

A Guide to Forest School Training

Course Information 2018/19



Forest School is different from most other forms of 'environmental education' in that it involves regular sessions in the same woods and the activities are mainly determined by the children and are predominately play based.

The skillful Forest School leader will use the children's own interests to extend their knowledge and skills, thereby increasing the next generation's appreciation and care of the natural world.

The ethos is shared by thousands of trained practitioners across the UK and beyond. Its roots reach back to early years pioneers in outdoor learning and across the sea to Scandinavia.

Why choose Surrey Wildlife Trust?

Promoting the reconnection between people and their natural environment is at the heart of Surrey Wildlife Trust's Forest School ethos, and this is reflected in all areas of our courses.

We recognise the vital importance of promoting an understanding of the natural world and see the Forest School training programme as an ideal medium for delivery.

As the only local charity that is concerned solely with the conservation of all forms of wildlife, we have expertise in biodiversity protection, botanical surveys and habitat management plans. Being a local training provider, we are often able to support new leaders on a personal level throughout their training and in the establishment of their own Forest Schools.

We offer additional support in terms of free resources, regular mentoring sessions for students and onsite visits & observations.

Our trainers are experienced providers of environmental education, and have been delivering Forest School programmes to children in Surrey from schools, nurseries, youth and community groups for many years.

We are active members of the Forest School Association (FSA) and the local group. The Awarding body for our training course is Open College Network West Midlands.

In addition to Level 2 & 3 courses, we provide

a comprehensive CPD programme to support Forest School practitioners, which covers everything from First Aid to Tree Identification.

Not sure what to expect?

Why not attend one of our Forest School half-day taster experiences

9.30am-12.30pm, cost £26. Have a go at some of the activities and speak to experienced trainers about how you might develop a Forest School programme within your setting.

Contact outreach@surreywt.org.uk

Saturday 7th July 2018 at Pucks Oak Barn, Compton GU3 1EG

Friday 9th November 2018 at Nower Wood KT22 8QA

What is Forest School?

Forest School is a unique outdoor education programme run by qualified leaders. It gives children and young people the chance to explore, learn and discover at their own pace, developing their confidence and self-esteem in a safe and supportive space.

Which level of training should I choose?

There are different levels of training in Forest School and we provide the following courses:

Level 2

Level 2 is designed to qualify the learner to become a Forest School Assistant, enabling them to take a proactive role in helping a Forest School Leader plan and deliver a Forest School programme and supporting the learners.

Top Up Course

The Top-Up course is for those that already have a Level 2 qualification with Open College Network West Midlands and now want to gain the Level 3 certificate. This course is incorporated within our existing Level 3 courses, but with less guided tuition (and less cost!).

Contact us for further information about a Top-Up course or if you have a Level 2 qualification with another provider.

Level 2

Level 3 is designed to qualify the learner to become a Forest School Leader, able to set up and run a Forest School programme. Level 3 covers how to facilitate groups in a learner-centred way, and how to manage a Forest School site sustainably. It also covers the practical skills required of a Forest School practitioner. You do not need to have a Level 2 in order to complete Level 3.

We recommend you observe some Forest School sessions before beginning the course or attend one of our taster experiences, please see our website for more details.

Level 2 Award for Forest School Assistants:
£475.00

Dates & Locations

1st & 2nd and 29th & 30th October 2018 at Pucks Oak Barn, Compton GU3 1EG

Course description

- The course cost covers;
- 4 day training course covering the OCNWM units. This includes planning for and running
- your forest school; risk assessment, background to forest schools. Practical skills and

- woodland management including fire lighting, tool use, games, identification and use of
- woodland resources.
- Assistance with completing your portfolio and marking.
- Awarding Body Open College Network West Midlands

Course requirements

- Participants should be over 18 years old and have some experience of working with young people or adults, for example youth workers, teachers or teaching assistants.
- All participants must be DBS checked.
- Participants must be able to assist with 3 forest school sessions.
- Commitments (approx 60 hours)
- 4 days initial theory and practice.
- Assisting with planning and delivery of 3 forest school sessions.
- Completion of a booklet of evidence.

The course normally takes participants six months to complete although some have handed all the coursework in after a few months. It can take several months for the work to be marked and for the exam board to validate it and send certificates out. This course was really thorough; it covered all areas that were appropriate and relevant. It has the right amount of practical and theory, considering all areas of learning. Student on Level 2 course, May 2016

Level 3 Certificate for Forest School Leaders:

£900.00

Dates & Locations:

6th & 7th October and 3rd, 4th & 5th November 2018 at Nower Wood, Leatherhead KT22 8QA

- Skills weekend: dates TBC May'19 4th & 5th March, 1st April and 13th & 14th May 2019 at Nower Wood, Leatherhead KT22 8QA

- Skills weekend: dates TBC Sept'19

Course description

The course cost covers;

- 5 day training course covering the five OCN units. This includes planning for and running your forest school; policies and procedures, risk assessment, session planning. Theories of learning and development and background to forest schools. Practical skills and woodland management including fire lighting, tool use, games, identification and use of woodland resources.
- Mentoring sessions – a face to face opportunity to ask questions and receive advice on your portfolio work.
- Skills days. – two days assessing and consolidating skills.
- Portfolio advice and assessment.
Awarding Body Open College Network West Midlands

Course requirements

- Participants should be over 21 years old and have significant experience of working with
- young people or adults, for example youth workers, teachers or teaching assistants.
- All participants must be DBS checked
- Be able to deliver a six session forest school programme to a target client group
- When leading a Forest School you need a first aid qualification; this can be either First
- Aid at Work (3 days) or First Aid in the Outdoors (2 days). Due to the outdoor nature of
- the work the outdoor first aid qualification is recommended, especially if forest school
- sessions are to take place in remote locations. We regularly run First Aid courses as part of our CPD for Forest School practitioners, for more information email Sue at outdoor.learning@surreywt.org.uk
- Commitments (approx 180 hours)
- 5 days initial theory and practice
- 2 days skills weekend
- 1 assessment visit in your setting
- Completed portfolio of written tasks
- Optional mentoring days
- Setting up and running 6 forest school sessions

Finishing the course

The course normally takes participants a year to complete, although some have handed all the coursework in after a few months. It can take several months for the work to be marked and for the exam board to validate it and send certificates out.

What I need for the course?

You will need a full set of outdoor waterproof clothing and a pair of suitable boots, the majority of the course is spent outside whatever the weather. Further items like a camera/phone is advisable to take pictures for your portfolio. You will be sent full joining instructions when you have booked a place.

You need to arrange a woodland site and a client group to deliver your 'Introduction to Forest School' programme (min 6 sessions); it is not vital to have this prepared before the course, but it will help give context to your learning if you can picture your woodland and know a bit about your learners. Do bear in mind that the Forest School Association guidelines for quality provision are that each session is at least 2 hours long.

Skills weekend

About six months through the Level 3 course, we like to bring you back for a weekend to further assess and extend your skills, in particular cooking over a fire and shelter building.

It is also a great chance for you to share stories of where you are up to, things that have gone well, and how you have solved things that are more challenging. Depending on the time of year you may have the opportunity to sleep out in the woods!

"Both tutors are very competent, informative leaders who are very knowledgeable and fun to be with.

Skills taught were all useful and play ideas were invaluable."

Student on Level 3 course, June 2016

How do I book a place?

Please complete the booking form included in this guide and return to us with a deposit to secure your place on a course. We will then invoice you for the remaining balance a month before the course starts. Payment must be made before the start of the course. See our booking conditions included in this guide.

Partnership with Surrey County Council

For many years SWT has worked in partnership with Surrey County Council Early Years to promote and support establishing quality Forest School practice in local settings. We have been SCC's preferred training provider and until recently the Early Years department has been able to partially fund practitioners Forest School training but unfortunately this has been discontinued.

Tailored courses

SWT can offer and has in the past provided tailored Forest School courses at an individual settings or schools if there are sufficient numbers of staff (six plus) wanting to attend. This is a great training opportunity as it enables you to have a course delivered that is specifically tailored to your site and the children or young people you work with. For further information and the cost contact outreach@surreywt.org.uk

Taster sessions and further training events

SWT can provide half or full day taster sessions for schools and settings where we can introduce you and your colleagues to the theory and practice of Forest Schools. We also offer follow up training and support, running sessions in schools and advice on improving your site. For further information please contact outreach@surreywt.org.uk

Bookings and Admin:

Victoria Pinder

Direct Tel: 01483 663300

Email: outreach@surreywt.org.uk

website: surreywildlifetrust.org/forestschool

Adult courses booking conditions

Safety and first aid

All training activities run by the Surrey Wildlife Trust are run with safety as a priority, and the Outdoor Learning Officer is First Aid trained. There will be safety instructions where necessary as part of the session, which we expect all participants to follow. Please inform the bookings administrator of any dietary requirements or medication taken. Please bring any medication needed and make the course leader aware of where it is.

Clothing and Equipment

All participants should be adequately prepared for the outdoors. Clothing should be suitable for getting muddy/torn.

Winter: warm clothes and waterproofs.

Summer: hats, suncream and plenty of water should be brought; waterproofs if it looks like it may rain.

We recommend long trousers and long sleeved tops, even in the summer, to help prevent bites, scratches and ticks. Insect repellent may be applied if wished.

Footwear should be sturdy trainers or boots to reduce the likelihood of slips, trips and falls.

Inclement weather

Our training will run unless the weather is so bad it would be dangerous to do so. Some of the sites we use have access to a building if necessary and have toilets available.

Refreshments

The Forest School training lasts all day, so please bring a packed lunch and a drink, although it may well be that we will cook various treats over a campfire.

Refunds

Should it ever become necessary for the Outdoor Learning team to cancel a booking owing to circumstances outside the control of the Outdoor Learning Manager, for example because of severe weather, you will receive a full refund.

If you cancel more than 14 days before the training then you will receive a full refund.

If you cancel less than 14 days before the training you will be offered an alternative date if possible, but you will not receive a refund.

Variation of conditions

The Outdoor Learning team reserves the right to vary its booking conditions from time to time as necessary. Bookings will be subject to those conditions prevailing at the time of the issue of the booking form.

