



‘Forest Schools’ at Camblesforth Community Primary Academy

What is Forest Schools?

Forest Schools is a fun way of exploring and experiencing the environment through child initiated or child directed learning. Many children and adults are used to learning in a structured way.

Forest School allows learning through play and in settings not always previously experienced. There are opportunities to take risks and learn in settings with wider boundaries. Enthusiasm and dedication by professionally qualified staff fires the imagination of each individual to have a sense of awe and wonder of the natural world and achievement in their own skills.

The children are encouraged to investigate & explore but also to respect all living things. Children learn best from first hand experiences. Exploring, playing and so learning using a range of activities (both designed by the leader and instigated by the children themselves) is what forest schools is all about. Building a sense of independence, high self esteem and team work are important parts of forest school, but health and safety considerations are always of paramount importance.

Forest Schools is lead by Dave Card who holds Forest School OCN Level 3 & ITC First Aid in the Outdoors (2 Day).



Forest School Rules

In the first Forest School session, children become involved with the setting and understanding of the Forest school rules to ensure their safety. At the beginning of every session a quick recap of the rules is reinforced by the children.

Camblesforth Green rules!
Walk within the Forest School Area
Keep everything out of your mouth
Stay within the boundary
Kneel near the pond
Do not throw anything
Drag sticks behind you
Care for nature
Ask an adult before you use a tool
Have FUN!
Always wash hands following a session.

Daily Operating Procedures

What to do before the session:

Before a session takes place the Forest School Leader will carry out a daily risk assessment of the area and will take any necessary action to ensure the site is safe before use. The Forest School Leader will list resources required for the session on the planning. The resources will be checked out by the Forest School Leader using the check list and all tools will be checked before use by the Forest School Leader following the tool policy procedure. All tools and resources are left in locked storage until required for use at the beginning of a session. Sometimes children are encouraged to help carry and transport resources safely to the session. Before the session staff and volunteers will be briefed on the intended structure of the session and their responsibilities. The children will change into waterproofs and appropriate footwear. The beginning of the session will follow a similar pattern each time (coming together time to recap rules and boundaries)



What to do during the session:

It is the responsibility of ALL adults to make on-going risk assessments. Regular head counts are carried out and if there is 'any' doubt the game 1-2-3- where are you is played to bring out children from hiding places.

What to do after the session:

At the end of the session children are called using the 1-2-3- where are you game. Children will be encouraged by supporting adults to work together to return resources safely, to a central location, ready for returning to storage. Children will then group in the Forest School seating area, where a head count will take place. A reflection session or game will take place, sometimes followed by a song. Children will be led to the outdoor classroom to change out of waterproofs. During and following a session, Forest School assistants will ensure they provide their observational notes to the Forest School Leader to enable them to plan, according to the children's needs, for the next session.

Cancellation Policy

Weather conditions; Following the Forest Schools ethos of.....'there is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing!' Children are advised to dress warmly and provided with waterproof trousers. However, there are some occasions where it may not be safe or practical to go ahead with a planned session due to extreme weather;

- In the case of high winds of 25mph or more determined by the met office online.
- In the case of extreme temperature determined by a met office amber weather warning.
- In the case of extreme cold of below '0' a session will be cancelled if it is near to this we will ensure children are appropriately dressed, sessions will be made shorter and activities will be planned to ensure children are kept moving.

Toileting Policy

Children will be encouraged to use the toilet before beginning a session, firstly to avoid too many trips during the session and to avoid having to take off all the waterproofs again! Adults and children are advised that tool use will be stopped during toilet visits due to the ratio of staff remaining. If in the rare occasion a child should have a toileting accident on site, then the adult and child will advise the Forest School Leader who will advise Adults and children that tool use will be stopped whilst an adult leaves the site.

Some Activity examples

- Shelter building
- Fairy/teddy bear shelters: scaled down versions of normal shelters.
- Miniature world: Similar to above with different theme.
- Animal shelters: learners 'become' an animal and make suitable shelter/den/nest.
- Journey stick: learners encouraged to collect objects of meaning during the session that are then attached to the journey stick, which can be later used as a reviewing tool.
- Bugs hunts
- Broom making: Lash smaller sticks to a larger length of wood to create a basic broom.



- Scavenge hunt
- Kelly kettle- hot chocolate/nettle tea/warm juice

Clothing policy

Forest School leaders carry items of spare clothing in the kit bags and we are building a bank of spare wellies. As a responsible person, the Forest School leader has the right to exclude any child they think is inappropriately dressed for Forest school activities. Children will be provided with waterproof dungarees or trousers to protect themselves from the elements. Available is a limited selection of wellies, spare clothing, coats, socks and gloves should the children not have any. However for their own comfort children are encouraged to provide their own extra layers in winter.

Some possible items the children could wear in Winter:

Vest or T-shirt Long sleeved top

Hooded top / fleece or thick jumper

Waterproof jacket

Thick socks (thermal or two pairs of thin ones)

Trousers

Wellington boots

Hat, gloves and scarf.

In Summer:

Long sleeved T-shirt or top (Arms and legs must be covered in the wild area)

Socks

Wellington boots (School shoes will have to be worn if no other footwear can be found)

Sunhat

Participants are also responsible for providing and applying their own sunscreen themselves in line with the usual school practice.

Tool Handling

Children will not be using tools until they are ready in everyway; emotionally and physically. Specific tool policies are in place for each tool that may be used within Forest Schools. The policies cover specific ratios for tool usage. All tools are initially modelled by the Forest School Leader to children and adults as set in the ratios determined by the tool policy. All Adults participating must receive basic training on the safe use of tools before being allowed to use them with children. Following a Forest School session tools are checked back in by the Forest School Leader or adults. Tools are checked against the checking out list to ensure no tools are missing. As tools are returned they are cleaned and maintained following the specific tool policy.

Tool rules!!:

Children are taught these and they are reinforced at the beginning of each session.

- Ask an adult before you take a tool from the tool area.
- You must have a purpose for your tool.
- You must make sure you choose a safe working area with nobody near your blood bubble.



Parental Consent

Parents are required to sign a consent form to allow their child to participate in Forest Schools. (See appendix) On the consent form as a cautionary measure parents are reminded to advise us if there are any further medical reasons or phobias that could affect their child's well being and experience of Forest Schools. Emergency contact information is kept within the school office and can be obtained quickly via radio or dashing into school.

Consent form

Parental Consent Form

Name of Child.....

Medical Information Medical information will be obtained from the medical information you provided at the start of the school year. However, if there is further information that you would like to make us aware of that might affect your child's involvement in Forest Schools (e.g. phobias, complaints) or any other allergies (e.g. material, food, medicine, pollen, dust, etc.) Please write below.

Consent As a parent/guardian of the child named above, I agree to my child participating in the Forest School activities taking place. I understand that activities may include, walking, craftwork, pond dipping, tool use, flint fire lighting skills, den building, campfire cooking and other related activities. I give my consent for the equipment and tools necessary for the activity to be used by the young person mentioned above. I understand that a strict code of practice for working with children will be followed and all activities will be risk assessed and I will be informed of any extra details of activities that are out of the ordinary pattern.

Signed:..... Date:.....

Name (in print):.....

Relationship to child:.....