



Forest School Parents' Information

What is Forest School?

“Forest School is an inspirational process that offers children and young people opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self esteem, through hands on learning experiences in a local woodland environment.”

National definition: by Forest School (England) Network.

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Forest School has developed from the Scandinavian education system and is about children and young people building self esteem and independence through exploring and experiencing the natural world.

Each Forest School programme is tailored to meet the needs of individuals within that group and is continuously developed as the children/young people grow in confidence, skills and understanding.

The ethos of Forest Schools allows learners the time and space to develop skills, interests and understanding through practical, hands on experiences. It also allows practitioners to step back and observe the children in order to then encourage and inspire individuals to achieve.

What benefits will my child get from Forest School?

Forest Schools supports the holistic development of the child:

- Health and fitness – Being active in an outdoor, natural environment.
- Increased emotional wellbeing – There is research available supporting this.
- Social development – Communicating, and negotiating with peers and adults to solve problems and share experiences.
- Skills development – Developing fine and gross motor skills and coordination for real purposes.
- Gaining knowledge and understanding – Multi-sensory, real-life learning.
- Individualised learning – Careful observation allows adults to tailor support to children's own interests and stage of development.
- Curriculum Links – Forest School supports many areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and National Curriculum

What will my child be doing?

Forest Schools will run all year round and in all weathers (unless weather conditions are dangerous). The child led ethos of Forest Schools means that once at the site the children can choose what to participate in, carefully supported and encouraged by adults. Possible activities may include:

- Preparing to go out by dressing in outdoor clothes such as waterproofs
- Sharing stories
- Hunting for minibeasts
- Natural crafts e.g. collages from natural materials
- Mud sculptures
- Shelter building and knot tying
- Tree climbing
- Using tools for a purpose – such as peeling bark from sticks with potato peelers to make toasting forks.
- Fire building

Is it safe?

The health and safety of all participants is central to everything done within a Forest Schools programme. Forest School leaders are trained in risk assessment and first aid.

Every Forest School will have; a Health and Safety policy; a seasonally and daily risk assessed site; risk assessments for activities; first aid and emergency equipment.

Some of the activities the children may participate in are 'higher-risk activities' (such as campfire cooking or tool use). However, these activities are not available to the children until certain behaviours and boundaries are established. Children are encouraged and supported in recognising and managing risk for themselves, through real life situations and experiences.

Warm Weather Clothing

- Long sleeved t-shirt
- Tracksuit bottoms/walking trousers/leggings (not jeans)
- Waterproof light weight jacket and trousers
- Sun hat
- Sun cream protection
- Waterproof shoes/wellington boots

Cold Weather Clothing

- Thermal under layer (vest/top and trousers)
- Long sleeved t-shirt
- Jumper/fleece
- Tracksuit bottoms/walking trousers/leggings (not jeans)
- Waterproof trousers (salopettes ideally) and coat (preferably with a hood)
- Hat
- Gloves (waterproof)
- Wellington boots or waterproof shoes
- Warm socks (e.g. ski type socks)

What will they need?

Can I help?

- If you have skills that would benefit Forest School please get in touch via the School Office
- Mrs Droy is looking for regular helpers on a Wednesday afternoons (1-3pm). The more helpers we have the more activities we can offer.

If you can help at all please get in touch – you don't need any Forest School experience, only lots of enthusiasm! Every week or once per month – all help is welcomed.