



Sustainability and Environmental Impact at Forest School

One of the aims of Forest School sessions is to look after the environment and the living things in it. As such, participants are encouraged to look after the Forest School area, ecosystem and habitat and learn about how to care for the flora and fauna on site. Participants are also encouraged to know they they are part of nature and build a deep bond with the natural world through activities and discussion.

The Forest School leader has completed Level 3 training with a Forest a school Association recognised qualification. This includes which includes training on how to manage a Forest School site sustainably.

Activities are often planned around using natural materials such as willow, elder and hazel. This is when discussions are had around topics such as coppicing, how to cut the plant to avoid rain damage to stalks, taking only a little from each plant and which plants can be cut or picked and which cannot and why.

Fire lighting is another opportunity to talk about sustainability and looking after the environment. Discussions can be had around dead wood and how it is the habitat for many different invertebrates and how a healthy woodland has about 40% deadwood, so plenty needs to be left and not collected for firewood. Putting out fires safely, keeping the area around the fire clear of trees and the dangers of lighting fires in hot, dry weather are also discussion when appropriate.

Opportunities arise for discussion around the badger sett in the Forest School area and participants are encouraged to stay far enough away so as not to disturb them. Consideration is also given to leaving objects, little and ropes up which may endanger animals living in the Forest School area and discussions are held when the opportunity arises. Often bird feeders are included as a Forest School activity, which provides a chance to talk about birds which can be found in the Forest School area.

All these opportunities provide ample moments for discussion around sustainability and caring for the environment at Forest School and beyond.

An assessment is always given to the impact it might have on the natural environment before it takes place. This is carried out by the Forest SchoolLeader and involves the participants wherever possible to develop understanding and knowledge.