

# Forest School and Outdoor Learning Policy/Handbook



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Prepared by	Alison Morgan
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**Together, we nurture, inspire and achieve**

## PURPOSE

Forest School is an approach which originated from Scandinavia. It is a unique educational experience which promotes many different skills and ideas such as raising self-esteem, health, wellbeing, confidence, emotional intelligence and team work. At Myton Park Primary School, we believe that it is an important part of a child's development to experience play and learning in an outdoor environment.

This policy gives guidance to all stakeholders on our approach. For the purposes of this policy, Forest School includes 'outdoor learning'.






## Forest School Vision

At Myton Park Primary School, we want our children to be resilient, independent and curious. Our belief is that by learning in a stimulating outdoor environment, pupils can nurture their social, emotional and intellectual wellbeing.

Myton Park is committed to creating, over time, a forest school curriculum which has learning, nature and inclusion at its heart. This journey began in September 2024 in our Early Years Foundation Stage.

Our youngest pupils have the opportunity to explore nature on the school grounds in a child-centred way. They learn about plants, creatures, the seasons and so on and develop compassion, empathy and an intrinsic love of the outdoors.

Our Early Years Ecology Curriculum objectives of:

-  learning to care for our world,
-  our impact on the environment,
-  wellbeing,
-  responsibility and
-  developing communication and vocabulary in a natural environment,

encompass all of these ambitions.






## Legislation and Forest School

Legislation of importance to Forest School includes the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This act makes it a statutory that an employer has a duty to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare at work of their employees (in the case of schools, adults and children) and any equipment used by them, and that employees are responsible for the Health and Safety of themselves and others they may be affected by their acts. The Children's Act 1989, makes it

important to consider adult ratios for all activities, equal opportunities and access, clear communication with parents and DSB checks for staff and regular volunteers.






## Myton Park Primary School Forest School Guidance

### Health and safety/safeguarding

-  The forest school area will be developed on the school site in discussion with the Headteacher (Alison Morgan) and trained forest school practitioners (Natalie Kush; Claire Lester). It will be regularly checked for hazards and risks at the start of forest school sessions.
-  Maintenance of the pond on site is the responsibility of the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust (until 2050). They will visit annually and provide any required maintenance/advice.
-  There is a pond risk assessment in place which has been sourced from the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust and adapted to meet our needs at Myton Park Primary School. A copy of this is attached to the pond fence. A further copy will remain with Forest School resources. This will be shared with all staff. Where specific higher risk activities take place, e.g. lighting a campfire, use of sharp tools, an individual risk assessment will be taken. These sessions will be supported by fully trained Forest School practitioners (L3 equivalent).
-  A small first aid kit and emergency medicines must be taken into forest school each session. These means that, where there are minor injuries, they can be resolved efficiently without taking too much time away from teaching and learning.
-  In the event of a lockdown, an assessment of immediate risk will be taken and if necessary, children will be taken into school via the nearest entrance. Where there is a need for evacuation, children will join the rest of the school on the playground (fire drill) or at another evacuation point as agreed. With this in mind, teachers must take the school's mobile phone with them to each forest school session. This is held in the school office.

### Curriculum intent and implementation

Children will have regular forest school lessons. These will usually replace a designated PE session and will always be supervised by adults (ratios within government guidance). Class teachers will be sufficiently trained to deliver forest school lessons to their own class.

-  When these sessions are planned, parents will be informed so that children can come to school appropriately dressed. Parents should expect that their child(ren) get dirty during Forest School Lessons. During the winter, they will need to wear waterproof clothing/old, warm coats and wellies.
-  A forest school/outdoor learning curriculum will be developed over time. However, it is recognised that children will need free choice opportunities built into this.
-  Learning will be recorded in a floor book. All staff should adhere to parental consents for photographs if any are to be uploaded to Facebook.
-  The school's Behaviour Policy will be adhered to at all times and any children posing a safeguarding risk due to unsafe behaviour will be sent back into school to work in another class.
-  In forest school, all children and adults are treated equally and provision will be made to ensure that all children can participate fully. This is in line with the school's policy on equality and inclusion and SEND.

The following policies should be read in conjunction with this policy:

All school safeguarding policies

Behaviour Policy

Inclusion Policy

Health and Safety Policy

First Aid Policy

Early Years Policy

Lockdown Procedures

SEND policy

Myton Park Primary School Pond Risk Assessment