

Guidance for Planning & Delivery of Introductory 6-week Forest School Programme

As part of the level 3 Forest School Practitioner training for Module 4 & 6, you are required to plan and deliver a 6-week introductory Forest School Programme.

A Forest School programme:

You will need to work with a small group of children/young people in an outdoor setting over a minimum of 6 weekly sessions.

The weekly sessions should:

- Be at least 1 ½ hours each week;
- Have a week in between the sessions;
- Be attended by the same group of children/young people, each week, for the duration of the introductory programme.

Planning your introductory 6-week Forest School Programme

Children –

You will need a small group of children/young people to work with. They could be from a school, youth group or other organisation.

You will need to get information to the children and their parents on what the FS programme is about and what they will need to wear.

You will also need some background information on the children who will be attending and what your aims for the FS programme are in order to build in some progression into your planning.

You will need to have parental consent and medical details for each child attending. If you are intending on taking photographs of the children you will need permission from their parents to do so.

Site –

You will need an outdoor site. This can be attached to school/organisation you are working with or be a nearby woodland. You will need the landowner's permission for the programme generally and for any specific activities such as fire-lighting.

Staffing –

FS normally works with closer ratios of adults to children. As such, depending on the size of the group you are working with you will need to have appropriate staffing ratios to suit.

You will need to work with *at least one other person* during your introductory FS programme. This is for child protection reasons as well as for health and safety reasons. This extra member of staff could be another student from the training course, a teaching assistant, parent helper or adult volunteer.

Insurance –

You will need to be insured through your own organisation or the school/group providing the children. You will need to check the extent of the insurance cover (it may not cover you for fire, tools, taking children off site etc.) and plan your introductory FS programme accordingly.

Risk Assessments –

You will need to carry out the following risk assessments for the introductory FS programme:

- One Site Risk Assessment per site used during the introductory FS programme;
- A Daily Risk Assessment for each session;
- Activity Risk Assessments – these can either be done as one overall risk assessment covering all the activities which will be done during the introductory programme. Alternatively the relevant activities can be included in the daily risk assessments.

Risk assessment forms should be completed in pen and signed by you.

Forest School Health & Safety Handbook –

You will need to have a FS handbook in place before running your introductory FS programme. This will include your daily operating procedures, accident and emergency procedures and all relevant policies including child protection and health & safety.

Emergency Bag –

You will be expected to put together a dedicated Emergency Bag for use during your introductory FS programme, the contents of which must be suitable for your site, for your group and the activities you have chosen. It will likely include:

- First Aid kit
- Medical details
- Other emergency equipment.

This bag should be in a prominent location during all your FS sessions.

BEFORE the start of the introductory FS programme:

You will need to complete the Practical Skills Assessment before starting on your introductory FS Programme.

The paperwork which needs to be in place before you run your introductory FS programme:

- Current First Aid certificate
- Current CRB Disclosure (or letter from school stating that they have an up to date disclosure for you)
- FS Handbook
- Programme & Session plans
- Risk assessments

Being assessed with others working on the same FS programme

It is acceptable to work with other students from the training course and to be assessed at the same time.

Both candidates will need to be acting in a leadership capacity throughout the programme and will need to be assessed on this basis.

Forest School Delivery Assessments

You will be assessed leading a FS session. Specific dates are given during the training course for Delivery Assessments and you will be expected to run one of your sessions to coincide with these dates. This may require you to set up a one-off reunion or extra date with the group of children to coincide with the assessment dates.

We will contact you all by email requesting which one of the delivery assessment dates you would like to be assessed on and create an assessment schedule for the whole training group.

You will be assessed by one of our team of assessors, who will come out to your site and see you working with the children/young people. The assessor will need to see the correct paperwork in place before the start of the assessment. They will observe around 1 hour of your session and will then need 15 – 30 mins for questions and debrief. You will need to make your supporting staff (parent helpers, volunteers or other staff) aware of this so that they can take over for you and give you the space for the questions and debrief time.

The Delivery Assessments

The assessors will, through observation, evidence of written work and verbal questioning assess you on the following:

- Responsible attitude to Health & Safety, including
 - Planning
 - Procedures
 - Emergency bag
- Leadership of the group
 - Suitable location
 - Choice of activities
 - Management of behaviour
 - Appropriate language
- Emotional and Pastoral support
 - Providing opportunities for children/young people to talk
 - Encouraging emotional language
 - Setting up a safe emotional environment