



Information on NIFSA Nature Ranger Clubs

**A partnership with NIFSA to develop an
after-school Nature Ranger Club**



The Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) is a registered charity - NIC100975

Background Information

The Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) was set up in 2008. Its aim is to develop and deliver outdoor learning programmes for schools and families. Every child in Northern Ireland should have regular outdoor learning opportunities throughout their childhood.

Key NIFSA statistics (correct at January 2023)

- a) Trained and accredited over 220 official NIFSA Forest Schools in Northern Ireland.
- b) Awarded over 300 Forest Leader Level 3 qualifications to teachers in Northern Ireland.
- c) Supports over 5,000 pupils learning outside every month.
- d) Actively training a further 400 trainee Forest School Leaders to achieve their Level 3 qualification.
- e) Clondeboy Nature Rangers welcomes over 100 schools, nurseries and home educator groups every year.
- f) Clondeboy Nature Rangers supports over 5,000 children through their after-school and holiday programmes annually.



Nature Ranger Club Proposals

Based on many years of experience NIFSA is proposing establishing formal partnerships with official NIFSA accredited Forest Schools.

The aims of the partnership are:

- a) Establish closer working relationships between NIFSA and partner organisation. This will mean NIFSA can provide a greater support to those organisations, helping them to develop their outdoor learning journey.
- b) Provide more opportunities for children and families to become more active outside in the natural environment through the development of after school Nature Ranger Clubs.
- c) Provide a source of income for both the school and NIFSA.

What would a Nature Ranger Club look like?

One day a week, during term time, staff or volunteers would run an after-school club in the grounds of the school.

NIFSA would train and support 2-3 school staff members or volunteers that would deliver each session. Up to 20 pupils per session.

Key stage 1 session would, for example, be delivered between 2-3pm and Key Stage 2 session would be delivered between 3-4pm.

During the Forest School session, Nature Ranger Club Leaders will teach new skills to the pupils e.g. whittling, identification skills, fire lighting etc. Importantly the pupils are in an environment that promotes their physical and mental health.

Nature Ranger Club Leaders make sure pupils return home safely and site is left tidy.

Holiday programmes would also be encouraged and supported.



Responsibilities

School – (Schools must be official NIFSA accredited Forest Schools)

- a) Help identify teachers, classroom assistants, parents, volunteers that would run an after-school Nature Ranger Club in the grounds of the school. Hopefully 2-3 Forest School Leaders per school.
- b) Continually promote the Nature Ranger Club to parents and wider school community.
- c) AccessNI any parents etc. involved.
- d) Ensure the Forest School site is safe and fit for purpose.

NIFSA

Identification of partner schools

- a) Schools must be official NIFSA accredited Forest Schools.
- b) Schools must have suitable outdoor space to deliver the Forest School sessions.
- c) Meet with Principals and/or key staff and formalise partnership and agree terms.

Identification of Nature Ranger Club Leaders

- a) Nature Ranger Club Leaders must be well known and respected by the school.
- b) They must be prepared to undertake the initial NIFSA training.
- c) They must be able to commit the time e.g. an afternoon a week and possibly some holiday time to deliver the Nature Ranger Club.
- d) They must be competent to deliver all aspects of the Nature Ranger Club programme –
 - a. Computer literate to manage the on-line booking system and post regular social media posts.
 - b. Self-motivated – continually look for innovative ways to promote and deliver the Nature Ranger Club programme.
 - c. Excellent communicator – be able to converse effectively with NIFSA, school, parents and pupils.
 - d. All round sensible person!
- e) Nature Ranger Club Leaders will either be self-employed or employed by the school.

Initial training for Nature Ranger Club Leaders

- a) Initial Zoom Introduction by NIFSA to explain the programme and commitment required (March)
- b) Introductory training weekend at Clondeboy Estate in Bangor in April.
 - a) Meet NIFSA and other Nature Ranger Club Leaders.
 - b) Introduction to NIFSA and Forest Schools.
 - c) Introduction to Nature Ranger Club Programme
 - d) Forest School Leader Level 3 training.
 - e) Practical outdoor sessions.
 - f) Other training as required.
 - g) Supply Forest School Kit Bags and measure for clothing.
- c) Follow-up training day at Clondeboy in June
 - a) Recap initial training.
 - b) Provide activity cards for first term (autumn of academic year).

- c) Training on booking system etc.
- d) Practical outdoor sessions.
- e) Progress on Level 3 qualification.
- f) Clothing provided.



Annual support to partners and Nature Ranger Club Leaders

- a) Activity cards provided at the start of each term.
- b) Annual one-day symposium at Clondeboyne to cover new opportunities, training, problems, outdoor workshops etc.
- c) NIFSA staff will visit each Nature Ranger Club at least once per term to support the Leaders and ensure high standards are being maintained.

Design and production of personalised promotional materials. To include -

- a) Recruitment of Forest School Leaders.
- b) Promotion of Forest School Family Days.
- c) Promotion of Nature Ranger Clubs.
- d) Weekly Nature Ranger Club updates for school to circulate.
- e) Nature Ranger Club Leader clothing.

Booking system

- a) Booking systems will be developed for each setting on the Forest Schools NI website.
- b) Training and support will be given to all Nature Ranger Club Leaders on how to use the booking system.

Finance

Bookings

- a) It is proposed that each session costs £6 (NIFSA is happy to agree costs with each school individually)
 - a. NIFSA receives £2 per booking
 - b. School will receive £1 per booking (as a contribution from NIFSA at the end of the term/year)
 - c. Nature Ranger Club Leaders £3 per booking on submission of timesheets.
- b) NIFSA will collect all the payments through the on-line booking system.

Example:

If completely full @ 40 pupils each week (20 in 2-3pm and 20 in 3-4pm) =

Total bookings - $40 \times £6 = £240$

School = £40

NIFSA = £80

Leaders = £160 or £80 each.

Holiday club example

24 pupils @ £15 per day

Total bookings - £360

School = £24

NIFSA = £48

Leaders = £288 or £144 each.

Initial outlay by NIFSA

- a) Nature Ranger Club Leader and Level 3 Training - £1.5k per person
- b) Per school –

Nature Ranger Club Resources – Kit bags, Kelly Kettle, water container etc. - £250

Clothing - £250

Total £3,500 per school initial outlay (based on 2 training).

Ongoing costs

- a) Booking system.
- b) NIFSA termly support visit.
- c) Annual conference at Clandeboye.
- d) Production and dissemination of supporting materials.
- e) Identified training courses.