

Forest School Curriculum Intent Statement 2022

The philosophy of Forest School is to encourage and inspire students, through positive experiences, by engaging them in motivating, achievable tasks and activities, within a woodland environment.

The curriculum is designed to ensure the five key Forest School Objectives are developed. That is: Independence, Self-discovery, Confidence, Communication and, above all else, raised Self Esteem.

These objectives are key factors in the Forest School curriculum playing an important role in developing cultural capital and gaps caused by the pandemic. This curriculum has been developed as a bespoke model for Downlands, because we feel it best serves our most vulnerable pupils. Giving them the skills needed to progress positively into their next stage of education.

Key stage 3 (Year 7) develops these through tutor group activities; with a focus on team-building. First through a Forest School day and then fortnightly sessions. These involve nature identification games, Bushcraft skills, photography and mindfulness.

Key Stage 4 (9-11) develops these objectives through Bushcraft and Environment certification. Bronze (Year 9), Silver (Year 10), Gold (Year 11) awards develop skills in shelter building, fire lighting, knife skills, knots and nature identification.

Verbal Communication is a key objective and as such, verbal literacy and numeracy are developed throughout each Key Stage. SEND and Pupil Premium pupils are the demographic of Forest School meaning their needs are a constant focus.

‘Potentially vulnerable pupils are particularly well supported through the forest school.....Pupils spoke incredibly positively about the improvements they have seen to their own self-esteem, resilience and confidence..... School information shows that this alternative curriculum is also helping to improve attendance and behaviour for some pupils.’ OFSTED Report November 2016.