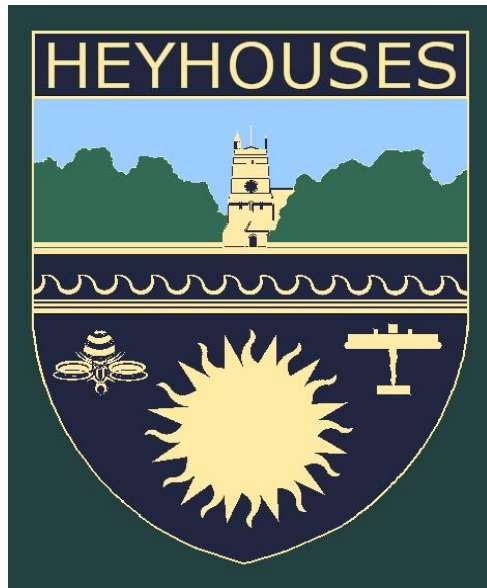


Heyhouses C of E Primary School

Wild at Heart Forest School Policy



Review Date: April 2018
Next review : April 2019

Contents

- Introduction
- Purpose & Aims
- Environmental Considerations and Conservation
- Legislation
- Links with existing School Policies
- Health and Safety
- Emergency Action Plan
- Risk Assessments and Risk management
- Policy and Procedures for Lighting Fires
- Communication
- The Role of the Wild at Heart (Forest School) Leader
- Wild at Heart Rules
- Routines and Procedures for Wild at Heart
- Essential Equipment for Wild at Heart
- Clothing Requirements
- Toileting Consideration
- Insurance Requirements

Introduction

Forest School is a unique method of Outdoor Education that allows children to develop confidence, independence, self-esteem and awareness and knowledge of the natural environment. This fully supports our Mission Statement:

“We seek to enable children to reach their full potential, educationally, spiritually and socially so that they may become all that God has created them to be.”

This is achieved by setting small achievable tasks. The child is never put in a position where he/she will fail so success is attained. It is a child centred and child led programme that provides the opportunity for the children to use their personal learning style to complete their chosen tasks.

Purpose/Aims of Wild at Heart

- To provide children with experiences that encourages an appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.
- To learn to respect and care for their own local environment.
- To abide by rules and set standards of behaviour, to work cooperatively in groups and to respect each other.
- Develop children's self-esteem and self confidence through the setting of small achievable tasks.

Environmental Considerations and Conservation

One of the principles of Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. The children are taught about respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both the children and adults are encouraged to respect their environment and to be aware of conservation issues of the wild area around them.

The aim is to promote respect for wildlife, which will be achieved through detailed session plans, evaluation and careful reference to our Woodland Management Plan and Ecological Impact Assessment. If appropriate, reclaimed, recycled and sustainable resources will be used to maintain and develop our forest school site.

Encouraging children to care for the environment is an essential part of Wild at Heart. In order to encourage the children to look after the site we will always leave it tidy and never damage anything growing in it. We will only collect things that are on the ground and leave the area as we found it when we leave. The Wild at Heart Leader will monitor the site so that it does not become overused and an alternative area will be found and risk assessed if necessary.

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 risk assessments carried out for Wild at Heart are written with the Health and Safety of all participants in mind; children, volunteers and members of staff.

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. Routines and procedures at Wild at Heart are developed with reference to this act and safeguarding practices.

Heyhouses School Policies and Wild at Heart

Staff attending Wild at Heart sessions should be familiar with the following school policies:

- *Health and Safety Policy
- *First Aid policy,
- *Risk Assessment Policy and Risk Assessments particular to WAH
- *Asthma Policy if asthmatics are attending sessions
- *Food Policy
- *Safeguarding Policy
- *Equality & Inclusion Policy
- *Behaviour Policy

Paper copies are included in the back of the school copy of the Wild at Heart Handbook, kept in the Wild at Heart Coordinator's File.

Particular attention is paid to the following areas:

Health and Safety

The Wild at Heart curriculum supports children to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will encourage early risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

A site risk assessment has been carried out and a copy is held in the Wild at Heart Coordinator's File in school.

The Wild at Heart Leader has an up-to-date certificate in ITC Outdoor First Aid and is in charge of first aid arrangement. All staff have first aid training. A first aid kit is taken on all sessions. In the case of an accident requiring further assistance, an emergency contact form is kept in the Office and a mobile phone is carried. The school will contact the parents.

Fires are a valuable part of the Forest School experience but will only be lit according to the procedures below.

Safeguarding

Wild at Heart sessions are led by a trained Forest School Leader, supported by members of staff and parent volunteers.

Everyone involved in WAH is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of sites and activities. Staff and volunteers are made aware of the relevant school policies and procedures and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in them.

All Heyhouses staff and regular volunteers have current CRB checks.

Any concerns about a child's physical or mental well-being will be shared with our named Safeguarding Officers and a Cause for Concern sheet will be filled in as soon as possible, so that our school's Safeguarding Policy can then be followed. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Any concerns should only be shared with those who need to know such as the class teacher who can then ensure the correct channels are then informed.

Equality and Inclusion

During Wild at Heart all persons are treated equally. We aim to provide a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.

Behaviour

At Wild at Heart we operate within the Behaviour Policy of Heyhouses. We praise and reward good behaviour using the established school systems. When a child's behaviour threatens the well being of him/herself or others, and he/she does not respond to a verbal warning, he/she may be returned to school.

Medical and Emergency Contact Details

All Medical Care Plans and Emergency contact details are held in the School Office.

Emergency Action Plan

This EAP (Emergency Action Plan) is kept in the top of the Happy Sack at all times

In the event of an emergency and a child needs to be taken to hospital a member of staff (TA) would direct the emergency services to the casualty, Julie Thornton, as ITC First Aider, would attend to the casualty until the Emergency Services arrive. The casualty would be accompanied to hospital by a member of school staff. The Class teacher or Forest School Assistant (Helene Kirkman) would oversee the rest of the group are counted and prepared to return to school.

The school office would be informed after dialling the Emergency Services and assistance to return back to school requested if necessary. The adult accompanying the casualty would return to school once the child was in the care of their parents/carers.

In the event of an adult needing emergency attention it must be judged whether they need to be accompanied or support may be required. Decisions taken must ensure the safety of the children within the group and accompanying adults.

In the event of the Forest School Leader needing emergency assistance it would be expected for the Class teacher or Helene Kirkman to return the children to school and another adult would stay with the casualty.

Accident and incident forms would be completed back at school.

Minor injuries would be treated as they would within school and recorded and reported to parents and carers in line with school policy.

| | |
|--------------------|--------|
| Emergency Services | 999 |
| Junior Office | 722014 |
| Victoria Hospital | 300000 |

Location of Forest School Site:

Heyhouses School, Clarendon Rd North, FY8 3EE

Risk Assessments and Risk Management

Risk assessments are in place to cover the following:

- Wild at Heart Site Assessment
- Wild at Heart sessions: including Sensory Activities, Minibeasts and Shelter building
- Tool use
- Campfire Activities

These Risk Assessments can be found in the Wild at Heart Handbook and in the Coordinator's File.

Safety Sweep and checklists

The Forest School leader will carry out a thorough sweep of the site for hazards and risks before the group enter the site and appropriate measures will be put in place, e.g. the removal of an object, or warning the group of specific dangers related to the site. The safety sweep will be recorded on a safety sweep form and kept in the Wild at Heart file.

Policy and Procedures for Use of Tools and Equipment at Wild At Heart

Tools and safe use of tools are an important part of Wild at Heart. Their use will be carefully managed by the Wild at Heart Leader with an area of the site set aside for tool use.

- Introduction to each tool will be by an official 'Tool talk'. (These can be found in the Wild at Heart File).
- Good practice will be demonstrated by the Wild at Heart Leaders at all times.
- Tools will be introduced to the children only when the Wild at Heart Leader feels the children are ready.
- All tools will be used on a 1:1 adult to child ratio when using them.
- Risk assessments of tool use are carried out in addition to other Wild at Heart activities and reviewed on a regular basis.
- It is not expected for any other adult attending Wild at Heart to use tools with children, only the Wild at Heart Leader.
- All tools will be returned to the tool bag and locked away at the end of each session. This is the Wild at Heart Leaders responsibility.
- All resources and equipment are checked regularly.
- Any unsafe, worn out, dirty or damaged equipment is repaired and cleaned, or replaced.

Policy and Procedures for Lighting Fires at Wild at Heart

Before lighting a fire at Forest School, the following should be in place:
Children must have a secure knowledge of log circle safety:

**Stand behind the log
Step over and sit down on log
Stand up, turn around and step over log
Children are not allowed to cross the circle or step into the circle**

The agreement of Mrs Hodgson, Head Teacher.

In addition to the other resources, we will take a large container full of water.

When lighting a fire:

- Only a trained Forest School Practitioner (Julie Thornton) will take responsibility for the fire. This will be their sole responsibility for the session. They shall be responsible for lighting it, manning it while it is burning and putting it out at the end of the session.
- The fire shall be contained within the area marked out within the centre of the log circle. The ground around shall be cleared of flammable material.
- Check for low overhanging trees.
- Have a container of water beside the fire to put it out and deal with burns.
- The flames of the fire should never reach higher than the knee.
- While the fire is being lit, the children will be engaged in activities elsewhere.
- The fire will be extinguished before the session ends.
- NO fires will be lit during peak fire risk periods.

All adults are aware of the following when cooking and eating at Wild at Heart:

- Everyone should wipe their hands before handling food and drink.
- All foods are stored in air tight containers.
- Only clean equipment is used.
- Everyone is aware of any special dietary needs of the children who have food allergies and any medication and copies of Care Plans will be in the Happy Sack
- Food will be cooked correctly.
- All equipment and waste is cleared away.

The Forest School Leader will follow the Effective Group Management Procedures outlined in the Wild at Heart Handbook.

The role of the Wild at Heart Leaders

- The Wild at Heart Leader is a trained Level 3 Forest School Practitioner and holds an up to date ITC Outdoor First Aid certificate. They are responsible for organising the planning and running all Forest School sessions.
- The Forest School leader has the safety of the children uppermost at all times. The leader will carry out a detailed safety check before each session and comply with health and safety risk assessments.
- The leader will ensure that all documentation is relevant and up to date.
- The leader will carry an emergency pack at all times.
- The leader is responsible for all equipment and will ensure that it is checked before use and returned to the resource area after use.
- The Forest School leader will keep an accident book and keep parents fully informed of any incidents that may occur during a session, eg, trips, falls, stings, etc.

Designated Person Responsibility for each Wild at Heart session

Overall responsibility for the session- Julie Thornton

(Risk assessments, safety sweep, and essential equipment, rucksack, planning, observations and next steps for learning).

Some FS and KS1 sessions will be taken by the class teacher after training, but they will follow planning from Julie Thornton and will **not** be allowed any tool use or Campfires.

Communication

Wild at Heart takes place in KS2 on Thursdays and Fridays. KS1 times are agreed with class teachers. Information is sent home to parents before the start of a series of sessions.

Wild at Heart Rules

- Keep your hands away from your mouth
- Leave things to grow
- Keep within the set boundaries

Routines and Procedures For Wild at Heart

Preparation - The Wild at Heart Leader (Julie Thornton) will do a sweep of the site prior to the weekly sessions.

J Thornton will check the Happy sack contains all essential items. The Emergency Action Plan is kept in the top of the Happy sack and all Adults are aware of this. First Aid kit, inhalers, wipes and spare hats and gloves (children's and adults) are kept in the Happy sack. The tool bag, water containers and other equipment will be taken as appropriate. The WAH Designated Leader will carry the rucksack to the site.

Waterproofs will be taken to the classroom prior to session. Spare wellies are kept in the WAH shed.

Prior to the session children will be toileted, put on their waterproofs. WAH safety rules will be shared with the group. Children will put wellies on the outside the classroom door and walk in pairs to the site.

During the session children participate in a variety of activities which are totally inclusive, thus catering for all ability levels. They are taught a variety of woodland skills through practical hands on activities. They also learn how to light fires safely. The children learn the care and safe use of a wide range of tools. This is a tightly supervised activity on a 1:1 ratio of adult to children. It is introduced gradually in small steps. Children are encouraged to listen attentively to instructions and to take responsibility for their actions. This is achieved by games that also encourage respect for the environment.

Back at school children will remove wellies out doors or standing on sheeting (if very wet), before entering the classroom.

After the session Equipment will be washed and stored as appropriate. Waterproofs will be dried and hung on rails. Flasks and water containers will be emptied and cleaned out. Tools (if taken) will be cleaned and locked away in the WAH shed. The essential equipment Happy sack will be put away and any items used replaced.

Cancelling Wild at Heart

WAH may need to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions, e.g. high winds, or blizzards. Adapted classroom activities will take place instead.

Wild at Heart may not be able to go ahead if there are not enough adults to accompany us. If no replacement adult can be found then the session will be cancelled. The session may also be

cancelled if the Wild at Heart Leader (Julie) or Assistant Leader (Helene Kirkman/Jason Heavyside) is unable to attend. Campfires will not take place without a Qualified Forest School Leader - Julie Thornton: Level 3 Forest School Practitioner.

Essential Equipment Needed at Wild at Heart sessions

A rucksack - The Happy Sack - containing the following essential items will always accompany the group:

- EAP (Emergency Action Plan)
- Mobile phone
- Medical Care Plans
- Newspaper
- Matches (Campfire sessions only)
- Wet wipes
- Protective gloves
- Sun cream
- First Aid Kit
- Inhalers
- Carry bag for dirty / wet items
- Spare hat & gloves for children and adults

We would also take a ground sheet and string to erect a shelter as needed.

Clothing Requirements For Wild at Heart

The following clothing requirements are for everyone attending a Forest School session (even adult volunteers).

- Woolly hat/sunhat
- Gloves
- Jacket/waterproof coat
- Fleece/sweatshirt
- Waterproof trousers
- Spare socks
- Stout shoes/wellies/boots

Toileting considerations

All children will visit the toilet before leaving the Classroom. Any children needing the toilet during the session will use the nearest school toilets. KS2 children are able to go unattended, KS1 and FS must be accompanied by an adult.

This Wild at Heart Policy has been written in agreement with the Head Teacher, Staff and Governors of Heyhouses School. It will be reviewed annually.