

## Who will be running the Forest School?

The Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) will be managing the People's Park Nature Rangers. NIFSA has over 10 years forest school experience with children of all ages and abilities. In that time staff have led over 50,000 children in outdoor learning activities. The People's Park Nature Rangers is based on the successful Clondeboy Nature Rangers and it will be registered with the local Health Trust and will comply with their regulations.

## When will it operate?

The People's Park Nature Rangers will operate during school term dates Monday to Friday between 2pm and 5.30pm starting September 2020.

Children will be picked up from their school and brought to People's Park in Ballymena.

Children will be collected by parents from People's Park no later than 5.30pm.

Holiday programmes will also be available.

## How much will it cost?

It costs £15 per day to register your place.

## How can I find out more information or register for a place(s)?

Visit- [Register your interest in People's Park Nature Ranger Centre](#)

Click on the picture to watch a short video about Clondeboy Nature Rangers



**Starting in September 2020**



# People's Park Nature Ranger Centre, Ballymena

**After-School Forest School  
Parents Leaflet**

## What is a Forest School?

Forest school is an inspirational process that has been evolving in the UK since the early 1990's. It fits in to the realm of outdoor education, but differs by being child led. Children are allowed to direct their own learning, following their interests. Our forest school staff are there to provide inspiration, stimulate and scaffold, but mainly just to observe learning.

Through exciting and stimulating play, children learn about themselves, others and the world around them. Play at Forest school allows children to encounter and experience risk in a safe and supported environment. This may be through climbing a tree, using unfamiliar tools, making fires or just working with someone that they do not know. Children will always be encouraged to identify and assess their own risks.

Children engage in achievable tasks and activities throughout the year and in most weathers. This allows children to observe the changes to seasons, experience weather and develop a relationship with nature that they will take through to their adult lives.

## What sort of activities will take place?

Sessions will have a focus on building resilience and social skills. A lot of the session will consist of child-initiated activities. Each week there will be a planned activity that the children can choose to do.

### These may include:

- Fire making
- Cooking
- Supervised use of tools
- Woodland craft
- Nature studies
- Den building



## What benefits are there to my child?

Forest school supports the holistic development of children. It will benefit them by:

Increasing social skills; Children share, negotiate, lead and problem solve with their peers.

Increasing confidence through small, manageable tasks.

Gaining knowledge and understanding of their natural environment, the plants and animals that live there and the change in seasons.

Understanding their own strengths, weaknesses and learning styles.

Increasing emotional wellbeing. Just being in nature has been shown to have a real and positive effect to children's mental wellbeing.

Developing new skills using tools and traditional crafts.

Having an opportunity to play and follow their own agenda.

For some children, it can form a new relationship with learning that they can take back in to the classroom.

## Health and Safety

The health and safety of all participants is central to everything undertaken within a Forest School Programme. Forest School leaders are fully trained in risk assessment and hold an outdoor first aid qualification. The Forest School operates under the NIFSA Health and Safety policy and policies and procedures regarding safeguarding and confidentiality. Alongside this the following are completed: \* A full site risk assessment \* Daily site risk assessments that will be shared with staff and children \* Risk assessments for each planned activity.