

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 hold an outdoor first aid qualification.

The Forest School operates under the school's Health and Safety policy and policies and procedures regarding safeguarding and confidentiality. Alongside this the following are completed:

- A full site risk assessment
- Daily site risk assessments that will be shared with staff and children
- Risk assessments for each planned activity
- All staff and assistants working with the Forest School will be asked to read all policies and procedures and risk assessments before the sessions start.

Some of the activities the children may participate in are 'higher-risk activities' (such as campfire cooking or 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.

Who will be running Forest School?

Mrs Keech is a qualified teacher and Level 3 Forest School Leader. She will be planning and leading the Forest School sessions. She will also be accompanied by another adult to give a high adult to child ratio.

How Can I help?

Firstly, talk to your children and let them share their exciting adventures with you. Please make sure that your children have appropriate clothing and, if it is warm, are wearing sun cream. 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.



St. Paul's Church of England Primary School



Forest School Information



What is Forest School?

Forest school is an inspirational process that has been evolving in the UK since the early 1990's. It fits in to the realm of outdoor education, but differs by being child led. Children are allowed to direct their own learning, following their interests. Forest school staff are there to provide inspiration, stimulate and scaffold, but mainly just to observe learning.

Through exciting and stimulating play, children learn about themselves, others and the world around them. Play at Forest school allows children to encounter and experience risk in a safe and supported environment. This may be through climbing a tree, using unfamiliar tools, making fires or just working with someone that they do not know. Children will always be encouraged to identify and access their own risks. Eventually this will become autonomous.

Children engage in achievable tasks and activities throughout the year and in most weathers. This allows children to observe the changes to seasons, experience weather and develop a relationship with nature that they will take through their adult lives.

What sort of activities will take place?

Sessions will have a focus on building resilience and social skills. A lot of the session will consist of child initiated activities. Each week there will be a planned activity that the children can choose to do. These may include

- Fire making
- Cooking
- Supervised use of tools (Bow saw, sheathed knives, palm drills)
- Woodland craft
- Nature studies
- Den building
- Rope work
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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.

What Clothing do I need to provide for Forest School?

In the shade of the trees, it can be cooler than expected. Children are best wearing several thin layers that can be added or removed as needed.

Children will need the following items of clothing:

- Waterproof trousers and jacket
- Wellingtons, walking boots or old trainers
- Long sleeve tops and full length trousers in all weather
- A sun hat and sun cream for warm