

The Ellis C of E Primary School



Forest School Handbook



@RainbowGarden_



@TheEllisCESchool



<https://theellisschool.org>

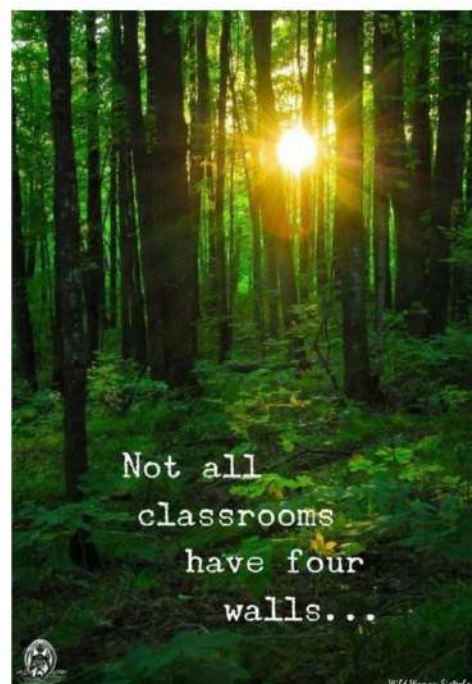


Our Forest School Ethos

Forest School is a unique educational experience which has child-led learning at the heart of it. The approach enables all children to succeed and be involved and valued equally. It focuses on the holistic development of the whole child and is about the process not the product. Play and exploration are key and the Forest Schools approach it is centred on small, achievable tasks which allow success for all.

Forest School sessions take place in a safe environment, in almost all weathers, where children are supported and given regular opportunities to take appropriate risks such as using tools, making fires and tree climbing. Through these experiences, children learn to push themselves which helps to increase their comfort zone. Forest School also enables the children to learn how to deal with risk safely and to recognise, understand and manage their feelings and emotions effectively.

Over time, children learn more about nature and develop an appreciation of the world around them. They learn practical skills and how to work independently and as part of a team. Alongside this, they build their confidence and self-esteem whilst developing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and other social skills which are needed to enable young children to grow up into well-adjusted adults.



Our Forest School Site

We are incredibly blessed to have such a beautiful Forest School area within our grounds. Every season within the forest brings new opportunities for outdoor learning and provides the children with hands on experiences to develop their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the world around them.



C.Trotter / G. Batley

The Benefits of Forest School

Forest School encourages children to:

- Develop interaction, communication and social skills
- Develop self-motivation and self esteem
- Develop their imagination and encourages creativity
- Improve gross and fine motor skills and concentration
- Build up resilience and determination
- Persevere and work through problems and challenges, finding ways of overcoming difficulties
- Build self-confidence and help them share ideas with others
- Become more aware of risk and learn about appropriate risk and making and evaluating their decisions
- Effectively work as part of a team
- Develop an understanding of how to manage feelings and failure as well as how to celebrate successes
- Develop practical skills and learn to use tools to build and create things
- Become more independent and to lead their own learning
- Take care of their mental wellbeing and happiness through reflection and reviewing time
- Develop their knowledge of nature and the natural environment around them
- Appreciate the natural world around them and develop a sense of awe, wonder and a love of the outdoors.



A Typical Forest School Session

Years 1 to 6 will take part in Forest School sessions run by one of the Forest School Leaders at certain times throughout the year. Foundation Stage children will visit the area with their class teachers. During the session, children will take part in lots of practical activities and games as well as creative activities and free play. Child-led learning is at the heart of the session. Children also gain the opportunity to explore the world around them in a practical way and to discover things for themselves.



Examples of Forest School Activities

- Natural art
- Collecting, identifying and sorting natural objects
- Bug hunts
- Making bug hotels
- Animal tracking
- Tree investigation
- Tree climbing
- Climbing, balancing, rolling
- Cooking on an open fire
- Fire lighting
- Using Kelly kettles
- Building shelters
- Whittling wood and woodwork
- Tool use
- Learning and using knots and lashings
- Sensory activities
- Team games





Our Forest School Staff

Miss Batley and Mrs Trotter are fully qualified Forest School Leaders. They both love their roles and enjoy watching children develop personally as well as gaining so much knowledge about the world around them and practical skills.

The role of the Forest School Leader is not to 'teach' the children, but to facilitate and support when needed. They are there to provide opportunities and experiences and to encourage and celebrate the success of all children. As Forest School Leaders, we risk assess all activities and ensure tools are well maintained and kept in good working order and the site is regularly monitored.



Forest School Rules

To ensure that everybody is safe and gains the most from their Forest School experience, we have created three simple, easy to remember Forest School rules! These are reinforced in every session and help the children to be safe and respect the environment around them.

- 1 – No picky no licky
- 2 – Be fire safe
- 3 – Leave no trace

Whilst taking part in the sessions, we continue to adopt the golden rules which we have displayed inside the classrooms.

Golden Rules

- *We are gentle.*
- *We are honest.*
- *We are kind and respect others.*
- *We are ready to learn and do our best.*
- *We look after our school environment.*



We encourage the children to support each other, be empathetic to one another and to celebrate and share in each other's' successes.



Forest School Clothes List

At The Ellis we believe that learning can take place in all weathers, unless deemed unsafe by the Forest School Leader. We embrace the saying,

'There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing'.

All children must have appropriate clothing and footwear to protect them from the extremes of heat and cold. We go out in all weathers with the exception of high winds, thunder and lightning and during every month of the year! We love to dig in the rain, explore shadows when it is sunny, watch icicles form and begin to melt and listen to the wind rustle in the trees. In the forest it can often be cooler than expected under the shade of the trees, however if children are kitted out properly with plenty of layers they can take off and put on, then they will gain the most from the Forest School experience.

Clothing list:

- Waterproof trousers
- Waterproof coat, with a hood.
- Long sleeved top
- Full length trousers
- Warm boots or wellies
- Warm Socks, and a spare pair
- Gloves and Woolly hat – Cold weather
- Sun hat: that fits well to ensure good visibility– sunny weather



Please note that when lighting fires, children **MUST** wear long sleeved tops and trousers.

Other information

All activities are thoroughly risk assessed and Forest School policies and procedures are in place. These documents can be obtained from the school office upon request.



Brief Yearly Overview

Our Foundation Stage children will explore the area with their class teachers and focus on seasonal changes, sounds heard in the Forest, exploring nature and gaining confidence using our Forest School Site.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Rope / Knots	Packing away ropes / paracords	Clove hitch Timber hitch Overhand knot	Figure of eight Square lashing Sheer lashing	Half hitch (slip knot) Reef knot Prusik	Practise previously taught knots	Practise previously taught knots and decide upon the best one for each situation
Shelters / Tarpaulins	Shelters out of natural materials / logs	Low A-frame shelter	Lean to shelter	Kit shelter	High shelter	Exploring other shelters
Tools	Potato peeler	Knife	Bowsaw Secateurs	Bill hook Loppers	Auger drill	Maintenance and use of all tools
Item to be made	Wand / Pencil	Tent peg	Tripod Whittling – animal pegs	Mallet	Stool	Miniature scene or ornaments Utensils – whisk, spoon
Fire Using fires	Learning fire safety rules, respect position, fire circle and fire square. Social time and stories around the fire	Make a spark with a fire steel Make a waffle and a tinder nest, then light the cotton wool	Fire triangle Learn to build a tepee and add kindling. Kelly Kettle to boil water	Closing down a temporary and permanent fire Make a 10 minutes fire adding fuel	Help light, maintain, extinguish and closing down a cooking fire	Explore different ways of lighting a fire – char cloth / Kind Alfred's Cakes Explore different cooking techniques
Cooking Food	Popcorn (pan) Biscuits (stick)	Hot dogs / bread (sticks) Sponge cake in oranges (foil)	Wrap pizza (pan) Stuffed apples and bananas (foil)	Jacket potatoes (foil) Sweet smores (sticks)	Sausages / burgers (grill / pan) or vegetarian options Sweet campfire cones (foil)	Group cooking Starter / main / dessert
Nature crafts / Activities	Introduce Sneezy the Dragon Friendship bracelet / tree Little People's Village Magic spot Meet a tree Tree climbing	Bog babies Mini beast hunt Bug houses / hotels Leaf people / stick people	Picture Frames and art Natural paintbrushes and paints	Natural musical instruments Nest building	Natural weaving looms Mandala art Involve children in risk assessing the site and maintaining the site	Natural tree decorations Bow and arrows Leaf art (backdrop for child lying on the floor) Involve children in risk assessing the site and maintaining the site

