

Forest School and Garden Ethos and Principles



What are the ethos and principles in our Forest School and Garden?

At Alveley Primary School, we focus on the social, emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual development of our learners. The nurturing environment encourages children to develop a positive relationship with the outdoor, natural world. Our ethos of a Forest School is based on a fundamental respect for children and the encouragement of their curiosity in the world.

Alveley Forest School and Garden believe in:

- A child's right to play.
- A child's right to access the outdoors.
- A child's right to access the natural world.
- A child's right to experience a healthy range of emotions.

Forest Schools aim to build resilience to encourage a learner's creative engagement with other people, their environment, and their own potential. They aim to encourage self-reflection and build strong social and emotional skills that will follow them into adulthood.

Forest Schools have six guiding principles. These principles are approved by the UK Forest School Community. We staff our Forest school with a fully qualified forest school lead.

- A Forest School is a long-term process with regular sessions in a natural environment
- The Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment
- The Forest School should promote the holistic development of all those involved –
- The Forest School should encourage supported risk-taking.
- Forest School practitioners are qualified
- The Forest School should be learner-centered and should create a community for learning and developing

Sessions will always be varied in form and content, as it will be adapted to suit the learner, season, weather and emotions of the group. The everchanging pattern of the natural world will be celebrated, thus making each Forest School session magical and full of exploration and discovery. With every new experience, the participants will be given the opportunity to choose activities, lead their own learning and follow their own interests – making each Forest School encounter all about their discovery.

The direct teaching of the three skill strands: shelter, fire and tools are interwoven with self-discovery and exploration as participants learn to take controlled risks in a safe, non-judgemental, nurturing environment. Activities such as Using tools, learning knots, den building, lighting fires and cooking help participants to become a rounded and independent learner.

Furthermore, endorsing a philosophy whereby learners cherish and appreciate the natural world, helps develop learners, socially, emotionally and spiritually therefore creating a deeper connection to the world. Children are encouraged to work as a team, support and nurture each other's growth and development. Plus, leaders and mentors introduce activities that are pitched at an appropriate level, whilst continually reviewing and reflecting.

At Alveley school we also use our area for our 'Science Garden' and our curriculum is woven with access to use this area regularly and encourage kinaesthetic learning.

Additional benefits of attending a Forest School include:

- Support the delivery of our ambitious and logically sequenced curriculum, through 'real-life' learning and adapting the space to support this ambition.
- Achieve personal and social development.
- Learning about the natural environment.
- Learning problem-solving skills.
- Building positive relationships.
- Improving communication skills.
- Encourages emotional wellbeing.
- Improves the capacity of learning.
- Encourages children to positively impact the environment and respect and care for the natural world.