



Hakeford Woods

The Forest School Ethos / What is Forest School

“Forest School is an inspirational concept providing learning opportunities through practical activities in an outdoor environment. Participants of all ages enjoy the freedom to explore and experience the natural world in all seasons and in all weathers. It can be personally and socially uplifting, so laying firm foundations for other learning. Unlike other forms of outdoor education, Forest School embraces an approach of nurturing, supporting and developing the self-esteem of participants. It is an ideal environment in which to develop innovation, problem solving, risk taking, creativity and teamwork.” [Bridgwater College Forest School](#)

Forest School in the UK has been adapted from a Scandinavian approach to learning where access to outdoor environments at all times of year and in all weathers is normal.

The nature of the Forest School ethos means that we remain flexible with regards to the make-up of the day, if a child shows a particular interest or is drawn to something, we will where possible, follow their agenda and encourage them to build on their discoveries.

Forest School sessions are designed to be structured but not directive. Throughout their time at Forest School the children will be involved in woodland art and other projects that can be taken back to school or home. It has been found that this encourages them to talk about and remember their days and gets the whole family or school involved in their Forest School experiences.

Forest School is, by its nature child-led so children will participate in some guided activities but also experience the wonders of supervised free play in the challenging woodland environment.

Participants will also be taught to make informed choices, use their own initiative to solve problems, co-operate with others and learn to evaluate risks.

- Forest School will be run by qualified Forest School practitioners.
- There will be high practitioner/adult to learner ratios.
- Practitioners and regular adult helpers at Forest School will be subject to relevant checks into their suitability to have prolonged contact with vulnerable people.
- Practitioners will hold first aid qualifications, including paediatric and outdoor elements.
- Forest Schools use a range of processes to enhance the development of the learning community.
- Play and choice are important aspects of the process and these are seen as vital in the learning and development of young people.
- Activities taking place in Forest School will provide stimulus for all learning styles.
- Observations made by Forest School leaders will be used to tailor learning and development at Forest School.

Examples of activities that may take place at Forest School:

- Simple investigation and exploration with minimal equipment, using natural materials as the learning resource.
- Playing games, using woodland as inspiration for art and writing projects.
- Using woodland for numeracy – counting, sorting measuring, estimating etc.
- Using simple tools to whittle and carry out craft type activities.
- Simple rope work.
- Developing areas with logs for informal seating and fire sites to demonstrate fire safety, construction, use and campfire cooking.
- Temporary shelters may be constructed using tarpaulins and woodland materials.

It is understood by Forest School leaders that any activity should only take place with the prior agreement of the landowner/manager. Most Forest School activities are planned so that they leave little or no trace.

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