Much Birch Church of England Primary School

'Helping Young Minds Grow'

Forest School Information for Parents



Our mission: Much Birch will be a loving school where children and staff are safe and respected, motivated to learn by an inspirational curriculum, where standards and expectations are high, the partnership with each other, parents and the wider community is strong.

Christian Values guide policy and are implicit in every aspect of the school's life, from class time to playtime to home time.

What is Forest School?



The Forest School concept originates from Scandinavia where outdoor learning is embedded and children spend the majority of their time outdoors. Forest School was brought to the UK in the early 1990s. A UK definition of Forest School was formulated in 2002: 'An inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults regular opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a local woodland environment.' Forest School is a long term process for children where they have regular contact with a local wooded environment over the seasons. It is child centred where the learning is predominantly child led and they learn to manage risk. Careful observations of the children within Forest School sessions mean that practitioners can help to scaffold the children's learning. Independence is promoted. The children learn the countryside code and how to care for the natural world. During Forest School activities the children will be physically active a lot of the time and will build up their stamina. The children will grow in confidence, build resilience and perseverance and over time their self-esteem will improve which will impact on their emotional and mental well-being.

What happens in Forest School?





During Forest School sessions there will be activities on offer for the children to access but the emphasis will be on the children choosing what they do. Some of the activities the children can access may include things like den building, chopping firewood, building fires and lighting them using flint and steel, whittling, wood crafts, team building games, bug hunts, making rope swings and flora and fauna identification are just some examples! Your child will benefit from these sessions in so many ways, physical health from being outside on a regular basis, improved coordination and fine motor skills, for example knot tying, opportunities to be creative, develop their imagination, problem solve and take risks and improve perseverance. They will be encouraged to build up their resilience and perseverance which means they will continue to practise and develop a particular skill until they are successful.

Children will be encouraged to try things out and learn from experience, rather than rigidly following a set of instructions. This often involves learning to work as a team to get something done, feeling comfortable with asking for and offering help and learning how to cope with failure or setbacks. All crucial emotional skills to take with them into the adult world.

All Forest school sessions will be led by a Level 3 qualified leader (currently Mrs Davidson and Mrs Robbins) with paediatric First Aid qualification (renewed every 3 years). Forest School assistants will have a minimum of Level 1 Forest School training, or have been inducted by the Forest School leader. We currently have Mrs Stewart that is trained as a Forest School Assistant.

The Forest School site is risk assessed on a daily basis and a member of staff carries out a safety sweep before all sessions. All activities that the children do are risk assessed. There are strict rules around the camp fire and an adult will always be present whilst the fire is lit.

What will my child need to wear?

Children will need to have clothes in school for Forest School activities at all times as additional sessions may take place on a different day to their normal timetabled session. They must be suitable for the weather dependent on the time of year. As winter approaches and the weather turns colder it will be necessary for the children to have layers of clothing to ensure they stay warm. The following items are essential for Forest School Sessions:

- Wellington Boots or waterproof walking boots
- Long sleeved tops and jumpers
- Jogging bottoms
- Waterproof Jacket and trousers (available from uniform supplier)

If children do not have the appropriate clothing in school then they will not be able to take part in Forest School activities.



£10.49



£7.99

What if it rains?

We will go out for Forest School sessions in all weathers. The only time we will not go out is if the wind is too high or if it thunders. This is why the waterproof clothing is essential. The children will still need warm clothing underneath as the waterproofs will not provide adequate warmth for the children if they only where thin clothing underneath. The Forest School ethos promotes independence and we will be encouraging the children to take responsibility for having the correct clothing (suitable for the weather) in school.