

Wintringham Primary Academy

Part of The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust
Established in the Queen's Jubilee year 2012

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Dear Parents & Carers

Wintringham - Forest School

We are pleased to offer your child the opportunity to attend a Key Stage 2 Forest School Group. Your child will attend Forest School on a **Wednesday afternoon. Wilson** class will attend for the first half of the Summer Term and **Milne** will attend for the second half of the Summer term.

What is Forest School?

Forest school originated in Scandinavia and was brought to England in the 1990s, initially in a Nursery context. Since then, the concept has spread quickly across the country, with schools being able to gain recognition as a practising 'Forest School'. The overall purpose of Forest School is to raise a child's self-esteem by creating a safe, creative and free environment that encourages children to explore their own capabilities and develop their social and practical skills in a way that utilises and celebrates a connection with nature. It is always a non-judgemental process, where learners feel safe to explore the outdoors, and their own potentials, in a way that they feel most comfortable. A huge element of this process is learning through play and allowing the children to discover the natural world in the way they find most engaging.

At Wintringham, we have identified these aims for our Forest School Programme:

- To challenge ourselves in a safe learning environment
- To develop a curiosity and respect for nature and discover the changes that are always happening around us
- To gain independence and confidence in our own abilities
- To realise our own potentials
- To learn new, practical skills
- To build strong relationships with others
- To become compassionate, empathic individuals who care about others and their own individuality
- To create memorable experiences that will support all areas of development and have an impact beyond the sessions

The current recognised benefits, based on research of children in Forest Schools are raised levels of self-esteem and confidence, an improvement in physical exercise, increased proficiency in social interaction and higher levels of concentration in classes.

What will the sessions look like?

The sessions will be held on the school grounds on a **Wednesday afternoon**. Children will get changed prior to the session into appropriate clothing. The session will always start and end with a group circle where children can get to know each other. Importantly, in these areas of the session children can get involved as

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much or as little as they want to. The idea being that as the sessions go on, children become more confident in talking in front of both their peers and adults.

After group time the session is mostly directed by the children and what they wish to do. There will be a range of resources available and a suggested plan but generally the children can utilise the space and respond to being in nature however they wish. This might be through building dens, bug hunting, knot tying, creative projects and so on. Within Forest School there is also the potential to use a variety of tools including knives and fire lighters (these will only be used when the adults feel a child is ready to do so and risk assessments have been put in place) and will be completed under careful supervision. The possibilities are endless in the woodland, and although there will be a plan for the session, how the children feel on the day and the direction they might choose to go in, could change this. Before we leave the space, we will again come together as a group, say goodbye to the woodland, and transition back into school. The children will then arrive back to the classroom around 3pm ready to end the day on time.

Throughout the sessions all children will be subtly observed. This will not only be to identify gaps in their practical skills and knowledge so we can target individual children and support their learning, but also to inform planning for the next week based on what they have engaged with most, or what they want to know more about.

Please note that children will not miss any of their classroom learning in order to participate in these sessions. Timetables have been arranged to ensure that children involved complete their English and Maths learning in their classes in the morning.

What will they need?

As the programme is run in outdoor space, this means that the children will be spending lots of time outside. It is likely that the activities the children get involved in will mean they may get dirty. In terms of the children getting as much as possible from the experience it is important that they are not in clothes that they are worried about getting dirty, as this can sometimes hold children back and ultimately affect their overall engagement with the activities. Therefore, old clothes are ideal as there is then little concern over their condition and children can just focus on getting stuck in! Long trousers are always recommended for Forest School, as this is an extra layer of protection from things such as scratches, stings or bites as we will be utilising all of the outdoor space.

Suggested clothing list:

Warm, waterproof coat
Long, comfortable trousers
Waterproof Trousers or All in One
Appropriate outdoor footwear (wellies, walking boots, trainers)
Warm socks, Gloves and Hats.

What happens now?

Wilson class will begin on **Wednesday 22nd April 2026** and **Milne** on **Wednesday 3rd June 2026** so please could children have all appropriate clothing in school by then.

If you have any questions about Forest School and your child's involvement, or feel there is any additional information we need to know, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Tracy Bryden
Headteacher
On behalf of Wintringham Primary Academy (part of TDLPT)