

**Forest/Beach School Policy**

**Policy No: 41**

**May 2025**

**Contents**

[**Forest/Beach School Policies and Procedures at St Anthony’s School.** 3](#_Toc198726423)

[**1.** **Missing Child from Forest/Beach School** 3](#_Toc198726424)

[**2.** **Accident and First Aid at Forest/Beach School** 4](#_Toc198726425)

[**3.** **Forest/Beach School’s Fire Safety Procedure and Emergency Evacuation Procedure** 4](#_Toc198726426)

[**4.** **Forest/Beach School Allergies, Allergic Reactions and Medication Procedure** 5](#_Toc198726427)

[**5.** **Forest/Beach School’s Safe Use and Maintenance of Tools** 5](#_Toc198726428)

[**6.** **Manual Handling in Forest/Beach School**/**Climbing** 6](#_Toc198726429)

[**7.** **Forest/Beach School Food Activity Management** 6](#_Toc198726430)

[**8.** **Litter and Disposal of Waste from Forest/Beach School** 6](#_Toc198726431)

[**10.** **Forest/Beach School Code of Behaviour** 7](#_Toc198726432)

[**11.** **Confidentiality**/**GDPR/Consent** 7](#_Toc198726433)

[**12.** **Safeguarding** 7](#_Toc198726434)

[**13.** **PPE/Clothing** 8](#_Toc198726435)

[**14.** **Forest/beach school Activities including Den building, Ropes and Fire.** 8](#_Toc198726436)

[**15.** **Ducks in Forest school** 8](#_Toc198726437)

[January ~~2022~~ 2023 9](#_Toc198726438)

# **Forest/Beach School Policies and Procedures at St Anthony’s School.**

We are committed to the importance of daily outdoor play and physical development in all children and young people regardless of their age and stage of development. Forest/Beach School is great opportunity for children to develop and experience the outdoors in the most natural way possible. All activities will be made accessible to all children and have opportunity to move freely around the site.

The Forest/Beach School will provide a wealth of natural resources, which help children to develop in a variety of ways, including independence, exploration and investigative skills, risk taking and self-esteem all of which support children to develop skills for now and the future.

Children and young people will be provided with adult support but all of the activities will be child-initiated and child led. All children will have opportunities to learn and practice new skills, knowledge and behaviours from the environment. It is the responsibility of the forest school leader to ensure the supporting staff have had opportunity to familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures outlined in this document.

When in Forest/Beach School the ratio will be determined by risks. For example if the children are free playing it is likely to be 1 trained forest/Beach school practitioner and 1 support staff. When working with tools or fire the forest school leader would initially work 1-1 with each individual, observing their confidence and abilities. Please see daily risk assessment where ratio would be adapted to suit the activity. The higher ratio of staff will ensure the forest/Beach school leader can spend more time focusing on an individual, enhancing their skills and increasing their confidence in a chosen task.

The school and trained practitioner will ensure all areas are safe and secure through close supervision and the use of robust risk assessments and safety checks. The Forest/Beach School Leader and staff are informed of the importance of these procedures and are trained appropriately to ensure these procedures are followed effectively.

Before any session begins, the children and staff will talk through the agreed forest/Beach school rules and it will be the responsibility of the forest/Beach school leader to ensure these are delivered in a way that the children can understand.

The Forest/Beach School Leader and accompanying support staff will also have full access to, and will pay regard to the contents of the **schools risk assessments relating to Forest/Beach School (See Forest/Beach School Handbook risk assessments section).**

This document will be reviewed annually by the Forest School Leader.

1. **Missing Child from Forest/Beach School**

In the event of a child going missing within/from the Forest School, the following procedure will be implemented immediately:

The Forest School leader will inform the senior leaders immediately and necessary staff will be informed. Staff will then follow **St Anthony’s Policy no.32 Absconding protocol. Staff are not to follow children and must observe from afar. Police must be called if children go out of site.**

1. **Accident and First Aid at Forest/Beach School**

The Forest/Beach School Leader must hold an up to date outdoor first aid qualification and will be responsible for delivering the first aid in the event of any cuts, scrapes, bites, stings or anything else which can be dealt with onsite at forest school. In the event of an accident that requires further support, the forest school leader will contact for assistance using the walkie talkie. The person responsible for reporting accidents, incidents or near misses is the forest school leader. They must record it in the Accident book and then report it to a member of senior leadership team. This should be done as soon as the accident is dealt with, while the details are still clearly remembered whilst ensuring the remaining children are supervised appropriately. The Forest School Leader will check the accident book weekly for any possible patterns to be identified e.g. an accident occurring in the same place. Any patterns will be investigated and addressed if necessary by the Forest School Leader. The Forest School Leader has access to a First Aid kit and a Burns Kit will be located in the Forest School environment at all times. The Forest School Leader and accompanying support staff have full knowledge of, and will refer to the contents of **St Anthony’s Health and safety policy no.3 section C (C7) first aid arrangements.**

In the event of an accident whilst at the beach that requires further support, the Beach school leader will contact for assistance using a mobile phone. In the event of no signal areas, the supporting adult would make the call from an area that signal returns. This can vary from different areas of the coast so therefore this will looked at as part of the individual risk assessments for each beach. The person responsible for reporting accidents, incidents or near misses is the beach school leader. It must be recorded in the accident book as soon as we return to school. Any first aid completed will be recorded in the first aid book which will be held with the beach school leader on site. On returning to school, the incident will be reported to a member of senior leadership team.

1. **Forest/Beach School’s Fire Safety Procedure and Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

During all campfire activities, the Forest School Leader will ensure that there is a bucket of water next to the fire in case of emergency. A burns kit and fire blanket must be immediately available at all times, and flammable material must be removed before the fire is lit. The Forest School Leader and accompanying support staff have full knowledge of, and will pay regard to the contents of the schools risk assessments relating to lighting a campfire (See Forest School Handbook risk assessments section). It is the Forest School Leader’s responsibility to maintain the safe use of the campfire and that the fire is kept under control at all times. The Forest School Leader is the only adult who may light a campfire or lead an activity involving the fire. Any practitioner or assisted child who is involved with the lighting and maintaining of the camp fire, must at all times wear protective gloves of the appropriate size. All practitioners involved in any activities involving the camp fire must have their hair tied back at all times whilst a campfire is lit, the Forest School Leader must not at any time leave the fire unsupervised for any reason, even if there are other adults present. At the end of a campfire activity it is the Forest school Leader’s responsibility to extinguish the fire in a safe way by using the bucket of water already at the scene. The fire must be completely extinguished and there is no detectable heat rising from it. In the event of a fire becoming out of control the Forest School Leader will take responsibility for organising the safe evacuation of all children and adult’s present in the Forest School area to the schools designated fire assembly point. (Please see schools fire evacuation procedure) and alert office staff who will inform the rest of the school immediately of the situation via walkie talkie and the fire alarm would be set off. The school will then follow its Fire Evacuation Policy and Procedure. In the event of a fire located within the school grounds the forest school leader would ensure the site is left safe (put out any fire at forest school) gather the children together leaving behind any tools or equipment whilst ensuring it is left safely and not on the floor and then head to the nearest fire exit to the meeting points outlined in

**St Anthony’s Health and Safety policy no.3 section C3 and C4.**

On the coasts of Kent, fires are not permitted on the beaches. In the event of colder weather, the coastal school leader may bring the Kelly kettle to boil water to make hot drinks. Please see activity risk assessments for using Kelly kettle. During each session, the beach school leader will create a base which will be clearly visual. This will be our assembly point in the event of any emergency situation.

1. **Forest/Beach School Allergies, Allergic Reactions and Medication Procedure**

The forest school site has its own risk assessment and all species of plant and tree will have been identified and looked into for possible reactions, which may occur. If a child or member of staff gets stung or has an allergic reaction to a particular plant, the forest school leader will follow first aid procedure and ensure the rest of the group are calm and engaged. The forest school leader will then direct the supporting staff and the child to the medical room if needed.

The Forest School Leader and accompanying support staff have knowledge of, and will refer to **St Anthony’s** **Policy no.25 supporting pupils with medical conditions**. Please also see the risk assessment.

In regard to any medications for children, in school we have designated staff and areas for administering medication. In the event a child needing support with an inhaler the medical staff would be called to the forest school via walkie talkie. For some children their inhaler/medication may need to be immediately accessible during a Forest School activity, in which case it will be safely stored in a container alongside the first aid kit to enable all first aid trained practitioners to administer if necessary. In regard to any medications for children attending sessions at the beach, it will be the beach school leaders responsibility to administer the medication, which would have been signed out of school by a trained member of staff. It will be the beach school leaders responsibility to ensure we have drinking water available for any child to take medication. In the event a child needing support with an inhaler, the staff may support the child with administering this if required. For some children their inhaler/medication may need to be immediately accessible during activities, in which case it will be safely stored in a container alongside the first aid kit to enable all first aid trained practitioners to administer if necessary.

1. **Forest/Beach School’s Safe Use and Maintenance of Tools**

Activity Risk Assessments are completed by the Forest/Beach School Leader for all activities involving the use of tools. At the beginning of an activity the Forest/Beach School Leader will demonstrate and explain the safe use of the tools required to complete the activity planned for that session. This is called a ‘Tool Talk’. Any support staff or child using a tool as part of an activity must wear a glove on their non-tool hand at all times, and will be supervised on a one to one ratios with the Forest/Beach School Leader providing the correct level of support for the duration of the activity. The level of support will change as the child displays competence. The Forest/Beach School Leader will be responsible for the maintenance and cleaning of all tools. The Forest/Beach School Leader will wear appropriate protective equipment as necessary when carrying out tool maintenance and will follow the methods they developed from their training. St Anthony’s Forest/Beach School will use a variety of different tools with the children, however careful planning and observation will assess the ability of the children before introducing any tools to them.

1. **Manual Handling in Forest/Beach School**/**Climbing**

Correct handling techniques must be followed to minimise the risks of injury. A variety of injuries may result from poor manual handling. The Forest/Beach School Leader is responsible for modelling safe manual handling to the children and assessing their age and ability whether it is safe and appropriate for them to move loads such as logs or rocks, due to the weight, size and shape, taking into consideration factors such as weather conditions. Children will be encouraged to manage their own risks and to learn about weight, load and heights through experience. Staff will monitor children and support them if needed. If a child asks to climb the cliffs on the beach, it is the beach school leader’s responsibility to access the risk involved in the activity. Please see activity risk assessment.

1. **Forest/Beach School Food Activity Management**

The Forest/Beach School Leader and support staff present are responsible for ensuring the food in which is offered is suitable. They must, where possible provide balanced and healthy options for children, as well as adhering to any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that a child may have. The Forest/Beach School Leader and accompanying support staff will follow the contents of **St Anthony’s policy no. 25 supporting children with medical conditions.** Children who have allergies and allergic reactions, staff also need to be aware of individual requirements of the child’s dietary needs via their individual risk assessment. It is the responsibility of the Forest/beach School Leader, when carrying out a food activity to maintain the fire and the cooking of the food. The Forest/Beach School Leader will supervise staff and children who assist with the cooking. When doing so they must be wearing protective gloves. The Forest/Beach School Leader and any staff present who will be handling food must follow good levels of hygiene and ensure hand washing before handling food. All staff present will be responsible for demonstrating how to handle foods safely and hygienically. When children are preparing or handling food, using tools such as knifes it is the responsibility of the Forest/Beach School Leader to ensure they are using them safely and correctly on a one to one ratio. A risk assessment will be completed before each activity involving cooking on the campfire. It is unlikely that any food will be cooked at the beach, children will be encouraged to bring a packed lunch or snacks from home or school.

1. **Litter and Disposal of Waste from Forest/Beach School**

When in Forest/Beach School it is the responsibility of the Forest/Beach School Leader and accompanying support staff to demonstrate the correct way to dispose of litter and waste to and children. They should also be made aware of why it is important to do so, encouraging children to care for their own environment.

• Children should be encouraged to tidy up after themselves and dispose of their own litter in a designated spot. This will be a carrier bag or big bag provided by the Forest/Beach School Leader who will dispose of it appropriately at the end of the activity. Items that are suitable to compost will be placed in the compost site within Forest School. It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to maintain the compost area. If a bin is not accessible, a carrier bag will be provided by the Beach School Leader who will dispose of it appropriately at the end of the activity. Items that are suitable to compost will be placed in the compost site within Forest School on return to school. Children will be encouraged to take part in a litter pick at times during sessions on the beach. This is to raise their awareness and create a sense of responsibility for our local areas. Please see activity risk assessment for litter picking.

1. **Forest/Beach School Children’s Toileting Needs**

When at forest school, children will use the toilet located in the forest school classroom which is directly linked. Children are encouraged to maintain their own hygiene standards by washing their hands, being reminded or assisted by the accompanying support staff.

Whilst off site at local beaches, it will be the Beach school leader responsibility to ensure that a toilet is available and open to the public. This will be part of the risk assessment process, taking into consideration that at certain times of the year, the toilets may be closed.

A member of support staff will accompany them to the toilet. The children will be encouraged to use the toilet before we descend to the beach area. Children are encouraged to maintain their own hygiene standards by washing their hands, being reminded or assisted by the accompanying support staff.

1. **Forest/Beach School Code of Behaviour**

St Anthony’s has a clear policy on behaviour that has been created to suit the children and young people within our school. Please see addition page

**St Anthony’s behaviour flow chart.**

**For addition information on behaviour please refer to St Anthony’s behaviour management policy no. 07**

Whilst attending Forest/Beach School children will be aware of the rules of behaviour for themselves and the safety of others. It is the responsibility of the Forest/Beach School Leader to set these rules and make sure that all children and support staff are aware of them at all times. Helping to promote positive behaviour at all times and continuing with the ethos of Forest/Beach school. If these rules are not adhered it is the responsibility of the Forest/Beach School Leader to implement St Anthony’s behaviour flow chart and direct support staff.

1. **Confidentiality**/**GDPR/Consent**

St Anthony’s work with children and their families, which brings us into contact with confidential information. Within Forest/Beach School and the school itself, it is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their families. All children will have a signed copy of consent in their files to say they can access forest/beach school. St Anthony’s school hold parental consent forms regarding the use of students photos. Please see individual risk assessment.

Please refer to **St Anthony’s Privacy notice for workforce under GDPR and Parents and Carers privacy notice.**

1. **Safeguarding**

During forest schools sessions it is possible for children to disclose information, which may raise a cause for concern. In the event of this happening, the forest/beach school leader and any supporting staff would report their concerns following the **St Anthony’s safeguarding and child protection policy no.14** as soon as it was safe to do so. Any concern would be logged on CPOMS and reported to DSL and SLT. All staff supporting children within will be DBS checked.

In the event of a serious disclosure and off site at the beach, a member of staff will phone the school to ask for further assistance. In the event of any visitors attending sessions, the beach school leader will lease with the visitor and give them a copy of the handbook to read and sign. The visitor will need to read the risk assessment for the day and be lead by the beach school leader. If the visitor is not DBS checked, at no point will the visitor be alone with children.

1. **PPE/Clothing**

Children will need to come to school prepared for forest/beach school. With the changing, weather it is important children have suitable footwear, jumpers, coats, hats and gloves, sun hats, sun cream, waterproofs and waterproof shoes. Wellington boots could be supplied by St Anthony’s if we have the correct sizes. Gloves worn for warmth will need to be removed when working with tools and replaced with the correct PPE. Staff will also be required to wear appropriate clothing, ideally waterproof clothes and shoes. Staff will be responsible for bringing their own clothing suitable for the weather. The forest/beach school leader will ensure before any session that children are prepared with the correct PPE and clothing. If a child is to cold, the forest/beach school leader will organise additional clothing and contact class teachers to speak to parents/carers about more layers. In the warmer months all children will need to bring a bottle of water to ensure hydration. Staff can refill these throughout the day. The beach school leader, where possible, will also create a shelter as part of an activity.

1. **Forest/beach school Activities including Den building, Ropes and Fire.**

Any activity delivered at forest/beach school will have been thoroughly risk assessed beforehand to ensure any risks involved are minimised.

Children will need to show a good level of understanding of the risks before the forest/beach school leader attempts an activity.

The children will have opportunity to create a fire. This activity will evolve slowly to ensure children understand the rules of the fire circle and show good understanding of the risks involved. Children will be highly supported and opportunity will be given for reflection and questions. Please see risk assessment on fire safety and refer to the activity risk assessment for that day.

Children will be given the opportunity to build dens and shelters. This will include the use of ropes and learning to tie knots. It is the responsibility of the forest/beach school leader to ensure that any use of rope is monitored to ensure the safety of the children. Although all activities will be child led the forest/beach school leader will ensure that any risks are discussed with the children during the session so they build an awareness of the risks. Children will have the opportunity to put their new skills into practice and will be encouraged to discuss their work. This will involve them taking part in the risk assessment of their own dens and secure knowledge in the activity and its related risks.

Please see risk assessment relating to den building, use of rope and also the daily risk assessment for the activity.

# **Ducks in Forest school area**

Studies show that encouraging children to take an interest in animals can have a positive effect on them and can be used to improve human and animal welfare. Some of the benefits have been identified as follows:

**School animals have been found to:**

\* motivate pupils to think and to learn, as children have a high level of natural interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment of animals

\* encourage a respect and reverence for life in pupils and thereby improve their relationships with other pupils, parents and teachers

\* foster a sense of responsibility in children

\* teach children to nurture and respect life

\* lead to the development of hobbies /careers in animal care

**Animals in schools also have social benefits for the school community:**

\* enhance the learning environment, creating a sense of security and family warmth for the children

\* encourage the involvement of parents and the wider community in school activity

\* help to promote the school as an important nurturing influence in the community

1. **Looking after school ducks**

At St Anthony’s School we aim to promote good practice in animal care. Children are taught correct procedures in handling and caring for animals; they are encouraged to take a shared responsibility for the care of the animals, under supervision. Children will be taught how to interact gently with our school animals whilst under adult supervision.

\*ensure that each animal enjoys an optimum environment, socialised and well maintained.

\* We are aware that keeping mixed gender animals can lead to breeding and careful measures have been put in place to ensure the ratio of male and female is correct.

\* routine preventive health measures are practised to ensure the welfare of our ducks. This includes the use of specialised bedding and sanitiser powder. Any concerns will be reported to local vets and treated as necessary.

\* animals and their quarters are always kept clean and safe.

\* a high quality, appropriate diet is provided.

\* children always wash hands after handling.

\* careful arrangements for holiday and weekend care are made. Staff have agreed to a rota system to ensure the animals are happy and safe.

1. **Handling Ducks**

Maintain of good level of hygiene. When handling ducks.

\*Do not consume food or drink whilst handling the ducks

\* wash your hands with soap and water before and directly after handling ducks

\* keep animals away from the face

Careful handling of the ducks is most important. The animals should be restrained sufficiently so that, they cannot damage themselves or the handler. Children to be encouraged to be at floor level and not stood whilst holding the ducks to avoid any accidents or injury to the ducks.

1. **Diseases, parasites and allergies**

The likelihood of diseases being passed on from ducks to humans is low. Hand washing is essential aftercare.

Staff to carefully monitor children developing allergic reactions. Children with allergies specific to animals are identified on their individual risk assessments. Children known to have allergic reactions to animals have restricted access to those that may trigger a response. In most cases, an allergic reaction will subside once the animal and the affected person are kept apart. In extreme cases, seek medical advice and inform parents/carers.

1. **Keeping animals in school: RSPCA guidance**

The guidance from the RSPCA says that where animals are kept in schools, “any staff responsible for animals must ensure that the needs of these animals are met”. This includes ensuring that:

\*Accommodation is appropriate to the animal and its size.

\* Suitable fresh food and water is provided as and when required

\* The animal has the freedom to exhibit normal behaviour patterns

\* The animal has suitable companionship

\* The animal is protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

\* A named person is responsible for the welfare and husbandry of the animals at all times

\* Any contact between children or young people and animals is supervised and controlled

\* The animals are given adequate "rest" periods away from disturbance

\* The animal's lifestyle (according to its species) fits with the academic day

\* Any animals kept are prevented from indiscriminate breeding

**How will St Anthony’s School ensure these guidelines are followed**

At St Anthony’s school we aim to provide high-quality level of care for our ducks. This will include access to open spaces, giving our ducks opportunity to forage for their own food, in a natural safe environment, giving opportunity to mimic their natural behaviours.

The ducks have plenty of space to roam free during the day.

At night the ducks will live in a carefully constructed enclosure, made of galvanised steel. This has been built with extra protection to protect against foxes and other predators. They also have a wooden house which is located inside the steel structure. It is lockable and gives more than adequate space for sleeping. This area will be maintained daily by staff and children attending St Anthony’s school.

A class will be allocated each morning and afternoon to let the ducks out and put them away at the end of the school day. This will ensure their safety.

During the weekends and school holiday’s St Anthony’s have a selection of staff we have named “Team Duck “who will ensure they are clean, fed, watered and safe.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Document Title:** | Forest School |
| **Version:** | K-SENT Version 2 |
| **Prepared by:** | Ame Friend  Forest School Lead |
| **Governing Body Acceptance Date:** | Ratified at the FGB meeting on the |
| **Date for Next Review:** | January 2027 |
| **Link on School Website** |  |