



**Derbyshire**  
Wildlife Trust



## Choosing your course- Forest School or Outdoor Leader?

### Why train with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Connecting people to nature is at the very heart of all the work carried out by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Wilder Engagement Team and this is reflected in all our training courses.

We recognise the importance of promoting an understanding of the natural world and see both the Forest School and Outdoor Leader training programmes as an ideal medium for delivery. As the only local charity that is concerned solely with the conservation of all forms of wildlife, we have expertise in biodiversity protection, botanical surveys and habitat management plans. Being a local training provider, we are often able to support new leaders on a personal level throughout their training and in the establishment of their own Forest Schools.

We offer support in terms of free resources, onsite visits and observations. Our trainers are all highly experienced teachers and providers of environmental education who have been connecting people to nature and delivering Forest School programmes to children in Derbyshire from schools, nurseries, youth and community groups for many years.

The Awarding body for our training courses is AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group. In addition to Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 courses, we provide a CPD programme to support practitioners, which covers everything from First Aid to Tree Identification.





## What is Forest School?

Forest School is a unique outdoor education programme run by qualified leaders. Taking part gives children and young people the chance to explore, learn and discover at their own pace, develop their self-esteem and confidence in a safe and supportive environment.

Forest School is different from other forms of outdoor learning as it involves regular sessions in the same woodland and the activities are predominantly determined by the children and often play based.

The forest school leader will act as a facilitator, using the children's own interests to extend their knowledge and skills and in doing so they will increase the next generation's appreciation of and care for the natural world.

The Forest School ethos developed in Scandinavia and is now shared by thousands of trained practitioners across the world.

**Which level of training should I choose?** Level 2 is designed to qualify the learner to become a Forest School Assistant, enabling them to take a proactive role in helping a Forest School Leader plan and deliver a Forest School programme and supporting the learners.

It involves:

- 4 days of face-to-face training at our site
- Completing your portfolio workbook, with optional mentoring days
- 3 consecutive FS sessions in a FS setting of your choice
- 6 months to complete the course.





Level 3 is designed to qualify the learner to become a Forest School Leader, to be able to set up and run a Forest School programme. Level 3 covers how to facilitate groups in a learner-centred way, and how to manage a Forest School site sustainably. You do not need to have the Level 2 qualification in order to complete Level 3.

It involves:

- 5 days of initial face-to-face training at our site
- 1 individual training session in your setting
- 2 days skills assessment at our site
- Completing your portfolio workbook, with optional mentoring days
- Minimum 6 sessions programme in your own FS setting
- 9 months to complete the course.

### **What is a Leader of Outdoor Learning?**

Outdoor Learning is different to Forest School as it uses outdoor spaces to deliver the curriculum in an exciting and hands-on way. The benefits of outdoor learning are well documented, we know that it helps children become happier, healthier and more successful as learners.

An outdoor learning leader will look at the school grounds to see how they can be improved for nature but also how they can be used across the curriculum to bring learning to life.





## Which should I choose?

When choosing a course, it is important that you take the course that is right for you and your setting. Both the Forest School Leader and Outdoor Learning course equip you with the skills and confidence to take young people outside, however they do this through very different approaches and can achieve different outcomes. The questions below should help you decide which course will give you the right training for your situation.

	Forest School Leader	Leader in Outdoor Learning
<i>Are you able to provide regular outdoor sessions for students over a long period of time (e.g. every fortnight for a full school year)?</i>	A core principle of Forest School is that it is a long-term programme and as such children should reap the benefits of a <i>minimum</i> of 6 regular sessions. We would encourage leaders to offer more than 6 sessions to children so that they enable them to connect with the natural world throughout the seasons.	Outdoor Learning Leaders take their classes out as often as fits with their timetable and curriculum/setting requirements.
<i>During outdoor sessions, do you need to stick to an adult-led agenda or are you able to follow children's interests?</i>	Forest School is 'learner-centred' this means that as the leader you facilitate the learning, doing what is interesting to them. The process rather than the product is key.	Outdoor Learning usually involves lessons designed by teachers to meet specific learning outcomes from across the curriculum.
<i>Do you need to fulfil curriculum objectives directly in your outdoor sessions?</i>	Many Forest School activities relate back to the curriculum and help to inspire better work back in the classroom however the sessions are learner-led and focused on holistic development rather than academic progress and curriculum objectives.	Outdoor Leaders design lessons with the same process and attention to the curriculum as they do indoor lessons. All subjects can be taught outdoors and often deepen the memory and understanding when taken back into the classroom.





	Forest School Leader	Leader in Outdoor Learning
<i>Do you have accessible outdoor space with some natural features?</i>	Many Forest Schools are delivered away from forests and instead use semi-natural environments. A woodland is 1 deal, but the philosophy of Forest School can be applied anywhere, you will just need to keep in mind that the more limited your space is the more materials such as wood and loose parts you may need to import.	Outdoor learning can be done anywhere, the course teaches you to utilise parts of your school grounds that you may not have otherwise considered before to enrich your lessons across the curriculum.
<i>Are you willing to reframe classroom rules regarding behaviour?</i>	Forest School encourages young people to take more autonomy and responsibility for their own actions. Learners are given more time to work through challenges and are supported to reflect on and recognise the consequences of their actions rather than being instructed on what to do and corrected when they deviate from the instruction.	Outdoor learning may require you to rethink your ground rules to ensure they suit the outdoor environment, however the teacher- student dynamic remains unchanged.
<i>Are you comfortable with your learners taking appropriate risk?</i>	The ethos of Forest School encourages young people to take appropriate risk and sessions should provide sufficient opportunities for them to develop their awareness and confidence in evaluating and managing risk	Outdoor learning may include activities with more risk than you would encounter in the classroom, but this is at the discretion of the leader rather than being an integral part of the programme,





	Forest School Leader	Leader in Outdoor Learning
<i>How much time are you willing to commit to your training?</i>	<p>Forest School Assistant (Level 2) is a 4-day course leading to a nationally recognised qualification. After the course days are completed, you will have 6 months to complete a GCSE standard portfolio and assist with 3 Forest School sessions. When you achieve the qualification you will be able to work as a Forest School Assistant (alongside a qualified Forest School Leader).</p> <p>Forest School Leader (Level 3) is a 7-day course in person plus an onsite training session, leading to a nationally recognised qualification. After the course days are completed, you will have 9 months to complete an A level standard portfolio and run a block of 6 Forest School sessions. When you achieve the qualification, you will be able to work as a Forest School Leader</p>	<p>Leader in Outdoor Learning (Level 2) is a 2-day accredited course. After the course days are completed, you will have 6 months to complete a workbook and run 3 outdoor learning sessions.</p>





## Course entry requirements

### Level 2 Leader of Outdoor Learning

- Participants should be over 18 years old and have some experience of working with young people or adults, for example youth workers, teaching assistants or teachers.
- All participants must be DBS checked.
- Be able to attend 2 days of theory and practice.
- Be able to plan and deliver 3 outdoor learning sessions.
- Be able to complete a workbook of evidence.
- Course commitment approximately 70 hours.

### Level 2 Award for Forest School Assis-

- Participants should be over 18 years old and have some experience of working with young people or adults, for example youth workers, teaching assistants or teachers.
- All participants must be DBS checked.
- Be able to attend the four days of theory and practice.
- Be able to assist with the planning and delivery of three Forest School sessions.
- Be able to complete a workbook of evidence.
- Course commitment approximately 60 hours.

### Level 3 Certificate for Forest School Lead-

- The minimum age to start this qualification is 19 years old. Participants must have significant experience of working with young people or adults, for example youth workers, teaching assistants or teachers. The minimum age to practise as a Forest School Leader is 21 years old (this is a Forest School Association and Department of Education requirement).





- When leading a Forest School you will need a First Aid qualification, this can be either First Aid at Work (3 days) or Outdoor First Aid (2 days). Due to the outdoor nature of the work, an Outdoor First Aid qualification is strongly recommended, especially if forest school sessions take place in remote locations.
- All participants must be DBS checked.
- Be able to attend the initial five days of theory and practice.
- Be able to set up and run a forest school programme of at least six sessions to a target client group within a woodland setting. We will arrange an on-site individual training visit to your setting during one of your sessions.
- Be able to complete a portfolio of research and written tasks.
- Be able to attend two skills assessment days about three months into the Level 3 course - this will include cooking over a fire and shelter building. This is also a great opportunity to discuss any challenges, share tips and ask questions.
- Course commitment approximately 180 hours.

### **Thinking of booking onto a course?**

If you would like more information, or to talk to someone about which course is right for you and your setting email us :

<mailto:trainingenquiries@derbyshirewt.co.uk>.

To find out about prices and dates for our courses visit:

<https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wilderlearning>

