



Wednesday 4th September 2019

Dear Parents / Carers

Vernon Park Primary School is delivering Forest School sessions to support your child's learning. Children in Year 1 will receive Forest School sessions this term. I hope to answer any questions you may have below.

What is Forest School?

Forest School is a holistic approach to educating children in the outdoors on a regular basis, with the ultimate aim of raising children's confidence and independence. Through the mastery of small, achievable tasks that are challenging and exciting, children improve their communication and language, social skills, physical development, emotional awareness and intellectual abilities. As you may be aware, children already have regular opportunities to learn in the school's environmental area (the small woodland on the slope at the back of school). This is one of the children's favourite places to learn!

When will the children be doing their Forest School sessions?

The children will take part in a 1 to 2 hour session on the following dates:

Wednesday 11th September

Wednesday 18th September

Wednesday 25th September

Wednesday 2nd October

Wednesday 9th October

Wednesday 16th October

No Sessions Wednesday 25th October - Half Term

Wednesday 30th October

Wednesday 6th November

Wednesday 13th November

Wednesday 20th November

What do the children need to wear?

An important part of the Forest School experience is that children experience the outdoors in all weathers, with the exception of very high winds and thunder storms. Therefore, it is important the children are dressed appropriately. We ask that on the dates above, your child comes to school dressed in appropriate clothing. This includes trousers, a long sleeve t-shirt, a waterproof coat with a hood, and Wellington boots or sturdy walking boots. You may also want to provide them with waterproof trousers. On sunny days, you will need to supply a sun hat, water and suncream; and on colder days, warm clothing. Please bear in mind your child is likely to get very muddy! Children do not need to wear or bring their school uniform on these days, but they need to bring a pair of additional shoes to wear when they have finished their session.

What sort of activities will be delivered?

A wide variety of practical activities will be delivered in Forest School. A priority of Forest School is teaching children about caring for, understanding and managing woodlands. As part of this, children will be taught to use small hand tools such as sheath knives and bow saws, as well as learning about fires and their different uses. I appreciate this may sound alarming but would like to reassure you of the extensive safety procedures that have been developed to make this possible.

Is Forest School safe?

Forest Schools nationally have an excellent safety record thanks to the robust procedures we are required to have in place before we can offer sessions. Forest School sessions may only be delivered by a qualified Forest School practitioner. I am a qualified Level 3 Forest School Practitioner and will be delivering all Forest School sessions. In addition to this, Forest School can only be run with better than usual adult-child ratios. We are required to maintain a ratio of 1:8 or better at all times. To make this possible, Mrs Singleton will be joining us.

This venture will be a learning experience for all of us - children and staff. Ultimately, by raising your child's independence and self-esteem, they should be able to use Forest School to enhance their learning in other areas of the curriculum whilst developing a love and understanding of the natural environment.

If you wish to discuss any aspects of Forest School further, I am happy to answer your questions.

Many thanks for your support. I am sure this will prove to be a very exciting time for your child and the school!

Mrs Stone
Forest School Leader