



Forest School – Subject on a page

Why we teach it

“Forest School is an inspirational process that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self-esteem, through hands on learning experiences in a local woodland or natural environment with trees

Forest School is a specialised approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland learning.” *Forest School Association Ethos and Definition*

The Six Forest School Principles

Principle 1: Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

Principle 2: Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

Principle 4: Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Principle 5: Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

Principle 6: Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

At St William of Perth we have focused on developing the following areas of Forest School:

- Children experience a block (6 weeks) of Forest School sessions each academic year (where possible).
- A collaborative approach between children and adults allows for progression in learning.
- Behavioural and physical boundaries are established during the first session which set the pace for the remainder of the sessions.
- Our Forest School site matches the needs of our children and our programme of learning. It provides space and an environment for all learners to explore and discover.
- The Forest School Lead consistently monitors the ecological impact of the site, involving children where possible.
- We use natural resources for inspiration, which enable imagination and encourage intrinsic motivation. This encourages all children to develop a personal relationship with nature.
- Children have opportunities to build on their innate motivation, positive attitudes and interests.
- Detailed risk assessments for every tool and activity have been completed to reflect the developmental stage of the learner.
- The Forest School Lead is completing the Level 3 qualification and holds the necessary First Aid requirements to run sessions.
- Play and choice are an integral part of the Forest School learning process. Play is vital for learning and development at Forest School for all ages.
- Children are encouraged to reflect at the end of each session to understand their achievements, develop emotional intelligence and plan future sessions.
- Sessions aim to develop the physical, social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional and spiritual aspects of each learner.

INTENT - What we are teaching

We use the six Forest Principles stated above to underpin the delivery of Forest School sessions. We use ‘in the moment’ planning where we take the lead from the children. This includes their emotional maturity as well as their physical maturity for an activity, such as a campfire and tool work. Initial sessions focus on working with children to develop physical and behavioural boundaries which allow for everyone’s safety and enjoyment at Forest School. An index of skills and experience has been developed for every pupil which demonstrate progression throughout the subject. This allows for a child to work at their own pace during the sessions and gives the adults supporting guidance on how to develop the individual’s learning. It is imperative the index does not become a ‘checklist’ which every child must achieve. It is to be used as guidance for adults working in the Forest School.

IMPLEMENTATION - How we teach it

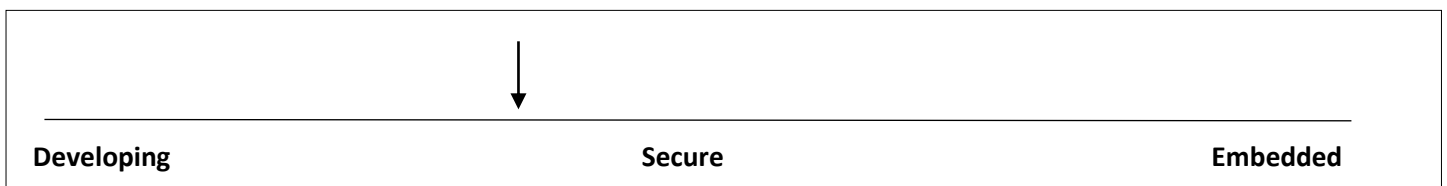
- All pupils (YR-6) have one 6 week block of Forest School every academic year.
- During each block, each class is split into two groups and each group will have a weekly 45 plus minutes session.

- The Forest School Lead will plan for a directed activity each session. This will be based on previous observations and the children's interests.
- Adults will be assigned specific roles dependent on skills. A typical session will involve: 1 adult working at the directed activity, 1 adult observing and supporting in the wooded area and 1 adult observing and supporting in the open areas of the site. *This may vary due to the needs of the pupils.*
- Where possible, over the child's time at St William of Perth, they will experience the Forest School site during each season.
- Photographs and anecdotal observations are made during each session. These are shared with all staff members at the end of the session. The FS Lead uses these and discussions with staff to inform planning for the next session.
- Every child has a 'Forest School Portfolio'. This is where the index of skills and experiences is kept. Photographs and anecdotal observations are kept in here and presented in a scrapbook style. The FS Lead is responsible for updating these.
- At the end of an FS block, the children will have a campfire experience (if appropriate). The class teacher and TA are invited to share the learning experience with their class.
- Regular dialogue with class teacher allows the FS Lead to assist with any cross curricular links which occur during the session block.

IMPACT - What is working

- There is a positive attitude towards Forest School across the whole school community. Parents engage in sessions by interacting with posts on Dojo and sending in correct equipment each week.
- Children enjoy and are positive about coming to Forest School (Pupil Voice surveys before and after session block to restart again to gain further feedback).
- Forest School portfolios have helped to celebrate the learning which takes place at Forest School. They also show progression for all pupils.
- Forest School staff are confident within their roles and, where necessary, take the lead in planning and delivering an activity.

On the scale below rate where you believe this subject currently stands in terms of your overall curriculum offer:



Forest School leader actions and impact

Previous Improvement Actions and Impact	Current Improvement Actions	Future Improvement Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . To develop Forest School Portfolios to showcase children's learning at Forest School and their individual progression and Forest School journey. . KH to successfully complete her pilot programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the site is safe and accessible. • To restart Forest School sessions in the 2022/2023 academic year: Year 1 have completed a block of sessions and Year 2 are going to be given a block of sessions in the Summer term. • KH to successfully complete her Level 3 qualification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . To liaise with Eco Warriors to work together on community projects. . To develop Forest School nurture groups where there is a need. . To add digital cameras to the site to observe night time wildlife and live stream.

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