

**Level 2 Open Awards Assistant Forest  
Schools Practitioner Award**

Information Document



## What is Forest Schools?

Forest Schools provide sustained opportunities for development of the whole child in a woodland environment run by a qualified Level 3 Forest Schools Practitioner.

Forest Schools establish, through a variety of advanced proven techniques, sound emotional and social skills. This is at the core of Forest Schools in the UK.

Forest Schools was established in the 1980's in Scandinavian countries like Denmark, Germany and Sweden, though has been continually provided in Hungary for the last 80 years.



Forest Schools was a provision initially for pre-school children (under 7) to utilise the outdoor environment for maximum holistic development. Those children attending Forest Schools were found to be arriving at mainstream school with strong social and emotional skills contributing to their ability to learn independently and confidently.

The philosophy of Forest Schools is based on a guided learning approach, where the Advanced Skills Forest School Practitioner creates a long term provision to meet the specific learning needs of the individuals within small groups to connect to the natural environment. They will use a continual process of reflective practice to encourage self exploration and discovery, physical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world around them as well as the key skills of emotional and social development and wellbeing. Forest Schools contribute to all areas of Every Child Matters.

## What is the Assistant Forest Schools Practitioners Award?

The Assistant Forest Schools practitioner award training will give you the basic knowledge and understanding of the ethos and theoretical underpinning of Forest Schools, as well as practical woodland skills needed to support a Qualified Level 3 Forest Schools Practitioner.

You will be given a basic understanding of how to support learners by providing a safe and supportive environment for groups and individuals to gain maximum potential from their long term provision in the woodland environment.



On the course you will explore different theoretical approaches to using the outdoor environment in a Forest School setting, such as how to observe for Schema and the principles of Accelerated Learning. You will gain knowledge of how best support individuals through their Forest School programme and find out how to approach and apply both activity and site risk assessments within Forest Schools.

The course provides experience of different reviewing techniques to develop reflective practice both in you and the children. You will begin to develop your own observation and evaluation skills so you can help each child maximise their potential, supporting the Level 3 Forest School Practitioner.

## Who is this course for?

This course is designed to qualify you to become an Assistant to a qualified Level 3 Forest Schools Practitioner. It is a Level 2 qualification and will require some written work which will be submitted for assessment to Open Awards and will also require you to demonstrate your practical skills in order to demonstrate competency at this level.

This course is an ideal opportunity for you if you work with children, young people or adults to use the woodland environment as a valuable learning resource to establish sound emotional and social skills through play, education or adventure therapy.

You cannot independently run a Forest School programme with this qualification.

## Course Details

The Assistant Forest Schools training takes place over 5 days. You will demonstrate and be assessed on your practical skills during the week. A portfolio is provided for you to record evidence, some will be written and some will be through demonstration. If you have additional support needs, please let us know so we can assist you. We have a great many dyslexic people attending training, who have successfully completed their qualification and this is not a barrier to working with Forest Schools Education.

You are required to provide a Forest School experience for 3 sessions with a group of children in your own setting, preferably with a Level 3 Forest School Practitioner (though we understand that this is not always possible).

*Please note if you are working by your self you are not qualified to work with tools or fire, until you have been assessed at Level 3 standard.*

You have 3 months in which to submit your folder after your training by submitting your folder to the office address as below, after this time you may be charged for late registration. Portfolio marking and completion of qualification will take approximately 3 months from hand in date. When complete a certificate of completion will be sent to you from Forest Schools Education. A separate certificate will be sent directly to you from Open Awards. Your Portfolio will be returned to you via 2<sup>nd</sup> class post free of charge once the marking has been completed and you have passed, however this can be returned to yourself 1<sup>st</sup> class recorded post for a charge of £10.00.

## Training

The training is a practically based course covering two units.

### Unit 1 – Skills for the Assistant Forest Schools Practitioner

Forest Schools utilises the woodland environment in order to engender a personal connection to it. Wide research has been carried out identifying the positive impacts that the outdoors can have on wellbeing, health, physical development, communication and emotional and social development. In order to support the children you will develop skills in tools use and procedures, how to introduce them to groups and how to maintain them. You will gain confidence in how to light fires and how to manage your group around a fire pit and cooking area. Shelters are an important element in Forest Schools, not only for providing protection from the weather, but also for developing skills in the children. You will learn a few basic knots.

### Unit 2 – Supporting Learning and Development at Forest Schools

Forest Schools is a unique opportunity for the provision of a long term programme that allows children to develop in a holistic way, with specific attention to the development of emotional and social skills as well as high levels of wellbeing.



This cannot happen without careful observation, reflection and planning by the Level 3 Forest Schools Practitioner. You will be given some theoretical underpinning to help you support children on their Forest School journey.

The outdoors provides a unique learning environment that will encourage play, discovery, independence and confidence. Forest School channels this into a unique learning experience by creating stimulating sessions within a woodland setting.



When you wish to book your place on the Level 2 Assistant Forest Schools Practitioner Award, find out about our Level 2 – 3 Progression Scheme or for more information on Forest Schools, contact the office team via the methods below;

## Forest Schools Education

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