

Little Foresters



Little Foresters Community Interest Company

Information booklet

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

- *The Forest School Association*



How did Forest School as a concept develop?

Forest School, the principle of learning and exploring in outdoor settings, is a common educational provision in Scandinavian countries. In the early nineties, a group of Nursery Nurses at Bridgwater College in Somerset visited Denmark to learn more about this provision. This learning was brought back to England and so the Forest School movement spread!

Before this, other groups, such as Scouts, Rangers and Guides have also focussed on young people having access to nature to explore, learn skills and learn about the world. Various courses in Forest School have since been developed to train people in the skills needed to provide safe and enjoyable outdoor learning.

Little Foresters – a philosophy

Little Foresters was developed initially by Louise Heath, in November 2016 following an opportunity given by Long Eaton Community Garden, to work in an open space near to the garden.

The community garden also provided set up funds for resources which has been added to by Tesco, bags for life funding and other local providers. From humble beginnings where we sat on buckets in the park, we now have a fabulous Forest School area within Long Eaton Community Garden.

Michelle Wainwright-Hicks joined Louise in October 2017 helping to expand provision for school age children and young people.

Louise taught early years for 20 years and now has swapped the indoor setting for an outdoor one! She has been a qualified Forest School Teacher at level 3 for 6 years.

Michelle has worked as a play worker from early years to secondary for over 20 years and is, at the time of writing, working towards finishing her level 3 Forest School qualification. Both our experiences in education and our own families have convinced us of the need for children to have extended periods of time in nature, to explore, learn and achieve.

Free range outdoor play is of great benefit to young and old alike. Forest School activities provide opportunities to promote physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, whatever our age.

Forest School can be of particular benefit to children and young people who have additional needs, disabilities, behavioural problems, social emotional difficulties, low self-esteem, those at risk of exclusion, those who would benefit from more physical activity, poor attenders and anyone who might otherwise have limited access to the outdoors.

Our philosophy of education is to focus upon the interests of the young people attending and to build upon those. We believe in the value of the process of making or doing something, rather than an end product. Sessions have a theme, maybe linking to the seasons, weather, using a particular tool, a game or particular skill. We are led by the needs and likes of the group. We include the young people in our planning, giving them ownership of the activities and opportunities available.

A philosophy of Forest school is that there is no bad weather, only bad clothing so we will be out in all weather, with the exception of high winds or thunder storms. Forest school gives young people the chance to see changing seasons and weather in a first-hand way. It teaches them that we must run around to keep warm when it is cold and find shade when it is hot. It teaches children how trees change over the seasons and which different plants and shrubs grow at different times.

Forest School teaches young people to manage risk. We enable young people to use tools safely, to make fires safely and cook over the fire.

We also teach and foster problem-solving skills with Forest school activities and allow young people to make decisions and make choices.

Examples of activities

- Den building
- Tool use
- Fire making
- Team building games
- Cooking
- Rope use and knots
- Natural arts and crafts

Location of session

We hold the sessions in Long Eaton Community Garden on Norfolk Road Recreation Ground. We also use the park for den building, tree climbing, exploring, games and foraging. We have use of the garden's compost loo and access to fresh drinking water. The Garden is wheelchair friendly with well-established paths and a ramp up to the compost loo. There are facilities to make a hot drink and have shelter. The location of the sessions can be found by pasting this link into your browser.

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Norfolk+Road+Recreation+Ground>,

The Long Eaton Community Garden website has a map

<http://longeatoncommunitygarden.org.uk/>

There is a car park next to the garden and park and parking on the road if access is not possible. The recreation ground is accessed by turning down Norfolk Road, located off the A6005, just before or after the railway bridge, depending on your direction of travel. Turn left into the car park if the gate is open just after the Norfolk Road convenience store. Otherwise you can park on the road.

Local Medical facilities

The nearest A and E is the QMC

Derby Road

Nottingham

NG7 2UH

(This is a 16 Minute drive without traffic)

We Have an Environmental Impact Assessment and Risk Assessments, available on request.

Health and Safety Statement

As previously mentioned, participants are exposed to potentially risky activities, but it is managed risk and with a view to teaching children and young people to learn to manage risk. Little Foresters accepts the legal obligations designated by the Health and Safety at work act 1974. We hold Current DBS checks and have completed First Aid training and Food hygiene courses as part of Forest |School training. Little

Foresters are insured by Birnbeck Insurance for £5 million public liability cover. Risk Assessments have been made concerning the site and the activities. Also, due to changing weather conditions, we will be carrying out ongoing Risk Assessments on behalf of the group.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a serious incident, due to injury, illness or threat, emergency services will be contacted, and the following procedures followed.

1. Secure the group's safety, remove group to another area if necessary
2. First aider to attend to any casualties
3. Emergency services to be contacted. Forest School leader to ensure their phone is charged.
4. Inform Next of kin as soon as possible
5. Incident to be recorded and the landowner informed as soon as possible.
6. Incidents leading to hospital admittance for more than 24 hours or resulting in an injury that prevents someone working for 3 or more days need to be registered with RIDDOR within 24 hours. Tel 0845 3009923 (HSE Monday to Friday 8.30 to 5 p.m.)
7. First aid kits to be restocked after use and a check to be carried out every 6 months.
8. In the event of a person going missing, we will gather the group together and ensure the safety of the group. One or more adults to search for the missing person
9. If the person is not found within 5 minutes, the group leader must telephone the police. A description of the person is to be passed on.

Safeguarding

Parents and guardians will be asked to fill in a consent form which details medical issues, emergency contact details and the option to give permission for photographs of young people to be used and in which context.

It is of paramount importance that children and vulnerable adults are given appropriate support and care within the session and we create a safe environment as a group.

All staff will have DBS certificates. Any volunteers will be vetted by gathering references, employment history, record of qualification and if they have one their DBS will be checked. Young people will not be left unsupervised with any visitor or volunteer if a DBS check has not been seen.

Disclosures, recording and reporting

- Any disclosures will be dealt with sensitively and in line with best practice
- Any concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon immediately
- The safety of the group will be secured before taking any action on site. The police will be involved if necessary.
- Implicated adults will be asked to leave the group until the disclosure is officially cleared or action is taken.
- Relevant information will be recorded

- Confidentiality will always be maintained by only sharing information with relevant people
- NSPCC helpline can be used for children 08088005000 or the care quality commission for vulnerable adults 03000616161
- Little Foresters will follow guidelines provided by partner organisations and local authorities.

Terms and conditions

- Dress appropriately – layers in the winter, waterproofs and strong sturdy shoes or boots in summer and winter.
- Little Foresters cannot take any responsibility for any personal property that is lost or damaged during sessions.
- We welcome feedback and concerns that arise should be shared so that resolutions can be found.
- Feedback and concerns can be expressed verbally, in person or by telephone, by email or in writing.
- Formal concerns will be logged, and a resolution found within 28 days

Cancellation and Postponement

- In the case of extreme weather or illness, Little Foresters may need to cancel sessions at short notice
- A refund will be offered if the group cannot find an alternative time to make up the session.

N.B Families are welcome to pay for just their initial session. If you wish to book further sessions, we ask that you book a block of sessions which is 5-6 sessions. You can book a minimum of 3 sessions then pay for a further 3 if preferred. Payments can be made via pay pal or bank transfer and must be paid before the session.

PRO FORMA CONSENT

I.....(parent name) give permission for my child/children
..... (child/ children's names)
.....
.....

to take part in the activities and give permission for

(PLEASE DELETE ANY OF THE STATEMENTS YOU DON'T WANT TO GIVE PERMISSION FOR)

- The audio recording of conversation
- The use of photos and videos in publicly available reports and news articles
- The use of written research data for reports, presentations and publications

Signed(parent name) Date.....

Relationship to participant

Address

.....
.....

Email

Mobile number.....

Name and mobile number of next of kin

HEALTH AND PERSONAL SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE

Do you or your child have any medical issues we need to be aware of?

Any allergies or food allergies?

Any special needs or mobility issues?

Any other information relevant to ensure your child's safety and wellbeing?