



Forest School Assistant Training

Level 2 Handbook

Contents

Welcome & Meet the Team

Course Overview

- Delivery & Features
- Location
- Timings
- Accessibility & Other Useful Info

After the Practical Course

- Three Sessions
- First Aid Training
- Submitting your work
- Reading List

Student Support, Guidance and Conduct

- Miscellaneous Useful Information
- Assessment Process
- Course Regulations

Code of Conduct

Appeals & Complaints Procedure

Welcome to the Forest School Leader Training course with The Outdoors Group. This handbook contains useful information about the course and expectations of both you as a student and The Outdoors Group as qualification providers.

Our Course Instructors for Forest School are Neil Martin and Nick Murphy. Our Training Administrator is Lauren Vanstone. If you have any questions before or during the course, you can reach them via email, or you can call us on 01392 715940. Our IQA (Internal Quality Assurance) is Annie Milverton.

Emails:

neil.martin@outdoorsgroup.co.uk

training@outdoorsgroup.co.uk

Meet the Team



Neil Martin

Neil is a qualified Forest School leader and has completed a foundation in outdoor education. Neil is a fully qualified joker. He uses his humour and imagination, through storytelling, poetry, playing games, craft and nature connection activities. Neil brings his humour and passion for learning in the woods to the Outdoors group and has been co-leading our Forest School leader training since February 2019.



Nick Murphy

Nick is our Head of Forest Schools & Training, overseeing all our Forest School & Training provision. Also known for his excellent ukulele and spoon carving skills, Nick works hard to bring magic into the forest for children, parents and learners of all ages, encouraging them to get involved in activities and inspiring them to use their imaginations.

For more information on the team please visit the website at <https://www.outdoorsgroup.co.uk/our-team/>

Course Overview

This is a Level 2 Qualification, which is the equivalent of a G.C.S.E.

Your awarding body for the course is ITC First. This is what they say about the qualification.

This qualification is intended for those who wish to become an assistant Forest School Leader or intend to become a Forest School leader in the future, developing knowledge and practical skills suitable for the role.

This qualification is composed of 2 units.

Delivery

Topics include:

Unit 1: Supporting a Forest School Programme: Practical Skills

Unit 2: Supporting a Forest School Programme: Learning and Development

Assessment tasks will result in each candidate producing a portfolio of evidence meeting each assessment criteria in each unit.

Features

Typical qualification support includes:

- Attendance at an event at an approved ITC Centre
- 48 guided learning hours
- Assessed by a portfolio of evidence generated by Centre devised assessment tasks
- Mentor support
- Successful completion will result in the candidate gaining an ITC Level 2 Award for Forest School Assistants

Ofqual Qualification Number:

603/3211/6 ITC Level 2 Award for Forest School Assistants

Location

The course is held at:

Exmouth Forest School
Leeford Woods,
Knowle Hill,
Exmouth,
Devon

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what.three.words location for car park: <https://w3w.co/novelists.cavalier.glorified>
 what.three.words location for training site: [//w3w.co/unfit.respond.edgy](https://w3w.co/unfit.respond.edgy)

We don't provide the postcode for 'sat nav' devices as the postcode is shared with another local business.

Please instead search for us on Google (or google maps) and use the drop pin provided there. For your convenience, this is the link to the drop pin of our location:

<https://www.google.com/maps/@50.635085,-3.353254,19z?hl=en>

And/ or follow these directions from the M5.

- Exit M5 at junction 30.
- Follow signs A376 Exmouth
- At next roundabout follow signs to Exmouth A376 3rd exit
- At the next roundabout take first exit to sign posted to Woodbury and Budleigh B3179
- Once you have passed through Woodbury take a right sign posted for Budleigh Salterton
- At the 'T' junction at the top of the hill turn right.
- At some point you will do a sharp right turn followed by a sharp left. Shortly after this you will go down hill.
- Look out for a roundabout sign that says "Devon cliffs and country life park." **Just in front of this sign is our gateway (which is signposted)**
- Go through the gateway and park neatly near the other cars.

Timings

For the practical training you will be expected to arrive ready to start at 8:45am and stay until 4:30pm each day.

You are required to attend all timetabled learning activities for each module. Notification of illness or exceptional requests for leave of absence must be made to training@outdoorsgroup.co.uk.

If you have not gained the required authorisation for leave of absence, or if you are absent for any of the practical / main delivery aspects of the programme, you may be withdrawn from the course. If this is the case, then the date of withdrawal will be recorded as the last day of attendance.

Accessibility & Other Useful Information

- For the practical training you will need to bring your own packed lunch each day. We will provide tea, coffee, water and biscuits.
- **Please bring a notebook and pen for taking notes and a camera** (a camera on a mobile phone is sufficient) for taking photos that will be used as evidence in your coursework.
- **To be able to access the online training platform, you will need a laptop or handheld device such as a tablet.** Please note that a mobile phone is not sufficient in this case.
- Please note that we use compost toilets at the practical training site. There is a step up once through the door that you may need to be aware of.
- The forest environment is fickle, please dress accordingly! In the winter, we advise full waterproofs, hats, gloves and walking boots or wellies and in the summer, we would advise long sleeved tops, trousers and closed shoes to minimise insect bites. But regardless of the season, please take a few minutes to check the forecast each day so you are warm and comfortable throughout the training.
- Our training carpark is located a short walk from our woodland training site. On entering our Forest School site, look out for our 'Adult Training Car Park' located at the first opening along our driveway.

Please **do not park in the lower carpark** at the bottom of the hill, as this is reserved for our Forest School attendees.

- Access to the training site itself is through our bottom car-park. On the first day of your training, one of our staff will meet you on arrival. Following days, please feel free to find your own way down. If you have any mobility issues, please make us aware of this and bring walking sticks if required.

After the Practical Course

You will have one year to complete a portfolio of evidence.

Coursework can be submitted at any time and in any order during that year. However, we do ask that you submit work in **small sections at a time**, this is to ensure more efficient marking and highlight any errors or misunderstandings prior to any significant quantity of work being submitted.

The units that you study are:

- Unit 1: Supporting a Forest School Programme: Practical Skills
- Unit 2: Supporting a Forest School Programme: Learning and Development

The 5 days practical training will take you through a foundation of skills that are necessary to become a Forest School Assistant and the following Portfolio work and Learner support days will provide you with the knowledge and understanding of how to apply this in a professional capacity.

All of the units are mandatory and are marked on a pass/ fail basis.

The three sessions

As part of your portfolio of evidence you will have to assist with the planning and delivery of three sessions, following the learning and development of one learner.

If you choose to do your placement within a school, most schools can cover this under their insurance but it's important to check before undertaking these activities.

If you cannot find a placement elsewhere, The Outdoors Group can accept volunteers from our training programmes within some of our Forest School sessions, and you will be covered by our insurance when doing so.

Placements are determined on a case-by-case basis and are subject to the approval of our Forest School Team, dependant on available space.

Please understand that this process takes some time to organise, including DBS checks etc. In some cases it **can take up to 6-8 weeks**. Therefore, please allow plenty of time to set up your placement.

To process you as a volunteer, we need to complete all necessary background checks (Enhanced DBS, references and sometimes an overseas check) and safeguard training.

This is important for safeguarding purposes, and we are therefore unable to appoint you a placement until we have this all completed.

To arrange a placement with us, please contact us on training@outdoorsgroup.co.uk. Make sure that you explain in a covering email that you are training with us, as you will be given preference over other volunteer placements.

To speed up some time, please include the following information:

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- **Contact details (inc. email addresses) for 2 references** (this must cover you for the previous 5yrs, and be completed by your line manager/supervisor or HR)
- **Photographed documents to verify your DBS application** (this must include 2 x proof of ID (e.g. passport & driving license) and 1 x proof of address (e.g. utility bill, dated in the last 3 months)
- **PREVENT certificate**
- **Safeguarding Level 2 certificate**

If you do not have a PREVENT or Safeguarding L2 certificate, don't worry we can send you a link to complete this (Free) before your placement.

Our HR department will then busy themselves with your DBS checks etc. You will also need to complete a Volunteers Details Sheet, but our HR team will send you this when following up on your enquiry.

Our HR team aim to process volunteer background checks within a six-week timeframe, to allow for delays in return of DBS and references, as well as some time allowance for you to complete the mandatory safeguarding training. But delays can happen when many aspects and parties are involved in the organisation of the placement. Please prepare your nominated reference contacts, bear with us, and keep a close eye on your mailboxes to ensure responses are back as soon as possible!

Once Cleared to start, you will be back in touch with our training administrator who will speak to you about available sessions, sites & everything you need to know to get started and will liaise with our site leaders to get you booked in for an induction.

You will attend 4 sessions in total, an induction session (no activity leading done here), followed by your 3 sessions, where you will plan and deliver your activities (min of 2 hours), witnessed, and signed by our site leader.

What happens if I do not complete my course within the 12 month course duration?

You can apply for an extension, which costs £150 for an additional 12 months. Failure to apply for an extension or complete your coursework to current deadlines will result in you being withdrawn from the course.

Should you fail to complete your course within three years, the awarding body ITC state that to seek additional extensions (at a cost of £150 per year following the initial 12 months from the course start date), you will be required to attend an additional practical supervision day with our training team, at a further cost of £150.

Submitting your work

All work needs to be submitted by your course deadline, which is one year from the last day of practical training. All course work is to be submitted online via our online learning platform (Moodle).

To find Moodle, you will need to log in at <http://myoutdoorsgroup.co.uk>

Full instructions on how to upload your work will be given to you during your practical training.

Please be reminded to submit your coursework in **small sections at a time**, Our assessor will feedback on any improvements or misunderstandings within your coursework, which may need to be re-submitted. By

submitting your initial work in small sections, you are ensuring that it is manageable both for yourself, and for our course Trainer who will be marking your work.

If you are running close to your deadline, you can apply for an extension, which costs £150 for an additional 12 months. Failure to apply for an extension or complete your coursework to current deadlines will result in you being withdrawn from the course.

Indicative Reading List

This is by no means exhaustive but will give you the basic insights necessary to be able to engage fully with the programme and can be seen as a solid starting point for the research and written elements of the course. If you need any further reading information or guidance please contact the course Tutor.

1. "How Children Learn: from Montessori to Vygotsky", by Linda Pound
2. "Last Child in the Woods" by Richard Louv
3. "Toxic Childhood" by Sue Palmer
4. "Sharing Nature with Children" by Joseph Cornell
5. "What Every Parent Needs to Know" by Dr Margot Sunderland
6. Knight, S. (2009) Forest schools and Outdoor learning in the Early Years. London, SAGE
7. Maynard, T (2007) Forest Schools in Great Britain: An Initial Exploration, Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 8 (4), 320-31
8. Tovey, H. (2007) Playing Outdoors, spaces and Places, Risk and Challenge. Maidenhead, Open University
9. "I Love My World" by Chris Holland

Student Support, Guidance and Conduct

Coursework Support Days

We are happy to be able to offer regular written and practical coursework support days to be able to give our trainees as much guidance as is needed as they complete their coursework. Details of these will be sent out regularly to those on our training mailing list.

Personal Tutors

Your personal tutor for the forest school qualification is Neil Martin. His details are listed in this handbook if you need to contact him, and he will be available via email on an ongoing basis to help support you with your coursework.

Students with disabilities

If you have a disability that may affect your studies let one of the course team know as soon as possible. As the course will qualify you to lead groups of students in outdoor settings, The Outdoors Group may require a meeting with you to discuss how you intend to ensure group safety as a leader, and to help make reasonable adjustments to the programme delivery to ensure you can complete the course to a suitable standard to lead groups.

Health and Safety

As a student of The Outdoors Group you are responsible for the safety of yourself and for that of others around you. You must understand and follow all the regulations and safety codes necessary for a safe working environment. Please help to keep it safe by reporting any incidents, accidents or potentially unsafe situations to a member of staff as soon as possible.

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Safety assessments have been undertaken for each unit of your course and you will be advised of all applicable safety codes and any specific safety issues during the induction to your course and units. You must ensure that you understand and apply all necessary safety codes. These form an essential element of your personal development and contribute to the safety of others.

Conduct

You will be expected to abide by the code of practice at the end of this handbook. You are also bound by the relevant policies and procedures of The Outdoors Group, copies of which are available on the website or by request. You will be given information about expectations during induction on the first day of the programme.

Assessment

Please note that all modules will be assessed. You are expected to attempt all required assessments for each module for which you are registered, and to do so at the times scheduled unless authorised extensions, special arrangements for disability, or extenuating circumstances allow you to defer your assessment.

Data Protection

We will only ask for details that we feel are necessary for the completion of the course. Any details we hold will be kept for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Assessment Process

Assessment will be ongoing through our online Moodle portal.

The final submission deadline is one year from the enrolment date and will be sent out to students in good time to help solve issues before the deadline.

If, at the end of the year, you require more time, you can request an extension of an additional year. This can be issued at a cost of £150. To request an extension, you will need to submit a request via email to training@outdoorsgroup.co.uk

All assessment feedback will be uploaded onto Moodle as part of the assessment process. The Outdoors Group Ltd aims to respond to and mark all student's work, within 2-3 weeks of the submission of each section of work.

You will be shown how to submit the course work using our online platform found at:

<https://myoutdoorsgroup.co.uk>

Your login details will be in the following format: (case-sensitive)

Username: firstnamesurname (e.g. timothyjones)

Password: FirstnameSurnameYear! (e.g TimothyJones2023!)

Once you have logged in, please change your password to ensure your access to Moodle is secure. As you complete the work over the duration of the year please submit it to Moodle as you go. This allows us the most time to mark your work, making sure you can pass at the nearest Internal Verification (IV) and External Verification (EV) window.

First Aid Training

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Please note that the first aid training is a separate, standalone course and should be booked as such. Although we offer a package whereby Forest School Training and our First Aid training can be purchased together, you will need to book into the first aid training on a separate booking using the codes sent to you in your Forest School Training booking confirmation email.

Having appropriate First Aid qualifications is essential for those wishing to run Forest School sessions at their own site. The Outdoors Group is delighted to offer a 2 day, fully accredited, first aid course that gives you two qualifications:

- ITC Level 3 Paediatric First Aid
- ITC Forest School First Aid

This training is available in conjunction with our Forest School Leader Training (although it's a separate course) or as a standalone booking. Forest School First Aid training covers practical skills needed by those who work with children, providing the confidence and knowledge to deal with comprehensive life-saving first aid emergencies in the outdoor environment, including first aid for adult helpers. The complementary Paediatric First Aid qualification satisfies Early Years Foundation Stage practice guidance and statutory guidelines. It is mandatory that trainees attending our first aid course attend **the full 16 hours of delivery, and failure to do so will result in the candidate not being able to complete the course.**

The course runs over 2 days. Each day runs from 9am – 6pm. Course Cost: £200. Read more here:

<https://www.outdoorsgroup.co.uk/first-aid/>

Internal, External Verification and Certification

Once your work has been marked and everything has been passed it will be sent for internal verification (IV) at the next opportunity. Once the IV process is complete, your work will be sent to the external verifier (EV) at ITC First. Following a positive EV, your certificate will be applied for and will usually take 10 working days to be sent to The Outdoors Group.

Please note, however, that this whole process can take up to 6 months.

At the point where all your work has been fully assessed, you will be classed as passed and awaiting certification. If you would require this in writing for employment or insurance purposes, then please contact training@outdoorsgroup.co.uk and explain your request.

If you have requested a physical copy of certificate, we will send this to you via Royal Mail.

Please make sure you contact training@outdoorsgroup.co.uk if your address has changed since you registered with the course. We will claim no responsibility for certificates lost due to being sent to your former address.

Course regulations

Course requirements

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In order to complete the course, there are certain criteria you will have to meet; you will need to ensure these are all completed before the final submission date.

- the practical week of activities
- 3 days (minimum) delivery of forest school activities, evidenced by a witness statement from the setting you have worked within.
- coursework elements of the programme that make up the mandatory units

Once you have completed this and submitted your coursework, it will be Internally Verified and then a sample will be taken of the cohort's work and seen by the External Verifier; this will determine whether your certificate will be awarded.

The Outdoors Group will endeavour to let you know if you are required to provide additional work or to alter work before the submission goes to the External Verifier.

Should you require assistance with your submission, please let us know and we will endeavour to help where possible.

Student voice

You can play an important part in the process of improving the quality of this course through the feedback you give. In addition to the ongoing discussion with the course team throughout the year, there are a range of mechanisms for you to give feedback about your experience of teaching and learning. We aim to respond to your feedback and let you know of our plans for improvement.

Course Evaluation Questionnaire

At the end of your programme it would be very useful for us to know how you felt the course has been for you. This is our main way of improving our delivery for future courses. This will be emailed to you on completion of your course.

Code of Practice

Our code of practice is designed to do three things;

1. To provide guidelines on safe conduct for participants on our courses,
2. To provide safeguards to protect both staff and course participants from abuse or bad conduct and
3. To give guidelines to all parties regarding our underlying focus and ethics regarding inclusion, ethos and environment.

Guidelines on safe conduct for participants on our courses:

We expect visitors to our site to;

1. Listen to instructions provided
2. Act responsibly with the equipment provided
3. Remain focused and sensible at all times
4. To cooperate with staff in all instructions they give
5. To remain positive towards all members of the group
6. Ask instructors for additional information or help whenever necessary
7. To take responsibility for themselves and other group members

Safeguards for the protection of staff and course participants:

We will provide for the safety of staff and participants;

1. Details and/or certificates of any relevant training, including DBS clearance upon request by any visiting group or potential customer
2. We (The Outdoors Group) operate a zero-tolerance approach to the misuse of potentially dangerous equipment used on the courses we provide. Anyone found misusing equipment will have their privileges regarding the equipment removed until a responsible attitude has been proven. This action is taken at the discretion of the course instructors.
3. We (The Outdoors Group) operate a zero-tolerance approach to bullying or abusive behaviour, towards staff or course participants. Any behaviour of this nature will result in warnings from staff members and possibly lead to exclusion from the course. This action will be taken at the discretion of the course instructors in line with our policies and procedures (see anti bullying policy for further details).
4. We (The Outdoors Group) will provide a guarantee of quality and care regarding the state of all equipment provided for courses run by The Outdoors Group.
5. We (The Outdoors Group) will guarantee communication and cooperation wherever possible or reasonable with members of staff or organisers linked to visiting groups and also with parents of any child attending our courses, this will be through open communication on social media and responses to written communications and emails within 21 working days..
6. We (The Outdoors Group) will ensure we keep all instructors and members of staff up to date in all relevant qualifications, and our company directors will ensure that all instructors and members of staff meet the companies' standards. This will be ensured through observations and close working relationships.

Inclusion, participation and company ethos:

1. We (The Outdoors Group) believe that inclusion and participation are integral to all learning; no matter what your learning capabilities, creed, religion or colour.
2. The Outdoors Group believes that learning is a process of failure, discussion and co-operation. If these elements are not present you cannot expect to learn.
3. We (The Outdoors Group) are fully committed to providing courses and course material to everyone regardless of physical or mental disabilities. We will fully cooperate with carers/members of staff of visiting organisations to provide access and relevant course material for anyone interested in participating.
4. The Outdoors Group has a clear 'leave no trace' attitude to the environment in which we work. We believe that leaving the environment the way it was found is vital to the understanding of how the environment works.
5. We (The Outdoors Group) strongly believe in everyone having a go; we (partners, instructors and members of staff) will actively encourage participation by everyone who enrolls on our courses.
6. The Outdoors Group's ethos regarding the environment is; that it is integral to the learning we provide. The study of the environment is critical to the learning provided by The Outdoors Group and encompasses many and varied aspects of environmental learning into our course material.
7. We (The Outdoors Group) will provide material in our courses linked to other areas of study or the curriculum. We will do this through negotiations with course purchasers to meet their requirements.

Cheating, plagiarism, collusion or re-presentation

You are required to sign a declaration indicating that individual work submitted for an assessment is your own.

If you attempt to influence the standard of the award you obtain through cheating, plagiarism or collusion, it will be considered as a serious academic and disciplinary offence.

- Plagiarism describes copying from the works of another person without suitably attributing the published or unpublished works of others. This means that all quotes, ideas, opinions, music and images should be acknowledged and referenced within your assignments.
- Collusion is an attempt to deceive the examiners by disguising the true authorship of an assignment by copying or imitating in close detail another student's work - this includes with the other student's consent and also when 2 or more students divide the elements of an assignment amongst themselves and copy one another's answers. It does not include the normal situation in which you learn from your peers and share ideas, as this generates the knowledge and understanding necessary for each individual to independently undertake an assignment; nor should it be confused with group work on an assignment which is specifically authorised in the assignment brief.
- Re-presentation is an attempt to gain credit twice for the same piece of work.

The process of investigation and penalties which will be applied can be reviewed in the relevant The Outdoors Group policies. If an allegation is found to be proven, then the appropriate penalty will be implemented:

Appeals and Complaints Procedure:

The Outdoors Group is committed to your continuing success during your studies with us. If for any reason you feel we have not met your expectations in any aspect of our delivery, please get in touch with us and make your complaint known. Below is the procedure by which we will consider your complaint and respond;

- 1) We (The Outdoors Group) receive a complaint about an aspect of the course delivery, assessment or any of the staff delivering the course. You will be asked to submit this in writing so that we can ensure the right people get the information in your own words.
- 2) The Outdoors Group will ensure that the complaint is looked into by the Assessor and the Internal Verifier for the programme in the first instance, if we feel this is an instance that cannot be impartially resolved by the Assessor and IV (i.e. it is a complaint about the way an assessor has marked work or delivered an aspect of the course) the information will be passed on to the course manager and/or a Director of the company to look into.
- 3) The Outdoors Group will then respond in writing to the complaint detailing what we have done to resolve it, or explaining the reasons why we have not upheld the complaint. This will be returned to you within 8 weeks of the written complaint being received by The Outdoors Group.
- 4) You will have the right to appeal the decision at this stage, if you appeal the decision it must be submitted in writing within 6 weeks of receiving The Outdoors Group' report on the complaint. Any appealed decision will automatically be looked into by a Director of the company.
- 5) As before we will respond within 8 weeks of the appeal with our findings/ decision.
- 6) If you are still not satisfied with the decision you have the opportunity to discuss further courses of action with The Outdoors Group which may involve but is not exclusively limited to;

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- a. Discussions with the awarding body of the qualification
 - b. Discussions with the board of directors
 - c. Negotiation of a resubmission for the qualification and/or a refund
 - d. Discussions with regulating bodies for education that are applicable to the course delivery (such as Ofsted)
- 7) This step will be the final process of appeal and any decision made by the relevant body will be deemed to be the final decision of the complaints process.

The Outdoors Group Ltd reserves the right to suspend your activity on the course during the complaints procedure process. If the complaint is upheld this will in no way compromise your position on the course.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this document. We look forward to meeting you all on the practical course but if you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to email us on training@outdoorsgroup.co.uk.