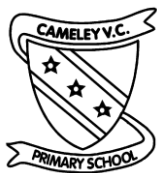


Forest School Handbook

Policies & Procedures

Cameley Church of England Voluntary
Controlled Primary School



***To be read by all adult leaders, volunteers, and visitors of Cameley CEVC Primary Forest School sessions**

*“Tell me, I forget,
Teach me and I remember,
Involve me and I learn...”*

Introduction and background:

This handbook contains information on policies and procedures to help everyone get the most from our forest school sessions in a safe and enjoyable way.

This handbook was developed by Stuart Ball, Hannah Maggs and Charlotte Park for Cameley CEVC Primary School.

Please contact the school office to find out more about any aspects of the handbook or the session you will be attending.

Cameley Primary School
Meadway
Temple Cloud
Bristol BS39 5BD

Tel: 01761 452644

E-mail: office@cameleyprimary.org.uk

This handbook is intended to be read and used by all Teachers, Adult Leaders, Volunteers, and Visitors of Cameley CEVC Primary Forest School sessions prior to attending a session.

As a formal school document this handbook is subject to annual review, and to immediate review should any incident identify the need to do so. This handbook will be reviewed every three years at Finance, Personnel and Premises meeting.

Our Ethos:

Cameley CEVC Primary's Forest School is designed to enhance and complement our day to day curriculum across the whole school (Early Years and Foundation Stage, KS1 and KS2).

It is founded on the belief that the whole child matters, that every child should feel included and be given exciting opportunities to grow in confidence, self-worth, and ability; and to experience and celebrate their own positive achievements.

And most importantly; to build happy memories and to develop confident and capable children who are able to explore their own hopes and dreams...

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All other consent forms and procedures are contained within the Cameley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Handbook.

Activities:

Our activities are limited only by our own ideas and only confined by the need to consider the children's safety at all times. Safety is our number one priority and all areas of forest school will comply to these policies and procedures.

Our activities **will include:**

- *Exploring our environment independently;*
- *Identifying the resources available around us;*
- *Learning how to respect the environment around us;*
- *Considering how we might use the resources and be able to conserve them;*
- *Building dens and shelters;*
- *Creating fire from a variety of materials, trialling the use of different methods;*
- *Preparing and cooking food outdoors;*
- *Fun, games, and imaginative play;*
- *Woodland crafts, including natural products;*
- *Using tools, including saws, knives and axes, and developing the skills to use these safely;*
- *Seasonal celebrations;*
- *Celebrating the achievements of ourselves and others;*
- *Building confidence and self-esteem;*
- *PSHE and exploring moral and social situations*

Cameley School:

Cameley CEVC Primary School is a smaller than average, rural primary school situated at the heart of the village of Temple Cloud, within the County of Bath and North East Somerset. The school is the hub of the local community, with a lack of many other initiative or activities within the local area. As such, the school is an integral part of the local community and has touched the lives of every resident in a positive way; from nurturing and developing local children and working to support families, to regular involvement with St. Barnabas Church.

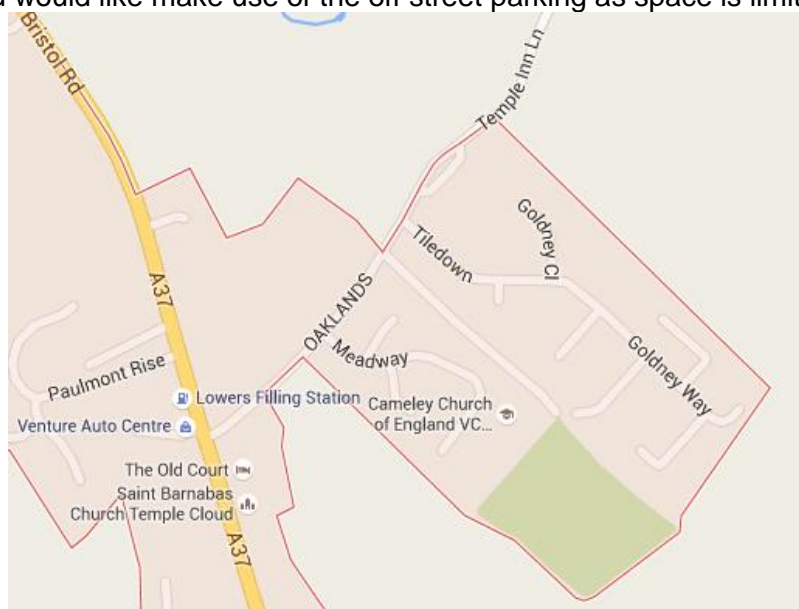
At Cameley we desire to integrate the school even more within the community, and welcome people to join in with events, celebrations and the school day. We welcome people to come along and enjoy the forest school sessions as well and hold open events and sessions in order to support this.

One of the main strengths of the school is the wide open space, the area for adventure play, they playing field, the school; pond, garden and the recently created Forest School area. The site is blessed with open spaces which lead out into the wider open spaces. Within the grounds our children play, in the playground, on our fixed play equipment, on our sports field and freely explore the trees and bushes surrounding it.

It is fortunate to have fields and woodland criss-crossed with footpaths within easy reach of the school site, even if walking with the smallest of children. These paths really do start at the school gates!

Although the Forest School was created for the children of Cameley School there may be occasions where others spend time with us at one of our sessions.

Should you not be familiar with the village, there is ample on street parking for visitors along Meadway and Temple Inn Lane, and a small on site car park available to accommodate disabled access, or for those who find mobility a little difficult. Please contact the school before attending if you would like make use of the off street parking as space is limited.



There is also regular access to the village by bus from most nearby towns and certainly from Bristol, Bath and Wells (Although these will involve a short walk from the main A37 to the school). We also encourage visitors choosing to arrive by bicycle and these can be secured within the school grounds for the duration of your visit. We hold the Bronze Travel Award and are committed to promoting sustainable travel.

First Aid / Medical Emergency:

Should an incident occur where First Aid by staff is insufficient staff our nearest medical facilities can be found:

The nearest 24/7 **Accident and Emergency** Departments:

Bristol Royal Infirmary (BRI) – 11.6 miles
Upper Maudlin Street
Bristol
BS2 8BJ
Tel: 0117 9230000

Royal United Hospitals Bath (RUH) – 11.6 miles
Combe Park
Bath
BA1 3NG
Tel: 01225 428331

The nearest **Minor Injuries Unit:**

Paulton Memorial Hospital – 3.4 miles
Salisbury Road
Paulton
BS39 7SB
Tel: 01761 408114

South Bristol NHS Community Hospital – 8.4 miles
Hengrove Promenade
Whitchurch Lane
Bristol
BS14 0DE
Tel: 0117 3429692

The nearest **GP Surgery:**

Cameley Surgery – 0.4 miles
Temple Cloud
BS39 5BW
Tel: 01761 452205

The nearest **Defibrillator:**

Cameley CEVC Primary School
Meadway
Temple Cloud
BS39 5BD
Tel: 01761 452644

Environmental Policy and Environmental Impact Assessment:

All Cameley CEVC Primary Forest School staff and volunteers demonstrate a high level of respect for their surroundings and the natural world. Everyone attending our sessions is encouraged to do the same and to pass on this approach to others; this is an integral part of all of our sessions.

We believe that in every way possible we should pass through our natural environment leaving as little trace of our passing as possible. Of course our fixed site within the grounds of the school is built with a little more permanence in mind, yet still focuses on using recycled and natural materials that if left, would quickly return to nature.

Every trip out in to the natural world will always be planned to “leave no trace” and in so doing treat the environment and each other with respect.

On site activities will be conducted with this approach in mind:

- *Fires will be managed to ensure minimal impact on plants and wildlife. Although several fire types will be experienced, commonly the fire will be raised off the ground, or contained in a fire pit in an area devoid of rare or endangered species. Renewable wood sources will be used whenever possible, and care taken to dispose of ash and embers responsibly. Dead wood will on occasion be sought out and used taking care not to use all of this precious resource, leaving some for the bugs too;*
- *Wood ash can change the nature of the soil encouraging nettles. Where possible these should be removed from the site or used to help patches of existing nettles to grow;*
- *Embers can ignite roots and certain peat based soils. As such care should be taken to completely extinguish and cool embers to avoid accidental woodland fires. Sometimes days after you have moved on;*
- *Firewood will be sourced locally and from renewable sources, whenever possible to protect local diversity and resources;*
- *Dropping litter or food waste is not acceptable. Everyone will be encouraged to remove food wrappers and other litter with them, or to our school recycling area. Leaving these things behind regularly will encourage rodents and unwanted scavengers into the site;*
- *Tree Climbing and other activities may damage trees or branches. Vulnerable trees and plants will be identified and declared out of bounds. Planned activities will be varied to prevent overuse of a resource;*
- *Toilets. On site facilities will be used at all time when the schooling is within the school grounds. There maybe times when forest school goes off-site and then off site facilities will always be sought. If no facilities exist faeces will be buried, or removed in bags and disposed of hygienically.*

Health and Safety Policy:

This document should be considered in addition to the existing Health and Safety Policy at Cameley School, and that of any other site being visited. A risk assessment pertains to the external environment here at Cameley and will be followed at times.

Forest School activities are often perceived to present higher risk than other general school activities. This is particularly relevant when using sharp tools or sticks, and when around fire. However, we believe that if children are appropriately educated and correctly supervised that this is still within a level of appropriate risk.

Each activity will be considered thoroughly and individually risk assessed before being undertaken by children. Children will receive tuition and high levels of supervision at all times.

The site will be checked before and after each session in order to identify any new risks arising from unauthorised access, or fresh damage etc. This will particularly be important after windy weather and after weekends (risk of vandalism and damage). Care will be undertaken to ensure that the overhanging tree branches are not too low for the fire pit.

Legislation:

Cameley Primary School and Cameley Forest School accept their legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Every activity should bear in mind this legislation, with the aim of taking reasonable steps to protect the health and safety of all staff, pupils, and visitors or members of the community passing by.

Staff and Training:

All staff and volunteers possess current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates. All forest school staff are either qualified teachers or have the relevant forest school qualification. All staff working towards an appropriate qualification will be doing so under the guidance of qualified staff.

The safety of children will always be of primary concern.

Risk:

We believe that children must encounter risks and hazards in order to learn necessary life skills, or enhance their confidence and decision making. Forest school can provide opportunities to encounter risks and hazards in a managed way, with a safety net and support readily available.

The acceptable amount of risk will vary from child to child and factors such as maturity, age, and ability must always be considered. Every child is different. Where children require additional support within class, this will always be given within the forest school setting. We are aware that they might not need this support, but that other pupils might need more focussed support in forest school sessions. This risk must always be assessed.

Our Site and Risk Assessments:

Our site should always be safe and accessible. It is within school grounds and there is no public access. However damage does occur either due to unauthorised access or weather.

A 'walk through' or visual check will always be conducted before and after every session to identify new hazards.

Mobile phone coverage is good, and a landline is available at reception, in case of emergencies. There is a mobile telephone to take out on site with teachers, in all sessions.

When conducting a walk through staff will;

- Look for hazards such as fallen branches;
- Consider who might be harmed;
- Evaluate the risk. Are existing precautions sufficient? Should the session continue?;
- Can remedial action be taken to eliminate the risk, such as cutting off a broken branch to eliminate sharp points;
- Record the findings and any actions;
- Review the risk assessment and update if required.

Sharing Information / Data Protection:

Refer to Cameley Church of England VC Primary's existing site policy.

However, the disclosure, or sharing of information is always justifiable in the interests of the safety and wellbeing of the children, providing the information is shared on a 'need to know' basis. All staff will have read the Child Protection policy and Keeping Safe in Education guidance, which details sharing of information.

Insurance:

Please refer to Cameley VC Primary's existing policy and certificate, which can be viewed at the school office as required. The details of this are:

Bath and North East Somerset

Policy number 17-MPS-LIA-000000016

Any external provider will require their own insurance which will need to specify forest school within the insurance criteria. Cover can be arranged through Burnbeck insurance.

Emergency & Serious Incident Procedure:

Emergencies are never wanted, or by their nature expected, but they are a possibility, and so we at Cameley VC Primary ensure that all leaders are familiar with our emergency procedures. There is a Lock Down procedure which is in place for our school and which will be shared with any external or visiting staff.

Most emergencies can be resolved on-the-spot by the leader removing the group from potential threat and providing first aid. However, in the event of a serious incident, which could arise as a result of an injury, illness or threat, emergency services should be contacted and the following procedures followed:

Immediate Actions:

- Secure the safety of the whole group and remove them from further danger. Stop all work/activities if safe to do so;
- First Aider to attend to any casualties. Further assistance will be summoned from staff within the school, and the school office alerted. Our First Aid at Work is Tracey Parsons;
- Emergency services should be contacted as necessary, ideally by the first aider at the scene, otherwise via the school office;
- All staff should be in possession of a charged mobile phone to assist in emergency contact where necessary;
- Emergency services should be met by a member of staff at the school gate, or nearest point of access and guided to the location of the incident;
- Our on site address is:

**Cameley Primary School
Meadway
Temple Cloud
Bristol BS39 5BD**

- Staff will continue to consider the safety of the remaining group away from the incident location where possible;
- Informing the next of kin should be carried out as soon as practicable after the incident by the Head Teacher or other responsible member of staff;

Secondary Actions:

After the safety of all children and staff is secured consideration should be given to any investigation needed into the circumstances, either internally or where serious by HSE or other Law Enforcement Agency:

- All equipment involved in an accident or incident must be retained in an unaltered condition in case it is required by the Police;
- A written record or log should be created at the earliest opportunity and all notes

retained;

- Photographs of the location and equipment should be obtained if possible and again retained;

- Do not allow anyone to interview any party member without an independent witness being present. With regard to children this should be a NOK where possible. With regard to staff this should be a person of their choice not involved in any way with the incident or investigation and may include a union representative;

- An incident report or entry in the CLASS first aid book must be completed, signed and dated, where possible before leaving the site;

- Incidents leading to admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours or resulting in an injury preventing a person working for three or more days afterwards need to be registered with RIDDOR within 24 hours Tel: 0845 3009923 (HSE - Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm);

- First Aid kits must be restocked after use and a stock check carried out every 6 months (or in accordance with existing school policy which in Cameley Primary school is currently every three months);

- Any incident or near miss must be subsequently investigated by staff to review existing controls and procedures and amendments to risk assessments made where necessary;

Lost or Missing Person Procedure:

This should not be an issue within school grounds. However, it is possible for a child to

wander off, or when visiting an alternative site to become lost.

Unfamiliar woodland can be disorientating, especially if a participant is unused to this kind of environment. Many woodland sites are not surrounded by walls or fences, and whilst we appreciate this sense of freedom can be beneficial to all, there is also the possibility that a participant may get lost.

We encourage all our children to take an interest in their surroundings so as to help them find their bearings and to take some responsibility for their own safety with respect to staying close to the rest of the group.

- Boundaries will be identified and made known to the group. This may be by walking the perimeter or marking with coloured flags or the like. Straying outside these markers or agreed boundaries will always require a member of staff or leader to be present and should be undertaken in small groups or as one large group. It is acknowledged that within the site at Cameley this is not necessary.

- The children will be counted in and checked at the start and end of day, and also at other relevant points in the day – particularly after activities that include members splitting up;

- Good communication within the group will encourage collective responsibility for *each others' safety. Every effort should be made to ensure that no child should be able to wander off alone unnoticed;*

In the event that a child is found to be missing:

- All the group will be immediately called back in and counted, and the missing member identified;

- The time will be noted;

- ***The Group Leader must ensure the safety of remaining pupils.***

At least two adults must stay with them at all times;

- One or more adults should immediately start searching for the missing group member, calling and whistling as appropriate;

- If the missing group member is not found within 5 minutes, the group Leader must contact Police by telephoning 999 (this will result in the emergency plan coming in to action);

IT IS BETTER TO CALL FOR ASSISTANCE EARLY AND NOT NEED IT, THAN TO NEED IT AND HAVE NOT CALLED FOR IT.

THE POLICE WOULD RATHER BE CANCELLED WHEN THE CHILD IS FOUND THAN BE CALLED WHEN SOME TIME HAS PASSED AND MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO FIND THEM.

- A written description of the child including their clothing should be provided to Police as soon as possible and in any case when they first arrive at the scene. This should include any risk factors such as known ailments, medications, or physical or mental impairment;

- A member of staff should meet Police at the nearest access point and take them directly to the place of the last confirmed sighting of the child;

- Care should be taken to point out where searchers have trodden as a Police dog may not distinguish between different tracks and this option may be able to be ruled in or out at an early stage;

- Further activity should be taken at the direction of the Police or other rescue team.

Tools, Fires & Activity Guidance:

Tool Use Procedure:

Using a range of tools will be necessary in many site based activities and is an important part of our work as it enables children to develop new practical skills and self-confidence.

Cameley VC Primary School aims to ensure that all people participating in sessions with tools do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

Tools that may be used include potato peelers, needles, awls, bow saws, pruning saws, loppers, knives, drills and hatchets.

The following guidelines are to be followed when using tools:

- The forest school leader will check all tools are fit for continued use before the session. Only tools that are in safe working order shall be supplied for use;
- Correct and safe use of sharp tools will be demonstrated to all staff and participants;
- Tools should be counted when handed out and counted back in again when finished;
- All groups are to be supervised closely by competent leaders until deemed competent to work with limited supervision;
- Tools should be kept in a designated safe area when not in use - none should be left unattended outside this area;
- All knives will be closed / sheathed immediately after use;
- Saw guards will be replaced immediately after use;
- Walking around with open / unmasked tools will not be permitted;
- Safe working distances must be maintained at all times, often described aptly as the 'blood bubble'.

All group members will wear suitable boots/shoes and outdoor clothing for the activity they take part in. Where any cutting or felling is taking place, safety equipment should be worn.

Fire Procedure:

Fire and the use of storm kettles are an important part of Forest School.

Cameley VC Primary aims to ensure that all children participating in sessions with fires and/or storm kettles do so safely and with as little risk to their health as possible.

Fires will only be used where it is appropriate to do so.

Storm Kettles require extra care as they present greater risk of injury than other options. Thought should be given to the space around them at all times. Should one fall over hot water is likely to be ejected some distance, the fire will remain, smoke is concentrated above them, and the metal of the kettle will be hot for some time even when empty.

- Leaders will explain to the children the importance of using only dead wood for fires and also of the importance of dead wood as a habitat;
- Smoke inhalation will be reduced by burning dead wood. Those in smoky areas will be encouraged to move to less smoky areas;
- Fires will only be lit in suitable defined spaces or in a fire wok;
- Children will only be allowed to light fires under direct supervision of a trained leader, using suitable materials and equipment;
- All children will be given clear guidelines about how to behave and move around the area when the fire or kettle is lit, maintaining a safe distance unless invited to move closer by a supervising adult;
- All fire and cooking activities will be supervised by an adult at all times;
- Related safety equipment, including heat-proof gloves, a fire blanket, a burns kit and cold water will be kept within close range of fires;
- All fires should be fully extinguished and all traces removed at the end of a session;

Food Hygiene & Eating:

Washing hands is among the most important activity of the day and should be repeated frequently, before and after eating, before and after touching anything unidentified, before going home, and even just for fun!

During some sessions, we may cook items such as popcorn, damper bread or marshmallows over the fire. At least one member of staff will hold a current Food Hygiene Certificate and will ensure that safe procedures are undertaken accordingly. Copies of allergies and allergen information is provided within the school office for all pupils within Cameley Primary school.

General Session Safety & Group Guidance:

Session Safety Resources:

Whenever outdoor activity sessions are run there will always be the need for key items to meet the health and safety requirements of leading a group outdoors. These will differ whether at school within our permanent site or whilst visiting another site, and may change according to the seasons or prevailing weather.

The type, location & remoteness of the site, time of year and the group will have a significant impact on what resources are needed to run a safe and enjoyable session.

Weather & Clothing:

Clothing advice will be given to participants and their parents/carers prior to the visit and may include:

Winter: waterproofs/coats, fleece/jumper, hats and gloves;

Children in Willow class are expected to wear clothing appropriate for forest school activities every Wednesday. Wet weather suits and wellingtons are kept within school at all times.

Summer: waterproofs, fleece, sun hat, long sleeved tops and trousers;

Footwear: wellies or strong/sturdy (ideally waterproof) outdoor shoes and warm woollen or manmade fibre socks (not cotton);

Where possible, we will keep spare sets of waterproofs available on site in case of a child arriving without or not having adequate protection.

Toileting:

Within Cameley VC Primary grounds the usual school toilets and wash facilities will be utilised at all times.

When visiting another site regular toilet and wash facilities will always be sought.

Sites without regular toilet and wash facilities may not be suitable for younger children and where these are known to not exist older children will be encouraged to use regular facilities before leaving home / school;

Everyone in the group will be introduced to wild toileting, to use a trowel to bury faeces and tissue. Privacy and respect will be encouraged for all. The use of a sawdust/ bucket will be introduced to the group;

Should a child require assistance then two members of (DBS checked) staff should assist as required, this will follow the Intimate Care policy which is in place at Cameley Primary school.

Hand washing facilities or cleaning gel / wipes should be available as required, with refuse being removed and disposed of correctly;

Toileting kits contain:

- Toilet paper
- Wet wipes and cleaning gel
- Nappy bags
- Small trowel
- Tarps to make a modesty screen
- Spare pants and jogging bottoms if younger children

Dogs & Members of the Public:

Dogs & Members of the Public should not be encountered within the grounds of Cameley VC Primary School as there are no public rights of way and the grounds are surrounded by a secure fence.

However, when visiting an area off site that may be open to the public there may well be other people out enjoying the woods. Most people will be happy to pass by the Forest School group without hindering activities, but there is the possibility of unwanted attention from a passer-by. In this event a leader will step in and assure the member of public that if they wish to raise any issues, then they should contact Cameley VC Primary School office directly. If the situation escalates to a dangerous level staff will use a mobile phone to call the Police.

Should a dog be encountered and fail to pass the group a leader will speak to the owner and request that it be placed on the lead and pass the group. All children should be advised to be quiet and to remain still and certainly not to run. Children are educated about the importance of appropriate interactions with dogs as part of the curriculum.

Hazardous Plants & Fungi:

All children should be advised that **no-one is to eat anything, or place anything in their mouths without first checking with the group leader.**

Any known hazardous plants should be identified and pointed out at an early stage to all members of the group and the dangers explained.

Fortunately serious poisoning from ingestion of leaves, berries or mushrooms rarely occurs. However, ingesting even small amounts of some species can cause nausea, vomiting, and stomach cramps; and large amounts are potentially fatal.

Consequently, no-one is to eat anything, or place anything in their mouths without first checking with the group leader.

If a child is exposed to a hazardous plant or fungi, a leader must be informed and appropriate First Aid given.

If the nature of the reaction is more serious medical attention should be sought.

Biting & Stinging Insects:

Insect bites and stings can be common, particularly in spring and summer, and usually cause only minor irritation. In rare cases, people can have a serious allergic reaction to a bite or sting that requires immediate medical treatment - if this is the case then immediate medical attention should be sought.

If there is prior knowledge to suggest that a participant will have an allergic reaction if bitten, then Cameley VC Primary, and ideally the Head Teacher and Forest School Leader, must be informed before any activities take place on site.

If ticks are known to exist in proximity to a site then all participants need to check or be

checked for ticks as soon as possible following any activity on site. Where a tick is found on a participant, a plaster should be placed over it and parents/carers informed at the end of the session so that they can remove it safely. Information on safe removal of ticks can be found at www.tickbitepreventionweek.org/tick-removal

Safe Lifting:

Forest School activities can be physically demanding.

One of the greatest causes of back injury is lifting or handling objects incorrectly.

- Think and plan where and how you are going to move an object before you lift;
- Keep the load close to your waist and the heaviest side of the load next to your body;
- Adopt a stable position with feet apart and one leg slightly forward if possible;
- Ensure a good hold on the load, hug it close to your body if possible;

- Avoid bending your back, only bend at your hips or knees if possible;
- Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways especially if bending at the back;
- Keep your head up and look ahead, not down at the load once it is held securely;
- Move smoothly;
- Know your limits - don't lift or handle more than you can easily manage without help;
- Put the load down if you need to adjust it;
- Where possible, use ropes to drag objects such as trees.

Lone working:

When preparing for a session, it may be necessary for one person to visit a site alone. Anyone carrying out the work should inform a member of Cameley VC Primary School staff before departing and upon safe return. They should follow the Lone Working Policy for Cameley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School.

The staff member should ensure that they are in possession of a charged mobile phone. The lone worker should leave details of where they will be working and at what times. There is a school mobile telephone kept within the school office.

If the lone worker changes location they should inform the Cameley VC Primary School Office of the change.

If no contact has been made by the lone worker at the agreed end of working time, then the Cameley VC Primary School Office staff should attempt to contact them.

If they are unable to contact the lone worker, then they should try their home number, inform the Head Teacher, and alert the Police.

Group walking:

Group walking is of little impact within the permanent grounds of Cameley VC Primary School.

However when leaving the site on foot the following procedures will be followed:

- The destination will be communicated to all adults present;
- Children will be counted at the beginning and end of the walk, and at any necessary points in between, such as after a rest or play stop;
- Walking on roads will be avoided, but where necessary will be in single file, with an adult at the front and the rear, and remaining adults interspersed between children;
- For longer walks and those which venture beyond the Forest School site, the route and projected timings will be communicated to the Cameley VC Primary School office, and arrangements made for a check-in system between the office staff and the group leader.

Administering medicines and sun cream – see Sun Safety Policy for full guidance

We will follow the Sun Safety policy at all times. Children should bring in their own sun cream and should administer this themselves, under the supervision of an adult. Where necessary to administer paediatric paracetamol, sting or bite treatments, antiseptic cream and sun cream, or other prescription medicines appropriate permission will be gained and are included within our proforma consent form. We will not apply suncream to pupils.

Guardians will also be asked to provide details of allergies or relevant illnesses and to supply medicines where necessary (such as an epi-pen or asthma inhaler). There will be a care plan in place for those pupils who have severe medical conditions or allergic reactions. These are visible within the classroom.

Where the next of kin (NOK) or guardian does not give permission for medicines and creams to be applied, their wishes will be adhered to by the Forest School Staff.

Reporting: incidents and accidents:

Any accidents that involve injury will be recorded into a first aid book.

Major injuries that constitute 'reportable injuries' will be reported to the Health and Safety via the online reporting tool and the Health and Safety. This will be investigated by the Headteacher or another member of the SLT.

Parents will be notified of injuries in keeping with school policy.

'Incidents', which include major behavioural incidents and any major negative occurrence that is not an accident, will also be recorded by the Forest School leader in an Incident Report.

Pro forma consent:

Parents/Guardians will be asked to fill in a consent form before their child begins at Cameley Church of England Primary School. The completed consent form will give relevant medical details of the child, consent for the child to take part in the forest school activities and permissions to administer medicines and creams and to admit the child to hospital for emergency treatment. This forms part of the standard procedures for Cameley Primary school and does not need to be a separate consent form for Forest School.

The form also provides emergency contact details and optional permission to take and use photographs of the child for promotional purposes and reports.

When on site a copy of this form will be retained within the school office. When off site a copy of this form will be within the possession of the group leader at all times.

Safeguarding:

Please refer to the existing Cameley VC Primary School Safeguarding Policy.

It is the responsibility of Cameley VC Primary School Forest Leaders to ensure the safety of children and any vulnerable adults whilst in our care.

We are committed to creating an environment which is safe from abuse and any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with.

The Cameley VC Primary School Safeguarding Policy focuses on:

- Minimising the risk of abuse taking place through good planning and best practice;
- Empowering those it works with to stay safe and speak out;
- Taking appropriate action when any allegations arise.

Staff & Assistants:

All staff will have enhanced checks from the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS), dated within 5 years and at the current home address.

All volunteers and visitors will be vetted by gathering: references / employment history / record of qualification in accordance with Cameley VC Primary School policy.

Volunteers without a valid DBS certificate will not be left unsupervised with children. Participants will not be left unsupervised with a visitor or volunteer where no DBS certificate has been seen.

Ratios:

Ratios of staff to children will depend on the location and activity in accordance with existing Cameley VC Primary School policy.

A ratio of 1 adult to 4 children is ideal, and should not exceed 1 adult to 10 children.

Disclosures, Recording & Reporting:

Appropriate steps will be taken where concerns arise regarding the safety of a participant. Concerns will be reported to the Head Teacher and we will ensure that disclosures are responded to sensitively and appropriately, in line with current best practise.

- Any concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon immediately;
- Positive action will be taken to ensure the protection of participants who are subject to any concerns;
- The safety of the rest of the group will be secured before taking further action and

consideration given to calling the Police should the concern warrant it, or where a crime has taken place;

- Implicated adult(s) will be encouraged to leave the group until the disclosure is officially cleared/action taken;
- All appropriate staff/managers will be informed;
- Relevant information/evidence will be recorded in an appropriate and cooperative manner;
- In all child/vulnerable adult protection situations, confidentiality will be maintained at all times by disclosing information only to those who need to know.

LADO (Local Area Designated Officer) via the BANES Switchboard
NSPCC helpline can be used for children 08088005000 or the Care Quality Commission for vulnerable adults 03000616161

Cameley VC Primary School will follow guidance provided by partner organisations and local authorities.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion:

Please view in addition to the existing Cameley VC Primary School policy.

Cameley VC Primary School is committed to equal opportunity for all and we wish to provide an environment in which people feel equally valued. Our policies help to ensure that we promote the individuality of all, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

When planning a visit, information is requested from schools/groups about any participants with access or medical requirements so they can be fully included in the programme.

We will endeavour to adapt activities to ensure that everyone can participate and, where possible, we will keep spare sets of waterproof clothing to ensure that bad weather is not a barrier to taking part.

Behaviour Policy:

Please view in addition to the existing Cameley VC Primary School policy.

Everyone has a responsibility to protect their own and other group members' health, safety and well-being. They should inform Cameley VC Primary School staff if they have concerns about anybody's actions.

We aim to promote:

- Self-esteem;
- Self-awareness of personal abilities and limitations;

- Respect and care for oneself, other people and the natural environment;
- Co-operation and non-violent communication.

Forest School Agreement and Ground Rules:

In the course of the first session, a commitment will be sought between the staff and all children for the conduct of the group. This will include items such as respecting oneself, each other and the environment and listening carefully to instructions when they are given. The group will be encouraged to contribute items to the agreement before it is 'sealed'.

Ground rules are firmer non-negotiable rules, such as 'no violence' and will be explained along with the consequences of breaking them.

Physical Intervention:

Please view in addition to the existing Cameley VC Primary School policy.

In accordance with the law, and our values, Cameley VC Primary School does not use, or threaten to use, corporal punishment. However, where necessary, physical intervention may be used in order to avert immediate danger to any person (including a child). Staff are trained appropriately to ensure that this follows all accepted guidelines.

Any occasion where physical intervention is used will be recorded in an incident Report and parents/carers will be informed on the same day as the incident.

Behaviour expectations for leaders, assistants and visitors:

- Be a positive role model for participants, particularly with regards to respecting each person and the environment;
- Encourage and reinforce caring and nurturing behaviour;
- Be vigilant with regards to common sense safety;
- Avoid unnecessary rigidity or petty rules;
- Avoid coercive or manipulative behaviour management, or that based on personal negative messages, as we feel these damage morale, motivation and self-esteem and are counter-productive to the ethos and objectives of forest school.

Encouraging Positive Behaviour:

We want to allow the greatest potential for each participant's forest school experience to be transformational and therefore wish to welcome each participant from an open and unbiased viewpoint with regards to their behaviour and abilities.

Whilst recognising that it is useful to have previous information about participants' needs, we believe that no child is inherently 'naughty' and hope that the greater freedoms offered by a forest school environment will allow for a more flexible interpretation of positive engagement.

We will work with each group to develop a clear set of boundaries and guidelines.

Each participant will have the opportunity to voice their own feelings. Talking about how they wish to be treated and listening to the feelings of others is important as it will allow the group to work together, understand one another and ultimately become more supportive and cooperative. It will also contribute to making the forest school a safe and enjoyable space.

De-escalation:

If a situation arises in which participants are behaving in a way that threatens the safety of the group, the forest school leader will ensure that the following steps are taken:

1. Recount the facts of the incident as observed, in simple language and without judgement, and if possible mutually agree on these. Remind the participants involved of any guidelines they have not followed;
2. Listen to the involved party or parties, if necessary gently separate them from the group for this. Ask about how they feel about the incident, empathise with them to help them to express themselves and take responsibility for their feelings. Ask them to imagine how they think their behaviour has affected everyone else;
3. Talk with them to establish what their needs in the situation were and to understand how they were not being met. Discuss what their needs might be now and encourage them to consider the needs of everyone else present;
4. Help them to express any requests they might have clearly and in positive language. These can be requests of themselves, others, situations or of the environment;
5. Encourage discussion of new strategies, so that if a similar situation arises the participant(s) feel able to communicate their needs without resorting to negative behaviours.

Recording & Reporting:

In all cases the forest school leader will complete an incident report form, and where necessary inform parents/carers.

Where relevant, any significant issues or incidents will be discussed with parents or carers in a private conversation, when the participant is not present.

Learning and Development:

The contemporary forest school movement was brought to the UK from Scandinavia in the 1990s but it is predated by many British traditions, such as the Woodcraft Folk, Scouting and Guiding. It draws inspiration from these traditions, along with various educational philosophies, including Rousseau, Froebel, Steiner and Montessori.

Our Ethos:

Cameley CEVC Primary's Forest School is designed to enhance and complement our day to day curriculum across the whole school (Early Years and Foundation Stage, KS1 and KS2).

It is founded on the belief that the whole child matters, that every child should feel included and be given exciting opportunities to grow in confidence, self-worth, and ability; and to experience and celebrate their own positive achievements.

And most importantly; to build happy memories and to develop confident and capable children who are able to explore their own hopes and dreams...

Cameley CEVC Primary would like our forest school programme to foster self-esteem, independence, emotional, resilience, co-operation, personal responsibility, autonomy and motivation, as well as a deeply personal knowledge, respect and care for our environment. Our approach is learner-led, play-centred, holistic and experiential. When taking part in our forest school programme a participant is engaging with nature in wild spaces in an exploratory, sensory and physical way.

We believe it's important to create, where possible, a long-term relationship between a location and a group of participants - giving all participants a chance to get a feel for how an environment changes over time.

Participants will be encouraged to take constructive risks in order to develop skills, good judgment and to learn and develop through managing their own and others' risks. In planning activities we consider not only the risks but also the potential benefits for the learner.

Roles & Responsibilities:

All staff members involved in the forest school programmes are conscious that it is an exploratory experience for the group. They allow the group to play and learn as independently as possible, often without demonstrating or suggesting. If invited to provide support then they do, but otherwise merely observe, allowing the experience to be learner-directed.

It is the role of the forest school leader(s) to take a lead in planning, delivering and evaluating the forest school programme. They also take primary responsibility in ensuring that policies and procedures, rules and guidelines are adhered to.

Volunteers and other adults may help with these responsibilities where they wish to and are able and/or qualified to.

Evaluation:

Evaluation forms will be completed after each session and a reflective report is compiled after each programme of sessions.

Communication Strategy:

This communication strategy explains how participants, parents, those involved with delivering the forest school programme and other stakeholders are kept informed with the delivery and outcomes.

Participants will be asked to evaluate the programme through verbal feedback, videos, writings and drawings. These will be opportunities for them to express how they feel the programme is going and to engage with the process of developing the future sessions.

Participants' contact person (teacher, support staff or parent):

Cameley CEVC Primary will request that all those leading or supporting sessions read our Handbook before their group's sessions begin. Parents/carers of each participant will be asked to complete a consent form. The group's contact person will be asked to provide medical and behavioural information about each participant and confirm that they understand the programme and the handbook.

Verbal feedback will be sought from the contact person on a regular basis, and will be asked to complete an end-of programme evaluation form. Parents will receive information about the outcomes of the sessions through photos, a display or report.

All adults present at the forest school must sign a form to confirm that they have read, understood and agree to comply with Forest of Avon Trust's forest school Handbook before the start of the programme or session they will take part in.

Assistants and volunteers will be informed of the plan for each session in advance by email or telephone and invited to provide input. They will be asked to provide feedback on how each session went verbally or written, as preferred.

Following an evaluation of the sessions a case study or report will often be produced and this will be shared with others, such as other schools, forest school leaders, etc.

Equipment List:

This is by no means a complete list and can be adapted to suit the particular lesson plan or location:

- First Aid Kit
- Emergency bivvy-bag/blanket
- First Aid book
- Mobile Phone
- Fresh water/water carrier
- Bowl
- Towel
- Hand washing kit
- Spare clothing
- Pro forma consent forms/Incident log
- Tools
- Fire lighting kit
- Personal protective equipment/gloves/wellies etc
- Fire blanket
- Risk-benefit analysis
- Emergency Procedure
- Toileting kit

Session Routines:

1. Carry out a session risk assessment of site and advise/act accordingly
2. Collect necessary equipment and restock first aid where necessary
3. Meet and register group
4. Check phone signal

Session Opening:

1. Introductions of any new faces
2. Make the group aware of new hazards or medical considerations
3. Check that they are all wearing suitable clothing and footwear
4. Take the group to the location
5. Form an opening circle
6. Describe or walk the boundaries for the day
7. Engage children in the development of rules and guidelines for the day
8. Describe the day's activities

During the Session:

1. Visually check all equipment before use
2. Check on pastoral needs of group
3. Conduct a head count, as needed
4. Ensure appropriate personal protective clothing is worn

Closing the Session:

1. Extinguish any fires properly
2. Count any tools used into their bag
3. Remove structures
4. Check for litter etc.
5. Collect the equipment
6. Form a closing circle
7. Conduct some type of evaluation with the group (questions, talking stick or drawing)
8. Walk the group to the pick-up point
9. Bid farewell to the group
10. Thoroughly check equipment
11. Complete the appropriate evaluation forms

Terms and Conditions:

“There is no such thing as bad weather, just unsuitable clothing.” This is almost true; strong winds are probably the one real exception. We aim to go out in all seasons, so for each we need participants to dress appropriately. Our sessions are relatively active, but in winter spending hours outside can mean getting very cold if a participant isn't wearing several layers, warm socks, a hat, gloves, scarf, etc. It's also advisable always to wear long trousers and sturdy boots or wellies in all weathers in the woods.

We encourage all participants and carers/parents to give us regular feedback about their experience and also to talk to us about anything that is causing consternation.

Feedback and concerns can be expressed verbally, in person or by telephone, or in writing by email. We will always endeavour to be as open, honest and as straightforward as possible with carers/parents with regard to any issue; maintaining a two way flow of information can lead to resolutions before problems arise or escalate. All communications regarding formal feedback or concerns will be logged and records kept.

In the event of a concern being about our practice, we will investigate this and feed back our conclusions with 28 day and in accordance with existing school policy.

Sign-off Sheet:

“I confirm that I have read a copy of this Handbook and agree to abide by the policies and procedures it contains.”

Name:	Position/Title:	Signature:	Date:

Pro forma consent

I have read the accompanying information about the *Cameley CEVC Primary Forest School* activities.

I am happy for to participate and give my permission for:

Please delete any of the statements below you do not want to give permission for

- The audio recording of conversation
- The use of photographs and videos in publicly-available reports and news articles for promotional and educational purposes
- The use of written research data for reports, presentations and publications.

Signed..... Date.....

Print nameRelationship to Participant.....

Address.....
..
.....

Postcode.....Telephone contact.....

Email contact.....

Please return one copy of this form to: *Cameley CEVC Primary School Office*.