21st August 2026

Dear parents/carers

We are providing you with some information about forest schools and our 2026/2027 sessions. We hope these answer some of the questions you and your child(ren) may have. The last page regarding clothing is particularly important!

If your child has their sessions first thing in the morning they will need to come to school dressed ready for forest school (except for their wellies as they should be kept at school), however please send a bag to put their forest school things in at the end of the session. If their session is after lunch, they should bring their things with them and they will get changed after lunch and will come home in their forest school things, except their wellies.

If you have any further queries or concerns you can contact myself, Miss Halls on Dojo (either school) or via email at claire.halls@barford.norfolk.gov.uk for Barford Primary School or claire.halls@bawburgh.norfolk.sch.uk for The Bawburgh School.

Forest school ethos and principles

Here at Barford Primary School our sessions are weekly throughout the school year in all seasons and weather is more of a danger than it is beneficial (Usually is the gusts are above 39+mph or lightening is striking).

Things forest school is great at promoting include;

- ✓ a connection between children and nature
- ✓ social skills
- ✓ holistic development (development of the whole person) including their resilience, confidence, independence, creativity, self-esteem, and emotional intelligence
- ✓ ability to identify and manage risks

Experiences are child led, and we can meet the child where they are and scaffold their learning depending on their learning styles, preferences, schemas, pace of learning and individual needs.
Processes, skills, and experiences are celebrated, and time is given to practise rather than the focus being on an outcome or target.

Activities at forest school

Although experiences are child led and chosen, there are continuous provision activities as well as additional new and planned activities provided for the children to choose from if the wish to.

Continuous provision activities are freely and consistently available. Especially all that the natural site itself has to offer such as natural changes & processes that occur. Other examples are the mud kitchen, digging pit, and music area.
Planned activities that are provided may only be prepared for a session or a couple of sessions, which are available if and when the children choose to access them are

chosen and organised based on a range of factors such as;

- being linked in with the curriculum and to what each class is currently learning
- previous learning that forest schools can help to embed and/or extend
- tailored to the children's interests and support the depth of the children's knowledge and skills
- the natural world such as the seasons, weather or animal or plant development stages

Other experiences will be introduced gradually or may be available on rotation such as tool use, fire lighting, cooking, water play, whittling, crafts, and sensory play trays.

We are also using the NOLA scheme (National outdoor learning award) to track children's development and achievements particularly around social and emotional skills and can vary in how long it takes depending on each child. The WILD Passport is also being used for their tool, rope, fire, shelter, and nature skills and is designed to be used throughout a child's time whilst they are at primary school.

Snacks/toasting/cooking items over the campfire are often a part of our sessions. We haven't found any combination of allergies/dietary requirements we haven't been able to meet yet and often manage to ensure that the whole class can have the same things if they choose to. As such Bawburgh forest school is a sesame, soya, avocado, aubergine, dairy, beansprout, nectarine and nut free zone, and although we can't control the environment, it is also a tree nut and egg eating free zone (we definitely have birds and trees which produced nuts but we don't eat either and supervise them carefully)!

Being in nature

To look after and respect nature, we will work towards the Countryside code, the Country code, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

As such we;
-take steps to protect wildlife, their habitats, and homes/shelters
-try our absolute best not to disturb wildlife. We will slowly build our noise level as we enter the site to make wildlife aware of our presence
-observe but not disrupt the actions of any wildlife (unless legally coming to their aid)
-we will leave everything we find in the Forest School site, at the Forest School site, and replaced it back to where we found it
-enjoy plants where they are rather than picking/uprooting plants unnecessarily
-respect each other, the environment, and all living things in and around it
-take all litter and any objects we brought with us, back with us
-be mindful when/if having a fire alight

We have been working had to nurture our forest school site and the children have been introduced to a wide range of existing inhabitants, new arrivals, and visitors. We have also raised and observed many animals raising their young.
As much of our time is spent in the natural world, we frequently undertake habitat improvement and wildlife friendly activities.

Taking risks

The site is an outdoor space that provides opportunities to take risks whilst supported. These are appropriate risks, to build danger awareness and management skills. Children (and adults!) are supported to develop and practise their own ability to identify risks. Then move on to assessing those risks, not just based on the risk itself, but the risk vs benefit balance, followed by how to manage risks.

There are risks about the site itself that your child(ren) may encounter at forest school. For example, thorns or stinging nettles, although we remove the majority of these. If you child does encounter these, we will wash the area with clean water & may provide a cool pack to help reduce the irritation.
They are likely to find insects and other living things in the area such as bees or spiders but will support the children to learn about these through observation rather than handling. If contact is made, we will ensure hands are washed and provide any necessary first aid or other treatment.

Litter & other unwanted items can also be found in digging pits, but children are frequently reminded not to touch these but inform an adult who will remove them. The site has a pond, and children are supported in knowing how to keep safe around water. We do have several cats who we know visit the site, we do check for faeces before every session but cannot guarantee we can remove all of this (they may leave this under plants and it is difficult to check under every plant or leave this is between us checking and bringing the children up). If any contact occurs then thorough cleaning will undertaken.

Many of the forest schools' core skilled activities such as fire lighting and tool work also involve risk but these activities are undertaken after careful assessment of each child's needs and start with 1:1 support with the forest school leader.
Please be aware that having been using tools, your child may at times bring home items they have made. Although we support the children, these items are made by themselves and they may have sharp angles/sides, not be sanded down fully, or have screws/nails poking out in some places as they are still learning how to construct items.

In the rare circumstance your child comes home, and you find a tick on their body, the advice is as follows;
With cleaned, long pointed tweezers, grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible, pull the tick out without twisting & trying not to squeeze its body. Clean the skin with antiseptic. Try to save the tick in a container & if any symptoms develop later, take it with you to the doctors.
Tick bites are usually painless so will often not be noticed until they are seen but they can result in a rash and three diseases (the most common being Lyme disease, which can be treated with antibiotics). Not all ticks are infectious so please don't panic. Most people encounter ticks from their cat or dog carrying them into the garden, but they can also be found in woodlands or other natural areas. Wearing long sleeves, trousers and boots helps protect against this.

What will my child need to wear?

For safety reasons children (& adults) need to wear long sleeves & trousers all year, as well as wellington boots or sturdy ski/walking boots that are at least ankle height.

We do have a number of spares for days when things get forgotten, however we cannot guarantee we will have enough of the right sizes available. We will take all steps possible to support children to join in but unfortunately for safety reasons, if we do not have appropriate spares available then any child without the essential items will have to join another class in school rather than participating in forest school.

It is recommended that waterproofs are available, this is not essential but is recommended for a number of reasons; to protect clothing, to allow children to fully engage without being concerned about mess or being wet, to prevent children getting cold because they are wet, and to provide an added layer of protection from insects and rough foliage.

You can do this is a number of ways depending on what your child feels most comfortable in.

Here are the most popular options for you to consider;

Light weight waterproof separates or puddlesuit

- Pro's; Flexible to use through the year as they can be used straight on top of the school uniform, or with additional layers in colder weather. Usually fairly cheap. Fairly easy to put on and off. Easy to clean & dry.
- Con's; Onesie's can be tricky for toileting, whereas separates can mean mud gets between the layers!







Thicker lined waterproof separates or ski suits

- Pro's; Children don't need to put so many layers on underneath as it gets colder. Children often find the lining more comfortable.
- Con's Trickier to wash and dry. Too warm to use across the year. Often more expensive.

Other items

Arrangements regarding hats, gloves, scarves, sun creams, and jewellery are the same for any other day at school however we do recommend that gloves are waterproof.

As soon as hands in gloves touch anything wet, they get cold extremely quickly and wet gloves only make it worse. Children with wet, cold hands are not typically happy.