

# FODC Forest Schools Programme



Photo: Florencecourt Primary School

Information



Photo: St. Joseph's PS Drumquin



- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council have partnered with **Cuilagh Lakelands Global Geopark** and **Lough Erne Landscape Partnership** to deliver a Forest Schools Programme alongside the **Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA)**.
- The Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) has been developing and delivering outdoor learning programmes for schools, nurseries and youth organisations across Northern Ireland since 2008. They have trained hundreds of teachers to become accredited Forest School Level 3 Leaders in the process.
- In the past 2 years, NIFSA have supported the outdoor education of over 21,000 children.

# The Forest Schools Programme



- Every school/group will become actively involved in outdoor learning.
- Encourage local school children to regularly visit their local Council Park or school green space.
- The park/forest/green space becomes the children's outdoor classroom.
- Following the programme, children have increased environmental awareness and have developed socially and intellectually.

# Feedback from the Forest Schools Programme

- The forest provides freedom and **extensive learning opportunities**, especially for children with learning difficulties.
- Even the quietest, most reluctant children were able to **find their voices** in Forest School.
- Improved communication, **problem-solving**, teamwork and increased resilience.
- Reduced behavioural issues.
- Develops **extra-curricular skills** outside classroom.
- **Inclusive**, creative activities are **stimulating** and suitable for all.
- Provides a natural **sensory experience**.
- Develop a connection with outdoor world that promotes **eco-friendly** choices.



# Play Strategy



- ‘Play Strategy’ actively promotes ‘free play’ for those involved.
- Gives kids ideas on what fun activities they can do in their local park with little or no money.
- Active play encourages imagination.
- Parents said their children were ‘asking to go for walks and get outside more frequently to share what they learned during Forest School sessions.’

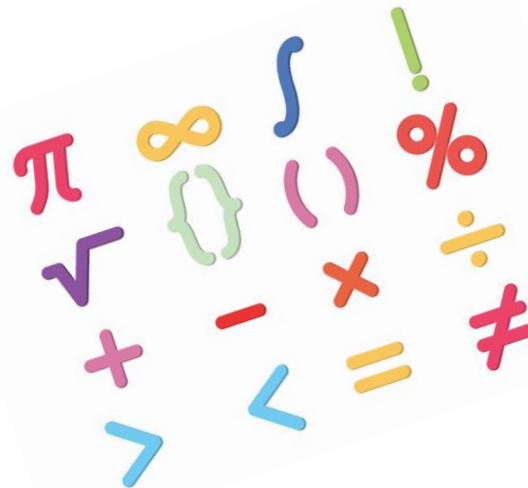
# Awards

- Following group visits to your chosen outdoor site (4 practical sessions over 2 days), the school/organisation and children receive an **official NIFSA Forest School plaque.**
- Following completion of assignments and training (5 online Zoom sessions), a teacher will become qualified as a **Level 3 Forest School Leader.** This teacher can then train other staff in the organisation to conduct Forest School sessions.



# Curriculum Links

- Mathematics and Numeracy - counting, pattern making, symmetry, measuring trees and much more.
- The Arts - making pictures from natural materials on the ground, weaving and hapa zome (leaf printing).
- All other areas of the curriculum can be taught outside e.g., Literacy, Science, World Around Us, etc.



# What you will receive as a Forest School

- 10 successful schools or youth organisations will be selected.
- **Blended Learning - Forest School Leader Award Level 3 Training** (4 practical sessions over 2 days and 5 online Zoom sessions to cover the theory) for one or two members of staff in your chosen Forest School site. Sites could include school grounds, Council Park, Geopark site, Forest Park etc. (It needs to be in the Fermanagh and Omagh District area).
- **Forest School Starter Kit Bag.**
- Assistance in the development of a dedicated Forest School site.
- An entry in the Forest School Awards Directory to promote your Forest School activities.
- **Official Forest School plaque.**
- Membership to Forest School Awards website that gives information on other Forest Schools in your area, lesson plans, latest research, literature, Forest School products and much more.



# Application

- To apply, please fill out the application form on Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Biodiversity webpage.
- Once complete, save the form as a pdf.
- Submit your form by emailing it to [biodiversity@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:biodiversity@fermanaghomagh.com)
- If you have any queries please contact the above email address or phone 0300 303 1777.



We look forward to receiving your application.