



# Forest School at KHPA

## **How KHPA teaches forest school...**

Forest School is about children and young people building self-esteem and independence through exploring and experiencing the natural world. The ethos of Forest School allows learners the time and space to develop skills, interests and understanding through practical, hands-on experiences. You can find out more about Forest school from the forest school association website: <http://www.forestschoolassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/>

At KHPA we are running the forest school programme for Nursery, Reception and Year 1 with every child will having the benefit of experiencing 2 units of 6 sessions throughout the year. The children in the 'Heart' will attend forest school each week as an integral part of their curriculum. Each session will build on the skills learned in the previous sessions and children's confidence, independence and love of the great outdoors will develop every week. Sessions will be planned according to the interests of the children and children will be encouraged to guide their own learning and initiate play and exploration themselves.

We are privileged to be able to share our forest school visits between 3 inspiring sites, including Brixworth Country Park woodland, The University of Northampton forest school and Nationwide Pocket Park. The sessions are led by a Level 3 qualified Forest School Leader and supported by KHPA staff and dedicated volunteers. The children travel to and from the sites on our school minibus and wear protective, waterproof warm suits provided by the academy.



Sessions will run by beginning around a 'fire circle' where children are invited to sit together as a group. This is where expectations will be explained and reinforced and activities explained. The fire circle is also somewhere that children are encouraged to listen to each other's ideas and opinions and show respect for peers, adults and their surroundings. We then play a game designed to show children the boundaries of the site and also to teach the children strategies to find help quickly if it is needed and to stay safe in the environment. We then introduce a new activity to the children for them to have a go at as well as bringing other resources that they might like to use. The children are then encouraged to decide for themselves what they would like to do and how they are going to achieve it. The adults in the setting support the children's interest and actively promote their inquisitive nature so that the children really develop their sense of self, independence and well-being. We end the sessions by sitting around the fire circle again, having a drink and a snack and reflecting on the session.



Activities include: Den / shelter building, knots and lashings, making various items from stick and other woodland material, tree climbing, potion making, perfume mixing, tree identification, mini-beast hunting, learning to use tools safely including drills, knives and saws, cooking on a fire.....and many, many more

## **The benefits of teaching Forest School this way...**

At KHPA, we believe that the forest school ethos used alongside our curriculum can work effectively to support the development of our children right from the early years. Through our forest school programme, we will enable children to understand the importance of effective communication, teamwork, listening and risk management. It will enable children to experience a healthy range of emotions through the challenges of social interaction and to build a resilience and understanding of the opinions of other and an opportunity to learn strategies to deal with difficult

situations successfully. These valuable skills can be transferred from forest school into the school and classroom which we hope will create a calmer, more collaborative and respectful learning environment.

## What to expect from Forest School feedback...

Each forest school session is photographed and documented a 'session log' that shows the highlights of each forest school session for every group. These are displayed in the forest school area at KHPA and given to class teachers to add to children's learning records. Each child will receive a certificate at the end of each unit outlining the activities that they have tried and their learning outcomes. They will also receive a huge well done and a sense of pride for their wonderful achievements!



## How we assess the teaching of Forest School...



Each child is assessed every session by the Forest School Leader as to their level of Well-being and Involvement using the Leuven Scale. This is used to ensure children are increasing in their interaction and participation of each session and that they are enjoying taking part. If the levels are low, the Forest School Leader can support children with any issues that may have arisen. Data will be collected and analysed at the end of each unit to ensure that the sessions are benefiting EVERY child, looking closely at our vulnerable groups.

## How we support parents in supporting our method for teaching Forest School...

A forest school guide is available for parents to read, which talks about what forest school is, its benefits and what their children will be doing in their sessions. Regular Twitter posts will show forest school activities and encourage parents to talk and comment on posts. There will be a forest school stand at parents evening where parents will have the chance to come and talk to the Forest school leader about their child and the progress they are making at Forest school.

Parents can support their children by taking them outside! Take advantage of Northamptonshire's fantastic woodlands and parks and have fun with your children! You can have a look at the Woodland Trust's website that has lots of different ideas for things that you can do with free resources that you can use.

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/activities/>

Your child can join the 'Nature Detectives' for £1.50 per month and receive a pack of activities, resources, information and ideas to explore.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/join/form/>

