



Forest School

Our ethos

Forest School provides an encouraging, inspiring environment where children can learn using all their senses to explore and investigate the world around them where they can grow in self esteem, worth, independence and confidence. The day is structured around child-centred and independent learning and encourages practical, hands-on experience in a natural woodland environment. Forest School is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.

Risk

Unlike a day at the preschool setting, forest school takes place out in a natural environment and so presents greater risks than a normal day at preschool. Every possible precaution is put into place to reduce this risk and as such we are confident in the preservation of child safety and wellbeing at forest school. However we are not able to 100% ensure that children will not encounter risk or acceptable harm along the way. The risks present in our woodland are explained to the children at the beginning of each session and they are taught to respect their environment and the dangers around them. Through careful monitoring and repetitive cautions by the staff, along with parental support and the correct clothing and equipment, these risks are minimised as much as possible.

Our policy

- Our forest school activities aim to cover all aspects of the EYFS, enabling children to explore their abilities through social and emotional development and the image of the child
- The sessions are open to two to four year olds
- The sessions run for a full day from 0930 to 1500 and children are required to bring their own packed lunches and drinks with them, although parents are welcome to collect them early from the wood camp if they choose to
- Forest school takes place in a private woodland in Sherford, by kind permission of the owner, and drop off and pick ups take place at Homefield Farm, Kingsbridge TQ7 2AT

- The sessions are run by a fully qualified forest school leader along with other MGR staff members, in accordance with our staff/children ratios
- The forest leader and all other staff are paediatric first aid qualified suitable for outdoors
- Activities are planned and delivered by our forest school leader and are all risk assessed
- At the start of each day, the forest school leader reminds the children of the risks present around them including the nearby stream, loose overhead branches and poisonous plants
- Clear boundaries are demarcated in the woodland using rope so children know the safe zone they are allowed to play in
- The camp has a parachute shelter to provide a protected area from the weather
- A snack is provided, and during winter months this will include a warm drink
- Children are encouraged to wash hands before eating in a bucket of warm water. Baby wipes can also be used
- Toilet facilities involve wild wees in the woods or a potty for other requirements. All waste is removed from the woods and disposed of appropriately
- Children receive a tool talk before accessing any tools. Children do not access the tool without an adult. Tools are never left unattended
- The forest school leader is responsible for the maintenance and cleanliness of the tools at the end of the session
- Fires shall only be lit by the forest school leader and only in the fire pit area
- The children are taught the procedures of entering the fire pit numerous times before a fire is taken place
- The preschool manager carries a first aid kit with her at all times
- In the case of wasp and bee stings, given that most kids will not have been stung yet and so may not know about allergic reactions, the staff carry piriton but need to have prior parental permission to use it (as part of the Registration Form)

Kit lists

We ask that all children attending forest school arrive with the below clothing.

All seasons:

- Waterproof trousers – even in the summer, these are necessary to protect from stinging nettles and scratches
- Waterproof coat – if not worn, this should be in their bags in case of a change of weather
- One pair of comfortable trousers
- Long sleeves need to be worn at all times as there is a high risk of horsefly bites
- Wellies or sturdy closed toe shoes (which you don't mind getting wet and muddy!)
- Spare trousers & socks in backpacks (more than one set of each plus underwear if toilet training)

In the winter:

- Multiple warm layers, including base thermals
- Warm hat & gloves (at least two pairs of gloves)
- Extra socks
- Warm food and/or hot drink

In the summer:

- Sun hat
- Sun cream and insect repellent, ideally the all-day types, applied before they arrive in the morning and included in their bags for any additional applications required
- Plenty of water

Declaration

Forest school is a wonderful and rewarding environment for children to explore the world, their friendships, their resilience and their emotional and mental wellbeing. It is a core element of the Merry Go Round offering and we hope you and your child are satisfied with the provision and policies we have put in place.

Please sign below to indicate that you have read all of the above information, that you agree to sending your child to forest school with all the required clothing and kit, and that you are comfortable with the level of risk presented by a day spent at forest school.

Parent name _____

Signed _____

_____ Date

Name of manager _____

Signed _____

_____ Date

Date of first review _____