Tendring Primary School

Forest School information for parents and carers

Welcome to Forest school!





Every visit to the Forest will be to the same place, yet the story will always change and be different. The memories and adventures that take place in Forest School will always be enjoyed. In Forest school all children are given the opportunity to access, experience and enjoy learning while being in the outdoor environment.

What is Forest School?



Forest School is a method of working outdoors, using the natural environment to promote social and emotional development. It is an inspirational process that offers all learners regular opportunities to develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees. These learning experiences also help to develop communication and practical skills, as well as a greater understanding of the environment.

What happens during Forest School?



Each session begins around the Fire Circle, where we talk through the safety rules for working outdoors, and about respecting each other and the outdoor environment. We always offer activities that are linked to the Wild Passport skills we are working on. Activities are tailored to the skill level appropriate for individual children, and children move through the levels at their own pace.

What is the Wild Passport?





A structured outdoor learning curriculum that supports the development of bushcraft, nature, and outdoor learning skills. Children develop skills across five strands every year with each strand being a focus for about eight weeks.

- **Ropework** – knot tying, lashings and practical applications.
- **Shelter** – building and evaluating a range of different shelters.
- **Fire** – understanding safety, lighting and maintaining fires, and cooking.
- **Nature** – identification of plants, trees, wildlife and natural habitats.
- **Woodcraft** – safe tool use, whittling and woodworking.



The programme follows a clear skills progression model for each strand:

1. **Beginner**
2. **Advanced Beginner**
3. **Intermediate**
4. **Proficient**
5. **Expert**







Every week – Continuous provision



Children can also choose to create their own activities using the equipment available and adults guide and help children develop these ideas while encouraging then to apply skills they have been learning as part of the Wild Passport. We always have ropes, tarpaulins, hand puppets, mud kitchen and bug hunting equipment available for children to use.

What about break times?



If they are outside during the morning, children take their snack and water bottle out to the session with them. Hand washing is available out in the Forest and although they stay in the Forest, they have their snack at their usual breaktime. This is can be taken sitting around the fire circle, or in their own shelter if they have built one. School snacks are available for KS1.

If it is cold or raining will Forest School still take place?

Forest School takes place in all seasons and in all but very extreme weather conditions. In very cold or wet weather a session may be adapted and shortened, depending on the needs of the children. However, we are very fortunate in having a parachute over our fire circle and a small wooden shelter, both of which help in bad weather.

Clothing – A detailed guide

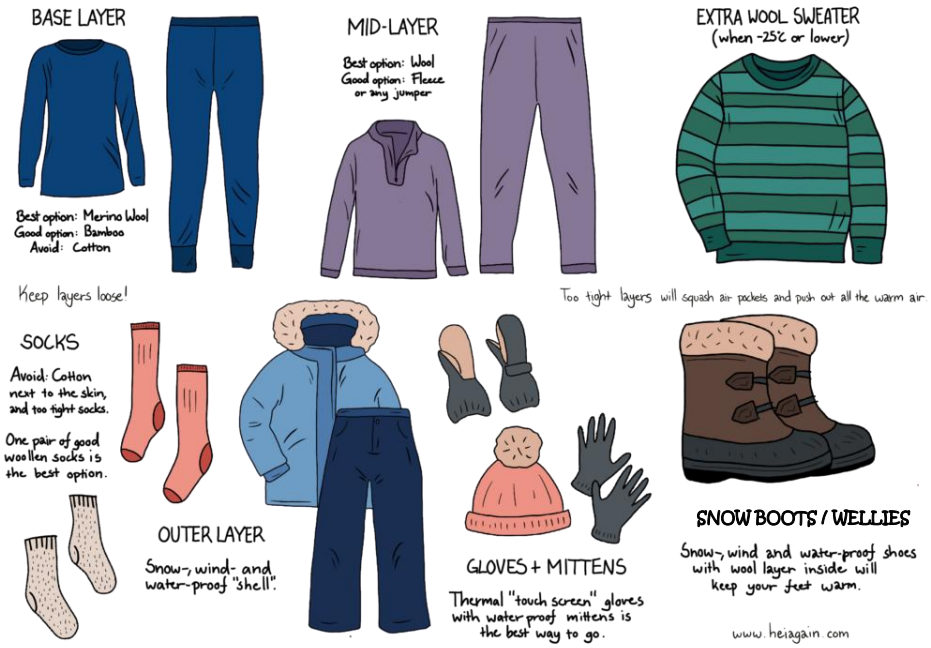
The children take part in Forest School every week in all weathers (except high winds and during lightning storms).

To ensure your child stays safe and comfortable, please ensure that they have the correct clothing.

- **Waterproof coat with a hood —** this is all year round as children may be taking part in water play. It also gets the children into a good habit of having the right kit for being in the outdoors and is for consistency.
- **Waterproof trousers** or all-in-one waterproofs. A padded snowsuit can be useful in the winter.
- **Wellington boots** — to remain in school as they can be used for outdoor lessons as well as Forest School.
- **Long sleeved t-shirt and long trousers** - this is all year round and protects against insect bites, scratches from brambles and stings from nettles. In warmer months, children may come into school in shorts and t-shirts, but must be covered when in the forest.
- **Warm layers** - if children get warm, they can remove a layer, if they get cold, they can add one.
- **Gloves (ideally waterproof), hat and neck gaiter/scarf** - in cold weather. A **neck gaiter** is more comfortable and easier to manage than a scarf when taking part in activities.
- **Spare socks** in case they get wet during the session.
- **Sun hat, sun cream and insect repellent** applied before school in warmer weather.

All clothing should be named

Dressing in colder weather – we can help children in school with this if needed:



Base layer — Tuck in base layers (e.g. vests, thermal tops/trousers) to stop drafts reaching the skin.

Add **mid layers** – e.g. jogging bottoms, leggings or trousers (jeans get heavy and uncomfortable if damp). Tuck trouser legs into socks to reduce the likelihood of socks slipping and avoid lumps that make boots uncomfortable. In very cold weather two pairs of socks or thermal socks are advised.

Then add a **waterproof layer** - e.g. waterproof trousers or dungarees and a waterproof coat. If there is enough room tuck mid layer into waterproof trousers or dungarees to stop drafts.

Then add **wellies**. When children come to school in their Forest School clothes, they should wear indoor shoes and ***must*** change these into wellies before their session. ***This ensures we can keep the school as clean as possible, especially when the forest is damp and muddy.***

Finally, **hats and gloves**.

Please bear in mind that sending children in fashion clothes will not keep them warm and these clothes will get ruined. We really want children to be excited and have fun at Forest School and not feel cold and miserable!

We make sure all children are wearing the correct clothing before we go outside.

We do have a limited selection of spare waterproof clothing and wellies in school that children can borrow if they forget their own. If your child has grown out of any of their forest school outerwear and you would like to donate it for spares, we are happy to take them!