



07.11.22

Dear Parent

Rathmore Primary School is delighted to be involved in a Forest School project supported by the Northern Ireland Forest School Association.

Forest School is an exciting and innovative educational experience that has been shown to be hugely beneficial to all those taking part.

Pupils at Rathmore Primary School will be involved in a number of Forest School sessions. Each session will last approximately one hour and will take place outside. These sessions might include den building, camouflage games and exploring nature. Please ensure pupils have wellington boots or trainers that can get muddy, waterproof coats and warm clothes.

The Forest School sessions will be delivered in partnership with the Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA). NIFSA is a local charity that has been set up to promote outdoor environmental education for children in Northern Ireland. For further information please visit their website on www.forestschoolsni.com

You may wish to become involved with the NIFSA Forest School Family programme at home. NIFSA have created a free resource to encourage family members to spend quality time together in the garden or local green space, for further information visit www.forestschoolsni.com/families

Our thanks go to Northern Ireland Forest School Association for giving us this wonderful opportunity to become involved in this exciting venture.

Yours sincerely

Julie M Hardy
Principal



Learning Outdoors at Rathmore Primary School

Information for Parents and Carers



Rathmore Primary School is committed to creating and planning for high quality learning opportunities for all of our pupils making full use of our wide range of outdoor spaces.

This week Rathmore Primary School will be celebrating Outdoor Classroom Day which took place during our half-term holidays (3 November 2022).

At Rathmore Primary School, we are fortunate to have a choice of outdoor spaces across our school grounds; these green spaces can provide enhanced learning opportunities for our children.

As part of our Covid-Recovery Plan, Rathmore Primary School has embedded regular opportunities for each year group to take their learning objectives outdoors. This will ensure that the curriculum content is delivered both indoors and outdoors. In doing so, each class is able to cater for the range of learning styles of all of our learners and to promote engagement with learning.

Learning together in an outdoor environment has many positive benefits:

- When learning outdoors, the children's long-term social, emotional and mental health are being enhanced by spending time in an outdoor environment.
- Learning outdoors promotes social experiences through collaborative learning on a large scale, in a classroom without any walls.
- Being physically active, spending time outdoors and connecting with nature can affect emotions and allow for relaxation, calmness and a heightened sense of wellbeing.
- Outdoors, children can experience freedom through risk-benefit assessed activities, where they socialise freely and use their own imagination and creativity.
- As a constantly changing environment, the outdoors offers ample opportunity for children to experience excitement and wonder in the natural world and they are less restricted by the physical constraints that exist indoors.
- Learning outdoors provides opportunities to move as they are learning, this supports children in their development of gross and fine motor skills, which helps to promote co-ordination, balance and body awareness.
- Moving outdoors whilst learning improves physical development by keeping the body, heart and other organs healthy and boosting mental and physical wellbeing.