



Forest School Handbook

“Springfield is a caring, supportive and innovative school where everyone is recognised and appreciated as an individual. The golden thread running through our vision is the mental health and wellbeing of our school community. By creating a safe, supportive and relational environment for all, we enable our children to be ambitious and to reach their full potential, so that they can take their place in their community and in the wider world.”

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SECTION 1 - THE FOREST SCHOOL ETHOS

1.1 What is a Forest School?

Forest School is a child-centred learning process. Regular sessions of play, exploration and supported risk-taking in a natural outdoor setting get children active and learning. Hands-on experience helps individual pupils to develop team working skills, improves their confidence and enables self-led learning of important life lessons. “Spring Forest complements and extends our work with individual learners, creating an environment where all pupils have more choice to initiate and drive their own learning and development, and to experience success on a regular basis.” (Mrs S Nasim, Headteacher)

Spring Forest aims to promote the holistic development of everyone involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.



1.1 Forest School Activities and Benefits for Pupils

The Forest School learning process supports and enhances the emotional health and mental wellbeing of those who spend time there. An analysis using Five Ways to Wellbeing - which are reflected in our Forest School outcomes - illustrates how the two are interlinked. (part of our WAS Wellbeing Award for Schools)

Activities for forest schools are numerous and diverse, but we should always be mindful that we are trying to create independent learners who are inspired to try out their own ideas, explore their own interests and to attempt new ideas.

Connect

The Forest School curriculum encourages pupils to learn how to work together and how to support each other. Groups of pupils share tools and collaborate on projects such as den building and they explore the outdoor space. As a result, their communication skills improve, and they make friends - improving their personal and social development. The forest school programme also promotes emotional intelligence - including self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and motivation. Good emotional intelligence enables children and young people to identify and manage their own and other people's emotions. <https://cpdonline.co.uk/knowledge-base/safeguarding/forest-schools/>

“My friends help me lots at Forest School.” - EYFS Pupil

“I love Forest School. I love it more than riding my bike!” - Year 4 Pupil

“I like seeing the changes that the seasons bring.” - Year 4 Pupil

Be Active

Many Forest School activities will help to improve a learner's physical stamina, and fine and gross motor skills. Outdoor activities may also focus on other physical skills such as balancing, climbing, and sensory skills. We assess pupils at the start of each year and the equipment and experience will be altered to meet the needs of each new cohort.

Forest School learners are usually more physically active than learners in a more traditional school setting. Parents of Forest School learners often report that their child's interest in woodland settings and the outside world transcends into their home life. This means children may also be more likely to be physically active at home.

<https://cpdonline.co.uk/knowledge-base/safeguarding/forest-schools/>

"I like being in Forest School - it makes me stronger." - EYFS Pupil

"I love being outdoors and playing outside." - Year 4 Pupil

"I like going on walks with my family." - Year 4 Pupil

Keep Learning

Forest School is a unique form of outdoor learning, with a play-based, child-led ethos that offers children regular opportunities to succeed and develop as people, through practical learning and hands-on activities in a natural setting. The children are allowed to take risks and explore, within a safe outdoor space and support from trained Forest School practitioners. Sessions are designed to stimulate each child's imagination, creativity, and desire to explore through activities involving natural materials such as green woodwork, shelter-building and natural art. Children learn how to assess problems and make their own decision about the best way to solve the problem - becoming more independent problem solvers. Learners and practitioners are encouraged to reflect to understand their achievements, learn to overcome obstacles and reflect on their experiences, thereby building resilience.

Each learner gets something different out of Forest School; it can improve confidence and self-belief, behaviour, physical and social skills, emotional wellbeing, language and communication, concentration, knowledge and understanding of the world.

Being in nature offers practical, sensory experiences that are suited to the preferred learning styles of many neurodivergent children. Sessions allow children to learn at their own pace but follow a loose structure with opportunities for adult-introduced activities, free play, snacks and reflection, so learners know what to expect. Open-ended resources such as magnifying glasses, binoculars, muddy play items, hammocks and tarps are available each session for children to play and explore with. Forest School leaders do not plan specific objectives for the group or stick to the national curriculum; rather they plan future activities by observing children's interests and actions during sessions. Child observation forms includes general mood, confidence with peers and leaders, engagement

in tasks, emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social skills and empathy), exceptional behaviour and a sliding scale for wellbeing and challenge/ engagement. <https://naee.org.uk/helping-sen-children-develop-life-skills-through-forest-school/>

“I have learnt new skills; I keep using them to do more and get better.” - EYFS Pupil

Take Notice

Children develop a awareness and instinctual respect for the natural world through the long term and regular opportunities to just 'be' in Spring Forest. Because of this fascination with the woodland, children are motivated to participate and concentrate over longer periods of time.

<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/forest-schools-impact-on-young-children-in-england-and-wales/>

Here are some of the things in Spring Forest that drew the attention of our pupils:-

“It is calm here.” - EYFS Pupil

“You can build more things. Because there are lots of sticks you have more choice of what to build.” - EYFS Pupil

“I like finding spiders now I am braver, now I go to Forest School.” - EYFS Pupil

Give

Over their time spent at Spring Forest, children tend to develop an interest in the natural surroundings and respect for the environment. This often forms the basis of a lifelong relationship with nature when they are likely to have a more positive impact on the environment eg caring for plants, litter, climate change.

<https://www.forestschooltraining.co.uk/forest-school/the-benefits/>

“I find it fun you get to explore and find out about natural things.” - EYFS Pupil

“It makes me feel really happy being outside collecting things in my wheelbarrow.” - EYFS Pupil

“Look! I collected the most litter. I love playing this game.” Year 4 Pupil

SECTION 2 -STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Staff Trained by our Forest School Provider

Caroline White - Qualified Level 3 Forest School Leader (FSL) - also Outdoor First Aid

Katie Wilson - Outdoor First Aid

Sarah Wilson - Outdoor First Aid

Jordan Coates - Paediatric First Aid

Imaani Mehdi - Paediatric First Aid

Volunteer Helpers

Volunteers are vital for the effective running of our Forest School. They often have talents, interests and knowledge about wildlife or growing. Volunteers also ensure that we can follow county guidelines regarding adult:child ratios Early Years Foundation Stage - Year 3 ratio is 1:6; Years 4 - 6 is 1:10. Additional adult support should be provided where appropriate for children who have disability or SEN needs.

Volunteers must always remain in sight of school staff and under no circumstances be left alone with a child.

All volunteers are provided with a handbook which outlines Forest School policies and procedures to adhere to. They will also be made aware of how these fit into other school policies namely - Health and Safety, security, medical administration, attendance, behaviour, child protection, equality, and visitor protocol, which can be accessed online on the school website or other formats including paper copies can be obtained from the Forest School Leader.

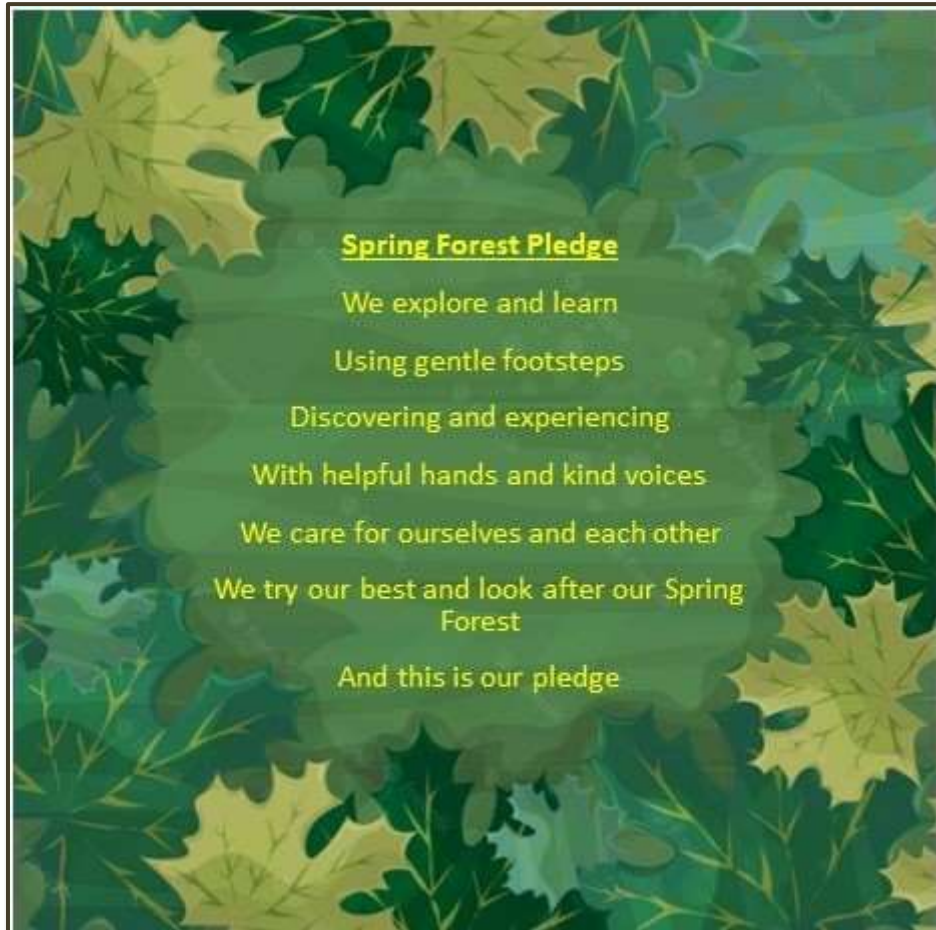
Staff and Volunteers must sign to say they have read, understand and will follow the handbook and all the policies and risk assessments. Failure to adhere to these policies and procedures will result in the volunteer no longer being accepted to work at Springfield.

See Forest School Volunteer Agreement - page 27

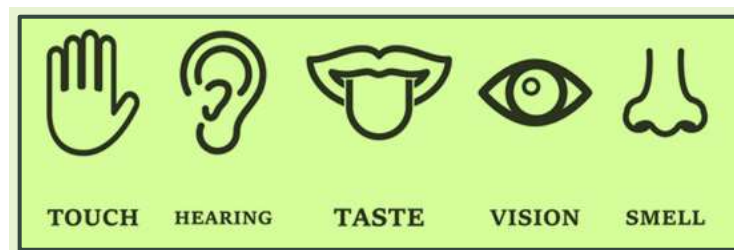
SECTION 3 - CHILDREN'S CODE OF CONDUCT

Start of Session Procedure

Pupils recite the pledge below before they start each Forest School session:



The Five Senses





Our Expectations

We will enter Spring Forest respectfully and know that when we are at forest school specific expectations are in place. We will explore, investigate, learn, and play in a manner that will not damage our forest environment within set boundaries. We understand that we share our forest school with plants and animals and that when we are in Spring Forest, we are sharing the environment with them.

The Fire Circle

We will not enter the fire circle perimeter or place items in it unless invited to do so by an adult. We will not run when passing it. If we wish to move around the fire to a new stool, we will step out of the circle perimeter, walk around the outside and step over the logs into our new seat. We will do this whether the fire is lit or unlit. (See Appendix A Fire Policy)



Using Tools

We will listen carefully when the Forest School Leader tells us about the tool that we will be using. We will follow the rules - using it correctly for its intended purpose, adopting correct body posture, and wearing recommended personal protective equipment. Because tools can be dangerous, we will work closely with an adult. We will return tools when they are not in use. (See Appendix B Tool Policy)





Picking up and playing with sticks

We can carry sticks shorter than our own arm's length, but we have to think carefully about how close we are to other children. Longer sticks may be dragged or carried by two of us with a person at either end. We will not throw sticks. We will not pull sticks from living trees. We can find short sticks on the woodland floor and longer sticks that are stacked and ready for use near where we build our dens.

Picking up and playing with stones

We like to make patterns and pictures with stones. We will pick up stones and move them. We will not throw stones as this could injure someone. We can drop them but we must check first to see whether it is safe to do so, i.e. what will the stone land on? After use, we will carefully return after use to where we got them. This will limit ecological impact and endangering animal habitats.



Digging

We carefully move soil to look for insects and their habitats using special trowels, lolly pop sticks, fingers, or small sticks found within the forest. We will not dig deep holes because it will disrupt the habitat of the flora and fauna that we share the site with.





Collecting wood

We collect wood in four thicknesses - matchstick sized, pencil sized, thumb sized, and wrist sized - which we are told is good for mathematical activity involving sorting and matching. We also collect sticks for creating pictures and patterns and larger pieces for fire lighting purposes. We collect these sparingly so as not to disrupt creature habitats.

Use of Rope and String

We use rope, string and knots carefully and we do not tie each other up! If we have a good idea and want to tie up a tarp or a swing, an adult will help us if we need it. They will show us how to tie knots and talk to us about our ideas and decisions but we are encouraged to problem solve for ourselves.

The children in the photo are making a spider's web.



Carrying and Transporting Materials

We can roll, lift, drag, and pull materials, either by hand or by using ropes. We will lift safely by bending our knees and keeping our backs straight. We watch adults to see how this is done. We will lift heavier objects with more people working together to roll, carry or lift them. (See Safe Lifting Risk Assessment)



Climbing Trees and Frames

We can climb trees, frames, inside the maze, and up to our tree house and mud slide. We can explore to our own limits or to a maximum height of 1.5m. In preparation, an adult will check the safety of climbing equipment, the forest floor for sharp objects, and the trees for loose or rotten branches. During our session, adults are not invasive in our exploration, but they are near enough to catch us if we fall! (Tree Climbing Risk Assessment)

Eating, Hygiene and Drinking

We do not eat or drink anything we find in the forest, unless our activity has been specifically planned to do this (e.g. blackberry picking).

We do not put our fingers or hands in our mouths or noses.

We will use wipes and water to clean our hands before we have drinks or snacks. (COSHH Health and Safety)



Leaving Spring Forest

At the end of our Forest School session, we aim to 'leave no trace' that we were in Spring Forest. Adults take down shelters and remove materials they have brought in. We help by gathering rubbish and litter to be removed. We also make sure that resources (sticks, stones) are put back carefully where we found them to minimise disturbance to the habitat. We will not take artefacts that we have found or made without permission from an adult.



SECTION 4 - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Forest School policies and procedures outlined in this document are in addition to and do not replace:

- Those that are shared with Springfield Community Primary School (links to our school website shared)
- Relevant legislation and national guidance (links shared)

If you would like further information or prefer it in a different format eg paper, large print, different language, please ask the Forest School Leader or her assistant who will be happy to help.

4.1 Health and Safety

Springfield Community Primary School accepts its legal obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The purpose of this act is to promote, stimulate and encourage high standards of health and safety at work. It protects not only people at work, but also the health and safety of the general public who may be affected by its work activities. Spring Forest is covered within Springfield's public liability insurance.

In line with Springfield's Health and Safety policy, at Spring Forest we ask that all adults and children work in accordance with any instruction or training they have been given.

Forest School Policies and Procedures

Clothing Policy

No person will be permitted to go to Spring Forest without appropriate clothing that will

- protect them from extremes of heat or cold
- keep them covered to reduce the likelihood of cuts and scrapes
- fit appropriately for comfort
- meet any religious requirements

Children and parents are encouraged to think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities, and to be aware they are likely to take some of our mud home with them after a session. In the forest, it can often be cooler than expected under the shade of the trees. **Clothing to be provided from home:**

✓ Long sleeved top
✓ Full length trousers
✓ Warm boots (wellies can be very cold during the winter)
✓ Warm Socks, and a spare pair
✓ Gloves and Woolly hat (cold weather)
✓ Sun hat that fits well to ensure good visibility- sunny weather

The following will be provided by the Forest School:

✓ Waterproof and wellingtons

Spare clothing is stored in the emergency bag. Protective clothing is provided as needed for tool use / fire activities.

Contingency and Cancellation

We will not go to Forest School if the conditions are deemed dangerous for example high winds, thunderstorms, or periods of extreme cold. We will use the BBC weather online forecast to make judgments about the expected conditions. Our Forest School Leader will make the decision whether the weather is suitable for Forest School.

There are permanent shelters available so children can still enjoy forest school activities such as tracking, sensory and team games and they do not miss out on their regular forest school experience.

If the weather deteriorates unexpectedly during a session, it may be that the session comes to an early end.

Emergency and serious incident procedure

Emergencies are never wanted, but they can still happen. In most cases the emergency can be resolved on-the-spot by the TA taking the group away from the incident and the Outdoor First Aider providing first aid. However, if a serious incident was to occur the following procedure would be followed:

1. Secure the safety of the group - "1,2,3 where are you?" all activities stop and children return to TA, who will take them to a place of safety.
2. First Aider to attend to casualties with an adult helper. The casualties will be closely monitored and first aid administered.
3. The emergency services are to be contacted by an adult helper. They will provide the operator with the following information
 - a. an assessment of the casualty's injuries
 - b. the location of Springfield CPS POSTCODE BB11 3HP. Grid reference is SD847319.
 - c. The time of the incident
4. A volunteer will meet the ambulance crew at the school's main reception area and escort them to the casualty.
5. The Pastoral Team will be informed of the injury and asked to contact parents and inform the head teacher. Telephone: 01282 437277
6. An incident report will be completed once the casualty is in the hands of the medical team.

Fire procedure

See Fire Policy (Appendix A)

First Aid

1	Any illness or injury to be treated by a qualified first aider.
2	Check Dr -A-B-C, and administer first aid
3	Remove others in group from the situation, ensuring they are safe.
4	Notify Forest School Leader or her assistant. If necessary, call for further assistance, or notify emergency services.
5	Have medical details available in medical bag and notify parents/guardians as appropriate.
6	All accidents, however minor, must be reported to the Forest School Leader or her assistant who will complete an accident report form.
7	Follow up with parents as usual.

Checks on medical kit will be undertaken by the Forest School Leader.

Parents are to

- keep staff up to date on any medical conditions.
- Medication will be kept in the Emergency bag with the corresponding paperwork for children who have on going medical needs such as asthma.

Refer to the school administration of medication policy.

Volunteers are to

- be made aware that information regarding children's medical needs is confidential.
- Take responsibility for their own medication they may need for ongoing medical conditions.
- Complete next of kin and emergency contact information
- Complete the form outlining any ongoing medical conditions they may have.

Emergency Bag - This is kept separate to all other items taken to Spring Forest and is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader initially and then in emergency, members of school staff.

The essential items in the emergency bag will vary depending on the time of year and weather conditions, the site being used, and the planned for activities according to the relevant risk assessments and daily risk assessment.

✓	First aid kit (see below)
✓	Emergency plan
✓	Names of children attending

✓ Any personal medication of children attending and permission / administration forms)
✓ Copies of risk assessments
✓ Communication devices (mobile phone and/or walkie talkie - checked for working order and signal strength)
✓ Clean water
✓ Emergency whistle
✓ Emergency life blanket
✓ Accident forms
✓ Medication for individuals (if not appropriate for the individual to carry the medication him/herself it should be clearly labelled - staff must be trained to administer it and parental consent must have been received)
✓ Bivi bag
✓ Burns kit
✓ Emergency sugary food
✓ Sharps box and gloves

Essential Equipment: First Aid Kit

✓ Contact Cards	✓ Scissors
✓ Sterile Gloves	✓ Cotton wool
✓ Bandages	✓ Antiseptic wipes
✓ Plasters	✓ Medication for individual children
✓ Burns gel	✓ Sterile water
✓ Burn dressing	✓ Cling film
✓ Dressings	✓ Eye wash
✓ Blood bag (disposal sack for medical waste)	✓ Bites and stings cream or spray (parental permission required)
✓ Sewing Kit	

Essential Equipment: When having a fire

✓ Flame retardant Gauntlet gloves	✓ Vaseline
✓ Fire Blanket	✓ Cotton wool
✓ Bucket of water	✓ Matches
✓ Fire steel	✓ Emergency fire kit

Other Equipment that may be included:

✓ Wet wipes, hand gel	✓ Torch
✓ Trowel	✓ Plastic bag
✓ Sun cream (Parental permission required)	✓ Roll Mat and Blanket
✓ Spare clothing	✓ Knife
✓ Thermos of hot water	✓ Tick remover

Gardening policy

Children are to wear gardening gloves and be supervised. Hands must be washed once finished.

Lost or missing person procedure

Children are given boundaries to adhere to and the gate is always locked behind us. In the unlikely event of a suspected missing child:

- An adult will shout “1,2,3 where are you?”
- All children and adults are then to come to the Leader.
- A quick register is taken and if a child is missing the Forest School Leader will search the area with a volunteer.
- A member of school staff will remain with the other children.
- Exits are checked for breach of security.
- If the child is not found within 5 minutes the Pastoral Team is informed. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will become involved in the procedure and the police may be contacted.

Any child who feels they are lost may shout “1,2,3 where are you?” and adults will listen and search in the direction of their voice.

Nil by mouth policy

There is no safe way of ensuring that children eat only safe berries, fungi and fruits or that the fruit is clean and edible. There is also the possibility if children eat those identified as safe in Forest School sessions, they may incorrectly identify and ingest harmful berries, fungi or fruit outside Forest School sessions. For these reasons, Spring Forest adopts a nil-by-mouth policy regarding any items found in the forest. If children are given anything to eat or drink, they are to use hand gel to clean their hands before partaking in snacks. The Forest School leader will make adults aware of any child who is unable to eat particular foods due to allergies. They will also be informed that this information is to remain confidential. On occasions adults may harvest fruits that are edible to clean and prepare back in school.

Risk management and Risk assessment

Forest school sessions offer learning opportunities for children, young people and vulnerable adults. The purpose of many of the activities is to encourage participants to face new challenges and to learn to take reasonable risks. To do that safely, all adults involved must know their role and ensure that the necessary risk assessments are carried out regularly and thoroughly. Risks can rarely be eliminated fully, but they can be reduced to a minimum using control measures without limiting opportunities for children to explore and reach their full potential.

Risk-benefit management is a fundamental part of life and is a skill needed for young people’s safety and well-being. Staff and volunteers and have a duty of care towards

young people however this certainly does not mean wrapping them in cotton wool. Therefore we have responsibility not only to keep them safe, but also to enable them to learn to manage risk for themselves. (Council for Learning Outside the Classroom)

See Appendix C- Initial Risk Assessment and Appendix D Risk Benefit Assessment

The Forest School Leader will conduct the following risk assessments:

Weekly Site Check This will be undertaken by the Forest School Leader or her assistant.
Daily Site check/safety sweep - This will be done 1 hour before taking a group out and will be undertaken by the Forest School Leader or her assistant.

Both of these checks will entail identification of any significant hazards and taking precautions to reduce the risk to a safe level.

Steps to the process of risk assessment will take place:

- Look for hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how - What is the worst outcome we could face?
- Evaluate the current level of risk
- Decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or more should be done
- Re-evaluate the level of risk once our course of action and precautions have been put in place
- Create a risk assessment and collate them in the forest school file.
- Inform all adults accompanying the group and require them to sign each relevant risk assessment to show that they have read and understood the assessments.
- Regularly monitor and review each risk assessment, either half termly or when an action is needed.

Daily site checks will also consider the weather forecast for the session.

Individual risk assessments - These will be developed by the Forest School Leader, parents and class teachers for children who have social, physical and or medical needs.

Activity risk assessments - These will be undertaken by the Forest School Leader and will entail identifying and managing hazards and risks, and also identifying the benefits of each activity. Action will be taken to minimise risk by following procedures for risky activities such as lighting fires and use of tools.

Volunteers will be made aware of all risk assessments and plans for the session in a pre-session briefing with the Forest School Leader.

Ongoing dynamic risk assessment - This takes place onsite throughout the session. It involves professional judgements in response to changing situations - such as deterioration in the weather. Volunteers are reminded that Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility and to inform the forest school leader as soon as possible if they become aware of anything which worries them regarding the safety of the group.

Toileting policy

Children are all asked to use the toilet before leaving the school building. If children require the toilet during the session they are to be accompanied by a member of school staff back to school to use the toilet. If a child soils themselves, they must be returned to school by a member of school staff where they will be taken care of in line with school policies by a member of support staff in school.

Tools Use Procedure

See Use of Tools Policy (Appendix B)

Tree climbing procedure

- Children may only climb identified trees.
- Children must ask an adult before climbing a tree.
- Adults must check the tree for loose or rotten branches.
- Adults must check the area below the tree is free from any sharp objects.
- Children are permitted to climb to limits below 1 ½ meters.
- An adult must be present and be near enough to catch a child.

Springfield CPS policies and procedures

- Administration of Medicines Policy <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Administration-of-Medicine-Policy-2023-24.pdf>
- First Aid Policy - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/First-Aid-Policy-2023-24.pdf>
- Health and Safety Policy - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Health-and-Safety-Policy.pdf>

Relevant legislation and national guidance:

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 <https://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>

4.2 Safeguarding

Springfield Community Primary School has a duty by law and as a responsible organisation, to take reasonable care of children and vulnerable adults who participate in our activities at Forest School.

All forest school staff and volunteers are required to follow Springfield's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and other safeguarding policies listed below. These follow government guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (noted below). Staff and governors are DBS checked and they - along with volunteers - receive refresher training on safeguarding annually.

Everyone at Spring Forest has a responsibility in relation to child protection. We are committed to:

- Taking all reasonable measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of each child and young person in our care
- The practice of safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people
- Protecting each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil

Our Aims
• To raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
• To provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting of concerns and cases
• To provide guidance on recognising and dealing with suspected child abuse
• To provide a framework for inter-agency communication and effective liaison
• To ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay
• To ensure that safe recruitment procedures are operated
• To design and operate procedures which promote this policy and which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations
• To contribute to the operation of appropriate health and safety procedures
• To have regard to and be consistent with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements and guidance

We are committed to creating an environment in which children are safe and free from harm. It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader and staff to ensure the safety of children when on a forest school session.

To minimise risk of child abuse, the Forest School Leader will:

- Follow government guidance and forest school principles and criteria for good practice set out by www.forestschoollassociation.org
- Educate children on how to stay safe and speak out
- Should any allegations arise, take appropriate action as outlined in Springfield's child protection and safeguarding policy.

As relationships and trust develop between adults and children in the Forest School, children may disclose information which they might have otherwise kept to themselves. Any volunteer, or member of staff, who finds that a child is telling them something that concerns them should follow the course of action set out below in simple steps:

1. **Listen** to the pupil but ask **NO** leading questions. Allow the child to lead the discussion but do not press for details.
2. **Keep calm and offer reassurance.** Accept what the child says without challenge.
3. **Make NO promises.** You cannot 'keep a secret'. You should make it understood that there are limits to confidentiality at the start of the disclosure.

4. **Inform** the Forest School Leader who will pass it on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
5. Keep an accurate **written record** of the conversation, including the date, the time, the place where the conversation occurred and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. Keep the record secure and hand it to the Forest School Leader who will in turn pass this information on to a member of the Pastoral Team and/or the Headteacher and will be recorded on CPOMS.

Springfield and Spring Forest are located within a secure, fenced in site with locked gates. People passing can see into the school grounds but there is no access for them other than through the main school reception.

Forest School Policies and Procedures

Media procedure (Data Protection)

A media release with photos (Staff confirm parent permission.) will be prepared by the Forest School Leader. Before its release it will be authorised by the Headteacher/Pastoral Team who will check content and double-check the school has parental permission for pupils in photos. Pupils are referred to by first name only (no surnames).

Mobile phones policy (Data Protection)

No mobile phones are to be used during Forest School sessions, except for the emergency walkie talkie carried by the Forest School Leader in the Emergency Bag which should not have a camera.

Parental consent procedure

Parents are to be informed of the activities that could take place at Forest School. They must sign to say they are willing for their child to take part and provide information regarding medical history, allergies and insect stings.

Photography policy (Data Protection)

Permission for photographs and their use must be given by parents. School staff must be aware of any children who are not permitted to have photographs taken.

Photographs can only be taken on cameras which are the property of Springfield Community Primary School. These must be downloaded onto the computer at the end of the session then deleted from the camera. Professional photos may be taken by a photographer approved by the Forest School Leader.

All staff and volunteers must recognise that photos/information regarding children should be confidential and should not be posted on any social networking sites.

Uninvited visitor procedure

If there is unwanted attention from a member of the public, the Forest School Leader will ask the person to leave the area. If they fail to do so the Forest School Leader will contact a member of the Pastoral Team as to the next steps taken. If the situation is causing concern regarding the safety of the children, the police will be called. The incident will be logged and shared with the Head Teacher.

Springfield CPS policies and procedures

- Access to School Premises - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Access-to-school-2023-24.pdf>
- Anti-Bullying Policy <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Anti-bullying-policy-23-24.pdf>
- Care and Control of Pupils - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Care-and-Control-Policy-2022-23.pdf> - The policy and procedure for using care and control within the school
- Child on Child Abuse Policy <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Child-Appropriate-Child-on-Child-Policy-2023-24.pdf>
- Intimate Care Policy - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Intimate-Care-Policy-2022-23.pdf> - Where children may require intimate care given from members of staff within the school.
- Missing Child policy - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Missing-Child-Policy-2022-23.pdf>
- Parent/Carers and Visitors Code of Conduct - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Parents-and-Visitors-Code-of-Conduct-2023-24>
- Racist Incidents Policy - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Racist-Incidents-Policy-2022-23.pdf>
- Relationship Policy - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Relationships-Policy-2023-.pdf>
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Safeguarding-and-CP-Policy-2022-23.pdf>

Relevant legislation and national guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

4.3 Learning and Development

See Section 1.2 Forest School Activities and Benefits for Pupils

Activities that may take place:

- Den making
- Nature study
- Team games / collaborative play
- Creative experiences
- Imaginative play
- Physical activity
- Tool use *
- Fire use *
- Tree climbing *

*see separate procedures above

Daily operating procedure

Before each session:

- Forest School Leader will complete a risk assessment / site sweep.
- Forest School Leader will check all items are in the emergency bag and that the mobile phone is charged and has a signal in the forest.
- Forest School Leader will add any additional medication to the bag and permission / administration form for the child.
- Forest School Leader will check that morning that volunteers are able to attend and that the adult:child ratio is in place.
- Forest School Leader to check any equipment and tools are in working order and safely stored.
- Forest School Leader will set up any equipment / experiences in the Forest.
- Forest School Leader will brief volunteers regarding risk assessments and activities planned.

Session opening

- A register will be taken
- Introduce any new faces
- Adults support children in putting on outdoor clothing
- Adults ensure children walk safely to the site
- Boundaries and guidelines are discussed once at the site

During each session

- Ongoing risk assessment with regard to changes in weather, behaviour, safety and activity by Forest School Leader, supported by volunteers
- Head counts
- Games and activities

Session closing

- Children review their learning
- Extinguish any fire
- Check all tools have been returned
- Remove structures
- Remove any litter

- Ensure emergency bag is intact and returns with us
- Take register
- Adults to ensure children walk safely back to school
- Adults help children remove outdoor clothing
- Adults clean and tidy away clothing After the session
- Make any repairs to resources / clothing
- Top up any resources used form emergency bag
- Complete evaluation forms
- Complete any incident / accident forms if needed

4.4 Equality and Diversity

“Springfield is a caring, supportive and innovative school where everyone is recognised and appreciated as an individual. The golden thread running through our vision is the mental health and wellbeing of our school community. By creating a safe, supportive and relational environment for all, we enable our children to be ambitious and to reach their full potential, so that they can take their place in their community and in the wider world.” - *Springfield Community Primary School Mission Statement*

Springfield Community Primary School is committed to equal opportunities for all. The Forest School Leader and supporting adults operate in accordance with relevant legislation our school policies listed below.

Spring Forest aims to provide all our children with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. We are committed to giving each individual child every opportunity to achieve the highest standard, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background. We actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual children or groups of children. We will:

- Ensure equal access for all children
- Employ a range of styles, including collaborative learning, so that children will value working together
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child’s education
- Take account of the performance of all children when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- Make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all children.
- individual risk assessment will be developed with the parents, SENDCO, 1:1 TA support and the Forest School Leader.

Our Forest School teachers will ensure that our children:

- Feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- Appreciate and value the differences in others
- Take responsibility for their own actions
- Participate safely, in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs
- Are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success

- Use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, learning styles and linguistic needs, without stereotyping
- Have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- Have challenging targets that enable them to succeed
- Are encouraged to participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs.

We encourage a level of risk-taking, always under close adult supervision, and actively foster friendships and collaboration between all children and adults. Forest school activities are always designed to produce success and enjoyment, even when this appears to be of a transitory nature. The forest environment is an environment to which we are all entitled, and we strongly believe that the experiences we will have there will linger in our memories for years to come.

Children with medical needs or disabilities will be helped so that they can take part fully in each forest school session. Those children with challenging behaviour will be risk assessed and may need one to one supervision, but their entitlement to participate in forest school remains the same.

Forest school is for all.

Behaviour

Clear sets of boundaries and guidelines and a positive behaviour management philosophy is in place. However, if it becomes apparent that the actions of a child is likely to jeopardise the safety or comfort of others, volunteers must report this immediately to the Forest School Leader, who will take the following steps to de-escalate the situation:

- Recount the facts of what they have seen in a neutral tone.
- Remind the child of the Forest Rules or guidelines they have not followed.
- Listen to all parties involved.
- Establish what needs to be done to resolve the problem, encouraging them to consider the happiness and safety of other members of the group.
- Provide calming down time if needed with TA.
- Monitor behaviour and praise positive changes.

Children who can on occasion struggle with controlling their emotions and behaviour will need an individual risk assessment and 1:1 support.

Springfield CPS equality policies and procedures

- Single Equalities Policy - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Single-Equalities-Policy-2022-2025.pdf>
- Racist Incidents Policy - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Racist-Incidents-Policy-2022-23.pdf>

Springfield CPS SEND policies and procedures

- SEND Policy - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SEND-Policy-2023-24.pdf>

- School Accessibility Plan - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Accessibility-Plan-2022.pdf>
- SEND Information Report - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SEND-Information-Report-2023-2024-.pdf>

Relevant legislation and national guidance:

Children’s Act 2014 [Children and Families Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

Equality Act 2010 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

4.5 Access, Environment and Sustainability

Care of Flora and Fauna

See Appendix E Ecological Impact Assessment Plan

Sustainable Use of Site

Spring Forest is divided into two parts - Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2. In the middle are some raised beds that will be used as a community garden.

See Appendix F 3 Year Sustainability Woodland Management Plan

Purchases

Springfield CPS allocates a budget for the Forest School and financial guidance (below) is followed. All expenditure is overseen and records are kept by the Bursar. Any purchases over £10,000 are required to have three quotes.

County Guidance

Scheme for Financing Schools in Lancashire -

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/936257/scheme-for-financing-schools-in-lancashire-2022-23-final.pdf>

4.6 Terms and Conditions

We hope that your child will thoroughly enjoy their time in Spring Forest. If for any reason you encounter a difficulty, please speak to the Forest School Leader in the first instance. If the situation is not resolved to your satisfaction, please follow the steps in our complaints policy. You can obtain a copy online or by asking at the school office.

Springfield CPS policies and procedures

- Complaints Policy - <https://springfieldcps.lancs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Complaints-Policy-2023-24.pdf>

SECTION 5 PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Spring Forest	The Family	The Child
We will aim to work in partnership with parents and carers to	I/we will aim to work in partnership with the school and its staff to	I will aim to follow the rules of the forest. (Please discuss this with your child!)
✓ provide high quality teaching & learning through a broad and balanced curriculum	✓ ensure that my child will attend school regularly and on time	✓ I will be gentle
✓ value each child as an individual	✓ ensure that my child is equipped appropriately for Forest School	✓ I will be kind
✓ understand that each child has their own learning journey	✓ let the school know about any concerns and problems which might affect my child's behaviour or progress	✓ I will try my best
✓ encourage each child to achieve their personal best in all areas	✓ support my child in opportunities for learning at home	✓ I will be honest
✓ provide opportunities for children to learn and practice new skills	✓ attend parent consultations and discussions about my child's progress and school life	✓ I will listen to others
✓ encourage collaborative learning	✓ support the school policies and their rules for promoting good behaviour	✓ I will look after living things
✓ encourage children to ✓ take risks in their own ✓ learning	✓ respond promptly to school correspondence	
✓ provide a high ratio of ✓ adults to children		
✓ ensure all adults working ✓ with our children are fit to do so		

SECTION 6 - FOREST SCHOOL VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

I _____(volunteer at Spring Forest) have read, understood and will follow all policies, procedures and guidance that is set out in this handbook. I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered about its contents or my role.

I understand that the Forest School Leader is in charge of the activities within the session, and I have read the relevant risk assessment for the activities to take place during my session.

I have provided my medical and emergency details to the Forest School Leader.

Signed _____ Dated _____