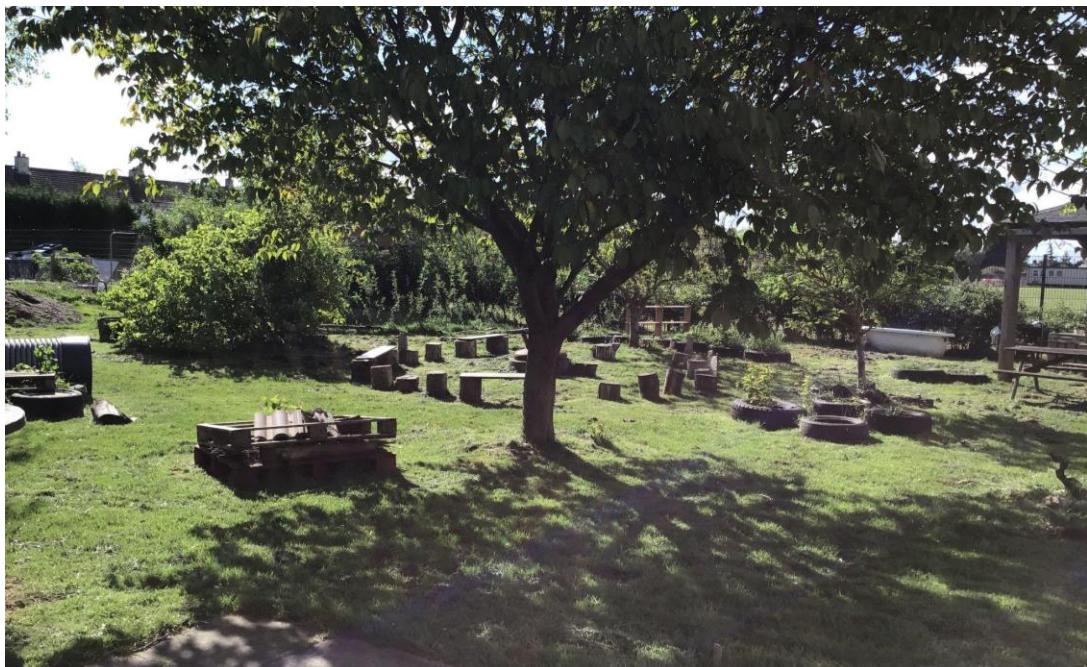




ALDERMAN JACOBS PRIMARY SCHOOL (ACADEMY TRUST)

Forest School Handbook

Policies and Procedures



What is Forest School?

Forest School is an inspirational child centred approach which offers children regular opportunities for holistic growth. It is a long term program which supports children to engage in healthy risk taking, develop self-confidence and self-esteem, through hands on learning experiences in an outdoor natural environment.

Forest School provides children freedom with responsibility to be creative, experiment, team build and build on their skills.

Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

At Alderman Jacobs Primary School, the health and safety of all children, staff and visitors is our primary concern. The following policies and procedures within this handbook are in addition to the main school policies and procedures and do not replace them.

Forest School sessions encourage children to develop their own risk management skills which will support them to become responsible for themselves and others around them. Children will be reminded of rules, expectations and safe play.

Risk assessments are carried out before each session and for the use of all tools and equipment.

There is a high staff to child ratio at Forest school, with ratios being a maximum of 1:8 children. This allows participants to safely experience high risk activities.

A high staff to child ratio also allows for the Forest School Leader and support staff to give individuals one-to-one attention when needed and lead small group work.

All activities carried out at Forest School are risk assessed and continually monitored throughout the activity. There is always a trained first aider present.

Roles and Responsibilities

Forest School Leader will have the overall responsibility for:

- Risk assessments for each session, pre-visit site checks and continuous safety monitoring.
- Planning for sessions, differentiation for individual children's needs.
- Ensuring that once on site rules are followed and continue to risk assess during the session.
- Ensuring necessary equipment is in good working order.
- Administration of first aid and checking first aid kit.
- Supervision of fire use, following procedures set out in this document.
- Supervision of tools use, cleaning and storing.

- Organising emergency procedures.
- Ensure site is left as it was found after every session

Staff will model good practice throughout the session, carry out delegated roles and responsibilities. They will support and extend children's learning where appropriate by asking extending questions, support children to manage their own risk, remind children of rules and boundaries, be aware of dangers within Forest School and monitor levels of safety at all times, support the Forest School leader to run the session.

Weather conditions:

Following the Forest Schools ethos of.....'there is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing!' Children are advised to dress warmly and wear waterproofs if necessary. However, there are some occasions where it may not be safe or practical to go ahead with a planned session due to extreme weather;

- In the case of high winds of 25mph or more determined by the met office online.
- In the case of extreme temperature determined by a met office amber weather warning.
- In the case of extreme cold of below '0' a session will be cancelled if it is near to this we will ensure children are appropriately dressed, sessions will be made shorter and activities will be planned to ensure children are kept moving

The Forest School Leader will assess weather conditions regularly and will evacuate the area if they become too extreme.

A Forest school session will be cancelled due to staff illness or other circumstances if it is going to compromise the adult to child ratio.

Behaviour

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to ensure all children feel safe, respected and valued.

The school *Behaviour and Discipline policy* will be followed, along with additional rules and expectations of Forest School.

Forest School rules and expectation will be set out in the first session and revisited thereafter in a 'Nurturing Forest School' talk.

If a child's behaviour puts themselves or other children at risk, *Children will be reminded of rules, expectations and safe play.*

However, if the unsafe behaviours continue and are deemed too dangerous the child/ren will return to their class under the supervision of an adult.

All the children are expected to follow the Forest School rules and behave accordingly. The children are expected to respect the plants and wildlife and help to maintain our Forest School area.

Safeguarding children

Alderman Jacobs Forest School takes safeguarding of children and young people seriously. The same guidelines will be adhered to as in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*.

Missing/ lost child from Forest School.

Boundaries and expectations are made clear to all children at the beginning of the session during our 'Nurturing Forest School' talk. The Forest School Leader and all staff members are responsible for maintaining regular headcounts throughout the session.

If a child is discovered missing, the group will be called back using '123 where are you?' The Forest School leader will search the Forest School, calling the child's name, whilst the other members of staff will keep the group together in the forest school classroom. Assistant Heads will be notified via the radio. When senior management are present support staff will take the group back into the school building. The Alderman Jacobs School *Critical Incident Policy-Procedure if a child is missing from the school site* will then be followed.

First Aid and Emergency procedure

The Forest School Leader is Pediatric first aid trained as well as some support staff having first aid training. First aid will be carried out following the *First Aid policy* using the Forest School First aid kit, located in the Forest School classroom.

Inhalers will be brought to the Forest School Area with children's names clearly labelled on an individual bag.

In the event of a serious accident, The Forest School lead or support staff will inform Assistant Heads via radio and an ambulance will be called via mobile telephone. The Forest School lead will remain with the casualty and another member of staff will take the children back into school.

In case of a serious accident involving the Forest School Leader, additional members of staff are aware of where the radio is located and will notify Assistant Heads. The children will be called using '123 where are you?' And asked to wait in the forest school classroom until more support arrives, so they can be escorted back into school.

Equal Opportunities

Alderman Jacobs Forest School strives to maintain equal opportunities for all children and young people. The Forest School Leader will aim to make the session as inclusive as possible and will adhere to Alderman Jacobs School, *Equality Information and Objectives policy*.

Parental consent

Parents/guardians are required to fill out a consent form before the start of Forest School covering the use of tools and fire with close supervision. Administration of first aid/medications, emergency contact details and the use of photography are covered by the permission granted at the start of school.

Transition to and from Forest School

Preschool and year one will travel to and from forest school through the garden gate and via the back of school.

Early Years to Year six will meet in the dining hall and will go to and from Forest school via the dining room door.

Toileting

All children will be asked to use the toilet before leaving their classroom and reminded they may not be able to use the toilet straight away.

Food and Eating Policy

Children will participate in simple cooking on the fire. Which can include: toasting marshmallows/ toasting crumpets, bread or cooking tinned soup.

Wild food foraging is not carried out with Preschool children as an activity. This is to avoid confusion amongst the children, with which foods are safe and unsafe.

Children are taught how to cook food safely following the activity risk assessment and fire policy. The Forest School leader has level 2 food hygiene.

A separate bowl of fresh water and antibacterial soap is available for children to wash their hands before and during food prep, consuming food and using cooking utensils.

Tools Handling Policy

Tool Usage

Alderman Jacobs Forest School is about scaffolding new skills. The children will use tools once the Forest School Leader and the group have gained each other's trust. The forest school has specific ratios for tool usage and Personal Protective Requirements for all persons when using any tools.

All tools are prepared and checked at the beginning of a session and these are completed by the Forest School Leader. If any of the tools are unsafe, they are marked with tape and placed in the locked shed so they are not used.

Tools available at Forest School are:

Bowsaw, Loppers, Billhook, Axe, Mallet, Gimlet/Palm drill, Potato peeler/knife,

- All tools are cleaned, maintained and stored securely by the Forest School Leader in the Forest School shed.
- Before use, the Forest School Leader will check the tools for damage, instability and sharpness.
- Tools are transported from the Forest School shed to the working space.
- How to use all the tools safely will be demonstrated in a group and then the activity will be carried out on a 1:1 basis with the Preschool children. Additional year groups will follow the tool ratio for the activity, under the Forest School leaders supervision and additional members of staff for support.
- Children will not use any tools until it is felt by the Forest School Lead they are ready to do so.

Tool Handling Policy - Axe

Tool used for	To Chop and split wood to a certain size
Transportation	Carry holding by the handle at your side with the blade facing the floor (handbag position) Forest school leader to transport to safe working area.
Inspection	Visual observation by Forest School Leader. Check for splits or cracks in the handle. Check join of the axe head to handle, by grasping handle and head and twisting. Check sharpness of the blade. Ensure user has no gloves or scarves on and long hair is tied back.
Personal Protective Equipment	Strong boots/footwear. Trousers.
Safety equipment	None

Ratio: adult/child	1:1 for all children
Working space	Forest school knee (one knee on the floor and the other bent) before removing the blade cover. Two arm lengths and tool length working space.
Method of use	Use a stable, level chopping block of wood. Use the axe ensuring to keep it straight/level hitting in a down motion with the mallet. Hold the axe at the end of the handle to ensure stability. When using with another person ensure good communication and eye contact is made before hitting with the mallet. When the axe is not being used, place the axe in an agreed safe place with blade facing against block of wood.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Use a wire brush and then wipe with an oily rag.
Storage	Store in locked shed.

Tool Handling Policy - Bowsaw

Tool used for:	Cutting green or dead wood. Blades are different for each type of wood. Gaps in the blade: green wood, Raker tooth blade. Uniformed blade: dead wood, peg tooth blade.
Safety Equipment	Blade guard when bowsaw is not in use. Plastic handle to hold. Store in locked shed.
Personal Protective Equipment	Glove on the hand that is not holding the saw. Long trousers/overalls. Working boots.
Ratio: adult/child	For younger children 1:1. Older children can be supervised when using the bow saw, 1:2 ratio.
Transportation	Carry holding the top and at your side with the blade facing down with the blade cover on. Pass to other people using the handle.
Working Space	Two arm lengths and tool length between others using tools. Forest school knee position.

Method of Use	Secure the wood and lean on a low sturdy piece of wood or low tree stump. Participants need to be facing each other. One person holds the handle and one person holds the opposite end, the bowsaw should pass along the users thigh. Before cutting, make eye contact with each other. Then three backwards strokes to start the cut followed by me to you action to complete the cut. When finishing the cut make sure the blade is on the floor in case when working with children, they go to grab the wood quickly.
Inspection	Check blade is secure, not damaged and is not blunt. Check blade cover is not broken and is effective.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Clean the blade after use, with a wire brush and cloth some oil. Replace blade guard if it's broken.
Storage	Store with the blade guard on in a locked shed.

Tool Handling Policy - Gimlet /Palm drill

Tool used for	To drill holes in to green or dead wood to the size of the gimlet or palm drill.
Safety Equipment	Handle to use to turn.
Personal Protective Equipment	Glove on the hand which is holding the wood.
Ratio adult/child	1:1 with younger children. The older children supervised 1:4, working in pairs.
Transportation	Carry at side with drill bit pointing towards the ground in a gloved hand.
Working Space	Two arm length and the length of the tool. Drill into the ground of a low old tree stump. In the forest school knee position.
Method of Use	Mark the wood where you are going to drill, turning the drill clockwise once. Then apply more pressure to the top of the gimlet/palm drill turning clockwise. Removing the drills turn anti clockwise pulling upwards.
Inspection	Check the drills are not damaged.

Cleaning and Maintenance	Wipe clean using an oiled cloth making sure the handle is kept dry.
Storage	Store in the shed in a tin with a dry cloth to absorb moisture.

Tool Handling Policy - Bill hook

Purpose	Used for splitting green wood. Hedge laying and coppicing.
Safety Equipment	Wrap blade in a cloth when not in use. Handle to hold.
Personal Protective Equipment	Glove on hand that is holding the blade. (non-working hand) Long trousers, overalls and boots.
Ratio: adult/child	1:1 for young children, working with an adult holding the blade, children can control hitting with the mallet. Older children 1:2 when safe working in pairs.
Transportation	Carry covered with cloth, at side with the cutting edge facing down. Pass using the handle.
Working Space	Two arm length and the length of the tool. A secure base to stand an object for cutting, such as a low tree stump.
Method of Use	Log that is going to split is placed on a secure surface, a billhook is placed on top where you want to cut and then hit with a wooden mallet. Making eye contact with the person using the mallet and giving them instruction, as to whether to hit soft, hard or medium.
Inspection	Check the handle is not loose. Blade is not blunt before use.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Clean the blade after use to remove sap. Get the blade sharp using a cigar sharpening stone.
Storage	Wrap in a cloth and store tray in locked shed.

Tool Handling Policy - Mallet

Purpose	For striking equipment that are cutting or going into wood, ground.
Safety Equipment	Handle to hold.
Personal Protective Equipment	Glove on hand that is holding wood.
Ratio: Adult/child	Supervision for all children 1:2.

Transportation	Carry by the handle at side, with head facing down and not swing around.
Working Space	Two arm lengths and tool length from others.
Method of Use	Hold handle and use a striking action so that the head contacts the object.
Inspection	Check for damage such as handle not secure.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Wipe away dirt and lose bits of wood. If broken, create another mallet.
Storage	In a tool bag in shed.

Tool Handling Policy - Loppers

Purpose	To cut branches up to approximately 2cm diameter (smaller than your thumb)
Safety Equipment	Handles to hold. Always close the loppers when finished.
Personal Protective Equipment	Glove on hand holding the wood. Long trousers/overalls, strong boots.
Ratio: adult/child	1:1 for younger children. Older children can work in pairs with adult supervision.
Transportation	Carry at your side with your hand on the bottom shaft. Pass to others handles first.
Working Space	Two arms length plus the tool, trip hazards and obstruction.
Method of Use	Measure the piece you want to cut, using your thumb as an indicator. Use the length of the shaft to get as much leverage as possible. Ensure wood is as far into the jaws as possible and then cut, pulling handles together.
Inspection	Check grips are not damaged or loose. Make sure the extension locks. The cutting edge is clean, hinge free to open and close sufficiently..
Cleaning and Maintenance	Clean cutting edge after use. Wash and clean. Use a wire brush to clean the blade. And sharpen using a flat file. Oil using a cloth.
Storage	Store in a tool bag and in a dry shed/storage unit.

Tool Handling Policy - Trowel/Spade

Purpose	For digging and moving soil, sand, stones.
Safety Equipment	Handle to hold.
Personal Protective Equipment	Overalls/long trousers and boots.
Ratio: adult/child	Supervision of all children.
Transportation	Carry by handle at side, not swinging around and not dragging spades along the floor.
Working Space	Two arm length and tool length away from others. Check for trips/hazards.
Method of Use	Apply pressure and push the spade/trowel into the ground and move soil, sand etc safely from one place to another.
Inspection	Check handles are not loose from spade end, cracked or damaged.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Wash dirt off periodically and check for damage.
Storage	Tray in the shed.

Tool Handling Policy - Bit and Brace

Purpose	Used to drill holes into green or dead wood, up to a size depending on the drill bit size.
Safety Equipment	When not being used, the drill bit should not be in the chuck and stored in a container.
Personal Protective Equipment	Gloves on both hands if required. One glove should be worn when holding the piece of wood that the drill bit is going into.
Ratio: Adult: child	1:1 for younger children. Older children can work together with adult supervision.
Transportation	Carry by their side, ensuring that the drill bit is removed and carried in a gloved hand.
Working Space	Drill into a flat piece of wood or the ground. Ensure that two arm length and the length of the bit and brace away from others. Forest school knee position.

Method of Use	<p>Find a firm base close to the ground.</p> <p>Secure the drill bit in the chuck before using and make sure that is tightly fitted.</p> <p>Line up the drill and the wood that is going to be drilled. Use one hand to apply pressure to the top of the drill, use the other gloved hand to hold the piece of wood.</p> <p>The other person can turn the U-shaped crank handle in a clockwise position.</p> <p>If wanted, the role of who holds the wood can be changed. Ensuring that the person wears a glove when holding the wood.</p> <p>When removing drill from wood, continue turning clockwise but pull up instead of applying pressure.</p>
Inspection	Check the drill bit for damage and the chuck for wear, paying attention to how it holds the drill bit.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Lubricate all moving parts of the bit and brace to remove sawdust or dirt. Do not use it if the chuck is worn. Use non damaged drill bits.
Storage	Store drill bits in container, and bit and brace in a tool bag.

Tool Handling Policy - Potato Peeler/knife

Purpose	To shape, de-bark and carve wood.
Safety Equipment	Hold the handle. Knife guard.
Personal Protective Equipment	Glove on the holding hand. Long trousers/overalls

Ratio: Adult/child	Potato peeler 1:4 for younger children 1:6 for older children	Knife 1:1 for younger children 1:3 for older children
Transportation	Make sure that the bladed end is pointing towards the floor and held at your side using the handle , if the knife has a guard keep it on unless in use . Pass using the handle.	
Working Space	Two arm lengths and the tool distance from the others. Sitting position with elbows on knees whittling to one side of the legs	
Method of Use	Sitting position. Elbows on knees in a locked position into the body and move the blade away from the body.	

Inspection	Check the blade is secure, and the handle is not loose at join. Check blade is not blunt before use.
Cleaning and Maintenance	Wash and clean off sap, clean with a wire brush. Keep blade sharp using a wet flat sharpening stone then oil
Storage	Store in a locked container/knife safe in a locked shed.

Fire Safety

Fires will only be lit by a Forest School Leader following the Fire Safety Policy when the children are ready.

Considerations before having a fire:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wind direction • No combustible materials near by • No overhanging branches • Ground conditions (very dry) • Fires will be lit in the firepit or Kelly kettle in the fire square.
Safe sitting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire will be lit by the Forest School Leader when the leader feels confident the group understands and are able to carry out instructions safely. • The fire will be lit in the designated fire square. The area will be cleared of dried leaves and wood. • A fire pit will be used to prevent the spread of fire. • Fires will be lit using the fire steel, cotton wool and Vaseline. They will be stored in a tool box. • The fire will never be left unattended. • A bucket of water will be available before the fire is lit in case of an emergency burn/scald, a fire blanket and a watering can will be available to

		extinguish the fire.	
Safe extinguishing:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pour water over gently using a watering can Stir and spread out the ambers of the fire Check the fire is out before disposing in the compost/hedge row. 	
Emergency:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alderman Jacob's Fire Safety and Evacuation Policy will be followed in an emergency. 	

Created/Reviewed <i>/Updated</i>		Ratified		Review Frequency	Next Review Date	Signed by	
By	Date	By	Date			Head	Chair
Zoe Whitwell	Summer 2024	Local Governance Committee	22 nd April 2024	2 Years	Summer 2026		