

# Forest School at Harrow Gate Academy

*'If we take care of the natural world, the natural world will take care of us.'*

**Sir David Attenborough**

*'I have learned you are never too small to make a difference.'*

**Greta Thunberg**

## **Intent**

At Harrow Gate Primary Academy, our ethos of Forest School is based on a fundamental respect for all children to instigate, test and maintain their curiosity about the world around them. We want all of our children to be protectors of their planet who challenge decisions that do not align with the future of their world. Our hope is that the children of Harrow Gate will be the guardians of nature.

Forest School further enhances the creative, enquiry based learning that already happens within the classroom. Children develop their emotional intelligence, social skills and self-esteem with a belief of every child's right to access the outdoors, risk-taking and the reality of the natural world. Through challenge and collaborative working, children are able to build resilience, social skills and develop a sense of self. They will connect with the natural world which is vital for their health.

## **Implementation**

Children in Nursery, Year 2 and Year 5 take part in weekly forest school sessions for a minimum of one hour. A qualified forest school practitioner will always run a session with a minimum of one other staff member. The children lead their own learning and sessions will be planned based on what the children are interested in. There are many opportunities for children to apply their curriculum knowledge when outdoors such as science and Geography and practitioners and children naturally make links to the curriculum. Play and curiosity is at the heart of forest school and our children enjoy being outside.

Children bring their own outdoor clothing, but have access to spare clothing and footwear. There is a forest school changing area, where waterproof clothing is provided.

In September 2022, we have more members of staff undertaking the forest school training and we will then extend forest school to year groups 1, 3, 4 and 6.

## **Impact**

Forest School has a positive impact on our children's social, emotional and mental health. Children learn about the natural environment and develop a love and appreciation for our planet. They learn skills in problems solving, communication and building positive relationships. We have found that time in the natural environment improves their capacity for learning when back in the classroom.