



Forest School Ethos and Principles

Forest School is a healthy way of learning in a natural setting. Forest School promotes success and achievement through personalised learning in an inclusive outdoor classroom.

It offers opportunities for individuals to flourish and for their true potential to shine through with a focus on well-being, emotional development, social interaction and practical skills.

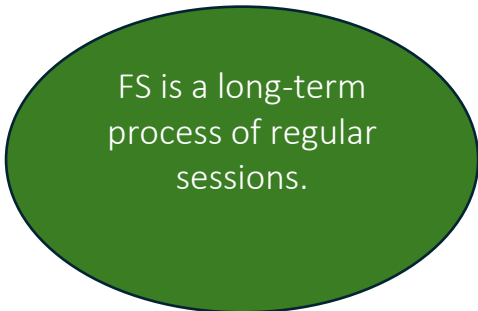
It promotes success and achievement through child-led learning in a natural environment where all children can succeed.

Forest School helps children to identify their strengths by exploring their talents. Immersion in nature has proven to reduce stress levels and boost the immune system.

Forest School is led by a trained Forest School level 3 Practitioner who is committed to delivering a high-quality programme, putting into practise their knowledge of pedagogy, education and practical skills.

Forest School is an amazing spiritual experience, which takes you into the deepest parts of your imagination, leaving you feeling uplifted, enlightened, challenged and content. (P. Dobbs 2015)


To ensure best practise we follow the Forest School principles:




FS is a long-term process of regular sessions.



FS takes place in a woodland or natural environment.




FS offers learners
the opportunity to
take supported
risks.



FS is run by
qualified Forest
School
practitioners.



FS is learner led.



FS aims to
promote the
holistic
development.

Forest School Intent, Implementation and Impact

Intent

Forest School is a unique, all-inclusive method of outdoor learning.

At Belmont 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. Some children will learn how to use tools respectfully, learn boundaries of behaviour; both physical and social, establish and grow in confidence, self-esteem and become self-motivated. I expect all pupils to have at least 1 reason why they love being in nature.

Implementation

We aim to give all children a collective insight into the ethos of Forest School.

Through Forest School sessions, we will build on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.

We envisage a Forest school learning environment to provide opportunities for children to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, to form positive relationships with others, to develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others, to learn to co-operate and work with their peers and adults and to develop strategies, to take risks within the boundaries of safety.

In Forest School pupils can learn about exploring and experiencing the natural world through practical activities. The pupils can learn how to experience learning/ creating in all weathers, all year round, exploring and learning from the seasons and environment changes. Appropriate

clothing will be available, however, taking responsibility for their own well-being is encouraged.

We want to build on children's interests, and to have resources in our grounds, which can be used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development. One of the principles of Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. At Belmont Forest School, pupils will be taught respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both pupils and staff will be encouraged to respect their environment and to be aware of conservation issues of the wild area in our locality. The aim is to promote respect for wildlife. This can be achieved through detailed session plans and evaluation of natural habitats we have and want to attract onto our grounds.

Where appropriate, reclaimed, recycled, repurposed and sustainable resources will be used to develop and maintain our forest school site. Encouraging children to care for the environment is an essential part of Forest School. To encourage the children to look after the site we will always leave it tidy and never damage anything growing in it. We will only collect things that are on the ground and leave the area as we found it when we leave. As Forest School Leader, I will monitor the site so that it does not become overused.

We will create a magical haven of continuous provision, giving pupils responsibility of tasks to maintain our land, opportunities to create things for our land, supported risk-taking activities, like tool use and fire skills and opportunity to relax on swings and hammocks, to help pupils self-regulate.

Impact

The success of Belmont Forest School will allow the pupils to:

- Grow in confidence because of the freedom, time and space they are given during their learning. This allows them to demonstrate independence.
- Develop team-work, strengthen their bonds and social skills through activities such as sharing tools and participating in play as a group.
- Increase opportunities to learn how to self-regulate, by offering safe, calming spaces.
- Increase their vocabulary. The sensory experiences provided by Forest School helps prompt language development.
- Improve their communication skills, which also can have a positive effect on their self-esteem.

- Have high levels of interest, which leads to high levels of attention. Spending time in a magical outdoor space, will be exciting for a child. It could fascinate them, helping to develop a strong will to participate and concentrate over long periods of time.
- Develop physical stamina and improve gross and fine motor skills as well as mental health.
- Inspire children to gain a love of the outdoors, which encourages them to want to visit local woodlands more frequently and participate in general outdoor activities as they get older.

Trish Dobbs (Belmont Forest School Lead)