

St Mary's C of E (VA) Primary School

Forest School Information for Parents

What is Forest School?

Forest school is a chance for your child to be outside with nature whilst learning through play and having hands on experience. They will have the opportunity to learn new skills with the activities on offer during the session. Forest School provides opportunities for them to succeed and develop confidence and boost their self-esteem.

What are the aims and benefits of Forest School?

Forest School has been shown to have the obvious benefits of exercise out in the fresh air but other outcomes for children have also been shown extend back into the classroom. Forest school has been shown to boost pupils' confidence and improve their behavior and social skills. It has shown to build a sense of independence, boost self-esteem and team work. During Forest School sessions children investigate, explore and discover in a wild but safe outdoor space.

Our aims are:

- to build on self-confidence and self esteem
- to build on their social and emotional skills
- to build on their team work skills
- to give opportunities for them to asses and take risks within a safe environment
- to reconnect with the natural world around them
- to develop a love for the natural environment
- the ability to care for the natural environment
- to have lots of fun



What activities will there be?

A lot of learning in Forest School is initiated by the children as they explore and discover. The Forest School leader is trained to observe the children's interest and plan in activities to enhance their learning. Some of the activities your child may experience are:

- Using tools (whittling using a peeler, sawing, using a palm drill, rope work, making swings).
- Fauna and flora identification
- Building shelters
- Natural artwork – creative thinking
- Exploring the environment
- Loose parts play
- Fire lighting and cooking on a campfire
- Using rope swings, slacklines, hammocks and wheelbarrows
- Allowing them to fulfil their specific schema of learning



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What will your child need?

Cold weather clothing

- Full length trousers- thick for winter, lightweight for summer
- Thermal top/bottoms
- Waterproof trousers and waterproof coat with a hood or a waterproof all in one
- Long sleeved top
- Fleece/ jumper
- Warm boots/ wellies
- Thick warm socks
- Gloves and hat
- Snood

Warm weather clothing

- Sensible sturdy closed toe shoes/ trainers/boots.
- Lightweight full length trousers
- Lightweight long sleeved top
- Sun hat



When and where does Forest School take place?

We aim to go out in all weathers unless the weather makes it unsafe to be outside e.g. strong winds. Parent helpers are very welcome and advised once DBS checked. We will have a rota in place if you would like to help out. Please sign up. Our Forest School sessions are led by level 3 qualified leaders who also hold the relevant outdoor first aid certificates.



How does a Forest School session run?

- Getting ready – wellies, appropriate layers
- Walking whilst singing to our site
- Welcoming each other during our initial fire circle and playing a game together
- Sit spot (sitting quietly for 10 minutes building up to 20 minutes)
- Discussing boundaries and agreements
- Explore and play
- Snack time, songs and games
- Explore and play
- Sharing our Forest School experience
- Walking back to school



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Play at Forest School

It is vitally important for children to be 'playful' and to allow themselves to relax, laugh and what better way for them to learn this than from the adults at FS. When part of the F.S session, as adults we need to show the child-like part of ourselves in order for the children to see it first hand, have role models and also use this skill in order to initiate their own play. We can get as much from a F.S session as the children and enjoy it with them as well.



Hygiene Procedures

We will toilet the children before leaving the classroom. The children have access to toilets in the nurture room on the school field during forest school. Before we have snack the children will wash their hands. Once changed after our session, all children wash their hands before having lunch.

Safety Procedures

The forest school leaders will undertake a daily site check before the session and complete a risk assessment form. Alongside the children we develop our forest school agreements and these become part of our forest school session. We have agreements for our boundaries, stick use, tree climbing, eating and tool use. We have a call back signal which the children know is a sign to return to the sitting circle.

