

Hartford Infant School Forest School Policy



VISION AND VALUES

We believe in bringing out the best in everyone.

We want all our children to be curious, confident learners who can communicate effectively.

We want all children to be;

- Articulate, using a rich vocabulary
- Independent, active learners who are self-motivated
- Happy, with a love of learning
- Resilient problem solvers
- Respectful members of the community, with high standards of behaviour

We offer high standards of teaching and learning in an enabling, inclusive environment where each child is nurtured and valued as an individual and encouraged to reach their potential.

We value six fundamental characteristics of learning that encourage the children to be the very best version of themselves.

These are our **Hartford Heroes** which focus on:

- aiming high
- involvement
- perseverance
- problem solving
- reflection
- teamwork.

CURRICULUM INTENT

At Hartford Infant School (HIS) we have a bold and engaging curriculum that develops the following **core skills**:

- Curiosity (question, observe, enquire, understand)
- Confidence (resilient, independent, reflective, self-motivated, problem solver, resourceful, self-regulate)
- Communication (read, write, represent, reason, speak, listen, present, collaborate)

We deliver a skills-led curriculum, which is underpinned by knowledge. We teach the foundations children need in order to make connections across year groups and subjects, which will allow them to be successful citizens. We believe that all children have a right to a broad, balanced and relevant education which provides continuity and progression and takes individual differences and barriers into account. We aim for all pupils to develop the skills and knowledge they need in order to succeed across the curriculum and reach their potential. We will provide an engaging and accessible curriculum, relevant to our community, promoting our school vision and values, in order to develop a lifelong love for learning.

INTRODUCTION

At Hartford Infant School we aim to provide a bold and engaging curriculum where there is a consistency of approach, standards and expectations. As part of our physical education (PE) curriculum we enhance children's learning with a weekly Forest School afternoon/morning, which seeks to promote imagination, independence, perseverance, risk taking and confidence through a holistic approach in the outside environment, in addition to healthy, active lifestyles.

Forest School provides a child centred approach to learning and an opportunity for children to develop their love and understanding of the natural world. At Hartford Infant School our school site is used for weekly sessions, and clear boundaries and agreements are established with the children.

AIMS OF FOREST SCHOOL AT HARTFORD INFANT SCHOOL

- To provide children with unique experiences that encourages an appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.
- To learn to respect and to care for their own local environment.
- To develop children's self-esteem and self-confidence through the setting of small achievable tasks in a safe, stimulating and positive environment.
- To develop levels of confidence, independence, resilience and perseverance enabling children to achieve challenges set and to become committed and reflective learners.
- To promote real life learning and a development of life skills, where risk taking is facilitated and promoted in a controlled and purposeful environment.
- To provide a holistic and child centred environment in which children are encouraged to set their own pace and challenges, learning in the style that suits them best.
- To abide by rules (agreements) and set standards of behaviour.
- To work individually and cooperatively in groups, developing a mutual respect for each other. This is line with our Hartford Heroes.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

At the start of each Forest School session the leader must ensure that the adults are familiar with the current risk assessment and emergency procedures. As the Forest School sessions will mainly take place on the school site, school policies for Fire and Emergencies will be adhered to. In addition, the Forest School radio and a radio from the classroom will be taken to allow full contact with the whole school in the event of an emergency. Emergency information relating to individual children is stored centrally in the school office and all emergency medication, such as inhalers, will be taken outside.

In the case of a major injury:

- Keep calm. The children are more likely to remain calm if adults appear to be in control. If necessary, remove the danger, or the person from the danger.
- Stay with the casualty whilst the other children are called and make their way back to the log circle. A member of staff will take responsibility for the children while the leader joins the casualty.
- A trained first aider will carry out necessary First Aid, whilst delegating someone to call for further assistance if necessary using the schools radio system.
- The incident must be reported to the SLT and recorded on the schools incident report forms. First aid administered will also need to be recorded in the Forest School first aid log book.

Minor Injuries:

- All minor injuries must be recorded in the first aid log book and reported to the FS leader/assistant. First aid (including plasters) must only be applied by a member of staff with a current first aid certificate. See first aid policy.

FIRST AID

The Forest School leader has an up-to-date certificate in Outdoor First Aid and is in charge of first aid arrangements. All staff who have first aid training can administer first aid. The Forest School Leader/assistant must be informed of any first aid treatment provided and this is recorded in the Forest School first aid log book. In accordance with the school's first aid policy, children will take home a Linton white slip detailing the treatment given. A first aid kit is taken outside for each session and is stored in a green first aid backpack. The appointed person for first aid at work must be informed of any additional first items required. See first aid policy.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Forest School encourages children to explore risk in a controlled and safe environment. As Forest School practitioners we must assess the hazards and the likelihood of such hazards causing harm and weigh this up against the knowledge

and enjoyment that could be gained from taking appropriate risks. The Forest School Leader/assistant have written and continue to review a number of risk assessments. Risk assessments will be carried out before each session and for the use of all tools and equipment. All staff are to ensure that they have read and are fully aware of all risks before starting a Forest School session and hazards and risks are shared with the children at the start of each session. Risk assessments are kept in the Forest School file and each staff member/volunteer has been made aware of such policies. These include;

- The **site** of the Forest School
- Individual Risk Assessments for **tools** e.g. bow saw, potato peelers, knives.
- **Activity** risk assessments, if required. E.g. tree climbing, den building.

CLOTHING

Forest School sessions will take place in warm, wet and cold conditions throughout the year and it is essential that children, and adults, are dressed appropriately. Children must wear warm clothing, wellington boots and waterproof all in one suits (provided) in wet conditions, and cool clothing and a sun hat in the hot sunshine. Children are responsible for dressing and undressing themselves, but may need support or good modelling at times. There are additional wellington boots and warm layers in the Forest School clothing box for those children who are not appropriately dressed for the weather conditions.

TOOLS

Children and adults will be trained in the use of each tool before they use it, according to the risk assessment for using tools carried out by the Forest School Leader/assistant. Tools will be counted in and out at the start and end of each session. Tools will be stored safely and kept out of the reach of children. They will be cleaned after each use to prolong their life, broken and damaged tools will not be used and must be reported to the Forest School Leader. Children and adults will be informed of rules, safety and how to use before they use. Tool use will be on a ratio of 1:1.

FIRES

A Forest School Leader must always be present when a fire is lit and fires must never be left unattended. There must always be water available to extinguish the fire and this will be extinguished before the session ends. The fire will be lit in the fire pit in the centre of the log circle, where no overhanging branches are present and the ground has been cleared of leaf litter. A risk assessment for use of fires has been written and hazards and risks must be shared with all children and staff before lighting a fire.

Children will be reminded of the fire pit procedures at each and every visit.

- Walk behind the log seats and stand behind the log
- Step over and sit down on the log seat
- Stand up, turn around and step over the log
- Children are not allowed to cross the inner circle (adults should be role models of this)

HYGIENE

Children are able to access their usual year group toilets during Forest School sessions and must inform an adult before leaving the site boundaries to use these. Hands must be washed before and after using the toilet, and before eating. Children should be reminded of the 'no hands on face' rule. Hands are washed when returning to the classroom at the end of a forest school session.

BEHAVIOUR

At Forest School we operate within the Behaviour Policy of the school. When a child's behaviour threatens the well-being of him/herself or others, and he/she does not respond to a verbal warning, the schools Policy for Behaviour must be followed. Agreements are made with the children as 'rules' for Forest School sessions and are communicated verbally with the children at the start of each session. These agreements are also recorded and children can be reminded of these agreements as and when necessary.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

CURRICULUM

Throughout the whole school cross curricular approach to implementing the National Curriculum, opportunities exist to extend and promote outdoor learning. Teachers seek to take advantage of all these opportunities within our Enquiry each term and Forest School and outdoor learning is linked, whenever possible, to the current whole school Theme.

PLANNING

The Forest School Leader/Assistant is responsible for planning Forest School sessions. This planning is shared with all staff supporting or leading Forest School sessions, under the guidance of the Forest School Leader. National curriculum links are highlighted, and plans must be annotated to identify success and possible next steps to inform future planning. All planning, risk assessments and information is in the Forest School folder and shared with all staff involved in Forest School sessions. This is saved on the school server.

ORGANISATION OF FOREST SCHOOL SESSIONS AND THE FOREST SCHOOL SITE

SESSION OUTLINE

Each class participates in weekly Forest School sessions over the whole academic year. This session is one afternoon or morning per week and is based on the school site. Sessions are between 1 hour 30 minutes and 2 hours long.

Sessions begin and end with a whole group focus in the circle of logs and children are encouraged to question, reflect and communicate their ideas and feelings during this time. Children and adults must adhere to the rules concerning the log circle and as a habit never walk across the log circle but step over the log and sit down, walking around the outside of the circle to access other areas.

BOUNDARIES AND AGREEMENTS

Agreements are established with the children and as part of the weekly introduction, children are reminded of these. Clear boundaries are set with the children and communicated verbally, using rope and signs to mark the area visually. Children are allowed to explore the Forest School site independently but must inform an adult of when visiting the toilets. See Appendix 1 for a map of the school Forest School site.

RATIOS

The ratio for Forest School sessions on site is at least 1:15, although when using tools and participating in activities of a greater risk this ratio changes significantly. The ratio for using tools is 1:1. Please ensure that when using tools, the risk assessment for such tool use is read thoroughly and the correct ratio is put in place.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Forest School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos. Wherever possible, environmentally friendly products and recycled materials are used when appropriate. At Hartford Infant School good practice is modelled by adults showing children that the world in which we live in should be cared for. This includes adhering to the Forest School site management plan.

The newly planted woodland will be maintained to ensure the survival of all flora and fauna and the site will be managed, in accordance with the site 3 year management plan. As part of Forest school, all litter will be removed and branches at eye level will be removed or highlighted to reduce risk of injury to children and adults. As the site is close to houses, children will be encouraged to be caring towards our neighbours and try to minimise the amount noise produced.

RESOURCES

All resources for Forest School are stored centrally in the PPA room/Year 1 shed or on site. A list of all Forest School resources is available from the Forest School Leader. Where necessary, additional resources are borrowed from curriculum resources in the designated areas, and must be replaced at the end of Forest School sessions. The Forest School site itself provides an abundance of natural resources and includes an area of young woodland, established trees and plants, and moveable pieces of wood. Please ensure that when using tools, the risk assessment for such use is shared with all staff and volunteers.

SEND Learners

At HIS we will provide a secure and accessible environment, within which all our children can flourish. Teachers will have high expectations for all children and will meet individual needs as they arise. This bespoke provision may mean making changes to the environment, methods of communication or resources utilised. Staff will be deployed to support children in the most appropriate manner and outside agency advice will be followed. In our lessons we will help pupils develop the skills and knowledge needed to succeed across the curriculum and reach their full potential. Our teachers recognise that children all begin at different starting points, each child's progress is unique will be tracked rigorously and celebrated. Our children will become, to the best of their ability, inquisitive and independent learners, prepared to challenge themselves and try new experiences on their journey. All staff will work with rigour and determination to prevent any form of learned dependence. All children will demonstrate tolerance towards each other and be inclusive of all groups within their learning, play and social time.

Equal Opportunities

Equality of opportunity is a fundamental right for all children regardless of race, culture, gender or special educational needs. This policy is written for all and recognises that every child has equal opportunities. At Hartford Infant School we have high expectations of all pupils and of all groups of pupils. We carry out data analysis of pupil performance identifying areas of development for all pupils and groups of pupils, comparing their progress with national expectations and are committed to taking action where underachievement is identified. We recognise and value all forms of achievement.

MONITORING

The Forest School Leader, is responsible for updating this policy in line with any new developments in the school and new guidance. All staff are expected to follow the policy and the Leadership Team, following ongoing regular reviews of FS practice, will be responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of practice across the school, reporting regularly to the Governing Body.

Written: September 2018, updated July 2020.

Ratified by LGB:

Forest School Addendum July 2020

Following COVID-19 information, the following amendments will be made to Forest School (FS) sessions in September 2020:

1. All children and staff will wear appropriate clothing on designated FS days and will not change within school building. No red suits will be worn. Welly boots can be brought into school on relevant FS days and cleaned by parents. Welly boots will be put on outside and not inside the school building.
2. All FS volunteers will meet classes outside and not enter the school building and asked to socially distance where possible. All volunteers will receive an updated FS information guide.
3. All resources used during FS session will be cleaned thoroughly by staff at the end of the session. This will ensure that all resources are clean for the next class to use.
4. All children and adults will continue to wash hands when entering the school building to use toilets or at the end of a session. Staff and children must follow the schools risk assessment and hygiene measures in place.