



Rotherhithe Primary  
Rotherhithe New Road  
London  
SE16 2PL

Tel: 0207 2371586  
Fax: 0207 2373653  
Email: [office@rotherhithe.southwark.sch.uk](mailto:office@rotherhithe.southwark.sch.uk)

Courageous  
Caring  
Ambitious  
Resilient  
Empathetic

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## Forest school at Rotherhithe school and children centre

### What is Forest school?

A Forest School is a secure area of woodland, which acts as an outdoor classroom where children can explore, investigate and discover the natural environment. Forest School provides an excellent opportunity to bring learning to life, allowing the children to explore and learn in a constructive way. This inspirational process increases self-confidence, self-esteem, improves individuals' ability to work co-operatively and counters a lack of motivation and negative attitude towards learning, while offering the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.

We make the most of the unique resources available by using lots of natural materials, working (with appropriate levels of adult support) with tools and fires, and encouraging high levels of independence and team work. Forest School sessions will follow a pattern that the children will feel comfortable with. We will begin with a getting to know the woodland area, our boundaries and what keeps us safe. Typically we will introduce two new activities for each forest visit. They will range from going on a bug hunt, making a forest friend from the natural resources available, testing the strength of leaves, to making dens ...the forest's our oyster! Of course we will break for a well-earned outdoor snack and hot drink made with our own storm kettles.

### Principles:

### Why we do it?

Forest school approach has several aims:

- To support and improve children's self esteem
- To support and improve children's emotional development including behaviour.
- To develop communication
- To work cooperatively
- To build a closer relationship with and better understanding of the outdoors
- To develop a range of skills and attitudes that support children's wellbeing and enhance their readiness to learn. These may include; developing the ability to value, respect, and to view the world with awe and wonder.



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- To enable these skills to be transferable to the classroom

## Purposes: How we do it:

We aim to offer the forest school experience to all children in the early years and key stage one. However, when resources do not allow this children will be chosen through the usual systems for assessment in the early years that observe the whole child and their needs and well-being as well as particular achievements. Children will be chosen for the forest school experience if it is felt it would benefit their self-esteem and confidence and would enhance their learning and achievement.

The forest school experience is:

- Groups of six children
- once per week
- for six weeks
- To a local open space.
- With trained adults
- Planned activities with a flexible approach
- Child centred learning
- FUN

Forest school process	Actions/outputs		outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AM and pm sessions</li> <li>• Go to base camp.</li> <li>• Establish safety routines</li> <li>• Get ready/appropriate clothing and equipment</li> <li>• Sharing tools and equipment</li> <li>• Sharing tasks</li> <li>• Taking part when</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaining experience of working in a team</li> <li>• Helping others and sharing tasks and tools</li> <li>• Building trust amongst peers and towards adults</li> <li>• Understanding and employing safety routines</li> <li>• Seeing the importance of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on skills and confidence over time</li> <li>• Reflecting on achievements</li> <li>• Developing play skills</li> <li>• Fun fun fun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are more confident of their own abilities</li> <li>• Children are willing to have a go</li> <li>• Children speak and listen in turn</li> <li>• Children can work together and appreciate one another</li> <li>• Children are more confident to persevere with</li> </ul>



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<p>ready</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having fun</li> <li>• Wallowing in ideas</li> <li>• Recording the experience through ICT and observation</li> <li>• Coming back to base camp</li> <li>• Reviewing and planning together</li> </ul>	<p>listening to instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoyment: Feeling free and relaxed</li> <li>• Expressing emotion and imagination</li> </ul>		<p>challenging tasks</p>
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Sessions will be carried out with two members of staff one of which will be a trained forest school leader and one will be a first aider.

Risk assessments will be carried out in advance of the visits and daily additional risk assessments will be carried out before the start of a session.

Safety will be discussed with the children at base camp at the start of every session.

Planning for the next session will take place at the end of each session with the children's input. This will ensure that the individual children's needs are met and that the planning is flexible and can follow children's interests.

Base camp will be situated in a mobile unit in the park where the equipment will be stored.

## Planned activities could include:

- Exploring nature and the seasons
- Cooking in the outdoors
- Making things with wood, leaves and other found and natural materials
- Pond dipping
- Building fires
- Climbing trees
- Bird watching
- Naming trees
- Finding bugs



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- Building
- Re-enacting stories in the outdoors
- Whittling wood
- Painting with mud

dens

## Health and Safety Considerations

### **Please refer to school's Health and Safety policy and the school safeguarding policy.**

The health and safety of the adults and children is paramount at all times throughout any activity and session. Safe practice is reinforced through regular reminders. The Forest School programme provides children with opportunities to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own learning. Whilst being independent in their learning, they will develop early risk assessment strategies and understand that their actions have consequences.

The Forest School Leader will carry out risk assessments at the beginning of each term which will take account of seasonal change. In addition a daily risk assessment will be undertaken before each forest school session.

## Roles and responsibilities:

### **Forest School Leader:**

Will have a level 3 Forest School Leader qualification, CRB enhanced disclosure and an outdoor first aid qualification.

Forest School Leader will have the overall responsibility for:

- Risk assessments for each session, pre-visit site checks and continuous safety monitoring.
- Planning for sessions, differentiation for individual children's needs.
- Ensuring necessary equipment is taken into woodland.
- Administration of first aid and first aid kit.
- Supervision of tools use, cleaning and storing.
- Organising emergency procedures.



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Staff/ students / volunteers: will model good practice throughout the session, carry out delegated roles and responsibilities, extend children's learning where appropriate by asking extending questions, support children to manage their own risk, remind children of rules and boundaries, be aware of dangers within Forest School and monitor levels of safety at all times, support the Forest School leader to run the sessions.

## Monitoring of the Forest school policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or before should any incidents arise or laws and policies change.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Chair of Governors** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Head teacher** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Designated Person** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date**