

A Guide to Forest School at St Peter's

Possible activities may include:

- *Hunting for minibeasts and/or pond dipping*
- *Natural crafts – making necklaces from elder, crowns or dreamcatchers from willow, collages from natural materials, weaving with long grasses, tree cookies, etc*
- *Mud sculptures*
- *Shelter building and knot tying*
- *Using tools for a purpose – such as peeling bark from sticks with potato peelers to make toasting forks*
- *Fire building and cooking on a camp fire*

*“This is the best kind of classroom,
It’s a journey through time and space,
From the smallest seed to the largest tree,
This is a Forest and a learning place.”*

From ‘The best Kind of Classroom’ by Ian MacMillan



What is Forest School?

Forest School has developed from the Scandinavian education system and is about children and young people building self-esteem and independence through exploring and experiencing the natural world. Forest School at St Peters is delivered by Alice Williams who has undergone the level 3 Forest Schools Training. Each Forest School programme is tailored to meet the needs of individuals within the group and is continuously developed as the children grow in confidence, skills and understanding. The ethos of Forest Schools allows learners the time and space to develop skills, interests and understanding through practical, hands-on experiences.

When and where will Forest School take place?

It will take place on Wednesday afternoon for a group of 15 children. They will receive sessions for half a term before changing to the next group. We are very fortunate at St Peter's as we possess many green spaces. Forest school will take place sometimes on the field, by the pond or in our own small St Peter's wood that backs onto our grounds.

What does my child need to wear?

Forest school will take place in all seasons and weather, except when there are high winds, lightning storms or blizzards.

Your child will need wellies and some warm socks. A waterproof and fleece or warm waterproof coat. Hats, gloves and scarf as appropriate. Your child will get muddy!

Health and Safety

The health and safety of all participants is central to everything done within a Forest School session. We seasonally and daily risk assess the site; have risk assessments for activities; first aid and emergency equipment always present with the group. Some of the activities the children may participate in are 'higher-risk activities' (such as campfire cooking or tool use). However, these activities are not available to the children until certain behaviours and boundaries are established. Children are encouraged and supported in recognising and managing risk for themselves, through real life situations and experiences.

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

Forest School supports the holistic development of the child:

- Health and fitness - Being active in an outdoor, natural environment.*
- Increased emotional wellbeing - There is research available supporting this.*
- Social development - Communicating, and negotiating with peers and adults to solve problems and share experiences.*
- Skills development - Developing fine and gross motor skills and coordination for real purposes.*
- Gaining knowledge and understanding - Multi-sensory, real-life learning.*
- Individualised learning - Careful observation allows adults to tailor support to children's own interests and stage of development.*
- Curriculum Links - Forest School supports many areas of the National Curriculum particularly in Science, English Speaking and listening, Maths, Geography, Art and Design.*