Kelloe Primary School
Wild at Heart
Forest School Policy
2018-2019

Headteacher: Mr Paul Newton

Chair of Governors: Mrs Carol Ayre
Contents

- Introduction.................................................................p.3
- Purpose & Aims...........................................................p.4
- Environmental Considerations and Conservation..............p.4
- Legislation.......................................................................p.5
- Links with existing School Policies..................................p.7
- Health and Safety..........................................................p.7
- Emergency Action Plan....................................................p.8
- Risk Assessments and Risk management...........................p.9
- Policy and Procedures for Lighting Fires............................p.10
- Communication.............................................................p.11
- The Role of the Wild at Heart (Forest School) Leader......p.11
- Wild at Heart Rules.........................................................p.11
- Routines and Procedures for Wild at Heart.........................p.11-12
- Essential Equipment for Wild at Heart.............................p.12-13
- Clothing Requirements...................................................p.13
- Toileting Consideration..................................................p.13
“It would not be too bold to assert that direct and indirect experience of nature has been and may possibly remain a critical component in human physical, emotional, intellectual, and even moral development.” (Kahn and Kellert, 2002, p. vii).

Introduction

Forest School is a unique and inspirational learning approach that offers children of all ages and abilities regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment. Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners, as well as offering opportunities to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves. This approach fully supports our aims, ethos and vision at Kellow Primary School:

Aims, Ethos and Vision:

Our Vision

At Kellow Primary School, children are valued as individuals and experience high-quality learning, which is dynamic, imaginative and creative. All learning is relevant to the children’s lives and encourages strong home-school links. Through stimulating teaching methods and resources, pupils are encouraged to take risks and to challenge themselves. All children are supported to develop a deeper understanding of self, enabling them to grow into responsible members of society.

Our Aims:

- Provide an environment, which is stimulating and secure
- Encourage social, spiritual and moral development whilst promoting caring and co-operative attitudes
- Help children to become effective communicators
- Develop self-reliance, self-motivation, self-confidence and self-esteem
- Help children achieve a wide experience and knowledge
- Encourage pupils to learn to value and be valued as individuals
- Promote good behaviour within agreed and understood rules
**Purpose/Aims of Wild at Heart**

- To provide children with regular experiences which encourage an appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.
- To develop as effective communicators and team players, working collaboratively and cooperatively in groups and to respect each other.
- To promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners through the setting of small achievable tasks.
- To assess and take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Thus creating a learning community where deep-level learning and progression are the norm.

**Environmental Considerations and Conservation:**

Encouraging children to care for and foster a relationship with the environment is one of the principle aims of Wild at Heart. We will strive to achieve this through regular, personal experiences in order to develop long-term, environmentally sustainable attitudes and practices in staff, learners and the wider community.

The children are taught about respect and responsibility for the world around them and to be aware of conservation issues of the local wild area. The children will develop a clear understanding of their duty to look after our site, preserve and protect the natural environment and “leave only footprints behind”. We will access and utilise open-ended, natural resources for inspiration and to encourage intrinsic motivation.

We will endeavour to closely monitor our ecological impact and work within a sustainable site management plan agreed between the landowner/manager, the forest school practitioner and the learners. This will also be achieved through detailed session plans, evaluation and careful reference to our Woodland Management Plan and Ecological Impact Assessment.

Wherever possible, reclaimed, recycled and sustainable resources will be used to maintain and develop our forest school site.
Legislation and Forest School


“Forestry in England: Seeing the wood for the trees” (House of commons, 2017): Active woodland management is the process by which landowners intervene to sustain the natural environment and is important to not only to help monitor and protect against disease, but to increase the biodiversity of our woods by allowing light into them to enable other plants, insects and woodland species to thrive.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974:
This act makes it a statutory that an employer has a duty to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare at work of their employees (in the case of schools adults and children) and any equipment used by them, and that employees are responsible for the Health and Safety of themselves and others they may be affected by their acts. The risk assessments carried out for Wild at Heart are written with the Health and Safety of all participants in mind; children, volunteers and members of staff.

The Children’s Act 1989:
The Children’s Act 1989, makes it important to consider adult ratios for all activities, equal opportunities and access, clear communication with parents and DSB checks for staff and regular volunteers. Routines and procedures at Wild at Heart are developed with reference to this act and safeguarding practices.
Green woodworking and habitat management provide children with a range of exceptionally rich learning experiences encompassing understanding habitats and our impact on the natural world, learning risk and developing practical skills. By setting small achievable tasks, the children are never put in a position where he/she will fail, so success is attained, and self-esteem may flourish. It is a child-centred and child-led programme that provides the opportunity for the children to use their personal learning style to complete tasks, supported by the Forest School leader and their peers.

Children can harvest green wood in a sustainable manner to minimise impact on woodland ecology. They gain this understanding through real life learning experiences in a woodland site or in our school grounds. Green woodworking activities allow opportunities for children to practice practical woodworking and DT skills seeing the whole process from harvesting raw materials through to final piece of work.

Children learn how to identify risk and develop their risk analysis and management skills as they use tools in a supported environment. Research shows that children are not having opportunities to develop essential skills in assessing risk and keeping themselves safe, skills that children developed more holistically through unsupervised play in past times.

Tools activities at Forest School also allow children to be exposed to real risks with close supervision and guidance to keep them safe.
Kelloe Primary School Policies and Wild at Heart

Staff attending Wild at Heart sessions should be familiar with the following school policies:
* Health and Safety Policy
* First Aid policy
* Risk Assessment Policy and Risk Assessments particular to Forest School
* Asthma Policy if asthmatics are attending sessions
* Food Policy
* Safeguarding Policy
* Behaviour Policy
* Equality & Inclusion Policy

Paper copies are included in the back of the school copy of the Wild at Heart Forest School Handbook, kept in the Forest School leader’s file. Particular attention is paid to the following areas:

Health and Safety
The Wild at Heart Forest School programme supports children to develop responsibility for themselves and others in relation to health and self-care. Children will be taught early risk management strategies that will prompt consideration of the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

A site risk assessment has been carried out and a copy is held in the Forest School leader’s file in school. The Forest School Leader has an up-to-date certificate in ITC Paediatric First Aid and Forest School specific First Aid and is in charge of all first aid procedures and arrangements on site. Additional staff have also had first aid training. A first aid kit and mobile are taken on all sessions. In the case of an accident or injury requiring further assistance, an emergency contact form is kept in the Office. The school will contact the parents.

Fires are a valuable part of the Forest School experience but will only be lit according to the procedures outlined below.

Safeguarding
Wild at Heart sessions are led by a trained Forest School Leader, supported by members of staff and parent volunteers. Everyone involved in WAH is fully briefed on health and safety, risk assessment of sites and activities. Staff and volunteers are made aware of the relevant school policies and procedures and ensure that they adhere to the guidance contained in
them.  
All Kelloe staff and regular volunteers have current CRB checks.  
Any concerns about a child’s physical or mental well-being will be shared with our named Safeguarding Officers and a Cause for Concern sheet will be filled in as soon as possible, so that our school’s Safeguarding Policy can then be followed.  
Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Any concerns should only be shared with those who need to know such as the class teacher who can then ensure the correct channels are then informed.

**Equality and Inclusion**
During Wild at Heart all persons are treated equally. We aim to provide a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.

**Behaviour**
At Wild at Heart we operate within the Behaviour Policy of Kelloe. We praise and reward good behaviour using the established school systems. When a child’s behaviour threatens the well being of him/herself or others, and he/she does not respond to a verbal warning, he/she may be returned to school.

**Medical and Emergency Contact Details**
All Medical Care Plans and Emergency contact details are held in the School Office.

**Emergency Action Plan**
This EAP (Emergency Action Plan) is kept in the Forest School File at all times. In the event of an emergency and a child needs to be taken to hospital a member of staff would direct the emergency services to the casualty, Georgina Carr, as ITC First Aider, would attend to the casualty until the Emergency Services arrive. The casualty would be accompanied to hospital by a member of school staff. The Class teacher or Forest School Assistant would oversee the rest of the group are counted and prepared to return to school.

The school office would be informed after dialling the Emergency Services and assistance to return back to school requested if necessary. The adult accompanying the casualty would return to school once the child was in the care of their parents/carers.

In the event of an adult needing emergency attention it must be judged whether they need to be accompanied or support may be required. Decisions taken must ensure the safety of the children within the group and accompanying adults.

In the event of the Forest School Leader needing emergency assistance it would be expected for the Class teacher or Assisting staff to return the children to school and
another adult would stay with the casualty.
Accident and incident forms would be completed back at school.
Minor injuries would be treated as they would within school and recorded and
reported to parents and carers in line with school policy.

Location of Forest School Site:
Kelloe School Grounds.

**Risk Assessments and Risk Management**
Risk assessments are in place to cover the following:
- Wild at Heart Site Assessment
- Wild at Heart sessions: including Sensory Activities, Minibeasts and Shelter building
- Tool use
- Campfire Activities
These Risk Assessments can be found in the Wild at Heart Handbook and in the Coordinator’s File.

**Safety Sweep and checklists**
The Forest School leader will carry out a thorough sweep of the site for hazards and risks before the group enter the site and appropriate measures will be put in place, e.g. the removal of an object, or warning the group of specific dangers related to the site. The safety sweep will be recorded on a safety sweep form and kept in the Wild at Heart file.

**Policy and Procedures for Use of Tools and Equipment at Wild At Heart**

Tools and safe use of tools are an important part of Wild at Heart. Their use will be carefully managed by the Wild at Heart Leader with an area of the site set aside for tool use.
- Introduction to each tool will be by an official ‘Tool talk’. (These can be found in the Wild at Heart File).
- Good practice will be demonstrated by the Wild at Heart Leaders at all times.
- Tools will be introduced to the children only when the Wild at Heart Leader feels the children are ready.
- All tools will be used on a 1:1 adult to child ratio when using them.
- Risk assessments of tool use are carried out in addition to other Wild at Heart activities and reviewed on a regular basis.
- It is not expected for any other adult attending Wild at Heart to use tools with children, only the Wild at Heart Leader.
• All tools will be returned to the tool bag and locked away at the end of each session. This is the Wild at Heart Leaders responsibility.
• All resources and equipment are checked regularly.
• Any unsafe, worn out, dirty or damaged equipment is repaired and cleaned, or replaced.

**Policy and Procedures for Lighting Fires at Wild at Heart**

Before lighting a fire at Forest School, the following should be in place:
Children must have a secure knowledge of log circle safety:

**Stand behind the log**
**Step over and sit down on log**
**Stand up, turn around and step over log**
**Children are not allowed to cross the circle or step into the circle**
The agreement of Mr Newton, Head Teacher.
In addition to the other resources, we will take a large container full of water.

**When lighting a fire:**
• Only a trained Forest School Practitioner (Georgina Carr) will take responsibility for the fire. This will be their sole responsibility for the session. They shall be responsible for lighting it, manning it while it is burning and putting it out at the end of the session.
• The fire shall be contained within the area marked out within the centre of the log circle.
The ground around shall be cleared of flammable material.
• Check for low overhanging trees.
• Have a container of water beside the fire to put it out and deal with burns.
• The flames of the fire should never reach higher than the knee.
• While the fire is being lit, the children will be engaged in activities elsewhere.
• The fire will be extinguished before the session ends.
• NO fires will be lit during peak fire risk periods.
All adults are aware of the following when cooking and eating at Wild at Heart:
• Everyone should wipe their hands before handling food and drink.
• All foods are stored in air tight containers.
• Only clean equipment is used.
• Everyone is aware of any special dietary needs of the children who have food allergies and any medication and copies of Care Plans will be in the Office.
• Food will be cooked correctly.
• All equipment and waste is cleared away.
The Forest School Leader will follow the Effective Group Management Procedures outlined in the Wild at Heart Handbook.

**The role of the Wild at Heart Leaders**

- The Wild at Heart Leader is a trained Level 3 Forest School Practitioner and holds an up to date ITC Outdoor First Aid certificate. They are responsible for organising the planning and running all Forest School sessions.
- The Forest School leader has the safety of the children uppermost at all times. The leader will carry out a detailed safety check before each session and comply with health and safety risk assessments.
- The leader will ensure that all documentation is relevant and up to date.
- The leader will carry an emergency pack at all times.
- The leader is responsible for all equipment and will ensure that it is checked before use and returned to the resource area after use.
- The Forest School leader will keep an accident book and keep parents fully informed of any incidents that may occur during a session, eg, trips, falls, stings, etc.

**Designated Person Responsibility for each Wild at Heart session**

Overall responsibility for the session – Georgina Carr
(Risk assessments, safety sweep, and essential equipment, rucksack, planning, observations and next steps for learning).
Some FS and KS1 sessions will be taken by the class teacher after training, but they will follow planning from Georgina Carr and will **not** be allowed any tool use or Campfires.

**Communication**

Wild at Heart takes place in KS2 on Thursdays. KS1 times are agreed with class teachers. Information is sent home to parents before the start of a series of sessions.

**Wild at Heart Rules**

- Keep your hands away from your mouth
- Leave things to grow
- Keep within the set boundaries

**Routines and Procedures For Wild at Heart**

Preparation - The Wild at Heart Leader (Georgina Carr) will do a sweep of the site prior to the weekly sessions.
G Carr will check the Happy sack/Trolley contains all essential items. The
Emergency Action Plan is kept in the Forest School File and all Adults are aware of this. First Aid kit, inhalers, wipes and spare hats and gloves (children’s and adults) are kept in the Happy sack. The tool bag, water containers and other equipment will be taken as appropriate. The WAH Designated Leader will carry the rucksack/trolley to the site.

Waterproofs will be taken to the classroom prior to session. Prior to the session children will be toileted, put on their waterproofs. WAH safety rules will be shared with the group. Children will put wellies on the outside the classroom door and walk in pairs to the site.

During the session children participate in a variety of activities which are totally inclusive, thus catering for all ability levels. They are taught a variety of woodland skills through practical hands on activities. They also learn how to light fires safely. The children learn the care and safe use of a wide range of tools. This is a tightly supervised activity on a 1:1 ratio of adult to children. It is introduced gradually in small steps. Children are encouraged to listen attentively to instructions and to take responsibility for their actions. This is achieved by games that also encourage respect for the environment.

Back at school children will remove wellies out doors or standing on sheeting (if very wet), before entering the classroom.

**After the session**, equipment will be washed and stored as appropriate. Waterproofs will be dried and hung on rails. Flasks and water containers will be emptied and cleaned out. Tools (if taken) will be cleaned and locked away in the WAH storage area. The essential equipment Happy sack/Trolley will be put away and any items used replaced.

**Cancelling Wild at Heart**

WAH may need to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions, e.g. high winds, or blizzards.

Adapted classroom activities will take place instead.

Wild at Heart may not be able to go ahead if there are not enough adults to accompany us. If no replacement adult can be found then the session will be cancelled. The session may also be cancelled if the Wild at Heart Leader (Georgina) or Assistant Leader is unable to attend. Campfires cannot take place without a Qualified Forest School Leader – Georgina Carr: Level 3 Forest School Practitioner.

**Essential Equipment Needed at Wild at Heart sessions**

A rucksack – The Happy Sack - containing the following essential items will always accompany the group:

- EAP (Emergency Action Plan)
- Mobile phone
- Medical Care Plans
- Newspaper
- Matches (Campfire sessions only)
- Wet wipes
Protective gloves
Sun cream
First Aid Kit
Inhalers
Carry bag for dirty / wet items
Spare hat & gloves for children and adults
We would also take a ground sheet and string to erect a shelter as needed.

Clothing Requirements For Wild at Heart
The following clothing requirements are for everyone attending a Forest School session (even adult volunteers).
Woolly hat/sunhat
Gloves
Jacket/waterproof coat
Fleece/sweatshirt
Waterproof trousers
Spare socks
Stout shoes/wellies/boots

Toileting considerations
All children will visit the toilet before leaving the Classroom. Any children needing the toilet during the session will use the nearest school toilets. KS2 children are able to go unattended, KS1 and FS must be accompanied by an adult.

This Wild at Heart Policy has been written in agreement with the Head Teacher, Staff and Governors of Kelloe School.

It will be reviewed annually.