

Forest School at Milwards

FAQ's for parents



What is Forest School?

Forest School is a nature-based community where trained practitioners nurture and support learner-led exploration and discovery. The concept originated in Scandinavia and over the last 30 years spread across the continent with now thousands of Forest Schools running across the country. In 2011, the Forest School community agreed on six principles, which we adopt at the Milwards Forest School:

- 1. Forest School is a long-term process.**
- 2. Forest School takes place in a natural wooded environment.**
- 3. Forest School aims to promote holistic development.**
- 4. Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks.**
- 5. Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners.**
- 6. Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes.**

To find out more about the Forest School principals, visit the Forest School association website: <https://forestschoolassociation.org>

What will my child be doing during Forest School sessions?

During Forest School sessions, your child will develop their knowledge of and relationship with the outdoors. Your child will play in and explore the woodland at their own pace. Throughout their time at Forest School, your child will be invited to participate in several activities including den building, woodcraft, tree climbing, mini beast hunting, pond dipping, gardening, arts and crafts, foraging and cooking, fire safety and many more.

When does Forest School take place?

Forest School sessions take place every Friday. The morning session runs from 9:15am – 11:45pm and the afternoon session runs from 12:45 – 3:15, giving 2 hours and 30 minutes for each session. Forest School takes place throughout the school year during all seasons and weathers, with exception to any unsafe weathers (as stated on our risk assessments).

When will my child attend Forest School?

Your child will be allocated a Forest School Half-term. During this half-term, they will participate in approximately 6 sessions. Your child will be put into either the AM or PM group with some friends from their class and children from across the rest of the school.

Where does Forest School take place?

All Forest School sessions take place on the school grounds. We have access to a wonderful set of spaces and resources which we will use each week. At Milwards, we have a Forest School classroom and storage area, an outdoor workshop, a tree stump circle and fire pit, den building areas, two copse, a nature area with pond, allotment beds and our very own beehives. We utilise all of the space we have throughout the seasons to highlight our wonderful grounds to the children.



What does my child need to wear for Forest School?

You will receive a full kit list of recommended clothing when you receive your child's invitation letter. However, it is mostly common sense. Your child will need to have their arms and legs covered to play in the woods, so it is important to send them in with layers so they can control their temperature. We will provide your child with waterproof overalls of the weather requires. Be mindful that your child will come home muddy, so they should come in wearing old clothes, trainers/ wellies.

What will happen at lunch time?

If your child is in the morning session, they will finish Forest School at 12:00pm and go to lunch as normal.

If your child is in the afternoon session, they will have their lunch early to start Forest School at 12:30pm.

What will my child eat and drink at Forest School?

Eating and drinking forms part of our Forest School sessions. We make sure your child is always hydrated throughout the session with regular water breaks and a rolling fruit snack the children can help themselves to. We also have treats from time to time including hot chocolate, biscuits, and food we prepare in the woods. All dietary information will be shared with you in advance.

Is Forest School safe?

There are elements of Forest School which encourages children to take guided, sensible risk to meet their goals. This is heavily supported to ensure children are not putting themselves in dangerous situations.

Thorough and extensive risk assessments are completed on all areas of the Forest School curriculum which can be found on the school website. Both members of staff delivering Forest School sessions are first aid trained. As we will not be leaving the school site, we will be in contact with the school office if we need medical assistance.

How will Forest School contribute to my child's education?

Forest School has its own principles which we feel are imperative to your child's development, which is why we are so pleased to give them this opportunity at Milwards.

Naturally, there will be links made between what your child is doing in class and in the woods, especially in curriculum areas such as Science, Design & Technology and Maths.



Who will my child be doing Forest School with?

Your child will be in a group of children from year 1 up to year 6. They will stay with the same group for their time at Forest School to encourage new, supportive relationships with their peers at Milwards. At Forest School, we have a ratio of 1 adult: 8 children. Every session will be supervised by 2 designated Forest School staff with additional adults supporting at different times.

For more information on the Milwards Forest School, visit our section on the school website: <https://www.milwards.essex.sch.uk>

