

FOREST SCHOOL

Forest School is based on a fundamental respect for children and young people and for their capacity to instigate, test and maintain curiosity in the world around them. It is built around the principles of a child's right to play; their right to access the outdoors; their right to access risk and the vibrant reality of the natural world and their need to experience a healthy range of emotions through all the challenges of social interaction, in order to build a resilience that will enable continued and creative engagement with their peers and their potential.

At Whetstone Field Primary School, Forest School sessions always happen in the same natural environment in an area of the school field which is designated only for Forest School activities. Forest School sessions are planned so that they are included as an integral and regular part of the timetable. Although the sessions are planned, there is also room for review and adaptation based on practitioner observations of the learners and their interactions with the environment and each other.

Similarly, the entire Forest School programme is built on collaborative reflection between learners and practitioners so learning opportunities are developed based on learners' individual motivations and interests. In addition, Forest School provides learners with the chance to take risks which are appropriate to the natural environment and to the learner. Finally, Forest School uses a wide range of learner-centred pedagogical approaches to encourage individuals to create a community for learning and development for themselves and other learners. Play and choice are important to the learning process and unlike other more structured outdoor learning scenarios play is recognised as fundamental to the learning and development of the whole learner. Forest School aims to encourage the holistic development of all learners, including fostering resilience, building confidence, encouraging independence and drawing out creativity.

The Forest School at Whetstone Field Primary School was established in the Summer Term of 2014 in a small piece of the school playing field. Although the site is already surrounded by gardens and therefore a range of large and small trees, shrubs and hedges, a number of young trees were planted in the hope that in the future there would be a small woodland. At this time a variety of logs and wood materials were also acquired that were in keeping with the existing flora and fauna and used to add to the experiences available. Since the beginnings of this site other projects have been investigated and implemented, such as the establishment of a fire circle and fire pit, the planting of a small hazel coppice, the creation of an area for digging, coppicing of the willow trees so their branches could be used as a natural resource for activities and the planting of a hedgerow to act as a boundary and to encourage more wildlife.

At all times at Forest School:

- All children are expected to wear waterproof all in one suits or waterproof jackets and trousers over their existing school uniform. (Provided by school)
- All children to wear wellington boots or old trainers. (Provided by parents/carers)
- All adults to wear waterproof trousers (provided by school) and a waterproof coat (either own school coat or one provided by school) over their own clothes. Adults are

expected to wear clothing in keeping with the school's uniform policy - it is recommended that on Forest School days clothing suited to the environment and weather conditions is worn. For example, trousers, layers, etc.

Exception - in warm weather conditions:

- All children to wear old clothes - long trousers only. (Provided by parents/carers)
- All children to wear old trainers/shoes - closed toe only. (Provided by parents/carers)
- All adults are expected to wear clothing in keeping with the school's uniform policy - it is recommended that on Forest School days clothing suited to the environment and weather conditions is worn. For example, trousers, layers, older clothing, etc.