

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.

In time, and where appropriate, we will introduce activities that involve using tools such as knives, saws and loppers. We will also introduce a fire pit and learn about fire safety and cooking.



How will staff ensure that children are safe?

A full risk assessment will be completed by staff 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 session, including not to eat anything they find and to make sure that they can always see an adult. Staff will also encourage children to risk assess for themselves. This means getting them to think critically about situations and encourages them to problem solve.

Where can I find out further information?

<https://forestschoolassociation.org/>

<https://www.lionelwalden.cambs.sch.uk/>

<https://ltl.org.uk/forest-school/>



A Guide to...

Forest School

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. It is not adult-led outdoor activities. Instead, children explore the outdoors 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?

Sessions will take place weekly on a Tuesday morning. Pupils need to arrive at school ready to go outdoors in their waterproofs and outdoor shoes. School uniform needs to be brought in a named carrier bag so that we can change afterwards.

What happens in bad weather?

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

Winter:

- Base layers – vest, long sleeved top, thermal layer.
- Thick jumper or fleece
- Leggings and joggers
- Thick socks (thermal or two pairs of thin ones)
- Waterproof trousers and coat or all in one
- Wellies or waterproof shoes
- Hat, gloves and scarf

Summer:

- Thin long sleeve top
- Thin trousers
- Socks
- Waterproof shoes or wellies
- Sun protection and insect repellent (applied before school)
- Sun hat
- Thin waterproof coat and trousers or all in one

Clothing that covers arms and legs is essential all year round to protect our limbs. We are climbing, foraging and exploring!



