



The Lenches Pre-school  
Church Lench Village Hall  
Main Street  
Church Lench  
Evesham, WR11 4UE

# The Lenches Pre-school Group



## Forest School

### Information pack for parents

‘Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.’

**Not all classrooms have four walls**



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## What is Forest School?

Forest School is an outdoor learning experience that originated in Sweden and quickly spread around other Scandinavian countries. Very young children would be taken out into forests to be taught about nature and explore the natural environment using stories, songs and hands on experiences. The use of the outdoors on a regular basis was used to develop confidence and self-esteem without the pressure of a more formal classroom.

Children involved in Forest School sessions are noticeably better at concentrating and being involved in activities than being inside the classroom. Children can play for longer periods of time, with less annoyance or interruptions of each other. Forest School encourages children to develop stronger personal, social and emotional skills, equip children to be able to work in groups and to have high self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities.

Forest School sessions also provide children with the opportunities to manage supported risk appropriate to their environment. During carefully planned activities, children will have the opportunities to use tools such as saws, fixed and folding blade knives, drills, mallets, as well as learning to build fires and lighting them using fire steels. All activities are carried out under the close supervision of trained Level 3 Forest School Leader and staff members.

Activities are dependent on the completion of an experience and activity risk benefit assessment.

## Key features of Forest School:

- The use of a natural outdoor environment
- Child-led approach to children's learning which is fun and unhurried
- Long term programme that allows repetition where children come into contact with nature using all their senses
- Builds children's confidence and self-esteem as they are responsible for making their own decisions and are carefully supported to achieve it
- Allows every child to have a voice, especially those who find it difficult to communicate in a more conventional learning environment
- A high adult to child ratio allows children to undertake new experiences whilst taking appropriate risks
- Supports personalised learning.

## Forest School at The Lenches Pre-school

We are very fortunate to have use of Church Lench Village Hall and The Yates Community Orchard in the village for our Forest School sessions.

The Orchard was donated to the community by Mr and Mrs David Jones OBE, and in June 2007 was opened by the HRH the Duke of Kent.



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The Orchard is 5 minutes' walk from the school and follows public footpath. The site contains many areas where children of our pre-school can learn and explore in a safe environment. There are many fruit trees (variety of apple, plum and pear), a fire pit area, a mud kitchen and den building site, shelter, picnic benches and the beehives. Next to the orchard there is a small woodland area, that children can also explore. The site is full of wildlife. We love doing minibeast hunts, and in a past we spotted pheasants, rabbits, foxes, monk jacks and dears there. Children learn about flora and fauna and how to look after the world around us.

The Yates Community Orchard is looked after and maintain by the Lenches Sports Club and the local community.

Forest School sessions are open for all children who are over 3 years old and who are fully toilet trained. Children are guided down safely to the orchard, wearing hi vis jackets holding to a walking rope and being supervised by staff at all times.

Before any child participates in Forest School, health and safety considerations are of paramount importance! Personal details, medical records and formal consents must be filled out and signed by the parents/ carers. All staff are First Aid trained and we always have first aid box with us.

We have a written **Handbook** that details all policies and procedures to run Forest School sessions.

### **Forest School sessions**

Forest School sessions run every Tuesday, term time only (except Teacher Training Days TED). Children must arrive to **Church Lench Village Hall** by 9 am and wait outside until a member of staff comes out to take the children inside the pre-school.

We will then start getting the children ready to leave for a Forest School session. Please **do not** put your child in Forest School outdoor clothes when arriving as all children will be taken to the toilet first if they are out of nappies. Children will be encouraged and supported in putting on their outdoor clothes and footwear. We ask parents to practice putting on shoes/ wellington boots and waterproofs/ outdoor clothes with their children at home first, as we encourage children to be independent when getting ready for the session.



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## What will your child need for Forest School?

For your child to participate in Forest School it is **essential that the correct clothing is worn to each session**, as it will take place all year round in all weathers (with some exceptions). We will be staying at pre-school during very heavy rain or wind, and we will reduce staying outside during very cold or hot temperatures. I cannot stretch enough how important appropriate clothing is during the sessions! Please check the weather before each session and pack the essentials.

The site we use is fairly safe, but has a lot of sticks, logs, nettles and brambles underfoot. For the comfort and well-being of your child the following clothing and footwear is recommended:

**When arriving all children must wear** long trousers/ joggers, long sleeve t-shirt or pre-school uniform sweatshirt or hoodie, trainers. Please remember no skirts/ shorts and sandals/ crocs are allowed. Your child's clothing needs to feel comfortable and be practical. There is a high chance that the clothes will get muddy or damaged, so it is important they wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty. We must insist upon long trousers and sleeves for protection from brambles and nettles etc, even in the summer.

Each week please provide a bag with one change of clean clothes (to include underwear, socks top and bottoms), wipes, drinks bottle.



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**PLEASE PUT NAMES ON ALL CLOTHES AND SHOES/ BOOTS!**

Autumn and Winter season	Spring and Summer season
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wellington boots, and during winter <b>WATERPROOF SNOW BOOTS</b>- those will keep children's feet warm and dry</li> <li>- All-in-one waterproof suit or waterproof jacket and trousers, and during winter: <b>WATERPROOF SNOWSUIT/ SKI SUIT</b>. Please do not buy new one as children get very muddy on a weekly basis. Please look on e-bay, charity shops or car boot sales or ask our old pre-schoolers if they have one for sale</li> <li>- Warm hat, scarf and gloves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wellington boots during wet days/ trainers when dry</li> <li>- Thin waterproof suit, jacket and trousers during wet days</li> <li>- Long trousers or leggings</li> <li>- Long sleeve top/ jumper</li> <li>- Sun hat</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Please apply sun cream before arriving to Forest School</p>

We will be back to pre-school before 12 noon and get children ready for lunch. We will help children to get changed, cleaned and ready for lunch.



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### Forest School Routine:

9.00 am- Children arriving to Pre-School

9.05 am- Toilet time (applicable for those out of nappies)

9.10 am - Registration, day activity plan and safety rules reminder and getting dressed for Forest School Session

9.25/30 am- Leaving pre-school premises and walking to the Orchard (in case of bad weather conditions the Forest School session will be run within pre-school)

Approx. 10.30 am- Snack and drink in the orchard

11.30 am- Walking back to pre-school

11.40 am- Changing into our indoor clothes and shoes

11.50 noon -Hand washing/Toilet time

12.00 noon- Lunch

12.30 pm- Free play/focus activity

1:00pm – Home Time (if your child is doing half a day)

2:30 pm- Tidy up and Story time

3:00pm- Home time

If your child is unwell, or not going to be attending Forest School, please can you let Pre-school know ASAP.



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**Contact details:**

<b>The Lenches Pre-school telephone</b>	<b>07933 77 99 18</b>
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Please only phone in case of emergencies or to let us know if your child will be absent/ or if someone else will be collecting after the session.

Please fill in the slip below and return to pre-school ASAP.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to speak to me directly.

Kind regards,

**Pre-school Manager**



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## Forest School Sessions Consent Form

Child's name: .....

I/We agree for our child named above to take part in Forest School sessions at the Lenches Pre-school.

I/ We agree for our child to take part in all Forest School activities to include use of simple tools while supervised by trained staff members.

I/We give The Lenches Pre-school staff permission to give first aid treatment to my child and/or contact Emergency Services if/ when necessary.

**\*I/ We consent/don't consent** for our child to take part in all Forest School activities that include making and eating **\*smores/hot chocolate/none sugar snack** while supervised by trained staff members.

I/ We read and agree with all information provided in Forest School Parents Information Pack.

I/We understand to give FOUR WEEKS WRITTEN NOTICE to cancel or change my child's place at Forest School (excluding half terms).

Date: .....

Parents/ Carers signature: .....

**\*Please delete as applicable**