

HOLLYBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL



Engage, Empower, Excel

‘WORLD AROUND US’ POLICY

Date of Next Policy Review	April 2024
Name of Person Responsible for Policy	A Taylor
Issued to	Staff and Governors
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Introduction

Children are naturally curious and often ask profound questions about themselves and the nature of the world around us. The purpose of this Area of Learning is to help children to explore and find age appropriate answers to some of these big questions from the perspectives of Geography, History and Science and Technology. This policy is based on the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum document which is the starting point for planning a school curriculum that meets the needs of individual children. With these requirements it is our aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for the children of Hollybank Primary School, preparing them for a rapidly changing world.

Hollybank Primary School occupies a spacious site on the edge of Monkstown Wood. There is a large playground, a football pitch, an adventure playpark, an outdoor classroom as well as a recently constructed garden area with a polytunnel, and grass areas to the side and rear of the premises. The surroundings are safe and secure and provide a very pleasant learning environment for the pupils of the school.

What is 'The World Around Us'?

'The World Around Us' is one of the six Areas of Learning in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. It focuses on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in Geography, History, Science and Technology.

The statutory curriculum for World Around Us is structured as follows:

- ✓ Foundation Stage: The World Around Us including Geography, History and Science and Technology
- ✓ Key Stages One & Two: The World Around Us through the contributory elements of Geography, History and Science and Technology

The three contributory elements within the World Around Us are: -

Geography

This explores the relationship between the earth and its people through the study of the environment, place and space. It develops knowledge of places and environments throughout the world, an understanding of maps and a range of investigative and problem-solving skills both inside and outside the classroom. Our children will be provided with opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of their place in the world, other places, and the processes which affect the people, conditions and life in that place. They will explore ideas about people, jobs, the weather and the environment both locally and globally and begin to consider their part in maintaining a sustainable world.

History

This is concerned with the concepts of sequence and time and with evidence which allows us to find out what happened in the past. The concepts of chronology, change/continuity, empathy and cause and effect will be developed through investigation of life in the past. Children will be provided with opportunities to gain an awareness of their past and changes which have occurred over time through examining evidence, looking at photographs, watching TV and multimedia clips

and listening to stories. Our children will recognise the importance of evidence in giving a picture of the past but will understand that there can be different interpretations of this depending on how it is viewed.

Science and Technology

This aims to stimulate a child's curiosity in finding out why things happen in the way they do. It teaches methods of enquiry and investigation to stimulate creative thought. Our children will learn to ask scientific questions and begin to appreciate the way science will affect their future on a personal, national, and global level. They will have opportunities to develop the skills of Science and Technology and to develop awareness of the relevance and importance of Science and Technology in everyday life in finding out about themselves, the environment, the material and physical world. It is the exploration and understanding of the children's surroundings and the world in which they live.

'The World Around Us' is split into four interrelated strands:

- ✓ Interdependence;
- ✓ Place;
- ✓ Movement and Energy;
- ✓ Change Over Time

As the strands are context free in nature, they give the teachers flexibility and the choice to move the theme they are studying in whatever way they and the pupils choose.

It is our aim to try and retain good practice from the three subject areas within the format of 'The World Around Us'. In developing a thematic approach which connects with all areas of the curriculum, it is important that we ensure breadth and balance in our teaching.

Aims

The purpose of learning about The World Around Us within the Northern Ireland Curriculum is to provide opportunities for the children:

- ✓ To develop self-confidence and self-esteem in expressing and sharing their thoughts and ideas and developing an appreciation of the beauty and wonder of the world;
- ✓ To develop an awareness of themselves and their place in the world, as well as of other places, cultures and the environment;
- ✓ To develop an awareness of Information and Communication Technology and its impact on society and the world around them;
- ✓ To develop knowledge, understanding and skills in the context of the "World Around Us";
- ✓ To promote understanding, respect and appreciation for the world in which they live and their immediate environment;
- ✓ To acknowledge and appreciate a sense of the past, changes which have occurred and how these affect the world today;
- ✓ To develop an appreciation of the relevance and importance of Science and Technology in everyday life;
- ✓ To develop in children the skills of enquiry, investigation, analysis, evaluation and presentation.

Through the teaching of the 'World Around Us' all children will develop skills in the following areas:

- ✓ Literacy, Numeracy and ICT;
- ✓ Managing Information;
- ✓ Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making;
- ✓ Being Creative;
- ✓ Working With Others;
- ✓ Self-Management.

(See Appendix 1 for links to Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities)

Planning Approaches

'The World Around Us' programme will be implemented at a level appropriate to the needs of the children in the context of our school whilst providing opportunities for pupils to explore their world in the context of home, school, the local area and the wider world. Whilst initial planning is for the teachers, pupils will be encouraged to be active participants and contribute to the planning process. All planning will be based on the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Our planning for 'World Around Us' should be directed towards promoting the following:

- ✓ good investigations and the development of children's enquiry skills;
- ✓ good use of ICT to support teaching and learning;
- ✓ effective use of the environment, educational visits and visitors;
- ✓ progress in all three subject areas which make up 'World Around Us'.

Planning for Progression and Continuity

Planning for 'World Around Us' builds on the earlier experiences of children and continues to help them explore the world in which they live.

At Foundation Stage, skills and concepts are developed during Play Based Learning and other planned activities relevant to the interests and experiences of the children. Observation informs the planning of future experiences within 'World Around Us'.

The development of knowledge and understanding is important. When planning for progression teachers should consider:

- ✓ the relevance of the knowledge selected;
- ✓ the breadth and depth of knowledge appropriate to the age and ability group;
- ✓ the understanding that is intended.

It is important to ensure that the overall programme of learning in any year group and across the key stages is broad and balanced and that there is continuity and progression in children's learning.

Connected Learning

Flexibility has been built in to allow teachers to connect the elements of Geography, History and Science and Technology where appropriate. Where possible, links should be made with the other learning areas:

- ✓ Language and Literacy;
- ✓ Mathematics and Numeracy;
- ✓ The Arts;
- ✓ Personal Development and Mutual Understanding;
- ✓ Physical Education.
- ✓ Good use of ICT to support learning and teaching.

Recognising the changes and requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, we have in place detailed thematic planning (Appendix 2) which ensures breadth and balance of knowledge, skills and understanding of the 'World Around Us' and which are flexible to take account of the interests of the children. We emphasise the totality of the children's learning across the curriculum by making meaningful links across the learning areas. We encourage children to transfer understanding and skills from one context to another, allowing them to practice and apply the skills they have gained.

Learning and Teaching (refer to Learning and Teaching Policy)

In Hollybank Primary School, learning and teaching approaches provide suitably challenging opportunities for all pupils to take part in all lessons fully and effectively. Learning experiences are active, practical and enjoyable. We make use of a wide range of teaching methods balancing whole class, group and individual activities to engage the children in effective learning.

In the Foundation Stage children experience much of their learning through well planned and challenging play. This is further developed through well planned and challenging Activity Based Learning experiences in Key Stage One followed by Enquiry Based learning in Key Stage 2.

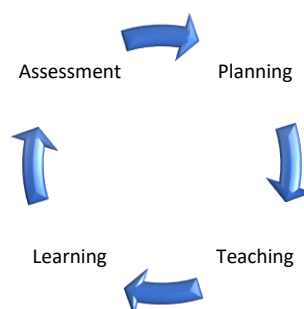
Throughout the school, children have opportunities to make choices and decisions, developing their own ideas and interests, either as starting points for learning activities or pursuing a theme in more depth. They are supported in taking risks in their efforts to succeed and are actively involved in planning, carrying out and reflecting on their work within the 'World Around Us' area.

Assessment

Assessment in the 'World Around Us', as in all areas of learning will be used as a means of promoting, enhancing and deepening children's learning. It involves all methods normally used, either individually, in a group and whole class.

The key reasons for assessment in 'World Around Us' will be to:

- ✓ enhance performance, achievement, self-confidence and self-esteem;
- ✓ promote greater resilience when faced with challenges;
- ✓ increase independence;
- ✓ develop a positive climate for learning



Our teachers' professional judgement is an important component of the day-to-day teaching happening in our classrooms. A range of assessment techniques are necessary to assess a pupil's full range of ability. Some techniques include:

- ✓ Observations
- ✓ Questioning
- ✓ Presentations
- ✓ Discussion
- ✓ Role play
- ✓ Fieldwork
- ✓ Group work

Inclusion

At our school the World Around Us forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.

Children will be helped to access this Learning Area using a range of learning styles, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. They can record and demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways, according to their learning needs and preferences. Children with exceptional ability will have access to more demanding aspects of the WAU and increased resources may be required.

Outdoor Learning

The outdoors provides children with one of the best and most effective environments to learn. As Margaret McMillan (c1925) says,

'The best kept classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky'.

Our pupils have opportunities to develop skills and concepts in an outdoor learning environment where they will:

- ✓ Become more aware of, more observant in and more responsive to their surroundings
- ✓ Develop an approach to careful observation, accurate recording and thoughtful analysis
- ✓ Encourage an interest in environmental issues
- ✓ Foster a sense of wonder and discovery

Children should have the opportunity to study aspects of their own immediate world, including different features of town and countryside and make comparisons between local and wider world issues.

The school garden area greatly enhances our outdoor learning experiences. Our pupils get the opportunity to develop skills and concepts in this outdoor area as members and representatives of our School Council. Pupils will also be responsible for assisting with the planting, upkeep and maintenance of the garden area.

There are 2 trained Forest School Leaders on the Teaching staff, Mrs Campfield and Mrs Culbert, who incorporate Forest School lessons into their weekly teaching, encouraging teaching

and learning outdoors through Forest Schools. This will be disseminated to other classes annually. (See Appendix 3 Forest School Handbook)

Links with Outside Agencies

Classes go on trips which can be linked into themes covered in 'World Around Us' and the pupils' learning is greatly enhanced by visitors to school who have knowledge related to the theme being studied.

Health and Safety

In the event of pupils taking part in activities or trips outside the classroom, it is important to carry out risk assessment prior to the activity to ensure that it is safe and appropriate for all pupils. Should extra help (adults/ supervisors) be required, staff must consult the school's list of vetted adult helpers.

World Around Us Coordinator Role and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the World Around Us coordinator to:

- ✓ work with the SMT to draw up an action plan for the development of the World Around Us in our school;
- ✓ monitor the running of the World Around Us scheme to ensure continuity and progression throughout the school;
- ✓ negotiate the place of World Around Us within the SDP and be involved in Monitoring and Evaluating;
- ✓ develop and disseminate knowledge and expertise of World Around Us in the context of the whole school policy on Career Professional Development;
- ✓ advise and guide colleagues regarding appropriate classroom practice;
- ✓ formulate policy / schemes of work in association with teachers and Principal, in line with SDP;
- ✓ promote and disseminate the policy within school;
- ✓ undertake monitoring to include lesson observations, examination of planning, and carry out evaluations;
- ✓ ensure that the area of learning is properly resourced in terms of acquisition, safe storage and access.

Resources

As far as possible, staff will use their own classroom resources which they have requisitioned. Pupils may be asked to bring any items which they are able to, from home.

Our resources are frequently and valuably supplemented by 'Theme Boxes' of books from our school library/ library van.

A very significant resource will be our new outdoor learning environment as well as the local environment.

Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff. The monitoring of standards of planning and work within 'World Around Us' is the responsibility of the co-ordinator. Time will be allocated to allow the co-ordinator opportunities to fulfil this role.

This policy will be reviewed in April 2023 or as appropriate, considering new legislation/ recommendations.

Appendix 1

Stages	Learning Intentions (we are learning...)
Foundation	<p>To begin to have a sense of the world around them (BC)</p> <p>To become familiar with concepts such as fair/not fair, the past, my place (MI)</p> <p>To use our senses to find out about our world (TPD)</p> <p>To stop to look closely and carefully (MI)</p> <p>To use a magnifying glass, digital microscope (MI)</p> <p>To record independently in a variety of ways (MI)</p> <p>To make suggestions when planning what to do (BC)</p> <p>To use simple subject specific language (TPD)</p> <p>To begin to have a sense of the passage of time (MI)</p> <p>To be aware of how to find out about the past (TPD)</p> <p>That we can find out by exploring (BC)</p> <p>To begin to ask questions relevant to our explorations (BC)</p> <p>To recognise change in our own lives (MI)</p>

Stages	Learning Intentions (we are learning...)
Key Stage One	<i>As for Foundation Stage and</i>
	<p>To begin to have a sense of how geography, history, science and technology help us to understand our world (MI)</p> <p>To begin to ask more focussed questions around our observations (BC)</p> <p>To make simple predictions and give reasons for these (TPD)</p> <p>To recognise and begin to explain why tests are fair/not fair (TPD)</p> <p>To classify according to simple differences (TPD)</p> <p>To recognise patterns in the natural and built environment e.g. Spring growth, house types etc. (MI)</p> <p>To interpret information from simple maps (MI)</p> <p>To begin to plan what to do (MI)</p> <p>To follow a structured enquiry (MI)</p> <p>That we may use all senses to explore and survey the natural and built environments (MI)</p> <p>To use standard measures when working (MI)</p> <p>That we can record work in a variety of ways (MI)</p> <p>To describe what happens and explain why (TPD)</p> <p>To relate what happened to what we predicted (TPD)</p> <p>To examine evidence and opinions from a range of sources (TPD)</p> <p>To record information using simple timelines (MI)</p> <p>To begin to understand what life was like for older people we know (BC)</p> <p>To be aware of how people's experiences may have influenced how they felt (BC)</p> <p>To identify how life in other time periods is similar to, or different from, the present day (TPD)</p> <p>To begin to identify why events happened in the past (TPD)</p>

Stages	Learning Intentions (we are learning...)
Key Stage Two	<i>As for Key Stage One and</i>
	<p>That history, geography, science and technology help us to understand our world (MI)</p> <p>To use more precise subject specific language (TPD)</p> <p>To suggest subject specific questions using an enquiry-based approach (MI)</p> <p>To record and present information in appropriate formats (MI)</p> <p>To use different ways to find out about our world e.g. exploration, survey, fair test (BC)</p> <p>To make predictions based on previous knowledge (TPD)</p> <p>To design and carry out a fair test (TPD)</p> <p>To make observations noting close detail and to be able to use microscope (MI)</p> <p>To make observations taking account of the need for care and accuracy (SM)</p> <p>To make decisions about what, when and how to measure with increasing accuracy (TPD)</p> <p>To draw conclusions and make comparisons from our work (TPD)</p> <p>To sort and classify according to more complex similarities and differences, offering explanations (TPD)</p> <p>To begin to relate cause with effect (TPD)</p> <p>To structure a simple enquiry (TPD)</p> <p>To investigate an issue from different viewpoints (BC)</p> <p>To develop a sense of place through the use of maps, plans, photographs and atlases etc. (MI)</p> <p>To examine evidence and opinions from a range of sources and distinguish between fact and opinion (TPD)</p> <p>To order and sequence information to demonstrate understanding (TPD)</p> <p>To create timelines within a broad historical period (MI)</p>

	<p>To identify change and continuity within a period studied and suggest reasons (TPD)</p> <p>To appreciate that there may be different points of view / different causes and consequences of an event or situation (BC)</p>
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Appendix 2 Thematic Planner

World Around Us

Interdependence

Movement and Energy

Place

The Arts

Art and Design

Music

Drama

Personal Development & Mutual Understanding

Personal Understanding and Health

Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community

OVERVIEW

The children will . . .

Thinking Skills & Personal Capabilities

RE

Whole Curriculum Skills

Communication

Using Maths

Using ICT

PE

Curriculum Objectives:

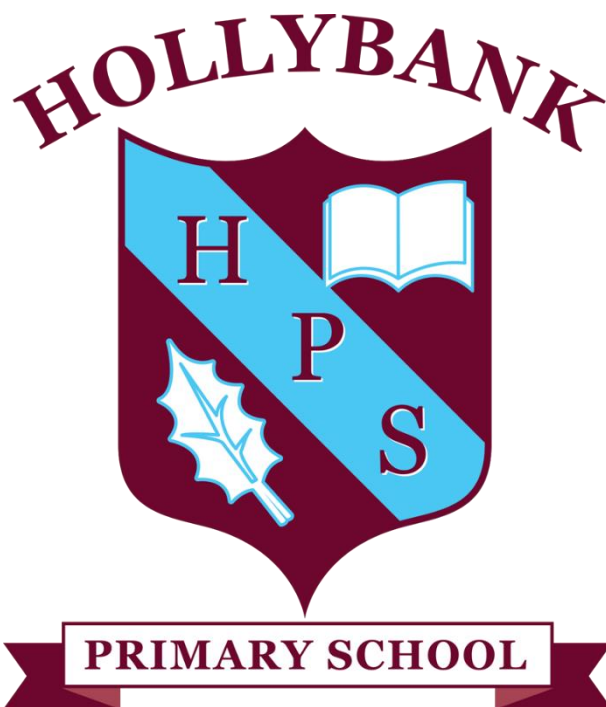
Individuals

To develop young people as:

Contributors to Society

Contributors to the economy and environment

HOLLYBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL FOREST SCHOOL HANDBOOK



Date of Next Review	April 2025
Name of Person Responsible for Policy	N CULBERT
Issued to	Staff and <i>Governors</i>
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Contents

Page 3	Welcome to Forest School
Page 4	Guidance for Volunteers
Page 5	Emergency Procedure
Page 6	Procedure in case of a participant going missing/absconding
Page 7	Health & Safety Policy
Page 8	Site Safety
Page 9	Risk Assessment Policy
Page 9	Staff and Pupil Ratio
Page 10	Behaviour Policy
Page 11	Child Protection Policy
Page 11	Equal Opportunities Policy
Page 12	Equipment - Tools/Forest School Leader's Equipment
Page 13	Insurance
Page 13	Impact of Forest School on the Woodland
Page 14	Appendix 1 Site Risk Assessment Table
Page 17	Appendix 2 Contact details



Welcome to Forest School

Forest School is an educational programme developed from Danish ideas of working with children and young people in the outdoors, helping to build self-esteem, social skills and independence. Hands-on activities with natural materials develop practical and intellectual skills, which can be linked to the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Forest School aims to boost confidence through setting students up to succeed. Tasks are broken down into small achievable chunks that are matched to students' capabilities.

In addition, Forest School helps children become part of an effective efficient team and to participate in a range of creative, sensory and environmental awareness activities.

Forest School uses children's learning styles as a basis for the presentation of all activities. Children who learn visually can access learning through the demonstrations. All activities are presented through speech for those children who learn aurally. Freedom to touch, feel and "do" satisfies the kinaesthetic learner.

This pack contains information for staff, volunteers and parents of children helping with the Forest School Programme.



Forest School - Guidance for Volunteers

Forest School welcomes the opportunity to work with you. Volunteer adults are vital and essential. Included are some guidelines to make this a valuable experience for all. Volunteers, whilst participating in Forest School sessions must adhere to the guidelines of the schools Policy for Volunteers.

Please:

- ✓ Ensure that you are appropriately dressed for the weather conditions of the day. Many Forest School activities involve getting damp and muddy. See clothing list below.
- ✓ Inform the team of any medical conditions or allergies that may affect you during the Forest School session.
- ✓ Complete the Volunteer Helper Information Form.
- ✓ Familiarise yourself with the policies in this handbook.
- ✓ Feel free to ask any questions. The Forest School team will be happy to explain the Forest School ethos and aims of each session.
- ✓ Maintain confidentiality.
- ✓ Assist the leader in helping the children to maintain their own and others' safety.
- ✓ Report accidents, hazards and equipment defects to the leader.

Your co-operation regarding requests and instructions from the Forest School staff is greatly appreciated.

Please note that it is Hollybank Primary School's Policy to carry out an AccessNI Check before you can work with the children.

Clothing list:

- ✓ Waterproof clothing - jacket and trousers
- ✓ Woolly hat, or sun hat depending on season
- ✓ Gloves
- ✓ At least 1 jumper - layers of clothing are useful for regulating body temperature
- ✓ Long sleeved top even in summer
- ✓ Warm socks in winter
- ✓ Wellington boots or walking boots or sturdy trainers with good grips.

NOT ADVISED

- ✓ Scarves are not advised at Forest School due to risk of entanglement.
- ✓ Shorts are not advised.

Emergency Procedures

All participants will be briefed in what to do in case of emergency. A whistle blast will signal that everyone must stop what they are doing, gather by a member of staff, be silent and await instructions.

Listed below are the procedures that will be adopted in case of emergency or unforeseen circumstances:

In case of injury

If anyone sustains injury or illness which cannot be treated by first aid on site, and requires removal to hospital or a doctor:-

- ✓ If severity requires it, 999 is contacted by the school office and parents of the child are informed. The remainder of the group should be contained together away from the incident site and involved in a meaningful static activity. One member of staff should meet the ambulance at the main entrance to the school and direct the crew to the incident site. An accident/incident form will be completed and held in the school office.
- ✓ In minor cases the Forest School Leader will be responsible for contacting the school office, giving details of the incident so the parent/carer of the casualty can collect the child and drive them to hospital or doctor or home if required. An accident/incident form will be completed and held in the school office.
- ✓ If the latter is not possible, as a last resort the teacher/group leader will use their own car. Two members of staff should be in a car which is insured for work purposes.



Procedure in case of a participant going missing/absconding

As soon as it is discovered that a child is missing, the situation will be considered an emergency. (All gates of school will be closed so child should still be on site).

- ✓ As such, after no more than 5 minutes of calling and looking for the missing person, an adult will contact the school.
- ✓ Maintaining the correct adult/child ratio, any surplus will be deployed to search for the child.
- ✓ The remainder of the group should be contained together away from the last known position and involved in a meaningful static activity.
- ✓ Staff should meet and corroborate details of the situation, last known position of the person etc.
- ✓ Return to the Last Known Position and mark it immediately.
- ✓ All prints found should be marked.
- ✓ Do not stand on any prints.
- ✓ If the person has not been located the police and parents should be called and asked to attend the scene. The time when this action is taken will depend on the specific situation and will be judged by the Forest School Leader and school staff.
- ✓ Whilst waiting for the police to arrive, tracking should continue as before.
- ✓ Under no circumstances should other children be used as searchers
- ✓ One member of staff should meet the police at the entrance to the site and direct them to the Last Known Position.
- ✓ Staff should then follow the directions of the police Search Advisor.



Health and Safety Policy

The Forest School Leader will endeavour to provide and maintain a safe learning environment and involve all participants in becoming aware of and reporting any potential hazards. Learning about perceived and actual risk is an important aspect of outdoor learning and is incorporated into all activities where practical.

Written risk assessments are undertaken when first starting to use a new site for Forest School activities and if an incident occurs. The Risk Assessment is reviewed on a monthly basis. See Appendix 1.

A visual risk assessment will be undertaken prior to each session and any new hazards will be noted on the risk assessment form after the session. These will be filed and held by the Forest School leaders. Procedures for emergency situations are included in this file. Please familiarise yourself with these before participating in a session.

The Forest School Team will aim to:

- ✓ Teach children and adults to maintain their own and others' safety, involving them in risk assessments and safe inspections.
- ✓ Maintain the legal adult: child ratio.
- ✓ Ensure equipment meets required standards and is maintained and used appropriately.
- ✓ Assume responsibility for the maintenance of the First Aid Kit and other safety equipment.
- ✓ Record any incident involving an injury, missing person or allegation of misconduct as soon as possible after an event.
- ✓ Regularly monitor the effectiveness of policies and working practices, revising and amending as necessary.

The children, to the best of their capabilities, will:

- ✓ Exercise personal responsibility for the safety of themselves and others.
- ✓ Observe the safety information with which they have been provided.

A copy of the school's Health & Safety Policy can be found in the School office.

Site Safety

The following checks and precautions will be carried out in order to ensure safety at the Forest School site before each lesson takes place.

- ✓ Pre-visit checks will be carried out to ensure the site is free of dangerous litter and refuse and that there is no damage from fallen trees or hung up branches.
- ✓ A session may be cancelled if, in the opinion of the Forest School Leader, weather conditions, such as high winds make visits to the forest unsafe or, if due to staff absence, the appropriate ratios cannot be maintained.
- ✓ During very wet weather the lesson may be held in the Outdoor Classroom or postponed to another day in the week if necessary.
- ✓ A risk assessment is carried out for all activities. See Appendix 1.
- ✓ During some sessions food will be cooked on a campfire and eaten. Basic hygiene standards will be followed such as cleaning hands before food and using food within sell-by dates.
- ✓ During some sessions a fire will be lit using a pre-prepared fire pit. The children are gradually introduced to and taught valuable skills regarding fire safety. They are shown how to approach a fire carefully and how to treat it with respect. They are shown how to put the fire out at the end of the session.



Risk Assessment Policy

The safety of all children is paramount. In order to achieve this, the Forest School leader aims to:

- ✓ Recognise that a hazard is anything with the potential to cause injury or harm.
- ✓ Identify significant hazards and ensure risks are minimised, taking appropriate action as necessary.
- ✓ Carry out regular and continuous risk assessments of working areas. See Appendix 1.
- ✓ Be constantly alert to potential, previously unidentified risks.
- ✓ Complete risk assessment paperwork.
- ✓ Inform staff, volunteers and children of potential risks and methods to minimise them.
- ✓ Involve staff, volunteers and children in risk assessment, as appropriate, as part of learning.
- ✓ Ensure legal guidelines regarding off-site activities, such as adequate insurance, permission and records are met.
- ✓ Implement emergency procedures as necessary.

Staff and Pupil Ratios

Due to the nature of Forest School activities, high ratios of adults to children are necessary in order to ensure a safe, high quality learning environment at all times. The minimum ratio of adults to children is 1:8. This means at least two adults with training or experience of teaching/working with young people, for a group of sixteen children.

This ratio will need to be increased if any of the children have special needs that require extra attention. The school will be responsible for addressing any special need requirements and ensuring relevant ratios are met.

If the group is working with tools or fire, a lower ratio is desirable, but the lesson can continue with a minimum of 1:8 ratio if the Forest School Leader deems it safe.

Behaviour Policy

Forest School aims to facilitate children's self-esteem, independence and motivation to learn, while always maintaining a safe environment. In order that these goals are worked towards, certain standards of behaviour need to be sustained and reinforced. This policy clarifies responsibilities in this area.

The adults at Forest School will:

- ✓ Create a positive environment which encourages and reinforces caring, nurturing and acceptable behaviour towards each other, the environment and the equipment.
- ✓ Build effective relationships in which all are accepted, valued and treated equally.
- ✓ Be consistently mindful of the need to maintain safety.
- ✓ Clearly define and reinforce acceptable standards of behaviour.
- ✓ Respond consistently to both positive and negative behaviours.
- ✓ Consistently model high standards of behaviour.
- ✓ Place the needs of the children at the centre of the curriculum to minimise failure and maximise success.

The children, to the best of their capabilities will:

- ✓ Respond to requests, instructions or actions, particularly those concerning safety.
- ✓ Develop and maintain an acceptable attitude to each other, the environment and the equipment.



It may be necessary, after all possible avenues have been investigated, to exclude a child who is judged to persistently be compromising their own safety and the safety of other children and adults participating in the Forest School programme.

The 5 stages within Hollybank Primary School's Positive Behaviour Policy will be adhered to when dealing with any behaviour incidents during Forest School Lessons. If deemed appropriate individual Risk Reduction Action Plans may need to be made for students to participate in Forest School lessons. These will be made in consultation with the Principal, Vice Principal, Teacher and Parent.

Child Protection Policy

The Forest School team fully recognises its responsibilities for Child Protection.

Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working at Forest School. There are four main elements to our policy:

- ✓ Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- ✓ Raising awareness of the Child Protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- ✓ Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, of suspected cases, of abuse.

- ✓ Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the regular contact with children, staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. We will therefore:

- ✓ Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- ✓ Ensure children know that there are adults at Forest School whom they can approach if they are worried.
- ✓ Include opportunities in the programme for children to develop the skills they need to stay safe.

Staff and Volunteers taking part in Forest School Sessions should be familiar with Hollybank Primary School's Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection and follow the procedures set out in it to report any concerns.

Equal Opportunities Policy

Forest School aims to provide for all pupils regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion or disability through:

- ✓ Promoting a positive, empathetic and valuing ethos.
- ✓ Understanding that children have different learning styles and multiple intelligences and striving to accommodate all.
- ✓ Working hard to include all, using available resources and seeking expert help and advice as necessary.
- ✓ Challenging stereotypical and prejudicial comments or behaviours.
- ✓ Supporting those children who experience discrimination and those who, through misguided judgements, discriminate.
- ✓ Using opportunities to celebrate the diversity of cultures.
- ✓ Exploring opportunities throughout the curriculum to address discriminatory and equality issues.
- ✓ Value and celebrate the contributions of all.

Equipment

Tools:

Tools are to be maintained in good order by the Forest School Leaders and visually inspected before each session to ensure safety. It is important that during a session all tools are handled properly and treated with respect. To ensure that this happens the following rules should be followed:

- ✓ No children should bring any edged tool to any Forest School session.
- ✓ No children can get any tools from the bag. They must find a member of the Forest School staff to hand them a tool.
- ✓ Penknives are to be opened and closed by members of Forest School staff.
- ✓ Running with tools is not allowed.
- ✓ When walking with tools, saws should be held facing downwards and knives with the blades closed.
- ✓ Children may lose permission to use tools if they are misusing a tool.
- ✓ All tools need to be counted back into the bag at the end of each session.

Working with tools:

- ✓ When working with penknives, saws, secateurs and billhooks the adult: child ratio should be minimum 1:8. Lower ratios are preferred if possible. If working with a younger class they should be asked to line up and use the tool with an adult.
- ✓ Long hair or loose clothing should be tucked away.
- ✓ Peelers and knives - always whittle to the side of and downwards away from the body.
- ✓ Billhooks - are to be used as cleaving rather than chopping tools i.e. they should not be swung and should never be used with gloved hands.
- ✓ Bow saws should have their guards on when not in use.
- ✓ Extreme care should be taken that no tool is used to point with.

Forest School Leader's Equipment

- ✓ Plastic bags
- ✓ Trowel
- ✓ Register of children
- ✓ Whistle
- ✓ First Aid kit
- ✓ Fire lighting kit
- ✓ Equipment required for Forest School activities e.g. wool, bamboo canes etc.

Insurance

The school need to ensure that their own insurance covers them for visiting the woodland and undertaking Forest School activities.

Impact of Forest School on the Woodland

All adults should be mindful of the impact that Forest School has on the woodland. On the school site the following measures are in place to minimise the impact.



- ✓ Designated fire pits
- ✓ Children are encouraged to stay on the paths for most activities.

Please follow the "Leave no Trace" principles - www.lnt.org/programs/principles.php

When using the woodland, adults and children should be mindful of the impact of lots of feet on the woodland floor, especially on the steeper slopes.

At certain times of the year it may be advisable to avoid certain areas.

The site is rested during the school holidays as Forest School only takes place during the term time.

Appendix 1



Northern Ireland Forest School Association

Risk Assessment Form

Name of Site: **Hollybank Primary School**

Date of Visit: **September 2023**

Hazard	Assessed by/on	Level of Risk	Short Term Action	Long Term Action
Walking to site from school	N. Culbert September 2023	L	*Safety Talk before leaving. *Appropriate supervision. *Adult at front wearing Hi-Vis vest. *Children walk in an orderly single or double file line.	*Safety Talk before leaving. *Appropriate supervision. *Adult at front wearing Hi-Vis vest. *Children walk in an orderly single or double file line.
Stinging nettles	N. Culbert September 2023	L	*Teach children what they look like and tell them to avoid them if possible.	*Teach children what they look like and tell them to avoid them if possible.
Brambles	N. Culbert September 2023	L	*Teach children what they look like and tell them to avoid them if possible.	*Teach children what they look like and tell them to avoid them if possible.
Fungi	N. Culbert September 2023	L	*Teach children what they look like and tell them to avoid them if possible.	*Teach children what they look like and tell them to avoid them if possible.
Litter	N. Culbert September 2023	L	*Ensure children wear gloves and use litter pickers.	*Ensure children wear gloves and use litter pickers.
Low branches	N. Culbert September 2023	L	*Vigilance *Give verbal instruction to children to look carefully at the route they are taking.	*Vigilance *Give verbal instruction to children to look carefully at the route they are taking.

Uneven/Slippery ground	N. Culbert September 2023	L	*Instruct children where uneven/slippery surfaces may be. *Position adult nearby *Erect temporary boundary signs.	*Instruct children where uneven/slippery surfaces may be. *Position adult nearby *Erect temporary boundary signs.
Wasps	N. Culbert September 2023	M	*Instruct children to avoid them and to remain calm if a wasp is around them.	*Instruct children to avoid them and to remain calm if a wasp is around them.
Heavy objects	N. Culbert September 2023	L	*Teach children how to lift heavy objects correctly.	*Teach children how to lift heavy objects correctly.
Using conservation hand tools	N. Culbert September 2023	M	*Ensure everybody has been given a tool talk before they begin.	*Ensure everybody has attended using hand tools correctly training.
Adverse weather conditions	N. Culbert September 2023	L	*Ensure everybody has the appropriate protective and water proof clothing on. (No scarves/shorts)	*Ensure everybody has the appropriate protective and water proof clothing on. *Clear the site if weather becomes too adverse e.g. strong winds etc.
Visiting cats/wildlife	N. Culbert September 2023	L	*Remove faeces from areas where children are working.	*Remove faeces from areas where children are working.
Using the fire pit	N. Culbert September 2023	H	*Discuss fire safety with the children. *Ensure all children are seated the appropriate distance away from the pit (Back benches) *Bamboo canes with skewers attached to be used for cooking. *Ensure adequate adult supervision. *Teach children how to ensure fire is out before leaving the site.	*Discuss fire safety with the children. *Ensure all children are seated the appropriate distance away from the pit (Back benches) *Bamboo canes with skewers attached to be used for cooking. *Ensure adequate adult supervision. *Teach children how to ensure fire is out before leaving the site.

			*Check fire is out before leaving Forest School site.	*Check fire is out before leaving Forest School site.
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Appendix 2

Contact Number Sheet

- ✓ Northern Ireland Forest School Association Details Forest School Leader - Brian Poots - 07790884522
- ✓ Newtownabbey Borough Council - Biodiversity Officer - Lindsay Matthews - 07876352848