

FOREST SCHOOL FACILITATED LEARNING

Forest School at Hummersea is based on the following core principles:

- **Child-Centred Learning:** The program is designed to be child-led, allowing pupils to explore, discover, and learn at their own pace, supported by skilled facilitators.
- **Regular and Long-Term Access:** Forest School sessions will be delivered regularly (biweekly), providing ongoing opportunities for children to build confidence and skills.
- **Holistic Development:** Forest School focuses on the holistic development of each child, including physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth.
- **Risk and Challenge:** Pupils are encouraged to take calculated risks, guided by staff, to build resilience, confidence, and responsibility.
- **Connection to Nature:** Pupils will develop a strong connection to nature, understanding its importance and learning to care for the environment.

Forest School Practice also supports and sits alongside our **school values**:

- **Be respectful**
- **Be resilient**
- **Be enthusiastic**
- **Be determined**
- **Be curious**
- **Be proud**

Whilst attending Forest School the children are actively encouraged not only to follow the School's key principles of being

- **Ready, Respectful and Responsible**

They are also encouraged to adopt the 3 Core Forest School Promises:

- **To take care of themselves**
- **To take care of each other**
- **To take care of our woodland and nature**

These 3 promises underpin the core values of our Forest School Practice and by each child making at wearing either a badge or a bracelet to signify these promises, they are making a choice to uphold them.

In line with the Forest School Principles and our Forest School Policy, we aim to offer our children the opportunity to lead their own learning. Therefore, this document will be a working document that will be updated biweekly, in line with the children's interests and needs. However, it is important to point out that children's exposure, experiences and active participation in the long-term Forest School programme can complement many areas of the curriculum, which works towards the holistic development of every child who attends Forest School. Listed below are some of the subjects and objectives that will naturally occur from active participation in our Forest School Programme, from the 2 year provision, all the way until Y6.

2 Year Provision, Nursery and Reception

Communication and Language e.g. singing songs and listen to stories, and begin to retell stories; listening and responding to instructions; having conversations with friends and adults; respond to questions and begin to ask them; learning and using new vocabulary; communicate their needs using non-verbal means and then verbally

Personal, Social and Emotional Development e.g. following routines and follow the Forest School rules – looking after themselves, their friends and the and the FS area; develop friendships relationships with peers through play and develop relationships with adults in the group; understanding the importance of good hand hygiene; begin to use vocabulary to express their feelings, wants and needs whilst in the wood. Develop independence when getting dressed and undressed for FS.

Literacy Skills as well as the above Communication and Language other examples of Literacy development can be - mark making in mud with sticks, chalk on blackboard, charcoal on wood or paper, crayons for rubbings and drawing; use initial sounds to finding their names and then being able to identify each letter in their names; repeat words and phrases used in FS; use initial sounds to name objects in nature and then orally segment sounds in words to label them

Physical Movement and Development e.g. through play, movement songs and exploration in the woodland the children will learn to move in different ways - crawling, balancing, rolling, sliding, climbing over, up and under objects and obstacles, jumping and landing, change direction and moving at different speeds, pushing and pulling which will develop their gross motor skills, coordination, agility and balance, and become increasingly aware of their own body. Fine motor skills can be developed through picking up sticks, leaves and seeds, winding and weaving, pulling up zips on their suits.

Maths and Numeracy skills e.g. singing number rhymes and represent numbers using my fingers; combining objects by stacking them; measuring out liquids, placing objects inside containers and then taking them out; filling and emptying containers, cups, pans; counting shells, stones, seeds, leaves, sticks; balancing scales and see-saw with objects or themselves; sorting and/or matching objects with different/similar characteristics; recognising patterns in nature and copy them if inspired to do so; develop positional language and understanding by climbing on, under, through or standing beside an object; explore size, length, height and capacity of different objects, in free play and then compare them to say which is heaviest/lightest, tallest/shortest etc; identify simple 2D and then 3D shapes in the FS environment and in nature.

Understanding the World e.g. In-line with one of our FS Promises the children will learn to explore, learn from and respect and care for the natural environments and all living things, in our woodland and the natural world; explore natural materials with different properties; explore and explore to different natural phenomenon, such as seasonal changes, weather, growth and life cycle; observe and experience different weathers and understand what clothing is suitable for it; begin to recognise and identify changes in seasons and the natural world; engage with the outdoors using their senses, describing what they can see, hear and feel when they are outside; observe and identify animals and plants within our natural environment and the immediate area, and talk about their features, their similarities and differences; find and plant seeds and observe any growth, and observe and understand the key features of a life cycle, in flora and fauna.

Art e.g. singing songs and chanting rhymes, with movement and/or actions; exploring different natural materials, exploring and identifying different textures and using the materials in different ways, e.g. finger printing, mark making, printing, collage, moulding, building; explore joining different materials using simple techniques, such as wrapping or sticking; opportunities for imaginative/creative play; using natural materials and objects to produce sound

Physical Education

Physical (gross/vestibular skills, fine motor skills, cardiovascular/aerobic) development can be developed and enhanced through time spent in outdoors, by providing opportunities for play and introducing new skills and activities. These experiences will cover the development of Locomotion, Stabilisation, Manipulation skills, examples of which could be:

- Climbing
- Swinging
- Balancing
- Rolling
- Lifting/pushing/pulling
- Running
- Leaping/Jumping/Landing
- Knot tying
- Weaving
- Tool use – using secateurs, flint and steel, loppers, spades, trowels, hammers, drills (with saws and carving knives to be introduced at a later stage)

RSE/PHSE

Exposure, experiences and active participation in the long-term Forest School programme allows children the opportunity to develop a range of personal, social and emotional skills, including those highlighted in our RSE/PHSE curriculum:

- Explaining and following rules (of Forest School) and understanding why they are important (keeping themselves, each other and the environment safe)
- Following simple and then multistep instructions
- Managing their own basic and personal needs, e.g. getting a drink if they are thirsty, getting ready for FS by dressing themselves
- Respect and recognise positive things about themselves and that they are important
- Developing the social skills to play alongside others and then work cooperatively: listening, responding, taking turns, waiting
- Build constructive and respectful relationships with each other and understand that respect is two-ways
- Thinking about others and understand how to treat them with respect
- Develop strategies to resolve arguments, positively
- Identify and explore different ways to help manage feelings e.g. taking time out, finding space to calm down
- Talking about things that we like and understand and accept that others like different things (and that this is ok!)
- Show resilience and perseverance in the face of a challenge
- Respecting and caring for natural environments and all living things

- Recognising how time outdoors can support health and well-being
- Develop good hygiene, e.g. handwashing, and understand why this is important

SCIENCE

Scientific knowledge and understanding can be strengthened by providing the children with immersive opportunities to explore the natural world. Through exploration, observation and time spent in the outdoors, pupils will be increasingly able to:

- Ask simple questions, and then relevant questions (about the natural environment)
- Identify living things in a natural environment, including wild plants and trees (deciduous and evergreen), and animals
- Observe and explain the difference between flora and fauna
- Observe and then identify different animals and their characteristics (sub-groups), and their habitats
- Discuss the basic needs of all living things and what they need to survive
- Understand the difference between carnivores, herbivores or omnivores
- Know whether an animal is prey or predator
- Observe the life-cycle of living things
- Note changes in the natural environment that occur across the 4 seasons, including changes in flora, weather and length of day
- Observe temperature changes in the environment
- Identify a range of natural materials, including soils and rocks, and their properties
- Explore materials that are solids, liquids or gases.
- Explore how solid objects can be changed by applying different forces (including tool use)
- Explore how temperature can change the state of both natural and man-made materials when they are heated or cooled, dissolving, mixing and changes of state are reversible changes
- Identify sources of light and explore how shadows are formed and how they change throughout the day
- Recognise that light from the sun can be dangerous and understand ways to protect their eyes
- Observe and identify natural sources of sound and explore how sound travels
- Observe and explore the forces of gravity, pulling, pushing and friction, including air and water resistance
- Identify how our body changes when moving around our Forest School and understand why exercise is good for humans
- Understand the importance of and implement good hand hygiene
- Identify and use their senses to engage and immerse themselves in the natural environment

GEOGRAPHY

Consistent participation in Forest School will also allow the children to develop skills and understanding about the world in which they live, in their immediate environment and the wider world. The children will naturally develop knowledge about their location and how human and physical geography impacts their immediate environment through hands on experiences in the woodland.

Intellectual Growth

Ways in which Forest School supports intellectual development:

- **Encourages Creativity and Imagination:**

The unstructured and adaptable natural environment inspires children to use natural materials to build, create, and imagine, leading to innovative problem-solving.

- **Promotes Problem-Solving:**

Children face natural challenges, such as building a den or navigating uneven terrain, requiring them to devise solutions and think creatively about their surroundings.

- **Enhances Cognitive Skills:**

Research suggests that exposure to natural environments improves attention span, concentration, and memory.

- **Develops Decision-Making:**

Children make choices about their activities, learning to take appropriate risks and make informed decisions, which strengthens their cognitive flexibility.

- **Fosters Curiosity and a Love for Learning:**

The freedom to explore and follow their own interests in nature encourages children to ask questions and make discoveries, building a deeper motivation for lifelong learning.

- **Builds Spatial Awareness:**

Navigating the environment, planning routes, and interacting with natural features helps children develop spatial memory and understanding of their surroundings.

- **Integrates Learning with Real-World Application:**

Activities, such as building 3D shapes with sticks or understanding ecological processes, provide hands-on, real-world experiences that deepen understanding and make learning more meaningful.

Additionally, frequent and positive contact with nature before age 11, especially in active and playful experiences, is likely to encourage people to appreciate, value and want to conserve nature throughout their lives. Direct contact with nature creates strong connections and affiliations between child and place. This is known as Biophilia.