



Little Willows Forest School

An enriching and adventurous outdoor activity programme for 2-5 year olds

What is Little Willows Forest School?

At Little Willows we provide fun and educational activities that give children aged 2-5 the opportunity to immerse themselves in our safe Forest School setting. Our wonderful willow woodland provides a stimulus for play and learning; to develop children's wellbeing, confidence and social skills. Your child will be encouraged to take managed risks and make positive choices; whilst having fun and enjoying the great outdoors.

Who leads the programme?

Our Little Willow Forest School programme is designed and led by Rebecca Dodman, a Level 3 trained Forest School Leader, qualified Primary School Teacher and Paediatric Outdoor First Aider. Rebecca has 20 years' experience as a teacher and leader in education. She qualified as a Forest School leader in September 2020 and has led Forest School sessions at a primary school within Suffolk for children aged 4-6 years. She also runs Forest School camps within her local community.

What is a Forest School session like?

We welcome the children into the woodland, share our rules and play games to establish our boundaries and build relationships. The session will be semi-structured with opportunities for children to develop their knowledge of the woodland environment, their understanding of how to keep safe, and their skills in making things from natural resources.

The children will have an opportunity to play games together, participate in planned tasks, as well as initiating their own play and exploration. Each week there will be a structured activity for children to do if they wish; activities may include den building, natural arts and crafts, low ropes and balance bridges, mud sculpting, bug hunts and campfire cooking.

The activities, tools and tool procedures will be introduced for the session, to ensure all children understand how to use the resources safely. Activities may include: den building, wild art and crafts, low ropes and balance bridges, mud sculpting, bug hunts and campfire cooking. The children will also play games and be offered refreshments.

When will the sessions take place?

There are three Little Willows Forest School groups, which run on Monday and Friday mornings 9.30-11.30am and Monday afternoons 12.15-2.15pm. Each group will experience a programme of six weeks (according to the length of the terms); in order for the children to connect, immerse and benefit from the beauty of the natural environment. The length of the programme also enables the children (and adults) to build relationships and establish friendships.

The programmes usually run in accordance with the school term-time calendar. For dates please contact us, see our website or visit our Facebook page.



Little Willows

Forest School

Where will the sessions take place?

The sessions will take place at The Willows, Farm Cottage, Horringer, Suffolk, IP29 5SW. The Forest School site can be difficult to find. From Bury St Edmunds, travel through the village, past Horringer House on your left and through the woods. On exiting the woods, turn left and follow the gravel drive to the end. Please park after the wooden fence or in our field. When you are ready, head down to our site.

How do we keep the children safe?

At Little Willows we want the children to immerse themselves and explore in the safe woodland environment. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children, adults and the natural environment we have three significant rules: look after yourself, look after each other and look after the woodland. The rules are introduced and reinforced in each session as health and safety is paramount at The Willows.

At Little Willows Forest School we will use tools (for example; vegetable peelers and mallets) to develop the children's skills and to enhance their outdoor experience. Each tool is introduced with a tool safety procedure; to ensure all children understand how to use the resources safely and to ensure all children remain safe. Tools will be used within a designated safe area under adult supervision.

The Forest School site has been carefully assessed and the children will be given clear boundaries and instructions, to ensure they can take and manage risks within the safe woodland environment. The children will be supervised throughout the session by Rebecca Dodman, who holds appropriate Public Liability Insurance and Property Owners Liability for Forest School activities. Cathy Fordham, an experienced Forest School Assistant, supports our busier sessions.

What will the Forest School Leader do and what will your role be as a parent/carer?

The role of the Forest School Leader is to

- plan, provide resources, facilitate and introduce activities;
- ensure the health and safety of the group is paramount.

As a parent/carer your role is to:

- encourage your child to join in, try new things and have a go by themselves (maybe by modelling or demonstrating to start with);
- observe your child and intervene if required (either for safety reasons or to move their learning on);
- join in with games (children love to see their parents having fun!);
- be positive and enthusiastic (even if it's raining!)

What if it's raining?

The sessions take place entirely outdoors, in all elements; rain, snow, sun... unless the weather conditions deteriorate and become hazardous; such as thunderstorms or very high winds. Therefore, it is very important that you both are dressed appropriately and have spare kit on site. We will contact you if we have to cancel the session (due to hazardous conditions). Please refer to our cancellation policy.



Little Willows

Forest School

What should we wear?

It is very important that you and your child are both dressed appropriately for each Forest School session, in order for us to all enjoy the experience and opportunities provided. You should both arrive wearing old clothes, with waterproofs and additional clothes packed in a bag. The kit identified below, will help protect you both from the elements:

- Waterproof coat
- Waterproof trousers (optional)
- Wellington boots or old trainers (in the summer)
- Warm hat, scarf and gloves or a sun hat
- Warm trousers or lightweight long trousers (in the summer)
- Long-sleeved jumper/fleece
- Long-sleeved top
- Vest or base-layer (in the winter)
- Thick socks (in the winter) thermal if possible or two pairs of cotton socks

What do we need to bring?

Please bring any medication that you or your child need. We advise that you apply sunscreen and insect repellent (if needed) in the summer.

Food and drink will be provided for your child and hot drinks are available for adults.

Are we permitted to take photos?

You are welcome to take photos of your child. Please be considerate if your child is near to someone else and ask them for permission before taking photos of them/ their child during the session.

What if we can't attend the session?

If you are unable to make a session please text or ring me on 07920096012 to let me know, so we know not to expect you. Unfortunately, we are unable to offer a refund for missed sessions.

How do I book a place and make payment?

The six week programme costs £48 per child (£8 per session), £36 for each additional sibling that is 2years+, 'exploring' siblings are £24. Babies in slings are welcome free of charge. Individual sessions are available, please contact rebecca@thewillowshorringer.com for prices. In order to secure your place, please complete the booking form (available at thewillowshorringer.com) and make payment to: Rebecca Dodman sort code: 40-15-22 account no: 11498622.

We look forward to welcoming you and your Little Willow to our Forest School.