



**Clyro Church in Wales  
Primary School**

# **Clyro Church in Wales Primary School**

**Forest School Information,  
policies and procedures  
handbook.**

**2023/24**



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# Introduction to Forest Schools

## What is Forest Schools?

The ethos of Forest schools is based on a fundamental respect for children and young people and their capacity to investigate, test and maintain curiosity in the world around them. It believes in children's right to play; the right to access the outdoors (and in particular a woodland environment.); the right to access risk and the vibrant reality of the natural world; the right to experience a healthy range of emotions, through all the challenges of social interaction, to build resilience that will enable continued and creative engagement with their peers and their potential.

Forest school is based more on the process of learning than it is on the content - more so, on the how than the what.

This means that genuine forest school practice steps boldly out of the shadow and limitation of planned activities and ventures collaboratively into the realms of the unplanned, unexpected and ultimately unlimited. Children and young people are given encouragement to direct their own learning - this often requires catalyzing on the part of the forest school leader either through stimulating play in the outdoors or through scaffolding a child's learning, but mostly through simply observing how children are in the outdoors.

Significantly, and on many levels, a woodland/natural field environment is central in supporting this very dynamic approach to learning; the passage of time from the changing of the seasons to the contemplation of an ancient tree; the dynamic nature of an outdoor environment - an infinite source of smells, textures, sounds and tastes; a range of visual stimuli from near to far, high to low, very big to very small; and the infinite layers of historical, cultural, spiritual and mythological significance that speak of our deep relationship with trees and woodland through the ages.

(Above extract from FSTC)

At Clyro Church in Wales Primary School the focus of Forest Schools is firstly, to develop children's collaborative working skills, self-esteem, confidence and practical skills, which can then be transferred to the classroom. Secondly, to make learning practical, fun and enjoyable so that children develop an enjoyable attitude towards school and learning.

## Provision

At Clyro Church in Wales Primary School, we aim to offer our children the experience over their school year. This will be rotated to give children the opportunity to experience the changing seasons. In addition to Forest schools, we encourage outdoor cross-curricular learning throughout the school.

## Communication

To enable the successful operating of Forest Schools, key stakeholders (Headteacher, Governors, Parents) will be informed of the aims, objectives and outcomes in a variety of ways periodically throughout the year.

## Environmental Impact

At Clyro Church in Wales Primary School we aim to teach children about caring for the environment in a variety of ways from creating habitats to using non-native species for craft activities. There is a woodland management plan in place, with objectives to minimise the impact of activities on the site. We aim to balance the benefits the woodland provides the children with care for the environment.



## Forest School Rules

In the first Forest School session, children become involved with the setting and understanding of the Forest school rules to ensure their safety. At the beginning of every session a quick recap of the rules is reinforced by the children.

## Forest School Motto

Walk within the Forest School Area

Keep everything out of your mouth

Stay within the boundary

Kneel near the pond

Do not throw anything

Remember the fire rules

Drag sticks behind you

Care for nature

Ask an adult before you use a tool and follow the tool rules

Always wash hands following a session.

Have FUN!

It is important that the adults involved try to help children understand the importance of these rules, and support children in understanding that Forest School will become too dangerous if these rules aren't followed, which may mean that Forest School sessions have to end.

## Staff and helpers at Forest School.

### Forest School staff:

- Mrs. Sarah Groves: Forest School Leader (Headteacher)  
Forest School OCN Level 3 in Forest School Leadership  
First Aid in the work place (1 Day) - 25/4/22
- Miss Sinead Griffiths: Forest School Leader (Deputy Headteacher)  
Forest School OCN Level 3 in Forest school Leadership  
First Aid in the work place (1 Day) - 25/4/22

### Other Staff

All teachers and teaching assistants have received information regarding the key principles of Forest Schools and its' purpose and all have received the First Aid in the workplace training - 25/4/22.

Forest Schools is carried out with an adult to child ratio of at least 1:8, but additional adult support will be provided where appropriate for children who have disability or ALN needs. When using tools, a definitive adult to child ratio is determined, please see section on tool policies. A separate activity risk assessment will be carried out for each activity, when any hazards associated with that activity are at risk of causing harm, ratios for each activity will be determined by the type of activity, the competence of the children and the level of risk involved. All staff and helpers supporting the Forest School leader are DBS checked and records are kept in the Headteacher's office. All teaching staff are first-aid trained. All staff and adults involved in Forest Schools, are required to sign and date a form to show that they have read this handbook, appropriate risk assessments and understand to comply with the safety guidelines.

## Health and Safety

At Clyro Church in Wales Primary School, the health and safety of the children, staff and visitors is our primary concern. The following policies within this handbook are in addition to the main school policies and do not replace them. They are the minimum requirements for the safe running of Forest Schools.

Forest Schools is held on the school premises, within the nature area, and is attended by children from the school. It is covered by the QBE Insurance (Europe) Ltd, which is the School's Public Liability Insurance, which also covers the main school. Insurance Policy number: Y082744QBE0118A.

The forest school leader is responsible for the safe running of Forest Schools therefore, has a duty of care for the children. However, all adults are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure children are safe. Before a session commences all staff involved in the sessions have access to activity plans and risk assessments associated with the activities.

## Site Risk Assessment

Before a site is used, a risk assessment will be carried out by a Forest School Leader. The site risk assessment will be approved by Mrs. S. Groves (Headteacher) or Miss. S. Griffiths (Deputy Headteacher) and updated as and when there are any permanent or seasonal changes to the site, which are not recorded on daily site assessment below.

**Daily site risk assessment** - A daily site risk assessment (safety sweep) will be carried out before the site is used to ensure that there are no changes to the site which could cause harm. This should be taken with extra caution following high winds and other bad weather. Following the daily site risk assessment, the FS leader will carry out anything that is needed to make the site safe (e.g. remove any hazards, mark off any unsafe areas). At the same time, they will consider specific circumstances which make it appropriate to cancel a Forest School session.

**Activity risk assessment** - When planning activities for Forest School, any hazards associated with that activity, that are at risk of causing harm, should be considered. These should be recorded on an activity risk assessment with suitable control measures taken to control and minimise the risk. Due to the nature of Forest School, the children may come up with a new activity during a session and therefore reasonable steps will be taken to ensure the activity is safe. An activity risk assessment form will be completed ASAP following that session.

## First Aid

A full emergency kit is taken to the Forest School site and includes a First Aid kit. Access to this kit is permitted only to the Forest School Leader and other teaching assistants, not to volunteers, visitors or children.

The Emergency Kit contains the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Aid Kit (see contents in column right)</li> <li>• Burns Kit (cling film/scissors/latex gloves)</li> <li>• Blanket and Roll mat</li> <li>• Fire blanket</li> <li>• Small tarpaulin</li> <li>• Tissues and paper towels in plastic bag</li> <li>• Hand wash gel</li> <li>• Baby wipes</li> <li>• Fresh water in container</li> <li>• Spare clothes (size appropriate for group)</li> <li>• Sugary snack</li> <li>• Emergency action plan and incident book.</li> <li>• Emergency 999 script.</li> </ul>	<p>Full First Aid kit will contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• instant ice packs</li> <li>• antiseptic wipes</li> <li>• plasters</li> <li>• triangular bandages</li> <li>• self-adhesive wound dressings</li> <li>• bandages</li> <li>• protective gloves</li> <li>• eye pads</li> <li>• roll micro pore tape</li> <li>• CPR face shield</li> </ul> <p>Foil Blanket</p> <p>The forest school leader will ensure this is adequately stocked and replenished.</p>
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In addition to this, a summary of medical information relating to each child and/or specific care plans are kept in the First Aid/Hygiene room. Doors to the school are unlocked to ensure that full access is available to any medication required (e.g. inhalers, epi-pens, etc.) Staff will be advised of any specific medical information they should be aware of. The leader will also ensure a mobile phone is available during off-site sessions.

## Emergency First Aid Procedures

In the event of an emergency the following will happen:

- Emergency whistle blown
- Children advised of tools down by other adults in surrounding areas and to await further instructions.
- Forest School Leader to assess situation and remove any hazards.

### Situation as assessed able to treat casualty with First Aid:

- Adult 1 (Forest School Leader) treat casualty using emergency First Aid bag and calm the casualty.
- Adult 2 - to lead other children safely to a safe area/back into school and complete head count. Await further instructions, keeping children calm, playing circle time games.
- If child needs to go home or further non-urgent treatment is required, parents or carers are contacted by the Forest School staff and informed of the accident and treatment. Forest School staff complete school accident book which is signed and dated.
- If the session resumes, children are advised of any information needed to prevent any further accidents. Injured child to be monitored and class teacher to be advised. Parents are also to be informed, just to let them know of the accident and treatment. Forest School staff complete school accident form which is signed and dated.

### Situation as assessed but unable to treat casualty with First Aid:

- Adult 1 (Forest School Leader) treat casualty using emergency First Aid bag and calm the casualty. Ring 999 and read script from Emergency bag. Await ambulance and stay on phone to emergency services. If on arrival of ambulance if parents have not arrived to accompany child to hospital. Forest School staff to complete Powys Accident Reporting form.
- Adult 2 - to lead other children safely to a safe area and complete head count. Send a child up to the school site to alert school staff who will contact parents. Terminate session and return to school.

## Daily Operating Procedures

### What to do before the session

Before a session takes place the Forest School Leader will carry out a daily risk assessment of the area and will take any necessary action to ensure the site is safe before use.

The Forest School Leader will list resources required for the session on the planning. The resources will be checked out by the Forest School Leader using the check list and all tools will be checked before use by the Forest School Leader, following the tool policy procedure. All tools and resources are left in locked

storage until required for use at the beginning of a session. Sometimes children are encouraged to help carry and transport resources safely to the session.

The Forest School Leader will provide activity risk assessments (see risk assessments in Forest School file) to all staff and volunteers at the session, to ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of any hazards associated with an activity and the measures in place to control the risk. Before the session, staff and volunteers will be briefed on the intended structure of the session and their responsibilities.

### **Transport at the beginning of the session**

When on the school site, the children will change into their clothing and appropriate footwear and will be brought to the wildlife area after registration by the Forest School leader. Adults joining the session will be made aware of the ratios. The beginning of the session will follow a similar pattern each time (coming together time to recap rules and boundaries).

When sessions take place off site, the above procedure will be followed and children will either walk or be transported to the woodland site. Children will travel either by bus or car to the woodland site and permission will have already been sought.

### **What to do during the session:**

It is the responsibility of ALL adults to make on-going risk assessments. Regular head counts are carried out and if there is 'any' doubt the game "1-2-3- where are you?" is played to bring out children from hiding places. If any child is unaccounted for then the missing child procedure is followed. The adults should follow the roles of the adult guidance (see page 19-20) keeping in mind the purpose for the high adult to child ratio.

**What to do after the session:** At the end of the session children are called and will be encouraged by supporting adults to work together to return resources safely, to a central location, ready for returning to storage. All litter will be gathered up to be disposed of in school. Children will then group in the Forest School seating area, where a head count will take place. A reflection session or game will take place, sometimes followed by a song. Another headcount will take place before the children leave the nature area. In the school, the class adults will then escort the children back to their classroom and they will change.

The Forest School staff will check back in the resources using the check list and advise if any tools/resources are missing and go and check the area. These will then be locked away.

**Evaluation for next session:** During and following a session, Forest School assistants will ensure they provide their observational notes to the Forest School Leader to enable them to plan, according to the children's needs, for the next session.

## Toileting Policy

Children will be encouraged to use the toilet before beginning a session, firstly to avoid too many trips during the session and to avoid having to take off all the waterproofs again! Adults and children are advised that tool use will be stopped during toilet visits due to the ratio of staff remaining. Should a child need to go to the toilet during a session they will enter the school building.

If on the rare occasion a child should have a toileting accident on site, then the adult and child will advise the Forest School Leader who will advise adults and children that tool use will be stopped whilst an adult leaves the site due to the ratio of staff remaining. The adult and child can return to the session when they are ready and advise the FS leader so that a usual session resumes.

## Parental Consent and confidentiality

At Clyro Church in Wales Primary School all adults are required to observe confidentiality and are aware of their responsibilities in relation to it. Any confidential information regarding children/adults is followed in the same procedure as in school.

In relation to Forest schools, medical information for each child is obtained at the beginning of the school year from the parents/carers and is in individual pupil files in the school office and also kept in the First Aid/Hygiene Room. The Forest School leader is given a summarised list of specific medical needs for individual children. (e.g. Asthma, allergies, etc.).

At the start of the school year parents/carers are provided with information outlining the ethos of Forest School and proposed activities. They are required to sign a consent form to allow their child to participate in Forest Schools. (See appendix.) On the consent form, as a cautionary measure, parents are reminded to advise us if there are any further medical reasons or phobias that could affect their child's wellbeing and experience of Forest Schools. All parents are required to read this Forest School handbook and sign to say that they have read this document before their child can undertake Forest School activities. The consent forms are kept in the Forest School file in locked storage in the Headteacher's office.

All information about individual children is private, although specific medical information that could affect a child's wellbeing and safety at Forest Schools is shared with Forest School staff that have a need to know, to ensure the best care and safety for children in our care. A summary of medical information and any medication required is kept in the Forest School Emergency kit at each session. Access to the emergency kit is permitted ONLY to the Forest School Leader and other teaching assistants, NOT to volunteers, visitors or children. In between sessions this medical information is kept in the First Aid/Hygiene Room.

Emergency contact information is kept within the school office and can be obtained quickly via mobile phone or dashing into school.

## Clothing policy

Forest School leaders will endeavour to carry items of spare clothing in kit bags and we are building a bank of spare wellies. As a responsible person, the Forest School leader has the right to exclude any child they think is inappropriately dressed for Forest school activities. We will develop a limited selection of spare clothing, coats, socks and gloves should the children not have any. However, for their own comfort, children are encouraged to provide their own extra layers in winter.

Some possible items the children could wear:

### Winter

Vest or T-shirt  
Long sleeved top  
Hooded top/fleece or thick jumper  
Waterproof jacket  
Thick socks (thermal or two pairs of thin ones)  
Trousers  
Wellington boots  
Hat, gloves and scarf.

### Summer

Long sleeved T-shirt or top  
Light trousers (Arms and legs must be covered in the woodland)  
Socks  
Trainers, sturdy shoes or Wellington boots.  
(Sandals, crocs and flip-flops are not suitable.)  
Sunhat

Participants are also responsible for providing and applying their own sunscreen themselves, in line with the usual school practice.

# Tool handling policy

## Tool usage

Children will not be using tools until the children are ready in every way; emotionally and physically. Specific tool policies are in place for each tool that may be used within Forest Schools; these can be found in the appendices. The policies cover specific ratios for tool usage and any PPE required for adults or children whilst using the tools. All tools are initially modelled by the Forest School Leader to children and adults, as set in the ratios determined by the tool policy. All adults participating must receive basic training on the safe use of tools before being allowed to use them with children.

## Tool Maintenance

As tools are prepared for the beginning of a session, tool safety checks are completed by the Forest School Leader. If any tools are deemed unsafe for purpose, they are marked with fragile tape and are removed for repair.

Through safe modelling of tools, in initial 1:1 ratios, children and adults are taught how to check a tool before using as a matter of routine. If they notice a tool is unsafe in any way to use, they are taught to use the fragile tape to highlight a tool is unsafe. If they are unable to do this then they are taught to advise an adult so they can mark off the tool as unsafe. Children and adults are taught that if they see a tool marked with fragile tape then they are not to use the tool because it is unsafe to do so. Following a Forest School session, tools are checked back in by the Forest School Leader or adults. Tools are checked against the checking out list to ensure no tools are missing. The Forest School Leader will be advised immediately if any tools/resources are missing. As tools are returned they are cleaned and maintained following the specific tool policy.

## Tool rules:

Children are taught these and they are reinforced at the beginning of each session:

- Ask an adult before you take a tool from the tool area.
- You must have a purpose for your tool.
- You must make sure you choose a safe working area with nobody near your blood bubble.

## Fire policy

Fires will only be lit by a Forest School Leader following this safety policy when the children are ready in every way; emotionally and physically.

Considerations before deciding to have a fire:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wind direction</li><li>• No combustible materials nearby/over hanging branches.</li><li>• Soil type - ensure not too peaty</li></ul>
Safety - clothing and hair:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No hair/jewellery dangling - hair tied back.</li><li>• No gloves on when placing materials.</li></ul>
Safe Sitting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seating should be positioned 1-2m away from fire.(4m in diameter)</li><li>• Allow gaps between seating arrangements for escape routes.</li><li>• Ensure the area between the seating area and fire pit is free from debris and trip hazards.</li><li>• Children will be taught they must never cross the inside ring and are taught to move by stepping over the seating logs and walking outside the seating area.</li><li>• Seating in line of smoke will be avoided. Children will be taught to turn their heads if smoke is coming in their direction.</li></ul>
Safe Management:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fires will be lit by the forest school leader with gloves and only when the leader is confident the group is able to carry out instructions safely.</li><li>• Fires will be lit using a fire steel, matches and firelighters can be used but will be stored safely away in a fire proof box. No flammable liquids will be used to light or accelerate fires.</li><li>• Never leave the fire unattended.</li><li>• Have at least 5 litres of water in a bucket available in case of an emergency burn/scald, a fire blanket and a water container for extinguishing available.</li><li>• The fire will be lit in a designated area used only for this purpose. The area will be</li></ul>

	cleared of debris. A fire bowl/pit will be used to prevent the spread of fire on the school site.
Safe Extinguishing:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow fire to burn down, if possible or alternatively spread out the embers of the fire.</li> <li>• Pour on water gently, in a circular motion, over the entire fire pit.</li> <li>• Stir ashes in the water until all are out.</li> <li>• Once cold, remove ashes from site.</li> </ul>
Emergency:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Fire Action plan will be followed in emergency - see appendix</li> </ul>

## Food and eating Policy

Children at Forest School are taught a strict NO eating rule, unless it is a specific activity led by an adult to prepare and cook food. Initially, when children are ready they will participate in simple cooking on the fire activities which include; toasting marshmallows/waffles, etc. As skills develop, this will include cooking further meat and vegetable dishes such as vegetable kebabs, baked apples and hot dogs to name, but a few! There is always a staff member present with food hygiene training, when food is being handled and prepared. All staff are aware of children's allergies.

### **Food Preparation, transport and storage:**

- Hands will be washed thoroughly and any cuts/grazes covered in the correct manner before handling and preparing food.
- Any food needing preparation will be prepared in the school kitchen e.g. bread dough.
- Food will be stored in clean containers and transported in a cool bag to and from the site, with any clean utensils and cooking pans required. The box will remain closed in between use with food covered in bags or boxes; to avoid attracting flies and other insects.
- Raw meats will be stored separately to any other foods.
- All 'use by' dates will be checked on foods before eating.
- Water for cooking will be provided in cleaned sealed storage.

### **Handling, cooking and eating Food:**

- A fresh, clean, bucket of warm soapy water will be available for children to wash their hands before handling food or utensils.
- Children are taught how to cook food safely following the activity risk assessment and fire policy. All food will be checked by an adult to ensure it is fully cooked before eating.

- Children will be asked to sit still around the fire circle or to move to a designated eating area from the fire to keep numbers to a minimum near the fire circle.

#### **Clearing away and cleaning up:**

- ALL food not eaten or cooked will be placed in black bin bags and disposed of in the school bin at the end of the session by one of the adults. The area is checked to ensure there are no food traces to avoid vermin being attracted to the area.
- ALL utensils and pans will be placed in the cool box and carried away after the session and cleaned in hot soapy water by one of the adults and stored away correctly.

## **Tree Climbing Policy**

Within the Forest School area there are a limited amount of mature trees which are suitable for children to climb.

Before allowing children to climb, trees should be checked for loose or rotten branches, as well as the ground surrounding the tree for hazards/sharp objects and then removed.

- Adult to child ratio 1:1
- Only one child climbing a tree at any one time.
- Tree climbing is NOT allowed in high winds or wet conditions.

Children are ONLY allowed to climb up to 1.5 metres in height. Adults should note that tree climbing should be carried out with extra caution when children are wearing wellies.

## **Safeguarding Children**

The School's Safeguarding policy should be followed and referred to for further information. (See Safeguarding and Child Protection policy in school)

**Safeguarding at Forest Schools:** Through the long term process of Forest Schools, we aim to build trust and meaningful relationships between the adults and the children. Therefore, the nature of Forest Schools means that disclosures are more likely. Any volunteer or member of staff who finds themselves with children telling them something which concerns them should follow these steps:

- Listen, do not interrupt especially if the child is talking freely,
- Remember that you must not promise to keep a secret.
- You must report orally to the designated senior person immediately.
- All concerns about a child or young person should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer: Mrs. S. Groves, without delay and recorded in writing. Miss S. Griffiths is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer.

- Your responsibility in terms of referring concerns ends at this point, but you may have a future role in terms of supporting or monitoring the child, contributing to an assessment or implementing child protection plans.

**Safeguarding Adults:** Guidance about acceptable conduct and safe practice will be given to all staff and volunteers during induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. There will be occasions when some form of physical contact is inevitable, for example, if a child has an accident or is hurt or is in a situation of danger to themselves or others around them. Please refer to the full Clyro Church in Wales Primary School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

At Forest Schools if staff, visitors, volunteers or parent helpers are working with children alone they will, wherever possible, be visible to other members of staff and will all have a current DBS check.

## Lost or missing child policy

**1-2-3- Where are you?** Children are taught a game from the beginning of Forest Schools which is similar to hide and seek. Children are asked to hide and then when they cannot be found on the call of '1-2-3 where are you?' children have to make themselves seen by an adult and praised for hiding so well. Throughout the sessions this can be played and also used as a call back to the base at the end of the sessions.

**Boundaries:** Boundaries are established with the children at the beginning of a session and children are taught the rule of asking an adult if they wish to go beyond the boundary. In Forest Schools, boundaries begin as smaller areas, marked by red markers, until trust can be developed between the adults and as smaller areas, marked by red markers, until trust can be developed between the adults and the children and boundaries widened. Children are involved in the risk management process of establishing boundaries and safe areas to go. Initially, Forest Schools is carried out on site in the nature area at school to prepare children before heading off site. This enables us to establish trust that children understand how to stay within boundaries. If a child leaves the Forest School boundaries, the outer school gates are locked during the day.

**Headcounts:** At the beginning, during a session and at the end, headcounts take place. The number of children and adults participating, can be found at the top of the daily risk assessment where the ratio of adults to children has been calculated for the session. It is the responsibility of all adults participating to ensure they are aware of the headcount for the session and to be involved in the monitoring of this.

**High ratios of adults and role of the adult:** The high ratios of adults to children at Forest Schools (minimum 1:8) ensure that children are well supervised and supported in their learning and development. Adults are expected to spread out in the Forest School area and be able to see children but not impose on children.

On the school site, due to the size of the area, the overall size of the groups need to be limited to 16 children with 2 adults, or more. This is not only to allow for physical safety but also to allow the forest school ethos to have maximum effect. Before using a site away from the school, the Forest School Leaders will discuss the maximum size of the group depending on the site being used.

## Equal Opportunities

Clyro Church in Wales Primary School is committed to an inclusive ethos based on respect for, and celebration of, ethnic diversity. The school strives to promote equality in all dimensions of school life; irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

**Please refer to the school's Equal Opportunities, ALN and Behaviour Policies alongside this information.**

## 'Forest School for All'

**Forest Schools aims to be child led:** Forest school aims to be child led and enables children to develop their independent learning skills at their own pace through their own interests. Linking with the School's ALN policy allowing children to acquire, assimilate and communicate information at different rates.

**Forest schools has high ratio of adults to children:** the high ratio of adults to children, 1:8, enables support so children can fully participate in physical and practical activities. Adults facilitate learning to ensure children achieve, enabling them to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

**Forest schools is a long term process:** At Clyro Church in Wales Primary School we aim to promote equality of opportunity for all members of the school community and promote good relations between people of different racial groups. As a long term process, with high adult to child ratios, forest school allows time to build meaningful and effective relationships consisting of genuineness, trust, acceptance and empathy. Through a range of activities, we develop trust between adults and children as well as children with other children. We aim in Forest Schools to create an all equal environment with a sense of community and belonging to make children feel safe, secure and valued. Adults within the Forest School environment are in control of this dialogue, ensuring that the messages we communicate both verbal and non-verbal help young people to feel respected and valued. The United Nations Convention Rights of the Child (UNCRC 1989) article 12 and 13 recognises the competences of children and their views should be listened to and respected. If children recognise they are a valued member of the community with an important contribution to make, then it becomes reality when your thoughts and views are both sought after and respected.

**In Forest Schools we aim to build an inclusive ethos by:**

- Using reflection - talking about feelings, emotions. Teaching children to become emotionally literate and aware of feelings, becoming aware of who we are.

- Setting up opportunities for children to work together; developing social skills, sharing resources, trying new activities.
- Discussing and sharing historical cultures and beliefs through a range of stories and activities.
- Ensuring that activities and resources are accessible for all. For example, A frame for sawing built at the correct height, tool size appropriate for users.
- Ensuring that the area is accessible for all users. The Forest School area has clear pathways through allowing wheelchair users or children with less mobility access to the area.
- Allowing the children to choose to take their learning in a way that is appropriate and individual to them. Giving them time and space to do this.

### **Extra Forest School sessions**

A selection of pupils who emotionally require more support to develop academically, will sometimes be given the opportunity to receive additional Forest Schools. This could be accessing additional sessions with other classes or as part of a separate group known as the forest school council. The ratio of staff to pupils in these sessions is higher and enables these children additional support to build relationships and develop their emotional intelligence, as well as scaffold their learning to ensure they achieve to develop their self-esteem and independent learning skills. Progress of their development is recorded in their class Forest School Learning journeys and discussions are held between teaching staff to discuss the impact of these sessions on their learning in class.

## **Behaviour**

At Clyro Church in Wales Primary School we pride ourselves on being recognised by Estyn, parents and children as outstanding for behaviour:

*“The school is a caring community where pupils are happy and feel secure. Their behaviour in and around the school is excellent. Most pupils thrive as confident, capable learners.” Estyn Inspection June 2019.*

### **At Forest Schools we encourage positive behaviour and learning through:**

- Building relationships and trust; It is vital for children to trust adults if the experience is to be a positive one. Through building relationships in Forest Schools, adults can gain an understanding of children’s emotional difficulties (frustration/anger, etc.) and the triggers which may cause behavioural changes of fight or flight. As trust is built, we can teach children coping strategies and use reflection opportunities to talk about feelings and emotions enabling children to become emotionally literate and aware of feelings and aware of who we are.
- Adult’s model positive behaviour and create a positive site atmosphere where everybody is treated as equals.
- Consistent boundaries give children security and enable them to know what to expect. A good way is to involve and engage the children in setting the rules and boundaries. Rules and boundaries are reinforced at the beginning of each session.
- Setting up opportunities for children to learn to work together; developing social skills, sharing resources, trying new activities.
- Being in the natural environment, Forest School naturally creates a calming environment.

**Rewards:**

At Forest Schools we aim to build children's self-esteem and confidence through self-appraisal and own sense of achievement, through the completion of activities. Adults at Forest Schools facilitate learning to ensure that children achieve. Achieving a task will lead to a positive learning experience and children recognising a sense of personal competence. Children with low self-esteem find it difficult to receive praise and only hear what they want to hear. When giving praise it should be for recognising skills and asking how it made the child feel. We will share items made (with permission of the children) with the rest of the group to celebrate individual success.

**Sanctions:**

If a child's behaviour becomes unsafe to himself or others, then that behaviour needs to be stopped and every measure taken to prevent a situation escalating. If needed, the child will be removed from the forest school area. Incidents will be recorded in the school Behaviour record and the class teacher informed. If unsafe behaviour is repeated, then further discussions will involve the Headteacher to establish the next course of action.

**Bullying:**

At Forest School we aim to create a positive learning environment and develop relationships between children. The school does not tolerate bullying of any kind and has a Behaviour policy which references bullying, please refer to this. All cases of bullying are referred to the Headteacher.

## Roles and Responsibilities of adults

Higher ratios of adults to children are in place to ensure that the sessions are of high quality and children have access to risk taking, in a safe and supported way. It is expected that all adults will take an active part in all the activities; this will involve getting muddy and experiencing a range of unusual circle time activities! Where possible, Forest School aims to be child led using a range of activities, you are expected to support the children (not take over) to enable them to achieve a task and develop their self-esteem. Demonstrate how to do things, take an active role and extend their learning through open ended questioning, modelling new skills (e.g. knot tying) and sharing their enjoyment of their new experiences. Getting to know the children, developing relationships and building trust is vital to understanding and developing the children's emotional needs.

**Other roles and responsibilities include:**

- Ensure before taking part you have read the Forest School Handbook and signed the policies and procedures in place. Before the session takes place, take time to read the plans for that session and refer to any related risk assessments contained in the Forests Schools file associated with the activity. Alert the Forest School Leader immediately if anyone (adult or child) requires first aid or has an accident - no matter how minor.
- ONLY use tools if the Forest School Leader has said it is okay to do so. Follow the appropriate tool policy and lead by example when handling and using tools. Report any concerns about the state of equipment immediately.

- Lead by example and follow the Forest School rules and reinforce them to children throughout the session.
- Be aware of the location of the First Aid kit.
- Only tend the fire to extinguish in an emergency, or if agreed beforehand with the Forest school Leader and you feel comfortable doing so.
- Stay within the boundaries and let the FS leader know if you need to leave the activity or area you are supervising.
- Be aware you are duty bound, under the Health and Safety at Work Act, to work safely, take responsibility for your own safety and the implications of your actions, and report or remove hazards as they occur - this means use your initiative.
- Discretely gather observational notes on children according to criteria provided - a good system is to work with another adult (one to interact and one to take notes).
- Ensure you wear appropriate waterproof clothing and footwear.
- At the end of sessions ensure you all support the FS leader with tidying away resources.

## Roles and responsibilities of Forest School Leader

- To plan and lead all Forest School activities.
- To ensure that planned activities and resources available are within the capabilities of the children taking part, amending plans to provide an inclusive curriculum enabling the children to achieve.
- To take responsibility for discipline during Forest School sessions (see school's Behaviour Policy)
- To have an up to date First Aid qualification.
- To ensure that medication (e.g. epi-pens/inhalers) and appropriate First Aid is available at every session.
- To ensure that all participants are adequately dressed for the weather.
- To ensure that adults participating understand their role in promoting emotional intelligence, self-esteem and learning at Forest Schools.
- To carry out daily risk assessments.
- To ensure all Forest School policies are regularly reviewed and that review is informed by observations and developing knowledge of the Forest School setting.

## Roles and responsibilities of children

- To take personal responsibility for their own safety as well as the safety of others.
- To listen to and follow safety information given to them.
- To adhere to the rules of Forest School at all times.
- To bring appropriate clothing and footwear to Forest School sessions.

## Evaluating, Monitoring and assessing

In order to develop the Forest School program and to ensure good practice is maintained, evaluation of activities will be undertaken.

**During a session:** Across all classes evidence is gathered using the following criteria: self-esteem/confidence, behaviour, relationships, independence/self-care, communication/language, exploration/curiosity, creativity/imagination, physical/practical skills, participation, taking appropriate risks and other general observations.

At all Forest School sessions, observations on pupils are discussed during or after a session and recorded. Forest School staff will feedback to the class teacher enabling the teacher to gain insight into changes between usual classroom behaviour and that of Forest School. The evidence collected, in the form of notes and photographs, of children's learning is collated primarily to plan for future sessions and to develop the children's progression in different areas. Periodically the classes Forest School learning journeys will be updated. However due to the nature of forest school observations', these need to be carried out as subtly as possible (children behave differently when being observed.) Interaction and support for the group should always come before evidence collecting. This learning journey of their forest school experience will be carried through each year at Clyro Church in Wales Primary School. It can be used for reflection with children as a record of personal development and achievements.

**Following each session:** The Forest School leader will write a reflection/evaluation of the session and plan accordingly for the next session based on the children's interests and learning in order to develop their skills and learning further.

**Following a block of sessions:** Further monitoring of Forest Schools, is carried out by the school Governing Body, informal drop-ins by the Headteacher and by Estyn.

# Appendices



## Parental Consent for Forest Schools

Name of Child.....

### **Medical Information**

Medical information will be obtained from the medical information you provided at the start of the school year. However, if there is further information that you would like to make us aware of that might affect your child's involvement in Forest Schools (e.g. phobias, etc.) or any other allergies (e.g. material, food, medicine, pollen, dust, etc.) please write below.

Please give the date of your child's last Tetanus Jab \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

**Consent:** As a parent/guardian of the child named above, I agree to my child participating in the Forest School activities taking place.

I understand that activities may include walking, craftwork, pond dipping, tool use, flint fire lighting skills, den building, campfire cooking and other related activities. I give my consent for the equipment and tools necessary for the activity to be used by my child/ren mentioned above. I understand that a strict code of practice for working with children will be followed and all activities will be risk assessed and I will be informed of any extra details of activities that are out of the ordinary pattern.

Signed:.....Date:.....

Name (in print):.....

I have read the Clyro Church in Wales Forest School handbook on the school website and agree the policies and procedures. (PLEASE BE AWARE - children will not be allowed to take part in Forest School activities unless parents have read the handbook and signed below.)

Signed:.....Date:.....

Name (in print):.....

Relationship to child:.....

## Equipment Safety Checklist

Name of equipment	TOTAL IN STOCK	TAKEN FOR SESSION	CHECKED BACK IN FOLLOWING SESSION
Mallet (wooden & Rubber)			
Dibbers			
Metal Hammers			
Hand trowels			
Hand forks			
Forks (short handled)			
Spades (short handled)			
Adult sized spade			
Adult sized forks			
Scout Knives (orange)			
Secateurs			
Pen Knives			
Bow Saw			
Loppers (long handle)			
Tape measure			
Hand Drills			
Large Rope Box			
Small Rope Box			
String reels			
Scissors			
Tarps (large Green)			

Extra Equipment taken \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

ALWAYS TAKE FIRST AID KIT, MEDICATION AND MOBILE PHONE.

ALL TOOLS UNSUITABLE FOR USE SHOULD BE MARKED WITH FRAGILE TAPE AND FOREST SCHOOL LEADER ADVISED.

Tools checked back and cleaned by \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed)

<b>Tool Handling Policy - Axe</b>	
Tool used for:	For a purpose Purpose - Chopping wood (possibly to make a point at the end of wood to make an A frame)
Transporting to FS:	In a secure bag/box with the blade guards on. On site carry by handle down by side of body.
Safety Checks:	Visual observation of tool by Forest School Leader Check for splits/cracks in handle. Check metal pin which joins axe head and handle intact. Grasp handle and head and twist to ensure no movement. Check blade straight and not cracked or damaged in any way. Check sharpness of blade (using thumb horizontally to feel drag). Ensure user has no gloves on or jewellery scarves hair dangling
PPE needed (and for whom):	Walking boots/footwear for user to protect feet from potential axe slip. Glove to be worn on non-working hand.
Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	None.
Ratio Adult/Child	1:1 (an Axe is a complex tool, only advisable to be used by Forest school leader, unless children have high skill level with other tools).
Safe Body Stance:	Move to the height of the block level. Work in a "Blood bubble" - 2 arms and a toll distance away from each other. Ensure nobody in front or behind your blood bubble, the safe zones are to the sides.
Safe Action:	Use a stable, level chopping block of wood. Use the axe ensuring to keep it straight/level in an up and down motion. To avoid slipping chipper cuts could be made in the wood first to give the axe points to grab. Angle and move the wood accordingly, not the axe. Keep hand holding wood safely up high, out of the way of the axe. Hold the axe at the end of the handle to ensure maximum force, but if struggling move hand closer to blade making smaller movements. If using another person to support wood ensure good communication. Additional person must be in safe position at 90° . This person can also be used as a spotter to check for safety. Position wood to the back of the chopping block when chopping and when axe is not being used, embed into back of block (to avoid trip hazard). To release the axe: push down to create leverage to pull away safely without the need to tug up and cause injury.

How to clean and store:	Use a sharpening stone and oil and rub in a circular motion. Clean/Wipe over all working parts with an oily rag. Store in dry, locked storage.
<b>Tool Handling Policy - Loppers &amp; Secateurs</b>	
Tool used for:	Secateurs: for cutting wood which is thumb thickness diameter or smaller. Loppers: used for cutting branches; good for children to use, instead of secateurs, because of their long handles and non-spring closing action.
Transporting to FS:	To site in secure bag /box. Loppers - On site, carry down by the side of body, horizontally and hold bottom arm to ensure the blades do not open. Secateurs - carry down by side with blades locked, pointing down.
Safety Checks:	Visual observation of tool by Forest School Leader; Loppers - Open loppers, with curved (smiley) blade up, and rest one handle on shoulder and other in groin to avoid accidental closure whilst checking. Secateurs - open and rest on tree branch to avoid any possible closure whilst checking. Check for splits/cracks in handle. Check blade straight and not cracked or damaged in any way. Check sharpness of blade (using thumb horizontally to feel drag). Check moving mechanisms not stiff or damaged.
PPE needed (and for whom):	Gloves to be worn with secateurs at all times. Gloves not needed for Loppers.
Ratio Adult/Child:	1:1 (this ratio can be increased at the decision of the forest school leader depending upon the skill level of the users).
Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	None
Safe body stance:	Working in a "blood bubble" - 2 arms and a tool distance away from each other; Ensure that there is no over-reaching and the user is on level ground.
Safe action:	Ensure user has no jewellery/scarves hair dangling. Ensure the blood bubble is length of arm and tool length. Loppers - Ensure when using, the blades are open fully with the curved face facing upwards and the user cuts as far into crotch of the blades for maximum leverage using two handing. Ensure when working in pairs to cut wood that children are at 90° angle.
How to clean:	Clean and all working parts oiled. Clean away from the body.

Storage:	Store in clean, dry tool box. In locked storage when not being used.
<b>Tool Handling Policy - Mallet</b>	
Tool used for:	Correct purpose: e.g. hammering in pegs to secure shelter, hammering A frame into ground,
Transporting to FS:	In a secure tool box/bag. Carry down by side holding handle.
Safety Checks:	Visual observation of tool by Forest School Leader; Check for splits/cracks in handle. Check metal pin which joins mallet head and handle intact. Grasp handle and head and twist to ensure no movement. Check head not cracked or damaged in any way. Ensure user has no gloves on or jewellery/scarves/hair dangling
PPE needed (and for whom):	None
Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	None.
Ratio Adult/Child	1:1 (this ratio can be increased at the decision of the Forest school leader, depending upon the skill level of the users).
Safe Body Stance:	Move to the correct height. Get into 3 point stance if hammering low. If standing have legs apart. Blood bubble - ensure nobody in front or behind in your blood bubble, the safe zones are to the sides.
Safe action:	Use the mallet ensuring to keep it straight/level in up and down motion. Keep hand holding item being hammered safely out of the way. Hold the mallet at the end of the handle to ensure maximum force but if struggling move hand closer to the head making smaller movements.
How to clean:	Wipe with a dry cloth to remove any debris.
Storage:	Store in dry conditions in locked storage when not being used.
<b>Storm Kettle Policy</b>	
<b>The 'Storm Kettle' is a formidably efficient, portable device for boiling water outdoors using twigs and other natural combustible materials.</b>	
Safety precaution:	ALWAYS Remove cork and fill kettle with cold water. ALWAYS have bucket of cold water and fire blanket available. Follow fire policy.
Safe sitting:	Clear ground of litter and hazards and ensure ground is level. Set up grid method of twigs around storm kettle.

	<p>Then set up seating as fire plan with seating 2 metres away from kettle.</p> <p>Children should not be left unsupervised with a storm kettle.</p> <p>Children should remain seated.</p> <p>If they need to leave the area, they step over back of seating and walk around - not within the inner circle.</p>
Adult/Child Ratios:	Minimum of 1:6.
How to add fuel:	Children can feed the fire with one-to-one supervision but they must have been shown how to do so safely. (stick held at the end and dropped in from the side; hand should never be placed over the top of the kettle)
Instructions on how to safely lift kettle once boiled:	Once the kettle is boiled lift off using two hands and holding the handles to the sides, NOT at the top. PPE in the form of gauntlets may be worn as further protection. Only adults to remove and lift kettle once boiled.
Instructions on how to safely pour:	Hold the handle with one hand and with the other hold the cork on the chain and tilt. Ensure cups are on level ground and not being held by others when pouring hot liquid.
How to extinguish:	Remove kettle from pan. Pour on water into pan to extinguish. Then empty embers and spread out. Sprinkle on water and feel with the back of hand, continue adding water until cold. Then spread out cold embers around woodland and cover back with leaf litter to leave no trace.
<b>Tool Handling Policy - Bowsaw</b>	
Tool used for:	Sawing up pieces of wood for various purposes; e.g. tree cookies, wood for den building/whittling. Triangular Bowsaw good for coppicing. NOTE: two types of blades - Peg tooth (regular shaped teeth) used for dead wood/both but Raker tooth blade for living wood only.
Transporting to FS:	In a secure box/bag with blade guards on. Carry down by sides.
Safety checks:	Visual inspection by forest school leader. Check metal handle for wear/damage/bends/cracks. Check teeth of blades for damage. DO NOT CHECK SHARPNESS OF BLADE BY TOUCHING - only by using. If blunt throw away safely do not get sharpened as not worth it.
PPE needed (and for whom):	Gloves to be worn on non-working hand.
Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	Advisable to have bow saws with knuckle protectors.

Ratio Adult/Child	1:1 (initially this can be increased based on trust and skill level decision with F/S leader).
Safe body stance:	Working in a “blood bubble” - 2 arms and a tool distance away from each other;
Safe action:	Draw the saw towards you initially 3 or 4 times (less likely to jump out) to create a groove in the wood. Use long strokes and pull the saw rather than push. Set up children to support by holding wood, rather than rotating or the wood falling to the floor. Ensure keep looking down the length of the saw to keep the cut straight and level.
How to clean:	Clean using an oily paintbrush.
Storage:	In dry conditions with blade guard on. In locked storage.
<b>Tool Handling Policy - Fixed Blade Knife</b>	
Tool used for:	Whittling sticks; ideal for hazel, sweet chestnut, sycamore. NOTE: yew, laurel and laburnum may be whittled but must not be cooked as they contain toxins.
Transporting to FS:	Secure box with knives in sheaths.
Safety Checks:	Visual inspection by Forest School Leader. Check along the blade of the knife for dinks, cracks. Check the blade is not wobbly. Check no movement in handle. Check sharpness of blade using thumb horizontally (not vertically!)
PPE needed (and for whom):	Glove to be worn on non-working hand.
Additional Safety Equipment to be used:	To identify unusable tools with bright electrical tape to alert others the tool is unsafe to use and remove from box to be repaired.
Ratio Adult/Child:	1:1 (but can be adapted later built on trust and confidence of tool users - decision made by Forest school leader)
Safe Body Stance:	Working in a “blood bubble” - 2 arms and a tool distance away from each other; Work to your right, blade away from yourself and to the right of the thigh. The position must be safe, stable and secure.
Safe action:	Model first - Knife direction away from body. Fist grip on knife, keep knife initially vertical. Then when bark stripped, angle knife (smaller angle easier). Use the part of the blade closest to the handle. Always sheath when not in use.
How to clean:	Use a sharpening stone and oil and rub in a circular motion. Clean/Wipe over all working parts with an oily rag. Store in dry, locked storage.
Storage:	Store in clean and dry conditions with knives in sheaths. In tool box in locked storage.

# Emergency Script

## REQUESTING ATTENDANCE BY THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

1. Dial 999 and ask for the emergency service. Speak slowly and clearly and be ready to repeat any information.

Telephone number: school 01497 820860

Location details: Clyro Church in Wales Primary School, Clyro, Via Hereford, HR3 5LE.

Grid Ref: SO 21165 43408, Grid Reference (6 figure) SO211434.

Vehicular access: Main entrance, round the back of the school, at the bottom of the school field.

1. Give a brief description of the problem (for example, if you are requesting an ambulance, give a description of the injury or illness).

2. State the ambulance will be met at the main entrance by a member of staff.

The nearest landing site for the Air Ambulance is in the main school playing field.

## Casualty Monitoring Card.

Time (24 hour clock)					
Pulse	Rate (per min)				
	Character				
Breathing	Rate (per min)				
	Character				
Temperature	Warm/dry				
	Hot/wet				
	Hot/dry				
	Cold/wet				
	Cold/dry				

All accidents/incidents are recorded using the forms within the appendices, according to the Powys and the school's usual Health & Safety Policy

## Clyro Church in Wales Primary School First Aid Record



Name	Date	Time	Class	Description of what happened	Witnesses	Treatment Given	Signed