



Wood Field Forest School Rationale

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 develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting.

Forest School has a developmental ethos shared by thousands of trained practitioners around the world, who are constantly developing their learning styles and skills to support new and imaginative learners. Its roots reach back to the open-air culture, *friluftsliv*, or free air life, seen as a way of life in Scandinavia where Forest School began. It arrived in the UK in 1993 and has grown from strength to strength since then.

The process helps and facilitates more than knowledge-gathering, it helps learners develop socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually. It creates a safe, non-judgemental nurturing environment for learners to try stuff out and take risks. Forest School inspires a deep and meaningful connection to the world and an understanding of how a learner fits within it. This approach to risk means that learners constantly expand on their abilities by solving real-world issues, building self-belief and resilience. It is believed that risk is more than just potential for physical harm, but a more holistic thing, there are risks in everything we do, and we grow by overcoming them. Forest School therefore, helps participants to become, healthy, resilient, creative and independent learners.

There is lots of research out there to support the outcomes of Forest School, but we know that it isn't just the educational outcomes and research that matter, our learners and leaders will love it too!

The Forest School ethos has six principles, which were agreed by the UK Forest School community in 2011.

Principle 1: Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

Principle 2: Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners

Principle 4: Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Principle 5: Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

Principle 6: Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning

(Forest School Association.org)

How does Forest School link to the Wood Field Drivers and Pupil Qualities?

In Forest School we:				
Foster High Aspirations by:	Develop Creative Mindsets by:	Build Resilient Learners by:	Promote Independence by:	Widen Horizons by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing opportunities for the children to set their own projects and tasks • Supporting idea development and challenge • Expanding the children's view of careers to include those outdoors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing the option to choose their own activities, allowing them to creatively use the forest school space • Start targeted open-ended creative projects such as make your own woodland seat, build a house for the fairies, create some artwork using the nature around you • Fostering the Forest School ethos, no idea/ interpretation is a bad one, allowing people to share their work, others can learn to be creative through watching those around them and hearing their ideas. • Being free to choose and explore the ways they approach challenges and activities fosters an environment where children are encouraged to think critically and creatively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing skill-based activities as these in particular require resilience and perseverance e.g. lighting fires • Working with groups of people as they learn to cope with other people's ideas and differences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing children to decide upon their own projects • Allowing children to set up their own site at the start of session • Children being able to explore/investigate a task and how to solve it • Using skills and tools without direction, once competency has been gained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning outside the classroom • Developing a love of the outdoors that can be expanded upon outside of school

In Forest School our pupils show they are:				
Ambitious by:	Inquisitive by:	Respectful by:	Kind by:	Worldly by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting their own tasks and activities that interest them • Supporting risk-taking activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating the outside learning environment • Setting their own tasks and activities that interest them • Providing opportunities to learn about an environment in which they may not be used • Welcoming questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking after the forest school environment • Working with others on projects and activities within forest school • Learning and developing a respect for the natural world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together and being kind to others within the group • Looking after the forest school environment and the flora and fauna within it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and developing a respect for the natural world • Learning about the roots of Forest School in Scandinavia