

St Faith's

Church of England
Infant and Nursery School



FOREST SCHOOL HANDBOOK

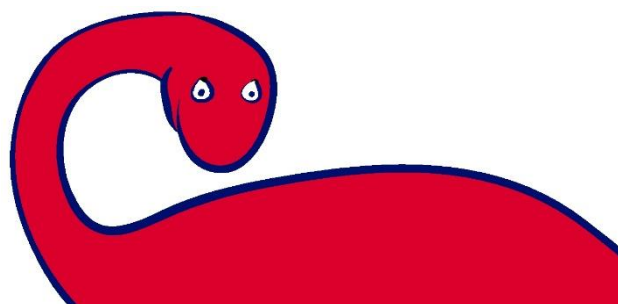


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What is Forest School?

Forest School is a unique hands on learning experience that offers children the opportunity to connect to nature. At Forest School we strive to offer opportunities and experiences that will support each individual child through their holistic development. By putting the child at the center of everything we do we are able to support their social, physical, intellectual, communication, emotional and spiritual skills and characteristics. We embrace a child led approach and encourage the children to follow their own interests through play and exploration. We aim for all children to become independent, confident and resilience learners who are able to manage their own risk and embrace challenge and new experiences. Within Forest School we foster a community approach, where we support and encourage one another. We become a Forest School family with a love and respect for each other and our natural world.

Our Forest School Site



Our forest school takes place in an area of the Key Stage 1 playground. The site has two large willow trees that create a natural canopy above it. There is climbing ivy on the surrounding fences. We hope to introduce more flora to the site in the near future.

We will also make use of other areas of our school site from time to time. This includes the large grass area, peace garden, wildflower area and the Early Years grass and mud kitchen area.

As our site is within school, it is not accessible by the public.

We are also extremely lucky to be within walking distance of the West Common which has a beautiful area of public woodland. We aim to include the addition of visits to this site as part of our forest school experience in the near future.

Meet our Forest School Leaders

Mrs Jemma De'Ath



"Hello. I have worked at St Faith's for 9 years, mainly based in Reception and Year 1. Both of my children also attended this school when they were younger so I have been part of the St Faith's family for a long time! My favourite outdoor activities are walking and bug hunting. I am excited about all of the adventures we will have at Forest School!"

Mrs Melanie Picker



"Hello. I have worked at St Faiths for 7 years in both reception and nursery. I have been part of the St Faiths family for much longer as both my children came to this school when they were younger. I love spending time outdoors, especially discovering and learning about wildlife. I can't wait to be part of your forest school journey and all the fun we will have along the way."

What does a Forest School session look like?

During every forest school session, we aim to:

- Inspire curiosity and a love of the natural world
- Provide a safe, multi-sensory learning environment
- Allow every child to take ownership of their own learning through exploration and reflection
- Meet the individual needs of every child
- Develop practical skills
- Provide enough challenge and risk to develop resilience, boost confidence and raise self-esteem
- Promote teamwork, communication and social skills



How is a Forest School Session structured?

Welcome

- ❖ We sit around our fire square and sing our forest school song:

Hello plants and hello trees,
Hello bugs and buzzy bees
Hello sun up in the sky
Hello birds flying by,
We're learning in our forest school
Where having fun is our rule!

- ❖ We share our news and thoughts to settle our minds

Group games

- ❖ We play a short game to help us get to know each other initially. Following on from this, we play games that promote social communication and teamwork
- ❖ We play in small groups or as a whole group

Safety/ Tool talk

- ❖ If a new tool/ experience is being introduced, the adult will demonstrate what to do and explain the safety rules

Exploration

- ❖ This is the longest part of the session. Children will be free to explore the site and engage in a range of experiences of their choice

Snack time/Reflection

- ❖ We sit around the fire square and have a snack (this may be something that we have prepared and cooked on the fire as a team*)
- ❖ We use our "Rock, Stick, Leaf" reflection model to reflect on the session:

ROCK – What did you 'rock' at today?

STICK – What would you like to 'stick' at?

LEAF – What would like to leave ('leaf') behind?



Our continuous learning opportunities

The following opportunities will always be available at every forest school session:

AREA/ OPPORTUNITY	RESOURCES	LINKS TO CURRICULUM
Mud kitchen and herb wall	Cookware, scales, measuring jugs/ cups, various utensils, crockery and cutlery Menu boards and chalk Variety of herb plants	Early Years: PD, PSED, CL, M, L, UW, EAD Key Stage 1: PSHE, Science, English, Maths, DT
Dig pit	Spades, trowels, forks, buckets Water station Large sheets (on ground/ fence) Paintbrushes/ rollers	Early Years: PD, CL, UW, EAD Key Stage 1: PSHE, Science, DT, Art
Explorers Kits	Magnifying glasses Tape measures/ rulers Binoculars Nature books/ charts	Early Years: CL, M, L, UW Key Stage 1: PSHE, Science, Maths, English, Geography
Slack Line OR Rope Ladders	Slack line Rope ladder Rope	Early Years: PSED, PD Key Stage 1: PSHE, PE
Tools	A selection of tools that have been previously introduced will be available provided that children have demonstrated that they can follow the tool safety rules	Early Years: PSED, CL, PD, EAD, UW Key Stage 1: PSHE, DT, Art
Loose parts	Sticks Logs Stones Natural 'treasure' – Conkers, Pine cones, Fir cones etc String/Rope/Elastic	Early Years: PSED, CL, PD, M, UW, EAD Key Stage 1: PSHE, Maths, Science, DT, Geography, Art

KEY:

PD = Physical development, PSED = Personal, Social and Emotional development, CL = Communication and language, M = Maths, L = Literacy, UW = Understanding the world, EAD = Expressive Art and Design

PSHE = Personal, Social, Health Education, DT = Design Technology



Learning experiences

As well as the continuous opportunities listed above, children will have the opportunity to take part in the following learning experiences during their forest school time at St Faiths:

- Den building (Natural and Tarpaulin shelters)
- Climbing
- Using tools – Palm drills, hammers, mallets, loppers, whittling knives, bow saws, hand saws
- Fire lighting and maintenance*
- Food preparation and campfire cooking
- Art and craft activities
- Plant and wildlife study
- Team building games
- Story telling/ Singing around the fire square

*Fire lighting will only be introduced when the forest school leaders are confident that every child in the group can follow the fire safe rules.



Kit List



Our forest school sessions happen whatever the weather! We will only cancel in the case of thunderstorms or very high winds. It is important that all children wear appropriate clothing for forest school to keep them safe and to provide protection from the elements.

We do have some spare clothing, but if we have too many children without appropriate kit, the forest school session may have to be cancelled.

All clothing needs to be labelled with your child's name and class.

Please see below for a list of what your child will need to bring to school for their forest school sessions:

BASE LAYER (All seasons):

- Long sleeve top
- Long trousers (leggings/ jogging bottoms are ideal)
- Socks (+ an extra pair in kit bag)
- Waterproof walking boots or trainers (not plimsolls)
- Welly boots for wet days

Long hair should be tied back on forest school days

Additional items for Autumn/ Winter:

- Waterproof walking boots or welly boots (trainers are not suitable in wet/ very cold weather)
- Waterproof coat with a hood
- Waterproof trousers (or all in one rain suit)
- At least 1 jumper/ Fleece layer
- Warm socks (+ a pair of thin socks underneath them on very cold days. Two pairs of thick socks may be needed with welly's as they do not insulate the feet)
- Gloves, preferably waterproof
- *Optional - Thermal base layer*
- *Optional - Hat/ earmuffs and scarf*

Additional items for Spring/ Summer:

- Lightweight waterproof coat/ rain mac
- Sun hat
- Waterproof trousers OR spare trousers

We will provide:

- Hi-vis vests (on very dull days)
- Safety gloves (for tool use)
- Safety goggles (for tool use)
- Fireproof gloves (gauntlets)
- Gardening gloves



Forest School Procedures

Fire Procedure

Within our forest school site, we have a permanent seating area, known as the fire square, around our fire pit. We have safety rules that we follow within and around our fire square. These need to be followed at all times regardless of whether a fire is lit or not. The rules are:

- We do not run around the fire square
- We walk around the OUTSIDE of the fire square to get from one side to the other
- There must be no more than 2 people within the fire square at the same time
- We only enter the fire square when instructed to do so by a forest school leader

A fire will not be lit until all children taking part are able to follow these rules. For further information, please see our fire risk assessment.

Tool Use Procedure

Tools are used within forest school as a way of enhancing sessions, developing new practical skills and supporting a child's holistic development. Each tool is used for specific purposes and before using any tool, staff will give a 'tool talk' that explains the use and safety procedures for each tool. Staff will model correct and safe tool use and closely monitor children whilst they are using any tool. Children will not be permitted to use tools until the forest school leaders are confident that they can use them safely. Tools will be removed if the correct safety procedure is not being followed. When not in use, all tools are stored securely away in a locked shed on the forest school site.

See individual tool risk assessments for more tool specific procedures.



Procedure for eating, drinking and cooking at Forest School

Sitting together in our fire circle to share a snack and drink is an important part of every forest school session. We ask that children bring their own water bottle to the session. In the colder months, a warm drink will also be provided.

A healthy snack, such as fruit, will be readily available throughout the session for if a child is hungry. A more filling snack may be provided towards the end of the session. This might be something that we have prepared and/ or cooked at forest school. Dietary needs will be catered for.

Children will be taught the 'No pick, No lick' rule – We must not pick anything from plants or the floor and put it into or near our mouths/ nose.

Food or drink that needs to be stored at a low temperature will remain in the fridge within the school building until it is needed. Food will be transported to the forest school site in air-tight containers where it will remain until it is needed.

Before preparing or eating food, children and staff will wash their hands with hand soap in a bowl of soapy water. Hand gel will also be readily available.

Before preparing food, long hair must be tied back and any open wounds such as cuts must be covered with a waterproof plaster.

Food will be prepared on a suitable clean surface, such as a chopping board. Separate chopping boards and utensils will be used for raw/ cooked food and different types of food e.g. meat, vegetables, bread. Any tools required during the preparation of food, such as knives, will be used under the close supervision of an adult. Food that is waiting to be cooked will be kept separate from cooked food. We will ensure that cooked food is adequately heated and, if required, it is tested with a temperature probe to ensure it is fully cooked. Children will be taught to blow on hot food to cool it down before they eat it.

Procedure for the disposal of food, litter and waste water

Any litter will be collected throughout the session and placed in a rubbish bag to be disposed of at the end of the session. This then goes in the large bins on the school grounds ready for collection. Appropriate food will be put in the compost bins. All waste water is poured down an outside drain within the school grounds.

Procedure for toileting

If a child needs to use the toilet during the forest school session, they will be taken by the forest school leader to the year 1 toilets located next to the Ladybirds and Tiger Moths classroom. If a child needs changing, they will be taken to their own classroom where a member of staff will support them with changing. They will then return to the forest school site.

Procedure for first aid during forest school sessions

Our forest school leaders are trained in Pediatric First Aid. We have a first aid kit on site that can be used to treat minor injuries. An accident form will be filled out for any injuries that require treatment and this will be placed into the child's book bag. For more serious injuries or illness, we will follow the usual school policy.

We hope that the information in this handbook will answer any questions that you may have, however please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further queries!

