

Holbrook Primary Forest School



Contents

1. What is Forest school?
2. Where do the sessions take place?
3. What do we do at Forest School?
4. Who will be there?
5. The benefits.
6. Clothing.
7. How long will the sessions last?
8. Toilet use and hygiene.
9. How dirty are pupils likely to get?
10. How are pupils kept safe?



1. What is Forest School?

Forest School is a group of children and adults spending a set time over a period of weeks outside in a wooded area, sharing the benefits of learning through play. The area should be a place, different from the classroom environment and hopefully it includes some trees but doesn't have to. It has a special set of forest school agreements. The play includes elements of appropriate risk taking, allowing individuals to build self-esteem and explore lots of new experiences. Because pupils are outdoors the classroom boundaries are naturally removed which allows individuals to express themselves more emotionally, physically and verbally. It also provides lots of freedom to experiment. This is because there is no end goal. It's all about the journey and experience, everybody within the forest school session is equal and respected. The adults are just there to guide and scaffold the experience through modelling rather than direction. There should always be an opening and closing circle time with reflection to make a clear definition between Forest School and other conventional school time.

2. Where do the sessions take place?

Most of the Forest School sessions take place within the school Hollow. It's an area that is fenced off at the back of the school field. It has many benefits because it's within easy access of the school toilet facilities and is within a minutes' walk from the main building but has a vast array of biodiversity. We are also lucky enough to have a wildlife pond area and a bird hide. Areas which pupils can use at any time throughout the year.



3. What do we do at Forest School?

We start and finish each session sitting in the fire circle. At this time, we discuss the forest school boundaries. We talk about what the children would like to do during the session and what they would like to do during future Forest School sessions.

Potential activities available within these sessions include:

- * Whittling
- * Woodland art
- * Knot tying
- * Den building
- * Tool use
- * Games
- * Building a fire
- * Bird watching
- * Pond dipping
- * Nature identification



4. Who will be there?

The sessions are run by a level three qualified Forest School Leader who is pediatric and outdoor first aid trained.

The minimum number of adults depends on the number of children, but there are always at least two adults.

Additional adults are sometimes needed if children go off the school site. These adults may be teaching staff, parents or carer's. The school ensures that additional parents are DBS checked first.



5. The Benefits

Forest School has the potential to enhance a child's learning across all areas of development: i.e.

Physical, creative, communication and spiritual, problem solving, reasoning, social/ emotional skills and understanding the world. Forest school has seen a clear improvement in children's confidence and self - esteem.

* Resilience – Forest School allows time for a child to persevere at a task and is repetitive, helping to build this skill.

* Confidence – Forest School promotes independence and a level of appropriate risk taking, promoting this attribute.

* Self-Esteem – Forest School caters for all children and provides opportunities for all learners to exceed and excel.

* Discovery and exploration – Forest School promotes learning through play and discovery. Promoting a greater understanding and appreciation of the learning.

6. Clothing.

Forest School will take place in all weather conditions except high winds and thunderstorms. Therefore, it is essential that the children wear suitable clothing.

Old clothes are suggested, layers work well. Waterproof trousers are recommended long trousers and long sleeve tops should be worn even in the summer months to protect from nettles etc.

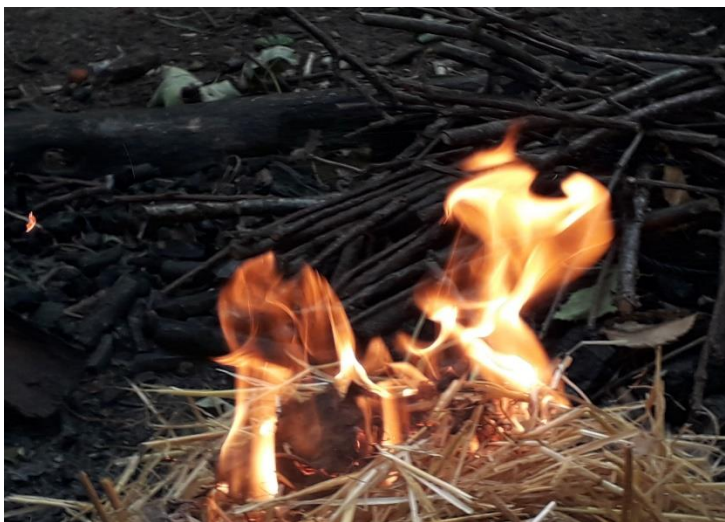
Suitable footwear – in summer months this may be an old pair of trainers, but wellingtons may be more suitable in certain weather conditions.

In winter / wet months, we suggest everyone wears wellington boots with extra socks as the boots can become cold. Also, in winter hats, scarfs and gloves may be worn and a suitable warm coat.

In summer months – a sun hat, sun cream and a thin waterproof, plus a water bottle.

7. How long will the sessions last?

Forest School sessions for the EYFS class will take place every Thursday morning throughout the whole year, other year groups will take it in turns. The pupils will be given at least ten weeks' worth of Forest School starting with Year Two on Wednesday afternoons (welly Wednesday) and Year One on Friday (Forest Friday) the sessions will last at least two hours and ten minutes allowing time to change shoes and wash hands before going home.



8. Toilet Use and Hygiene

The children will always be encouraged to use the toilet before going to Forest School and wash their hands. Once pupils are at the Forest School site, the children in Foundation are taken to the toilets, Children in Year One upwards are allowed to take themselves, as long as they tell the Teacher they are going and tell them when they get back.

The Forest School Lead takes antibacterial hand gel to the forest site if we are going to be eating or drinking anything, as well as having the tippy taps full of water and a bar of soap for general use.



9. How dirty are pupils likely to get?

This or depends on the individual child and what the weather is like. If we have had a lot of rain the children tend to get very muddy and we do ask them to bring old clothes, waterproofs and a bag to put their clothes into. We do have a mud kitchen which the children love to play with. The Hollow is a damp area so even in summer months the children and adults can get dirty.



10. How are pupils kept safe?

Before any Forest School session, the Forest School site is walked and a visual, daily risk assessment is carried out. If there are any visual dangers, they are removed. For all the activities we do within Forest School there are risk assessments written. All adults are always watching the children and making sure they are taking manageable risks. For instance, only climbing a tree to head height

when an adult is standing nearby. All tool use is at a ratio of 1:1 and the concept of a fire will be introduced over a few weeks.

What might cause a Forest School session to be cancelled and how much notice will be given to parents?

There are not many reasons Forest School will be cancelled. The main reasons are thunderstorms, hail, strong winds, or in the unlikely event the forest school leader is ill or absent that day. If it's due to the weather, the Forest School Lead will try to do something linked to Forest School indoors. Parents are informed if the session is cancelled by email or by the class teacher in the morning. The school will provide as much notice as possible.