



Carey West is Leader Forest School Leader and Cori Keenan is Forest School Assistant (In Carey’s absence Cori will be the Forest School Lead and an assistant will usually be Debs Bunker.)

Site Location: Basing Wood

Grid Refrence: Base 1: SU 645 547 Base 2: SU 646 551

Carey’s contact telephone number: 07549268724 Pre-school Telehone number: 01256 353100

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1. **Basing Wood and Forestry Commission, England**

The land that Merton Pre-school will be using for their Forest School is land leased to Forestry Commission from the National Trust. The Forestry Commission allows open access for reasonable activities, but it is not open access under the Country and Rights Way Act (2000). They have been kind enough to allow Merton Pre-school and other Schools to use it for their Forest School, so we need to ensure that the land is kept the way we found it.

“Basing Wood covers 120 hectares, the woodland has a large number of conifers…there are smaller numbers of broadleaf trees including oak, Ash and Alder.” Some of the tress are up to 65 years old.

The woodland has a Forest plan which means that there will be times where work maybe happening in the wood for either conifer feeling or timber feeling. In cases this happens, Forestry commission will keep in contact with Carey and Cori and let them know and arrangements to move base camps or cancel sessions will be arranged.

Forestry Commissions believe that the forests are for learning, their learning message is:

**Our trees and forests are essential for people, wildlife and the green economy.**

**They are for….recreation…. learning…. communities…. health…. habitats…. biodiversity…. timber…. jobs…. sustainability…. climate change…. tree collections…. research…. aesthetic value….wellbeing…**

**The way the Forestry Commission manages them on behalf of the nation will safeguard them for the future.**

To find out about their learning message please see website: <https://www.forestryengland.uk/learning-resources>

Contact details for Forestry Commission:

Beat Forester:                   Michael Ullman     07900 137177

Recreation Ranger:            Justin Rylands  07887 628084

Learning Manager:            Sarah Wood      07919 304414

Head office:                      0300 067 4600 or email:  reception.southern@forestryengland.uk

24 hour Duty officer:      07768 460250

1. **Parents information**

Forest School in England is based on a model from Scandinavia, in that children are encouraged to explore the woods, take risks and learn skills, some of these skills like using tools will be incorporated into Merton Pre-school’s forest School. Children take their own lead in their learning and adults are there to support, be a point of safety and encourage the child to be naturally curious in the world around them. “There is no place for learning objectives or curriculum links.” (Yellow Door, n.d.).

In order for children to participate in Forest School parents will need to provide slightly different resources to the usual day to day items that children bring to Pre-school.

Children will need:

**Wellies** (if they have their own) These need to fit over the top of a pair of socks and welly socks in the winter months.

**A full change of clothes in case of getting wet**

**A spare pair of socks**

**A fleece jumper** (Additional to the clothes they are wearing.)

**Layer the children’s clothes so that they can remove the layers or put on layers when needed for example: a base layer a thin long sleeve t-shirt or thermal, a t-shirt, a jumper. On the bottom half leggings/tights or thermal base trousers, a pair of good trousers** (never shorts or skirt)

**Lunch box with no yoghurt, nuts or drinks bottles** (Pre-school will provide the drinks)

Children always need their arms and legs covered even in summer due to ticks and biting insects. It maybe advisable if your child is prone to insect bites to use insect repellent spray, but this will need to be applied before attending Pre-school.

Children need to arrive promptly at 8.55am, so that children can be toileted and get ready to visit the woods. The children will be put in clothes appropriate for the weather and will be carrying their lunch in a backpack supplied by the Pre-school.

For safety, due to being away from houses in the woodland Cori and Carey will have their personal telephones with them. This will make certain that the emergency services can locate us as we both have location devices on our phones. The phones will only be used to make contact in an emergency and not used for any other purpose whilst out in the woods. Photographs will be taken on a separate tablet.

Parents must fill out the medical form and permission form prior to a child attending Forest School. All parents will be given a copy of the Forest School handbook. Children will attend Forest School for a minimum of 6 weeks, unless they have missed sessions due to illness/holiday or we have had to cancel sessions.

1. **Transport and Transport Policy**

The children will arrive in preschool as usual.

Our ratios for Forest School are 1:5 and the sessions will be led by Cori Keenan (Deputy Manager) and Carey West (Manager) who are both Level 3 Forest School Leaders in training. Both are qualified Forest School First Aiders.

The children will change into their waterproofs, which are provided by Pre-school and Hi-Vis vests.

Each child will carry a backpack with a bottle of water and their lunch and snacks for the session.

We will walk to the Abbey Road bus stop and take the No.4 bus to Popley fields bus stop in Carpenter’s Down.

The children will walk across the field to the entrance to Basing Woods and then on to our site.

Parents will be required to sign consent forms before the children can attend Forest School and these will be kept with our register.

**4.Setting up /Packing away**

* All staff and volunteers and parents of children that participate in Forest School will read the Handbook, risk assessments and policies before taking part in the session.
* The Forest School Leaders will remind the parents, via our Facebook group, what to bring in for the session.
* Forest school Leaders will ensure the Register, First Aid Kit, Burns Kit, Tools, Toilet and equipment are packed, complete and ready for use.
* Forest School Leaders will ensure there is at least 15 litres of water in the Jerry Can when intending to light a fire at the site.
* The Register will be taken before leaving the Preschool, upon arrival at the site, before leaving the site and arrival at preschool.
* The Forest School Leaders will :

Check for dog faeces, poisonous plants, loose branches and other dangers. (one adult to walk slightly ahead of group and check base camp.)

Mark out site boundaries and remove them at the end of the session.

Build shelters and remove them at the end of the session.

Fire will be put out, made safe and the ash removed from the site.

Any residue from the toilet will be carried off site bagged and binned at the bin by the entrance to the woods.

**5. FOREST SCHOOL RULES**

1. We do not leave Forest School.
2. We do not put anything in our mouths, unless given permission to do so.
3. We do not hurt anything or anyone.
4. We don’t run near the fire.
5. We will return to Base when we hear “Base, 1,2,3” or a whistle being blown.

We will not remove anything from the woods, and we will encourage the children to take responsibility for looking after flora, fauna and develop respect for the natural world.

We will not have any negative impact on our site and will leave everything as we found it.

**6.Hand Tool Policy and Risk Assessment (in line with our insurance policy from Morton Michel Ltd. 2019)**

Tools will be carried to the site by the Forest School Leaders in an appropriate bag/box.

Trained adults will support other adult and children to learn and use tools in a safe manner.

Any tools will be used by children aged 3 upwards on a 1:1 ratio. Peeling will be done on a 1:2 ratio supervising the child.

Tools will be counted when arriving and leaving the site.

We will oil the tools after use and sharpen them when required.

We will check every session for wear or signs of damage. Blades will be replaced when needed.

Bow saws will always have their blade guards on when not in use.

Gloves will be worn by adults and children on the non-tool hand.

Any tools including knives will always be carried by the adult off and onsite. We shall adhere by the offensive weapons Act 2019, and all Forest School Leaders will carry a card to state the reason they are carrying a knife. Knives not is use will have a protective cover on it.

**7.Woodland Conservation**

A knowledge of Flora and Fauna will be encouraged by talking about the environment and using our ID books.

We will use a minimum of dead wood from our site and bring our own wood to burn in the fire pit.

We will only coppice small amounts of wood and only when needed, all other times we shall source wood from elsewhere and take it home with us to avoid cross contamination such as diseases. (which has been granted permission by Forestry Commission)

Children will be taught, via our Forest School Rules, not to harm anything living.

We will try not to impact too much on the soil layer by using alternate paths to our site if possible.

We shall use a various amount of base camps to lessen our impact on the soil. (By instruction of Forestry Commission).

We shall abide by the countryside code. Please see the website for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>

**8.Toileting Policy**

Children will use the preschool toilets before leaving the setting and again at Popley Fields Community Centre after getting off the bus.

If the children need the toilet during a Forest School session, they will use the triangular pop up tent and portable potty toilet by themselves. This will be set up in a sheltered position within the Base.

An adult will be waiting nearby to zip or unzip the tent if help is required.

The children will wash their hands using decanted soap (see COSHH information for Pink Pearl Hand soap) and water in a pump action bottle. They will then dry their hands on the paper towels provided.

The Forest School Leaders will empty the toilet and disinfect it after each session.

**9.Health and Safety Policy**

All staff and volunteers must read this Handbook and relevant risk assessments before taking part in any Forest School sessions.

The Forest School leaders are responsible for the Health and Safety during the travelling to and from the Forest School site and on the Forest School site.

We will adhere to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Workplace (Health, safety and welfare) Regulations 1992 and their associated Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) at all times.

We will ensure to have competent, qualified Forest School Leaders in all sessions.

We will create a safe environment without risk to health.

We will use and maintain equipment, tools and first aid kits.

We will store our tools and equipment safely.

Equipment will be carried onsite by the Forest School Leaders, staff or volunteers as required. Small parts of equipment such as magnify glasses maybe carried by the children in their rucksacks or buckets.

This will include:

A copy of this Handbook

Register

Medications and Healthcare Plans

Allergy and intolerance information

First Aid Kit

Burns kit

Bucket (when intending to light a fire)

Fire pit (when intending to light a fire)

Risk assessments: we will be carrying out ongoing risk assessments as we travel to and from the site so that we can identify any risk of harm.

We will assess any changes to our site, this will be ongoing because of weather, other people using the site etc and will be carried out at the start and throughout the session, make changes where necessary.

Accident/Incident/Concern forms

Emergency Contact List (The Forest School Leaders will have a mobile phone each on different networks)

Spare clothes

Clean water

Toilet and tent

Hand gel

Food

We will ensure all accidents/incidents/disclosures are recorded and reported adequately. We will inform other agencies where appropriate.

We will review any accidents/incidents to enable us to implement any new measures.

Forest School sessions will be cancelled if the winds speed is over 37kph or there is reports of thunderstorms or extremely thick fog. Carey and Cori shall let parents know as soon as possible if this happens.

All adults including volunteers will have been DBS checked.

Merton Preschool’s insurance cover from Morton Michel includes the Forest School sessions. The Children Act 1989 and Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires that we comply with the duties under their legislation e.g. Employer’s and Public Liability Insurance and this is included in our policy.

**10.Personal Protective Equipment (Clothing Policy)**

The provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) is a statutory requirement of the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992.

We will provide waterproofs, fleeces, wellington boots, hats, gloves, Hi-Vis jackets during wet/cold sessions for adults and children.

We will also provide, sunhats and sunscreen on sunny days when required.

We will use the gloves provided for using tools or the fire gloves when tending to the fire.

To minimise harm from insect bites, sunburn, stinging nettles, ticks and thorns we ask that all children, staff and volunteers wear long sleeved tops and long trousers. In the cold weather we will wear layers that we can add or remove as necessary.

We require parents to provide a full set of spare clothes including two pairs of socks for each child.

**11.Fire Safety Policy**

Cori and Carey both hold fire marshal certificates.

All staff, volunteers and children are aware of our Fire Safety policy and procedures.

We will practice sitting around and not running around the fire until we are as sure as we can be that the children understand Fire Safety and are able to sit 2 metres away from a fire safely.

We will only build a fire in our mobile fire pit or in our Kelly Kettle. We will ensure the area beneath is clear of leaves, ground is level and there is no hanging branches.

Once the fire is lit one of the Forest School Leaders will remain with it throughout the time that it is lit.

The children will not be permitted inside the fire boundary unless the Forest School Leader asks them to on a 1:1 ratio.

Long sleeves and trousers must always be worn and hair must be tied back.

The Forest School Leader tending the fire will be kneeling on one knee using the fire gloves provided.

There will be a bucket with 5 litres of water by the fire pit with a towel/ fire blanket inside and a further 10 litres of water in the jerry can near the fire.

The fire will be lit with a strike fire starter. The burns kit is situated within the fire boundary at all times where a fire is lit.

**All fires must be extinguished at the end of the session:**

Stop adding wood to the fire 30 minutes before leaving the site.

Pour water onto the fire until it has stopped smoking and hissing.

Scan the area to make sure there are no embers.

Remove or disperse the ash once cooled down if possible.

**12.Emergency Procedure Policy**

We will provide adequate equipment needed as is our duty under the Health and Safety (First Aid) regulations 1981.

Forest School Leaders Cori Keenan and Carey West are both first aid trained and have current Paediatric and Outdoor first aid certificates.

All other staff and volunteers will be informed as what to do in case of an emergency.

In case of an emergency, the Forest School Leaders will assess the situation.

We will keep the children safe and supervised whilst attending to the casualty.

All accidents/incidents will be recorded. Parents will be asked to sign this to acknowledge what has happened and that they have been informed.

The Preschool Manager will inform OFSTED, RIDDOR and any relevant agencies of any serious incident, accident, illnesses, injury or death of any child whilst in Forest School.

If there is a minor injury, we will contact the parents so that they can collect the child from the woods.

In case of injury or other emergency not cannot be treated on site we will:

Ring 999 using a mobile phone carried by the Forest School Leaders. Use grid reference or 3words app to locate us.

We shall notify Parents after the initial 999 telephone call and then contact the Preschool.

We shall make sure the rest of the children and staff are safe or move them if needed. Maintaining a calm manner.

One adult will meet the ambulance at the entrance to the woods and direct them to the site, if enough adults in ratio. If not, 1 adult will deal with the emergency, whilst the other adult ensures the safety of the other children.

If Forest School is being held in Basing Wood, if able to Popley Fields Community Centre will a place of safety and shelter.

If child needs to go to hospital, if able to move rest of children to Popley Fields Community Centre, then one member of staff will go in the ambulance with the child.

GRID REF: SU645547

X 464511 Y 154708 Long.51.287863 Lat.0763085

**First Aid equipment**

Burns kit

Cling film

Clean water

Sterile wipes

Plasters

Conforming bandages

Non adhesive bandages

Scissors

Surgical tape

Hand gel

Disposable gloves

Safety pins

Eye dressings

Aspirin (for adults)

Sun cream (hypoallergenic)

Antihistamine cream

Children’s medication and health plans

FS First Aid manual

Tarpaulins

Foil blankets

Yoga mat

Glucose tablets or gel

Any personal medication, child or adult, will be carried in the First Aid Kit in a lockable section.

**13. Missing child**

As soon as a child is deemed missing, the Forest School Leaders will do a headcount to check on the other children and to keep them together.

The Forest School Leaders will shout, “BASE 1,2,3!” several times at different edges of the Base, alternatively.

The Forest school Leader will blow a whistle and listen 3 times.

If the child is not found within 5 minutes, the emergency service, parents and preschool will be informed.

One member of staff will stay with the remaining children whilst the other adults look for the missing child, keeping them calm and safe.

**14.Food and Hygiene Policy**

Children will be carrying their own drinks and food for the session in their rucksacks.

Food will be prepared by the Forest School Leaders who have a Food Hygiene and Safety Level 2 certificate.

Forest School Leaders will keep a list of any allergies or intolerances the children or staff may have.

Any food that has been decanted into bags or tubs will have the full ingredient list with it.

Children, staff and volunteers will wash their hands using soap, water before eating or cooking any food.

All rubbish will be taken to the bin by the entrance to the woods or taken back to Pre-school and put in a rubbish bin at Pre-school.

All food taken for snacks or provided by the Pre-school will be vegan food and all allergies abiding by the food allergens law 2014 alternatives shall be provided if parents have notified us.

15. **Valuing Diversity and Promoting Inclusion and Equality**

**Policy statement**

We are committed to ensuring that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children.

We recognise that children and their families come from a wide range of backgrounds with individual needs, beliefs and values. They may grow up in family structures that include one or two parents of the same or different sex. Children may have close links or live with extended families of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins; while other children may be more removed from close kin, or may live with other relatives or foster carers. Some children come from families who experience social exclusion, severe hardship; discrimination and prejudice because of their ethnicity, disability and/or ability, the languages they speak, their religious or personal beliefs, their sexual orientation and marital status. Some individuals face discrimination linked to their gender and some women are discriminated against because of their pregnancy and maternity status. We understand that all these factors can affect the well-being of children within these families and may adversely impact on children’s learning, attainment and life outcomes.

We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice to promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity for all children and families using our setting. We aim to:

* promote equality and value diversity within our service and foster good relations with the local community;
* actively include all families and value the positive contribution they make to our service;
* promote a positive non-stereotyping environment that promotes dignity, respect and understanding of difference in all forms;
* provide a secure and accessible environment in which every child feels safe and equally included;
* improve our knowledge and understanding of issues relating to anti-discriminatory practice,
* challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions on the basis of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act (2010) namely:
	+ age;
	+ gender;
	+ gender reassignment;
	+ marital status;
	+ pregnancy and maternity;
	+ race;
	+ disability;
	+ sexual orientation; and
	+ religion or belief.
* where possible, take positive action to benefit groups or individuals with protected characteristics who are disadvantaged, have a disproportional representation within the service or need different things from the service.

**16. Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults**

**Policy statement**

Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children, young people\* and vulnerable adults. Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the three key commitments of the Early Years Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy.

**Procedures**

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments of the Alliance Safeguarding Children Policy, which incorporates responding to child protection concerns.

*Key commitment 1*

We are committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

* Our designated person (a member of staff) who co-ordinates child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues is:

Carey West

* When the setting is open but the designated person is not on site, a suitably trained deputy is available at all times for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.
* Our designated officer (a member of the management committee) who oversees this work is:

Larissa James

* The designated person, the suitably trained deputy and the designated officer ensure they have relevant links with statutory and voluntary organisations with regard to safeguarding.
* The designated person (and the person who deputises for them) understands LSCP (local safeguarding children’s partnership) safeguarding procedures, attends relevant LSCP training at least every two years and refreshes their knowledge of safeguarding at least annually.
* We ensure all staff are trained to understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and that parents are made aware of them too.
* All staff understand that safeguarding is their responsibility.
* All staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, are alert to potential indicators and signs of abuse and neglect and understand their professional duty to ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are reported to the local authority children’s social care team or the NSPCC. They receive updates on safeguarding at least annually.
* All staff are confident to ask questions in relation to any safeguarding concerns and know not to just take things at face value but can be respectfully sceptical.
* All staff understand the principles of early help (as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2018) and are able to identify those children and families who may be in need of early help and enable them to access it.
* All staff understand the thresholds of significant harm and understand how to access services for families, including for those families who are below the threshold for significant harm, according to arrangements published by the LSCP or safeguarding partners in areas where the safeguarding partners have replaced the LSCP.
* All staff understand their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018, and understand relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory requirements and local safeguarding partner requirements and ensure that any information they may share about parents and their children with other agencies is shared appropriately and lawfully.
* We will support families to receive appropriate early help by sharing information with other agencies in accordance with statutory requirements and legislation.
* We will share information lawfully with safeguarding partners and other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns.
* We will be transparent about how we lawfully process data.
* All staff understand how to escalate their concerns in the event that they feel either the local authority and/or their own organisation has not acted adequately to safeguard and know how to follow local safeguarding procedures to resolve professional disputes between staff and organisations.
* All staff understand what the organisation expects of them in terms of their required behaviour and conduct, and follow our policies and procedures on positive behaviour, online safety (including use of cameras and mobile phones), whistleblowing and dignity at work.
* Children have a key person to build a relationship with, and are supported to articulate any worries, concerns or complaints that they may have in an age appropriate way.
* All staff understand our policy on promoting positive behaviour and follow it in relation to children showing aggression towards other children.
* Adequate and appropriate staffing resources are provided to meet the needs of children.
* Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
* Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks and other suitability checks are carried out for staff and volunteers prior to their post being confirmed, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
* Where applications are rejected based on information disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
* Enhanced criminal records and barred lists checks are carried out on anyone living or working on the premises.
* Volunteers must:
	+ be aged 17 or over;
	+ be considered competent and responsible;
	+ receive a robust induction and regular supervisory meetings;
	+ be familiar with all the settings policies and procedures;
	+ be fully checked for suitability if they are to have unsupervised access to the children at any time.
* Information is recorded about staff qualifications, and the identity checks and vetting processes that have been completed including:
* the criminal records disclosure reference number;
* certificate of good conduct or equivalent where a UK DBS check is not appropriate;
* the date the disclosure was obtained; and
* details of who obtained it.
* All staff and volunteers are informed that they are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment with us).
* From 31 August 2018, staff and volunteers in childcare settings that are not based on domestic premises are ***not*** required to notify their line manager if anyone in their household (including family members, lodgers, partners etc.) has any relevant convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings or has been barred from, or had registration refused or cancelled in relation to any childcare provision or have had orders made in relation to care of their children.
* Staff receive regular supervision, which includes discussion of any safeguarding issues, and their performance and learning needs are reviewed regularly.
* In addition to induction and supervision, staff are provided with clear expectations in relation to their behaviour [outlined in the employee handbook].
* We notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern.
* Procedures are in place to record the details of visitors to the setting.
* Security steps are taken to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.
* Steps are taken to ensure children are not photographed or filmed on video for any other purpose than to record their development or their participation in events organised by us. Parents sign a consent form and have access to records holding visual images of their child.. Staff do not use personal cameras or filming equipment to record images.
* Personal mobile phones are not used where children are present.
* The designated person in the setting has responsibility for ensuring that there is an adequate online safety policy in place.
* We keep a written record of all complaints and concerns including details of how they were responded to.
* We ensure that robust risk assessments are completed, that they are seen and signed by all relevant staff and that they are regularly reviewed and updated, in line with our health and safety policy.
* The designated officer will support the designated person to undertake their role adequately and offer advice, guidance, supervision and support.
* The designated person will inform the designated officer at the first opportunity of every significant safeguarding concern, however this should not delay any referrals being made to children’s social care, or where appropriate, the LADO, Ofsted or RIDDOR.

*Key commitment 2*

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents, allegations or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused' (HMG, 2015) and the Care Act 2014.

*Responding to suspicions of abuse*

* We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual, as well as neglect.
* We ensure that all staff have an understanding of the additional vulnerabilities that arise from special educational needs and/or disabilities, plus inequalities of race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation or culture, and that these receive full consideration in relation to child, young person or vulnerable adult protection.
* When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through:
* significant changes in their behaviour;
* deterioration in their general well-being;
* their comments which may give cause for concern, or the things they say (direct or indirect
* disclosure);
* changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play;
* unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; and
* any reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting.
	+ We understand how to identify children who may be in need of early help, how to access services for them
* We understand that we should refer a child who meets the s17 Children Act 1989 child in need definition to local authority children’s social work services
* We understand that we should refer any child who may be at risk of significant harm to local authority children’s social work services.
* We are aware of the ‘hidden harm’ agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems and consider other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, radicalisation, mental or physical illness and parent’s learning disability.
* We are aware that children’s vulnerability is potentially increased when they are privately fostered and when we know that a child is being cared for under a private fostering arrangement, we inform our local authority children’s social care team.
* We are prepared to take action if we have concerns about the welfare of a child who fails to arrive at a session when expected. The designated person will take immediate action to contact the child’s parent to seek an explanation for the child’s absence and be assured that the child is safe and well. If no contact is made with the child’s parents and the designated person has reason to believe that the child is at risk of significant harm, the relevant professionals are contacted immediately and LSCP procedures are followed. If the child has current involvement with social care the social worker is notified on the day of the unexplained absence.
* We are aware of other factors that affect children’s vulnerability that may affect, or may have affected, children and young people using our provision, such as abuse of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; fabricated or induced illness; child abuse linked to beliefs in spirit possession; sexual exploitation of children, including through internet abuse; Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation or extremism.
* In relation to radicalisation and extremism, we follow the Prevent Duty guidance for England and Wales published by the Home Office and LSCP procedures on responding to radicalisation.
* The designated person completes online Channel training, online Prevent training and attends local WRAP training where available to ensure they are familiar with the local protocol and procedures for responding to concerns about radicalisation.
* We are aware of the mandatory duty that applies to teachers, and health workers to report cases of Female Genital Mutilation to the police. We are also aware that early years practitioners should follow local authority published safeguarding procedures to respond to FGM and other safeguarding issues, which involves contacting police if a crime of FGM has been or may be about to be committed.
* We also make ourselves aware that some children and young people are affected by gang activity, by complex, multiple or organised abuse, through forced marriage or honour based violence or may be victims of child trafficking. While this may be less likely to affect young children in our care, [we/I] may become aware of any of these factors affecting older children and young people who [we/I] may come into contact with.
* If we become concerned that a child may be a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking we will refer to the National Referral Mechanism, as soon as possible and refer and/or seek advice to the local authority children’s social work service and/or police.
* We will be alert to the threats children may face from outside their families, such as that posed by organised crime groups such as county lines and child sexual exploitation, online use and from within peer groups and the wider community.
* Where we believe that a child in our care or that is known to us may be affected by any of these factors we follow the procedures below for reporting child protection and child in need concerns and follow the local procedures as published by the local safeguarding partners.
* Where such indicators are apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the member of staff who is acting as the designated person. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
* In the event that a staff member or volunteer is unhappy with the decision made of the designated person in relation to whether to make a safeguarding referral they must follow escalation procedures.
* We refer concerns about children’s welfare to the local authority children’s social care team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation. NB In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the local safeguarding partners.
* We respond to any disclosures sensitively and appropriately and take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children (although we may check out/clarify the details of what we think they have told us with them).
* We take account of the need to protect young people aged 16-19 as defined by the Children Act 1989. This may include students or school children on work placement, young employees or young parents. Where abuse or neglect is suspected [we/I] follow the procedure for reporting any other child protection concerns. The views of the young person will always be taken into account in an age appropriate way, but the setting may override the young person’s refusal to consent to share information if it feels that it is necessary to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult. Sharing confidential information without consent is done only where not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.
* All staff are also aware that adults can also be vulnerable and know how to refer adults who are in need of community care services.
* All staff know that they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they feel that or organisation and the local authority have not taken appropriate action to safeguard a child and this has not been addressed satisfactorily through organisational escalation and professional challenge procedures.
* Staff/volunteers know they can contact the organisation Public Concern at Work for advice relating to whistleblowing dilemmas.

*Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures*

* Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that give cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect; that member of staff:
* listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;
* does not question the child, although it is OK to ask questions for the purposes of clarification;
* makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes: the date and time of the observation or the disclosure; the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible; the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time.
* These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file, which is kept securely and confidentially.
* The member of staff acting as the designated person is informed of the issue at the earliest opportunity, and always within one working day.
* Where the local safeguarding partners safeguarding procedures stipulates the process for recording and sharing concerns, we include those procedures alongside this procedure and follow the steps set down by the local safeguarding partners.

*Making a referral to the local authority children's social care team*

* *Safeguarding Children* (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2013) contains procedures to help in making a referral to the local children's social care team, as well as template forms for recording concerns and to assist with making a referral.
* We keep a copy of this document alongside the procedures for recording and reporting set down by our local safeguarding partners, which we follow where local procedures differ from those of the Early Years Alliance.

*Escalation process*

* If we feel that a referral made has not been dealt with properly or that concerns are not being addressed or responded to, we will follow the LSCP escalation process.
* We will ensure that staff are aware of how to escalate concerns.
* We will follow local procedures published by safeguarding partners to resolve professional disputes.

*Informing parents*

* Parents are normally the first point of contact. Concerns are normally discussed with parents to gain their view of events, unless it is felt that this may put the child or other person at risk, or may interfere with the course of a police investigation, or may unduly delay the referral, or unless it is otherwise unreasonable to seek consent. Advice will be sought from social care, or in some circumstances police, where necessary.
* Parents are informed when we make a record of concerns in their child’s file and that we also make a note of any discussion we have with them regarding a concern.
* If a suspicion of abuse warrants referral to social care, parents are informed at the same time that the referral will be made, except where the procedures of the local safeguarding partners does not allow this, for example, where it is believed that the child may be placed at risk.
* This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser or where sexual abuse may have occurred.
* If there is a possibility that advising a parent beforehand may place a child at greater risk (or interfere with a police response) the designated person should consider seeking advice from children’s social care, about whether or not to advise parents beforehand, and should record and follow the advice given.

*Liaison with other agencies and multi-agency working*

* We work within the local safeguarding partners guidelines.
* The current version of ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ is available for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what they need to do if they have concerns.
* We have procedures for contacting the local authority regarding child protection issues and concerns about children’s welfare, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and children's social care to work well together.
* We notify Ofsted of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children or where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere). Notifications to Ofsted are made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.
* Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also kept.

*Allegations against staff and persons in position of trust*

* We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
* We ensure that all staff volunteers and anyone else working in the setting knows how to raise concerns that they may have about the conduct or behaviour of other people including staff/colleagues.
* We differentiate between allegations, and concerns about the quality of care or practice and complaints and have a separate process for responding to complaints.
* We respond to any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, volunteer or any other person living or working on the premises, which includes:
* inappropriate sexual comments;
* excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities, or inappropriate sharing of images
* We will recognise and respond to allegations that a person who works with children has:
	+ behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
	+ possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
	+ behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
* We respond to any concerns raised by staff and volunteers who know how to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with our response
* We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff or volunteer within the setting, or anyone living or working on the premises occupied by the setting, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
* We refer any such complaint immediately to a senior manager within the organisation and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as necessary to investigate and/or offer advice:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Mark Blackwell 01962 876364* | *(name and phone number)* |

* We also report any such alleged incident to Ofsted, as well as what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
* We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children’s social care in conjunction with the police.
* Where the management team and children’s social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the member of staff or volunteer will be suspended for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff, as well as children and families, throughout the process. Where it is appropriate and practical and agreed with LADO, we will seek to offer an alternative to suspension for the duration of the investigation, if an alternative is available that will safeguard children and not place the affected staff or volunteer at risk.

*Disciplinary action*

Where a member of staff or volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, we will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of relevant information, so that individuals who pose a threat to children and vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

*Key commitment 3*

We are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout our training and learning programmes for adults. We are also committed to empowering children through our early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

*Training*

* Training opportunities are sought for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation) and neglect and that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. Training opportunities should also cover extra familial threats such as online risks, radicalisation and grooming, and how to identify and respond to families who may be in need of early help, and organisational safeguarding procedures.
* Designated persons receive appropriate training, as recommended by the local safeguarding partners, every three years and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually.
* We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they may have about the provision.
* We ensure that all staff receive updates on safeguarding via emails, newsletters, online training and/or discussion at staff meetings at least once a year.

*Planning*

* The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision.

*Curriculum*

* We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and so that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
* We create within the setting a culture of value and respect for individuals, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
* We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

*Confidentiality*

* All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the local safeguarding partners and in line with the GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, and Working Together 2018.

*Support to families*

* We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers.
* We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, information sharing, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children’s social care team.
* We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
* We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child’s social worker in relation to the setting's designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
* We will engage with any child in need plan or early help plan as agreed.
* Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure, and only if appropriate under the guidance of the local safeguarding partners.

**Appendix.**

**Species Survey**

Mixed broadleaf and coniferous woodland

*Flora*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Base 1** | **Base 2** |
|  |  |
| Gorse | Scotch pine |
| Hawthorn | Brambles |
| Scotch pine | Moss |
| Grass | Silver birch |
| Brambles | Grass |
| Oak | Holly |
| Silver birch | Hawthorn |
|  | Bracken |
|  | Hazel |
|  | Wild rose |
|  | Lichen |
|  | Bank Haircup moss |
|  | Sweet chestnut |

Fauna - Both sites will have similar fauna

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Evidence | Seen |
| Roe deer | X |  |
| Muntjac Deer | X | X |
| Great Tit |  | X |
| Magpie | X |  |
| Grey Squirrels |  | X |
| Tawny Owl | X |  |
| Robins |  | X |
| Sparrow Hawk | X |  |
| Gatekeeper butterfly |  | X |
| Spiders | X | X |
| Common frog | X | X |

**Parents medical and consent form**

**Forest School Permission form**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Child’s name: | Date of birth:  | Parents name: |
| Home address:  |
| Contact telephone number (in case of emergency): |
| GP name and telephone number: |
| Does your child have any of the following: (Please delete as necessary)  |
| Asthma/Bronchitis |  Yes No | Sight/hearing difficulties | Yes No |
| Heart Condition |  Yes No | Fits/fainting or blackouts | Yes No |
| Severe headaches/ migraine |  Yes No | Have they been stung by a bee before? | Yes No |
| Diabetes | Yes No | Allergies to any known drugs | Yes No |
| Food allergies | Yes No | Other illness | Yes No |
| Hay fever | Yes No | Sleep Walking | Yes No |
| Travel sickness | Yes No | Does your son/daughter have any special dietary requirements? | Yes No |
| Physical disability | Yes No | Any other medical conditions? | Yes No |
| If you have answered Yes to any questions above, please provide details:Is your child up to date with their tetanus vaccinations? Yes No |

|  |
| --- |
| **Forest School consent**Please complete and return to Pre-school by **22nd January 2020**. (Delete as appropriate)I give permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to attend Merton Pre-school’s Forest School at Basing Wood. I agree/do not agree to my children receiving emergency medical treatment as considered necessary by Forest School Leaders this includes first aid administered by a qualified first aider, or if appropriate the child having emergency aid by the ambulance service, where I (the parent)shall meet the child at the hospital In the case of emergency if a child does need to attend hospital, 1 member of staff will stay with the remaining children and make their way to Popley Fields Community Centre and parents will be called to pick the children up. I will keep the staff I informed of any changes in medical information.I know of no medical reason why my child should not participate. As the parent/carer of the child named above, I have read, and fully understand and am satisfied with the details supplied regarding Forest School which are outlined in Merton Pre-school Forest School’s handbook. I agree/do not agree for the Forest School Leaders to have their personal mobile phones on them during Forest School in order to be used to ID species in the event that it could be poisonous additionally in order to telephone emergency services. I agree/do not to my child being photographed for educational and publicity purposes. Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Parent)Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Suggested Forest School kit list:*** Long sleeved top
* Full length trousers
* Warm welly boots
* Warm socks and a spare pair of socks
* Gloves with fingers (not mittens) (in cold weather)
* Woolly hat (in cold weather)
 |

**Management Plan**

Please find Basing wood’s Forestry commission management plan at: <https://www.forestryengland.uk/forest-planning/basing-wood-forest-plan>.

**Risk Assessments**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What are the hazards?** | **Who might be harmed?** | **What are we doing already?** | **Do you ned to do anything else to manage the risk** | **Action by whom?** | **Action by When?**  |
| Exposure to weather.Cold injury, heat injury, over-exposure to sun. | Children and staff. | Consider possible weather conditions and plan appropriate programme, clothing and equipment.Plan for children who may not bring suitable clothing – check before departure and/or bring spares.Daily weather forecast obtained, and plans adjusted accordingly.**If the wind is more than 34mph we shall move fs to a safe area which is not under trees or cancel it.**  | Provide clear information about suitable clothing and equipment to pupils and parents. | Carey | Low |
| Pupil lost or separated from group, inadequate supervision. Injury, death. | Injury, death. | * Ensure supervising staff competent and understand their roles.
* Sufficient supervision
* Plan and use suitable group control measures (for example, buddy systems, large groups split in small groups each with named leaders, identification system).
* Discuss itinerary and arrangements with Children.
* Briefing to all on what to do if separated from group.

Head counts by leaders particularly at arrival/departure points, and when separating and reforming groups. | Plan supervision before visit and brief staff and pupils. | Carey | Low |
| Illness or injury to one of the group | Children, staff, volunteers | * 1st aid cover accessible and appropriate
* Leaders know how to call emergency services.
* Children and parents are reminded to bring individual medication, and this is securely kept.
* First aid and travel sickness equipment carried.
* Mobile phones carried if available.

Emergency contacts arranged | Check first aid certificates current. Medication bag on trip. | Cori | Low |
| Special needs of specific pupils – medical, behavioural, educational.Illness, injury. | Children | * Obtain information from parents
* Take advice from SENCO if appropriate

Make necessary arrangements for individual pupils including individual risk assessment and additional staffing as necessary. | Use parental consent form. | Carey | Low |
| Traffic accident, busInjury, death, separated from group. | Children, staff, volunteers | * Buses never used on high speed roads, and children all sit on forward facing seats.
* Sufficient supervision, where an adult can reach the child at all times.

Close supervision and head counts during any breaks in journey and getting on and off the bus. | Contact to Stagecoach  | Carey | Low |
| Walking on foot to destinationInjury, death. | Children and staff. | * Work on foot planned to avoid fast roads wherever possible.
* Supervision on pavements, roads and especially crossing of any fast roads is pre-planned.

Children are briefed about hazards and behaviour required. |  |  | Medium |
| Use of public transport: bus.Injury, death, separated from group. | Children and staff, volunteers | * Journey is planned and assessed – key risk points identified.
* Careful supervision, particularly in crowded areas and entry, exit and change points with head counts.
* Large groups divided into small groups each with an adult’s hand to hold.
* Children know who their group and adult is.

Emergency plan in place – Children briefed where they are going. |  |  | Low |
| Wooden bench on a slope which is approx. 2 ft high from the ground on one sideInjury, falling | Children | Children taught to recognise the difference between wet and dry and explain it is slippery when wet.Model sitting on the bench and teach putting arms out when balancing.  |  |  | Low |
| Dens left standing by othersFallen objects overhead.  | Children, staff  | Make sure dens left are secure and if not remove.  |  |  | Medium |
| Dogs that are off the lead. May frighten children, may be aggressive. May have dog faeces in area Injury and cross contamination.  | Children, Staff | Make sure area is clear of dog faeces if not either pick it up or mark area.Put up Forest School signs reminding people to keep their dogs with them. Be aware of which children are scared of dogs, by reading their unique books.  | Teach children to look and not touch other dogs.  |  | Medium |
| Other people accessing the site. Children may be taken, injury. Aggressive people. Dropped litter | Children | Ensure base sites are clear of litter, ensuring that the Forest School Leader is on site checks site before children enter, assistant walks behind with children. Put up signs starting the Forest School is in session.Staff to always speak clearly and calmly to other people who may have accessed the site.  |  |  | Low |
| Slippery floor, sticks, logs and bumpy flooring. Falling, trips and slips. | Children | Remind children that floor is bumpy and that they need to be looking at their environment.  |  |  | Low |
| Hill to access the site becomes very waterlogged and slippery in wet weather.  | Children, staff | Use alternative paths in order to access the site.  |  |  | Low |
| Big puddles/Stream/Pond. Could drown, cross contamination.  | Children | Teach children who want to go in puddles about the stick depth method.Explain to children that we will be in the woods for a few hours and they do not want to be in wet clothes for a long time as they will get cold. In order to look into ponds teach the crawl and lie method.  |  |  | Medium |
| Several oak trees. Falling branches overhead.  | Children, staff | To cancel or move to a place away from trees if the wind is faster than 34mph. To check trees by sight at every fs session.  |  |  | Medium |
| Prickly bushes such as Holly, Gorse, Brambles | Children, Staff | Teach children that the plants are prickly, wear long sleeves when picking blackberries. Offer gloves when picking blackberries.  |  |  | Low |
| Fire pit - burns, scold | Children, staff | Wear fire gloves when dealing with fire. 1 adult to stay with fire the whole time it is alight. Keep 5 litres of water with a cloth in next to fire at all times. Boundary a fire zone of 2 metres around the fire and children sit beyond this boundary. If child allowed near fire, then child sits with adult only 1 child at a time.  |  |  | Medium  |
| Ticks that could cause lyme disease.  | Children, staff, volunteers | Wearing long sleeved t-shirts and long-legged trousers and welly boots.  | Telling parents to spray exposed areas with insect repellent. Making parents aware of ticks after Forest School.  | Carey | Low |

**Risk Benefits**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Activity | What are the benefits | What are the risks? | Who? | We reduce this risk by… |
| Uneven ground | Balance, co-ordination, spatial awareness, muscle development | Falling over, slips. | Children | Giving lots of opportunity and time to explore. Teaching the children to look around the environment.  |
| Big puddles/Stream and pond | Water flow, Depth, life – looking at frogs and water insects etc., exploring water e.g. how high how far.  | Drowning, contamination | Children, FS lead, and assistants | Teach depth using the stick method, get children to use the crawl and lay technique when looking into ponds.  |
| Cooking on a fire | Community, meeting a need, watching a fire is calming, food awareness, learning about cooking methods.  | Burns, burning the woods. | Children, FS lead, assistants, woodland | 1 adult to stay with fire at all times, all children 2 meters away from fire, if entering fire zone then only 1 child at a time, people dealing with the fire wear fire gloves, 5 litres of water is placed next to fire. When putting out fire pour on lots of water and stir before spreading the ashes.  |
| Tree stumps | Learning about height difference, counting rings, learning about trees | Fall, slip, not see it and fall over the top.  | Children, FS lead and ass. | Point out tress stumps to children, explain that they are slippery when wet.  |
| Whittling/Peeling | Developing gross motor skills, feeling of calmness, pride in making something, Being able to eat marshmallows off a stick you have made.  | Cuts, stabbing.  | Children, FS lead and ass. | Always adhere to 1 adult and 2 children peeing/whittling. Knives and peelers numbered and counted in and out of the tool kit, knives and peelers taken to the woods in a locked bag and kept in locked bag when not in use. Knives to be in sheaf when not in use. FS lead to teach using knife/peeler away from self an teach children to sit and never stand when peeling/whittling.  |
| Exploring areas independently | Exploring what the child set out to achieve, rather than adult directed. Finding out about nature and learning new things, being able to explore safely gives a sense of independence.  | Getting lost, poisonous plants or fungi, other people, dogs. | Children | Walk the boundary so children are aware of where they can explore, mark boundary by tying markers to boundary trees, teach the 3 rules, species survey regularly so know if the area has any poisonous plants of fungi. Put up signs that Forest School is using the site to remind dog walkers to keep dogs close by.  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Comments/Additions to safety information given to group | Controls | Signed |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |
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