

# What is Forest School?

What is Forest School? Forest School is an inspirational process, which offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees. Forest School is not simply an outside classroom or nature lesson. It is an approach to learning, which compliments and works within the wider world of outdoor education. Forest School arrived in the UK in its current form from Scandinavia in the early 1990s. Its ethos has been developed over many years and is shared by thousands of trained practitioners across the UK and beyond.



# What happens in a Forest School session?

Children are not taught. They are encouraged to find things out for themselves and learn from their own experiences, rather than being given a set of instructions to follow. This may involve children working alone but, more often than not, will involve children working as a team and feeling comfortable with asking for and offering help and learning how to cope and move on from setbacks or disagreements with others. Activities will be provided during a Forest School session but the emphasis is always on the children taking the lead and choosing what they want to do. Activities range from den building and campfires to hammocks and rope swings, from flora and fauna ID to storytelling and from bug hotels to simply spending some quiet time alone.



# How do children learn at Forest School?

Forest school takes a holistic approach to learning. This means developing the whole person alongside new skills, rather than learning new skills in isolation. Holistic learning seeks to address all the needs of the child: SPICE – Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Creative, Emotional



For example, in building a den, children are learning many things, some more obvious than others:

- Learning a new skill
- Hands on approach
- A sense of achievement
- Understanding how you might use your new skills
- Sharing the new skill with a friend
- Taking a risk
- Working as a team