



St. Veronica's RC Primary School Use of Tools Policy

Policy statement

It is the Forest School Leader's priority to ensure the safety of the learners, staff and volunteers and also the conservation of the forest area. This policy aims to provide clear guidelines for the use of tools within the Forest School environment. This policy should be used in conjunction with the individual tool cards.

Tools and Storage

The Forest School leader will:

- Ensure tools are stored in a dry, securely locked toolbox, inside a secure cupboard when not on site.
- Tools should be checked regularly and well maintained.
- Faulty and damaged tools will be removed from circulation. They will be either be fully repaired or safely disposed of.
- When on site, tools will be stored in a dry securely lockable toolbox to ensure the safety of the all participants at Forest School.

Before Using Tools in the Forest

The Forest School Leader will ensure these elements are completed before the use of tools is taught:

- Designate an area in the forest where tools will be stored when not in use. A tarp shelter will be erected to keep tools dry and make the storage area very clear.
- Designate and create a safe environment for the use of tools. This may require the movement of ground layer materials to provide a safe, trip free environment.

- When considering the safe area for use of tools refer to the safe working space around an individual or pair of individuals. This is the safe distance bystanders should stay out of to avoid being hurt, when a tool is in use. This is given a consistent size (two arms and a tools length) so pupils easily remember. With younger children it may be necessary to mark out the safe working space, as they may not be able to visualise the size of the area.

Working with Tools with Learners

Learners should be briefed about the importance of using tools safely and ensuring we are respectful of the woodland environment when using them.

- Before starting to use tools, learners should learn the Tool Talks for any tool being used. The learners should be able to give their own tool talks fluently, so they thoroughly understand their safe use.
- The Forest School Leader will assess the learner groups abilities and behaviours to decide whether independent use of tools can be allowed. Before allowing learners to use tools independently, the correct use should be modelled repeatedly, then the use should be closely supervised until the Forest School Leader is comfortable with independent use.
- Smaller group sizes should be considered when working with tools. An appropriate level of practitioner supervision is required, especially when working with children.
- If the Forest School Leader/ supporting adults feel learners are causing a risk to themselves or others during the activity (through use of tools or their behaviour), the Forest School Leader/supporting adults may stop the activity and reteach or discontinue the activity.
- Ensure tools are locked away at the end of the activity. Tools should be cleaned, safety checked and stored correctly for when they are used next.

Policy to be reviewed September 2026