



## LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM POLICY



### **Our Vision:**

We are committed to quality learning in a positive, happy and Christian atmosphere where everyone within the school community is valued as an individual. We expect everyone to, 'Treat others as you want them to treat you.' (Matthew 7:12-14). We have high expectations of all and strive to provide a safe, challenging, exciting and stimulating environment.

### **Our Values:**

To create and develop learners who demonstrate:

- **Respect** – by adopting a 'leave no trace' philosophy towards our environment. Respecting tools and fire and learning how to use these safely and in a controlled way to minimize the risk to ourselves and others.
- **Compassion** – towards each other and the variety of living things which we encounter, by learning how to care for and improve the environment in which we live.
- **Creation** – understanding that we are creative beings and can express this in many ways. By acknowledging that created things are to be respected and appreciated.
- **Perseverance** – to keep a 'can-do' attitude towards tasks that may be difficult.
- **Service** – by exploring ways in which we can benefit the wider community and beyond through how we can reduce our impact and change what we do. Also undertaking physical improvements.

## **Rationale**

At Willaston Church of England Primary School we believe in the concept of lifelong learning. We understand that children learn best by 'doing,' and learn most from first hand experiences. Learning outside the Classroom greatly enhances the way in which children are able to learn new ideas, facts, and concepts in a real world context. We intend to provide children with memorable learning experiences, enabling them to develop a love, respect and awe and wonder for their environment. We encourage respect to God's world and creations. Children should grow through challenge and become more independent.

Learning outside the Classroom should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. Through our teaching we intend to equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

Learning outside the Classroom is important as it enables:

- Personal and social development
- Motivation and positive behaviours
- Risk, challenge and adventure
- The development of children's ability to manage their own risk.

## **Definition**

Learning outside the Classroom at Willaston CE Primary School is delivered in a number of different ways:

- All children attend Forest School for half a day a week every two weeks. We are fortunate to have Willaston Meadow on our doorstep which is a fantastic resource to teach the children about our local environment. The children will go outdoors in all weathers, all year round and will witness the environment changing with the seasons. Natural resources are used as much as possible to stimulate creative thinking and skill development. The delivery of all areas of the curriculum is embedded in our Forest School teaching and learning.
- Residential visits take place every year from Year 2 onwards. They are progressive in the amount of time away from home. One night at Year 2 and 3, two nights at Year 4, three nights at Year 5 and four nights at Year 6. Residential visits enhance our curriculum delivery across all areas of the curriculum.
- Educational day visits to support and enhance the learning in the classroom take place at numerous venues across the North West including our immediate vicinity e.g. local shops, church, and railway station.
- We are fortunate enough to have extensive school grounds which are used regularly for teaching and learning. These include a school pond, outdoor stage, bird hide, woodland village, outdoor classroom, storytelling chair, trim trail, a 'fort,' a willow construction dome, extensive seating areas, gardening area with raised

beds, a climbing wall, basketball nets, exercise zone and space for a full range of sporting activities .

## **Aims**

- **Develop** confidence, self-awareness and skills (e.g. responsibility for self and others, working in a team, leadership, communication, problem solving)
- **Learn** new ideas, facts, and concepts in a real world context
- **Grow** through challenge and become more independent
- **Demonstrate achievement** – through awards such as Star of the Week, Headteacher Awards, House Points, displaying of children's work, newsletters and sharing assembly.
- **Increased motivation and willingness to learn** – contributing to raised levels of attainment across the curriculum
- **Broaden horizons and raise aspiration** – believing they can achieve and lead to an understanding that learning happens all around us and not just inside a classroom



## **Strategies**

**Inclusion** is central to our delivery of Learning outside the Classroom at Willaston CE Primary School. The needs of each individual child and adults is carefully considered and relevant support is provided to enable all to participate and for all to gain the best possible learning experience for every Learning outside the Classroom activity.

For each activity the following is considered:

- The medical/SEN/Social/Emotional needs of learners.
- The different ages/key stages/ability.
- The different preferred learning styles.
- Adult/child ratios.
- Potential impact on learning.
- Risk assessment.
- Appropriate equipment, resources and clothing.
- The weather.

Effective **planning** is crucial to Learning outside the Classroom being embedded in teaching and learning at our school. Teachers plan opportunities for Learning outside the Classroom to fit in with current themes and topics. Weekly planning is the responsibility of

the class teacher who works with the Forest School teacher to ensure that the curriculum is firmly embedded in the children's Forest School work.

Forest school education encourages and inspires individuals through positive outdoor experiences. By participating in engaging, motivating and achievable tasks and activities in a woodland (or alternative) environment each child has an opportunity to develop intrinsic motivation, sound emotional and social skills. These skills, through self awareness, can be developed to reach personal potential.

Forest School is effective for our children who visit the same local woodlands on a regular basis, who have the opportunity to learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and most importantly to use their own initiative to solve problems and co-operate with others. Children learn to use tools, play, learn boundaries of behaviour; both physical and social, establish and grow in confidence, self-esteem and become self motivated.

Most of the National Curriculum can be applied to outdoor learning. Being in a new setting can capture the interest and imagination of children and make the message more accessible for different learning styles.

We are very fortunate at Willaston to have a beautiful environment in which the children can learn new skills and become more familiar with nature around them.

Each class will cover the following things all of which enhance teaching and learning of the core curriculum areas (with poor weather options.)

- Orienteering/Indoor map work – orienteering work in the hall.
- Gardening/Indoors planting herbs creating gardens in trays/growing seedlings to plant in grounds.
- Wildlife area work – habitats.
- Outdoor art.
- Woodland visit/local visit termly if possible.

Our Reception Class have free flow to the outdoors as part of their daily learning experiences. Our Year 1 class also have immediate access to the same area and regularly access Learning outside the Classroom as part of their curriculum teaching and learning routines.

### **Evaluation and Assessment**

The class teachers evaluate all learning experiences including Learning outside the Classroom on a lesson by lesson basis and build on children's prior learning to inform their next steps. The Forest School teacher evaluates all Forest School sessions in exactly the same way.

Children are regularly involved in peer and self assessment which enables children to understand what they can do and what they need to do next to further improve.

Pupil voice is regularly collected through assembly, school council, PSHE lessons, Learning Mentor, school monitoring, Governor monitoring. We actively listen to what children tell us in the evaluation and assessment of Learning outside the Classroom and act when and where appropriate.

Photographs provide evidence of assessment of children's skill acquisition which is collected in children's Learning Journeys, through display, forest school books, topic books, sketch books and displayed on the school website

## **Monitoring**

Learning outside the Classroom is monitored by the Headteacher and Governor representative and the Forest School Teacher. Monitoring Days focus on planning, the impact of teaching through learning walks, lesson observation, book scrutiny and pupil voice. School success and areas for further development are shared at a staff meeting and actions implemented to enhance future teaching and learning.

The Governing Body are informed of forthcoming residential visits and their potential impact on learning and benefits to children. Governors are encouraged to visit the class whilst on their residential in order that they may monitor the impact whilst it is taking place. The Headteacher or a member of the Senior Management Team endeavour to visit each group whilst on a residential in order to monitor the visit. The Headteacher will report to the Governors following each residential visit.

Headteacher monitors all risk assessments for all educational visits and residential visits.

## **Safeguarding**

Some activities when Learning outside the Classroom can be perceived as 'risky.' The Health and Safety Executive is clear on the benefits of exposing children to risk, that we wholeheartedly agree with:

*"Exposure to well managed risks helps children learn important life skills, including how to manage risks for themselves... children, in particular need to learn how to manage risks, and adventure activities such as rock climbing, sailing and canoeing are an ideal way of doing this."* **RSA Risk Commission Conference, 31 October 2007**

The key for us in school is that the risks are 'well managed'. There are a number of ways in which we achieve this:

**Training** - We ensure that staff have the opportunity to attend relevant up to date training. Two members of staff have attended Local Authority Educational Visits Co-Ordinator training. We currently have six fully qualified first aiders on the school staff. All other staff are trained in emergency aid. Our Forest School teacher is trained to Level 3.

**Risk Assessment** - Is carried out for every Learning outside the Classroom activity. The general Forest School risk assessment is reviewed and adapted on a lesson by lesson basis depending on the individual needs of the children, the weather, any changes to the area where the class will be working and the availability of the support staff. Some children have a specific risk assessment which is under constant review. Risk assessments for educational day visits and residential visits are usually conducted following a preliminary visit to the site and collaboratively with the other adults attending the visit. Risk assessments are uploaded electronically on the Local Authority 'Evolve' site where permission for residential visits to take place is granted.

The health and safety of children and adults is paramount at all times during Forest School sessions. Children will be regularly reminded of rules and safe practice. Children will be encouraged to learn to assess risks for themselves and take appropriate risks in activities. The Forest School leader will carry out continual risk assessments at the beginning of each term and a daily risk assessment will be carried out prior to each session.

Children will wear appropriate clothing to meet the needs of the weather. Spare clothing will be given to children in school should their own not be appropriate. Additional warm clothing will be carried in cold weather for children who get cold or wet.

**Parental Permission** - Is sought on an annual basis for Learning outside the Classroom, when it takes place in the immediate vicinity of school. This includes, Willaston Meadow, Johnston Recreation Ground, church, tennis courts, local shops.

For educational day visits a letter of explanation as to the educational purpose of the visit and details such as transport, return times and any special clothing or equipment required will be sent together with a separate permission slip which parents are required to sign. When applicable, parents are requested to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the visit.

Local Authority Form C is completed by parents prior to a residential visit. Prior to residential visits taking place, meetings with parents are organised or parents are given the opportunity to attend 'Drop In,' to allow any questions or queries about the proposed visit.

**Planning** - Staff at Willaston plan in teams. This allows for staff to share expertise, ideas, challenge, and be challenged when planning Learning outside the Classroom experiences. It allows for those 'What if?' discussions to take place which is important professional dialogue when managing potential risk. Adult /child ratios are organized within the LA guidelines and any accompanying adults are aware of their duties and roles. Responsibility for first aid whilst planning Learning outside the Classroom activities is established.

### **Staff/Pupil Ratios**

'Pupil to staff ratios for school trips are not prescribed in law. Those planning trips, on the basis of risk assessment, should decide the ratios, taking into account the activity to be undertaken and the age and maturity of the pupils.' Health and Safety Executive

However, in line with the DFEE 1998 Good Practice Guide 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits' we believe it is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- type of any accommodation;
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities;

- requirements of the organisation/location to be visited;
- competence and behaviour of pupils;
- first aid cover.

Staffing ratios for visits are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and the efficient use of resources. Group leaders should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group. There should be a minimum of one teacher in charge.

## **Swimming**

Group leaders should follow the recommended safe supervision levels at the pool for their pupils. Experienced and competent swimmers to use 1 adult to 20 children ratio and younger, inexperienced swimmers to follow the Cheshire ratio of 1 to 12 or less.

Teachers should monitor the risks of regular swimming activities and adjust supervision levels for their individual groups as necessary.

If considering the use of a swimming pool not used before or monitoring the hazards of a regularly used pool it is advisable to observe and check the following:

- Is there constant pool supervision by a sufficient number of qualified lifeguards?
- Where there is no lifeguard the group leader should stay at the poolside at a raised location. In such circumstances, the group leader, or a designated teacher, should have a relevant life saving award and be accompanied by an appropriate number of supervisors;
- Is the water temperature appropriate?
- Is the water clear?
- Are there signs clearly indicating the depth
- Is there a shallow end and is the water there shallow enough?
- Does the pool cater for pupils with disabilities?
- Does the deep end allow for safe diving?
- Is there a poolside telephone?
- Is there a resuscitator and other pieces of first aid and rescue equipment, and is there someone trained to use them?
- Is there a changing room for each sex?

This policy should be read alongside the:

First Aid Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Missing Child Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

DFE 1998 Good Practice Guide 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits'

Appendix A Forest School Emergency Procedures

Appendix B Forest School Fire Safety Policy

Appendix C Forest School Safe Use of Tools Policy

**Approved by Governors, May 2020**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. E. Hilditch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a distinct loop at the end of the last name.

**Signed Chair of Governors**



## Forest School Emergency Procedures

Willaston Primary School's priority is to keep all children safe.

### Nearest landing site for air ambulance:

Johnston's Recreation Ground Grid Ref. 328782

### Emergency Contact Numbers

Ambulance: 999

Willaston Surgery 0151 327 4593

Willaston CE Primary 0151 338 2421

First Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the rest of the group is safe.</li> <li>• If appropriate remove the danger or people from the danger.</li> <li>• Qualified first aider to check a – b- c, give first aid and call for assistance if necessary.</li> <li>• Call school and phone parents/carers.</li> <li>• Record details in school incident book at school.</li> <li>• Follow up with parents.</li> </ul>
Lost or Missing child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As soon as child is found to be missing, one or two adults make an immediate search of vicinity for maximum of 5 minutes and use 1, 2, 3 procedure.</li> <li>• Assemble rest of children and one adult keep safe and calm by playing a circle game.</li> <li>• Call school to alert, call police and parent/carer.</li> <li>• Follow school critical incident policy.</li> </ul>
Death or Serious Accident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Aid procedure as above.</li> <li>• Stay with casualty, ensure group is safe.</li> <li>• School to call parent/guardian.</li> <li>• Follow school critical incident policy.</li> </ul>
Uninvited Stranger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The intruder will be spoken to/challenged and asked to leave politely by Forest School Leader or adult.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a child is involved then the police should be called and the child/children involved should be removed from the situation and made to feel safe.</li> <li>• Follow School's critical incident procedure.</li> <li>• Parents/carers should be briefed by FS leader as soon as possible.</li> <li>• Inform School Child Welfare Officer and gain advice.</li> </ul>
Poor Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If trees blowing more than 20 degrees, or if group leader feels uncomfortable take emergency 'safe' route out ASAP.</li> <li>• Use indoor areas or shelter outdoors (away from trees) areas as alternative.</li> </ul>
Behaviour Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained members of staff to use de-escalation strategies.</li> <li>• Remove other children from area of risk (if deemed necessary).</li> <li>• If thought necessary, trained members of school staff to use appropriate restraint technique. As school policy on restraint.</li> <li>• Debrief child after calm down period.</li> <li>• Log incident.</li> <li>• Inform parents/carer.</li> </ul>



## Forest School Fire Safety Policy

Camp fires and using Kelly Kettles are an important part of Forest School. At Willaston CE Primary School we will ensure that all children and adults receive adequate instruction about keeping safe near fires and fire safety.

- Fires can only be lit following a safety assessment of the area. Fires will only be lit in the designated 'Fire Circle'.
- Fires should not be lit in very windy conditions.
- There will always be a trained adult present when the fire is lit.
- Children will be not allowed in the fire circle when a fire is lit unless instructed to do so.
- There will be a maximum of 4 people in the fire circle at any one time.
- There will always be water present to extinguish fires.
- A first aid kit, burns kit and fire blanket will always be near.
- Fire gloves should be worn.
- The respect position should be used when near the fire – on one knee to prevent falling into the fire.
- Long hair should be tied back.
- There must be no loose clothing.
- It is the responsibility of the Forest School leader to ensure that Fires are extinguished at the end of the session.
- Ashes will be scattered around to allow natural decomposition and to leave no trace.



## Forest School Safe use of Tools Policy

Using tools is an important part of Forest School as it enables children to develop new practical skills and develop their self confidence.

At Willaston School safety is paramount in all activities.

- Tool skills will be introduced and supervised by the qualified Forest School Level 3 Practitioner keeping to appropriate safety ratios. Children will be taught to use tools safely and treat them with respect.
- A first aid kit will always be on site during Forest School activities.

Tools will be introduced using a tool talk:

- What the tool is used for.
- The different parts of the tool and any safety covers.
- How the tool will be held, passed and carried.
- Where the tool will be kept when not in use – in tool box in designated space.
- The area required to use it safely (2 arms and a tool width away from next person).
- Whether gloves are being worn.

Children may start using tools such as potato peelers and progress to tools such as loppers and bow saws.

- Tools are to be kept in designated tool box (which can be locked).
- Tools are to be checked prior to use for any damage.
- Tools should be wiped down after use.
- Tools should be kept sharpened as blunt blades can be potentially more hazardous.
- Tools must be counted back in at the end of the session.

