

Forest School at Palace Wood



What is Forest School?

'Forest School is an inspirational process that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees'. (Forest School Association)

At Palace Wood, through our Forest School sessions, we hope to encourage independent, enthusiastic, creative and resilient learners who develop holistically through a well-planned and interesting child-centred approach.

What benefits will my child get from participating in Forest School?

The benefits of Forest School encourage the holistic development of a child.

These include:

- Physical development: improve gross and fine motor skills, build stamina, develop coordination and balance.
- Creativity using the natural world around them.
- Independence: children will make choices, negotiate, problem solve, use initiative, take risks, develop resilience.
- Work collaboratively to problem solve and discover for themselves.
- Confidence and self-esteem through mastering new skills and being part of the decision making process.
- Emotional intelligence and resilience: develop communication and language skills, increase empathy, social skills, self-awareness and regulation, tolerance, adaptability and being able to overcome obstacles.
- Spiritual: having a sense of responsibility, understanding the connectivity of our world, understand the importance of leaving no trace.



When will my child participate in Forest School?

Each class will have 3 terms of Forest School for a block of 6 weeks. The sessions will either be a whole morning or whole afternoon. The children will be able to experience Forest School at different times throughout the year.

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Monday	Tigers Monkeys		Tigers Monkeys		Tigers Monkeys	
Tuesday	Crocodiles	Leopards Panthers	Crocodiles	Leopards Panthers	Crocodiles	Leopards Panthers
Wednesday	Elephants	Hippos Pandas	Elephants	Hippos Pandas	Elephants	Hippos Pandas
Thursday	Giraffes Bears	Rhinos Zebras	Giraffes Bears	Rhinos Zebras	Giraffes Bears	Rhinos Zebras
Friday	Penguins	Penguins Elephants	Penguins	Penguins Elephants	Penguins	Penguins Elephants

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What will my child need?

Part of being outdoors is to experience all seasons and inevitably the changeable British weather! To ensure your child gets the most out of each session please can you ensure appropriate clothing for the weather is provided. This needs to be provided for each session to allow for unexpected weather changes.

- Waterproof trousers and jacket or puddle suit
- Wellies or walking boots
- Long sleeved tops (fleece/ sweatshirt on colder days) and full length trousers in all weathers. This help prevents ticks, stings and bites.
- Sun hat and sun cream for warm days
- Warm hat, gloves (not mittens) and warm under layers (vests, socks, long johns etc.) on colder days.
- Spare pair of clothes (top, trousers, pants, socks, shoes- to be worn into school)

All clothes need to be comfortable, practical and warm. Your child will get dirty, old clothes would be a good idea. Children are to come into school in their Forest School clothes but bring their wellies/ walking boots in a separate bag to be changed into just before the session. The change of clothes will only be used if needed after a session.

What sort of activities will take place?

Sessions will begin with gathering around the fire pit (lit or unlit), discussing boundaries, rules and safety. Activities will mostly be child led, with some specific activities being led by the Forest School leader.

Activities may include:

- Games
- Storytelling (around our fire circle, lit or unlit)
- Natural art activities
- Supervised use of tools (if skills and behaviour indicators secured)
- Exploring, nature watching and bug hunting
- Rope work
- Practical woodland skills (eg. Willow weaving)
- Building dens
- Fire making
- Cooking
- Time to be quiet, reflect or talk



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How will we ensure your child is safe?

- Before each session the Forest School leader will walk the site to identify any hazards and take steps to remove or minimise the level of risk.
- Risks assessments and risk benefits for each activity and use of equipment will be undertaken before the sessions.
- Clear and safe boundaries will be set with the children.
- Children will also undertake a safety walk each session to begin to identify and deal with risks themselves.
- Children will learn about the different things found in our environment and how to appropriately deal with these.
- Guidance regarding specific activities will be discussed with children and carried out when the children are ready to do so.
- Mrs Emmerson and Mrs Cooper have an outdoor qualification in First Aid and will carry a First Aid kit with them.
- Children will learn about basic first aid appropriate to their age.
- In the event of an emergency, school policy and procedures will be followed.

What about the weather?

It is important for children to experience being outside in different weathers. Forest School sessions will continue to take place during rainy, cold and hot weather so the children need to be appropriately dressed. Forest sessions would only be cancelled during extreme weather, such as high winds, blizzards or thunderstorms, when safety is an issue. We will always monitor the weather. If we know in advance that the weather will be unsafe for Forest School we will plan an alternative outdoor activity at a different part of the school grounds.

The Forest School Team



From Left to right:

Mrs Cooper, Mrs Emmerson, Mrs Lembo