

Wednesday 8th September 2021

Dear Families and Carers,

At Horsford C of E VA Primary School we believe in providing children with as broad, rich and engaging a curriculum as possible that equips them to develop the skills, respect and understanding to flourish in our world.



As part of this Mrs Nolan, our trained Forest School Leader, takes children from Years one and two into our forest school area for one hour every week, to learn, explore and deepen their understanding of the world around them within our school grounds.



What is 'Forest School'?

There is no formal definition of the forest school philosophy but the concept was developed in Scandinavia, where a strong emphasis was placed on the relationship between children and their wider environment, with nature and its conservation.

Children are encouraged to spend as much time as possible outdoors, to encourage and inspire them through positive experiences. Having the opportunity to explore nature and the outdoors helps children build confidence and self esteem, extend their language and develop creative imagination, using all their senses. A greater appreciation for nature in turn helps them to understand the need to protect it. It also helps children to understand that it provides us all with food, fuel and many other resources.

The natural environment provides a wealth of opportunity for children to expand their learning through multi-sensory exploration, experimentation and adult-supervised play. All promoting group work, communication skills, self-esteem, confidence and decision making. Learning new life skills by revisiting and exploring the same area regularly and focusing on the children's learning needs taking into account their knowledge and stage of development.



What should my child expect at Horsford?

The children in our school can experience this because our forest school area provides a safe outdoor classroom in which they are encouraged to investigate and explore all aspects of the natural world and to respect all living things. The activities that the children undertake link to the national curriculum and are based on their own interests, play ideas and extend their classroom based learning. We also show the children what fun can be derived from the natural resources of a woodland environment.

Forest school has become an important part of our school's outdoor curriculum. The children have been involved in a wide range of activities some of which have included; minibeast hunts, making craft objects using natural resources - sometimes using tools, learning to tie knots, den building, listening to stories around a campfire and cooking on the fire.



How do you ensure my child is safe?

Tool work will only be introduced to children when the forest school leader is confident and when the children are at a stage of development that will enable them to be used safely. The same applies to the introduction of fire. Safety procedures will be practised regularly with the children.



How do you meet Covid-19 safety requirements?

- Children will wash their hands before and after any activities, as would be usual in all circumstances.
- Bins will be available for children to maintain good respiratory hygiene; 'Catch it, bin it, kill it'.



What should my child wear?

We advise that children bring Wellington boots clearly named to keep at school ready for when they take part in forest school. In cold weather please provide hats, gloves and scarves. In summer please remember that hats and sun cream are required for forest school.



What should I do next?

Complete the permission slip attached and return this to their class teacher as soon as possible.

Many thanks,

The KS1 Horsford Team



Please sign below to give consent for your child to take part in our forest school programme.

I give permission for my child to take regular part in a forest school programme held at Horsford primary school (Holt Road site).

- I understand that during forest school my child will be involved in messy activities and that some staining and damage to clothes may occur.
- I understand that forest school will involve an element of risk deemed to be of a reasonable level by the forest school leader. Extensive risk assessments will be carried out by the leader but minor scrapes, cuts and bruises are an unavoidable element of forest school.
- I understand my child may also come into contact with insects and plants that may bite or sting.

Feel free to call school and speak to Rachel Nolan should you have any concerns. A copy of the Forest School Handbook and generic risk assessments can be made available to view upon request.

Child's name _____

Signed _____

Date _____

I give permission for sting cream (Anthisan) to be applied to my child if required.

Child's name _____

Signed _____

Date _____