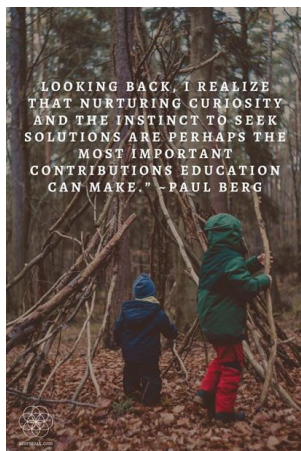


# Our Wonderful Woodland

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## Information for Families



### Our Woodland Project

The concept of Forest Schools has developed from the Scandinavian education system and is about children experiencing the natural world and learning outdoors. Children learn from first hand experiences and will develop skills like perseverance, independence and responsibility which will help to build self esteem. These skills will also help children to achieve more when they are back in the classroom.

We have such an amazing space in our school grounds, that we want to enhance and embrace it, for our children, local community and it's wildlife. Our plan is to ensure that everyone gets the opportunity to learn and explore in this wonderful, unique space regularly.

### What should we wear?

Times and dates will be published on the Newsletter as well as reminders sent out by texts. It is really important that your child is warm and dry during their woodland sessions. Children will get muddy, so should bring into school an **old** set of clothes to get changed into before their session. In cold weather children will need: long sleeved T-Shirt, warm trousers, 2 pairs of socks, warm layers – sweatshirt, jumper, fleece, warm hat, 2 pairs of gloves, waterproof trousers and jacket, wellington boots.

We do have spares and hope to purchase more in due course. Please come and talk to your class teacher if you feel this is something we can help you with.

In warm weather: light cool clothing – long sleeved top, light weight trousers, wellington or other sturdy boots, sun hats, full waterproof gear may be required at times.



### What if it's raining?

'There is no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing'

Our Woodland sessions will go ahead in almost all weathers as long as the children are warm and dry and wearing suitable clothing. Woodland sessions will only be cancelled if high winds, thunderstorms or very bad weather deem it to be unsafe.

### How do we keep the children safe?

The health and safety of all participants is central to everything within a woodland session. In every session, 1 first aider will be in the woodland at all times and all staff involved will be made fully aware of the risk assessment. The site and activities are carefully assessed and the children are given detailed training for all activities.



Part of our Woodland Project is teaching children about risks and how to evaluate them. So the children will be taught about how to use tools safely etc. These activities will be introduced as the children in the group are ready for them and will be carefully supervised by an adult.

By allowing children to take these measured risks, we help to prepare them for making choices when they are older and teach them to be actively responsible for themselves and others, thinking carefully about their choices and actions.



**How can I help?**

Make sure your child has the right clothing for the weather.  
Talk with your child about what they have done, often they will bring something home to show you.  
Support our Wonderful Woodland by donating items that are needed to sustain our project or come along as a volunteer.

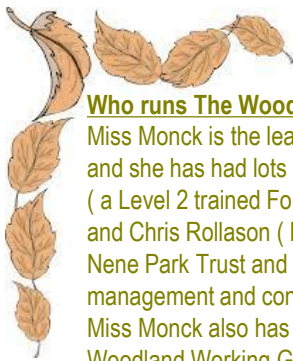


**What benefits will my child get from participating in our Woodland Sessions?**

Outdoor learning supports the holistic development of the child:

- Health and fitness – being active in an outdoor, natural environment
- Emotional wellbeing – being outdoors and among nature has been shown to have a positive effect on our wellbeing
- Social skills – communicating, sharing, negotiating, problem solving, increased confidence
- Skills development – developing fine and gross motor skills and coordination for a real purpose
- Knowledge and understanding – multi-sensory, real life learning, caring for green spaces and wildlife
- Personalised learning - careful observations enable adults to tailor learning around interests and stage of development
- Curriculum links – Our Woodland Sessions will support learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and National Curriculum

And we aim to do this whilst having lots of **FUN!**



**Who runs The Woodland?**

Miss Monck is the lead in this exciting project and she has had lots of help from Julie Porter ( a Level 2 trained Forest School consultant) and Chris Rollason ( Deputy Park Manager at Nene Park Trust and responsible for habitat management and conservation).  
Miss Monck also has the help from our Woodland Working Group which consists of many enthusiastic staff and children.  
Each Class Teacher will be responsible for planning and delivering each half termly session within the woodland, as well as finding lots of creative ways to take other learning outdoors.



**When and where will it take place?**

Woodland sessions will take place during the school day and each class will be participating in these sessions at least half termly.

We are very lucky to have our own woodland on site, with a lovely pond area too. The area consists of a fire circle and lots of different areas such as a den building corner, mini beast area and even a well being space with hammocks.

It is a secluded space, which will feel quite different to the areas where the children usually play and learn; a real little wild space for nature. We are also going to be working hard on increasing the bio – diversity (developing and enhancing habitats) of this very special area.

**What is a woodland session like?**

A Woodland Session will last around 2 hours. During this time the children will usually have time to play some games, sit together around the group circle and discuss what they are going to do. They will then be introduced to the activities for the session.

The Session Leader will give any safety talks and the children will choose their activity. The session will end with another discussion altogether about what they have enjoyed and where they would like to take their learning next.



**Woodland activities**

Earlier sessions will focus on core skills and safety; establishing boundaries and routines. As the children develop in confidence and familiarity with the environment the sessions focus on the development and consolidation of skills and understanding. We will use tools, make dens, make leaf trails, go on scavenger hunts, make environmental art and mud sculptures and lots, lots more. The school and its local community will be involved in maintaining and developing our Wonderful Woodland area.