

What benefits are there to my child?

Forest school supports the holistic development of children. It will benefit them by:

- Increasing social skills, Children share, negotiate, lead and problem solve with their peers.
- Increasing confidence through small, manageable tasks.
- Gaining knowledge and understanding of their natural environment, the plants and animals that live there and the change in seasons.
- Understanding their own strengths, weaknesses and learning styles.
- Increasing emotional wellbeing. Just being in nature has been shown to have a real and positive effect to children's mental wellbeing.
- Developing new skills using tools and traditional crafts.
- Having an opportunity to play and follow their own agenda. For some children, it can form a new relationship with learning that they can take back in to the classroom.

Careful observation allows adults to tailor support to children's own interests and stage of development. Curriculum Links – Forest School supports many areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, National Curriculum and the 'Every Child Matters' agenda.



How Can I help?

Firstly, make sure that your children have appropriate clothing and are wearing sun cream. Listen and talk about your child's forest school adventures and perhaps, when there is time, take them to visit other woodland areas.

If you feel that you have anything else that you can contribute to our woodland environment, such as plants, saplings or firewood or would like to come and assist then please let us know.



What sort of activities will take place?

The first 6 weeks, sessions will have a focus on core skills and safety, building resilience and social skills. A lot of the session will consist of child-initiated activities and will increase week on week, these may include: games; storytelling; natural art activities, which will be age appropriate. As time progresses activities may include, planting flowers to attract wild life, tree planting, fire making, cooking, woodland craft, nature studies, den building, rope work, supervised use of tools (Bow saw, sheathed knives, palm drills – when children skills and behaviour are ready) and also time to be quiet, reflect or talk.



What is Forest School?

Forest school is an exciting opportunity for your child to experience nature and learn outdoors.

At forest school the children learn from first-hand experience and develop skills like perseverance, independence and responsibility. These are all skills that will help them to achieve more when they are back in the classroom.



Who will be running Forest School?

We have Sarah from Bright Sparks Forest School.

Mrs Fawcett: Training to be a level 3 Forest School Leader

Mrs Scaplehorn: Training to be a level 3 Forest School Leader

Who are all accompanied by extra members of school staff during Forest School sessions.



What Clothing do I need to provide for Forest School?

Your children will attend forest school no matter what the weather. We suggest your child has a Forest School outfit fit for all weathers - we live in Cumbria where we can have all four seasons in one day. It is important to remember you can take off a layer if you're hot but can't put in on if you don't have it with you so it is best to come prepared.

Outer layers must include;

- wellies or walking boots,
- waterproof coat and trousers.

Base layers must include;

- a long-sleeved top

Clothes should allow children to play, climb and move (they will get messy).

Other essential items

- Water bottle.
- Hat summer/ winter, gloves.
- Sun-cream and insect repellent should be applied.



Health and Safety

The health and safety of all participants is central to everything undertaken within a Forest School Programme. Forest School leaders are fully trained in risk assessment and emergency first aid.

The Forest School operates under the school's Health and Safety policy and policies and procedures regarding safeguarding and confidentiality.

In addition we also have:

- risk assessments for activities
- informed adult helpers
- First Aid and emergency equipment.

Some of the activities the children may participate in are 'higher-risk activities' (such as tool use). However, these activities are not available to the children until certain behaviours and boundaries are established.

Children are encouraged and supported in recognising and managing risk for themselves, through real life situations and experiences.

