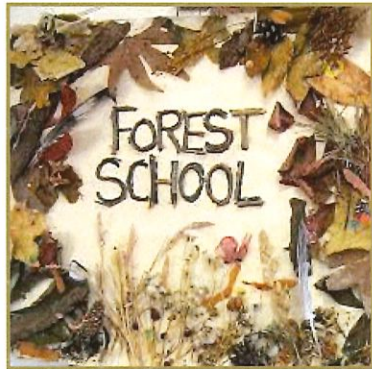




# Shobnall Primary School

## Forest School

### Information for Families



### Everything you need to know about Forest Schools

#### What is Forest School?

Forest Schools has developed from the Scandinavian education system and is about children experiencing the natural world and learning outdoors. Children learn from first hand experiences and will develop skills like perseverance, independence and responsibility which will help to build self esteem. These skills will also help children to achieve more when they are back in the classroom.



#### What should we wear?

It is really important that your child is warm and dry during Forest School sessions. Children will get muddy, so should bring into school an **old** set of clothes to get changed into before their Forest School session.

In cold weather children will need: long sleeved T-Shirt, warm trousers, 2 pairs of socks, warm layers – sweatshirt, jumper, fleece, warm hat, 2 pairs of gloves, waterproof trousers and jacket, wellington boots.

In warm weather: light cool clothing – long sleeved top, light weight trousers, wellington or other sturdy boots, sun hats, full waterproof gear may be required at times.



#### What if it's raining?

'There is no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing'

Forest School sessions will go ahead in almost all weathers as long as the children are warm and dry and wearing suitable clothing. Forest School sessions will only be cancelled if high winds, thunderstorms or very bad weather deem it to be unsafe.

#### How do we keep the children safe?

The health and safety of all participants is central to everything within a Forest School programme. Forest School Leaders are fully trained in emergency first aid and risk assessment. The site and activities are carefully assessed and the children are given detailed training for all activities. There is also a higher number of adults to children than in a classroom.

Part of Forest School is teaching children about risks and how to evaluate them. So the children will be taught about how to add fuel to a fire, cook and make drinks using a fire and will use tools. These activities will be introduced as the children in the group are ready for them and will be carefully supervised by an adult. By allowing children to take these measured risks, we help to prepare them for making choices when they are older and teach them to be actively responsible for themselves, their choices and actions.

#### How can I help?

Make sure your child has the right clothing for the weather.

Talk with your child about what they have done, often they will bring something home to show you.

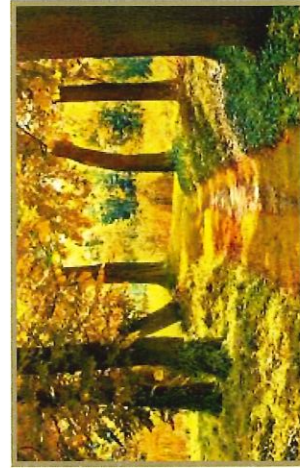
Support Forest School by supplying wood resources or come along as a volunteer.



### What benefits will my child get from participating in Forest School?

Forest School supports the holistic development of the child:

- Health and fitness – being active in an outdoor, natural environment
  - Emotional wellbeing – being outdoors and among nature has been shown to have a positive effect on our wellbeing
  - Social skills – communicating, sharing, negotiating, problem solving, increased confidence
  - Skills development – developing fine and gross motor skills and coordination for a real purpose
  - Knowledge and understanding – multi-sensory, real life learning, caring for green spaces and wildlife
  - Personalised learning - careful observations enable adults to tailor learning around interests and stage of development
  - Curriculum links – Forest School supports learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and National Curriculum
- And we aim to do this whilst having lots of **FUN!**



## So, your child is going to Forest School...

### What is a Forest School session like?

A Forest School session lasts around 2 hours. During this time the children will usually have time to play some games, sit together around the fire circle and discuss what they are going to do. They will then be introduced to the activities for the session. The Forest School Leader will give any safety talks and the children will choose their activity. The children will have snack in the forest, and the session will end with another discussion altogether about what they have enjoyed and what they would like to do in their next session.



### Who runs Forest School?

A number of staff have completed the Level 3 Forest School Practitioner training and will be leading the Forest School sessions. They will be helped by a variety of adults according to the activities chosen and the risk assessment and required adult to child ratio.

### When and where will it take place?

Forest School sessions will take place during the school day.

We are very lucky to have an area within the school grounds which has been specifically developed for Forest School sessions with a fire circle and work areas. It is a secluded space, which will feel quite different to the areas where the children usually play and learn; a real little wild space for nature. We continue to develop our own school grounds to incorporate provision for Forest School activities.



### Forest School activities

Earlier sessions will focus on core skills and safety; establishing boundaries and routines. As the children develop in confidence and familiarity with the environment the sessions focus on the development and consolidation of skills and understanding. We will, at some point, cook over an open campfire, use tools, make dens, leave trails, go on scavenger hunts, make environmental art and mud sculptures and lots, lots more. Children will be involved in maintaining and developing our Forest School areas.

