

The intent of Forest School is to support children's social development and emotional well-being through regular, child-led learning experiences in a natural outdoor environment. Forest School provides a nurturing space where children can build positive relationships, develop communication skills and learn to work cooperatively with others through shared challenges and play. By giving children time, space and autonomy, Forest School enables them to express emotions, manage risks, build self-confidence and develop resilience at their own pace. The supportive, non-judgemental environment encourages children to feel safe, valued and listened to, promoting self-regulation and emotional literacy. Through meaningful interactions with peers, adults and nature, Forest School helps children develop empathy, respect and a strong sense of belonging, supporting their overall mental health and well-being alongside personal and social growth.

FOREST SCHOOL PROGRESSION PLANNING

Forest School within a primary school setting is a planned approach to learning that places child-led exploration at the heart of experiences in a natural outdoor environment. The core principle of Forest School is that children learn most effectively when they are given the freedom to follow their own interests, make choices and take ownership of their learning. Through regular sessions led by trained practitioners, children are supported to initiate activities, ask questions, take appropriate risks and solve problems independently or collaboratively. The adult role is facilitative rather than directive, allowing learning to develop organically while ensuring safety through clear boundaries and risk assessment. Child-led activities enable children to build confidence, resilience, creativity and self-regulation, while practitioners observe, reflect and respond to individual needs to plan meaningful next steps. This approach supports holistic development and well-being, with curriculum links emerging naturally from children's interests, ensuring learning remains engaging, inclusive and purposeful.

	Building, problem solving and team work	Cooking/ fire	Art	Tools	Science/ nature/ environment	Physical	
Pre school	Dressing correctly Team games Noughts and crosses Using shelters	Fire safety- fire circle rules Engaging in fire based activities Using fire to help prepare foods/ drinks – smores. Beginning to engage in 1:1 cooking on fire.	Transient art using natural materials Mud painting Threading materials	Introduction to basic tools. Tool safety Mallets, trowels , spades.	Observations about the world around them. Talking about the natural world. Observations on plants and animals Show concern for living things.	Push, pull. Climbing Balancing Ladders Swings Slack line	
Reception	Dressing correctly, and with increasing independence. Team games Shelter building- building with support.	Fire safety – fire circle rules. Using the fire circle to stay warm. Engaging in fire based activities. Cooking different things on the fire-	Clay Mud painting Tree cookies Weaving Pictures with leaves	Introduction to basic tools. Tool safety Mallets, trowels , spades. Hammer & nails	Observations about the world around them. Talking about the natural world. Observations on plants and animals Show concern for living things.	Push, pull. Climbing Balancing Ladders Swings Slack line Tree climbing Water butts Carrying & lifting	

		smores/ popcorn/ milk/ bananas.	Use of own ideas.	Bow saw	Similarities, differences, patterns and change. Seasons Observations of season change. Observations- smoke, heat, natural materials.		
Year 1	Shelter building – building with support Mini den building in pairs for animals / fairies Simple knots such as but not limited to - Clove Hitch	Use of flints and steels to attempt to light their own fire using different materials. Independent toasting of marshmallows/dampa bread Try different types of cooked food on the fire (smores, doughnuts, dampa	Jewellery making with elder beads and threading Transient art using natural materials found in the environment Stick wands Simple musical instruments	Hammer and nails to create disc art Introductory to knife safety and skills (simple whittling to make their own skewer or arrow) Bow sawto cut their own discs	Begin to identify stinging nettles and other dangerous plants independently Deeper knowledge of what plants need to grow	Push, pull, climbing, balancing, ladders, swings, slack line, ladder bridge	

	- Half Hitch - Timber Hitch Use of directional language and simple compass coordinates (NESW) Mud Cafe, Shop etc	bread, popcorn,hot dogs) etc	Hapazome God's eyes Weaving natural materials on a frame Wooden disc decorations Tree spirits (using clay) Clay animals Cone Bumble Bees Bark rubbing Christmas decorations	Palm drill to make decorations and jewelllery	Name the seasons and recognise which season we are in and what it's main features are Notice changes to area around them. Notice wildlife and plants and ask questions about their environment Seed Bombs Planting of seeds Bird feeders Explore different habitats and environments Make frost		
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Assessment:

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