



Creating a chance to SHINE everyday

Wild Learning Policy

This policy was ratified: May 2018

And will be reviewed: May 2021

Signed by Headteacher: Samantha Welsby

Signed by Chair: Dave McWhirter

Aims

This policy sets out the aims, objectives, benefits and procedures in order for Wild Learning to be implemented effectively. The inclusion of wild learning in the curriculum at Newbold and Tredington is to widen opportunities for all pupils and enable pupils to develop skills outside of the National Curriculum (2014). Wild Learning gives children the opportunity to take risks in a controlled and safe environment under the supervision of known and trusted adults. Wild Learning wants to promote the voice of the child (The Children Act 2004) through a range of activities that are carefully planned and adapted, where necessary, to the needs of the child(ren). Wild learning has proven benefits for vulnerable learners as it follows the same principles and aims of Forest School. See <https://www.forestschoollassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/> for more information.

1. Inclusion

Currently all pupils at the Tredington site have weekly sessions for Wild Learning. Children are asked to provide wellies and waterproof clothing for these sessions as often the weather is unpredictable. We aim to go out in all weathers, but it is up to the Wild Learning coordinator to decide if it is safe to do so.

The sessions are carefully planned to include all children and all abilities. If required, special provisions can be made for those with physical or SEN needs.

2. Health and safety

In accordance with Health and safety at work Act (1974), children will be provided with toileting, hand washing and drinking facilities. They will also be provided with PPE for activities, and parents / carers will provide their wellies and waterproofs for general wear. If parents / carers do not provide these, it may affect their ability to join in activities. All children will start the session with 'sticky elbows' where children are counted. This will be repeated at the end of the session. The Wild Learning leader may also call for this during a mini plenary. In the event of a missing child the existing school policy will be followed.

The safety of all children and adults is of paramount importance in these sessions. Should an adult feel a child(ren) is not behaving safely or appropriately, the behaviour policy will be followed and if necessary, the child(ren) will not continue in the session. It may also affect their participation in future sessions.

Before and after every session, the area is checked for items that could cause injury or pose a potential hazard. These items will be either removed if possible, or children and adults will be made aware of them before the session commences.

Children must adhere to rules whilst outside which they are reminded of at the beginning of each session.

Risk assessments for the site, tools and activities are kept and updated when necessary.

PPE is provided by the parents/ /carers (wellies and waterproofs), with the exception of gloves, which are part of the resources we use in sessions.

Children are to wash their hands after each session and are able to do so during sessions if they wish.

In the unlikely event of a serious or fatal accident, a RIDDOR (2013) report will be completed in line with existing health and safety policies of the school.

All adults hold up to date first aid certificates. In the event of first aid being needed, children are sent inside to receive this from a staff member inside so as not to compromise the safety of the others in the session. If needed, another child or adult may escort a child inside. In extreme cases, all activities will stop if an emergency occurs. As the wild learning site is on school grounds and close to the main building, first aid will be administered in the school building. In extreme cases additional staff may be alerted to the wild learning area by blowing a whistle. These accidents will be recorded in the accident record book, and where necessary, parents / carers will be notified. (See appendix 1 for procedures)

A record of the plants and trees in the wild learning area will kept so, in the unlikely event of a child ingesting or having a reaction, we will be able to identify its source. If any children have allergies to any plants or trees in the wild learning area these will be removed in a controlled approach and inline with current government procedures.

3. Use of tools

Part of wild learning is teaching children to use and clean tools safely. Children will be supervised in small groups when using tools and will follow the agreed 'safe working distance' rules; stances for holding/using tools; storing tools when not in use and safe cleaning of tools.

All children will be reminded of these procedures before using tools.

4. Daily procedures

Before every session, the wild learning leader will check the area by walking around and through it. Any hazards will be noted in a record book and removed where possible, or children / adults will be made aware of them before use.

The wild learning leader will also assess if it is safe to use the area after adverse weather conditions.

The area will also be checked after sessions to ensue all tools and resources have been put away safely.

5. Storage of tools

The majority of equipment will be kept in the locked shed on the school field. Knives, axes and fire lighting boxes will be kept in school, inside the lockable cupboard in the Head's office.

6. Fire safety

As stated earlier, the fire boxes will be kept in the locked cupboard in the Head's office. Fires will be included in the activities when the wild learning leader feels the children can be trusted and are confident in the procedures involved with lighting and extinguishing fires. No fire will be left unattended. Children will only light fires under supervision in the designated fire pit area where 2 buckets of water will be full, next the fire pit for extinguishing.

7. Toileting, handwashing and drinks

Children will go back into the main school building to use the toilets after asking an adult first. Children may take their water bottles outside with them to keep them hydrated whilst outside.

Bowls of water will be taken outside for children to wash their hands in. After sessions all children are to wash their hands again.

Appendix 1

Tool talk

The safe working distance for all tools is 2 arms length, plus the length of the tool. This is only different when using saws, bit and brace, bill hook/axe and mallet and loppers. These tools will require two people. Gloves should be worn on the supporting / resting hand; not the working hand (the hand holding the tool) as it is the supporting hand that would be more likely to be cut or hit.

When using knives, a glove can be worn on the supporting hand, but movements are made away from the body.

Wood / branches should be no thicker than a thumb for loppers. Gloves would not be needed when using loppers, however another person, who may be supporting the branch, may wear them to hold the branch.

When using a saw it is important to be kneeling on one knee, with the other bent upwards, this is referred to as 'forest school knee' this is so should the saw 'jump' you are able to move out of the way quickly and safely. This position can be used for most tools. The size of wood to be used for sawing should be no thicker than a wrist, otherwise it can take a long time and may damage tools.

A tree stump is advisable to be used when using a knife, mallet, axe, bill hook or bit and brace. This allows the user to lean on a steady flat surface when using the tool. The forest school knee should be used, or sitting with a lower stump between the knees so the knife is still moving downwards and away from the body.

When carrying tools safely it is important to leave on any covers or sheaths. All blades should be facing downwards so if they are dropped they will fall into the ground. When carrying a saw, hold it by the curved arch that is above the blade, rather than the handle, as again if it is dropped, it will fall onto the blade down.

When taking a break from using tools, it is important to place them on a visible flat surface and make others around you aware of the tool. Covers and sheaths should be replaced if not using the tool for a period of time. If you have finished using the tool, it should be cleaned and/or sharpened and placed back in the tool bag with any cloths or covers replaced. All tools should be counted before and after use.