



Picknalls First School

Forest School Curriculum Statement 2022-2023



Intent

Forest School is a unique method of outdoor learning. At Picknalls First School our aim is to encourage and inspire children through positive outdoor experiences. Children will have the opportunity to learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and most importantly to use their own initiative to solve problems and co-operate with others. During these sessions the children will use full sized tools, play, learn boundaries of behaviour; both physical and social, establish and grow in confidence, self-esteem and become self-motivated.

Implementation

We aim to give all children a collective insight into the ethos of Forest School. Forest School builds on a child's innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves. The Forest school learning environment provides opportunities for children to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, to form positive relationships with others, to develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others, to learn to cooperate and work with their peers and adults and to develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety.

Forest School is about exploring and experiencing the natural world through practical activities. The children go out in all weathers, all year round, exploring and learning from the seasons and environment changes. Appropriate clothing will be worn at all times. During high winds (above 25mph) it may be considered unsafe to go into the woods and the woods closed to ensure the safety of all.






The children's interests along with the varied natural resources in our woodland are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development.

One of the principles of Forest School is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. The children are taught about respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both the children and adults are encouraged to respect their environment and to be aware of conservation issues of the wild area around them.

Encouraging children to care for the environment is an essential part of Forest School. In order to encourage the children to look after the site we will always leave it tidy and never damage anything growing in it. We will only collect things that are on the ground and leave the area as we found it when we leave. The staff will monitor the site so that it does not become overused.

Impact

A successful Forest school allows children to achieve/experience the following:

-  Grow in confidence as a result of the freedom, time and space they are given in their learning. This allows them to demonstrate independence at each individual child's rate.
-  Activities such as sharing tools and participating in play help teach the children to work together as a group, which strengthens their bonds and social skills.
-  The sensory experiences provided by Forest School helps prompt language development. Improving communication skills has a positive effect on a child's self-esteem and is a crucial part of their development.
-  High levels of interest lead to high levels of attention. Spending time in the woodland is exciting for a child. It tends to fascinate them which develops a strong will to participate and concentrate over long periods of time.
-  The increase in outdoor activity has a positive physical impact. Not only does the development of physical stamina improve but also gross and fine motor skills.

- 🌳 Children develop an interest in the great outdoors and respect for the environment. Encouraging children to develop a relationship with the natural world will help in protecting the environment for generations to come.

Forest School isn't just beneficial to children it is also beneficial to teachers. Observing their class in a different setting allows them to gain a new perspective and understanding of their class.

When children really engage with Forest School they will take their experiences home to share with friends and family. This will often encourage families to visit their local woodlands more frequently.

Taking children outside of the classroom removes the pressures of academia and allows them to play to their strengths.

Next Steps

- 🌳 A Jones and V Goodwin to undertake Level 3 outdoor first aid during 2022-2023
- 🌳 LC, VG and SF to complete Level 1 Forest School by Christmas 2022
- 🌳 VG to consider Level 3 training
- 🌳 Work towards establishing a full day Forest School session for Nursery children
- 🌳 Participate in November and May National outdoor learning days

Written by Mrs Jones
Forest School Lead

