



Rockwood Nursery School

Outdoor Play and Forest School Policy 2023



Our Vision

We aim to make the years the children spend at Rockwood happy and fulfilling so that, by the time they move onto the next stage, they will be competent, confident learners who take pleasure and pride in their achievements.

“The best classroom and the widest cupboard is roofed only by the sky”
Margaret McMillan.

Forest school is seen as an important part of Rockwood Nursery School’s education. We believe everybody should have access and experience of a woodland and natural learning environment.

Our Ethos of the forest structure is to ensure child centred and independent learning. We plan the environment to establish and develop the image of the child as we see it, resilient, curious, independent, communicative, motivated and expressive.

Our aim is to establish a stimulating, creative, challenging and risk benefit environment through a natural approach. By building on these good relationships we hope to foster good social skills and a growing independence in the children.

We recognise that an appropriate and positive nursery experience will help children feel confident about the challenges that lie ahead.

All play is conducted in a safe, child-centred environment under the guidance of qualified staff who are sympathetic to the care and educational needs of the children.

Delivering the curriculum while the children are engaged in play helps foster a genuine curiosity and love of learning.

Learning opportunities are designed, implemented and reviewed regularly so that the experiences offered provide children a chance to learn and consolidate new skills

Rationale:

Outdoor learning in early years settings is important because it:

- supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles;
- offers children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement;
- promotes a sense of confidence and well-being,
- provides opportunities for developing harmonious relationships with others, through negotiation, turn taking and cooperation;
- supports those children who learn best through activity or movement;
- provides safe and supervised opportunities for children to experience new challenges, assess
- risk and develop the skills to manage difficult situations;
- supports children’s developing creativity and problem-solving skills;
- provides rich opportunities for imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness;
- gives children contact with the natural world and offers them unique experiences, such as
- direct contact with the weather and seasons.
- Develops a sense of care and respect for the natural world, themselves, their friends and
- Community.

At Rockwood Nursery School we ensure that learning outdoors is given equal status as indoor learning and is planned for as an integral part of the play and learning provision for EYFS.

Children have daily access to the outdoor environment for both continuous provision and focussed activities; this is further complimented with ensuring the Forest School Principles are interwoven throughout the outdoor environment.

Wherever possible, inside and outside should complement one another, and learning in one area should reinforce learning in the other. All areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

The outdoor area is richly resourced with exciting play materials and open-ended flexible resources, many of which are natural, that can be adapted to the needs of play, rather than the materials dictating the play, meeting the interests of individual children.

Provision is organised in sheds that ensure that children can independently select and return resources as they need them. Adults encourage and engage children in shared, sustained thinking, encouraging the child to make choices and decisions to gain the maximum learning potential of the outdoor environment.

We aim to ensure our outdoor environment enables children to become resilient, curious, independent, motivated and expressive learners who are good communicators as to develop our 'image of the child'.

Staff ensure that the needs of all our children – girls, boys, different ethnic groups and children with disabilities - are met through monitoring and reviewing the resources that are available, how they are set up and used to ensure that the outside area provides a rich learning environment that positively encourages inclusive education.

Outdoor Rules and Countryside Code

- Respect the Environment

Children are encouraged to respect the living things around them. It will be explained to children how our actions can affect the living things around us. This may be achieved through explaining things that are living and deceased and by agreeing that nothing alive should be picked or destroyed.

- Respect other people

We expect all individuals to respect their peers, their belongings and their creations. Many activities delivered in a Forest School session aim to promote team building, communication and social and emotional development. This will be discussed at the start of each session and will be carefully addressed in a Forest school session using our Behaviour Aware Approach strategy.

- Looking eyes, Listening Ears

In the Forest there are numerous natural hazards. Each activity is risk assessed but individuals are encouraged to assess their surroundings and activities themselves. Using their eyes to watch where they are going and their ears to listen to safety guidelines that will be addressed at the start of each outdoor session.

- Snack and Drink Provision

Only snacks and drinks provided on site may be consumed by children. Wild fruits, berries and/or fungi must not be picked or consumed at any time. Children will be taught about these items and discuss why they should be avoided.

Session Routine and Procedures

Procedures

Children are able to access the outdoors through free play every day.

The children in Forest School will engage in a two-week rota where they will be shown a new skill and engage in a practice activity using the key skill. Regular observations on Tapestry will take place during each forest session by key workers. These observations/next steps/ interests will inform future planning and be written in the room's Forest School floor book and kept in each classroom. Each key worker has a responsibility to ensure key interests are being noted and passed to the forest school leader for the following forest school sessions to ensure children are maintaining interest and motivation when learning in sessions

Session Routine

Day	Tuesday AM	Tuesday PM	Thursday
Staff Members			
Children			

1. Site sweep
2. Get key worker groups get ready in classroom nursery promoting speedy independent dressing.
3. End of session 11:15 AM/ 2:45 PM – Tidy up time
4. Reflection activity - Will take place in the forest school canopy area and children's interests will be written to add to the class forest school book.

Essential Equipment List – weather dependent

Waterproof suit	
Wellies	
Thick socks	
Warm Clothes (to be worn on the day)	

<p>Warm Hat/Gloves</p>	
<p>Sun hat/Sun cream</p>	

Clothing Requirements

- All children to wear sensible foot wear – wellies or snow boots. No sandals, flip flops or open toes shoes.
- Children and staff to wear long trousers to protect from scratches and grazes. This again must be considered in warmer weather.
- Children wear waterproof clothing.
- Children are to wear waterproof wellies. The only exemption being extremely hot weather where children are permitted to wear suitable clothing and footwear.
- All children bring a spare bag of named clothes to change into if they are wet. Children are changed once back inside the main nursery following our intimate care policy.

Requirements for Forest School Leader

It is the duty of the Forest School Leader to:

- Provide users and staff with the relevant information relating to Forest School before sessions are implemented.
- Ensure that all equipment and resources are safe to use, with the accompanying safety equipment.
- Brief the adults involved on the health and safety considerations before each session.
- Ensure the forest school leader has checked and restocked the First Aid kit ready for each session.

Roles and Responsibilities for Teachers, Teaching Assistants, School Staff and Helpers

- Adult to child ratios must be adhered too.
- Ensure the consent forms, medical information and emergency contact forms are available and kept in a secure folder in the office.
- Only use tools if the Forest School Leader has said it is ok to do so and adhere to all safety rules when doing so. If unsure please ask.
- Stay within the Forest School picket fence boundary. If you need to leave the outdoor area, then use the walkie talkie to inform the Group's Teacher and ensure that a different member of staff is available to cover your position to maintain safe ratios.

Emergency Contact Details:	Rockwood Nursery School Kingsland Rd Burnley BB11 3PU Tel: 01282 426711
Nearest Accident & Emergency Centre:	Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital, Haslingden Road, Blackburn, BB2 3HH. Tel: 01254 263555
Nearest Urgent Care Centre:	Burnley General Hospital Urgent Care Centre Casterton Avenue Burnley Lancashire Tel: 01282 425071

Emergency Procedures

In case of Medical Emergency

- In the event of an accident the staff member that witnessed the accident is responsible for using the walkie talkie to communicate with the staff member in the 'main building to write an accident form. The accident forms then go in the going home pigeon holes for key workers to communicate the accident with parents and ask them to sign. It is the responsibility of the Keyworker to ensure these accident forms are signed by parents and stored appropriately in the accident file.
- The Forest School leader has a certificate in Paediatric First Aid as do all staff. One member of staff has First Aid at Work advanced first aid certificate. Accidents are reported on the main nursery forms and shared with parents.
- Children's medications are easily accessible within school and if needed staff will use the walkie talkie to communicate with staff indoors.

Lost Child Procedure

Refer to Lost Child Policy and Procedure and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Serious Injury to Forest School Assistant

In the event a Forest School Assistant is involved in an incident then the Forest School Lead should walkie talkie the office to request backup and support. If required then the office should then ring 999.

- Speak slowly and clearly
- Describe the incident and give patient's description / current condition
- Advise on location (as above)

The school office will provide extra assistance to organise the movement of the Emergency Services. An Incident/accident report will be completed and recorded. If required a RIDDOR form should also be completed.

If the Forest School Leader is injured the above procedure should be followed however a responsible adult should contact the school office through a walkie talkie and the appointed First aider should be called to support.

Health and Safety – Procedures and Guidance

Staff follow the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Duties of Staff and Children:

- Take responsibility of health and safety of self and others who may be affected by their actions.
- To follow procedures that are put into place by the Leaders.
- Do not intentionally misuse, damage or interfere with any health and safety equipment.

Other Health and Safety procedures:

- All gates and fences are checked to ensure they are locked and undamaged in any way by the Site Supervisor and Forest School Leader.
- Identified grounds issues are passed to the office for attention by LCC contractors or the gardener.

(See also Health and Safety Policy for more information)

Accident Reporting Procedure

Risk Management

Accident: An unplanned un controlled event, which has led to injury to people, damage to equipment or the environment or some other loss.

Incident: A happening, event or occurrence caused by ignoring or not adhering to set of rules boundaries or laws.

Forest School Leader and Site Supervisor will maintain site and working areas to ensure that the risk of incidents is as low as possible.

Risk assessments are not in effect a protection from but are methodologies by which Forest School Leaders monitor and demonstrate their commitment to health and safety. We follow the School's Health and Safety policy.

Any considerations will be pointed out to adults and children before hand to help manage risk. All adult involved will be given a copy of the completed Risk Assessment for the site and are obligated to manage or report risks under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

A risk assessment will be carried out for the Forest School site:

1. Identify the hazard.
2. Decide who might be harmed and how (particularly allergy sufferers)
3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions.
4. Record findings and implement measures required
5. Review the risk assessment and update accordingly.

- Identifying a hazard:

This is noting anything that has a potential to cause us harm. Not all hazards are necessarily risks. The Forest School Leader will identify these hazards before a session; the hazard will be removed, or identified to children and staff before a session starts.

- Deciding who may be harmed and how:

Some hazards may affect everybody and some hazards may affect individuals. Depending on an individual's allergies, all staff and volunteers will be made aware e.g. if a child is allergic to bee stings.

- Evaluating the risks and decide on precautions:

Are the hazards going to turn into risks? There are two different types of risk. The first is, the likelihood or how probable a hazard is to cause us harm. The second is the severity of the consequence if it did hurt someone. Therefore, when evaluating the risk and deciding on precautions both of these need to be considered. The severity of a hazard is stated in the risk assessments as: high, medium and low. The precautions taken will depend of the severity of the hazard. (see risk assessments)

- Record findings and implement measures required:

All high hazardous are reported to the head teacher who will then looking at control actions that address the likely hood of something causing us harm rather than taking away the harm completely. This will then reduce the hazard from high to low as we understand that a little risk is essential for children's development and understanding of the world.

- Review the Risk assessment and update accordingly:

Risk assessments are not static they are dynamic. The environment is forever changing therefore, risk assessments will be reviewed and updated accordingly as needed. Risk assessments are officially updated yearly therefore, if no changes are needed on a day to day basis, then they will be updated by their review dates.

General Outdoors Risk Assessment

Our 'Playground & Outdoor Play and Forest School Activities including Gardening risk assessments outline some of the more commonly faced risks associated with and outdoor classroom. Those that are more specific to activities are included in individual activity risk assessment. School staff must remain vigilant to the potential for risk arising throughout the session.

Reporting Procedure

In the event of an accident/incident the staff in the main group room will note down the incident/accident in the child's accident book and complete the relevant form as soon as practical. Blank accident/incident forms to be kept in emergency folder in the Forest School hut.

RIDDOR Reporting Procedure

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).

Employers/ Forest School practitioners must report to RIDDOR:

- Deaths
- Major injuries
- Over three-day injuries (i.e. person is unable to perform normal duties for more than 3 consecutive days)
- Injuries to members of the public or people not working/participating where they are taken from the scene of an accident to hospital.
- Some work-related diseases
- Dangerous occurrences (something not resulting in injury but could have done).

How to Report:

- Call the incident contact centre on 08453009923
- Incidents can be reported online via the HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm

- Once completed a copy of the form will be submitted to the headteacher and the Health and Safety Wellbeing Team

Who Reports:

If a leader/adult/child has been injured during a Forest School session, seen a dangerous occurrence or has a disease certified by a doctor (which may be linked to Forest School participation). The Head Teacher is then responsible for Reporting to RIDDOR.

Tools Risk Assessment

All tools will be risk assessed before the session takes place. If a tool becomes faulty or broken this will be reported to the Forest School Leader immediately then the tool can be repaired or disposed of limiting the risk of injuries.

Health and Hygiene Procedures

- Food Hygiene

The Forest School Leader has undertaken a Food Safety Level 2 qualification. Any food that is prepared will follow these guidelines



During winter months snack will consist of a warm drink and a substantial snack.

There is clean drinking water at all times.

Children are encouraged to clean hands before eating snack. Baby wipes can be used or hand sanitiser, these will be provided in the snack shed.

- Toileting Procedures

There is a outdoor toilet that can be used for liquid waste. Children will access the toilets and sink facilities indoors if needed and follow the indoor toileting routine.

- Vermin Prevention and Disposal of Litter

Litter picking is conducted every morning by the Site Supervisor following the Schools General Risk Assessment.

All bins are emptied and changed at the end of every day by the Site Supervisor to ensure minimal waste is left on site for vermin prevention.

Food items that are used for snack times are placed in a bin that is cleaned and disposed of at the end of each day in general waste.

- Lone Working

During sessions staff will not work alone.

A walkie talkie is kept on the staff who are working in the forest to allow for easy access to the Headteacher, Bursar or other members of staff in the case of an emergency.

Tool use Policy

- Tools are stored in a secure shed at the nursery. They are carried down to forest in a secure tool box.
- The health and safety policy must be followed and risk assessments put in place before any tool activity takes place.
- All tools are checked at the start of the session and also at the end. Any faulty tool is removed and disposed of immediately.
- The Forest School Leader is responsible for the maintenance and cleanliness of the tools at the end of the session.
- The tool box remains locked in the forest school shed until ready to be used by the Forest School Leader. The children are taught the safety facts of the tools and are clearly told they must not access the tools without any adult.
- Large tools should only be introduced to the children by the Forest School Leader and when the leader feels confident it is safe to do so, for example when the children are developmentally ready to handle tools.
- The tools should be used only in the designated tool area (at the top of the Forest and canopy area, as well as in the Allotment). This area is checked regularly for any dangers or trip hazards and the children are taught the importance of walking sensibly in all area.
- The small tools such as hand saws, hammers, mallets, clamps, screwdrivers, potato peelers, graters will be introduced through tool talks by the Forest School Leader. These tools will be introduced weekly from the start of the academic year and reinforced by using the new tool in an activity. Once established the Forest School support staff can engage in mini tool talks with children and these tools can be placed into continuous provision within the workshop area. The workshop area must then be used with one member of staff with a 1-4 ratio.
- The bow saw, the loppers, the pen knife and the bill hook are to be used on a one to one basis, with Forest School Leader and child. We only use these tools once we feel the children are fully developmentally ready in all areas of learning to do so.

PPE

All PPE will be checked before use for any defects or damage that may alter its effectiveness. Known incidents that may sustain damage to PPE should be reported to the Forest School Leader who will assess the damage and manage accordingly.

All PPE will be correctly looked after and properly stored in dry, clean containers suitable for the size of PPE. Any PPE that is wet or dirty will be dried and cleaned before use.

A standard First Aid Kit is accessible in the indoor area, a Burns Kit will be included in the fire-starting kit. First Aid should only be carried out by trained individuals. Any accident that requires First Aid should be recorded in the accident book, an accident form should be completed to send home and parents should be informed at the end of the session to obtain a signature. The accident form should then be placed in the accident file and kept safe for a record.

In case of a serious incident the emergency services will be contacted in line with the emergency

communications procedures. In situations where, further medical attention is required but, is not an emergency services issue, arrangements will be made by the school/group/parents for further medical attention.

Conservation Procedures and Guidance

Our Forest School is part of the nursery grounds. The nursery grounds are maintained through Lancashire County Council. The school have an independent gardening service for maintaining the grounds and a Service Level Agreement with LCC for other support services to schools. An environmental impact assessment and control measures are carried out by Lancashire County Council.

Adverse Weather Conditions Policy

It is our Policy that outdoor learning will take place in all weathers with the exception of electrical storms, high winds and severe snow. In the event of extreme weather happening in a session it may be necessary to end a session early until the weather passes and it is safe for the children again. The decision is the Headteachers along with the Forest School Leader and Lead Teacher.

The weather forecast can be found on:

Met Office – 09014772061 or www.metoffice.gov.uk
BBC Weather - www.bbc.co.uk/weather

- Shelter. During periods of prolonged heavy rain there are shelter areas that can be accessed; canopy or forest school hut.
- Clothing. Children are dressed appropriately for the weather, warm clothes, warm socks and snow boots and insulated gloves.
- Weather dependent activities The Forest Leader monitors the weather adapting the sessions accordingly.
- Cancellation decision. In the case on extreme weather discussions will take place with the headteacher, Forest School Leader and Lead Teacher as to whether a session needs to be cancelled due to adverse weather. This may be in the event of a thunderstorm or if the grounds are not safe in the colder months due to snow fall and ice.
- Extreme weather after ice and snow the site is carefully checked for hazards. The trees are checked for fallen branches, hanging dead wood or standing dead wood.
- All staff are aware of the children's well-being, base camp is heated and provides all with the opportunities to warm up.
- The Forest School hut has a heater that can be turned on in the colder months to provide warmth to staff and children.
- Warm drinks and where possible snacks are available for children to access at any time in the Forest during the winter months; ensuring children's well-being is met.
- On hot days children must wear hats and sun cream. All parents have signed for sun cream at the start of nursery.

(See Adverse Weather Policy for more information)

Equal Opportunities

Volunteer Procedures and guidance / Harassment/Bullying Procedures and Guidance

All volunteers are given an induction process by the school. This includes information around Forest School and the expectations they will be working under. All volunteers are asked to complete The Outdoor Code of Conduct before starting a session.

(See Equalities Policy for more information)

Inclusion Statement

All children regardless of gender, race or special needs have the opportunity to access the outdoors.

(See SEND Policy for more information)

Confidentiality

All staff and volunteers are expected to follow confidentiality and understand that anything that happens in Forest School must stay in Forest School. These are part of the expectations set out while they are being inducted

Outdoor Learning Code of Conduct Form

All participating and spectating adults must read and sign this form to confirm they have understood their roles and responsibilities and agree to adhere to the safety rules that relate to the session, and if any accident arises as a result of them not doing so, they will assume responsibility.

Forest School guidance: The Forest School Leader will provide all staff and volunteers with the safety guidance (including activity risk assessments) and rules for participation before the programme begins. It is responsibility of the staff to read this literature and make themselves familiar with its contents and to raise any concerns to the Forest School Leader.

Activities, risk and responsibility: Staff and volunteers will ensure that learners are safe and capable of undertaking tasks set, participating in the activities provided and adhering to the safety rules throughout the Forest School Programme. Staff are duty bound under the Health and Safety at Work Act to work safely, take responsibility for their own safety and the implications of their actions, and report or remove hazards as they occur.

Behaviour: The behaviour of the group is the responsibility of the school staff. A reflection area is available under the canopy for those individuals who need time to think about their actions. Individuals that express behaviour that puts themselves or others at risk will be asked to reflect inside using our Attachment aware approaches following our Behaviour Policy. It is the responsibility of a staff member to escort the child to the class cloak area inside for reflection time.

The Use of Tools: In some sessions, children may use smaller tools in continuous provision such as saws, hammers, mallets or gardening tools. These will be introduced by demonstrations via support staff who have been shown how to model tool talks to children by the Forest School Leader. Larger tools such as bow saws, loppers, secateurs and knives will be modelled by the Forest School Leader via a tool talk and will only be used 1:1 via the Forest School Leader. The rules and expectations will be stated at the start of each session or activity and staff/ volunteers must uphold these expectations throughout the session. Staff/ volunteers should intervene immediately if they see a hazard.

Medical Conditions: Staff should assess whether the health of any child or adult will be put at risk due to known medical conditions (asthma, eczema, allergies etc) and take responsible steps to reduce or remove a risk, or remove the individual from the activity.

I have read, understood and agree to follow the Forest School Code of Conduct.

Signed.....

Print Name..... Date.....