

Forest School at Holy Family Catholic Primary School



'Respect for the environment, respect for ourselves, respect for each other...'

Contents

- What is a Forest School?
- The aims of Forest School at Holy Family
- What is Emotional Intelligence?

What is a Forest School?

The ethos of Forest School is to inspire and encourage children through positive outdoor experiences in a chosen location. This experience is separate from outdoor learning as it is taught as a separate entity, building confidence and self-esteem and providing unique learning experiences. There are however many links to the National Curriculum and in particular the Characteristics of Learning from the Early Years Framework.



Forest School sessions are based around the needs of the learners and formed around their interests and imagination. Tasks and activities will aim to be motivational and achievable and provoke and develop many skills from shared experiences.

Some skills that can be developed and nurtured during Forest School sessions are:

- Showing respect and responsibility for themselves, others and our school environment
- Independence
- Increased confidence, courage and self esteem
- Self-motivation and discovery
- Speaking and listening skills

Aims of Forest School

At Holy Family our aims for Forest School are:

- To develop independent and motivated learners by fostering Personal Social and Emotional skills.
- To deliver focused, child-led Forest School sessions on a weekly basis, discovering and developing children's emotional intelligences and learning styles.
- To utilise and care for our Wildlife Garden environment and make full use of the space and invaluable links to nature that it provides.
- Developing and embedding the school values of respect, responsibility and contributing to the world.
- Connecting children with their outdoor environment in a way that promotes an awareness of themselves as a global citizen.



What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional Intelligence is defined as...

"the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically. "



An emotionally intelligent child will have the dispositions and attitudes to learn such as motivation, concentration, perseverance, the ability to control emotions and judge emotions in others. Research has documented that in the Forest School environment high motivation and levels of concentration on activities self-selected by the children developed their ability to persevere, achieve goals and show strong interpersonal skills such as relating to others emotions. Through problem solving activities children are able to show resilience and a depth of understanding. Forest School also helps to develop an attitude of mindfulness with children and develop perseverance to achieve small goals.

A typical Forest School session



Typically, Forest School sessions are planned for and delivered based on the needs of the children in the group to ensure that the direction of activities is learner led. There may be a theme to explore which may be planned for by the leader to be taken forward by the children. These themes may be specific like fairies or story-telling or may be something more open ended such as exploration of the site and the wonder of the nature of the site.

We will begin our sessions by singing the Forest Schools song (to the tune of Frere Jacques) on the way to our Wildlife Garden.

*Forest School (forest school), rain or shine (rain or shine)
In the Wildlife Garden (in the Wildlife Garden)
With our friends (with our friends)
We're exploring (we're exploring)
Having fun (having fun)
Learning in our own way (learning in our own way)
The best we can (the best we can)
We're fantastic (we're fantastic)
Following the rules (following the rules)
We can solve a problem (I can solve a problem)
In Forest School (in Forest School)*

Then we will move into the Wildlife Garden and undertake some planned for (but not directed) activities. Children will have a choice to participate and then be invited to reflect on their experience to conclude the session.