



MUNTHAM HOUSE SCHOOL

FOREST SCHOOL POLICY

Date	Review Date	Coordinator	Nominated Governor
September 2022	September 2023	Mr Lance Bolton	Mrs Tracey Kirk

Overview

The nature of the boys at Muntham House School means the development of things such as social/communication skills and self-awareness might not develop as they would compare to their peers in a mainstream setting. In order to develop these skills, the extra intervention of a holistic approach is needed. This is undertaken in the form of Forest School.

Forest School allows each pupil to develop communication, resilience, responsibility (to themselves, peers, and the environment they are in, the ability to take calculated risks, problem-solving skills, creativity, and conflict resolution.

Pupils will also develop the responsibility to take account of their own actions, behaviours and also grow a positive attitude towards learning when in the classroom.

Intent, Implementation and Impact

Intent

Muntham House School aims to use the natural outdoor woodland area to offer the children an insight into the Forest School ethos. This approach to outdoor learning encourages children to become independent, use their imagination, take appropriate risks within boundaries, become creative, develop social skills and initiate learning for themselves. Forest School is a holistic approach to learning, incorporating children's individuality and develops their skills for lifelong learning. It can cover many areas of learning, including emotional aspects where self-esteem and self-confidence can grow and positive relationships with peers can be formed. Forest School explores the outdoors and the natural environment with practical, useful activities all year round. It develops peer learning with the adults providing support and enabling activities to take place. The child's interest will be at the heart of any activity.

Implementation

Forest School is an additional subject taught here at Muntham House School. Each session will be delivered by a level 3 qualified Forest School Leader. Depending on the year group being taught depends on whether the sessions are held in the upper or lower forest school area. Years 7 and 8 will be taught in the upper forest school area while the infants and juniors will be taught in the lower Forest School area.

Forest school is a 'pupil led subject', meaning the pupils are able to have large inputs to the content of lessons. However, due to the nature of the pupils at Muntham, there needs to remain a structure for each lesson which the Forest school Leader is responsible for. If pupils show a particular interest in an area of outdoor learning, then the Forest School Leader will facilitate this learning.

Forest School sessions for primary will be focused on appreciating the outdoors while exploring nature and the natural world and the benefits it can bring to them. To achieve this, primary pupils will take part in craft activities that allow them to explore the Forest School environment while developing a sense of curiosity.

The sessions will help pupils develop team and pair working skills to help with communication

and conflict management skills. Primary Forest School sessions will also focus on gross motor skills through the use of basic woodland tools. At this stage primary pupils will start to understand how the natural environment can have a positive impact on both their mental and physical health.

Year 7 and 8 Forest School sessions will build on the experiences pupils have had during previous years. At this stage the pupils will start to have much more independence in their learning and will be able to take control of what it is they want to learn, or gain from a subject like Forest School. Whilst important factors such as motor skills, social skills, communication, resilience, independence and self-esteem will continue to be worked on and developed, Pupils will also be challenged throughout their forest school lessons.

The Forest School Lead will keep regular contact with teachers from other subjects and, wherever possible, compliment, in forest school, what the Pupils are learning in their other subjects. This is to maintain cross-curricular links.

Impact

The progress of pupils is monitored through progress data. This is updated regularly and provides the Forest School Lead with the progress of pupils, which then influences the planning of future lessons.

Although there is no formal summative assessment for Forest Schools, pupils do undergo formative assessments. This is conducted each lesson through discussions, debates and questions to gauge the pupils understanding and also helps towards the input for progress data. Formative assessment can also provide the Forest School Lead with information for future planning and where pupils maybe struggling or behind.

The Forest School Lead identifies the training needs for the purpose of continual professional development (CPD) and makes every effort to conduct training when and where possible.

Aims

- To engage pupils as learners at many levels through linking topics with practical experience.
- To enable all pupils to be independent by providing them with the skills necessary to communicate effectively.
- To encourage creative thinking, independence, risk taking, self-esteem, social skills and self-confidence in their practical abilities.
- To develop a love of nature and appreciation of the outdoors.
- To link what pupils learn in the classroom (within other subjects) to practical outdoor learning; cross curricular.

Objectives

- For pupils to develop a sense of responsibility for their actions, while in the forest school setting.
- To develop gross motor skills, through repetition, by the use of various tools and activities.
- To present pupils with a broad range of challenges, both mentally and physically.

- To help pupils to engage, immerse, appreciate and love being in the natural environment.
- To enable pupils to communicate effectively using team or pairs work.
- To help pupils develop an understanding of how the natural world works, how humans have affected it and how we can help it.
- To build confidence within each pupil by offering managed risks that will push them out of their comfort zone.
- To help pupils understand how the natural environment can help with reducing stress and anxiety in their daily lives by allowing pupils time to reflect in an environment without walls.
- To develop resilience within each pupil through repetition of tasks slowly building on knowledge and experience.
- To help pupils understand the physical health benefits of being outdoors.

Teaching Guidelines

- Identify what skills individual pupils already possess and adapt teaching around this.
- Prepare lessons that will stretch all pupils and the different abilities.
- Have extension tasks for those pupils who are more capable.
- Encourage peer teaching where those more able support those less able.
- All pupils will complete the lesson fully from the safety brief to clearing the area.
- Pupils are to be formatively assessed during each lesson.
- Help pupils identify the areas of their personal development.
- All pupils are to work towards being autonomous in the forest school setting.

Curriculum Planning

- 1.1 The SoW for Forest School is designed in such a way that each lesson is set out in the order they will be taught. This allows for activities that take more than one lesson to be completed, to roll over to the next. This has been applied to those activities that are known to take more than one lesson. However, the nature of such a subject means some activities may roll over to the following week that wasn't expected to do so. To allow for this, not every lesson the Pupils participate in has been planned. The reason for this is to not only allow for lessons to roll over but to allow pupils the freedom to explore areas of the subject they wish to take further. The Forest School Leader will simply facilitate the pupil's self-directed study. The long-term planning is ultimately designed for maximum flexibility.
- 1.2 A SoW for all primary groups, years 7 and 8, have been written in such a way the following year compliments the previous year. The pupils' knowledge and experience will be built on and extended year-on-year.

Monitoring and Assessment

During each lesson, pupils will be formatively assessed to test their knowledge and understanding of work currently undertaken and work they have already completed.

This will be to reinforce the knowledge through the use of searching questions. Pupils will also be questioned on their work during practical lessons that will require them to reflect on their work.

The pupil's progress will be monitored through the Forest School progress data. Progress will be monitored and recorded by the Forest School Lead. The colour coding system on the progress data will allow the Forest School Lead to quickly assess which pupils might be struggling in what area and what work needs to take place to help them level up with their peers.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

Annually (or when the need arises) the effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed by the Head of English, the Head of Education, and the nominated Governor. Necessary recommendations for improvement will be made to the Governors.

Head of Education:	Anton van der Watt	Date:	30 th September 2022
Nominated Governor	Tracey Kirk	Date:	30 th September 2022