

## Mountnessing Primary School Forest School

Forest School is a child-centred, inspirational, learning process that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term program that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting.

The process helps and facilitates more than knowledge-gathering, it supports learners to develop socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually. It creates a safe, non-judgemental nurturing environment for learners to experiment.

Forest School inspires a deep and meaningful connection to the world and an understanding of how a learner fits within it. Our approach to risk means that learners constantly expand on their abilities by solving real-world issues, building self-belief and resilience. We believe that risk is more than just potential for physical harm. There are risks in everything we do, and we grow by overcoming them. Forest School helps children to become, healthy, resilient, creative and independent learners.

We offer the children at Mountnessing Primary School the opportunity to develop a life-long love and understanding of the natural environment, inspiring them to be the future caretakers of the world.

What to wear?

Winter (Cold sessions)

- A vest / skins underneath their clothes. The closer the clothing is to your body the warmer you are. Layers are good!
- Long sleeved top / jumper
- Full length trousers / jogging bottoms
- Welly boots/warm snow boots (during the winter)
- Warm socks and a spare pair for layering or if they get wet.
- Gloves, snood / scarf and a woolly hat (during cold sessions)

Summer (Warm sessions)

- Long sleeved top
- Full length trousers / skins / leggings / light jogging bottoms
- Sun hat / cap
- Sun cream

The school provide waterproof suits to infant classes but these are mostly for protection and to keep them dry rather than for warmth.

We work on the principles that “ there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing” although session times will be adjusted during cold weather if we need be.

### Confidence

Giving children the freedom, time and space, to learn, grow and demonstrate independence.

### Knowledge and understanding

A respect for the environment is developed through inspiring 'awe and wonder' in the natural world. Children naturally take an interest in flora and fauna identification and this knowledge is retained.

### Social skills

Giving the children an awareness of the consequences of their actions on other people, supporting their ability to work co-operatively with others.

### Physical skills

Children develop physical stamina and their gross motor skills through free and easy movement round the Forest School site. They developed fine motor skills through opportunities in wild crafting, and making objects and structures.

### Language and communication

Children are inspired by visual and sensory experience enhancing their written and spoken language.

### Motivation and concentration

Children are keen to participate in exploratory learning and play opportunities as well as having time and space to focus on specific tasks for extended periods of time.

### Stress relief

Being outside in a natural environment has been shown to relieve stress by reducing the levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, in the brain. Children are increasingly assaulted by stressful environments (media, increasing emphasis on targets and testing, screen time, ever busier urban environments), being out in the woods gives them a much needed time to relax, enjoy themselves and have some stress free time.



### Benefits of using tools and fire

Children will be introduced to tools and fire in a controlled and progressive way so that they learn about managing risk for themselves. They will learn to ensure the safety of both themselves and for others by learning simple safety procedures under the close supervision of the forest school leader. They will benefit from improved fine and gross motor skills, confidence from achieving something from using tools, communication skills, teamwork, coordination and designing and planning skills.

