23rd March 2015

Dear Parents/Carers

We are excited to inform you that we will be starting Forest School sessions with children in Hazel Class. This is a wonderful opportunity for children to develop a wide range of skills in an outdoor learning environment and will enhance and extend the current curriculum in many ways.

Forest School is a way of working with children that was developed in Scandinavia in the 1950s. It is a way of giving children enjoyment in the outdoors, and giving them the freedom and skills to learn and develop in a natural environment. Forest School in England was introduced in the 1990s and it has since become a very popular way of engaging with children and improving not only their academic skills but also their physical, social and emotional development.

Forest school aims to nurture the whole child, and benefits to self-esteem, confidence, social skills, creativity, emotional intelligence and overall well-being are well documented. Through a range of practical activities including things like moulding mud, whittling, imaginative/creative play, outdoor art and den building, children are encouraged and supported to work with each other and with nature in a respectful but fun way. Children are able to achieve small steps towards a goal in their own time scale to give them a sense of achievement and pride.

The sessions will be run by Mrs Renwick. Hazel Class will have a 5 week course over the Summer term which will take place in the small area of woodland we have on the school site. The children will have one session a week, on a Monday afternoon.

The children are likely to get muddy and sometimes wet! We are therefore asking that on the day of their Forest School session they come to school dressed in old clothes that you don’t mind getting mucky. They need to wear long sleeves and long trousers to protect their skin from scratches/insects. The children will be outside even if it is wet so it is essential that they have a waterproof coat with them on Forest School days. The school will be providing waterproof trousers for the children to use for each session if it is wet. The children will be outside in all weather so please ensure your child has a suitable jacket/fleece that will keep them warm, but also sun cream and hat if the weather turns hot. The children will also need suitable footwear; either wellies, walking boots or sturdy shoes would be the most appropriate (they must not wear sandals or open toed shoes for safety reasons). Footwear can be brought into school in a bag to be changed into after lunch. Please also ensure everything is named!

Forest School sessions take place in all weather except high wind and the children will be notified when they arrive at school if we believe the wind is too strong for the session to take place that day. As part of the way Forest School works, health and safety is a key consideration in the activities the children participate in, and all relevant risk assessments are in place and updated regularly. More information can be found in the Forest School Folder which is kept in Beech class; you are welcome to look at this if you wish.

The dates of the sessions for Hazel class are as follows;

**Monday 20th April**

**Monday 27th April**

**Monday 11th May**

**Monday 18th May**

**Monday 1st June**

**Kit checklist for Forest School days;**

* Waterproof jacket
* Coat/fleece
* Gloves/sun cream/sunhat depending on the weather
* Wellies/walking boots/sturdy shoes
* **Old clothes with long arms and legs to be worn to school on a Forest School day.**

Many thanks for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Ruegg Mrs S Renwick

Forest School Leader Deputy Headteacher