

Radley C of E Primary School Forest School Hand Book



What is Forest School?

'A Forest School is an innovative educational approach to outdoor play and learning.'

The philosophy of Forest Schools is to encourage and inspire individuals of any age through positive outdoor experiences.

By participating in engaging, motivating and achievable tasks and activities in a woodland environment each participant has an opportunity to develop intrinsic motivation, sound emotional and social skills. These, through self awareness can be developed to reach personal potential.

Forest Schools has demonstrated success with children of all ages who visit the same local woodlands or forest school area on a regular basis and through play, who have the opportunity to learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and most importantly to use their own initiative to solve problems and co-operate with others.

Forest School programmes run throughout the year, going to the forest school site or woods in all weathers (except for high winds). Children use full sized tools, play, learn boundaries of behaviour; both physical and social, establish and grow in confidence, self-esteem and become self motivated.

Forest School will aim to develop:

- Self Awareness
- Self Regulation
- Intrinsic motivation
- Empathy
- Good social communication skills
- Independence
- A positive mental attitude, self-esteem and confidence

Some activities might include:

- Fire lighting
- Shelter building
- Tool use
- Studying wildlife
- Playing team and group games
- Sensory activities
- Tracking games
- Cooking on an open fire
- Using a Kelly Kettle
- Rope and string work
- Art and sculpture work
- Woodland and traditional craft
- Developing stories and drama, and meeting imaginary characters
- Physical movement activities

Where?

Radley C of E Primary School is very lucky to have the use of two Forest School sites.

The first site is based on the school grounds at the bottom of the field. In this area we have numerous amount of trees in which the children can climb, create dens and build rope swings. We also have an insect area, a story telling circle and a fire pit.

The second site is in the grounds of Radley College. It is a small area in the little woods. Children will experience a different area in which to investigate and explore.

Who?

All regular helpers and staff who attend Forest School are CRB checked.

The Forest School leader is Sonya Paige who already works in the Foundation Unit. She has completed her level three leadership qualification and is pediatric and outdoor first aid trained.

Sonya will be assisted every week by another member of staff, Alison Arnold who also has a level two qualification in Forest school and is also first aid trained.

On occasions we have other volunteers such as other members of the school, parents, grandparents and students.

Clothing for Forest School

To ensure that the children are sufficiently protected from the weather, and the forest school environment, we require children to be wearing appropriate clothing and footwear.

Clothing will get muddy so old home clothes are required. We require children to have long sleeves and long trousers in both winter and summer. This is particularly important in the warmer weather as it protects the children from ticks, sunburn, stings and grazes. In the colder weather, the general rule is to wear lots of layers, which keep in the heat and can be removed if needed.

Clothing is to be kept at school in a small named bag.

Cold Weather Gear:

- Wellingtons or snow boots
- Warm socks in the winter
- Warm under garments (thermal is the best)
- Snug long sleeved T/shirt
- Hat
- Gloves

(School provides a warm fleecy jacket and warm track suit bottoms as well as waterproofs)

Warm Weather Gear:

- Wellingtons
- Socks
- Light weight long trousers
- Light weight long sleeved T/shirt
- Sun hat
- Sun cream protection

Activities for Forest Schools are diverse and numerous but it should be reminded that we are trying to create independent learners who are inspired to try out their own ideas, explore their own interests and to attempt new ideas.