (learning how to fold and thumb the map), progressing to using a compass to take a bearing.

Orienteering by its nature will embed team-building skills focusing on: communication, cooperation, trust, empathy and patience, all qualities we wish to promote at Moor.

The Orienteering course was chosen because not only does it teach the skills valuable for life, it is also cross-curricular. While following the course, the children may be practising their maths skills, learning about the Stone Age or even developing an understanding of Classical music!

All children have an Outdoor Adventurous Activity Unit scheduled as part of PE but may complete orienteering in any lessons as well as during some forest school lesson time.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Within the EYFS Unit, pupils have daily access to an outdoor area. This is resourced to provide age-appropriate learning experiences to stretch and challenge pupils in line with the curriculum. During child-initiated learning pupils have free-flow access to their outdoor area and can choose to learn outdoors throughout the year. Learning experiences and resources enable pupils to explore the natural environment, seasons and their own interests and fascinations. Children wear appropriate protective clothing dependent upon the weather.

Inclusion

At Moor First, we do our utmost to ensure that all pupils, regardless of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation, have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. All children will be included with all activities and no form of discrimination will take place, reasonable adjustments will be made to make it inclusive for all. We aim to provide a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Forest schools Leader is a trained Level 3 Forest School Practitioner and holds an up to date ITC Outdoor First Aid certificate.

Forest School Leader will have the overall responsibility for:

- Risk assessments for each session, pre-visit site checks and continuous safety monitoring/tree inspections.
- Planning for sessions, differentiation for individual children's needs.
- Ensuring that once on-site rules are followed and continue to risk assess during the session.
- Ensuring necessary equipment is taken into woodland.
- Administration of first aid and checking first aid kit.
- The supervision of fire use, following procedures set out in this document.
- The supervision of tools use, cleaning and storing.
- Organising emergency procedures – use of Walkie Talkie
- Ensuring that the site is left as it was found after every session.

Staff leading orienteering have the overall responsibility for:

- Risk assessments for each session, pre-visit site checks and continuous safety monitoring.
- The planning of sessions, differentiation for individual children's needs.
- Ensuring that once on-site rules are followed and continue to risk assess during the session.
- Ensuring necessary equipment is taken.
- Ensuring that the site is left as it was found after every session

Staff/ students / volunteers will:

- Model good practice throughout the session
- Carry out delegated roles and responsibilities
- Extend children's learning where appropriate by asking extending questions
- Support children to manage their own risk
- Remind children of rules and boundaries
- Be aware of dangers within Forest School and monitor levels of safety at all times.
- They will support the Forest School leader to run the sessions.

Health and Safety Policy:

Forest School sessions, by their nature, encourage children to develop their own risk management skills and will support them to become responsible for themselves and others around them. When conducting Forest School and orienteering sessions, all staff will follow the health and safety policy and procedure set out by the school.

Emergencies:

During Forest School and orienteering, we will listen for any alarms and follow school policy on evacuations and invaccuations.

First Aid:

During Forest School, a first aid trained member of staff must be present. We will follow the school's first aid policy. All first aid will be carried out in line with training.

Forest School Leader will have paediatric to puberty first aid and first aid at work.

Behaviour Policy

The Forest School/orienteering leader will follow the school's Behaviour Policy, however if the behaviour of an individual, or group of individuals is such that it puts their own and others safety at risk then the individual(s) may be required to return to the school building with an accompanying adult. This will be at the discretion of the Forest School leader.

Thermal Comfort

To ensure that the children are kept safe during all weathers, the Forest School/orienteering leader will follow the guidance set out by the HSE in line with their thermal comfort policy. *“The term 'thermal comfort' describes a person's state of mind in terms of whether they feel too hot or too cold. Environmental factors (such as humidity and sources of heat in the workplace) combine with personal factors (i.e. your clothing) and work-related factors (how physically demanding your work is) to influence your 'thermal comfort'.”*

HSE, 2022 <https://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/thermal/index.htm>

Food safety and Hygiene Policy:

Children at Forest Schools are taught a strict NO eating rule, unless it is a specific activity led by an adult to prepare and cook food. All prepping, cooking, serving, eating and cleaning will be done in line with training.

Environment:

Wherever possible environmentally friendly products and recycled materials will be used. The Forest School Leader will ensure that care management, use and appreciation of the environment allows us to carry out sessions in harmony with our site.

All classes have their own Welly Sheds and we have an optional forest school jacket and trousers for families to purchase. All nursery children are given a suit free of charge via the PTFA.