

# West Earlham Infant and Nursery School

## Outdoor Education Policy including Forest Schools.

*“Outdoor Education gives depth to the curriculum and makes an important contribution to student’s physical, personal and social education”*

*Ofsted – ‘Outdoor Education – Aspects of Good Practice’*

### **1. Statement:**

At West Earlham Infant and Nursery School we are committed to providing the best learning environment. We view children as individuals and recognise that they learn in different ways. As a result we emphasise the importance of high quality curriculum experiences and acknowledge the unique role that the outdoor environment has. At Forest School we aim create a shared understanding of the Forest School ethos amongst children, practitioners and volunteers, in order to create a feeling of belonging and security as well as enabling children to take managed risks, promoting self-esteem, confidence, curiosity and respect for the natural environment.

### **2. Objectives:**

- To ensure that the outdoor environment is fit for purpose.
- View the indoor and outdoor environment as a combined learning resource embedding outdoor learning into curriculum plans, and classroom activities.
- To use the outdoor environment to help make subjects, ideas and concepts come alive for children.
- To provide appropriate adult interaction and support to help children make progress in their learning.
- To provide regular Forest School session throughout Key Stage One.
- To ensure that children are physically active, developing fine and gross motor skills as well as those of observation and reflection.
- To develop respect and curiosity about the natural environment.

### **3. Curriculum**

In our School the outdoors environment is viewed as a key way of meeting the National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. Children access the outdoors in a similar way to that of the indoors in Early Years Foundation Stage, however it is understood that what it offers children in terms of learning is uniquely different. In Key Stage one the outdoor environment is used to enhance curriculum learning opportunities. Forest School sessions are based on the individual interests, skills and talents of the children however they are also linked to current curriculum themes. Planned activities are intended to offer a starting point for exploratory learning and are not to be used as a prescriptive teaching and learning tools. Wherever possible opportunities are sought to enhance learning and child and staff well being by using the outdoors.

### **4. Environmental Considerations**

During use of the outdoor environment adult’s model good practice; showing children how to care for and respect the environment, environmental issues are taken into account at each stage of the planning process. During Forest School’s a range of different natural materials are used to preserve the diversity of the natural environment.

### **5. Outdoor Education and Risk**

We adopt a benefits/risk approach to managing the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe. We will undertake carefully considered and comprehensive risk assessments of all outdoor provision including Forest School and these will be reviewed on an annual basis, or whenever significant change/development in the outdoor environment takes place. All children are actively taught to become responsible for themselves, others and the woodland in terms of health and safety. At Forest School rules and boundaries are negotiated and discussed with children and are reinforced continuously in order to allow children to manage their own risk. These are shared with supporting adults.

## **6. Assessment**

Outdoor learning is planned, monitored and assessed in the same way as other elements within the school curriculum, depending upon the nature of the activity.

## **Approval**

This policy has been reviewed in line with the 2010 Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Act. Due regard has been given to Equality.

This policy will be adopted in **May 2018**. The date of the next formal review will be **May 2021** and every three years thereafter, unless statutory legislation changes.

Policy approved by the Head Teacher of West Earlham Infant and Nursery School.