



## Ditton Infant School

11<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Dear Parents,

In the next few weeks we will be embarking on a new and exciting project. We are happy to announce that our school is working towards delivering Forest School inspired learning. Mrs Savoury has already begun work on this and we are very keen to develop this further in our school. The letter below outlines what this is and how this will work. Activities will eventually include using tools, lighting fires, cooking and eating wild food, making dens, taking calculated risk and getting muddy. If you want any more information or have any objections to any of these activities, please let the office know and they will arrange Rachel Murray our Forest School Advisor to talk to you. The Forest School Inspired Learning Handbook will be available on the school website.

### **What is Forest School Inspired Learning?**

Forest School is a long-term outdoor programme of activities delivered by trained practitioners within a natural environment and whatever the weather! Our programme will be tailored to meet the needs of the children as they grow in confidence, skills and understanding. The ethos of Forest School allows learners the time and space to develop skills, interests and understanding through child led, practical, hands-on experiences. It also allows practitioners to step back and observe the children in order to then encourage and inspire individuals to achieve through careful scaffolding and facilitating. All staff will use these principles to take children outdoors for regular sessions to enhance their learning.

### **Where will it be taking place?**

The area that we use for our Forest School will be conducted on the school grounds and on occasions in other local outdoor spaces, but we will of course inform you of this in advance. All spaces used for these activities have been risk assessed.

### **Who will be staffing the Forest School?**

Rachel Murray is a Play and Outdoor Education specialist who has been trained in Forest School delivery. She will be training the staff and will be present at the first two sessions for each class. Each session will also be supported by the class teacher and TA.

### **Health and safety.**

The health and safety of all participants is central to everything undertaken within a Forest School inspired Learning Programme. The Forest School operates under the school's Health and Safety policy and policies and procedures regarding safeguarding and confidentiality. Alongside this the following are completed:

- a seasonal and daily risk assessed site;
- risk assessments for activities;
- informed adult helpers;
- first aid and emergency equipment.

Some of the activities the children may participate in are 'higher-risk activities' (such as campfire cooking or tool use). However, these activities are not available to the children until certain behaviours and boundaries are established. Children are encouraged and supported in recognising and managing risk for themselves, through real life situations and experiences.

### **What sort of activities will go on?**

The first sessions will focus on core skills and safety. Activities will increase week on week and may include:

- Games
- Cooking and eating wild food

- Storytelling
- Natural art activities
- Use of tools (if skills and behaviour indicators secured)
- Exploring
- Nature watching and bug hunting
- Climbing, rolling
- Practical woodland skills (e.g. Willow weaving)
- Building dens
- Time to be quiet, reflect or talk

### **What benefits will my child get from participating in this kind of learning?**

This style of learning supports the holistic development of the child:

- Health and fitness - Being active in an outdoor, natural environment.
- Increased emotional wellbeing - just being among trees has been shown to have a real and positive effect.
- Social development - Communicating, sharing, negotiating and Problem solving. Increased confidence.
- Skills development - Developing fine and gross motor skills and coordination for real purposes.
- Gaining knowledge and understanding - Multi-sensory, real-life learning, learning to care for our green spaces and wildlife.
- Individualised learning - Careful observation allows adults to tailor support to children's own interests and stage of development.
- Curriculum Links - it supports many areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, National Curriculum and the 'Every Child Matters' agenda.

### **When will it be taking place and how should the children be dressed?**

Initially it will happen Thursdays on a rota basis:

14.3.19	10-11.45am YrR (Gold)	1-2.45pm YrR (Silver)
21.3.19	10-11.45am Yr1 (Blue)	1-2.45pm Yr1 (Purple)
28.3.19	10-11.45am Yr2 (Red)	1-2.45pm Yr2 (Yellow)
25.4.19	10-11.45am YrR (Gold)	1-2.45pm YrR (Silver)
02.5.19	10-11.45am Yr1 (Blue)	1-2.45pm Yr1 (Purple)
09.5.19	10-11.45am Yr2 (Red)	1-2.45pm Yr2 (Yellow)

Please make sure that your child has appropriate clothing for the weather for example wellingtons in the wet or stout trainers in the dry. We suggest a pair of jogging bottoms and a long sleeved top as a base layer adding layers according to the weather. Please ensure your child has a waterproof coat with them just in case there is rain.

If your child's class has been allocated a morning Forest session, please send you child in wearing clothing suitable for the weather which you don't mind them getting dirty and their uniform in a named plastic bag with a towel and spare pants and socks (yes sometimes they get that muddy!)

If your child's class has been allocated an afternoon session, please send their Forest kit into school in a named bag and we will get them changed at lunchtime.

### **Suggested Summer Kit List**

Socks

T shirt

Light long trousers (shorts are permitted in hot weather but be advised that there are nettles and brambles on site)

Trainers or walking boots/shoes

Light waterproof jacket in case of showers

### **Suggested Winter Kit List**

2 pairs socks

Vest or t shirt or skins top

Long sleeved top

Trousers

Tights, sports skins, long johns or leggings for underneath

Fleece /jumper

Warm waterproof coat or warm coat and waterproof coat over the top

Waterproof trousers/salopettes (or a waterproof all in one)

Wellies

Hat

Gloves

### **How can I help?**

- Put the dates for Forest School on your fridge/in your calendar/on your notice board
- Make sure your child has the right clothing for the weather
- Listen to what your child is learning and feedback to us if you would like
- Support forest school by supplying resources

### **What resources can I donate?**

- Pallets
- Light coloured sheets/material
- Access to wood we can use such as elder or hazel
- Tools including bow saws, loppers, secateurs
- Metal or plastic cooking bowls
- Flasks
- Wool, Ribbon, feathers
- Old kitchen equipment, saucepans, wooden spoon etc

If you have any questions or queries, please just ask.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs C Lewer  
Headteacher