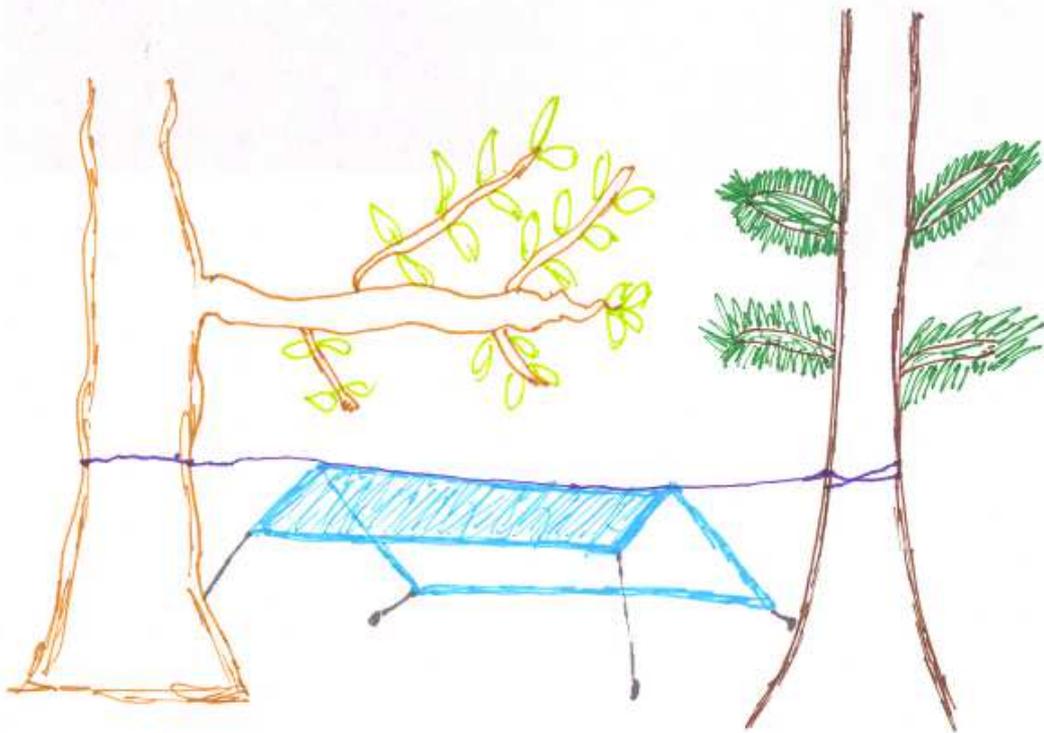




Out Of Our Tree Forest School

An introduction guide to attending
our Forest School programmes.....



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Out Of Our Tree Forest School

Out of our Tree Forest School CIC provide this introduction to interested parties and our partner organisations as it contains information, policies and procedures and our ethos, relating to the running of Forest School programmes in an inspiring and enjoyable way.

This document is to be read by all staff, volunteers, students, teachers, parents and freelancers working with, or for, Out of our Tree Forest School CIC prior to participation in a session. All our policies are subject to annual review, and to immediate review in the case of an incident.

All our policies are available on site in the Forest School Leaders Handbook.

In addition to our Forest School practice, we can also offer:

Woodland Enrichments Days- Transition Days-

-Woodland Crafts-

-Woodland Art After School Clubs & Woodland workshops-

Forest School Holiday Programmes & After School clubs.

Forest School Taster Days



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Out Of Our Tree Forest School

Is a trading style of:

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About Us:

Out Of Our Tree Forest School CIC is a young vibrant Community Interest Company, a not for profit, social enterprise- a partnership between like minded people. Founded by Seb Corall, who was inspired to retrain as a Forest School Leader after several years of supporting teaching and learning at an Infant school.

Our Company Directors between them bring over 60 years of passion and experience in areas as diverse as Learning Outside the Classroom, Woodcrafts, Business Management, Forestry, Woodland Management, Teaching in the Early Years, Childcare, Ecology, Catering and Event Management.

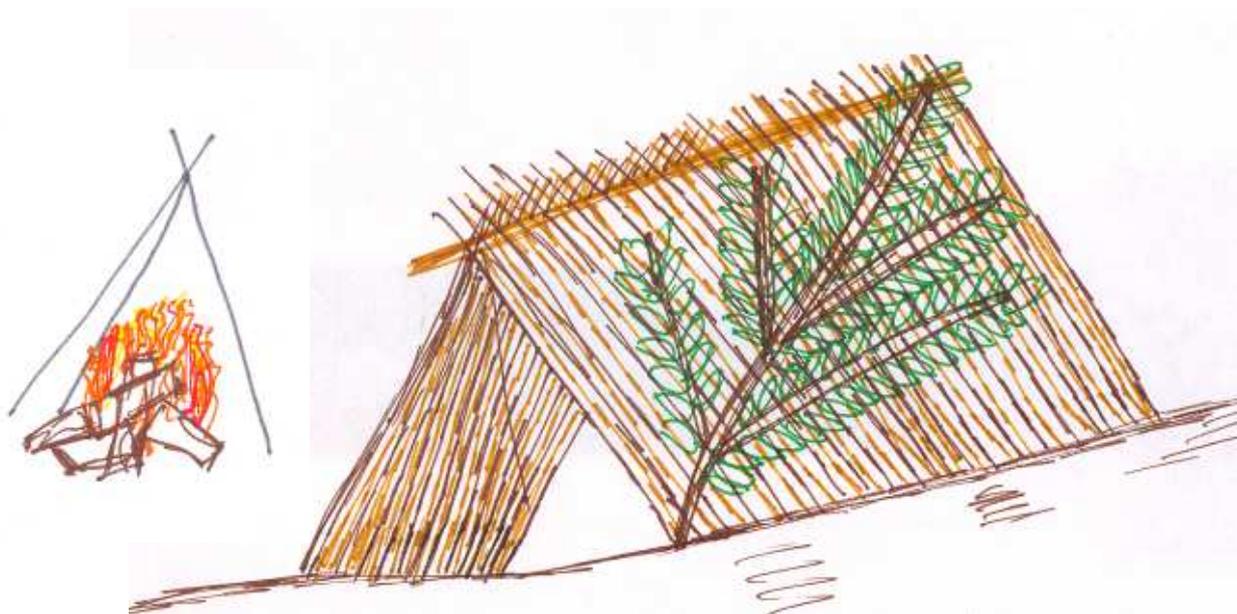
As a Community Interest Company, we work to bring Forest School and Outdoor Education to as many children as possible, and re-connect them with nature.

Our Mission:

To enable as many children as possible within Kent to experience Forest School during their Primary and Secondary Education.

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Forest School Introduction:

The Forest School concept originated in Scandinavia, and was aimed at pre-school children.

In Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark, children regularly have access to outdoor life, in Scandinavian culture this friluftsliv or 'free-air life' is considered a right.

This Forest Pedagogy is well established amongst the Scandinavian countries and teaching and learning outdoors. Although each country has different names for this ethos and type of learning, their core values and beliefs are all very similar- lots of fresh air, outdoors in all weathers, based on stories, characters, songs, activities and new discoveries- all outside encapsulated by the natural world.



In Norway, Friluftsliv barnehage, In Finland, Metsamoori, In Sweden Skogsmulle, and In Denmark, åbørnspædagogik.

It was åbørnspædagogik in Denmark, by then a daily part of Danish Early Years Practice that inspired Nursery Nurses from Bridgwater College in 1993 to bring Forest School to the United Kingdom, and to use it to elicit best practice in their own teaching and learning.

It is now 19 years since the UK first embraced the Forest School ethos and the first Counties rolled out a programme of regular Forest School sessions for school children.

Continued.....

It was found that attendance at Forest School in Scandinavia ensured that children arrived at school with strong social and communication skills, ensuring that they could work in groups effectively, had high levels of self-esteem and had confidence in their own abilities.

These skills built strong foundations that helped raise every child's achievements.

Forest School is a unique educational experience that offers children the opportunity to succeed and develop confidence, independence and self esteem through hands on learning experiences in outdoor environments.

Children engage in motivating and achievable tasks and activities through regular sessions. Children will work with tools, play, learn boundaries, develop a deep understanding of the natural world, become more confident, develop physically and socially.



- Play and choice are an integral part of the Forest School learning process, and play is recognised as vital to learning and development at Forest School.
- A learner-centred pedagogical approach is employed by Forest School that is responsive to the needs and interests of learners.
- Forest School programmes aim to develop, where appropriate, the physical, social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of the learner.

Forest School Ethos

The Forest School Ethos has six underpinning principles and criteria for good practice:

◆ **Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.**

- Forest School takes place regularly, ideally at least every other week, with the same group of learners, over an extended period of time, if practicable encompassing the seasons.
- A Forest School programme has a structure which is based on the observations and collaborative work between learners and practitioners. This structure should clearly demonstrate progression of learning.
- The initial sessions of any programme establish physical and behavioural boundaries as well as making initial observations on which to base future programme development.

◆ **Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.**

- Whilst woodland is the ideal environment for Forest School, many other sites, some with only a few trees, are able to support good Forest School practice.
- The woodland is ideally suited to match the needs of the programme and the learners, providing them with the space and environment in which to explore and discover.
- A Forest School programme constantly monitors its ecological impact and works within a sustainable site management plan agreed between the landowner/ manager, the forest school practitioner and the learners.
- Forest School aims to foster a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences in order to develop long-term, environmentally sustainable attitudes and practices in staff, learners and the wider community.
- Forest School uses natural resources for inspiration, to enable ideas and to encourage intrinsic motivation.

◆ **Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners**

- Where appropriate, the Forest School leader will aim to link experiences at Forest School to home, work and /or school education
- Forest School programmes aim to develop, where appropriate, the physical, social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of the learner.

◆ **Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.**

- Forest School opportunities are designed to build on an individual's innate motivation, positive attitudes and/or interests.
- Forest School uses tools and fires only where deemed appropriate to the learners, and dependent on completion of a baseline risk assessment.
- Any Forest School experience follows a Risk–Benefit process managed jointly by the practitioner and learner that is tailored to the developmental stage of the learner.



◆ **Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.**

- Forest School is led by qualified Forest School practitioners, who are required to hold a minimum of an accredited Level 3 Forest School qualification. Find more information on Forest School qualifications on the Forest School Association website.
- There is a high ratio of practitioner/adults to learners.
- Practitioners and adults regularly helping at Forest School are subject to relevant checks into their suitability to have prolonged contact with children, young people and vulnerable people.
- Practitioners need to hold an up-to-date first aid qualification, which includes paediatric and outdoor elements.
- Forest School is backed by relevant working documents, which contain all the policies and procedures required for running Forest School and which establish the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.
- The Forest School leader is a reflective practitioner and sees themselves, therefore, as a learner too.

◆ **Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning**

- A learner-centred pedagogical approach is employed by Forest School that is responsive to the needs and interests of learners.
- The Practitioner models the pedagogy, which they promote during their programmes through careful planning, appropriate dialogue and relationship building.
- Play and choice are an integral part of the Forest School learning process, and play is recognised as vital to learning and development at Forest School.
- Forest School provides a stimulus for all learning preferences and dispositions.
- Reflective practice is a feature of each session to ensure learners and practitioners can understand their achievements, develop emotional intelligence and plan for the future.
- Practitioner observation is an important element of Forest School pedagogy. Observations feed into 'scaffolding' and tailoring experiences to learning and development at Forest School.



“Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self-esteem, through hands on learning experiences in a local woodland or natural environment with trees.”



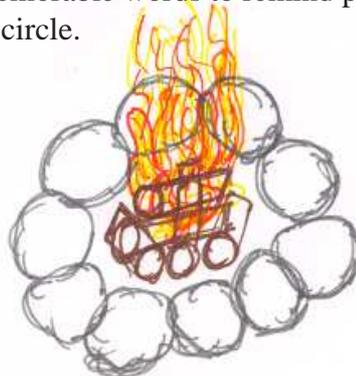
Procedures and Operations

Boundaries:

Pupils are reminded about boundaries during the start of each session. We make an agreement between us as a group of where we all feel appropriate boundaries are. Once these are agreed, these will be marked with fluorescent marking tape. If a pupil cannot be seen, we shout '1,2,3, where are you?'. The group will then all stand up and respond with '1,2,3, here I am!'

Fire Circle:

We have a permanent fire circle, with benches around. A fire pit in the centre, and a fire will often be lit. There are obvious and clear escape routes between the benches, these must remain clear of obstructions. We observe a fireside respect system. We model actions that encourage safe behaviour and do not permit crossing the fire circle, irrespective of whether a fire is actually lit. If you would like to cross to the other side of the fire circle, or move around, out of the smoke, you exit behind where you are sitting, and walk around, on the outside of the benches. We discourage placing items within the fire circle unless under the direct request of the Forest School Leader. We use easily memorable words to remind pupils not to cross the fire circle and remember to respect the fire circle.



Lighting a fire:

A fire will be lit under the direct supervision of the Forest School Leader, who will brief all accompanying adults beforehand.

Pupils will collect tinder, and sticks for kindling, and logs and then bring these back to the fire circle in small groups, imitating the hunter gatherer style.

We class these gathered provisions as

Breakfast- small twigs - Lunch- Larger twigs and Sticks - Dinner- Logs

Types of fire lay will vary, and the FS Leader will decide what is appropriate for the situation. Pupils may individually practice fire lighting skills, with cotton wool or tinder card, and a fire striker. The art of making fire is something that mankind mastered millions of years ago, and it is quite remarkable how this simple skill can enthuse and engage pupils, instill self confidence and promote self-esteem.

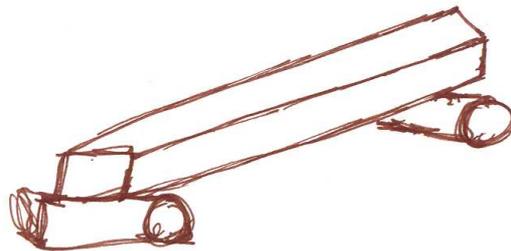


Toileting:

Pupils will be encouraged to use the toilet before a session starts. We have a toilet on site, which limits the disturbance for the group caused by pupils having to leave site to go to the toilet. Pupils will be encouraged to be independent- but if they do need assistance, this will be undertaken by two CRB checked adults, or the FS leader and/or assistant.

Picking up and playing with stones:

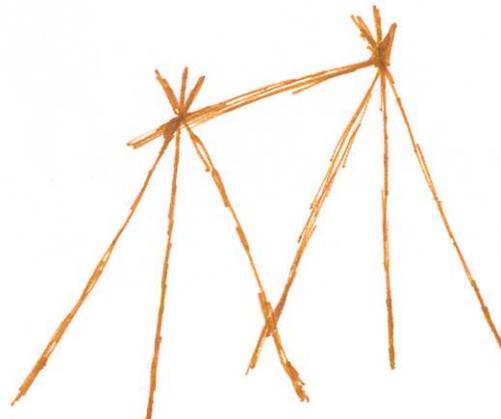
Stones can be picked up and transported. Stones are often used by pupils to make patterns and pictures. Pupils MAY NOT throw stones. Stones can be dropped, but pupils must think about what is beneath the drop zone- toes, bugs, mini beasts.



Picking up and playing with Sticks:

Pupils are encouraged to carry sticks shorter than their arm- but they must be reminded about other members of the group, and how close they are to someone else. Sticks longer than their arm, can be dragged, or carried with the help of a partner, with a person at each end of the stick. We work on a little ditty- 'If its bigger than you, it takes two, if its bigger than three, leave it be.'

Sticks must never be thrown. Branches must not be ripped from living trees to make a stick.



Collecting wood:

Pupils will be encouraged to collect wood for fire lighting, or for natural shelter building.

We collect wood in five basic diameters-

Matchstick sized -Pencil Sized -Thumb sized -Wrist sized -Leg sized

We can use this as a good teamwork exercise to work together to sort different sizes.

Natural picture frames can be made from sticks and lashed together with string or cord.

A great variety of craft items can be made from foraged wood, and we utilise everything that we find and make use of it to create something useful.

Transporting Materials:

Pupils are encouraged to scavenge for materials. They can pull, lift, drag and roll materials, either by using their hands, or by using ropes. Adults will at all times model safe lifting techniques- we encourage bending our knees and keeping our backs straight. Heavy items can be rolled, or lifted and carried by a larger group working together.



Digging:

Pupils can be encouraged to move soil, and to look for insects and mini beasts, and explore their habitats with small sticks. Digging deep holes is not to be encouraged unless in a specific area designated for this, as this presents a trip hazard for other group members.



Rope & String:

We very much encourage the transportation and collection of materials. Pupils are NOT allowed to tie each other up. If a Pupil decides that they wish to use rope or string to tie up a tarp, or make a shelter, then this should be encouraged, and they should be supported by an adult- who will use best practice to model knot tying techniques, and also encourage talking through ideas and decisions on what pupils think is a good idea.

Tool Use:

All tools that we use during Out Of Our Tree Ltd's Forest School sessions have clear Policies and Procedures for their safe use and implementation. They also have Risk Benefit Assessments, and guidance on posture and specific PPE necessary for their safe use. Adults and pupils will undertake a detailed briefing and demonstration of safe tool use, and of the task being promoted. Forest School Leader and Assistant will model safe tool use at all times.

Leave no Trace:

We have a permanent Forest School Base, but we do everything possible to limit our impact on the environment and the impact that we have on our site. Rubbish and ash is removed from site. If pupils have created work, or made something that they can take home, then this is to be encouraged, unless the Forest School Leader has specifically said that this is not possible. If items are unsuitable for transportation back home, then they must be left on site, and in this case we will showcase them for others to see.

Safeguarding:

It is the responsibility of Out of our Tree Ltd to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults whilst they are in our care. We will work with children, parents and the wider community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Everyone who works with us has a responsibility to help us ensure we create an environment that is safe from abuse, and that any safeguarding policy of Out of our Tree Ltd focuses on:

- Minimising the risk of abuse taking place, through best practice and good session planning.
- Empowering the people that the company works with to keep themselves safe, and speak out against abuse.
- Taking fast and focused action when any allegation may arise.



Mobile phones:

The Forest School Leader and Assistant always carry mobile phones. Visitors and volunteers will be asked to leave their mobile telephones in our office during sessions. Visitors and volunteers must not take photographs of pupils or of our Forest School sessions without written permission from Out Of Our Tree Ltd.

Photographs, Videos, Media:

Parental consents will be requested at the time of booking sessions, for Out of Our Tree Ltd to take photographs of pupils in the Forest School learning environment. These photographs may be used for evaluation and monitoring of sessions, or for use in publications, leaflets, website. If permission is refused, we will avoid using that child in photographs, but in the case of video material and where unavoidable, we will blur faces to make identification impossible.

Insurance:

Out Of Our Tree Ltd holds insurance with Birnbeck Insurance.
We hold Public Liability Insurance, to a level of £5 Million.



Welfare:

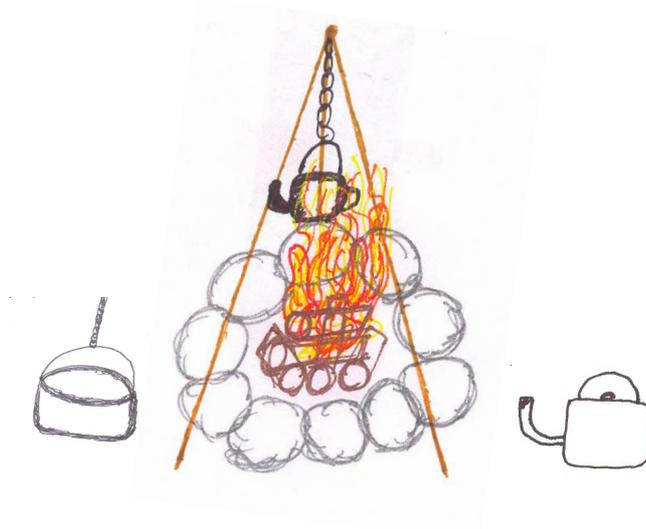
We will promote the welfare and wellbeing of our staff and pupils and try to ensure their enjoyment and comfort. We run Forest School activities in all weathers, and consider that there is no such thing as unsuitable weather, only unsuitable clothes. We try to provide spare sets of outdoor clothes and toileting, eating and cooking facilities so that participants can enjoy their sessions with us to their full potential.

We will have at least one Paediatric First Aid trained staff member on site. Forest School staff are trained in special techniques, and hold advanced paediatric first aid skills, that are appropriate to use in a Forest School environment.

Food Hygiene & Snacks & Foods:

Everyone involved in a session will be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water. We will additionally have Alcohol hand gel and wet wipes available.

We may during some sessions cook food over the campfire. This may include marshmallows, popcorn, damper bread, pancakes, soup, bacon, eggs and other foods. At least one member of on site staff will hold a current Food Hygiene Certificate.



Safe Lifting:

We have safe lifting procedures, and adults must model and demonstrate as well as encourage safe lifting techniques at all times.

Incident and Accident reporting:

All incidents and accidents will be recorded in the First Aid Book. Incidents and near-mises will require an incident report form. Accidents are logged into the accident book.

Administering Medicine and Sun Cream:

Signed consent will be sought from Parents/Guardians to administer Junior Paracetamol, Sting or Bite treatments, Sun Cream, Antiseptic cream.

Booking forms include provision for Parents'/Guardians to make us aware if necessary of allergies or illnesses and to supply any required medicines.

Epi Pen's, auto injectors, Asthma inhalers, Diabetic injections can be carried in the emergency bag.



Toileting:

Where possible, children will only be assisted for toileting purposes by their school support staff, or their own parents. In special circumstances the Forest School Leader or Assistant will take responsibility for this.

Water and soap will be provided where possible, but if this is not available, then wet wipes and Alcohol hand gel will be used. Wet wipes are to be placed into a bag, to be disposed of off site.

Pupils will, if unable to be independent, or have a parent/guardian with them, be attended by the Leader or assistant, or by 2 CRB/DBS checked members of staff.

Some of our sites have compost toilets and a briefing detailing how to use these will be given to everyone on site. Some of our sites use chemical toilets (which does not necessarily fit in with the Forest School ethos, but is better than using the main site facilities, as pupils who leave the site tend to lose the 'magic', and take longer to re-enter their learning '**Flow**' when they return.

Personal Tools:

All our staff carry Gerber Multitools so that in the case of an emergency, a sharp knife, pliers and other basic tools are close at hand. Visitors are not permitted to carry any personal tools when on site or present in any of our sessions.

Roles and Responsibilities of Our Staff:

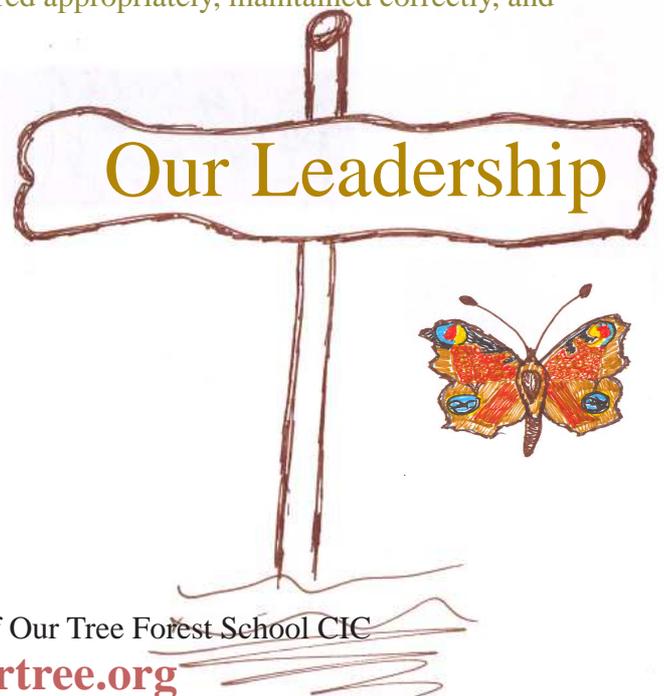
Forest School Leaders : Seb Corall

: Flora Haynes

The Forest School Leader is in charge at all times, and responsibility for the group, remains with the Forest School Leader.

The responsibilities of the Forest School Leader are:

- To Promote and provide Forest School experiences which adhere to and apply the 6 principles of the Forest School Ethos
- To Adhere to their own policies, procedures and individual values as outlined in their personal Forest School Handbook.
- To ensure that appropriate welfare requirements are in place for the whole group- this includes clothes, shelter, hand washing, warmth, food & drink and toilets.
- To communicate with all necessary stakeholders, landowners, staff, parents, management, pupils and the local community.
- To ensure that appropriate ratios are maintained during their Forest School sessions.
- To provide clear, useful and informative guidance and induction for helpers and parents supporting Forest School sessions to ensure a consistently supportive approach.
- Share planning and observations from sessions with relevant staff and teachers.
- To observe individual pupils, and record their learning processes, sharing this information with relevant staff and teachers.
- To constantly reflect on their own practice, network with other local Forest School practitioners and undertake continuous professional development in a quest to be the best that they can be.
- To undertake the management of the Forest School base area.
- To evaluate impact on the environment of running their own Forest School sessions, and to create a management plan to ensure the sustainable use of the site.
- To ensure that tools, clothing and equipment are stored appropriately, maintained correctly, and are fit for purpose.





Our Staff



Child Ambassadors: Jasmine Corall

Child Ambassadors support us primarily during our holiday and weekend sessions, with setting up, site maintenance and facilitating the pupils learning.

By embracing Child Ambassadors, we directly seek the input of children into our practice. Children are also invaluable in engaging with the pupils and aiding the facilitation of all our young learners in their independent discovery.

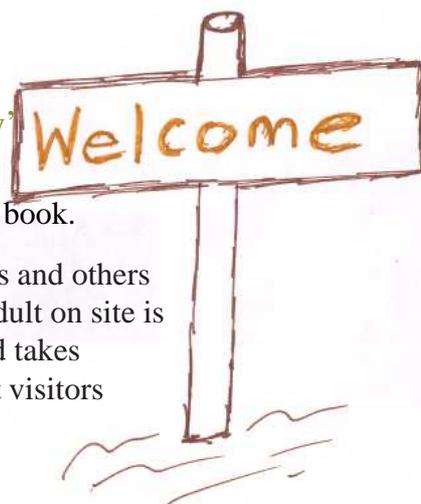
Forest School Assistants: Claire Corall

Our support staff:

We have several support staff that may assist us during sessions. They all have relevant DBS checks.

Roles and Responsibilities of Our Visitors:

To be read in conjunction with our 'Visitors Policy'



All visitors and volunteers will be required to sign into our visitors book.

All of our staff and visitors have a duty of care for themselves and others around them under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. Every adult on site is responsible for the Safeguarding of Pupils and Out Of Our Tree Ltd takes Safeguarding very seriously. We have a Visitors Policy and ask that visitors become acquainted with this before attending a session.

Visitors are welcome to observe our practice, and Teachers, Forest School Leaders, Student Teachers and Newly Qualified Teachers are particularly welcome to join us for regular sessions in order to gain an insight into how Forest School works, the ethos that we uphold and the best practice that we strive to achieve.

We invite you to join us at our site at 08.30 to observe us undertaking final setting up and welcoming the pupils to the session.

As a visitor to Out Of Our Tree, you must not be alone with any pupil. Staff will be aware of your presence and may ask you to move to an area where they have a better view of you. Equally, if you notice that you have inadvertently wandered into an alone space with a pupil, step back into the area with staff immediately. You must not assist a pupil with toileting, please inform a member of staff if a pupil is in need of help.

When observing the pupils, think David Attenborough and wildlife on the television. Observe from afar, and interact with the pupils as little as possible.

The Pupils are physically and mentally active and take a great delight in sharing their insights and experiences with adults, which is marvellous, however, this can lead to a distortion of the experience that the pupil has the potential of enjoying and that the visitor can then observe.

We are developing a specific ethos which includes developing: a quiet, strong, non-invasive adult presence that allows pupils to find their own play and inspiration in the outdoor environment. We foster and promote
-independence, creativity and resilience within each pupil,
-a spaciousness of play that has potential of risk but not of actual danger.

Please bring with you suitable clothing for the outdoors, that is warm and waterproof. Waterproof trousers are highly advisable, along with a waterproof jacket and hat. If you are unsure about what to wear, please contact us to discuss this. Please bring your own lunch, snacks and drinks with you, but be aware that if you wish to eat at a separate time from the pupils, that you will need to quietly remove yourself from the group.

Finally we would like you to be aware of the impact that your presence may have on both the staff and children and with this in mind please take time to read our Visitors Policy.

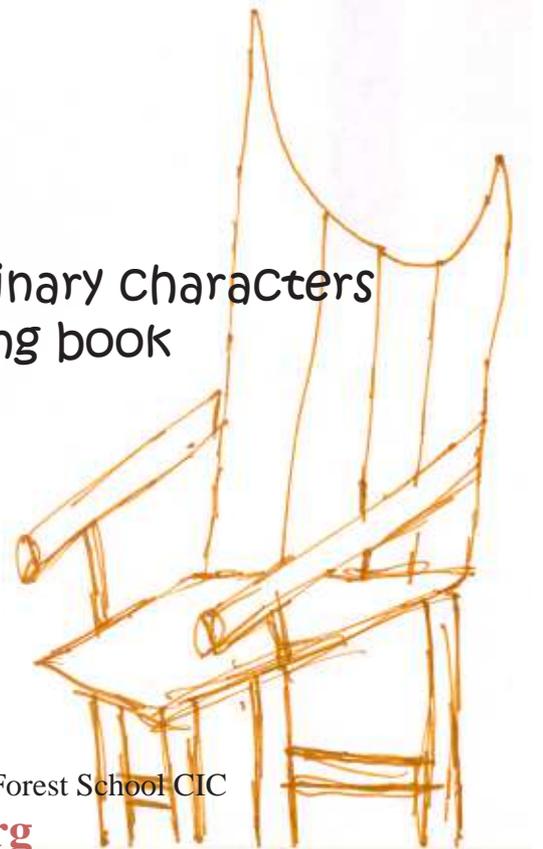
Experiences Offered:

We have a wide range of experiences that we may undertake with pupils. It must be stressed though that Forest School encourages child led, independent learning, and we want pupils to be inspired to try out their own ideas, explore their interests and attempt new projects and undertakings. We will have an experience planned, we will provide supporting materials for that experience, and then watch where the pupils then choose to take that experience, using their own ideas, with the support of adults present.

We always model small, achievable tasks, and never ever set up a pupil to fail.

Experiences include

Shelter Building
Tracking games
Woodland Art
Sculpture Work
Woodland Crafts
Physical Activities
Sensory Activities
Tool use
Fire Lighting
Rope, string and cord
Knot Tying
Puppet Story Time.
Cooking over the campfire
Team & Group Games
Designing & illustrating imaginary characters
Story Telling, with an inspiring book
and more.....



Clothing List

This is a suggested list of required clothing for Forest School sessions.

We do have a very limited supply of waterproof coats, trousers and boots that can be borrowed if necessary.

We run Forest School Sessions in all weathers.

There is no such thing as bad weather- only bad clothing.

Please, please, dress accordingly, and ensure that your child attends sessions properly equipped for the weather.

-Cold Weather-

Wellingtons, boots or sturdy walking type shoes.

Warm socks

Warm layers of undergarments

Thick hardwearing trousers

Long sleeved T shirt or lightweight top with sleeves

Sweatshirt or Cardigan

Winter Coat, waterproof

Hat

Gloves

Scarf

Change of clothes

Bottle of drinking water



-Warm Weather-

Sturdy closed toe shoes

Wellies

Socks

Lightweight trousers

Lightweight long sleeved T shirt

Lightweight top with sleeves

Sun hat

Change of clothes

Sun Cream

Bottle of drinking water.



Equipment List:

Leader:

- First Aid Kit
- Camera
- Medical details for every group individual.
- Mobile Phone
- Fresh Drinking Water
- Risk Assessments
- Emergency Procedures
- Forest School Handbook

Emergency Grab Bag:

Contents of the Emergency Grab Bag will vary- but will always include the essential items.

- First Aid Kit
- Emergency Procedures Card
- Medical information and emergency contact details for every member of the group.
- Risk assessments
- Mobile Phone, Walkie Talkies, Satellite Phone (as appropriate)
- Clean Water
- Emergency whistle
- Emergency Life Blanket
- Medication for individuals
- Appropriate spare clothing
- Sharps box and gloves (if appropriate)
- Wet Wipes
- Alcohol hand gel
- Sugary food
- Blanket
- Plastic bags
- Knife



Management of tools:

A great majority of Forest School activities could require participants to use a range of bladed and non bladed tools. We think that this is a fantastic opportunity because it enables participants to develop new practical skills that help develop self-confidence and independence, hand/eye co-ordination, motor skills. Out Of Our Tree Ltd aims to ensure that everyone participating in Forest School sessions utilising tools will do so safely, and with as little risk to themselves and others as possible. We may use Knives, Drills, Hatchets, Secateurs, Loppers, Bow saws, Pruning saws, Axes, Potato peelers, Billhooks, Froe's and other suitable bladed tools.

We have procedures for tools to be accounted for at all times. All tools are numbered and counted out for a session, and back in again at the end of a session. Pupils will never be able to access sharp bladed tools, as they will always require a key to gain access to the storage chests that we keep them in.

We will always promote the safe use of knives and bladed tools, and all bladed tool use will always be accompanied by a Leader or Assistant, with a ratio of 1:1 or 1:2.

Our policies and procedures, and a risk-benefit assessment for each individual tool are available for inspection in the Forest School Leaders Handbook, or can be read on our website.

We will not use knives with pupils under the age of 6.

Palm Drills, Hand Drills, Brace & Bit:



We use hand and palm drills for making holes. We might want to make a hole for some string, to hang up a craft piece, or make a necklace. We could make wooden medallions, or a fairy stool, or perhaps a bull roarer. These items need holes drilled into them to enable us to make them, and this presents a perfect opportunity for pupils to gain new skills, and discover inner strengths that perhaps they didn't realise that they had!

Bow Saws & Laplander Pruning Saws:



Pupils will be taught how to use a saw under close adult supervision. We use saws to make wooden projects. We can fell small trees, cut logs and undertake pruning type maintenance of our site. Bow saws usually require teamwork, with a pupil at each end, working in tandem, push-pull style. Laplander saws are much easier to use alone. Adults are always expected to demonstrate safe use of these tools.

Loppers:

We use loppers for woodland management, and for cutting and pruning branches and sticks. We use loppers for sticks up to 3cm diameter.



Secateurs:



We use secateurs for cutting and pruning sticks and small branches up to 5 pence size. We use secateurs a lot for woodland crafts and working with willow, hazel and basketmaking.

Fixed Blade Knives:



We always work with knives on a 1:1 or 1:2 basis- and as Forest School is an ongoing long term trust building programme, knives will only be used by pupils after they have worked with us for many weeks and the Forest School Leader is satisfied that they are ready.

The use of knives, and the multitude of uses for them are excellent for building hand/eye coordination, fine motor skills, independence, self confidence, self worth and a sense of assessing risk and applying this to something practical.

We use bladed tools like fixed blade knives to make various craft items and undertake projects. We use top quality Mora Kniv knives from Sweden. For younger hands, we use purpose made, Mora Frost 'Scout' knives that have a double tang and a wooden handle. They have a short blade, and are very light and easy for a younger pupil to use. Older pupils and adults will use Mora Companion knives. These have been proven around the world for bushcraft and wilderness survival.

Froe:

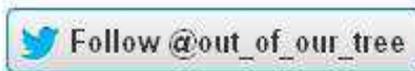
We use froe's for splitting wood. This is primarily a splitting rather than a cutting tool. The tool is used by two pupils, and one holds the froe, one a wooden mallet. The froe is knocked into the end grain of a log or piece of wood, and the handle is used to split the wood into billets- billets can then be used to make kindling, tent pegs, fairy flowers and a host of other craft items.



Axe:



We typically use axes made by Gransfors Bruks, in Sweden. These axes are top quality, hand forged and individually signed by the blacksmith that made them. Typically costing £100 each these are lovely axes to use, and lend themselves to a multitude of tasks. Particularly useful for woodcrafts and making craft items. They can be used for woodland management and chopping wood, and we have several varieties that we use for different projects. The long handled axe above would be suited to woodland management and firewood. The short handled axe is perfect for woodcrafts.



Adverse Weather:

In the case of adverse weather, we will not run Forest School sessions if the conditions are deemed too dangerous. Conditions such as thunder storms or high winds would be deemed to be too dangerous. Heavy rain, snow or ice would not in themselves stop a session, unless road conditions for arrival on site were deemed too hazardous, and a decision was made to cancel the session in advance.

- ★ Thunder storms, or the forecast of thunder storms, will trigger the adverse weather policy and sessions would be stopped.
- ★ High winds, above a Level 6 on the Beaufort scale would trigger the adverse weather policy and sessions would be stopped.
- ★ The MET office weather forecast online system (<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public-weather/forecast>) will be used to make judgements and decisions about the expected conditions.
- ★ We will usually have shelter in the Base Camp Teepee, or under the Fire Circle Canopy, but additionally, in wet weather, an additional shelter will be built by a trained adult, to give extra capacity.
- ★ Snow, adds another unique dimension to Forest School, and as long as learners are appropriately dressed, and able to keep warm, we would not normally cancel unless road conditions to and from the site could deteriorate later to such a level that the site becomes impassable.
- ★ During very wet, icy or snowy conditions, extra time will be given to safety briefing, to include the learners in taking responsibility for their own safety and looking out for their peers.

Cancellation:

- ★ In the event of having to change a programme before the day - we shall undertake the following steps.
 - Emails and phone calls to clients as per booking form details to inform them.
 - Clients asked to confirm acceptance of new programme details.
 - Updates on our website- www.outofourtree.org and Facebook page.
- ★ On the Day- Due predominantly to Adverse Weather, Staff or Pupil illness or catastrophe-
 - Texts in the first instance will be sent to all organisations & Parents. These will be followed up by a Phone call to parents if necessary.
 - Any Pupils not collected, will be cared for and we will run a 'childcare' programme based on Forest School principles until the pupil/s can be collected.

Risk Benefit Assessment & Risk Management Record

To be read in conjunction with other risk generic assessments -ie General Welfare & Weather, Daily/Site Specific

Name of person compiling this risk benefit assessment:

Activity/Experience/Tool - (please delete accordingly)

Risk Benefit: What is the benefit to the children of offering this experience?

Probability Score:

1. <5% chance that it will occur- very unlikely.
2. 25% chance that it will occur
3. 50% chance that it will occur
4. 75% chance that it will occur
5. >95% chance that it will occur- very likely.

Severity Score

1. Not serious- no first aid required
2. Minor injury- requiring basic first aid
3. Injury- requiring non immediate professional medical attention
4. Serious injury/multiple injuries- requiring immediate medical attention
5. Major accident- multiple injuries or fatality

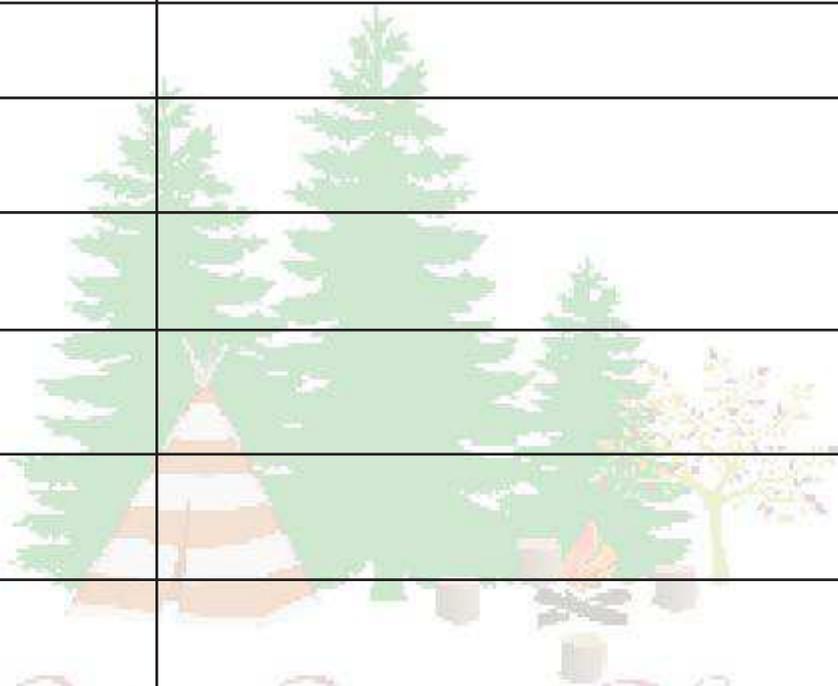
Calculate the risk levels:

The rating is calculated from the probability multiplied by the severity which will give a rating between 1 & 25.

Our Company will not be carrying out any activities deemed to have a revised rating of over 12 as they are deemed too dangerous.

Hazard	Harm	Risk Rating (Probability x Severity=)	Control measures to reduce risk and actioned by whom?	Revised Risk Rating: (Probability x Severity=)

Hazard	Harm	Risk Rating (Probability x Severity=)	Control measures to reduce risk and actioned by whom?	Revised Risk Rating: (Probability x Severity=)



Out Of Our Tree Ltd

Any further information which needs to be noted:

Signed: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

This assessment is reviewed annually unless accident/incident occurs requiring immediate review.

Mythbusting what Forest School actually is-

The following information comes directly from the Forest School Association website and is written to support all Forest School Leaders and Assistants.

Myth 1: 'Forest School is a type of badge that schools can collect, similar to schemes such as "Ecoschools" & "Health Schools"'

Forest School is the name of a specific ethos – a way of working with people in an outdoor natural space for an extended period of time, often a full year. Qualified practitioners carefully facilitate programmes which are uniquely tailored to the needs of the individuals within the group and have the fundamental aim of building participants' self esteem, confidence, independence and creativity. The name does not refer to an actual place; it refers to the philosophy. Forest School programmes work in a variety of situations and locations (not just schools). Therefore, it is not possible for schools to become 'a Forest School', however schools can provide Forest School programmes for their pupils.

Myth 2: 'If you take groups outside regularly for learning then you must be doing Forest School'

There are many different types of outdoor learning, all of which provide fantastic learning experiences for children and young people. Some examples of other types of outdoor learning are:

- environmental education
- field studies
- bushcraft
- horticulture
- Earth Education
- adventurous activities
- Coyote Mentoring



There are many more! All of these approaches have different focuses and underlying aims and therefore will have their own methodologies. Likewise, Forest School also has a distinct ethos that makes it Forest School, just as all the above have key features that make them what they are. Any type of outdoor learning can be done regularly (for example; an after-school bushcraft club once a week, or a year-long gardening project to maintain a school's growing area), not just Forest School. To be 'doing Forest School' the programme being provided would need to follow the philosophy of Forest School, part of which is that it happens over a long period of time. Do remember that the more the variety of outdoor learning approaches a person has experience of the wider the learning opportunities – the greater the diversity the greater the learning potential! Please visit the Institute for Outdoor Learning website for more information about outdoor learning.

Myth 3: 'I can't do Forest School because I haven't got access to a woodland'

It is the philosophy that is the essential element of Forest School, not the site. Woodland is an ideal environment as the diversity and abundance of natural resources make it easy to facilitate learner-led discovery. It is perfectly possible to run Forest School in other natural environments, including school grounds, grasslands/meadows, beaches/coastal areas and heathlands. However, in these environments the Forest School leader may need to import materials (such as poles, logs or other natural materials for construction or craft), and make provision for any additional needs posed by the site (for example on exposed landscapes like beaches it may be more important to provide appropriate shelter than in a sheltered woodland site).

Myth 4: 'You can run Forest School if you have a level 1 Forest School accreditation, as long as you don't go off site'

The Level 1 accreditation is designed only as an introduction to the Forest School ethos and does not cover any of the leadership aspects of running a Forest School programme. Level 3 is the minimum level of accreditation required to deliver Forest School regardless of location. The level 3 training contains assessments of the practitioner's practical skills and awareness of health and safety, as well as their leadership of groups in the outdoors and ability to facilitate the Forest School ethos. Level 1 and 2 Forest School training do not assess these elements as they are designed as an introduction and for supporting assistants respectively.

Myth 5: 'You have to be a qualified Forest School leader to use tools or fire with children/young people' ('and you have to use Tools and Fire to be doing Forest School')

Tools and fire can be hugely beneficial learning experiences for children and young people, and can be elements within all sorts of outdoor learning approaches, not just Forest School. For example, using tools and fire are key parts of bushcraft and also the scouting movement. However, these types of outdoor learning may introduce and use them differently to Forest School and for different reasons as have different aims and a different philosophy to Forest School. If any teacher or practitioner working with children/young people decides to use tools and/or fire with groups, their employer has a legal responsibility to ensure that health and safety law is adhered to. Legally employers must ensure that any significant risks are managed and that staff have appropriate training, first aid provision, welfare requirements, supervision levels, protective equipment, risk management systems and emergency procedures for all aspects of their job and workplace (this would include the outdoor environment and outdoor learning as well as indoor). Another consideration for employers is that if staff (and learners) are preparing and cooking food on fires, then staff should have an awareness of appropriate food hygiene practices therefore training may be required. It is also important to be aware that legally you must have landowner's permission to light a fire. Staff have a legal responsibility to follow their employer's health and safety guidance and report anything that they feel could pose a risk. Please visit the Health and Safety Executive's website to find out more about health and safety law.

Tools and/or fire may be used within Forest School programmes if the Forest School practitioner decides that the learner/s are ready and there is a reason why acquiring the skills will benefit an area or areas of their development (just the same as any other element being introduced into a Forest School programme). Every Forest School programme is different because it is centred on and guided by the individuals within the group. The learner led ethos means that you cannot say for definite which experiences will be part of the programme, nor when they will be introduced if they are at all. So some Forest School programmes may use the experiences of fire and/or tools as key parts of their programme because individuals are interested in them and need to develop these skills to support their personal learning journey; whereas others may not use them at all, because the children/young people are either not ready, not interested, or actively engaged in other experiences.

Level 3 Forest School practitioner training covers all aspects of the above in regards to applying this to a Forest School context. The training supports practitioners to create their own Forest School handbook which will contain all their policies and procedures (for example in managing risk, use and management of fire and tool use and maintenance) for their Forest School.

Myth 6: 'You have to be a qualified Forest School leader to take groups to a woodland'

Many different Outdoor Learning approaches will use woodland environments, not just Forest School. For example, bushcraft, environmental education and field studies (and many others too) will often use woodland sites, however these types of outdoor learning may use the environment differently (as they have different aims and philosophies to Forest School). Anyone using a woodland site for outdoor learning will need to ensure they have the landowner's permission to be there (unless it's a public right of way or access land), otherwise they will be trespassing (with the exception of Scotland where access rights and responsibilities are governed by the Outdoor Access Code). It's responsible to seek permission and work co-operatively with landowners when exercising your rights with groups. Employers will also usually be required to check whether the landowner have public liability insurance which covers the site being used, and a suitably experienced person to undertake a site risk assessment, which depending on the site and frequency of use, may involve seeking the services of a qualified arboriculturalist. Employers will also need to ensure that the remoteness of the site is considered within risk management systems; that access points are known in case of an emergency, additional emergency equipment is carried if deemed necessary, communication systems are in place and consider what ratios are appropriate for the site, planned activities and the group. Staff will need to follow their employer's guidelines regarding taking children/young people offsite (including transporting groups) and ensure parental/guardian consent is given for the visit and activities.

Level 3 Forest School practitioner training covers all aspects of the above in regards to applying this to a Forest School context. The training supports practitioners to create their own Forest School handbook which will contain all their policies and procedures (for example in managing risk, transporting children) for their Forest School. Leaders will also have their own communication policies of how they link with landowners, other staff, parents and the learners themselves.

Myth 7: 'I can't become a Forest School Leader because I'm not a teacher'

People from all sorts of backgrounds come to Forest School training, including teachers, teaching assistants, environmental educators, ecologists, woodland owners, artists, countryside rangers, scout/guide leaders, youth workers, parent volunteers and many more. To undertake the level 3 Forest School practitioner training there are prerequisites to meet to be accepted onto a course. If you don't have a teaching or equivalent qualification in play or youth work, you need at least 2 years' experience of working with your chosen client group instead. It is worth being aware that the level 3 course in particular contains a lot of written work (as well as practical assessments) and so prospective students are advised to have a level 2 qualification in something (Level 2 is the equivalent of GCSE A to C grade or NVQ2 etc). It is possible for students to progress up the Forest School training levels on some courses (different training providers will structure the training differently). Most training providers will be happy to discuss entry requirements with prospective students, so it is worth contacting them and discussing this before you book onto a course.





Out Of Our Tree Forest School

Is a trading style of:

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About Us:

Out Of Our Tree Forest School CIC is a young vibrant Community Interest Company, an notfor profit, social enterprise- a partnership between like minded people. Founded by Seb Corall, who was inspired to retrain as a Forest School Leader after several years of supporting teaching and learning at an Infant school. Our Company Directors between them bring over 60 years of passion and experience in areas as diverse as Learning Outside the Classroom, Woodcrafts, Business Management, Forestry, Woodland Management, Teaching in the Early Years.

After reading the book 'Last Child in the Woods' by Richard Louv, and having already spent several years working with children, and supporting Learning Outside the Classroom, I made the decision to retrain and to bring new experiences and enrichment opportunities to all children through Forest School. It is our aim that every child in the Ashford region should be able to access Forest School provision, and that they could all experience at least one Forest School session during their education.

www.outofourtree.org