



# Three Trees Forest School

by [NatureConnect](#)



TM

“If you are looking for heart, drive and talent in the nature connection world and you have chanced upon Marc then you are in luck! Marc shares ancestral skills of wilderness living with children of all ages in a way that is both exciting and accessible. There is a community that forms around this type of work and Marc is masterful at helping each person find their seat in it, around the table, the campfire, and in the circle.”

- Tim Drake (Co-Founder [Primitive Pursuits](#) in Ithaca, New York)



# What is Forest School?

The "Forest School" model was first developed in outdoor nature schools in Denmark in the 1980s and has grown to include many forms of nature-based learning methods around the world. Forest School was first introduced to Ireland in 2013 and is now a growing, vibrant community of outdoor educators around the country.

## **Forest School operates under an ethos of six key principles:**

**Regular Sessions:** Forest school is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a once-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.

**Woodland Setting:** Forest school takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

**Community:** Forest school uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development, and learning.

**Holistic development:** Forest school aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

**Opportunity to take risks:** Forest school offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks (e.g. climbing a tree), appropriate to the environment and to themselves. Managed risk creates enormous opportunities for growth both physically and psychologically

**Qualified practitioners:** Forest school is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.



## **The *NatureConnect* Vision**

To grow the roots of community, connection, regenerative culture and environmental stewardship for a flourishing future.

## **About *ThreeTrees Forest School***

The principal intention of the sessions is to cultivate the conditions for **THRIVING** for life. The heart of *ThreeTrees Forest School* programmes is to connect participants to the land, each other, and to a supportive natural community. Our participants develop strong naturalist skills, wilderness awareness, earth living skills, creative thinking and more - gaining inspiration from the land and a felt heritage for, understanding and value of **PLACE**.

**All Forest School Leaders are Garda Vetted, Insured, and First Aid Certified (REC 2)**



# Benefits of Forest School

The focus of Forest School/Nature Mentoring sessions is on the participants with social and behavioral development at the forefront. Through artful mentoring techniques and core-connection routines, participants naturally develop confidence, competence, self-esteem, and a sense of personal identity/purpose, all through the medium of the outdoors. The realization of one's gifts to share within community, considered as a drive or need present in everyone, is the core outcome I've witnessed through years of engagement in this work.

## Other Benefits include:

**Free and imaginative PLAY in Nature** – Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. Play is also important to healthy brain and personality development. The outdoors – especially woodland settings – offers the most dynamic spaces for a whole diversity of play types to be engaged in.

**Health and Fitness** – Physical (body) and cognitive (brain) development go hand-in-hand. While this continues for life, this relationship is most critical at a young age. When kids are active, their brain develops, allowing for new types of activity. Active engagement in the outdoors contributes to developing gross and fine motor function, increased strength/stamina, body awareness and ability and a complete vitality gained from lively time spent in the open air.

**Social Development** – Small group sizes allow for participants to become more aware of the consequences of their actions on others, they acquire the ability to undertake activities with others, such as cooperative play, sharing tools for a project, or listening/telling stories around a fire.

**Language and Communication Skills** – Working on challenges with adults and other children enables participants to learn new words (especially as they relate to the natural world) as well as how to communicate their needs. Storytelling is an incredible avenue to develop these skills.

**Risk Taking and Expansion of Common Sense** – Allowing children to explore, recognise, and manage risk in a safe and secure environment is vital to their development and well-being. By learning to navigate risk participants cultivate their common sense and gain greater independence.

**Enhanced Creativity and Connection to the Natural World** – Freedom of expression and the magic/mystery of the natural world contribute to imaginative projects. Engaging all of our senses throughout a forest school session creates a timeless space for connection to self, others, and the natural world to flourish.

**Self-Motivation, Concentration, and Vitality** – Participants become keen to participate in exploratory/experiential learning on their own terms. Participants are encouraged to lead their own learning, focusing on specific tasks for extended periods of time and engaging in free-play activities.

**Resilience** – The culture of forest school (skills and activities) allow the participant to cope with situations as they arise. Resilience in a changing world relates to a sense of community, adaptability/problem solving, recognizing change as a constant and working with it, holding tight to one's dreams, nurturing the mind and vision for the future, self-discovery and self-care.





# Forest School Activities

*Forest School is participant-led and allows them to engage in what they are most interested in rather than form a rigid curriculum around one skill or subject.*

## Unstructured Free Play in Nature

Outdoor games and exploration with countless ways to have fun and adventure

Awareness expanding exercises and Teambuilding challenges

Using and growing our imagination in any setting we find ourselves in

Naturalist Skills such as plant and animal identification/behaviour

Aidless Navigation

Nature Connection Routines

- Sense Meditations and Ecology-Themed Games
- Tracking and Mapping
- Wandering/Resting
- Storytelling and Journaling
- Practicing Survival Skills
- Finding a Secret Spot on the Landscape to Quietly Observe Nature

Whittling Sticks or weaving a basket while listening out for bird language

Sawing Wood for projects or for the fire

Swinging from ropes or balancing on a rope bridge

Bushcraft Skills such as:

- Making FIRE (without matches or a lighter!)
- Shelter Building
- Foraging
- Tracking
- Knot tying for different needs or situations
- Outdoor Cooking



“Marc brings care, compassion, and an incredible skill for teaching and connection to people of all ages. His stories are my favorites! An experience with Marc out in the woods and fields is sure to be one you won't soon forget.”-Steve Gabriel ([Wellspring Forest Farm and School](#) - Ithaca, NY)



# Info

## What will participants need?

- 2-Strap Rucksack
- Snacks, Water, and a Lunch (there may be cooking in some sessions, but own lunch is a must!)
- Warm Clothes (Jumpers, hats, gloves, scarves) as needed as we'll be outside almost all day - dress in layers!
- Wear footwear which fully covers feet - no sandals
- Waterproof trousers, coat, and boots (wellies) or good hiking shoes
- Waterproof footwear is best. Wellies are very waterproof but not warm and hard to run and climb in. We advise a change of warm, thick socks!
- Sunhats in sunny weather

And finally - be prepared to have fun, and bring your own sprinkling of songs, stories, games and laughter!

## How can you help?

- Sign up for the **ThreeTrees Forest School Sessions** © and put the dates for the Forest School on your fridge, calendar or notice board
- Include name(s) and age of youth attending
- Make sure you and your child are dressed properly for the weather
- Spend time in the Natural World with your family outside of program hours

## Contact

Marc Barker - [NatureConnect](#)

Phone: 087 163 8327

Email: [natureconnectireland@gmail.com](mailto:natureconnectireland@gmail.com)

Website: <https://natureconnectireland.com>

Facebook: [@natureconnectireland](#)



“Marc is very energetic and has volumes of information and inspiration about learning through nature. Very engaging with people and lots of skills to offer groups or individuals of all ages. From simple team games to lighting a fire by friction he will inspire you to be more creative. Our team at Comeragh Wilderness Camp was made stronger by interacting with Marc’s mentoring program”

- [Comeragh Wilderness Camp](#) (Rathgormack, Co. Waterford)



Thank you for your interest in ThreeTrees Forest School!  
We hope to see you in the woods soon!

- Marc



TM