

Britannia Primary School and Nursery



Forest School (Wonder Wood) Policy

‘Developing responsible citizens, confident individuals, and independent learners’

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<i>Committee</i>	LAB
<i>Signed by Chair of Committee</i>	K Smith
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Purpose and guiding principles

Our **Wonder Wood** provision, shaped by the **Forest School ethos**, is rooted in a child-centred, holistic approach that supports the development of confident, independent, and resilient learners. Through **regular sessions** in our **Wonder Wood**, children from **Nursery, Reception, and Key Stage 1** have opportunities to explore, take appropriate risks, and build a deep connection with the natural environment. Although the primary focus is on the lower school, the Wonder Wood is used by all year groups for cross-curricular and recreational activities.

Our ethos is rooted in our **Wonder Wood values and concepts: wellbeing, care, fun, empathy, communication, teamwork, self-regulation, self-confidence, self-esteem, and community.** These principles guide all experiences, supporting children's emotional development, social skills, and sense of belonging.

We believe that outdoor learning fosters curiosity, creativity, and wellbeing. Children are encouraged to develop respect for nature, work collaboratively, and learn through hands-on experiences that promote problem-solving, communication, and perseverance. Activities should be child-led where possible, with adults facilitating skill development and safe exploration.



Code of Practice

- Children must be **fully supervised at all times**.
- Higher supervision ratios are required for **tool use and tree climbing**.
- 1:1 support staff are not included in overall ratios.
- Weather conditions will be assessed using the **Beaufort Scale** to ensure site safety. At Force 7 (approximately 34 mph wind speeds), sessions will be relocated to a safer area or moved indoors. Particular attention will be given to wind gust speeds, which will be closely monitored as a priority.

The Site: The Wonder Wood

- A **daily site check** must be completed before each session (e.g. boundaries, hazards, litter, animal waste).
- **All safety concerns** must be reported to the Premises Team, ZS, and the Principal via email and recorded on the shared log.
- A **risk assessment** must be completed before every tool session.
- Sensitive habitats must be protected, and the site returned as closely as possible to its original state, with the log circle remaining intact.

Safety Talk

Delivered at the start of each session, with children contributing, and revisited when needed:

- Clear and consistent routines underpin all sessions and are essential for maintaining safety. A **password** (e.g. “acorns”) is used to stop children safely and return them to the log circle; this is practised regularly.
- Identification of site hazards, boundaries, and behaviour expectations
- Activity-specific safety guidance

Tool Skills

A key aspect of our Forest School is the development of tool skills, building confidence, responsibility, and practical ability. Under close supervision, children are taught to use tools safely and responsibly, including:

- **Peelers** for stripping bark and preparing wood
- **Bow saws** for cutting wood with control and teamwork
- **Palm drills** for creating holes and constructing items
- **Hammers** for construction activities and creative work

Tool Use Guidelines

- Tools may only be used by **trained and confident adults**
- Children must **receive permission before use**
- New skills are introduced **1:1 initially**, then in small groups
- Supervision ratios:
 - Under 5: 1:1 progressing to 1:2
 - Under 8: 1:2
 - Over 8: 1:6
- Emphasis on correct technique, safe handling, and awareness
- Children must be in the ‘green zone’ to use tools safely
- The ‘blood bubble’ rule must be followed to maintain a safe distance between users
- A glove is worn on the non-working hand.

Safe Practice

- Clear instruction is given before use
- Safe carrying is demonstrated in every session
- Tools are checked, counted, and stored securely

Through progressive teaching, children learn correct techniques, risk awareness, and safe handling, enabling them to gain confidence, independence, and a sense of achievement.

Fire and Cooking

Children experience the safe use of **fire** as part of their learning. They are taught clear safety routines, boundaries, and respect for fire. This includes how fire is made and opportunities for **simple campfire cooking**, helping to develop independence, responsibility, and cooperation.

Fire Use

- Led only by a **trained adult**

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- Children are taught **fire safety, respect, boundaries** and **purpose**
- Opportunities are provided for **simple campfire cooking**

Fire Safety Procedures

- Fire area clear of vegetation (minimum 5m radius)
- Water or earth available at all times
- Flames kept below knee height
- First aid kit, burn gel, and fire blanket accessible
- Children remain outside a **clearly defined safety boundary** (1.5m)
- Children may approach only when invited for a specific task

The adult leading the fire is responsible for ensuring it is **fully extinguished and safe** before leaving the site.

Environmental Care

We are committed to protecting and respecting our natural environment:

- Follow a **“leave no trace”** approach
- Remove all litter, dispose of waste safely back at school, and return materials appropriately
- Encourage **care, empathy, and respect for nature**

Inclusion and Behaviour

- All children are encouraged to participate and feel included
- Activities are adapted to support a wide range of needs and abilities

Positive behaviour is promoted through:

- Clear expectations
- Teamwork and cooperation
- Communication and emotional awareness
- Direct links to the school’s 4 Rs: being respectful, responsible, resilient, and reflective alongside the Zones of Regulation; feelings bears and traffic light systems.

Monitoring and Review

- Staff reflect on sessions regularly
- Observations support children’s development
- Practice is continually reviewed to improve provision

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Forest School Ethos in Practice

Our Forest School ethos emphasises:

- **Regular access** to Wonder Wood for all Nursery, Reception, and KS1 children
- **Safe risk-taking** and resilience-building
- **Respect for the environment** and sustainable practices
- **Development of key life skills**, particularly tool use, communication, and teamwork
- **Nurturing wellbeing and positive relationships** within a supportive community

By embedding these principles, the **Wonder Wood** enables children to grow in confidence, develop practical skills (including tool use and fire), and build strong relationships with nature and each other, underpinned by our core values of wellbeing, community and respect.