

**What are we aiming for students to achieve through our Post 16 Forest School curriculum? (Intent)**

“To encourage and inspire individuals of any age through positive experiences and participation in engaging and motivating achievable activities in a woodland environment, helping to develop personal, social and emotional skills.”

(Forest Schools Association)

Forest School Pedagogy supports good practice for working with people with autism particularly well. Our specialist provision at BGS aims to;

* be learner led and provide a holistic approach
* Follow the Seasons ensuring the learner can connect with their local environment
* Promotion of independence and resilience through learner led experiences
* give priority to teaching communication, social interaction + self-care skills
* be based on functional skills and life skills
* develop sensory integration - lots of hands on activities developing fine motor skills
* incorporate physical activity, reduce levels of stress and anxiety and to lessen disruptive behaviours
* be specialised in its organisation
* nurture a positive relationship with the natural environment in real life situations bringing lasting benefits
* fulfill many of the Learning Outside the Classroom manifesto objectives
* provide endless opportunities for experiential, contextual and applied education.
* Link to literacy and numeracy with a focus on developing makaton skills in the outdoor setting

**How is the Post 16 Forest School curriculum delivered? (Implementation)**

* Delivered by specialist staff.
* All classes have opportunity for outdoor learning/FS each week and have a regular and sustained programme of lessons to allow personalised progress across the lessons
* Focus on connection with the outdoors and individualised learning for the pupils.

**What difference is the Post 16 Forest School curriculum making to students? (Impact)**

* Develops the whole person with a holistic approach
* Intrinsic health benefits of being outside and moving
* Promotes understanding of the interconnectedness of life and sustainability
* Challenges assumptions made by staff who can see students with different perspective
* Supports communication and social interaction through structured routines
* Friendships strengthened and more positive communication between peers has developed.
* Provides a structured environment that is “safe enough” to take risks
* Promotes connections with the natural world
* Builds resilience and self-confidence
* Encourages creativity and independent thinking skills
* Highly engaging activities such as fire lighting and tool use facilitates concentration, motivation and develops self-esteem
* Allows many opportunities for multi-sensory learning experiences improving sensory function
* Can link to any curriculum area, can be used to achieve goals on EHCPs
* Highly inclusive, allowing for participants with most complex needs

Some examples of success;

* Selective mute student talking outside
* Students with OCD and agoraphobia overcoming anxieties by being outside, parents reporting positive changes in behaviour at home
* Students who find inside environments particularly challenging thrive outside
* Record of students who have history of non-attendance at school being highly motivated by outdoor sessions
* Reports of stronger friendships and fewer instances of serious incidents as a direct result of Forest School sessions
* Student who refuses to engage with food tech lessons loves cooking outside
* Highly anxious students are more relaxed and engaged during outdoor sessions