

Forest School



'Exciting experiences and challenges to foster curiosity and a love of learning through the education and enrichment of young minds.'

The Forest School approach originates from Denmark and has been growing in popularity in this country since the early 1990s.

Learning is not about the end result but about the process.

Children undertake tasks that challenge themselves, risk assess their own play to develop awareness of keeping themselves safe. Although Forest School activities seem risky, all necessary risk and benefit assessments have been carried out prior to the session and updated during the session should the need arise.

Forest School is linked to the National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage. Learning is open-ended and child initiated, often continuing over several sessions.

Whilst at Forest School children are encouraged to use all their senses to explore and investigate their surroundings, fundamental for encouraging imagination, creative development, equality and diversity, team work and collaboration language, literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world building the foundations for lifelong learning.

FOREST SCHOOL KEY POINTS

- Sessions led by qualified and experienced Forest School Leaders who hold an up-to-date First Aid Certificate.
- Time to investigate and explore natural materials and environment.
- Develop an awareness of the woodland environment, weather and changing seasons.
- Child centred, holistic learning - looking at the whole child.
- Familiar, structured sessions with lots of choice leading to child led activities.
- Discovering, identifying and experiencing local flora and fauna.
- Regular sessions in a familiar space experiencing all seasons and weathers (except storms and high winds).
- Develops teambuilding, confidence and self-esteem.
- Learn to use tools safely and effectively.
- Risk take in a structured and safe learning environment with learners being encouraged to identify and manage their own risks appropriately.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF A TYPICAL FOREST SCHOOL SESSION

INTRODUCTION, WELCOME; This takes place in the designated 'camp', pixie circle. Safety notices and reminders are shared at this time with 'tool talks' and demonstrations carried out.

GROUP ACTIVITY; using natural and found objects, for example whittling, making bird feeders, campfires, crafts using fir cones, sticks and wood slices, Activities are demonstrated and often linked to seasons or the week's focused story.

SELF DIRECTED LEARNING; Children have free choice either to use familiar resources or to follow their own ideas, or those of their friend's interests and activities. Eg, bug hunting, potion making, den building, whittling, creating pictures or artwork.

END OF SESSION AND GOODBYE; The group comes together prior to the end of the session and will often play a group game, group story telling or Goodbye song. Games such as 1,2,3 where are you? Or sticky elbows are a favourite.

Suitable Clothing

Children should come to school dressed in their forest school long trousers and long sleeved top rather than school uniform for all Forest School Sessions.

The following items should be clearly named and kept in a bag at school at all times please.

- Waterproof jacket and trousers (all weathers).
- Wellington boots or sturdy trainers in warmer weathers.
- Long trousers (All weathers)
- Long sleeve top (All weathers)
- Socks and spares
- Woolly hats and gloves or sun hat and sun cream depending on weather.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT EACH PIECE OF CLOTHING IS CLEARLY NAMED - THANK YOU