

Forest School Handbook

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Children reach their potential development when they are 'learning by doing', when they are given responsibility, work in teams, are given freedom to take acceptable risks and think for themselves.

Vision and Aims

Forest School is a holistic child-led approach to outdoor learning creating resilient, independent learners with self-esteem and confidence, who care for the environment.

At St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Forest School is designed to enhance and complement our creative and holistic curriculum. It offers our children opportunities to develop confidence and self-esteem, and to experience achievement.

By producing and adopting this policy for Forest School we aim to give all children and practitioners a collective insight into the ethos of Forest School. Forest School is a unique educational experience and process that offers children the opportunity to succeed and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland environment.

Children engage in motivating and achievable tasks and activities throughout the year and in almost all weathers. Children will work with tools, play, learn boundaries of behaviour; both physical and social, grow in confidence, self-esteem and motivation whilst developing an understanding of the natural world. The Forest School concept originates in Denmark, originally aimed at pre-school children, where it was found that children who had attended forest school then arrived at school with strong social and communication skills, having the ability to work in groups effectively, generally had high self-esteem and a confidence in their own abilities. These foundations helped them to raise their academic achievements.

A Forest School encourages children to:

- develop personal and social skills
- work through practical problems and challenges
- use tools to create, build or manage
- discover how they learn best
- pursue knowledge that interests them
- learn how to manage failures

- build confidence in decision making and evaluating risk
- develop practical skills
- understand the benefits of a balanced and healthy lifestyle
- explore connections between humans, wildlife and the earth
- regularly experience achievement and success
- reflect on learning and experiences
- develop their language and communication skills
- improve physical motor skills
- become more motivated
- improve their concentration skills