

# LEVEL 1 AWARD IN FOREST SCHOOL ETHOS + PRINCIPLES



COURSE INFORMATION



[WWW.FORESTSCHOOLTRAINING.CO.UK](http://WWW.FORESTSCHOOLTRAINING.CO.UK)

## WELCOME TO FOREST SCHOOL

Forest School is a long term, learner-led, continuous learning process that takes place over a period of time using a natural space (not necessarily a Forest!). Forest School is a specific type of outdoor learning which originates from Scandinavian educational approaches. The Forest School ethos focuses on building relationships with one another and the natural world to develop personal, social and emotional skills. Forest School practitioners facilitate this process through careful application of theoretical and practical skills to designed to raise self-esteem, develop confidence, independence, a sense of connection, awareness and mindfulness.

Every Forest School programme will be unique, depending on the group, site and leader, however there are some key principles, recognised by the [Forest School Association](http://www.forestschoollassociation.org) ([www.forestschoollassociation.org](http://www.forestschoollassociation.org)), please visit their website for more information:

- FS is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.
- FS takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
- FS uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.
- FS aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
- FS offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
- FS is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.



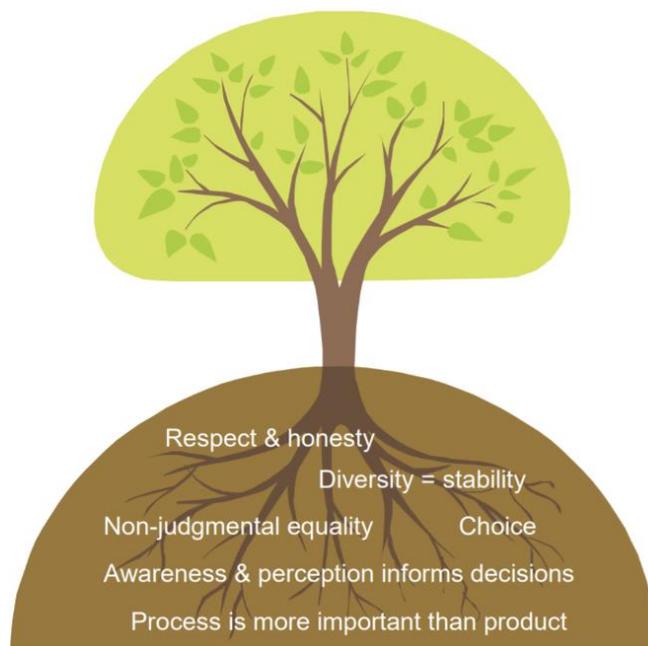
*"FOREST SCHOOL IS A LONG TERM, HUMANISTIC  
PROCESS BASED IN NATURE, WHICH USES  
RELATIONSHIPS, PLAY AND RISK TO SUPPORT  
INDIVIDUALS TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL."*

*~ LOU (FSTC TUTOR)*



You can find out more about Forest School's ethos and definition on [Lou's Youtube channel](#).

We at FSTC believe that Forest School is a powerful approach, through which people of all ages can find their way to connect with nature, develop their awareness, questions and reflect on what is truly means to be human. At FSTC we believe that there are some core values that are the roots upon which our Forest School practice and training grow & bloom:



## FOREST SCHOOL TRAINING

Forest School is delivered by qualified practitioners. People from many different backgrounds train in Forest School; teachers, playworkers, rangers, ecologists, artists, learning support assistants, parents and conservation volunteers may all come to Forest School to provide meaningful outdoor learning experiences for the children they work with.

There are 3 levels of training. To deliver 'Forest School' the practitioner must have completed a Level 3 Certificate for Forest School Leaders.

- Level 3 – Certificate for Forest School Leaders (18 credits = 180 hours)
- Level 2 – Award for Forest School Assistants (6 credits = 60 hours)
- Level 1 – Award in Forest School Ethos and Principles (3 credits = 30 hours)





## **FSTC AS A TRAINING PROVIDER**

The Forest School Training Cooperative has evolved from the Forest School Training Company, who has been providing Forest School training across the UK since 2004. We are a group of people who feel strongly that quality processes are important and have united to work together to promote Forest School. All our Forest School training courses are accredited and are nationally recognised qualifications on the Qualification & Curriculum Framework (QCF). This ensures FSTC training is continually up to date with current UK practice. FSTC training is delivered with the belief that the training of Forest School should model the Forest School ethos as far as is practical (and yes, we recognise that the irony is that it is a qualification!):



### **LONG TERM, EXTENDED EXPERIENCES –**

Our unique modular training format, breaks learning into small achievable chunks which build and develop, allowing learners to consolidate skills & understanding. We have developed our 12 day course (longer than most other FS training providers) to ensure topics are covered in sufficient depth and in an experiential way so that practitioners can develop their own processes relevant to their Forest School, rather than prescribing generic methods.

**FIRST HAND EXPERIENCES IN NATURAL PLACES** – Our training focuses on real life & first hand experiences in natural places. All our training venues have access to woodland areas that will be used throughout the training. Our training courses begin with a woodland transition day focusing on outdoor living skills and culminate with a woodland sleep out as we feel that these are fundamental skills for the Forest School Leader and they have to be ‘lived’ to be understood fully.

**WE CELEBRATE DIVERSITY** – We recognise that everyone is a unique human being who have different interests and strengths and aim to facilitate a community of mutual appreciation and respect. Our training uses learner centred approaches to help practitioners find the right process and methods for them, their situation and ultimately the Forest School they shall be establishing. We encourage questioning, sharing and focus on processes rather than prescribed outcomes. We use a wide variety of assessment methods throughout the training (such as practical demonstration, verbal questioning, written essay, presentation etc), to ensure a fair representation of a learners knowledge and skills.

**FLEXIBILITY + ADAPTABILITY** – Our modular training allows students to ‘top up’ their training to a higher level, without having to start from the beginning again. The methodology of training allows some adaptability in the training activities delivered meaning we are able to modify the training to better meet individuals and the groups needs. This process based approach allows learners some choice over the content of their learning journey.

**AWARENESS OF IMPACT** – Our training includes and promotes ecological understanding and sustainable use of woodlands. We feel that a key part of Forest School is to encourage people to think about and question the lifestyle choices they make.

**SPECIALIST TUTORS** – All our lead tutors are qualified Forest School practitioners themselves and have run a wide variety of long term Forest School programmes themselves. They also have background experience and/or qualifications in a range of practical, environmental and/or educational skills (often both). They also all are active members of national and local Forest School networks such as the Forest School Association or Forest Education Initiative groups. You can read our tutors biogs on our website.

## WHAT DO OUR PAST STUDENTS SAY?

*"It has been a brilliant course. It has made me question my own practice... I am motivated and equipped to develop the outdoor practice and environment in school."* – Teacher

*"This was a well delivered, thought provoking course which all schools & settings would benefit from attending."* – Local Authority Advisor

*"I know this may sound silly, but it has been a life changing experience.... it has made me question things within my own life, not just professionally but personally."* – Special Needs Teacher

*"This was an excellent course which completely convinced me of the value of outdoor learning, the connection with child development and how it could be translated into school."* – Freelancer



# ABOUT THE LEVEL 1 AWARD IN FOREST SCHOOL

## ETHOS AND PRINCIPLES

The level 1 training course is designed to give practitioners a solid foundation in understanding the Forest School ethos. It will develop your skills and ideas for outdoor learning opportunities and enable you to support an existing Forest School with some understanding.

The course content develops practical skills and theoretical understanding thereby increasing practitioners' confidence in working with children in a natural outdoor setting.

Many practitioners who have been unsure about whether Forest School leadership is the right path for them have found that the Level 1 course helped them decide before making the bigger commitment of enrolling on a Level 3 Leader course.



### WHAT DOES THE QUALIFICATION COVER?

This course carries a total of 3 credits (30 Hours) at level 1 and consists of 1 unit::

- Introduction to the Forest School ethos and principles

The course is designed to develop practical outdoor skills and theoretical understanding in a range of subjects to provide learners with a solid foundation to the philosophy behind Forest School. The topics covered at an introductory level during the course include:

- Understanding Forest School ethos and its benefits.
- Holistic Development
- The importance of play and the role of the adult.
- Risk management and assessment.
- Woodland ecology and environmental impact.
- Woodland species identification and uses.
- Using knots
- Creative activities using natural materials.
- Observing a Forest School Session.



## WHO IS THE QUALIFICATION FOR?

The Level 1 training course is designed as an introduction to the Forest School ethos and basic skills. It is appropriate for anyone over the age of 16 with an interest in working with children in the natural outdoor environment. No previous knowledge of Forest School or outdoor learning is necessary as the course is designed to be an introduction.

The course may be particularly relevant to parents or volunteers supporting an existing Forest School run by a Level 3 Forest School Practitioner.

Practitioners have come to Forest School training from a variety of different backgrounds – environmental education, ecologists, countryside rangers, artists, teaching assistants, teachers, Early Years practitioners, child minders, parents, scout/guide leaders, youth workers and many more.

## HOW IS THE TRAINING COURSE DELIVERED?

The Level 1 Award in Forest School ethos and principles carries 3 credits at Level 1 and usually takes up to 3 months to complete.

Level 1 is the equivalent standard of a D-F grade GCSE and 3 credits refer to 30 hours of learning time. These 30 hours consist of a 2 day intensive training course, visit to an established Forest School (at a later date) and a small amount of written coursework to independently complete to evidence learning.

### 4 STEPS TO COMPLETING THE LEVEL 1 QUALIFICATION

1. Attend the 2 day intensive training course
2. Visit an established Forest School (led by a qualified Level 3 Practitioner). Learners need to arrange their own visits after the training course. We may be able to help signpost you to level 3 leaders if you need help with this.
3. Reconnect as a group for a online reflection session to consolidate your experiences
4. Complete all sections in the workbook and submit evidence by the course deadline (usually 2-3 months after the start date).



## STUDENT SUPPORT FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Approximately half the qualification time is expected to be self directed learning by the student. We recognise that some students will find it useful to have a starting point for this, as well as advice and guidance on some issues. We aim to support our students during this self guided time as well as the contact time with tutors and have a variety of methods available for this:

- **STUDENT WEB PAGES** – All students will be issued with a username and password in order to access the student sections of our FSTC website. Within these web pages are reading list and links on various topics, handouts and resources, as well as electronic copies of all resources used during the training course.
- **ONLINE TUTORIAL + REFLECTION** – Post-course online tutorial support
- **VIDEOS** – Lou (FSTC Tutor) has her own YouTube channel – [Forest School Lou](#) which has a range of videos on different Forest School topics



## MODERATION + CERTIFICATION

In England we are a training centre under the Awarding Body – [ITC First](#) who will be the body ultimately awarding the qualification once all assessment criteria have been met.

There is a 3 stage assessment process to ensure quality, consistency and objectivity:

- **ASSESSMENT BY TUTORS AND ASSESSORS** – during the course and afterwards (marking coursework)
- **INTERNAL VERIFICATION** – we work with a moderator internally who takes a sample of the assessments from the tutors and ensures work is being marked accurately and fairly
- **EXTERNAL VERIFICATION** – the awarding body (ITC First) take a sample of the portfolios which have been internally verified to ensure moderation is consistent

Once all these processes have been completed, certificates will be issued.

## **VENUES + FACILITIES**

We use a variety of different training venues throughout the UK. Where possible we try to use venues of organisations who share a similar environmental and/or educational ethos as us. When choosing a venue we balance the facilities it offers (both indoors and outdoors), the need of the training and environmental sustainability.

We aim to use a venue that can sustain all elements of the training course, however in some cases it may be that venues cannot provide for all elements, in which case we may use more than one venue for the duration of the course to cover the different elements.

Please see the relevant course flier on our [training webpage](#) for more information about the training course you are interested in.

All training venues will have access to drinking water, toilets, & parking. The majority of our training courses require participants to bring a packed lunch, however hot drinks and snacks will be provided.

## **WE CAN COME TO YOU**

If you have a large number of staff you would like to train, we can offer 'private' level 1 courses, just for your school, cluster or organisation. With larger numbers we may be able to offer a group discount, making it a more affordable option. Each cohort can be a maximum of 16 practitioners and the course can run from an appropriate venue of your choosing for your staff. Please contact us for further details.



## YOUR LEAD TRAINER



In England our lead trainer is Louise, who works with various assistant trainers to facilitate the courses. All tutors are experienced outdoor practitioners and Forest School Leaders.

Louise wants to live in a world where everyone is connected to nature; where people of all ages have muddy knees, twigs in their hair, woodsmoke infused clothes, a sparkle in their eyes and warmth in their heart.

She's worked as a Forest School practitioner with groups of all ages, coordinated Forest School development for Norfolk County Council and been a Forest School trainer for the last 15 years.

More recently she is enjoying being a mama and having a small human attached to her 24/7, which has enabled her to confront her luddite ways and create a YouTube channel '[Forest School Lou](#)' to share all things Forest School-sy.

## FORTHCOMING DATES, VENUES + PRICES

All forthcoming course details are posted on our [website](http://www.forestschoolltraining.co.uk) www.forestschoolltraining.co.uk, please look at the course dates pages. Each course will have a downloadable flier detailing venue, dates & prices.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

We invite people who are interested in booking onto level 1 courses to apply using the online form within the [course dates page](#) of our website.



### CONTACT US:

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