



www.rowhedgeunder5s.co.uk

Rowhedge Village Hall, Rectory Road, Rowhedge, Colchester CO5 7HX

Tel: 01206 729042 (term time only) Email: rowhedgeunder5s@hotmail.co.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1159138 Registered Ofsted Number: 489490



Forest School Policy

Setting up & Packing away

All staff attending will have previously visited the site to become familiar with the area. All volunteers and parent helpers will have read the full policy and handbook, signatures are required to confirm they have done this.

- The Forest leader will liaise with management to ensure all parents receive via letter/email the visit dates, and clothing requirements at the start of term.
- Forest school leader will ensure all equipment needed is gathered before the setting opens.
- The first aid kit will be checked before pre-school opens
- Children will be given high-vis vests that must be worn at all times
- Children will walk to the forest site, in a sensible manner
- Staffing for forest school will be 1:5, children aged under 3 will not be attending forest schools
- Head counts will be undertaken at regular intervals
- A site safety check will be done by the forest school leader, and some equipment taken down before the setting opens.

Upon arriving at the site

- A safety discussion is held with all the children, and expectations of behaviours are spoken about. Safety points will include keeping within the boundary, away from brambles/nettles, taking care to point sticks downwards, keep hands away from face, beware of dogs keep still & quiet.
- The area boundary is spoken about and decided by the children, it is then marked out by the children.

Leaving the site

- Children will help to tidy the area
- Area will always be left as it was found
- Tools and equipment will be counted back in
- Boundary markers will be collected

Risk Assessment

A forest school risk assessment will be completed by the forest school leader a copy of which will be kept with all risk assessment and in the forest school folder. The forest school leader will do a fresh risk assessment with each change in season, term and depending upon the impact of the weather. A blank risk assessment check list will be undertaken each visit during arrival. The forest school leader will risk assess each individual activity.



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Clothing

To ensure that the children are sufficiently protected from the weather and the forest environment we require children to be wearing appropriate clothing and footwear. We require children to have long sleeves and long trousers in both winter and summer. This is particularly important in the summer to protect from tick bites, sun burn, stinging nettles and thorns. The general rule in winter is to wear lots of layers which keep in the heat and can be removed if needed. Children require: Warm hat Gloves NB not mittens Vest Long sleeved t-shirt/shirt Jumper/fleece Waterproof coat Waterproof trousers Wellies with warm socks/walking boots Thermal underwear Summer Clothing Sun hat Sun cream applied before session Light long sleeved top Light long trousers Wellies or enclosed shoes/boots (no sandals) Forest School leaders and staff will ensure all the children are appropriately dressed before leaving for our Forest School Locations. Rowhedge Under5s has a supply of waterproofs and wellington boots if these are needed.

Sheltering

Sheltering: In the event of very extreme weather e.g high winds, thunderstorm, the usual forest school session will not take place. A simplified activity will take place at the Pre-school.

During each Forest school session we will ensure that shelter is provided from sun and rain. The trees in the forest will provide good sun cover. We will also erect shelters from tarpaulins. We will take ground tarpaulins to provide comfort in the cooler months.

Toileting

Toileting: We will ask the children to use the toilet before leaving the setting. If the children need to go to the toilet we will have a travel potty. Only staff supporting the Forest School are able to support children with toileting unless a child attending has their parent helping. We anticipate the children will need less support with this activity as the sessions increase. Any children requiring a change of pull-ups will be changed. The soiled pull-up will be double-bagged and removed from the wood at the end of the session. These children should bring spare pull-ups in their back-pack.

Woodland conservation

One of the principles of Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. The children are taught about an appreciation, respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both the children and adults are encouraged to be aware of conservation issues of the woodland around them. It is important to bear in mind the ecological impact of running a Forest School and with that in mind consideration will be given to the following:

- Children will be educated not to pick up anything that is still growing. Unless the locations have an abundance of a woodland resource required for a specific activity. The Forest School leaders will observe the effect of the preschool route to and from the forest location and if necessary adjust the route to ensure the woodland flooring has time to recover.



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- Forest school leaders will ensure that woodland species are conserved and will endeavour to plant new species if damage has occurred.

Use of tools

At Rowhedge Under5s we are committed to providing children with access to a wide range of equipment that stimulates enjoyment, learning and development, both indoors and outdoors. Using small hand tools is an important part of Forest School as it enables children to develop new, practical skills that help them develop self-confidence. Hand tools are to be maintained in good order by the Forest School Leader and all preschool staff. Any damage will be reported to the manager, and replaced ASAP. The Forest School staff will inspect the tools before each session to ensure safety. Children and adults will be taught how to handle tools properly and to treat them with respect.

Whilst using hand tools the staff to child ratio is increased. This will be achieved by following these guidelines:

- Staff to child will vary depending on the tool in use. The ratios will vary from 1:1 to 1:3
- Tools will be kept in the allocated tool bag and only removed by the Forest School leader, staff or volunteers.
- Adult and child sized gloves will be available and are to be used when appropriate.
- A Penknife will only be used by the Forest School leaders, staff or volunteers
- Running with tools is prohibited, Children will be reminded throughout the session.
- Saws must have a blade guard on them when not in use. Blade guards to be removed and put back only by Forest School staff, or volunteers.
- When using peelers to whittle, children will remain seated, have their elbows on their knees and whittle away from the body.
- All tools must be counted back into the tool box at the end of the session

First aid forest school

A minimum of 2 first aiders will attend forest schools. First aid equipment that will be taken each time:

- Sterile Wipes x 5 • Plasters of various sizes • Conforming Bandages x 3 • Non adhesive square bandages x 3 • Scissors • Surgical tape • Hand gel • Disposable gloves x 5 • instant cool packs • Eye dressings x 2 • Aspirin x 4 (for adults) • Water bottle (labelled when last filled) • Hypo allergenic sun cream • Bite and sting relief spray • Children's specific medication and details

Emergency procedures

All participants will be briefed in what to do in case of emergency. Under duties set out in the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, we recognise our responsibilities in providing adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to enable suitable first aid to be given. The Forest



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School Leader will assess the situation, the nature and extent of the injury/accident. They will ensure that the rest of the group are safe from danger and are adequately supervised. A member of staff will contact the Manager, if not on location. If on location the deputy will be contacted.

A member of staff will attend to the casualty, giving first aid where necessary. After all such accidents or incidents will be recorded in detail and logged on an accident form. Parents/carers will be asked to sign in the relevant section of the form to acknowledge the incident or accident and any action taken by the Pre-School and its staff.

In case of injury If anyone sustains an injury or illness which cannot be treated by first aid on site and requires medical assistance:

- In serious cases, 999 should be dialled using a mobile phone carried by the Forest School Leader.
- A member of staff will use the second phone to contact pre-school, whom will notify parents.
- The rest of the group will be supervised away from the incident and if in danger, will be moved to safety.
- One member of the staff will meet the ambulance at the site entrance and direct the crew to the incident site.
- If the injured child is taken to hospital, one member of staff will go with them and the child's parent will be updated about the situation by the staff remaining.
- In minor cases, the Forest School Leader will arrange to contact the parent of the injured child so they can be collected and taken to the hospital, doctor or home.

We will follow all of the required policies in case of any serious accident, illness, injury or death of any child whilst in its care. The Forest School leaders and other relevant members of staff should consider whether the accident or incident highlights any actual or potential weaknesses in the policies or procedures, and act accordingly, making suitable adjustments where necessary.