
Cornerstone Academy

Forest School at Cornerstone

2021-22



Parents' Handbook

Cornerstone Academy Trust

2021-22

What is Forest School?

Forest School is a learning programme that takes place in an outdoor classroom, preferably within a woodland, where young people are given access to learning throughout the seasons.

The programme combines practical skills and activities with techniques to encourage creativity, independence, raise self-confidence and self-esteem and promote social skills.

The same group of children attends several sessions, usually at weekly intervals, of about two hours duration, so that they build up their skills as the weeks progress.

Its cross-curricular approach fits with the school's ethos and aims of providing a rich and broad curriculum that builds confidence and produces creative thinkers and problem-solvers.

Originally a Scandinavian concept, Forest Schools have been proven to be an effective foundation that has raised academic achievements. The children develop a variety of life skills: altruism, independence, self-awareness and social communication skills, all of which assist individuals to grow in self-esteem and confidence. In studies, children have appeared to: be more balanced with greater social capability, have fewer days off sick; be more able to concentrate and have better co-ordination with a greater ability to work in groups.

Learning Opportunities

Although lesson plans are prepared and activities link to the National Curriculum throughout the Key Stages, Forest School sessions are essentially child led. This means that as well as having the option to take part in the planned activities, children are able to explore and discover at their own pace

An awareness of learning styles and schemas helps to make the programme accessible to a wide audience. Activities include using tools to make things from wood; using natural materials to make shelters and produce art work; lighting a fire with flint and steel and cooking healthy campfire food; and exploring the habitat through minibeast safaris and sensory games.

The sessions are adapted to suit the client group, the location and the individuals taking part.

Aims of Forest School

- To learn to identify and use local flora and fauna
- To recognise the positive benefits of, and identify the dangers of fire
- To learn to manage risk
- To use tools effectively and safely
- To encourage curiosity
- To build self-esteem and self-worth
- To understand man's relationship with nature
- To encourage exploration and use of all the senses
- To empower children in the natural environment
- To increase cooperation with peers
- To encourage spatial awareness and motor development
- To learn to review and recognise one's own achievement
- To learn how to provide, light, heat, shelter and food in the natural environment

Our Forest School Programme



Year 1: The Year 1 sessions will aim to allow children to explore the Forest School site in a fun and engaging way with focus on imagination and creativity. Children will learn how to use a storm kettle to make a hot drink, palm drills to make Forest cookies and will of course experimenting with Wizard potions in our Mud Kitchen.

Year 2: The Year 2 programme will focus on the wildlife in our natural outdoor spaces. Children will learn how to identify different species of wildlife through exciting exploration games and a varied programme of outdoor activities including sourcing and cutting their own materials for woodland crafts.

Year 3: The Year 3 Forest School programme focuses on 'Surviving in the Outdoors'. Children will learn how to safely use knives, tie knots, build and light a fire and making a den. Children will put these skills together to 'survive in an extreme weather scenario'.

