

Forest School FAQs for Parents

What is Forest School?

Forest School is an inspirational process that offers all learners opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a natural environment. It is also a time to improve our mental health by spending time in nature. <https://forestschoollassociation.org/>

Which day is Forest School for my child?

Classes do Forest School every Friday afternoon for a half-term. You will be notified on Class Dojo when your child's class is doing Forest School.

Do Nursery and Reception do Forest School?

Nursery and reception do their own outdoor woodland sessions. Teachers will let you know when the sessions are.

What clothes should my child come to school in?

Children should come to school in their Forest School clothes with clean shoes on. We will change into our muddy shoes or wellies outside before starting the session. It is a good idea to bring a bag for the muddy shoes to go in.

Will my child need a coat?

The weather is always unpredictable so we recommend bringing a coat to every session.

Do children have to have wellies?

Wellies are optional. A spare pair of shoes is needed because children will find the forest area muddy and will need to put on clean shoes when they return to class. Wellies may be recommended during certain months of the year but children may borrow some from the school selection.

What if I do not have all the clothing required for my child?

School has some spare donated wellies and clothing for children to wear. Do not feel the pressure to buy any clothes, old warm clothes are all that is needed.

Do children go outside in the rain?

Yes! We see the outdoors as a place of adventure. We believe there is no such thing as bad weather. In extreme weather, the children will come back inside.

Will children get muddy?

Children will be in the small forest area which can get very muddy. Children may be playing or doing activities in the mud. They may get muddy at times.

How big are the groups?

Groups are no bigger than 15. The class will be split into two groups. While one group is in the forest, the other group will be doing a normal lesson with their class teacher. The groups will swap over.

How long are the sessions and how long will the children be outside?

Sessions are usually for 1 hour.

How many sessions do they get?

Forest School lasts for a half-term only. So it will depend on how long the half-term is.

Which classes do Forest School on Fridays?

Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 take part in Forest School sessions at different times throughout the year.

Who runs the sessions? Who is Mr Wolf?

Mr Wolf is Mr Wilcock - all children and adults choose an animal name when they are in the forest.

Are staff qualified?

Forest School is run by a fully qualified Forest School Leader with Forest School first aid training.

What is the purpose of Forest School?

Forest School is a child-centred inspirational learning process, that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term program that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It helps learners develop socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually.

What are the principles of Forest School?

<https://forestschoollassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/>

What do children do at Forest School?

Children will always get some time to play in the forest. This is wild play where children use their imagination and develop their self-esteem. There are a range of activities they will engage in such as fire lighting, cooking on a fire, building dens, creating hammocks, digging in the digging corner, whittling using knives of potato peelers.

Why wild play?

Forest school is sometimes the only time children spend outdoors in a natural environment regularly. In his book Evolutionary Playwork (2011), Hughes emphasises “that the growing body of scientific evidence confirming a direct relationship between play, evolution and brain growth, demonstrated that play should never have been viewed either as comprehensive support for deep biological processes—expressed through mechanisms like adaptation, flexibility, calibration and the different play types—that enabled the human organism to withstand the pressures of extinction