

Forest School

Information Pack

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*Challenge, Development,
Education & Fun*

www.wolt.org.uk

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The Wiltshire Outdoor Learning Team

We, The Wiltshire Outdoor Learning Team (WOLT), want to use our experience and understanding of outdoor / adventurous activities to help develop young people. The Team has experience from Education, Youth Services, Business, Social Services and Outdoor Education. We have vast experience in working with a wide range of ages and abilities, from small children to corporate groups, and specialise in working with young people with challenging behaviour. Some of the activities we run include Forest School, archery, canoeing, first aid courses, team development days and many more! All our staff hold enhanced DBS checks.

What is Forest School?

Forest School is a process of developing confidence and self-esteem in a woodland environment. It offers regular opportunities to achieve and develop through hands on learning experiences, by building positive relationships, having time to improve communication, and by spending time in an outdoor environment. One week may consist of building a den and cooking on a fire, the next could be following animal tracks and learning how to use tools safely. Each week is different and participants are encouraged to come up with ideas and just give it a go!

Our aim is to deliver a professional and personal Forest School that creates a supportive environment which builds a respect for the outdoors, the forest, each other and oneself.

What makes our Forest School different?

We are a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (Registered No. 8840089) with a fantastically dynamic team. With our wide range of experience we have been able to develop a Forest School which truly engages, develops and challenges. We aim to challenge negative attitudes towards learning, improve teamwork, build resilience and improve communication, all of which are essential life skills. In contrast to mainstream education our team is almost entirely male, providing positive male role models for young people.

We work closely with other specialist organisations, including schools, charities, social enterprises and councils to continually develop the provisions we offer.

We are able to focus more on each student and have the ability to better support them due to our ratio of 1 staff member to 2-3 students. This is very important to us in helping those experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Who is this for?

Our Forest School groups are aimed at primary school pupils who may either be having difficulty with self-esteem, struggling within a classroom environment, at risk of exclusion or those who just need the chance to succeed or be inspired in an outdoor environment. Please contact us if you have other requirements, we have a 'can do' attitude!



"Your hard work and commitment has shone through in [student], she said she feels better about herself and seems to have bit of a different outlook on herself - from a self esteem issue that is fantastic for her and also for us as parents.

As you will know a little bit of help goes a long way in a little ones life in this day and age - I can definitely say you made an impact".

Duration

We can run one off or even part days, but most of our groups run from 5-6 weeks up to a year or more, usually from 9:30am to 2:30pm. Please contact us if you have other requirements or ideas.

Pre visit

We aim to visit each school before new students join us for the first time. This helps us to find out about each student, talk through any issue they have, and also to start building a relationship with them.

Support and session feedback

Forest School should be used as one part of targeted support for students experiencing difficulty with self-esteem, struggling within a classroom environment or at risk of exclusion. Other support could be ELSA sessions, speech and language therapy, counselling, play therapy etc.

After each session we send an evaluation to the school (plus photos if requested) highlighting progression, learning, observations and any concerns. We very much want to develop a two way dialogue between us and the school as this helps bring developments back into the classroom.

We expect each school to send a member of staff to accompany their student once per term – this helps to maintain the link between what is being achieved at Forest School and in the classroom.

Parent / carer involvement

Encouraging students to talk at home about Forest School is crucial in involving parents / carers. We sometimes invite parents / carers to join us at Forest School, see what has been achieved and get involved themselves, taste some of the food, and see photos of the action. Invites are sent out near the time.

Location

We have the ability to run Forest School groups at any suitable site, whether at a school, in a private woodland or anywhere else you suggest! Our main Forest School site is in Roundwood, 40 acres of beautiful private woodland located near Westbury in West Wiltshire. Roundwood is home to a variety of plants, trees and animals including deer, badger, squirrel and many more. It is one of the last remaining corners of the ancient forest of Selwood - the vast belt of woodland that in the 9th century stretched from the Thames Valley to Dorset.

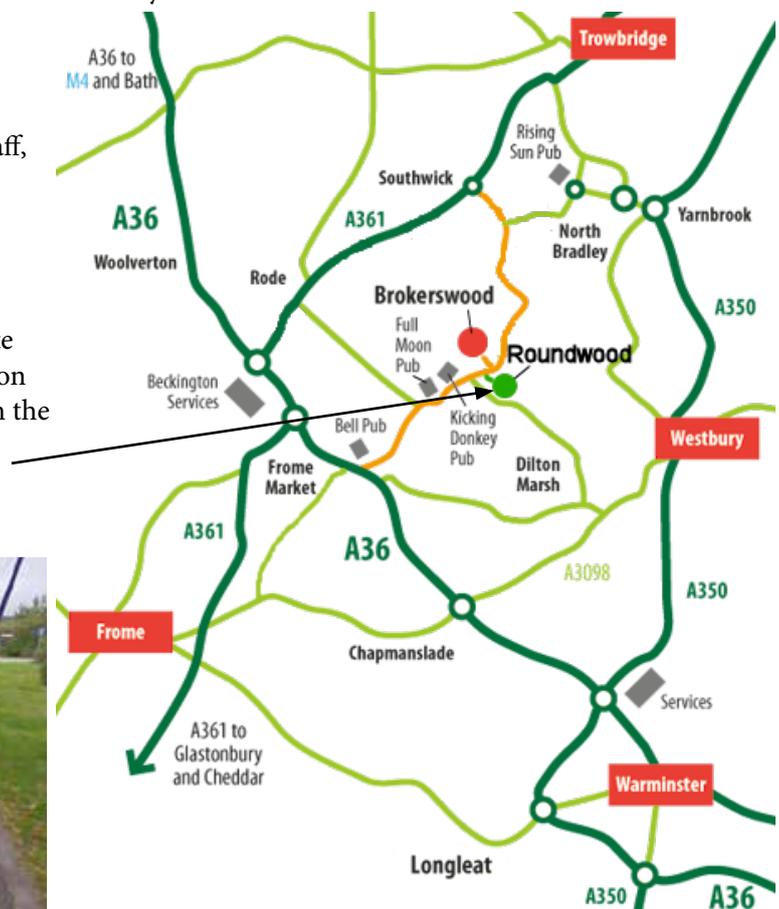
Transport to Roundwood

Schools are responsible for transport to and from Roundwood – some schools use taxis, members of staff, or parents / carers. We also have our own minibuses and with prior agreement can transport groups.

Directions

The entrance to Roundwood car park is through a gate 100m from the Brokerswood Country Park entrance on the opposite side of the road, near the crossroads with the tin church, see below.

Address - Brokerswood Road, BA13 4EH.



Clothing

Forest School is an all-weather outdoor activity, clothes will get wet, dirty and smelly - please wear old ones. Parents / carers are encouraged to look at the weather forecast each day and help their child choose suitable clothes. Best practice is to wear a t-shirt as a base layer and multiple layers on top of it. If they get too hot they can take some layers off.

Old clothes

- T-shirt / long sleeved top
- Jumper / fleece
- Trousers (no shorts)
- Waterproof coat (just in case)
- Wellies or walking boots

Extras

- Waterproof trousers
- Hat and gloves (winter)
- Warm socks (winter) - Cold feet are not fun! Wear at least one thick pair of socks, more if possible. Bring spares.
- Sun hat / cream (summer) - Essential, sunburn is unpleasant and can occur quickly without being aware of it.

Trousers are essential even during warm months due to the risk of being bitten by ticks. Keeping your skin covered will reduce the risk of this. See tick information sheet on page 6.

Food

Food and drink is supplied by us, which the students cook each week for lunch. We see lunch preparation as a key part of Forest School, it helps with communication and relationships, creativity and fire safety. Please do not send students with food, trying new things is something we encourage, and often find out they like something they previously didn't!

Please inform us on the consent form of any dietary requirements or allergies.



"..one of the keys to their success is the way in which they [The WOLT] develop individuals' often fragile self-confidence. They achieve this in a number of ways, by getting them to do what they are afraid to do but in a secure safe way and above all by reinforcing the concept that they are the only person on earth who can use 'their' ability."

Want to see our Forest School
in action?
Go to YouTube, type in
'WOLT Forest School' and enjoy!

To find out what other people think please go to www.wolt.org.uk and click on 'Testimonials'.

Medical conditions and Asthma

Please write all medical conditions on the consent form and give as much detail as possible. If needed we will contact you beforehand to discuss.

If the participant has asthma we recommend they have an up to date asthma action plan. It's a written record of what has been discussed and decided with their GP or asthma nurse about their asthma care. This is available on our website under 'Legal Info & Docs' if relevant. If used it significantly cuts the risk of an asthma attack that needs hospital treatment due to knowing what to do quickly.

Toilets

We have a full set of male / female toilets in Roundwood with sinks for hand washing.

Ticks

Ticks are active all year but more so during warmer months therefore trousers must be worn throughout the year. Please check your child's clothes and body on return home. Page 6 is a tick information sheet from Public Health England, this gives information about tick bite risks and prevention.

Health and safety

Our risk assessments are on our website at www.wolt.org.uk, for our policies please email ForestSchool@wolt.org.uk .

How to book

If you are interested in our Forest School and would like to book a place or to discuss whether it would be suitable please contact us - ForestSchool@wolt.org.uk or 07766 674062 / 07789 940971.

Frequently asked questions

Q. What are the benefits of Forest School?

A. Forest School helps develop confidence, self-esteem, communication skills and problem solving skills. It build resilience and stimulate creativity, spending time in nature has a positive impact on the ability to learn too!

Q. Is Forest School safe?

A. Yes, each activity is supervised and the safety rules are explained and must be followed. Forest School helps participants to assess risk themselves and make sensible decisions.

Q. Is Forest School for boys and girls?

A. Yes!

Q. Where do the students get dropped off and collected?

A. At the entrance to Roundwood. Our staff will meet students on arrival and be there at the end of the day.

Q. What if the student is ill and cannot attend?

A. Parents / carers should let their child's school know as soon as possible. Schools can phone 07766 674062 to inform us, please do this before 9:30am on the morning of Forest School.

Q. What if the weather is bad, will Forest School still be on?

A. Forest School will only be cancelled due to very high winds, lightning or heavy snow. We will phone schools and parents / carers as early as possible on the morning of Forest School if it will not run.

Q. Are you insured?

A. Yes, a copy of our policy is on our website - www.wolt.org.uk, click on 'Legal Info & Documents.'

Q. Do you run any activities during school time and holidays?

A. Yes, we run loads activities including archery, canoeing, tree climbing and our high roped Tarazn Trail just to name a few! If you would like to be kept up to date with the activities we offer please 'like' our Facebook page www.facebook.com/WiltshireOutdoorLearningTeam.



See our website for information on
other activities we run!
www.wolt.org.uk

Tick Information Sheet

What are ticks?

Ticks are small, spider-like creatures that feed on the blood of animals, including people. Depending on its development stage, the size of a tick varies. Nymphs are about the size of a poppy seed, while adult ticks look more like tiny spiders.

Where can you find them?

Ticks can survive in many places, but prefer moist areas with dense vegetation or long grass. The species most commonly found on people is *Ixodes ricinus*, more commonly known as the sheep or deer tick. They are usually found in woodland, grassland, moorland, heathland and some urban parks and gardens.

How do you come into contact?

Ticks don't jump or fly, but wait until an animal or person brushes past to climb on. They then bite to attach to the skin and start to feed on the blood. It may take several days to complete their blood meal, before they drop off. Ticks can be found throughout the year, but are most active between spring and autumn.

Main health risks

Ticks can transmit bacteria that cause diseases such as Lyme disease, which can lead to very serious conditions if left untreated. Symptoms of Lyme disease can include a circular rash, fatigue, and muscle and joint pain.

More serious conditions such as viral-like meningitis, facial palsy, nerve damage and arthritis can develop without treatment, so prevention and early detection are crucial. Lyme disease can be treated with a course of antibiotics.

Perform a tick check

Make it a habit to check your clothes and your body regularly for ticks when you're outdoors, and again when you get home. Tick bites may not hurt and you don't always notice you've been bitten, so make sure you thoroughly check yourself, your children and your pets.

Ticks prefer warm, moist places on your body, especially the groin area, waist, arm pits, behind the knee and along hair lines, so look out for anything as tiny as a freckle or a speck of dirt. Take simple steps to avoid coming into contact with ticks:

- Walk on clearly defined paths
- Avoid dense vegetation
- Wear light-coloured clothing so ticks are easier to spot and brush off
- Use repellents such as DEET

Help us monitor ticks

PHE monitors changes in tick distributions and investigates the drivers for change. Help us monitor ticks by participating in our nationwide surveillance via the Tick Recording Scheme (TRS). You can send in any ticks you come across, which helps us to update our knowledge of British tick species, their spread across the country and detect unusual species.

If you have been bitten

Being tick aware by knowing what ticks look like, where they can be found, and practicing prevention behaviours will help you to avoid tick bites. However, if you do get bitten, removing the tick quickly and correctly can help to reduce any potential risk.

- Remove the tick as soon as possible
- The only safe way to remove a tick is to use a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, or a tick removal tool
- Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Pull upwards slowly and firmly, as mouthparts left in the skin can cause a local infection
- Once removed, apply antiseptic to the bite area and keep an eye on it for several weeks for any changes
- Contact your GP if you begin to feel unwell and remember to tell them that you were bitten by a tick

