

Riverview Forest School



HANDBOOK

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Updated September, 2021

Contents

1. Introduction to Riverview Forest School
2. Ethos
3. Our site in Tymon Park
4. Daily Procedures
5. Preparing Children for Forest School
6. Site Preparation
7. Weather Conditions
8. Equipment
9. Activities
10. Health and Safety
11. Covid-19 Policy
12. Toileting and Hygiene
13. Fire protocol
14. Tools protocol
15. Ropes protocol
16. Environmental policy
17. Communication
18. Behaviour Policy
19. Anti-Bullying
20. Equal opportunities and inclusion
21. Roles and Responsibilities
22. Safeguarding Policy
23. Appendix:
 - 1) Risk Assessment templates
 - 2) Session plan template and equipment checklist
 - 3) Incident and Near Miss report forms
 - 4) Emergency protocol

1. Introduction to Riverview Forest School

Riverview Forest School runs during the school day and operates under:

- Riverview ETNS school policies (<https://www.rvetns.ie/policies>)
- the Department of Education (<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Primary/>)
- the National Primary Curriculum (www.ncca.ie)

Our leaders are also members of the Irish Association of Forest Schools; they adhere to its policies and regularly engage in continuous professional development (<https://irishforestschoollassociation.ie/>).

This handbook contains additional policies and procedures in relation to our Forest School sessions.

In Riverview Forest School, we are guided by the 6 Principles of Forest School as stated by the Association of Forest Schools:



Regular sessions

Forest school is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.



Woodland setting

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



Community

Forest school uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development, and learning.



Holistic development

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



Opportunity to take risks

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



Qualified practitioners

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

from <https://irishforestschoollassociation.ie/key-features-of-forest-school/>

All children participate in Forest School from Senior Infants. In each group, there is a ratio of 15 children to three adults, one a trained Forest School leader. We have a beautiful dedicated Forest School area in Tymon Park just 10 minutes walk from the school, and we are grateful to the park keepers there for their support. We have five

teachers on the staff who have completed Level 3 training in Forest School Leadership – one of these will always be in attendance at each Forest School session.

2. Ethos

Riverview Forest School aims to provide its children with:

- a safe woodland environment in which to holistically learn, explore, and take calculated risks.
- key skills to open new doors and develop self-confidence, and
- opportunities to learn more about their place in nature and in the world.

3. Our site in Tymon Park



Aerial view of our Forest School site in Tymon Park

The site is accessed by the pedestrian gate on Limekiln Road, Dublin 12, opposite Riverview School. The grid reference is Lat: 53.3028, Long: -6.3327. The park is owned by South Dublin County Council and managed by Finian Ward.

The closest vehicular entrance to our site can be found further along Limekiln Road, at Limekiln Rounders GAA club/Clondalkin Cricket Club. The Wellington Road car park is a considerable distance from our site. The main car park at Castleymon Road is not suitable for access to our site, due to the M50 motorway intersecting the park.

4. Daily Procedures

Two class groups attend Forest School on each of the designated Forest School days (currently Tuesday and Wednesday for the 2021-2022 school year) – this is four groups weekly.

Each class group has been split in two by the class teacher, to allow for appropriate staffing ratios (maximum of 15 children). Each half of the class attends Forest School every second week.

The schedule for the 2021-2022 year is as follows:

	Tuesday	Wednesday
8.45 – 9.00	Group 1 – changing into FS gear.	Group 3 – changing into FS gear.
9.00 – 11.15	Group 1 – Forest School Session.	Group 3 – Forest School Session.
11.15-11.30	Group 1 – changing out of FS gear.	Group 3 – changing out of FS gear.
11.30 – 11.45	Group 2 – changing into FS gear.	Group 4 – changing into FS gear.
11.45 – 1.45	Group 2 – Forest School Session	Group 4 – Forest School Session
1.45 – 2.00	Group 2 – changing out of FS gear.	Group 4 – changing out of FS gear.

It is intended that each child from Senior Infants to Fourth will take part in 12 Forest School sessions (weather and staffing permitting) during the 2021-22 year, to be alternated with a block of gardening sessions in the school garden. The classes attending each slot will change throughout the year, as they swap in and out of their block of gardening sessions.

5. Preparing children for Forest School

To prepare to go to Forest School, children go to the toilet and change into appropriate clothing according to the season and the weather.

Each child, from Senior Infants up, keeps a set of wet-gear in the school, in a bag clearly labelled with their name, and also a pair of wellington boots. These items are stored in the school from September for the whole year. In addition to this, each child keeps a set of spare clothes in the classroom (socks, underwear, t-shirt, trousers). These must be sent to the school in September, clearly labelled, and replaced by parents whenever used.

Fifteen minutes before leaving the school, children change in the outdoor shelter, under the supervision of the Forest School leader and ANA/volunteer. They walk to the Forest School area in Tymon Park accompanied by their class teacher and two other adults. On return to the school, they remove their rain-gear and change other items if necessary.

In addition to wet gear, parents should pay due consideration to how their child is dressed on the day of Forest School. We recommend the following:

Autumn to Spring, or in cold weather:

- Several layers of warm clothing
- Avoid denim jeans as they get cold and heavy when wet

- Synthetic fibres beside the skin repel water and help to keep skin dry
- Hat and gloves in very cold weather

In Summer or in warm, dry weather:

- Runners
- Long-legged leggings or trousers
- Long-sleeved top
- Sun cream
- Insect repellent
- Sun hat

Children bring a small backpack with water and lunch.

6. Site Preparation

A rota of parent volunteers has been compiled, who check the Forest School site on a Wednesday morning shortly before the first session. Margaret Burke (School Principal) monitors this rota.

Cleaning facilities are available from the school (bin bag, gloves, litter pickers) for this task, and the rubbish bag can be left on site for the Forest School leader to return to the school bins on leaving the site.

Before leaving the site, children and adults clean up the area thoroughly to leave no trace. Natural crafts may be left intact on site as long as there are no unnatural elements in them, and/or they benefit the wildlife in the wood (e.g. a shelter made only of sticks or a bird feeder may be left). We adhere to the 7 principles of Leave No Trace: <http://www.leavenotraceireland.org/seven-principles>.

7. Contingency Planning

Weather conditions are monitored by the Forest School leader on duty from the days before the Forest School session, using www.met.ie. This is reviewed at the staff morning meeting at 8.20, and staffing provision confirmed. Any changes to the Forest School timetable are agreed upon at this time.

Examples of possible changes which may take place include:

- Very heavy and persistent rain – Forest School may not take place, or may happen on the school grounds.
- Very heavy winds – Forest School will not take place.
- Volunteer unavailable/staffing shortages – Forest School may happen on the school grounds, perhaps for a shorter time period, or may be cancelled.

8. Equipment

The school owns two Forest School trolleys, for the purposes of bringing equipment over to the site and back. These are packed and checked by the Forest School leader on duty before each session. The water container is filled before the session to ensure clean, fresh water for handwashing and First Aid. Participants bring their own bags and personal water bottles for drinking water.

The school has invested in a collection of Forest School equipment, stored in the store room off the staff room. Equipment, particularly tools and fire equipment, must be returned to this storeroom after the afternoon session each day. On returning to the school, any wet equipment is hung to dry and returned to the storeroom.

All children from Senior Infants up have a pair of wellies and a set of waterproof outer clothes, which are currently kept on racks in the school. **All items must be clearly labelled.**

9. Activities

Sessions and activities are child-centred and have active, hands-on learning at their core. A wide range of methodologies and activities are used to foster children's learning, particularly games self-discovery, guided-discovery, problem solving, collaborative learning, using the environment and developing the skills of questioning and observing. The forest environment provides the stimulus for the children's learning. Sessions follow a rhythm of activity and quiet time depending on the needs of the group.

The following are some examples of forest school activities:

- Identifying plants, trees and animals
- Building shelters/dens and tents
- Bush craft
- Knots, bridges and swings
- Using tools
- Stories and songs
- Map making, Orienteering
- Fire making, cooking and foraging
- Writing poetry and stories
- Playing games

10. Health and Safety

1. Risk assessments

Risk Assessments are regularly filled in to ensure the health and safety of everyone attending. These are Daily Assessments (completed before each session), Site

Assessments (completed once per year) and Risk-Benefit Assessments (completed as necessary for new activities). Templates can be found in Appendix 1. Both Risk Assessments and session plans should be drawn up with input from two adults and may need to be amended when doing sessions with different groups of children.

2. First Aid

The Forest School Leader is trained in First Aid and REC2 (Remote Emergency Care) training. All adults attending Forest School are familiar with basic First Aid and the Emergency Procedure (see Appendix 2). A first aid kit is available at all times.

3. Individual Medical needs

Any medication or inhalers needed by children are brought to Forest School by the class teacher. The class teacher also brings a full class list including emergency contact numbers.

4. Child Protection

All adults attending Forest School have been Garda Vetted by Riverview Educate Together National School. Please see the school Child Protection policies in link above.

5. Weather policy

The daily assessments include the risk of weather, which is continuously monitored. While forest school can take place in all kinds of weather conditions, there are conditions in which forest school cannot go ahead:

- Wind speed reaching level 6 or more on the Beaufort scale (39 – 49kmh)
- Local red or yellow weather warnings
- Risk of lightning
- Extreme heat

6. Foraging

Children are told not to put anything into or near their mouths unless specifically told that they can by the forest school leader. The following plants growing in our forest school area are safe to eat and may be eaten during our forest school sessions:

- nettle leaves (infused or cooked)
- blackberries (raw or infused)
- dock seeds (ground and baked to make crackers)
- elderflowers and elderberries (infused)

7. Harmful plants and animals

If any harmful or poisonous plants are growing in the area, children are encouraged to examine them carefully and talk about identifying features. Sometimes they may draw them, or sometimes be encouraged to touch them if non-toxic to touch (e.g. nettles).

Occasionally, dogs wander into the forest school area off their leash, without owners. Children are told to put away lunches, stay where they are, not move and not panic.

8. Boundaries

On the first two weeks of the year in forest school, boundary markers are tied onto trees along the boundary line and children play games to become familiar with those boundaries. Children are also reminded every week that at all times they must be able to see the centre log circle.

11. Covid-19 Policy

Riverview Forest School operates within Riverview's Covid-19 Policy, which can be found on www.rvetns.ie.

Children, teachers, ANAs and volunteers and **must not attend school** if they are:

- Displaying symptoms of Covid-19 (fever, cough, change/loss in sense of taste/smell, breathing difficulties), or otherwise unwell.
- Told to self-isolate following a positive test result.
- Unvaccinated, and told to restrict movements following close contact with a confirmed case.
- Undergoing a mandatory quarantine period following travel, in accordance with the HSPC advice at the time.

Parents must sign a declaration form before their children return to school after an absence.

Children will only attend forest school with other children of their class bubble. Because of this, social distancing at forest school is not required. We also recognise that being outdoors results in a significantly reduced risk from transmission of Covid-19, and the operation of our Forest School programme plays a part in the recommendation to move activities outdoors where possible.

Upon entering Tymon Park, children will walk single file to and from the Forest School site, with one foot on the grass, so as to allow space for the general public to social distance on the paths.

Children attending forest school will have washed/sanitised their hands before their session, in accordance with the school's handwashing routines. The Forest School leader will also ensure that a plentiful supply of water is brought for handwashing before lunch, after toileting and for any other handwashing needs.

The outdoor shelter area will be disinfected in between the morning and afternoon sessions, as will the trolley handles.

Teachers and ANAs at Riverview wear face coverings at all times indoors, apart from eating. It is recommended to continue this practice in Forest School, particularly when the country is operating under Level 4 or 5 restrictions. It is essential to wear

a face covering when administering First Aid. Children do not need to wear face coverings, however any that choose to do so will be most welcome to.

12. Toileting and Hygiene

There is a 'toilet' area clearly marked and away from the log circle. This is set up by the adult who arrives to set up the area and comprises of toilet roll, a bag of sawdust (for covering soiled area afterwards) and a bin bag for used toilet roll. There is a separate hand-washing station beside the log circle comprising a water butt, soap and a towel. All children should wash hands after toileting and before eating lunch.

In the first few weeks of the year at forest school, the FS leader explains and discusses toileting in the woods. If a number 2 is needed, the child should dig a small hole (*Leave No Trace* recommends 6 inches depth), poo into the hole, cover it up and sprinkle area lightly with sawdust to show others to avoid this area. It is recommended to the children that they ask the FS leader for assistance in making the hole. A light sprinkle of sawdust should be put on a number 1 also, to show others where to avoid stepping.

Children go to the toilet area only one at a time, are instructed to avoid going near at other times, and respect the privacy of the person using the area.

13. Fire protocol

- Risk-Benefit Assessment is carried out by FS leader.
- 2 large buckets of water are at the site for putting out the fire.
- 2 fire blankets and a set of fire gloves are present.
- Children learn about and prepare for the fire for at least 3 weeks before any fire is lit.
- Children must use the ready position when dealing with the fire; single knee kneel.
- All belongings stay outside the log circle when fire is lit, and all children must not enter the circle unless invited to do so by the FS leader
- Safety circle, 2m from centre.
- Fire is managed constantly to ensure it does not become too big.
- Children and adults made aware there may be embers around the fire hearth.
- Children supervised around the fire at all times when lit.
- No trace of the fire is left when leaving the site.

Lighting a Fire

1. Explain we have permission
2. Verbalise why we choose this area of forest
3. Draw attention to fire blanket & buckets (one for burns, one to extinguish)
4. Highlight emergency exits - 2 gaps in log circle
5. Demonstrate how to prepare soil - remove top layer
6. Show three sizes of stick (match stick, finger, dogs tail)
7. need to be dry and snappy, not bendy
8. Go for a walk and collect sticks; make three piles

9. Make a raft on ground
10. Determine wind direction and put back to it
11. Discuss safety - one person tends to the fire, wears fire gloves
12. Everyone else moves around the outside (song). "We never pass through the circle when the fire is lighting"
13. Model best practice for hair/scarves/loose hanging clothes to be tied back
14. Fire Triangle (Fuel, Oxygen, Heat)
Tinder (straw and cotton wool), Oxygen, Heat (fire steel)
15. Show how to strike fire steel away from body, 45degrees angle
16. Light tinder, introduce first bundle from side, holding a little above so not to smoother
17. Add firewood, criss-crossing
18. Never add anything in without permission

Extinguishing a Fire

1. Ensure at point of embers
2. Use stick to rake over the embers and cool them down
3. Wearing fire gloves, pour cold water over the fire to put out
4. Rake burning ember into the water with a stick
5. Check ground is not hot
6. Remove ashes and spread out over forest floor
7. Reintroduce the top layer - scattering

14. Tools protocol

- Children learn the function, benefits and dangers of the tool before using
- The FS leader demonstrates clearly how to use the tool
- The first time a child uses a tool is with one-to-one supervision
- If using a tool, there must be no one in your 'blood bubble' (within 2-3 feet around you)
- Children must demonstrate competence with the tool before using it independently
- Children are trained to look after the tools and put them away correctly
- The FS leader will count in and out each tool being used on a particular day to ensure they have all been returned safely
- All tools are checked by the FS leader before use to ensure they are in good working order and condition

15.Ropes protocol

- Children learn the function, benefits and dangers of ropes before using
- The FS leader demonstrates clearly how to use the ropes and tie the knots
- The first time a child uses a rope is with an adult
- Children must demonstrate competence with the ropes before using them independently
- Children are trained to look after the ropes and to put them away correctly

16. Environmental policy and management

We recognise that constant use of the woodland can impact negatively on the ecosystem. At Riverview Forest School we aim to practise minimum impact and to improve our woodland. The following table summarises the possible impacts of Forest School on our site, and shows how we counteract it and improve the woodland.

Disturbance to woodland caused by FS	Action to decrease impact	Long-term Positive Management solution
Trampling of leaf litter and new shoots	Keep walking on tracks only to minimise unnecessary footfall	Teach children about mindful walking in the woods so delicate new plants and insect homes are not trampled
Clearing nettles in log circle area in the spring	Cut back where necessary.	Thin in darker areas of the woodland to allow light so that field-layer plants and saplings can grow
Cutting greenwood for crafts (elder and birch)	Only cut when needed and cut strategically. Use wood from thinning and coppicing	Thinning and coppicing to promote healthy forest growth
Toilet area: occasional human waste buried in ground	Only when absolutely necessary, and must be buried to 6 inches. Toilet paper put in a bin bag.	Change toilet area every year
Lighting of fires in centre of log circle	Not every week. Use a fire blanket under fire. Only burn dead wood.	Consider changing the fire area each year.
Art and Craft materials used	Make sure that paints, string, clay and glue used is eco-friendly and made of natural materials, so that if any does leak they have minimum impact. Ensure children clean up well afterwards.	Learning to use nature effectively for craft projects will reduce the need for synthetic materials in the future.

17. Communication

This table summarises how we communicate about Forest School.

Method of communication	For who?	What is communicated
School website	Everyone, but mostly current parents and parents interested in enrolling their children. Also, people searching for Forest Schools in Dublin.	Explains what FS is and how it works in our school. www.rvetns.ie/forest-school
School Facebook / Twitter page	Everyone, but mostly parents of children in the school and potential parents	Photos and updates
Emails to parents	Parents of forest schoolers	Practical information such as what day we are going to FS and what to bring, etc.
Photos up in school	Parents and visitors to school	Showing the children at play in FS
Google Drive	FS leaders and the other teachers	to share plans, risk assessments and general FS info
Forest School Whatsapp group	FS leaders and any other teachers and helpers involved in FS	Practical info. Weather info, plans for morning clean-up, schedule for the day, equipment info
Plaque at the site	members of the public coming across our FS site	"Riverview ET National School Forest School. Children at Play. Please look after our forest."

18. Behaviour Policy

The aim of this Behaviour policy is to ensure that the individuality of each child is respected, acknowledging the right of each child to an environment in which they can learn safely and grow. The entire Riverview FS community has a part to play in contributing to this environment. The strength of this community, together with a high level of cooperation between staff, parents/carers, volunteers and children, will ensure a high standard of behaviour. In RVETNS Forest School, we recognise that each member of the school community, staff, parents/carers, volunteers and children

have the right to be treated with respect and consideration, therefore every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach towards behaviour in the forest. Positive techniques of motivation and encouragement will be utilised by staff, placing greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions. Rules are child centred and child-friendly, and are there to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all members involved in Forest School; children, leaders, other staff and volunteers. This policy offers a framework within which positive techniques to motivate and encourage good behaviours are used by all partners of the Forest School.

Forest School Aims:

- Promote positive behaviour, respect and tolerance
- Develop children's personal, social and emotional skills through the acquisition of new skills and knowledge
- Create an environment that maximises learning and minimises disruption
- Develop children's independence, motivation, self awareness, self discovery, communication skills and self esteem, whilst also ensuring there is a safe environment
- Ensure the safety and personal well-being of all children
- Encourage collaborative and independent behaviour
- Promote children's knowledge of how to behave responsibly and suitably in an outdoor environment
- Equip the children with social, self-reflective and verbal skills to respond to negative situations and emotions
- Ensure that the individuality of each child is cherished and that special needs are accommodated
- Prevent bullying behaviours
- Build a strong sense of community and a high level of cooperation amongst staff, and between staff, pupils and parents
- State clearly our FS school values, rewards and sanctions in a clear, child-centred and positive way
- Ensure continuity between the code of good behaviour within RVETNS and at Forest School

The Forest School Leader will:

- Ensure that a safe, positive environment is promoted where effective relationships are valued and everyone is treated equally
- Encourage and reinforce, acceptable behaviour towards each other, the environment and the equipment used
- Ensure that all the needs of the children are taken care of and are a priority during every Forest School session
- Praise will be given to children demonstrating good independent work, behaviour, and collaborative work to raise self-esteem
- Involve parents, and staff in maintaining and establishing appropriate behaviour
- Ensure social and behavioural needs are at the centre of the Forest School

- Establish clearly and effectively the expected behaviour during a Forest School session
- Be a positive role model for the children
- Ensure the policy is available for staff, parents and volunteers
- Maximise benefits of the Forest School curriculum by observing children and adapting the curriculum to suit individual learning styles and behavioural needs

The children will aim to:

- Listen and respond appropriately to leaders, other staff and volunteers, and undertake given instructions to the best of their ability
- Show respect, courtesy and cooperation towards all other children and adults
- Develop an appropriate attitude and respect for the forest woodland
- Behave in a way that keeps them and others safe
- Stay within the boundaries of the forest at all times, unless given permission by the FS leader
- Maintain appropriate behaviour towards all forest school equipment

Our Golden Rules

1. Kind hands, kind words, kind feet
2. Demonstrate good listening skills 'Show 5'
3. Demonstrate respectful communication; listen to others and wait your turn to speak
4. Practise good friendship skills
5. Be Safe
6. Be Honest
7. Be Respectful
8. Be Responsible
9. Be Helpful
10. Believe in Yourself

Reward/Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour

- Verbal praise related to specific behaviours
- A positive note or phone call to parents/carers
- Regular reflection and revision of the golden/safety/yard rules
- Modelling of good behaviour by all school staff
- Cumulative reward charts to target specific behaviours
- Use of token economy to develop and sustain self motivation to behave
- Early intervention activities/strategies on an ongoing basis
- Drawing up Individual Education Plans for children with SEN
- Drawing up FS School Support Plans for social, emotional and behavioural needs

(*This is not, and can not be, an exhaustive list.)

Sanctions and Strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

1. Aim to stop the inappropriate behaviour
2. Communicate to the pupils that the inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable
3. Defuse, not escalate, a situation
4. Be applied in a fair and consistent manner
5. Be timely
6. Be appropriate
7. Be implemented in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

RVETNS Forest School will always work on the premise that there is a reason for negative behaviour and that, in most circumstances, once this has been identified, measures can be put in place to help the pupil stop the negative behaviour using a problem-solving approach.

Approaches:

- Reasoning with the pupil by reminding them of the positive behaviour we expect while referring to the Golden Rules and Safety Rules
- Failing this, an adult will give a verbal warning quietly and calmly, reminding of required behaviour
- Another verbal warning will be issued and the child will be taken to one side and reminded of the appropriate behaviour during Forest School
- A final warning is issued and the child will miss 5 minutes of free play or if this has already passed, they will be given 5 minutes time out from the activity, staying within the vicinity of the activity
- If a child has more than 2 timeouts in one session, they will miss the next session and the parents will be informed. This is particularly important where safety is involved
- If a child is putting other children at risk for inappropriate behaviour within the setting such as with fire or tools, the child will be escorted back into school
- If the behaviour is regarded as incredibly dangerous and the child had been previously warned of the dangers, the child will be excluded from the next Forest School session
- A Forest School Leader will complete an incident report form
- Given hazardous behaviour and if staffing permits, the child will be escorted back to school or the Forest School Leader will phone school.
- Conflict Resolution strategies are explicitly and implicitly taught and modelled
- Restorative Practices format is taught and followed - What happened, How did you feel, What will we do next?
- The leader keeps a written record of continuous unacceptable behaviour whilst verbally keeping the child's parent(s)/carer(s) and the principal informed

- Teacher will formulate an individual behaviour plan with the support of a senior member of staff. This plan will be shared with Parents

18. Anti-Bullying

At Riverview Forest School, we believe that each of our students has the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. Our community will not tolerate bullying behaviours. We are a "Telling" school. Bullying is too important not to report.

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Responsibility:

The relevant adults for investigating and dealing with bullying in forest school are as follows: FS Leaders, Class Teachers and School Principal

What to do if you are being bullied:

Any pupil, parent or carer may bring a bullying incident to any leader at Forest School, for investigation. All FS staff must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant class teacher.

At Riverview Forest School we will ensure that all children know what to do if they are being bullied. We will encourage a culture of reporting incidents, with particular emphasis on the role/importance of bystanders. The difference between "telling tales" and "reporting" will be brought to the awareness of pupils. This will be taught at a whole-group and individual level.

Children are encouraged to say 'stop', get away and go directly to a FS leader to tell. If this is too difficult they must get a parent or friend to tell on their behalf at the nearest appropriate time.

Investigation and follow-up

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows: The primary aim in investigating and

dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved; Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/carer(s) understand this approach from the outset. An outline of this approach will be highlighted to any parent/carers/pupil or staff member who may become involved in a suspected incident of bullying.

19. Equal opportunities and inclusion

Riverview FS is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, volunteers, and children and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The aim is for our learners and leaders to be represented and feel respected.

Educate Together schools are committed to the values laid down in Educate Together's Charter. Our schools are learner-centred, equality-based, co-educational and democratically-run. This means that all members of the school community, whatever their social, cultural or belief background, work together in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. Students follow an Ethical Education curriculum, learning about morality and spirituality; equality and justice; belief systems and an ethical approach to the environment. It teaches students about different belief systems as well as atheism, agnosticism and humanism, without promoting any one worldview over another. Our equality-based informs all policies and practices in the daily life of the school.

Riverview FS commits to:

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion
- Create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff and clients are recognised and valued
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, and children
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion

20. Roles and Responsibilities

Forest School Leader: Plan for and provide a programme that is true to the FS ethos and in line with the learning and developmental needs of the group of children. Use reflections from previous sessions and ongoing observations of the group to inform planning. Complete risk benefit assessments for each session; looking at the forest

environment and any tools/activities included in the session, follow policies and procedures, and administer first aid where needed. Check the weather forecast before sessions to ensure it is safe to attend and that all necessary equipment/clothing is in tow. Ensure first aid kit and mobile phone are on their person. Take into consideration health and safety issues that could arise and inform other adults clearly of their role for the session. Count equipment in and out and ensure tools are maintained to a safe user standard. Take into consideration the specific needs of a particular group or individual and ensure that each child is respected as an individual, that bullying is not tolerated and that the rules and guidelines are followed. Promote learning and development, share knowledge and teach new skills whilst promoting children's self belief and confidence in themselves, by offering small manageable tasks that ensure their own success. Allow children time and freedom to learn without pressure. Model a respect and love for the woodland.

Support Staff: Help FS leader in implementing a session by helping to pack up and carry equipment. Help children get changed in and out of their forest school gear. Ensure the site has been cleared properly of all rubbish. Help to keep children on task. Ensure children are following rules and keeping themselves safe. If any unsafe or unkind behaviour occurs, notify FS leader as soon as appropriate. Allow children to freely explore the forest and activities but providing support where called upon or needed. Respect the voice of the child, the forest woodland and all forest school equipment. Adhere to the code of behaviour when giving rewards and/or sanctions. Ask FS leader if ever unsure about anything. Help to tidy away FS equipment at end of the session and carry some things back to the school.

21. Safeguarding

Our Safeguarding policy can be found on the RVETNS website under the publications heading; <https://www.rvetns.ie/policies>

22. Risk Benefit Analysis for Key Activities

Site Risk Assessment

Location: Tymon Park FS site (by Limekiln Road entrance)
Scolard

Assessed by: Rachel

Date: Sept 2020

Next Assessment due: Sept 2021

Site Location grid reference: Lat: 53.30281600930102, Long: -6.332722303751552

Address/key information: Tymon Park, Dublin 12.

Benefits of using the Site				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secluded deciduous woodland with diverse trees and plants - Easy access from the school and from the road - Clearing in centre of site for wood circle - Grass area outside the woodland for welcome circle - Supportive and helpful park keeper - Lake nearby for water access 				
<p>Hazards and to whom (children/adults). Consider these things: Boundaries, Tree Layer, Shrub Layer, Field Layer Trees likely to be climbed, Water areas, ponds/ditches, Buried hazards such as barbed wire and old metal/broken glass etc. Public access, dog walkers, Forestry work/vehicles, Access to emergency services, Known poisonous/hazardous species, such as snakes, ticks, wasps/bee nests, hazardous plants, Any other hazards....</p>				
Risk & Hazard	Likelihood	Hazard Severity	Risk factor	Control measures to reduce the risk
<p>Hazard: Widow-maker branches and thin, leaning trees</p> <p>Risks:</p> <p>1.Branches may fall onto a child or into a child's path</p> <p>2.A branch/tree may fall while a child is climbing on it</p>	2	4	2x4 =8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site check before every FS session to look for particularly dangerous-looking branches. If possible cut them down. If not possible, consider moving to a different site for that day, and alert park-keeper. - Teach children to risk assess themselves when deciding which trees to use for rope bridges - Climbing not allowed as no trees suitable

<p>Hazard: Rubbish on the forest floor, some buried. High risk items: broken glass, barbed wire, needles, soiled underwear, condoms, toilet rubbish</p> <p>Risks:</p> <p>Children may pick it up and harm themselves (risks of cuts, infection)</p>	5	2	5x2 =10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site check before every FS session: once the day before and once before the session to pick up rubbish. - Park keeper to check site after the weekend - Teach children about what they are allowed to pick up and what they are not allowed to pick up, and when to ask - Rubbish bag at hand during FS session for leader to pick up anything that is spotted - Anti-bacterial gel, hand-washing station and first aid kit to hand for minor injuries
<p>Hazard: People walking through the park with dogs</p> <p>Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People may try to talk to the children at a time when they are not with FS leader - Children may come into contact with dogs off their leads 	2	2	2x2 =4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children must stay within the boundaries and be able to see the central circle at all times - As part of the 'Stay Safe' program in school, teach the children about the rules around speaking with strangers - Teach children not to engage with an animal unless the owner is present and known to the child.
<p>Hazard: Rabbit hole in the middle of the site (uneven grounds)</p> <p>Risks:</p> <p>Child's foot may fall in while running</p>	3	3	3x3 =9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Alert the children to the hole and tell them to avoid the area while playing running games
<p>Hazard: Child going missing</p> <p>Risks: Child wandering out of the forest.</p>	4	5	4x5 =20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The children are introduced to the rule; keep myself safe and happy -There is lots of talk and discussion surrounding how to keep this rule in the forest -Boundaries are clearly marked with bandanas hanging low on trees -The children walk these boundaries at the start of each session for a few weeks

				<p>-The children are told never to pass a boundary without an adult</p> <p>-Regular head counts are carried out by staff on duty</p>
<p>Hazard: Poisonous Plants/Fungi</p> <p>Risk: Child touches/eats a poisonous plants</p>	4	5	4x5 =20	<p>-The children are introduced to the poisonous plants/fungi on site, they are given their names and encouraged to become familiar with what they look like</p> <p>-The children are told the effects of touching/eating poisonous plants</p> <p>-The children are introduced to and regularly reminded of the 'no pick, no lick' rule in the forest</p> <p>-If poisonous plants/fungi are in an area where the children are playing they can be marked with a flag as a reminder of the risk or can be corded off with a boundary</p>
<p>Hazard: Extreme Weathers</p> <p>Risk: Trees being blown down, hypothermia, sunstroke</p>	4	5	4x5 =20	<p>-The forest school leader checks the weather each evening and morning before a session</p> <p>-The forest school leader has full responsibility to call off a session in case of extreme weather</p> <p>-If the hazard is strong winds, the fs leader may decide to hold the session outside of the forest on the open grass areas</p> <p>-If the hazard is hypothermia, the fs leader may ensure that a fire is lit and there are hot drinks provided. As well as ensuring all participants are well wrapped up and moving regularly</p> <p>-If the hazard is sunstroke, the leader may insist that children stay in the shade of the forest, and ensure plenty of drinking water is available on site</p>

Risk Assessment scoring - Scores of 8 and above cease activity or reassess the control measures

Likelihood		Hazard severity		Risk Factor (likelihood x hazard severity)
1	Very unlikely	1	Minor injury, scratches, bruises, burns etc.	1-3
2	Unlikely	2	Moderate injury, cuts, grazing, burns etc.	4-7
3	Likely	3	Serious- Person requires hospital treatment	8-12

			or time of school/work	
4	Very likely	4	Significant, risk of death or loss of limbs/ eyesight etc.	13-16

Climbing Trees Risk Assessment

Location: Tymon Park FS site (by Limekiln Road entrance)

Assessed by: Rachel Scolard

Date: September 2020

Next Assessment due: When with new group

Benefits of the Activity

- Learning to make risk judgements and manage risk
- Balance, coordination, strength, physical literacy will be developed
- Confidence and resilience building through challenge and success
- Group work and social skills developed through verbally guiding one another, taking turns
- Learning about tree types and properties (strength, flexibility, rooting)

To whom does this apply to: Young people/adults

Hazard/Risk	Likelihood	Hazard Severity	Risk factor	Control measures to reduce the risk
H: Damaged Weak Tree R: Falling to the ground	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful selection of trees chosen for climbing by FS leaders; taking into consideration tree type, condition and ground conditions • Risk assessment of the tree on the particular day to be carried out prior; looking out for overhanging branches, damage to tree, ground conditions • Risk assessment of the weather for the particular day to be carried out; is there wind/rain forecast? • Reminder of safety rules when climbing trees to group; No external support from adults, only climb what they can climb down. • Supervision of tree climbing by an adult at all times • Leader trained in First Aid, equipped with kit
H: Objects on ground floor R: Falls to ground or onto objects resulting in serious injury	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful selection of climbing site • Clearing forest floor of any debris/potential hazards, e.g. sharp edges, prior to climbing • Climb over grass, not concrete. If no option, think of laying ground mats • Reminder of safety rules when climbing trees to group; No external support from adults, only climb what they can climb down.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision of tree climbing by an adult at all times Leader trained in First Aid, equipped with kit
H: Climbing out of sight of an adult; climbing too high/ dangerous play at height / unhealthy climbing conditions R: Falling from tree; serious injury	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground Rules; no climbing trees without adult supervision Group discussion about why this rule is implemented; e.g. highlighting the hazards of climbing unsupervised, and the conditions that need to be checked beforehand Identify trees for climbing at the start of each session
H: Taking ropes up a tree R: Strangulation from the rope/ becoming hung up by feet or limbs	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check all equipment/ropes are in good condition before using Consider group competence/age; never ask a child who hasn't the necessary confidence or skills climbing Ensure there is adult supervision at all times Ground rule; must ask an adult before taking out ropes.. explain for what use Clear boundaries set out about heights for rope swings
H: Dangerous play at height R: Falling to ground/ Participants falling on one another / Being kicked accidentally when climbing below someone	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground rules about climbing trees communicated at the start of session Adult supervision of climbing at all times Guidance as to when's best for another person to start climbing/ or in what area of the tree Discussing ratios for certain trees and involving the children in these decisions; brainstorming how many children would safely participate in climbing a certain tree. Making those decisions and keeping to them

Risk Assessment scoring- Scores of 8 and above cease activity or reassess the control measures

Likelihood		Hazard severity		Risk Factor (likelihood x hazard severity)
1	Very unlikely	1	Minor injury, scratches, bruises, burns etc.	1-3
2	Unlikely	2	Moderate injury, cuts, grazing, burns etc.	4-7
3	Likely	3	Serious- Person requires hospital treatment or time of school/work	8-12
4	Very likely	4	Significant, risk of death or loss of limbs/ eyesight etc.	13-16

Palm Drills Risk Assessment

Location: Tymon Park FS site (by Limekiln Road entrance)

Assessed by: Rachel Scolard

Date: September 2020

Next Assessment due: When with new group

Benefits of the Activity				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine motor skills • Introduction to using tools Wide craft and functional applications				
To whom does this apply to: Young people/adults				
Hazard e.g sharp knife & Risk e.g cutting/wound	Likelihood	Hazard Severity	Risk factor	Control measures to reduce the risk
H: sharp bit R: cut skin of themselves or others	2	2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palm Drills are kept in a secure box which is transported by the leader to and from the session • Drills are counted and checked • Condition is always checking before bringing them to a session • Rules for tools (ABC): 1.Alone 2.Be skillful 3.Carefully Put Away • Go over rules each week before taking out tools • Demonstrate clearly how to use tool before children use it • Each adult to supervise 2 children first week using tool • Leader trained in First Aid, equipped with kit

Risk Assessment scoring- Scores of 8 and above cease activity or reassess the control measures

Likelihood		Hazard severity		Risk Factor (likelihood x hazard severity)
1	Very unlikely	1	Minor injury, scratches, bruises, burns etc.	1-3
2	Unlikely	2	Moderate injury, cuts, grazing, burns etc.	4-7
3	Likely	3	Serious- Person requires hospital treatment or time of school/work	8-12
4	Very likely	4	Significant, risk of death or loss of limbs/ eyesight etc.	13-16

Veg Peelers Risk Assessment

Location: Tymon Park FS site (by Limekiln Road entrance)

Assessed by: Rachel Scolard

Date: September 2020

Next Assessment due: When with new group

Benefits of the Activity				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide craft applications • Easy but effective for the children • Cheap and very low risk way to introduce tools 				
To whom does this apply to: children				
Hazard e.g sharp knife & Risk e.g cutting/wound	Likelihood	Hazard Severity	Risk factor	Control measures to reduce the risk
H: blade R: cuts through skin, penetrating injuries	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veg Peelers are kept in a secure box which is transported by the leader to and from the session • They are counted and checked • Condition is always checking before bringing them to a session • Rules for tools (ABC): 1.Alone 2.Be skillful 3.Carefully Put Away • Go over rules each week before taking out tools • Demonstrate clearly how to use tool before children use it: Pay special attention to child's posture and way of holding peeler. Pay attention to direction child is using peeler • Good management and judgement of competence of group • Leader trained in First Aid, equipped with kit
H: blade R: being struck by the peeler through movement	2	4	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of competence of group; especially with regard to behaviour, age and attitude • Group briefing, demonstration and instruction • Constant adult supervision • Safe working area and working space; away from free play, movement

Risk Assessment scoring- Scores of 8 and above cease activity or reassess the control measures

Likelihood		Hazard severity		Risk Factor (likelihood x hazard severity)
1	Very unlikely	1	Minor injury, scratches, bruises, burns etc.	1-3
2	Unlikely	2	Moderate injury, cuts, grazing, burns etc.	4-7
3	Likely	3	Serious- Person requires hospital treatment or time of school/work	8-12
4	Very likely	4	Significant, risk of death or loss of limbs/ eyesight etc.	13-16

Appendix 1

Activity Risk-Benefit Assessment

Activity:

Date:

Assessment due:

Assessed by:

Next

Benefits of the Activity				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide craft applications • Easy but effective for the children • Cheap and very low risk way to introduce tools 				
To whom does this apply to: children				
Hazard e.g sharp knife & Risk e.g cutting/wound	Likelihood	Hazard Severity	Risk factor	Control measures to reduce the risk

Risk Assessment scoring- Scores of 8 and above cease activity or reassess the control measures

Likelihood		Hazard severity		Risk Factor (likelihood x hazard severity)
1	Very unlikely	1	Minor injury, scratches, bruises, burns etc.	1-3
2	Unlikely	2	Moderate injury, cuts, grazing, burns etc.	4-7
3	Likely	3	Serious- Person requires hospital treatment or time of school/work	8-12

4	Very likely	4	Significant, risk of death or loss of limbs/ eyesight etc.	13-16
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Daily Risk Assessment Template

Daily risk assessment checklist	
Site	Tymon FS site
Activities	
Fire	
Cutting tools	
Games	
Rope work	
Tree felling	
Check	
Weather conditions	
Wind speed	
Risk of environmental injuries, hypothermia/heat stroke	
General site condition. Litter/animal faeces	
Canopy layer risk of falling branches/ dead trees	
Shrub layer, risk of eye hazards	
Ground layer, trip/slip hazards Poisonous plants/fungi	
Mobile phone available and best location identified	
1 st aid kit available	
Water available	
Any other hazards identified	

Appendix 2

Session plan template

Forest school Session plan	School: Riverview ETNS	Class:	Number of children
	FS Leader:	Other adults:	
	Date:	Time:	
Learning objectives: (That the child will:)			
Session outline			
Arrival Circle		Arrive 09.20	
In the woods			
Teach new skill			
End:		Leave 11.00	
Bad weather option:			
Session evaluation			
Outcomes met	Behaviour/engagement	Timing / pace	
Evaluation:			

Equipment checklist

Equipment needed		
FS kit	Craft kit / Tools	Extras
<input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit <input type="checkbox"/> Class list (class teacher) <input type="checkbox"/> Inhalers (class teacher) <input type="checkbox"/> Large water butt <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet bag (water, soap, towel, loo paper, bin bag) <input type="checkbox"/> Mini water/juice bottles <input type="checkbox"/> Ropes <input type="checkbox"/> Tarps <input type="checkbox"/> Compass <input type="checkbox"/> Bandanas <input type="checkbox"/> Rubber frisbees	<input type="checkbox"/> Craft boxes <input type="checkbox"/> Palm drills <input type="checkbox"/> Pruning saw <input type="checkbox"/> Secateurs <input type="checkbox"/> Paints & brushes <input type="checkbox"/> Calico <input type="checkbox"/> Bow saw	<input type="checkbox"/> Thermos flask <input type="checkbox"/> Cups <input type="checkbox"/> Fire kit <input type="checkbox"/> Clipboards <input type="checkbox"/> Paper & pencils
Preparations checklist		
<input type="checkbox"/> Site assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Activity risk assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Daily risk assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Rubbish collection <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet area set up <input type="checkbox"/> Tarp (if raining) <input type="checkbox"/> Specific activity set-up		

Appendix 3
Incident Report Form

Date Names Involved Location Time Description of Incident or Near Miss Treatment given/Outcome
 Evaluation and Risk Management Signed Next Steps

Date	
Time	
Location	
Description of Incident	
Treatment/Outcome	
Evaluation	
Next steps	
Signed (FS leader)	

Appendix 4
Emergency Protocol

Riverview Forest School EMERGENCY PROTOCOL IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 999 or 112	
LOCATION NAME AND ADDRESS:	Tymon Park, Limekiln Road, Dublin 12
DESIGNATED MEETING PLACE (to meet emergency services):	Entrance beside 76 Limekiln Road, Dublin 12, D12 HH73
SUITABLE HELICOPTER LANDING AREA:	Playing Field in Tymon Park
SITE OWNER/MANAGER CONTACT DETAILS:	Finian Ward: 086 8063343
LOCAL GARDA STATION:	Tallaght Garda Station PHONE: (01) 666 6000