

Langtoft Primary School

Forest School Policy

Article 29 (Goals of Education) Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 31 (Relax and Play) Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities

Aim

Forest School is a unique method of outdoor learning. At Langtoft Primary School our aim is to encourage and inspire children through positive outdoor experiences. Children will 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. The 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.

Intent

The ethos of our Forest School is based on a respect for children and their capacity to initiate, investigate and maintain curiosity in the world around them. It believes in a child's right to play; the right to access the outdoors (and in particular a woodland environment); the right to experience risk in a controlled way in the natural world along with the right to develop their emotional intelligence through social interaction, building a resilience to enable creative engagement with their peers and their potential.

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. Children who struggle learning indoors are often able to develop new ways of learning and coping with the world. Forest School is based on the process of learning – more on the 'how' than the 'what'. Forest School practice embraces collaborative, unplanned, unexpected and ultimately unlimited learning.

Children are encouraged to direct their own learning - this is often inspired by the Forest School leader either through stimulating play in the outdoors or through 'scaffolding' a child's learning, but mostly through simply observing how children are in the outdoors. The most important thing is to encourage the natural curiosity present in children and to enable them to open their eyes and experience the wonders of the world around them.

The woodland environment is central in supporting this approach to learning: the changing of the seasons, the contemplation of an ancient tree, the dynamic nature of an outdoor environment - an infinite source of smells, textures, sounds and tastes and a range of visual stimuli all contribute to the Forest School learning experience.

Our Forest School encourages children to:

Ambition ~ Independence ~ Cooperation ~ Consideration ~ Confidence ~ Resilience ~ Respect



- Develop personal and social skills with **Consideration** for others' ideas and opinions
- Work through practical problems and challenges ~ **Resilience**
- Use tools to create, build or manage
- Discover how they learn best ~ **Independence**
- Pursue knowledge that interests them ~ **Ambition**
- Learn how to manage failures ~ **Resilience**
- Build **Confidence** in decision making and evaluating risk
- Develop practical skills
- Understand the benefits of a balanced and healthy lifestyle
- Explore connections between humans, wildlife and the earth
- Develop a deep **Respect** for the environment
- Regularly experience achievement and success
- Reflect on learning and experiences
- Develop their language and communication skills ~ **Cooperation**
- Improve physical motor skills
- Become more motivated
- Improve their concentration skills

Implementation

Our activities for Forest School are diverse and numerous, 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. All of our activities are linked to the children's learning in their topics to help create an immersive and inspiring learning experience.

Some activities might include:

- Shelter/den building
- Fire lighting and cooking on an open fire
- Tool use
- Studying wildlife
- Playing team and group games
- Sensory activities
- Rope and string work, tying knots
- Art and sculpture work
- Woodland and traditional craft
- Woodland management
- Developing stories and drama, and meeting imaginary characters

To ensure high standards of teaching and learning in the forest classroom, we implement a curriculum that is progressive throughout the whole school. Forest School teaching follows a whole school long term plan which focuses on outdoor skills and links to their learning in other subjects. At Langtoft Primary School, we ensure that Forest School has importance within the timetable.



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Impact

Forest School lessons should make learning more relevant to their lives in the community and wider world. We encourage children to be responsible for and respect the local community and environment giving them a sense of belonging and ownership of the place in which they live. We explore the uses of the local area, integrating subjects so that meaningful activities can be planned and delivered effectively and regularly.

We measure the impact of our curriculum through the following methods:

- Images and videos of the children's practical learning.
- Interviewing the pupils about their learning (pupil voice).

The success of forest school allows the children to:

- Grow in **Confidence** as a result of the freedom, time and space they are given in their learning and develop **Resilience**. This allows them to demonstrate **Independence** at each individual child's rate.
- Activities such as sharing tools and participating in play help teach the children to work together **Cooperatively** as a group, which strengthens their bonds and social skills.
- The sensory experiences provided by Forest School helps prompt language development. Improving communication skills has a positive effect on a child's self esteem and is a crucial part of their development and helps promote **Consideration** of others.
- High levels of interest lead to high levels of attention. Spending time in the woodland is exciting for a child. It tends to fascinate them which develops a strong will to participate and concentrate over long periods of time.
- The increase in outdoor activity has a positive physical impact. Not only does the development of physical stamina improve but also gross and fine motor skills.
- Children develop an interest in the great outdoors and **Respect** for the environment. Encouraging children to develop a relationship with the natural world will help in protecting the environment for generations to come.
- Forest School isn't just beneficial to children it is also beneficial to teachers. Observing their class in a different setting allows them to gain a new perspective and understanding of their class.
- When children really engage with Forest School they will take their experiences home to share with friends and family. This will often encourage families to visit their local woodlands more frequently.
- Taking children outside of the classroom removes the pressures of academia and allows them to play to their strengths and be **Ambitious**. This is beneficial to children who struggle in the classroom because there is more of an opportunity for them to learn at their own pace.

Risk Assessment

A full risk assessment has been completed for all aspects of Forest School and approved by the People, Finances and Premises Committee and FGB.



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Before each session the Forest School leader must carry out a risk assessment of the Forest School site. The Forest School leader must identify and remove/reduce any risks that are found during the risk assessment.

Clothing

No person will be permitted to go to Forest School without appropriate clothing that will protect them from extremes of heat or cold, keep them covered to reduce the likelihood of cuts and scrapes, that fits appropriately for comfort, and that meets any religious requirements.

Children and parents are encouraged to think about the usefulness of their clothing for outdoor activities, and to be aware they are likely to take some of our mud home with them after a session. In the woodland it can often be cooler than expected under the shade of the trees.

Clothing list:

- Waterproof trousers
- Waterproof coat, with a hood.
- Long sleeved top
- Full length trousers
- Warm, waterproof boots (wellies can be very cold during the winter)
- Warm socks, and a spare pair
- Gloves and woolly hat – cold weather
- Sun hat and sun cream: that fits well to ensure good visibility– sunny weather

Organisation, Planning and Resources

It is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to organise and plan all forest school sessions with the support of the class teacher. All resources are kept in our outdoor Forest School classroom and it is the responsibility of the Forest School Leader to ensure these are kept in a clean, secure working order.

The types of outdoor activities children undertake within a Forest School will depend on the learner's age, stage of development and interests.

Assessment

When conducting and planning Forest School it is important to take a step back and observe and assess the children. The observations of children achieve a number of functions,

- it gives you a baseline of their skills
- lets you identify where their next steps may be
- it informs your planning for the next session
- it helps you learn as a Forest School Leader.

Equal Opportunities

At Forest School we actively promote the inclusion of all children and adults into Forest School sessions, and we endeavour to ensure that the opportunities for learning, development and



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participation are available to everyone, irrespective of race, gender, ability, religion, sexual orientation or age.

Inclusion

We aim to and are committed to:

- providing a secure environment in which children can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
- including and value the contribution of all children and adults to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- make inclusion a thread which runs through all of the activities of Forest School

Role of the Subject Leader

The Forest School Leader is a trained Level 3 Forest School Practitioner and holds an up to date ITC Outdoor First Aid certificate. They are responsible for organising the planning and running all Forest School sessions. The Forest School leader has the safety of the children uppermost at all times.

The leader will carry out a detailed safety check before each session and comply with health and safety risk assessments. The leader will ensure that all documentation is relevant and up to date. They are responsible for all equipment and will ensure that it is checked before use and returned to the resource area after use.

The Forest School leader will log any accidents in the school First Aid book and parents will be informed of any incidents that that may occur during a session, eg, trips, falls, stings, etc.

Working with Parents/Carers

At Forest School we value the input of parents and carers. Before the start of all our Forest School sessions a letter is sent home to parents/carers informing them about how and when the sessions take place.

Parents and carers and our wider local community have contributed to our Forest School by donating equipment and items to use in our Forest School sessions.

Policy Review Date: October 2024



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