Forest School Principles

Principle 1:

Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

- Sessions will take place for all children on a weekly basis.
- All adults will use observation to report back to the staff team what they saw/interests the children displayed.
- Adult observations of children's interests, responses, conversations and adventures will form the core of the planning for the following session.
- Specific children will continue with school-based behavior plans and recording methods.
- Staff will be aware of individual pupils needing 1:1 support in the woodland.
- The Forest is marked with a fence boundary and a gate. This will be closed during a session.

Principle 2:

Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

- Forest School will take place in **Woodside**.
- There is a large gate which can be unlocked each session to allow access. This will be closed during the session.
- There is a wild cherry tree onsite.
- Taking care of the woodland will be modeled by staff including being gentle with mini-beasts or looking at flowers rather than picking them. Information about caring for the environment will be adapted to suit the development stage of individual children.
- The children visiting 'Forest School' will have an extended time to explore the woodland setting at their own pace and following their own motivations.

Principle 3:

Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners

- Caring for the environment will be modeled by all the adults on site.
- Time and space to explore will allow children to develop their physical, social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and social development.

- Adults will support learning through observation, playing alongside, modeling exploration, as needed and using signing and symbols where appropriate to support and enhance engagement with the session.

Principle 4:

Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

- Time allowed to explore Woodside will build on an individual's innate motivation, positive attitudes and/or interests.
- Woodside Forest School will use tools and materials that match the learner's needs and levels of cognition. These will be kept in a locked box, as required and will be modeled by a trained Forest School Leader.
- Specific risk assessments will explore the use of tools.

Principle 5.

Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

- Forest School is led by Kathryn Sykes, a level 3 qualified Forest School practitioner. Kathryn is also a qualified teacher with an MA in Early Years Education.
- Early Years Practitioners leading or supporting a session have engaged in Forest School CPD to support their practice.
- All staff supporting Forest School sessions have relevant checks into their suitability to have prolonged contact with children, young people and vulnerable people. This is reflected in the schools safeguarding policy. .
- This handbook contains the policies and procedures required for running 'Forest School' session.

Principle 6.

Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning

- Play and exploration will form the core of each Forest school session.
- All adults will reflect on sessions and make observations regarding the interest of the children, these may be recorded on tapestry.
- Observations and relflections will be used to develop exploration and plan further sessions.