

Forest School at Northwick

Here at Northwick we have been enjoying weekly Forest School sessions we most hubs of children. We have enjoyed being outside in both the sunshine and the rain and have completed lots of fun activities.

The children have really enjoyed climbing the trees, playing on the rope swings and building their own dens. We have also taught the skills of whittling sticks with potato peelers and lighting fires with fire strikers.

The Forest School site has been decorated with paracord crafts and we have even planted flowers in old wellies and hung them in a beautiful display along the fences. Some children had the opportunity to plant vegetables too and we are hoping for a crop of tomatoes, peppers and marrow!

How can you enjoy Forest School at home?

Many of the activities that we are doing in school can also be completed at home so why don't you give some of these ideas a try with your adults:

Build a bug hotel

Encourage insects to your garden by building them their very own residence using planks of wood or old pallets or crates piled up with bricks between the layers.

Your child can fill the gaps between the layers with things to make their visitors at home, such as cardboard tubes, shredded paper, feathers and pebbles, and keep checking every day to see who has moved in.

Potato peeler whittling

Whittling sticks is a great outdoor activity that can be almost meditative, and providing a potato peeler rather than a knife makes it much safer.

Your child can use the peeler to whittle the bark off a stick, and then use felt tip pens to decorate it. Stick a feather to the end, and it becomes a magic wand

Whittling helps hand-eye coordination, and decorating the whittled sticks promotes creativity and imagination.

Flower crowns

This is a lovely activity for creative kids, and gives them opportunities to role-play being fairies, woodland nymphs or royalty.

Go for a walk and collect flowers, leaves and grasses along the way, which your child can then weave into a nature-inspired crown. They could make a classic daisy chain garland or knot grasses to create a wreath.

Build a den

Building a den is a brilliant back-to-nature challenge that will awaken your child's inner caveman, and it's a great project to get stuck into with a friend or sibling.

Find some thick, long sticks and challenge your child to create their own shelter, either by leaning them up against a tree, or by lashing them together with string at the top for a tipi-style den.

You could take an old sheet out with you to give their den-building more scope.

This is a good test of problem-solving skills that involves your child working out how to balance the sticks and make them stay standing, as well as providing an opportunity to be physically active.

Woodland dragons

Your child may well have played with chalks on pavements, but giant chalks are also good for drawing on trees.

The textured bark is really satisfying to draw on, helping children develop fine motor skills, pencil grip and mark-making, as well as creativity.

Try looking for knots in trees that look like dragons' eyes, and using the chalks to draw on the surrounding area: the bumpy bark makes brilliant dragon skin.

Giant bubbles

This hands-on science activity is much more fun than blowing bubbles from a tiny pot.

Combine six cups of water, one cup of washing-up liquid, and half a tablespoon of glycerine (the magic ingredient, available from chemists).

Tie a piece of string of any length into a circle, dip it into the bubble mix and waft it around to make giant bubbles.

Your child can experiment with how much to mix the solution to make the best bubbles, and see which weather conditions are the best for bubble-blowing.

