

Bolnore Village Primary School

c/o St Wilfrid's C E Primary School
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17 December 2009

Dear Parents/Carers of Cherry Class,

FOREST SCHOOL INFORMATION AND ARRANGEMENTS

We wanted to let you know more about our Forest School arrangements. Next term Cherry Class will be taking part in a weekly Forest School Activity in the woods around Bolnore Village. Our Forest School trainers from the Sussex Wildlife Trust have sent us this information to share with you.

FOREST SCHOOLS - SUSSEX WILDLIFE TRUST FOREST LEADERS

A forest school is an inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults regular opportunities to appreciate and enjoy their local woodlands. A forest school nurtures an understanding and respect for natural places. Participants experience nature at first hand through a series of engaging and achievable tasks. The forest school experience brings learning to life and improves an individual's ability to work co-operatively while offering the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning.

Where does the idea come from?

Forest schools originated in Sweden during the 1950s and was a way of teaching children about the natural world. The idea was adopted by Denmark as an important part of Early Years provision. The concept was introduced to Britain in 1995 by Bridgwater College.

Who is a forest school for?

Everyone can benefit from a forest school. The Sussex Wildlife Trust has worked with parents and toddlers, community groups, corporate groups, adults with learning difficulties and school children of all ages, from pre-school to sixth-formers. Forest Schools provides a valuable teaching tool for a wide range of curriculum subjects, and is an excellent way to support and enrich the National Curriculum

What is it like at a forest school?

A forest school group explores a local woodland on a regular basis, typically ten visits over ten weeks. During that time the group will get to grips with all sorts of woodland activities that will help to build an understanding and appreciation of the woodland.

The fire circle is central to all that happens at forest school. The fire is the focal point for discussing the day's activities and a place for socialising. The activities are always hands-on and will often require the use of tools such as bow saws and fixed blade knives. As a group becomes more comfortable with living and working in the woodland the programme becomes more learner led, a journey of discovery directed by the participants.

'It takes a village to raise a child.'

Key Dates

Tuesday 12 January 2010 on site from 9.45 am to 2.30 pm	Taster Day for parents/carers and other members of the community – please see the poster. Normal day in school for children. Waterproofs and boots or wellingtons are advisable.
3.30 - 4.30 pm Tuesday 19th January 2010 in Cherry Class at St Wilfrid's Primary School	Information session for parents/carers. We will run a crèche for the children during the session. This session will include more information about the activities, what to wear and how else you can help prepare your child. We will confirm your child's group during this week.
Monday 25 January 2010 : The children start their first Forest School session	Session 1 : 8.55 am – 11.30 am Session 2 : 12.45 pm – 3.20 pm
Monday 25 January, 1 February, 8 February, 1 March, 8 March, 15 March, 22 March, 29 March	Spring term dates (Some Mondays are missing due to half terms, INSET days and Bank Holidays).
Monday 19 April, 26 April, 10 May, 17 May, 24 May, 7 June, 14 June, 21 June, 5 July, 12 July, 19 July	Summer term dates (Some Mondays are missing due to half terms, INSET days and Bank Holidays).

Group Arrangements

The class will be split into two groups. Each group will do either a session in the morning or in the afternoon. A bus will transfer the children between school and Bolnore Village Square at lunchtime. The groups will be accompanied by Mrs Vandine. We will ask you to choose the session time for your child but the groups are intended to be up to 12 children only so that we have the required adult to child safety ratio.

Group 1 : Morning Session	Group 2 : Afternoon Session
8.55 am : Meet Mrs Vandine and staff from West Sussex Wildlife Trust in Bolnore Village Square 11.30 am : Morning group and Mrs Vandine bused back to Bolnore Village Primary School for lunch. Continue day as normal.	Morning as normal. 8.55 am at school. 12.30 pm : Afternoon group and Mrs Vandine bused to Bolnore Village Square. Met by staff from West Sussex Wildlife Trust. 3.20 pm : Collected by parents/carers from Bolnore Village Square.

Questions and concerns

We are really excited about the prospect of teaching the children a completely different skill set in our own unique outdoor environment. We do understand that you may have some questions and concerns about this activity. We hope that you will be able to join us on our Forest School Taster Day and then come along to the Information Evening the following week.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Allen, Headteacher
Mrs Vandine, Forest School Co-ordinator

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