

How is a session structured?

Forest school is an opportunity for children to play outdoors, follow their own interests and explore a natural environment. Adults are there to support the children rather than to lead or structure learning. Staff may gather the children at the start of the session to discuss rules and during the session for a snack. Most of the session will be free play with the children choosing where to play and what to do.

How will staff ensure that children are safe?

A full risk assessment will be completed by the forest school leader before children attend forest school. This will enable staff to identify potential hazards and take steps to remove or minimise the level of risk. Children will be supported to follow simple rules in the forest school site, including not to eat anything they find and develop a sense of ownership and independence by using and relying on their own skills. Staff will also encourage children to risk assess for themselves during their play then learning to manage and adapt appropriately. The benefits of forest school outweigh any possible risks



Where can I find out further information?



<https://forestschoollassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/>

<https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/features/article/parents-guide-early-learning-forest-school>

<https://muddyfaces.co.uk/>

A Guide to...

Forest School

Early Years Foundation Stage

Information for Parents and Carers



What is forest school?

Forest school began in Scandinavia in the 1950s. It offers young children frequent and regular visits to a local woodland area where they have the freedom to learn outdoors through play. Forest school is not adult-led outdoor activities. Instead, children explore the forest and follow their own interests. Adults take on the role of facilitating rather than leading the learning.



What are the benefits of Forest school?

- Improves physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Encourages children to care for the environment and develop a love for nature
- Provides children with the freedom to explore open-ended play outdoors
- Enables children to make real world connections
- Offers first-hand experience of different weather and seasons
- Opportunities for kinaesthetic and sensorial learning

How will forest school be organised?

Forest School takes place in a natural environment located in an enclosed space behind our early years' classrooms next to our large oak tree.

Our school is a safe and secure natural environment which supports the development of a lifelong relationship between the learner and the natural world.

Forest school visits are often once a week.

This ensures that forest visits are embedded as part of the weekly routine and supports children to feel confident and settled outdoors. The duration of a forest school session is 1 hour and 30 minutes, (1pm until 2:30pm).



What happens in bad weather?

It is important for children to experience being outside in different weathers. Forest school sessions can continue to take place during rainy, cold and hot weather if children are dressed appropriately. Forest school will only be cancelled during extreme weather, such as high winds or blizzards, when safety is an issue.



What will my child need?

You will need to ensure that your child is wearing appropriate clothing for the weather. In cold weather, dress your child in several layers of clothes as this will help them to keep warm. In summer, a sun hat and sunscreen on exposed skin will protect your child from the sun. Wellies and waterproof suits can be worn all year round.

Waterproof suits are provided as it is likely that your child will enjoy getting muddy!