

What is Forest School

Forest School is an inspirational process that offers children opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self-esteem, through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland environment.

Forest School develops children's skills and confidence in the following areas:

- Physical: fine and gross motor skills and balance
- Emotional: empathy, self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation and social skills
- Social: working in a group and sharing ideas with others
- Intellectual: creativity, imagination, problem solving, spatial awareness, logic and making links
- Communication: listening skills, nonverbal creativity, following instructions and speaking in a group

Benefits of Forest School

Children learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and most importantly, to use their initiative to solve problems and co-operate with others.

Stephens House & Gardens has 10 acres of gardens with over 631 trees. The gardens are also home to a rare species of beetle, the Stag Beetle, which lives in an enclosed and protected habitat. We have an outdoor learning area specifically designed for Forest School, a magical fairy circle and a pond dipping platform, which makes Stephens house a brilliant location for Forest School.

The Forest School Leader is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the group and risk assesses the site, daily conditions and all activities before and during the session.

The Forest School Leader is Rachel Lederman a student Level 3 Forest School practitioner. Rachel Lederman has a CHACHE Course Level 3, Diploma in Child Care and Education. She also has a Childhood studies BA. and is fully DBS and has a ITC Outdoor First Aider.

What to Wear to Forest School and Bring.

A part of the ethos of forest school is "There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing". The idea is that if sufficient, comfortable and appropriate clothing is provided, all children can enjoy the forest school experience in all weathers. The only exception to this is high winds. **What to wear:**

- Wellington boots or walking boots
- Long trousers (no Shorts)
- Long sleeved top
- Layers of clothing appropriate to the temperature and the season
- Waterproof trousers.
- Hat (for sun or warmth depending on the season) and (preferably waterproof) gloves.
- Sun cream
- Please also provide a Snack. **No nuts please.**

Clothes should be old or clothes that parents/guardians do not mind getting dirty. **They will get dirty.**

In summer, it is recommended to wear long trousers and long sleeved tops because it is cooler under the trees and they help to protect from insect bites and scratches.

We will provide all other equipment such as tools, tarps etc.

Forest School Rules

- We do not eat anything we find.
- Our hands must be kept out of mouths during Forest School.
- We must stay within the boundary markers when at our special areas.
- Children must respond to our call back process “123 where are you”.
- Children Must respect the gardens and leave it how they found it.

Behaviour policy

We do expect children to behave differently outside compared to inside, however it is our responsibility to ensure all children feel safe, respected and valued. If a child's behaviour puts themselves or other children at risk, we will ask them to stop, if the behaviour does not stop, we will call parents to collect their child. We expect the children to follow the Forest School rules and behave accordingly. We expect children to respect the plants and animals and help us to look after the wildlife and our special site. Forest School will not tolerate bullying of any kind.

First aid and emergency procedure

The Forest School Leader is an ITC trained outdoor first aider and will carry the first aid kit and be primarily responsible for administering first aid. The Forest School leader also carries a radio to contact the front desk staff if further help or an ambulance is required. In the event of a serious accident an ambulance will be called, the Forest School Leader will remain with the casualty and the volunteer helpers will escort the remainder of the group back to the main building.

Stephens House and Gardens Education Service has a generic risk assessment which is available on request.

Please note once you have booked your place at Forest School Mornings you will be sent a consent form, which you will need to complete and return. Please note: if the consent forms are not returned by the date stated in the email your child will not be allowed to take part in the session.

Confidentiality

Information on consent forms are treated confidentially and kept securely between Forest School sessions. Any information given on a child will be kept confidential unless the information conflicts with safeguarding procedures.

If you have any questions please email Rachel learn@stephenshouseandgardens.com

