



Learning Without Walls Newsletter



November Edition 2019

Editorial

In this issue I want to concentrate on membership and accreditation in our Learning Without Walls programme. This year we have launched our accreditation scheme to encourage Forest Schools to stay involved with the programme.

NIFSA is a small independent charity and we rely on funding from the Dufferin Foundation, local Councils, Public Health Agency and the Drumlin Wind Co-Operative. These pots of money are hugely important, and we thank our sponsors, but we need to work in becoming self-sustaining. If all our registered Forest Schools became members, this would go a long way to making this a reality.



Little Flower Nursery receiving their Nature Ranger Certificates at Ranfurly House in Dungannon

Forest School Awards accreditation

When your school becomes a recognised NIFSA Forest School, someone within your organisation has achieved the Forest School Leader Level 3 qualification, you are regularly undertaking Forest School activities which are child-led and introduce an element of risk, they receive an Official Forest School rust-proof metal plaque. This can be displayed outside your school reception building for parents and visitors to see.



We have now introduced an accreditation scheme that encourages you to continue and recognises the huge effort you all undertake in delivering Forest Schools.

There are three awards – Elder, Birch and Oak awards. There are subtle differences between them all, each progressively asking for something extra culminating in the Oak Award.

Home of the
Forest School Awards



Supported by the
Dufferin Foundation



Forest School Awards Accreditation Criteria

Criteria	Elder	Birch	Oak
Current NIFSA Member Comments (e.g. date registered):	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
You must be a member of NIFSA to qualify			
Number of qualified Forest School Leaders Level 3 Comments (e.g. names):	0 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2+ <input type="checkbox"/>
This must be a recognised Forest School Leader Level 3 qualification			
Minimum number of Forest School sessions per year Comments (e.g. checked MIS):	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	12 <input type="checkbox"/>	18 <input type="checkbox"/>
Sessions have to be recorded in your MIS			
Following Forest School principles Comments e.g. Risk taking –	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Forest School sessions must comply with the Forest School ethos e.g. child-led			
Mentoring other Forest Schools Comments (e.g. who)	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes (if required) <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes (if required) <input type="checkbox"/>
Your school may be asked to mentor another school for their Forest School award			
Involved with Friends of Forest School Comments (e.g. what and who)	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Friends of Forest School is due to start in 20/21			
Registered and delivering Nature Rangers Programme Comments (e.g. check MIS)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
You must register for Nature Rangers and record your Forest School activities in your MIS			
Complimentary programmes e.g. Eco-Schools, John Muir Trust, Woodland Trust Green Leaf scheme etc. Comments (e.g. what)	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 or more <input type="checkbox"/>	2 or more <input type="checkbox"/>
You must inform us if you are involved in another complimentary programme			

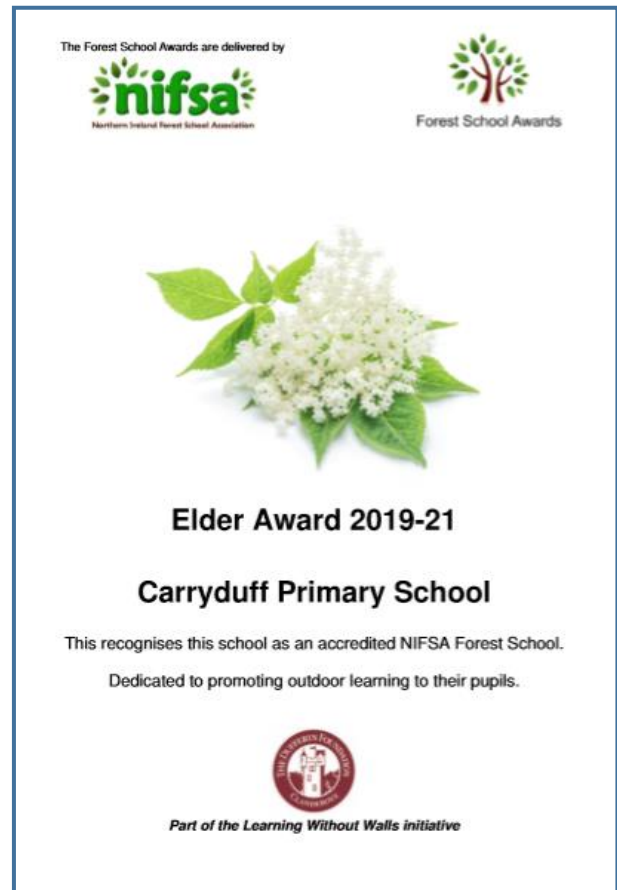


We will be contacting you over the year to inform you what Award you are currently on.

This will be in the form of a report. This will be undertaken remotely taking information from your MIS.



Certificate of recognition for you to print and display in your school.



The screenshot shows a web-based accreditation form for 'Carryduff Primary School'. It indicates the current accreditation is 'ELDER'. The form contains several questions with radio button options and dropdown menus. For example, '1. Current NIFSA Member?' has 'No' and 'Yes' options, with 'Yes' selected. '2. Number of qualified Forest School Leaders Level 3?' has '0', '1', and '2 or more' options, with '2 or more' selected. '3. Minimum number of Forest School sessions per year?' has '6', '12', and '18' options, with '12' selected. '4. Following Forest School principles?' has 'No' and 'Yes' options, with 'Yes' selected. '5. Mentoring other Forest Schools of required?' has 'No' and 'Yes' options, with 'Yes' selected. '6. Involved with Friends of Forest School?' has 'No' and 'Yes' options, with 'Yes' selected. '7. Registered and delivering Nature Rangers Programme?' has 'No' and 'Yes' options, with 'Yes' selected. '8. Complementary programmes?' has '0', '1', and '2 or more' options, with '1' selected. A 'Save and Print' button is at the bottom.

A recommendation section will advise what your next steps might be.

Once you have been awarded a status you will receive –

Digital image for you to use in Facebook, website and letterheads

Accreditation will take place every two years. Schools and groups can contact us for re-accreditation at any time.

Once accredited, when you open your MIS, you will automatically be able to download your certificate.

Home of the Forest School Awards



Supported by the Dufferin Foundation





The Oak Award is the top award. We are working towards being able to present something very special to successful schools and groups. Update in 2020!

NIFSA Membership

Annual membership is £100 and we believe offers good value for money.

Follow the link to subscribe now!

[Sign up for membership now](#)

What do you get for your membership?

- a) Access to Member's Section of the Forest School Awards website which gives information on outdoor lessons, research and much more.
- b) A section on the website exclusively for your own organisation.
- c) Area to record Forest School activities and produce Eco-Schools Reports.
- d) Free attendance for 2 members to the annual NIFSA conference.
- e) Monthly Learning Without Walls Newsletter.
- f) Entry into the Nature Rangers programme to encourage you to do 6 Forest School sessions every year.
- g) Opportunity to train and mentor other staff within your organisation as Forest School Leaders for only £30 Open College Network registration fee.

- h) An entry in the Forest School Awards Directory to showcase what you are doing.
- i) Reduced rates for pupils visiting the Clandeboye Nature Ranger Forest School site.
- j) Discounts at selected shops – 15% off GoOutdoors using special promotional code.
- k)

Clandeboye Estate visits

When you become a NIFSA member you can visit the wonderful Clandeboye Estate for only £3 per pupil. Richard McMeekin, Clandeboye Nature Ranger Manager organises the event with you to establish what exactly it is you need from your visit.

A short clip of what Rathmore Nursery Unit got up to on their visit to Clandeboye Nature Rangers.

[Rathmore Nursery Unit](#)



Contact Richard for more information:
richard@learningwithoutwalls.net

Home of the
Forest School Awards



Supported by the
Dufferin Foundation

