

What is Forest School?

Forest School is an innovative approach to learning in a woodland environment.

Forest School is different to outdoor learning rather than being a one off session outside, it is a long term process, with the emphasis being on children following their own ideas and exploration, (as opposed to curriculum based learning).

Forest School sessions provide opportunities for spontaneous, child led, purposeful play, which encourage children to follow their own ideas inspiring creativity and investigation.

Children are "allowed" to do things simply because "they want to", the focus is on the process as opposed to the end product and with careful observation and planning children are actively able to seek out, discover, explore and investigate things which they enjoy and which give them great pleasure.

Forest school sessions nurture both independence and self-esteem and are delivered in a caring nurturing manner. Forest School leaders lead by example and value and respect everyone as individuals as well as our environment. Forest School Practitioners and support workers allow children time and space to explore and grow, without disrupting play and "interfering" with a child's chosen activity, but scaffolding and supporting learning when asked. Through reflection and discussion children begin to take greater responsibility for regulating and managing their own behaviour, thoughts and feelings, to share and discuss these together in a safe and caring environment. Sessions aim to empower children to use and follow their own ideas, with support if necessary.

Being outdoors has wonderful, proven therapeutic benefits and spending time outdoors helps children connect with each other, with nature and with the immediate environment, intrinsically.

As a trained Forest School Leader I can teach new and exciting skills and techniques to participants such as safe use of tools, knot tying, preparing and lighting fires for cooking or warmth with the odd magical tale and of course our precious nature based makes woven in!

These activities help children to develop both fine and gross motor skills, balance and coordination, as well as unlocking inner creativity and inspiring them to learn more. Because children are following their own ideas they are able to work at their own level. They set the pace and this in turn helps them participate and engage in tasks fully. There is no right or wrong way to do things at Forest School and children are free from the constraints of daily life and the constraints of the classroom.

At Forest School Children are given time and support to develop, build and refine their own ideas, take risks and learn from their mistakes. All of these factors help to develop self-esteem and self-confidence, increasing self-worth and emotional wellbeing of participants. We feel these opportunities are even more essential in the current climate for all of our children.



forest schools

Ruth Patterson
Accredited to
Level 3
Practitioner Award

www.forestschools.com



What to wear?

Forest School sessions run whatever the weather and we use the different opportunities this brings to the sessions. We have much fun dancing in the rain, splashing in puddles, catching hail stones, feeling the force of the wind or exploring beautiful ice crystals. The weather inspires our play.

It is therefore vitally important that children are dressed appropriately for sessions. Children should wear some old clothes, long trousers or track suit bottoms. We will be sitting on the floor, climbing trees, hiding in bushes, jumping and playing in mud, so please make sure they are suitable playing out clothes!

Some old trainers are fine if the weather is, but wellies are better to keep us dry with warm socks too please if it is wet. Walking boots or snow boots in winter keep little toes warm if you happen to have them.

We can if necessary provide children with a set of waterproof trousers and a rain coat, but they will need warm clothing underneath, particularly as the weather gets colder.

Layers are great with a vest or t-shirt, long sleeve top warm hoodie or sweater and a warm coat. Skins or thermal tights or skins under trackies or leggings for really cold days will help to ensure children feel able to explore and play- without focusing on feeling cold, hats and gloves are needed also.

Please speak to a member of staff if you need any clothing.

Your children will be dirty, wet and very possibly smelly upon return!

For further information please feel free to call me Ruth 07796692610

And above all, watch with glittering eyes
the whole world around you because the
greatest secrets are always hidden in the
most unlikely places.
Those who don't believe in
magic will never find it.



#RoaldDahlDay

*As soon as children
find something that
interests them they
lose their instability and
learn to concentrate.*

Dr. Maria Montessori