Welcome to Forest School

In light of our current global pandemic and the many adaptations we face as a community, we have taken consideration to our nursery vision and asked ourselves “What do we want for the children here at Pitter Patters?”.

As most of you will know, outdoor learning is high on our list of opportunities for the children and the team members here, and we have several gardens for all age groups to access. We believe now, more than ever, children and adults need to experience the natural world and all it has to offer, to better their well-being, overall development and biological connection with nature. We have therefore made the decision to extend our Forest School provision and we feel very privileged that we have the opportunity to do this.

To allow us to expand these sessions we now have our very own Forest School teacher, Karen, who will run the sessions alongside the staff from our Big Toddler and Pre-School rooms.

The aim of this leaflet is to introduce you to Karen and provide further information on why we believe outdoor learning is so valuable to our children here at nursery.

Kind Regards

Lisa Grant-Colquhoun

Nursery Manager

My name is Karen Brenchley and I am the new forest school leader at Pitter Patters.

I have always loved being outside in nature and have been working with children in outdoor and environmental education for many years. I am a qualified Level 3 Forest School leader and have seen first-hand, many times, the huge positive benefits of Forest School and outdoor education for children, especially in terms of building their confidence and self-esteem. I am really excited about working with the children at Pitter Patters and want to share a bit about the Forest School ethos with you. You can find out more about Forest School using the below link:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=732181530868471>

**The philosophy**

Forest School is a philosophy which originated in Scandinavia and aims to take children outside and learn alongside nature. There are six main principles.

1. A long-term process with regular sessions at least once a week. Ideally it should include at least two seasons for the children to experience.
2. Allowing children to take supported risks taking to build resilience and confidence in different situations. This is especially effective when a child overcomes a challenge through play. Forest school introduces ways of tackling emotional and social risks as well as physical risks.
3. Promoting a holistic approach to nurture children’s social, emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual development. It is about the whole child and what they need.
4. Taking place in a natural environment with some trees or other natural area such as a beach. These environments are often more calming than an indoor space and change slightly with each visit as the weather and seasons change. This encourages exploration of ideas and helps build a connection with the external world and the child’s internal world.
5. Focusing on the children’s interests to engage them in learning. The needs of the children are the driving force behind Forest School which has the flexibility to allow a child to follow their own interests.
6. Delivered by a qualified Forest School practitioner who reflects constantly on their own practices and the needs of the children and provides an inspirational, structured and flexible programme to help children develop at their own pace. The Forest School leader assesses the risks of the environment and activities to ensure that children can safely try out “risky” activities such as cooking on a campfire.

**Connect**

**Play**

**Explore**

**Learn**

**Nurture**

**The benefits**

The benefits of Forest School are many and transformative. Forest School offers experiences and opportunities to learn in many ways and at a pace that suits all children. They find their own path and walk it their own way.

It works brilliantly with children who are anxious or who have low self-esteem and helps many children find their voice. There is no right or wrong, success or failure – just a chance to try things and see what happens. Real life problems can be considered, understood and possible solutions tried out.

Children find out how to form social connections at Forest School and become more independent, social, creative and healthy while absorbing all the benefits of fun, play, nature and the outdoors.

Research shows that children who regularly attend Forest School have better emotional understanding and increased problem-solving abilities. Communication skills and vocabulary improve more rapidly, while unwanted behaviours show a marked decrease and life for many children becomes calmer and more pleasant.

Big Toddler Sessions will run:

Tuesday PM

Thursday PM

Pre-School Sessions will run:

Tuesday AM

Wednesday AM

Thursday AM

**Practicalities.**

Forest School takes place whatever the weather, so children need to come with plenty of warm clothing as well as puddle suits and wellies.

Activities will take place in the outdoor spaces of Pitter Patter and at the beach. All the sites and activities are risk assessed in advance. Cooking on a campfire is a regular activity and will be planned to ensure that any dietary requirements are considered.