

Ten Steps to being a Forest School



Step 1

Decide that this is a journey you want to take the school community on.

Step 2

Identify all the partners you need for the journey, in particular the person(s) who will act as the forest school leader. Ensure the head teacher is supportive, and class teachers are enthusiastic. You may need a pool of volunteer adults/ professionals, with suitable Disclosure Scotland Act clearance, if required.

Step 3

Make sure you have all the resources you need, or know where you can get them on the way. Identify all the tools and equipment you will need; find where to source them - through loan or purchase, and start fundraising. Don't forget to identify a suitable woodland area. Ensure that the forest school leader and/ or the education department carries out appropriate risk assessments as required; shared them with the teachers.

Step 4

Having planned well – the journey really begins with the Forest School leader talking to the parents/carers and explaining all about Forest School and the sort of activities the participants will be doing. Parents are invited to visit the Forest School site, and see it for themselves.

Step 5

The Forest School leaders get to know the participants and gain their confidence before taking them to the woodland, for example, by leading activities at the children's educational setting for one or two sessions.

Step 6

The group visit the same local woodland site on a regular basis (once a week or fortnightly) ideally throughout the year, except in extreme conditions.

Step 7

Each session is learner-led, based on the skills and needs of that group.

Step 8

Games are played and small achievable tasks are set. Such as - hide and seek, building shelters, learning how to use appropriate tools, lighting fires, cooking.

Step 9

The participants learn basic woodland skills as a vehicle for boosting their self-confidence and raising their self-esteem.

Step 10

The participants learn to use & appreciate natural materials, and develop practical, affective and cognitive skills, which can all be linked with the Curriculum for Excellence, and improve life and employability skills.