

**FOREST SCHOOL IN SCOTLAND & THE CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE**

***This resource highlights information which might be useful to Forest School Scotland practitioners, in particular teachers. It contains content reviewed in October 2014, by a Forest School & CfE focus group.***

Forest School is a learner-centred pedagogy. It is a creative means for delivering the Scottish [curriculum](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/), in its widest context, using the outdoors. The following resources will help you find the most relevant links between key aspects of the curriculum and opportunities to support each individual’s personal progression in your Forest School programme. The resources could be useful, for example, when planning your sessions and reviewing the outcomes, justifying your programme to others and include making links to Award programmes.

**Forest School principles**

Remember that Forest School is not *just* about delivering the curriculum, which in Scotland is the [Curriculum for Excellence](http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk/). Sessions are planned to be open-ended and flexible, and responsive to individual needs. However, reviewing a session can reveal how much learning, in its broadest sense, has taken place, and the next session can be planned to build on these experiences. In 2011, a working group developed a [definition and ethos for Forest School in Scotland](http://www.foresteducation.org/images/uploads/FEI_Forest_School_Scotland_Definition_and_Ethos_July_2011.doc)

The Forest School Association has also agreed [principles and criteria for good practice](http://www.forestschoolassociation.org/full-principles-and-criteria-for-good-practice/). In particular, see *principle 6: ‘Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning’*.

**Education Scotland Outdoor Learning Resources:** [**Experiences & Outcomes Guides for Outdoor Learning**](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningteachingandassessment/approaches/outdoorlearning/about/experiencesandoutcomes.asp)

Here, experiences and outcomes have been coded to enable practitioners to identify where learning outdoors is most appropriate and valuable.

**Outcomes and Experiences at a Glance**

This useful East Lothian education website aims to share and support steps made by East Lothian learners, parents and teachers. The edubuzz [webpage](http://www.edubuzz.org/curriculumforexcellence/planning-support/interdisciplinary-learning/outcomes-and-experiences-at-a-glance/) provideslinks to download Word versions in poster format of all the outcomes and experiences from Early to Fourth level.

**Education Scotland:**[**Delivering on the Seven Principles of Curriculum Design**](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/howisthecurriculumorganised/principles/)

Does your Forest School programme offer Challenge & Enjoyment; Breadth; Progression; Depth; Personalisation; Coherence; Relevance? This makes a useful framework on which to plan and review your programme. Note that although all should apply at any one stage, the principles will have different emphases as a child or young person learns and develops.

**Education Scotland:** [**responsibility of all**](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningteachingandassessment/learningacrossthecurriculum/responsibilityofall/index.asp)

Can your Forest School programme help to deliver the experiences and outcomes which are the responsibility of all practitioners? These are:

* [Health & Wellbeing across Learning](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningteachingandassessment/learningacrossthecurriculum/responsibilityofall/healthandwellbeing/index.asp)
* [Literacy across Learning](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningteachingandassessment/learningacrossthecurriculum/responsibilityofall/literacy/principlesandpractice/index.asp)
* [Numeracy across Learning](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningteachingandassessment/learningacrossthecurriculum/responsibilityofall/numeracy/index.asp)

**Focus on planning and evaluating for Health & Wellbeing**

One of the key objectives for OWL Scotland is to increase recognition of the way that learning outdoors impacts positively on health and wellbeing. This was also a key focus agreed by the FS & CfE focus group. The group agreed that a poster\* which summarises the wellbeing indicators and signposts to additional resources was the most accessible and user friendly format.

*\*Note:* *The option to develop a Forest School-specific wellbeing indicators poster based on the ‘SHANARRI’ wheel, an* [*interactive Education Scotland resource*](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/interactivepdf_tcm4-831557.pdf)*, is currently being considered by OWL Scotland with the support of Forestry Commission Scotland.*

Some links relating to Health & Wellbeing:

* Describing the E’s and O’s from Early to Fourth Levels relating to mental, social, emotional and physical wellbeing [Curriculum for excellence: health and wellbeing across learning: responsibilities of all experiences and outcomes](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/hwb_across_learning_experiences_outcomes_tcm4-540905.pdf)
* Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators includes links to the SHANARRI wheel <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/well-being> and [Making the links… making it work](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/m/makingthelinks.asp) provides an overview.

**Forest School Scotland practitioner CfE initiatives**

Earthtime, a not-for-profit company based in Moray, has begun to develop [Forest School links to CfE](http://earthtime.co.uk/curriculum-for-excellence/) and E’s and O’s for the following typical FS activities:

* Introduction of leader and group (each other) and Health and Safety brief/discussion
* Den building (incorporating some knot tying)
* The choice to keep a personal journal

Thanks to Earthtime for sharing (Copyright © 2014 Earthtime)

**OTHER PROGRAMMES linking Curriculum, Forest School, Awards & outdoor learning**

**John Muir Award**

The JMA provides guidance on [Curriculum for Excellence and the John Muir Award](http://issuu.com/johnmuirtrust/docs/jma_curriculum) including a useful summary [Embedding the John Muir Award – Activities, Experiences and Outcomes](http://www.jmt.org/assets/john%20muir%20award/jmt_cfe_sep2013_p4_5.pdf). This mind map in poster format shows curriculum areas and related activities, many of which reflect typical outdoor activities which occur in Forest School sessions.

**Duke of Edinburgh Award**

The DofE website provides resources for leaders which includes a section on how DofE complements the [Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).](http://www.dofe.org/go/scfe/) Explore how doing a DofE programme can help young people in the areas of [Heath & Wellbeing](http://www.dofe.org/en/content/cms/takepart/notice-boards/scotland/health-and-wellbeing/), [Outdoor Learning](http://www.dofe.org/en/content/cms/takepart/notice-boards/scotland/outdoor-learning/) and their [CfE Impact pilot project](http://www.dofe.org/en/content/cms/takepart/notice-boards/scotland/pilot-project/).

**Scouts Scotland** describes how scout programmes link with [curriculum for excellence](http://www.scouts-scotland.org.uk/education.aspx). Like Forest School, Scouts offer a progressive practical and personal skills based programme and so their document ['How Scouting contributes to the learning of young people'](http://www.scouts-scotland.org.uk/media/994057/how_scouting_contributes_to_the_learning_of_young_people.pdf) has some parallels with Forest School approaches.

The **Outward Bound Trust** courses have been promoted by Education Scotland as real world experiences to [support CfE](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/o/genericresource_tcm4616445.asp). In addition the OBT undertake interesting social impact research with regular [reports](http://www.outwardboundtrust.org.uk/social-impact-report-2014.pdf) which describes the benefits for participants, including positive [benefits for teachers](http://www.outwardbound.org.uk/media/103251/how-teachers-benefit-from-accompanying-a-course.pdf) accompanying young people participating on their courses. Some of these outdoor approaches have parallels with FS programmes so may be a useful reflective tool.

[**FORESTS FOR THE FUTURE**](http://www.forestsforthefuture.co.uk/)

This resource is designed for upper Primary learners 10 –12 years to explore the local and global issues surrounding climate change and sustainable development.[Curriculum charts](http://www.forestsforthefuture.co.uk/curriculum-overview) linked to topics are provided. *The focus group noted this could be useful resource in both upper primary and secondary school, and can also help practitioners justify getting outside!*

**Acknowledgement:** many thanks to the Forest School & CfE Focus group participants:

*Dawn Ewan (Dunnottar School, Aberdeenshire); Pam Davey (Laurencekirk Primary, Aberdeenshire), Marian Laing (Balwearie High School, Fife), Gordon Cairns (Govan High School, Glasgow), Linda Leyland (Strachur Primary School, Argyll & Bute), Fiona Hamilton, Tighnabruaich Primary School, Argyll & Bute), Lizzie Low (Dalry Primary School, Edinburgh)*

*Kendal Gaiter (Craiglockhart Primary School, Edinburgh), Norman Bethune (The James Young High School, West Lothian), Kim Craigie (Mary Russell School, Paisley),*

*Aline Hill (Forest School Training Cooperative)*