Forest School Handbook - Home from Home Nursery, Worthing



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1. An Introduction to Forest School

At Home from Home our aim is to create a Forest School that encourages child focused learning and play. We aim to create a safe environment that encourages children to take risks, learn and try new activities that they would otherwise perhaps not have had access to. Our Forest School sessions will take place in our forest area. It is a space that was previously a residential garden but it has been allowed to return to a natural state. The space is secluded with a large Beech tree providing shelter. The ground is uneven and there are spaces for the children to explore and play.
Children will be given the opportunity to use tools and help create a fire. It will not be a prescribed session. There will be activities available for children to partake in should they wish and these will be modelled to them by qualified adults that are present. There will be a high ratio of adults to children, with at least three adults present for all sessions.
Children will have free reign within our 'forest area', with the exception of the fire circle. They will partake in forest school on a regular basis, weekly for a minimum of 6 weeks at a time.

Our forest school will be a place to promote their holistic development, good mental and physical health. It will be a place where children will be able to express themselves and where everyone is equal and all voices will be heard.
We will support managed risk. We have a tree that children can climb and there are materials available for them to make obstacle courses.
They will be free to undertake individual activities such as crafts and tool work. Equally team work will be an important part of forest school. Some tool work will require children to help each other, such as holding wood to keep it stable for a friend who is sawing. They can work together to build a den. Discussions will be held on the best way to set it up. They will need to work together to move their resources. There will be other shared experiences like the time we will spend around the fire. This may be a snack time when we may share a story together or use the time to talk and learn about woodland animals or bugs that they have found. We also come back around the fire at the end of the session to make it safe and discuss what we have enjoyed about that day.

2. Insurance and Permission

Our Forest School sessions run on site within the grounds of the nursery and therefore have permission of the landowner/nursery owners Julia Pattenden and Nicola Law.
The Insurance for the Forest School is covered within the main policy for the nursery. Our provider for this is Markel.
Policy Number: S35556
Name of Policy Holder: Home from Home (Worthing) Limited
Date of commencement of Insurance Policy: 6/8/2025
Date of expiry of insurance policy: 5/8/2026

3. Health and Safety

First Aid/Medical Information

All Level 3 Forest School leaders hold a Paediatric Forest School First Aid certificate. Other attending employees will also be Paediatric First Aid qualified.

There is a First Aid kit held with the Forest School Equipment. This is always kept in a visible and accessible location during the session.

Medical Information - All medical information for children and employees is held in the office. Dietary requirements for all children are held for each session to ensure that all snacks given are safe.

In the case of an incident of accident the injured party will be tended to by the Forest School Leader or other first aid qualified practitioner. If the incident or accident is deemed as serious then the fire will be extinguished, an employee will alert the manager whilst the rest of the children will be taken back into the nursery.
If the child requires an ambulance, then this will be called by the Outdoor lead. The child's parent/carer will be notified and the child will be accompanied to the hospital with an employee.

Any accidents or incidents will be reported and recorded via Famly in line with current reporting procedures.

Reporting serious incident/accident - Nursery procedures will be followed and where necessary incidents will be reported to OFSTED and/or RIDDOR.

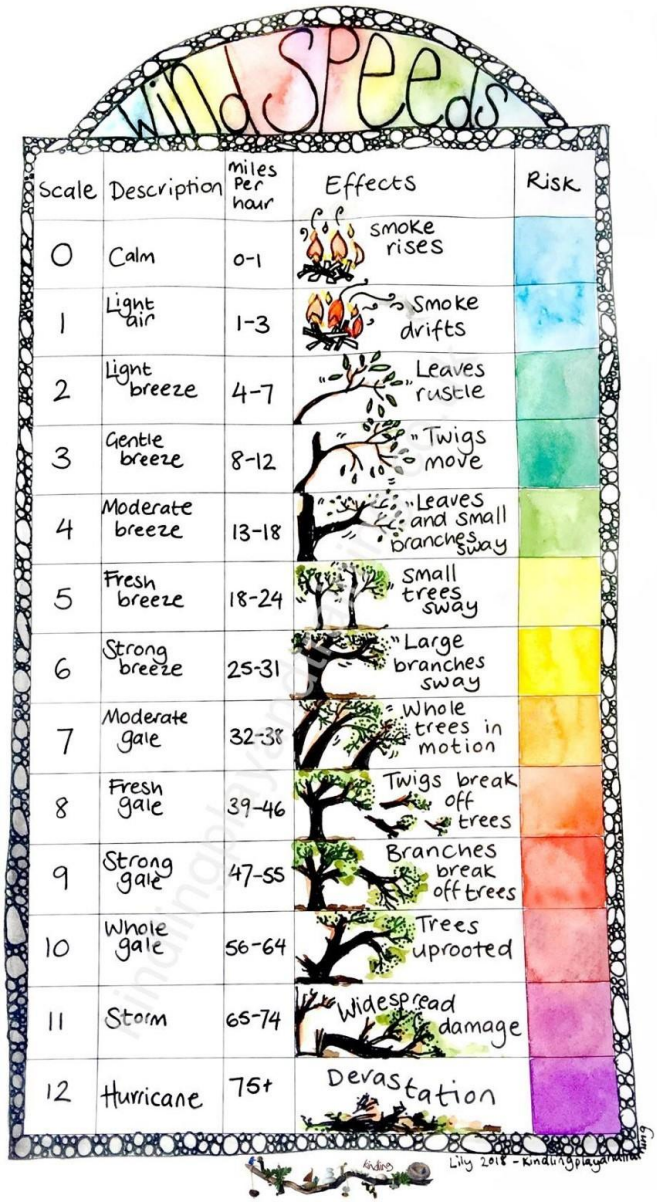
Clothing

Summer - Children and adults must always wear long sleeves, long trousers and sturdy footwear. No open toed shoes are allowed.
Children with long hair must wear this tied back.
Winter - Warm layers must be worn with waterproof outer clothing. Wellies (with warm socks) or waterproof sturdy boots must be worn. Children must have hats and gloves.

Poor Weather

Our Forest School sessions will take place in all weathers. The only exception to this is high winds and thunderstorms.
Wind speeds will be assessed before the session using the Met Office App. We will then refer to our Site Risk Assessment and if sustained winds are predicted to be in excess of 32mph then the session will be cancelled. The Forest School Leaders decision is final.
If a storm occurs unexpectedly during a session, then children will be taken back inside the nursery building until it has passed.

Children will only be allowed to attend if they are wearing the correct clothing for the weather. Parents will be issued with our Outdoor Clothing Guidance Document when their child is invited to attend their session (See Appendix __)



4. Forest School Programme and Daily Operations

The Forest School Programme will always be overseen by a level 3 qualified Forest School Leader.

Forest School activities are risk assessed in advance. Copies of those risk assessments can be found in this booklet and in the Outdoor Activities folder in the Home from Home Dropbox file.
Our site is a permanent Forest School location. It has been set up for regular use for this purpose. A parachute is set up above the fire circle. This is regularly checked and adjusted as necessary. It is also lowered when high winds are forecast.
All Forest School equipment is stored in the Forest School shed onsite. Items stored safely and regularly checked and maintained.

Toileting Arrangements
Children that need the toilet or require their nappy to be changed will be taken back into the nursery to use the facilities.
During the summer months we have a toilet tent and camping toilet that can be used by the children. This is emptied and cleaned at the end of each session.

Child Protection and Safeguarding
We will work in accordance with our current Safeguarding Policy at Home from Home Nursery. Any issues will be recorded and reported to Nicky Leah our Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Safeguarding Lead, in her absence.

Fire Safety
The fire is an intrinsic part of Forest School. At the beginning of their very first session the children are taught about fire safety.
The fire circle is set up so that seating is at least 1m from the fire.
We teach them about being 'safe green dragons' who walk around the outside of the fire circle. If you walk through the fire circle you are a 'red dragon'. They learn that an 'amber dragon' is someone who has permission to be in the fire circle to do a job.
We begin every session with a game of 'red dragon green dragon' whereby a stick is passed between the children around the fire circle and they must demonstrate being a 'green dragon'.
The fire bucket, fire blanket, fire gloves and first aid kit are all kept in the same location for every session, just outside the fire circle.
If they wish to do so, children may wish to practice using a flint and steel (dragon sneezer) to make sparks. They must be wearing appropriate clothing and be sat in a kneeling position behind their log. They will be taught how to do this safely, in accordance with our risk assessment.

Children are allowed to be 'amber dragons' if they are invited into the fire circle to do a job such as adding wood to the fire or to stir the hot chocolate pan. They will be supervised and shown how to carry out these tasks safely.
Only appropriate fuel will be added to the fire.
Appropriate footwear must be worn within the fire circle. No open toed shoes or bare legs.

Tool and Equipment Use

Risk assessments have been completed for all tools that are used at Forest School and copies are attached.
At the beginning of each block of sessions the children will be shown how to use the slackline, in line with our risk assessment. The slackline will be regularly checked to ensure that it is tight and the knots are secure.
Personal protective equipment is provided for tool work. The glove bag is located in the large tool box, which contains a range of child and adult size gloves.
Tools are kept in the equipment trolley when not in use, with any protective covers in place.
Children will work on a one-to-one basis with an adult when using tools. The adult will explain the process of what they are going to do before undertaking the task and a demonstration will be given if appropriate.
Adults undertaking the tool work will either have Forest School training or they will have been taught how to use the tool appropriately with children.
The children will be taught about our 'safety bubble' and will stand or sit a safe distance from anyone when undertaking any tool work.

Employees that attend Forest School will have either attended Forest School training or will have been upskilled internally.

Sanitation
There is always a handwashing station set up in the forest area at the beginning of each session. Clean, warm water is provided along with a clean towel. Children are shown how to use the handwashing station so that freshwater is used for each person. They are encouraged to help each other with this process.

5. Emergency Procedures

Site - Our Forest School site is located within the grounds of our nursery Home
from Home Nursery School
69 Grand Ave
Worthing
BN11 5BB

What Three Words - income.comet.gasp (entrance to the nursery)

There is an emergency exit from our site directly onto the car park at the front of the building via a double gate that is bolted from the inside.

Emergency Contact - The Forest School Leader will have access to a mobile trip phone that will be kept in the forest area during the session. This will be used for emergency outgoing calls only. In case of an emergency, the fire will be extinguished and an employee from session will alert the Nursery Manager/Senior Duty Manager.

The Forest School leader can be contacted via the Nursery Office number - 01903 248115

Daily Risk Assessment - The site is checked before each session during the initial set up, before the children are brought out.
A copy of the Daily Risk Assessment is available in the office and in the Forest School shed.
(See Appendix 1)

Poor Weather - The weather will be checked before each session.

High Wind - Consideration will be given to cancelling the session if winds are in excess of 32mph.

Rain, Snow, High/Low temperatures - Consideration will be given to erecting an additional tarp to provide more shelter from the elements.
In hot weather children will have sun cream applied in line with nursery policy.
Where deemed appropriate sessions may be shortened.
Thunderstorms - If a storm occurs unexpectedly then children will be taken back inside the nursery building until it has passed.

5.1 Forest School Emergency Action Plan

Introduction
In case of an emergency during a Forest School Session, we have a procedure in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and employees, and to keep disruption to a minimum for all children, parents and employees attending Home from Home.
This outlines the EAP Emergency Action Plan for employees to follow in the case of an emergency.

Emergency Information
Emergency Site Information Sheet - A copy of this is held within the Forest School Shed, with the Daily Risk Assessment sheet.
First Aid Kit - This is located in the same place for each session, just outside the fire circle, next to the fire bucket. This consists of a standard First Aid kit and a Burns Kit.

Responsibilities or the Forest School Leader

- Home from Home has an EAP that clearly outlines the responsibilities of the Forest School Leaders, Nursery Manager and employees in the event of an emergency.
- Where two Forest School Leaders are in attendance then one will be designated the 'lead; for the session and becomes responsible for implementing the EAP if/when required.

- It is the responsibility of the 'lead' Forest School Leader for the session to ensure that all employees and volunteers are familiar with current risk assessments and emergency procedures at the start of each session.
- It is the responsibility of the Forest School leader to ensure that groups stay within the boundary of the Forest School Area.

Responsibilities of employees/helpers attending Forest School

Each session will have in attendance a minimum of 3 employees. The Forest School leader and two further employees, one of whom will be the designated Forest School Assistant. This position will be held by someone who has completed their Level 1 Forest School training.

- Employees and volunteers should report any concern to the 'lead' Forest School Leader
- Employees should stay calm, if possible, remove the danger or the person from the danger

Emergency Action Plan In the case of a Major Injury

- Any concern should be reported to the Forest School Leader - keep calm.
- The leader will assess the situation and if necessary, remove the danger or the person from danger, if not already done so.
- The fire will be extinguished.
- A first aid bag will always be located in the same place. Forest School Leader Rebecca Devlin, ITC First Aider will attend to the casualty and give first aid, if appropriate, until the Emergency Services arrive.
- Risk assessments will be followed if appropriate.
- The Forest School leader will use the Forest School Phone to call the emergency services.
- The Forest School leader will direct a member of staff to return to the building to notify the Nursery Manager/Senior manager.
- The Nursery Manager will be responsible for notifying the parents/carers. In the absence of the Nursery Manager, it will be the Senior Duty Manager designated as the 'responsible person' who will make the appropriate calls.
- The 3rd employee in attendance at Forest School will accompany the children back to their rooms.
- The casualty must be accompanied to hospital by an employee.
- The adult accompanying the casualty would return to Home from Home once the child was in the care of their parents/carers.
- The incident will be recorded in the nursery accident/incident book.

Emergency Action Plan In the case of Injury to an employee

- Forest School will always be attended by at least two first aid trained members of staff. The Forest School leader will hold a Forest School ITC Level 3 Award in Paediatric First Aid.
- Any concerns will be reported to the Forest School leader. If it is the Forest School leader that is unwell or injured, this will be reported to the designated Forest School Assistant.
- The Fire will be extinguished.
- First Aid will be administered by the Forest School Leader to the injured/unwell employee. If it is the Forest School Leader that is injured/unwell then first aid will be delivered by the Forest School Assistant.
- The employee administering first aid will call the manager using the Forest School phone and request immediate assistance.
- The employee administering first aid will call the emergency services using the Forest School phone, if required.
- The 3rd employee will remain with the children and will gather them together away from the incident.
- Upon the arrival of the manager/senior employee the children will be returned to their rooms.
- The Manager will be responsible for contacting the employee's emergency contact if required.
- If the injured party is required to go to hospital, they will be accompanied by an employee.
- The incident will be recorded in the nursery incident/accident book.

Emergency Action Plan In case of a Lockdown

- In the event of a Lockdown, we will adhere to the lockdown policy.
- The Forest School Leader will be notified verbally by employees from the balcony outside the Toddler construction room.
- The fire will be immediately extinguished while employees carry out a head check and calmly escort the children to the construction room via the balcony. This door will remain unlocked to allow access to the Forest School group, once everyone is inside it will be secured and locked.
- The group will then head upstairs via the kitchen and messy play room to head up the rear staircase.

In case of a Fire Drill/Evacuation

- In the event of a Fire Drill/Evacuation we will adhere to the nursery's evacuation procedure.
- The Forest School fire will be immediately extinguished and while the children are gathered and lined up by the gate onto the car park.
- The children will be escorted to the Fire evacuation point in the Coach house front garden where they will join their age cohorts for the register check.

5.2 Emergency Site Information



Home From Home Worthing
69 Grand Avenue
Worthing
West
Sussex
BN11 5BB

What3words - income.comet.gasp
(for the entrance)

Home from Home is located on the junction of Mill Road and Grand Avenue, Worthing.

Access is via a gravel drive on Grand Ave.

The Forest Area is located in the South East corner of the plot and boundaries with the road.

Emergency access to the Forest Area is via double gates on the gravel drive.

The Forest School Mobile number is:
(to be used for outgoing calls only)
07788 920456/07708 920529

6. Communication with Parents and Employees

A copy of this document will be held in the Forest School Dropbox folder and a hard copy will be available on the parent information board.

Parents will be emailed to inform them when their child has been invited to attend their Forest School sessions. Included in this communication will be a copy of our 'Parent Information' document. There will also be a copy of our 'Outdoor Clothing' document. Parents/carers will be sent pictures of their children participating in Forest School via Famly.

Communications with employees takes place via our designated Outdoor Activities WhatsApp group. This will be where any communication takes place if sessions need to be suspended due to weather.

7. Training

We are committed to ongoing professional development for our practitioners who support Forest School. We currently have 6 employees who have attended L1 training and are currently completing coursework.

8. Review

This document will be reviewed annually alongside the Risk Assessment review.

9. Version Control

Version	Date	Status	Comments	By
1				Beckie Devlin
2	July 2025	Updated		Sophie Eade
3	May 2026	Reviewed		Sophie Eade

Appendix 1 - RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Task / Activity Assessed	Forest School Generic Site Assessment		
Activity Location	Home from Home Woodland Area		
Date	5/9/24	**Review date (1 year later)**	4/9/25
Assessed By:	Julia Pattenden	**Signature**	
Staff involved in assessment	Beckie Devlin	**Version**	3

Likelihood		**Severity**
Very unlikely	**1**	**Minor injury – no time off**
Unlikely	**2**	**Injury – up to 3 days off**
Likely	**3**	**Reportable condition**
Very likely	**4**	**Major injury-long-term absence**
Certain	**5**	**Death**

Risk rating
Likelihood x Severity

Low = 1-8	Medium = 9-15	High = 16-25

Type of Hazard	Likelihood of occurrence	Hazard Severity	Risk Factor	Action to be taken to reduce risk	New likelihood of occurrence	New hazard severity	New risk factor
Disease from leaf litter and animal excrement	2	3	6	Hand washing equipment is available throughout the whole session, and all children are required to wash their hands before eating. The site will be checked before the	1	3	3

				session begins and anything of concern will be removed.			
Disease from water bodies	2	3	6	All equipment that can hold water will have water tipped away at the end of the session to avoid stagnant water pooling.			
Poisoning from Fungi	1	4	4	Children advised not to touch any fungi. Fungi removed as part of daily nursery checks. Hand washing facilities available.	1	4	4
Bites from mosquitos or other insects	1	4	4	Children will wear long sleeve tops and long trousers when attending Forest School.	1	4	4
Litter left by public – cuts and abrasions from broken glass/cans	2	2	4	Site checked and cleared of any obvious litter before activity. Awareness raised. Gloves provided.	1	2	2
Nettles and brambles – scratches and stings	4	1	4	Nettles cleared from Forest School area. Awareness raised	2	1	2
Poisonous plants like foxgloves and `stinking Iris	2	3	6	Fox gloves to be removed and the berries of the Stinking Iris will be removed.	1	3	3
Uneven ground, exposed roots, burrows – trips, slips and sprains.	2	2	4	Awareness raising – move with care around the site, no running. Area that used to be a pond that has been filled in to be checked that filling has not subsided/ moved so as to cause a trip hazard.	1	2	2

Camp fire, burning	2	4	8	Fire activities supervised by L2 Forest School Leader at all times Minimum 1m safety zone defined around campfire, all seated. Instruction given for safe use of fire on arrival Only those designated on fire duty to operate within the seating circle. Only those designated on fire duty to attend fire. Fire blanket, fire gloves, first aid kit and bucket of water available	1	4	4
Smoke inhalation from fire	4	1	4	At least 1m from fire, sitting, working up wind from smoke. Awareness of wind direction. Always at least 2 spare seats/logs for children to move to if smoke is troubling them.	2	1	2
Low branches, eye hazard	2	3	6	Awareness raised, removed where necessary, identified with ribbon where appropriate	1	3	3
Sharp tools (Laplander saws, bill hooks, Frost knives)	3	3	9	**Full instruction before use**, tools only used when supervised by staff at appropriate staff/child ratios. All equipment counted out and back. Knives only unsheathed when seated.	1	3	3

				Peeler used instead of knife if too hazardous for the user.			
Cooking around the fire – smoke, heat, hot pans	2	4	8	Cook on embers of low flames. Wear gloves to protect your hands. Upwind of smoke and heat.	1	4	4
High wind, falling trees and branches	2	4	8	Review weather forecast (Met Office App) and refer to Beaufort Scale (copy available in Forest School Folder). **If the forecast is for gusts of above 39mph (Beaufort Scale 8) then the session will not be run.** Observe canopy and root bases for displacement	1	4	4
Exposure – heavy rain, extreme cold, heat wave: Hypothermia, sunburn/sunstroke	2	2	4	Cold/wet weather - Full waterproofs, to be worn. Spares to be supplied by nursery if required. Layers to be worn for warmth. Appropriate footwear to be worn. Either wellies or waterproof boots. High UV/Sun - Sunscreen and hats to be worn. Water available at all times.	1	2	2
Boundary - exiting the Forest Area unsupervised	2	1	2	Systems are already in place to keep children secure in the outside area. All external gates are locked with a code required to exit/enter. The Forest Area is gated and the	1	1	1

				boundary will be discussed with children at the beginning of the session. If they need to leave the area for the toilet then they will speak to an adult.			
Berries - risk of digestion	2	2	4	There are a couple of plants within the forest area that produce berries. This will be discussed with the children and a discussion will be had about not eating berries found in the setting. Berries will be collected by children wearing gloves and supervised by a practitioner as part of our forest school activities Berries from the stinking Iris will be removed by staff.	1	2	2
Holly Bush - risk of scratches	3	1	3	Awareness will be raised about their location. Size of Holly bush maintained if necessary.	2	1	2
Rockery - Risk of slipping	3	2	6	Risk of slipping if climbed on when wet. Risk to be discussed with children and close supervision if children climbing in this area	2	2	4
Guy ropes from parachute - risk of rope burn/getting caught	2	3	6	Ropes will be hung with items to mark their location and children will be advised to be cautious around them.	1	3	3

Leaves/leaf matter - risk of irritation, allergic reaction	2	2	4	Checks will be made for any known allergies. Children will be checked for any rashes. If there are any known allergies then children will not work with that material.	1	2	2
Parachute - risk of collapse/collapse if fire underneath.	2	3	6	The parachute to be checked at the beginning of each session. If there is a risk of high winds then this is to be checked (Met Office App) and wind speed and gusts are to be considered. **With regard to lighting a fire. If winds are forecast to reach level 7 on the Beaufort Scale (gusts 32-38mph) then fire will not take place.** **If winds are forecast to reach Beaufort Level 8 (above 39mph) then the session will not go ahead.**	1	1	2
Risk of injury from wind moving fire ie burns from embers/smoke inhalation	3	3	9	If wind is low then children will sit on logs away from the direction of wind. There will always be at least 2 spare logs. They will be taught to turn their back to the fire if smoke is blowing in their direction. If the wind is forecast to reach Beaufort Level 7 (32-38mph) then fire will not be lit.	2	3	6

No activity may be carried out where there is a risk factor of 10 or above.
Dangers involved in using equipment should be brought to the attention of all.
DAILY RISK ASSESSMENT MUST BE COMPLETED FOR EACH DAY

Manager Signature and date:_____ Reviewed– Manager signature and date:_____

Appendix 2 –
Forest School Parent Information

At Home from Home we are very pleased to offer a Forest School Programme to our Preschool and toddler children.



Our sessions are held in our forest area, where we have a canopy to facilitate an all weather programme.

Forest School is an inspirational process that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self-esteem, through hands-on learning experiences in a local woodland or natural environment with trees.

Forest School is a sustained programme, it is not a one off session. Children that are partaking will attend on a regular basis.
An important element of Forest School is that it is a child led learning experience. They will have the freedom to direct play.
They will be given the opportunity to learn new skills and try things that they may not have experienced before.
Children will be taught how to use tools such as bow saws and palm drills. They may wish to make a wooden disc necklace or a spinning top. They may want to just enjoy the process of using the tools, there will be no expectation to produce a 'keepsake'. Forest School is all about the process and not just the product.
All of this will be undertaken under close adult supervision. Sessions will consist of groups no larger than 10, and accompanying Julia or Beckie will be

a 2 further members of staff. Julia and Beckie are both Level 3 Forest School trained practitioners and first aid trained.



Fire making and management is an important element to the Forest School experience. Children will be given the opportunity to help make a fire. They will be shown how to use fire steels (or as they will know them - Dragon Sneezers!) to make embers.
They will learn about our fire circle and we will teach them to respect the safety elements of having a fire.

We will also integrate learning about our natural environment and habitats.

What do we hope to achieve?
Regular Forest School attendance can help to build confidence and self-esteem. Children will be given freedom, time and space, to learn, grow and be independent.
They will be able to work in teams which will foster greater social skills, and communication.
Child led play will increase motivation and concentration.
Forest School is a physical experience. There will be balancing, climbing and building. They will be practicing fine motor skills when using tools.
There will be increased knowledge and understanding of our natural environment.
They will experiment with new ways of creating art, from mud sculptures to making paint with berries.
They will be given the freedom to make choices and to take risks. They will develop the skills necessary to assess and make decisions.

Sessions run for two hours in the morning or afternoon. Children that are participating will receive their snack, usually cooked on the fire, as usual and the session will finish in time for lunch or tea.

It is essential that children come dressed for the weather as Forest School will go ahead, whatever the elements deliver!
We are very much looking forward to this new adventure with your children!