

Conquest Centre

Forest school Policy & Procedures

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Animals • Wellbeing • Nature • Connection

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FOREST SCHOOL POLICY & PROCEDURES

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FOREST SCHOOL POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. Policy Statement

Conquest Centre aims to use the natural outdoor woodland area to offer the clients an insight into the Forest School ethos. Forest School is a holistic approach to learning, incorporating individuality and develops client's skills for lifelong learning. It can cover many areas of learning, including the emotional and spiritual aspects of learning where self-esteem and self-confidence can grow and positive relationships with peers can be formed. Forest School explores the outdoors and the natural environment with practical, useful activities all year round. It develops peer learning with the adults providing support and enabling activities to take place.

2. Purpose and Aims of Forest School

To provide an experience that encourages an appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment.

To learn to respect and care for the local environment.

To develop self-esteem, independence and imagination whilst taking appropriate risks with set boundaries.

To work harmoniously within a group or independently respecting the views and ideas of others.

To allow Conquest Centre to work in a child led way with the clients interest at the heart of any activity.

3. Data Protection

Conquest Centre supports the objectives of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and other legislation relating to Data Processing, including the Human Rights Act 1998, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Conquest Centre has a statutory obligation to process personal data in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Every member of Conquest Centre has an obligation to ensure that the information they process (use) is collected, maintained and disclosed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Conquest Centre Data Protection Policy.

4. Disclosure of Information

Any use or disclosure of information held within Conquest Centre, without there being a legitimate purpose or legal basis, will be classed as unauthorised and is a criminal offence under Section 55 of the Act Right of Access (Subject Access Requests).

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Forest School Leaders will have the overall responsibility for:

- Completing Forest school risk assessments for each session and continuous safety monitoring.
- Ensuring necessary equipment is available and kept securely in the Forest School cupboard.

- Ensuring first aid and safety equipment is checked and available in the Forest School cupboard.
- Ensuring staff are aware of and following procedures set out in this document and update them when necessary

Forest School Leaders and Practitioners using the Forest School area will:

- Follow risk assessments for each session and continuously monitor safety.
- Ensuring that once on site safety rules are followed
- Ensuring necessary equipment is taken into woodland.
- Administration of first aid and checking first aid kit.
- Supervision of fire use, following procedures set out in this document
- Supervision of tools use, cleaning and storing.
- Organising emergency procedures.
- Ensure site is left as it was found after every session
- Model good practice throughout the session.

6. Health and Safety

Forest School sessions by their nature encourage clients to develop their own risk management skills and will support them to become responsible for themselves and others around them.

The Forest School Leader or Practitioners using the Forest School area will assess weather conditions regularly and will evacuate the area if they become too extreme.

Forest school Risk Assessments will include:

- Billhook
- Cooking on fire
- Coppicing
- Craft-making
- Drill use
- Electric drill use
- Fire lighting
- Fire
- Forest school site
- Games free play
- Green woodwork
- Hammock
- Knife use
- Loppers and secs
- Mud play, mud kitchen
- Shelter building
- Slackline
- Splitting logs
- Stream play water collection
- Swing

Conquest Centre has a Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy and a Risk Register etc. to enhance aspects of health and safety

Procedure

Procedures that should be followed by all staff running or assisting with forest school sessions at Conquest Centre:

7. Fire on –site

- Water can/ Bucket must be in place next to fire at all times for emergency use.
- Fires must only be had in the designated fire pit area.
- Safety Box/bag including Fire Blanket, First Aid kit and Fire gloves must be present at all times
- Staff must ensure the area is safe to work in before starting.
- Staff should have appropriate training to be running sessions involving Fire and impose rules around this activity accordingly.
- If safety is compromised the fire must be extinguished immediately.
- Clients should not be left un-supervised with the fire.
- Staff should have a mobile phone on them in case of emergencies.
- Any defects to safety equipment must be reported to the Centre Manager
- Consider group size and staff experience, ratio's should be suitable/high for the group and risk of activity.
- Fire should be extinguished by staff at the end of the session or appropriately supervised by staff between sessions.
- Consider Clients clothing and the possibility of this being flammable
- Long Hair should be tied up and loose/dangling clothing removed when near the fire.
- Students and staff to use respect position when close to fire, Kneeling on one knee. (This is to ensure they can move away from the fire quickly and safely if needed)
- Log benches must remain a minimum of 1.5-2 meters from the fire at all times. Students can safely approach the fire but not be seated when doing so.

8. Bad / Severe or dangerous weather

- Weather forecast should be checked by the session leader before starting any sessions.
- The Leader can cancel sessions before or during sessions should safety be compromised, alternative options can be discussed with the Centre Manager.
- Student and Client safety should be the highest priority.

9. Clients needing the Toilet

- Clients should be encouraged to use the toilet before the session wherever possible.
- Consider group size and staff and ratios to ensure adequate supervision of clients and environment.
- Where possible a second member of staff can be available to assist supervision of client to and from toilet.
- Staff should have a mobile phone on them in case of emergencies.

10. Safeguarding a missing student

- Follow Conquest Centre's client Absconding Policy
- Staff should have a mobile phone on them in case of emergencies.

11. Safe holding

- Staff should follow Conquest Centres Safe Handling and Relationship Policies.

- Staff should be aware that due to the nature of forest school activities including things such as, fire and tool use this could increase the risk to staff and students and therefore appropriate intervention may be required to prevent harm.
- Forest School Leaders and Practitioners using the Forest School area will need to consider likelihood of problems arising in session with each client and wherever possible minimize the likelihood for any physical intervention, if necessary, make the decision the session may not be suitable. This decision is made by the session leader but advice should be gained from the Centre Manager if unsure.
- Staff and Client safety should be the highest priority.
- Group numbers should be appropriate and take into consideration the group's needs.
- Staff should have a mobile phone on them in case of emergencies.

12. Using hand tools: Knives, Saws, Billhooks, Axes, Drills

- Safety Box/bag / First aid kit must be present at all times
- Staff should have the relevant training to carry out sessions involving tool use.
- Group numbers should be appropriate and take into consideration the group's needs.
- PPE should be used and available whenever necessary
- Supervision levels should be appropriate to the clients age and ability.
- Clients should never use tools without a member of staff in the area.
- Tools should be checked for damage and any damage reported to the Centre Manager
- Any tool that is damaged must be removed from service immediately.
- Tool use should only take place when members of staff feel it is safe to do so; sessions can be ended if safety is compromised.
- The Leader should retrieve tools from the locked storage prior to sessions and return at the end of session. Counting in tools to ensure no missing items.
- Staff Should ensure whenever tools are not being used they are stored in the box/container chosen by the Leader.
- Staff should have a mobile phone on them in case of emergencies.
- Clients should be taught safe ways of using tools and this should be modelled by leaders at all times.

13. Team Games/activity's in woods or field

- Rules and Boundaries to the game should be explained to Clients clearly before starting any games.
- Clients should be briefed on any particular Hazards that could cause harm.
- First aid kit must be present during sessions at all times.
- Staff should have a mobile phone on them in case of emergencies.

14. Rope Swings

- Safety Box/ First aid kit should be present during sessions at all times
- Staff must be in the area.
- Staff should have a mobile phone on them in case of emergencies.
- Clients must be deemed safe and physically able by the Leader.
- Appropriate rules should be given by the Leader.
- Forest school Lead should carry out a tree check to ensure its suitability.

15. Tree Climbing

- Safety Box/ First aid kit should be present during sessions at all times
- Staff must be in the area.

- Staff should have a mobile phone on them in case of emergencies.
- Clients must be deemed safe and physically able by the Leader.
- Appropriate rules should be given by the Leader.
- Forest school Lead should carry out a tree check to ensure its suitability.

16. Cooking /Eating

- Safety Box/ First aid kit should be present during sessions at all times
- Staff must be in the area.
- Staff should have a mobile phone on them in case of emergencies
- Staff should take into account food Hygiene and ensure relevant processes are followed.
- The fridge in the kitchen should be used to store food safely if necessary, before session
- Healthy Eating should be encouraged wherever possible.
- Dry foods should be stored appropriately.
- Staff to check all dates on any food before any food is given to Clients

17. Students getting to and from Forest school sessions

- Clients should be supervised at all times and consideration taken to the stream / water levels.
- Staff should have a mobile phone on them in case of emergencies.
- Consideration taken to other staff and client sessions with Horses.

18. Emergency on site

- Staff must ensure area is safe
- Sessions should be stopped immediately.
- Activity equipment that could pose danger should be locked away by the Leader
- Staff should have a mobile phone on them in case of emergencies.
- Staff should have relevant training to deal with emergency situations and manage a group.
- Safety Box/bag or First aid kit must be present during sessions at all times.
- Centre Emergency Procedures to be followed.

19. Hammocks

- Choose suitable area with two trees roughly 2-3m apart
- Tree's should be strong and healthy
- Check for deadwood in the tree canopy and move if needed.
- Check ground conditions for hazards, rocks, tree stumps, logs etc, the ground needs to be clear in case client falls out of hammock.
- Check condition of hammock before putting up, any damage may result in it failing.
- Ensure Clients don't swing, ropes can burn through from the friction.
- Gently swinging can be appropriate and safe.