



Forest School for Under Fives Information Pack

Hello, we're so pleased you're thinking of joining us for a fantastic Forest Adventure! Here is a little bit of information for you about Little Foxes Forest School for Under Fives; hopefully it answers all of the questions that you might have, but if there is anything else you would like to know, do get in touch. Our contact details can be found at the bottom of the page.

What to Expect:

Our Forest School sessions will run from 10am to 12pm most Fridays, with Jenny and Lizzie as your lead adventurers. There will be odd dates that we are not running sessions- please look out for updates on emails, the website and our social media pages, or get in touch before coming to confirm if a session is going ahead. We will be using an area of Lamberhurst Common known as The Gravel Pit. The sessions are drop-in, so feel free to come and go at any point between those times; you're welcome to stay for the full two hours or just pop in for a short while. You do not need to pre-book to come, you can just turn up on the day.

Our Forest School sessions will follow the rough timetable below, although this is subject to change if something exciting happens to distract us! You can join in with as much or as little of this as you like. Sometimes things will be aimed more at the slightly older children and sometimes more at the younger babies, maybe even occasionally with the adults in mind as the key audience.

10am: Arrive from this time and engage in free play and exploration around the site. You and your children do not need to join in with the adult-led activities if you do not want to and can free play for the whole session if that suits you best.

10:15am: Story time. Activities for the morning will be loosely based around the story of the day.

10:45am: Idea sharing time. We will demonstrate an activity that you might wish to partake in. Sometimes this will involve tool use, sometimes it might be a task for you and your little one to do together, sometimes it might be something crafty.

11:15am: Mindfulness. An opportunity for you to focus your mind on the present moment, for example through breathing exercises, sit spots or sense walks.

11:45am: Song time. Come together to sing about what we have done in the woods today and reflect on the morning.

12pm: Session end. We will pack up our resources, but you are more than welcome to explore The Gravel Pit further or even have a picnic lunch!

The Gravel Pit is a nature reserve and is a lovely spot for a short walk. Do be aware that there is a large pond within the Gravel Pit area (although not adjacent to our site, so you do not need to be worried about wondering toddlers falling in!) and that the site is open to the public, so there may be dog walkers and others using the common land too.

Our safety rules to be aware of, and to share with your child as appropriate, are: look after yourself, look after others and look after nature. We use these rules to keep everyone safe, for example by explaining to children to stay within the bunting, to only pick plants where there are plenty, to show respect to the animals, to help others when they need it, etc.

The theory behind Forest School is that children are encouraged to take the lead, and show us what they would like to do. During sessions we hope that you will get fully involved and immersed as this will encourage and inspire your little one to do the same, as well as being great for your own mental health! While we are there to help facilitate experiences, it is you as the carer who is fully responsible for your child. There will be some resources and activities available for you, however often we find that the under fives are happiest crawling/ toddling/ clambering/ climbing on logs or trees and amongst the leaves, engaging in their surroundings and playing with the natural items they can find around them. We like to reflect during sessions, building on what the children are interested in week-on-week, so if there is something that has particularly fascinated you and your little one, please bring it to our attention so that we can think of ways to extend that interest the following week. Forest School is proven to have the most benefits when it is experienced frequently and so we would recommend coming as often as you are able to. Children are likely to feel more comfortable and confident once they are in an environment that they are used to, and for the adults, it's nice to have a catch up with familiar faces each week!

Forest School takes place in almost all weathers. Being outside, no matter the weather, is a wonderful learning opportunity for us all. The woods are very different, but equally exciting, interesting and awe-inspiring, in different weathers. By attending Forest School in the hot and cold, rain and shine, you are enabling your child to learn so much more than if they just went outside on "fine" days. The only times that we will cancel a session due to the weather is during high winds or if extreme weather warnings have been issued making it unsafe. If this is the case, we will give as much notice as possible via email, the website and our social media pages. We will try to add on an extra date during the season to ensure that Season Pass holders do not miss out.

The site is within the middle of a woodland and so the ground underfoot is uneven and can occasionally be a little boggy. Please note that we may be sitting on the floor and/ or log stumps during the session; please feel free to bring a camp chair if you need one. If you arrive by car, our basecamp is a short walk from the carpark. We would recommend bringing your baby in a carrier, rather than a pushchair, as it will be easier for you to access the site. If you need assistance accessing the site from your car then do let us know and we can put things in place to support you.

There is not a toilet on site. If your little one is toilet training, you are more than welcome to bring their potty, and if they use nappies, we would encourage you to bring a changing mat you don't mind using on the woodland floor. The nearest public toilets are a few minutes' drive away, behind Lamberhurst War Memorial Hall, The Broadway, TN3 8DB.

Little Foxes are a welcoming and inclusive group, valuing diversity and promoting kindness. We are Breastfeeding Friendly and will work with you to accommodate any additional needs that you or your child may have. Caring for the environment is at the heart of our business and we try to be as sustainable as possible. We would ask you to be mindful of this during sessions, cutting back on waste where possible and respecting our surroundings and the creatures within it.

What To Wear:

We will be outside for the whole session, whatever the weather. Please dress accordingly! We recommend covering toes, legs and arms all year round, to help protect skins from scratches and insect bites. Clothes which you are not too worried about getting dirty are best. This means that yourself and your child can play, without worrying about ruining favourite outfits. At Little Foxes, we do encourage participants to get as messy and muddy as they can- the benefits of this are huge. While this does mean lots of washing for you once you get home, the memories you make will be worth it! During the colder months we recommend both yourself and your child wearing waterproof trousers or all-in-ones in order to stop you getting damp and cold from the woodland floor. Fingerless woolly gloves with a thick waterproof pair of mittens on top works well during the winter months, or spare pairs of woolly gloves to change whenever they get wet. Warm hats and two pairs of socks are recommended too along with warm, waterproof boots. In the summer, do make sure you have sunhats and wear suncream. Light coloured clothes are best as they reflect the heat.

What To Bring (these are only suggestions- some may not be needed by your family):

Sun cream

Hat/ gloves

Waterproofs

Hand warmers (we recommend reusable ones which can be 'snapped' then boiled to soften them again)

Change of clothes

Drinks and snacks for your child and yourself- remember to drink plenty of water, especially on hot days!

Camp chair (if you will be unable to sit on the floor/ wooden tree stumps)

Nappies/ wipes/ changing mat

Payment Options:

There are going to be two different options when it comes to paying for Little Foxes Forest School. The most cost-efficient way to pay will be to buy a Season Pass. Each season we will offer a pass for you to come to as many of the sessions we are running during those three months as you would like to. Prices will vary by season, so please check the website for current details. Alternatively, you can pay for single sessions. Although this is more expensive in the long run, I do appreciate the flexibility of this option if you are particularly busy or have not tried Forest School or similar activities before.

If you buy a Season Pass, this will need to be paid for in advance, or within seven days of your initial session. If you choose to pay for sessions individually, this can be done either in cash at the session, or via online bank transfer within seven days of the session. In order to make sure that these sessions are able to go ahead, we do need at least 6 people to commit to a Season Pass prior to the sessions beginning.

We will require you to register your details with Little Foxes before attending Forest School. Once you have registered, we will keep your details and just ask you to inform us if anything changes. When you register, we will collect the necessary details to provide an invoice. Please either visit the website to download a registration form or contact us via email.

