



Level 3 Forest School Leader General Training Information



What is Forest School?

Forest School is a unique philosophy and approach to outdoor play and learning. It involves using the environment and natural resources as a setting and stimulus for learning. Forest School practitioners use teaching and learning strategies that aim to promote confidence, independence, empathy, social skills, self esteem and intrinsic motivation.

How Forest School is different

Unlike one-day events and many environmental and outdoor/ adventurous activities, Forest School works with children/ young people in the outdoors over an extended period of time and aims to promote their holistic development. Forest School is run by qualified Forest School Leaders, together with other staff who are well versed on the Forest School principles and ethos. At Forest School there is a higher than normal staffing ratio and learners are introduced to responsible risk taking and encouraged to participate in engaging, motivating and achievable activities. The learning during Forest School sessions is principally child-led and based on observations by the leader and other adults which lead to appropriate interventions in order to develop the learning within and between sessions. The Forest School approach focuses on the 'process' of learning rather than the 'product' and in this way all learners can achieve success; building confidence and self esteem. The outdoor environment, particularly woodland, provides many opportunities for learners to explore their own preferred learning styles whilst building a long term relationship with the natural world.

The training

The Forest School Leader Award is a Level 3 qualification (A Level standard). Verified by Liminalis Ltd., and accredited by ITC First, the training provides the practitioner with the skills and knowledge to risk assess, set up and manage a Forest School site. It equips them to plan and safely facilitate challenging, learner led, Forest School programmes with a range of client groups in line with the Forest School ethos and principles. The training covers 5 units of study worth 18 credits at Level 3, requiring the completion of a portfolio of evidence and a group and site-specific handbook.

Your tutor: Charlotte Atkinson is an experienced headteacher and a qualified Level 3 Forest School practitioner and trainer. She has experience of leading Forest School sessions with children aged 2-11 years. She is a Forest School Association (FSA) endorsed trainer and trainer assessor. Charlotte provides training, guidance and support in setting up and running Forest School as well as practical delivery of sessions and support with bid-writing and site design.



Entry criteria

To do the course you must:

- ✓ Be aged 21 years or over (by the end of the course);
- ✓ Be a qualified teacher, play-worker, youth-worker or support worker (to Level 3 equivalent) OR an appropriate Level 2 with at least 2 years experience of working with your chosen client group in a leadership capacity;
- ✓ Hold a current DBS certificate;
- ✓ Have access to a group with whom you will run a 6-week 'Introduction to Forest School' Programme.

Course Content

The Forest School Leaders Award consists of 18 ITC credits contained in five units of study:

- 1. Forest School Programmes: Practical Skills** – This unit covers aspects of how to use the outdoor environment for learning and how to teach a range of practical woodland skills to others.
- 2. Forest School Programmes: The Woodland Environment** - Understanding the structure, diversity and management of a wooded area.
- 3. Forest School Programme: Learning and Development** - Looking at theories of learning and how to support holistic development. Discussing the importance of play and how to raise self-esteem in learners.
- 4. Forest School Programmes: Planning and Preparation** - Covering elements of the preparation needed to establish your own Forest School, including policies and procedures, risk and communication.
- 5. Forest School Programme: Delivery** – Aimed at delivering and evaluating Forest School sessions.

Venue: a beautiful, privately owned woodland in the village of Wilby in Suffolk (IP21 5LT)

Estimated Course Commitment

Part of the course involves identifying a suitable site, establishing and running 6 Forest School sessions. This includes creating a specific Forest School handbook for your site and group of learners. In addition to the taught element (approx. 96 hours – see above), the course involves approximately 84 hours of self-directed learning. This includes research, practical assignments and a completion of course portfolio including written assignments, photographs and other evidence of your learning. The course takes approximately 10 months to complete.

Teaching Methods

During the face-to-face training days a variety of teaching methods are used including:

- Presentation with follow up discussion for many of the theoretical aspects of the course
- Instruction/ demonstration with opportunities to practice for many of the practical/ skills based elements of the course.

Resources

During the initial 6 days and 3 practical skills days we provide all the necessary tools and safety equipment for use by the learners. We ensure that they are appropriate and in good working condition. Learners need to come with a pair of safety boots, outdoor clothing (including waterproofs) and a camera (optional but recommended). We provide a journal, a course file and reference material or sources for all the theoretical topics covered that participants can refer to for their learning and written assignments. We also provide a library for learners to access during the face to face sessions.

Course Programme

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| <i>The 6-day initial training</i> | The initial element of the training comprises a combination of practical and theory. Learners will need to come prepared for both indoor and outdoor learning every day and in all weathers. Each day will commence at 9am and finish at approximately 5pm. | 21 st , 22 nd , 28 th and 29 th September and 5 th and 6 th October 2021 |
| <i>Interim tasks</i> | Learners will need to work on some introductory assignments, practice their practical skills and consider where and when they will run their 'introduction to Forest School' programme and who with. | Before Practical Skills Assessment Days |
| <i>The 3-day Practical Skills Assessment Days</i> | Learners will be assessed on their practical and tool skills, as well as their leadership and group-working skills. This element of the course will also include a personal tutorial session. | 6 th – 8 th December 2021 |
| <i>Outdoor First Aid Training</i> | In order to qualify as a Level 3 Forest School Leader, learners will need to hold a 2 day Outdoor/Forest School First Aid course which will equip them with the skills and strategies needed to care for the infants, children and adults involved both in indoor and outdoor activities. | Participants to arrange. Course available autumn term 2021 |
| <i>Handbook and initial session plans/ RAs</i> | Learners will need to write/ update a set of policies and procedures for running Forest School. They will need to plan their introductory session and produce relevant risk assessments for this. | Before start of introductory programme/ tutorial |
| <i>Tutorial</i> | A one-day group tutorial on coursework portfolio | Date to be arranged – spring term 2022 |
| <i>Introduction to Forest School Programme (6 sessions min.)</i> | Learners will need to plan and run a short Forest School Programme with a small group of approx. 8-16 children/young people in their own setting. Each session needs to be a minimum of 2 hours in length and run with the same group of learners over consecutive weeks. Learners need to be accompanied by at least one other adult (on site) or two adults if they are leaving the grounds of the school/setting. | During spring/summer term 2022 |
| <i>The assessment of Forest School delivery</i> | Learners will be observed delivering a session working with their chosen client group. Session plans, evaluations and risk-benefit assessments will be assessed at this point. | To be arranged – during spring/summer term 2022. |
| <i>Coursework Portfolio</i> | Learners will need to complete a coursework portfolio for the five areas of learning: Learning and Development, Practical skills, woodland environment, planning a Forest School programme and delivery of a Forest School programme. The evidence comprises written work, photographic evidence, practical demonstration and assessments. | To be worked on throughout the training. Hand-in of portfolios 10 months after start date: 21 st July 2022 |
| <i>New Forest School Leader Skills Development Day</i> | An optional day for new Forest School Leaders (or those who have recently completed their training) to attend to practise and improve their practical skills for working with learners at Forest School. | To be arranged – autumn term 2022. |

Assessments and Coursework Portfolio

The assessments which take place during the training:

- Interim assignments (normally two written assignments completed between the initial training days and practical skills days)
- Practical Skills Assessment (during the practical skills days)
- Delivery Assessment (of your Forest School Leadership during your 'Introduction to Forest School' programme)

Learners have to complete a coursework portfolio containing evidence for the five units which includes a number of written assignments and a site and group-specific handbook of policies and procedures. Feedback from the interim assignments, personal tutorials during the practical skills assessment and a group tutorial at the end of the course assist learners with the writing of assignments. Further support is available via email.

First Aid

Before you can qualify as a Level 3 Forest School Leader you must also hold a relevant Outdoor/Forest School First Aid (OFA) Qualification. This is a 2-day course which equips you with skills and strategies to care for the infants, children and adults involved both in indoor and outdoor activities (a standard 1 day Paediatric First Aid or First Aid at Work certificate is not sufficient). If you do not have this qualification, there are a number of first aid providers that offer the course and a course that you can book onto in Wilby during the autumn term of 2021 (dates tbc). Typical costs are £120 per person.

Delivery Assessments

Participants on the course are assessed for their skills in leading Forest School sessions. This assessment takes place at your Forest School site. An additional charge of £75.00 plus 45p mile is levied for participants working outside a 50 mile radius of the training venue.

Course Costs

£925 for the full course which includes enrolment and accreditation fees with ITC First, verification by Liminalis Ltd, one year's FREE subscription to the Forest School Association (FSA) and the provision of a course file, training resources and support. Course costs include refreshments on all training days but exclude meals and first aid training.

Interested?

If so, please return the attached 'Expression of Interest' form to head@charlottesforestschool.co.uk. You will then be told if you have been accepted on the course and will be sent a pack of registration and consent forms. These must be returned by (along with a £50 deposit) in order to secure your place on the course. Please note that places are limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Tutor:

Charlotte Atkinson

Accrediting Body:

ITC First (<https://www.itcfirst.org.uk/>)

Support:

Charlotte Atkinson: 07879 653488 head@charlottesforestschool.co.uk