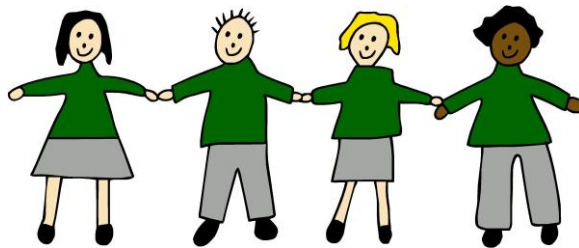


Dovers Green Forest School



*Information for parents
and carers*

About Forest School



Forest School is an idea which was developed in Denmark in the 1950's. It is an outdoor classroom, where children can explore and find out about the natural environment. Forest School is a holistic approach to learning and gives children opportunities to develop independence, confidence, build self-esteem, develop social interactions and work collaboratively together. Through a range of activities, the children use taught skills to problem solve and risk take in a safe environment.



Dovers Green Forest School



At Dovers Green, our Forest School takes place in the wooded area that runs adjacent to Lonesome Lane. There is a Base Camp, where the children start and finish their session and gather together to share their learning. It is a short walk away from the main building along paved paths.

All of the children will have access to this outside classroom at least once a week. These sessions will run throughout the year, with the exception of the first half of the Spring term, where the land is left to rest and recover from the winter. We do not do Forest School in high winds or during a thunderstorm. The sessions are uninterrupted and longer than usual, so that the children can explore their natural environment and learn at their own rate.

Before each session, the Forest School Leader will complete a safety sweep of the area. This information is then shared with both children and adults back in class, making them aware of the safety that is needed for themselves and others.



The excitement of Forest School and the active learning experience for all the children begins as soon as they leave the classroom. The walk to Forest School allows the children to discuss with each other what they see and hear on the way, what they might explore at Forest School and a time to reflect or contemplate the awe and wonder of their natural surroundings.



The rules of Forest School are reinforced at every session. There is an expectation that there will be a high standard of behaviour, a respect for one another and the environment and these values are reinforced through the Forest School approach.

At the beginning of each Forest School session, the Leader recaps on previous learning with the children and introduces a new learning opportunity, giving guidance about how they can succeed. The children can then use previously taught skills and apply them in independently chosen activities. The children are taught skills such as leaf, tree and minibeast identification, how to tie knots and other joining techniques, so that they can build dens. They will also learn how to use tools safely.



The adults are on hand to encourage active learning and participation, supporting the children in their interests. At Base Camp, a range of resources are available for the children to use, such as flora and fauna identification books, magnifying glasses and digital recording equipment.

During, and at the end of the Forest School session, everyone returns to Base Camp to talk about their learning at Forest School.



Rules for Dovers Green Forest School

We want the children to explore the environment of our Forest School and most of all, to have fun! These rules will enable children to be safe, as well as taking care of our Forest School area.

Remember

- + No pick, No lick!
- + Always stay within the boundaries
*'We don't go over it,
We don't go under it,
We don't go through it!'*
- + Always wear appropriate clothing.
- + The whistle, followed by '1, 2, 3 base camp!' means that we must return to Base Camp immediately.
- + We must always hold sticks safely by our sides with our thumbs on the top.
- + We must always walk to and from Forest School and in the woodland area.
- + We must always walk around the edge of Base Camp and never through the centre.
- + We always leave Forest School as we found it.

The Countryside Code

We also teach children the Countryside Code to help us learn how to respect, protect and enjoy our countryside.



- + Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- + Leave gates and property as you find them
- + Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- + Keep dogs under close control
- + Consider other people

What to Wear

For their Forest School session, the children will wear waterproof trousers, a waterproof jacket and wellies. We are able to provide these, but if they can be sent in from home, even better!

Please ensure that your child has appropriate clothing for the time of year.....a warm coat, hat, scarf, gloves during cold weather, and a sun hat to protect them in the summer.



