



Inspiring schools and families to play and learn outside since 2008

NIFSA Membership, Training & Outdoor Learning Action Plan

The staff at the Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) have over 20 years experience in developing and delivering outdoor learning programmes in schools across Northern Ireland.

NIFSA delivers the largest outdoor learning programme in Northern Ireland. There are:

- **Over 300 NIFSA accredited Forest Schools**
- **1,000 teachers and classroom assistants trained and qualified as NIFSA Forest School Leaders Level 3**
- **Over 10,000 pupils regularly learning outside the classroom every month**
- **Over 1,000 Forest School Families enjoying spending quality time outside every month**

NIFSA is successfully lobbying statutory bodies to recognise the importance of outdoor learning. Click on the image below to read an independant study undertaken by the Ulster University about the impact NIFSA is having.



MEMBERSHIP

NIFSA Membership:

What is included:

- Retain NIFSA Forest School status
- School Portal to record all outdoor learning activity
- Opportunity to access all NIFSA packages
- Regular NIFSA News
- NIFSA Forest School Family Newsletter
- Promotion of your school in the NIFSA website (qualified NIFSA schools only)
- Access to the NIFSA Accreditation Scheme (qualified NIFSA schools only)
- Access to all NIFSA website resources
- Two free passes for annual NIFSA Local Area Forest School (LAFS) regional conferences
- Booking links for termly Little LAFS (free on-line training events).
- Discounts for specialist goods and services e.g. Clandeboy Nature Rangers, Muddy Puddles etc.

**Could be
eligible for
TPL fund**

Cost: £125 per annum



**BE PART OF THE BIGGEST OUTDOOR
LEARNING PROGRAMME IN
NORTHERN IRELAND**

NIFSA OUTDOOR LEARNING ACTION PLAN (OLAP)

The Northern Ireland Forest School Association's (NIFSA) Outdoor Learning Action Plan is available only to NIFSA Premium Members. The Outdoor Learning Action Plan is a personalised step by step approach in helping you design your own outdoor learning journey. It can be daunting navigating your way through a minefield of options - however we are here to help.

Planning your personalised Outdoor Learning Action Plan involves a face to face meeting with a senior member of NIFSA and your key outdoor learning team. During the meeting NIFSA can explain the range of support packages that are available. These packages are costed very competitively and some are completely free.

By the end of the meeting you will have discussed and agreed the next steps for:

- **Your whole school: What is your ultimate objective for the year. For example - to embed outdoor learning delivering all elements of the curriculum in all the key stages within the school, participate in shared education Forest Schools**
- **Which teaching or support staff can be trained, and what commitment will it involve**
- **Parental engagement - do you need to raise awareness about outdoor learning?**
- **Pupil recognition as a key part of this journey - consideration of what rewards or incentives are already available**
- **School grounds. You do not need to spend tens of thousands of pounds to begin to develop your outdoor learning site. NIFSA has an experienced site development team that will help you identify what is needed and the most cost effective route to achieving this**

You will receive a personalised plan detailing everything discussed with all the additional costings attached.

Cost: £150



NIFSA TRAINING PROGRAMMES



NIFSA INTRODUCTION TO FOREST SCHOOL (EQUIVALENT TO LEVEL 1)

The NIFSA Introduction to Forest School is a course designed to educate all staff members about what a Forest School is. The first half of the course covers all the theory involved, why do we do it, ethos behind it, consideration of risks and the environmental impact plus other useful pieces of information. The second half of the course is undertaken outside. It will run through the Forest School setting up procedures and will showcase examples that are easily deliverable in your own school grounds. No previous knowledge or experience is required.

The course lasts a total of four hours. For the two hours inside covering theory NIFSA will need access to the internet, whiteboard or data projector and speakers. For the two hours of practical element of the course NIFSA will need access to your outside space and it is recommended all staff bring appropriate outdoor clothing.

Workbooks are provided for each staff member attending and a Certificate of Participation is provided once everybody has completed the course.



Cost: £350
Delivered over 2 Twilight sessions £450

NIFSA FOREST SCHOOL LEADER LEVEL 3 TRAINING

The NIFSA Forest School Leader Level 3 is a nationally recognised qualification accredited by the Open College Network Northern Ireland.

This qualification gives school and nursery staff the confidence, knowledge, practical skills and resources to deliver their own outdoor learning programme.

**Could be
eligible for
TPL fund**

The qualification is a personal qualification. Once a member of staff successfully completes the course and achieves the qualification, your school becomes a NIFSA Official Forest School. To retain NIFSA Forest School status there always has to be a member of staff that has completed the NIFSA Forest School Leader Level 3 qualification.

The theory elements of the course are all on-line. Each candidate needs to complete four 1,000 word assignments and six lesson plans to be delivered outside. The assignments are:

- 1) Benefits of Forest Schools
- 2) History of Forest Schools
- 3) How Forest Schools align to National Strategies
- 4) A personal evaluation of the NIFSA Course

Each school / nursery must produce a Forest School Handbook (Template is provided).

Once all the theory work is uploaded, NIFSA will arrange a date to observe the staff member leading a Forest School session.

Also included in the package is:

- a) Premium Membership Package, which includes the Personalised Outdoor Learning Action Plan. This is a face-to-face meeting to discuss what is involved and how to start your outdoor learning journey.
- b) Forest School Starter Kit Bag - contains everything you need to begin your outdoor learning journey, including first aid kit, boundary and evaluation flags, tarpaulins etc.
- c) Official NIFSA plaque to display in your school upon successful completion of qualification.



**Cost: £1500 for up to
2 staff members**



NIFSA FOREST SCHOOL LEADER LEVEL 3 TRAINING MENTORING OPTION

Could be
eligible for
TPL fund

If you have a qualified Forest School Leader Level 3 employed in your setting, the mentoring package is the most cost-effective way to get more of your staff qualified and delivering outdoor learning.

With NIFSA support via this mentoring package your qualified Forest School Leader will:

- Organise a meeting with the trainee Forest School Leaders to explain the process and what is involved in achieving the Forest School Leader Level 3 qualification
- Set realistic timescales to achieve the Forest School Leader Level 3 qualification. Recommended 6-8 months
- Ensure the trainee Forest School Leaders have access to the Courses Section on the NIFSA website
- Arrange for the trainees to shadow them when they are delivering a Forest School session. It is recommended that trainees should participate in at least four Forest School sessions delivered by the qualified Forest School Leader
- Organise regular meetings with the qualified and trainee Forest School Leaders. This is important to ensure trainees are on track and they have the opportunity to ask questions when they are maybe having difficulty or struggling motivationally

The trainee Forest School Leaders can commence completing the on-line assignments as soon as they are registered with NIFSA



Cost: £175 per person.
This includes registration
and certification with the
Awarding Body.



NIFSA FOREST SCHOOL MANAGER LEVEL 4 TRAINING

Could be
eligible for
TPL fund

If you have a qualified Forest School Leader Level 3 employed in your setting, getting them to achieve the Forest School Manager Level 4 qualification is the next step in embedding Forest School into your school timetable.

The NIFSA Forest School Manager Level 4 is a practical qualification designed to help embed good outdoor learning practice into your setting.

NIFSA has produced the “10 Steps to Developing and Delivering a Sustainable Outdoor Learning Programme” booklet to help.

The 10 steps are:

- 1) Ensuring you have a current NIFSA membership package.
- 2) Completion of your Outdoor Learning Development Plan.
- 3) Completion of your personalised Forest School Handbook, risk assessments and risk benefit analysis.
- 4) Involvement of the local community.
- 5) Consideration of the number of Level 3 qualified Forest School Leaders you require, and getting those in place.
- 6) Ensuring you are recording your sessions on the NIFSA website.
- 7) Rewarding your pupils that are participating.
- 8) Ensuring that you obtain ongoing help to continue developing.
- 9) Becoming involved in other outdoor learning initiatives e.g. RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch.
- 10) Getting involved in the NIFSA accreditation scheme



Cost: £350 per person
This includes registration
and certification with the
Awarding Body.



CLANDEBOYE FOREST SCHOOL VISIT

Clandeboyne Nature Rangers was established in 2018.

It is NIFSA's flagship Forest School located in the beautiful grounds of Clandeboyne Estate, Bangor, North Down.

Our staff will organise a personalised adventure day for your school or nursery. It will consist of organised activities that help develop team building, confidence, risk taking, communication and much more. Snack time will often be centred around the campfire. To finish, pupils are encouraged to explore and play in the forest. This is another very important part of the day as it teaches pupils to make decisions, establish independence, form friendships, be creative and develop resilience.

Schools and nurseries have a fantastic experience at Clandeboyne Nature Rangers. Many have regular visits over the year. Spaces are at a premium so please book early!

**Cost: £5 per pupil
with NIFSA membership**

**£7 per pupil
non- NIFSA membership**



FOREST SCHOOL FAMILY DAY

Could be
eligible for
TPL fund

It is vitally important that parents are fully invested in your outdoor learning programme. There is nothing worse than parents asking “Why are my kids outside messing about when they should be inside the classroom learning important stuff?”, or “Why does my daughter come home muddy every Wednesday?”

The NIFSA Forest School Family Day involves inviting parents to a practical outdoor learning session. The day is relaxed and informative but is designed to put at ease any doubts parents may have about the value of outdoor learning. The session normally lasts for two hours and parents can come and go whenever they wish. The event is held inside your own school grounds. It is organised to suit both your staff and the parents.

For this event, normally six or seven “stations” are arranged in your setting. At each station families will be asked to complete a task e.g. build a den, make a sculpture, find out the age of a tree etc. Instructions will be left at each station for parents to follow.

The event finishes with a cup of hot tea or juice from the Kelly Kettle. This is a great opportunity to reflect on what they have done and then to explain how outdoor learning is beneficial in so many ways. Parents will leave happy that their children are involved in outdoor learning.



Cost: £350 per event

NATURE RANGER CLUBS

Could be
eligible for
TPL fund

What is a Nature Ranger Club?

A Nature Ranger Club (NRC) is an afterschool club run by your staff but with the support of NIFSA. It can be run whenever it is convenient for you. A typical example of an existing Nature Ranger Club runs 6-8 blocks every term; KS1 2-3pm and KS2 3-4pm on a Wednesday. Many run multiple days during the week.

Nature Ranger Clubs are a great way to get children outside and also generate some funding to support your own outdoor learning journey. Each setting charges what is appropriate for them which varies between £1-£6 per pupil per session. This money stays with your school.

Premium Package

Lease of multiple kit bags, banners & uniforms. To be returned if you decide to stop running the Nature Ranger Club. Replacement or additional items are included in the package if agreed by NIFSA.

Choose 3 out of the personalised products listed below over 3 terms

- (1) Involving families;
- (2) Running 1 week of NRC;
- (3) Celebrating achievement; or
- (4) An extra staff member mentored to be part of the club.

Cost: £900 per annum

Basic Package

Lease of 1 kit bag, banner & uniform. To be returned if you decide to stop running the Nature Ranger Club. Replacement or additional items are included in the package if agreed by NIFSA.

Choose 1 of the products listed below -

- (1) Running 1 week of NRC;
- (2) Celebrating achievement; or
- (3) An extra staff member mentored to be part of the club

Cost: £350 per annum



NURTURE RANGERS

Social, emotional and mental health issues e.g. due to a change in family circumstances can affect pupil behaviour, school attendance. Nurture Rangers is a programme designed to address and improve these challenges by getting children outdoors connecting with nature; doing activities in a relaxed environment to reduce stress and anxiety and help communication. NIFSA has been running Nurture Rangers in schools over the past few years. Forest School sessions can be run in your school grounds or a neighbouring green space.

Nurture Ranger Programme

1. NIFSA staff will spend a morning with staff to discuss the reasons for the programme, benefits to the children, how it will run.
2. NIFSA staff will discuss what children should take part and have an initial questionnaire to fill out.
3. NIFSA staff will organise, prepare and deliver a 6-week Nurture Ranger Programme alongside the Schools Nurture Ranger Club staff.
4. NIFSA staff will return and carry out an evaluation and debrief and discuss the next steps.
5. Staff may have to complete extra training to deliver Nurture Rangers within their school, this will be an additional cost.

Cost: £2,000



NIFSA IN-PERSON PRESENTATION

Why not reward your staff, pupils and even parents with an in-person NIFSA Award Ceremony.

A NIFSA member of staff would deliver an engaging talk to all those invited about the value and benefits of outdoor learning, pitched for the appropriate age range.

Following the talk, invited guests will be presented with their NIFSA Certificate. This could be pupils receiving their NIFSA Nature Ranger Certificates, staff receiving their Forest School Leader or Manager Certificate or families receiving their NIFSA Forest School Family Certificates or indeed your school receiving their official NIFSA Forest School plaque. The event could cover all of the above.



Cost: £175

CUSTOMISED TRAINING

You may have specific training requirements for your school or nursery.

Let NIFSA know what course you would like delivered and NIFSA will customise a course to suit your needs.

The training will take place in your own setting.

Examples of courses could include:

- Fire lighting
- Cooking on a fire
- Structures - what structures would be good in your Forest School area and how to erect them e.g. hammock
- Risk benefit analysis
- Lesson Plan
- SEN Forest Schools
- Manual tool use



Cost: price on application

SITE WORKS

NIFSA's Site Improvement Team has over 20 years experience in designing and developing school grounds for outdoor learning use.

A big difference between NIFSA and other organisations is that NIFSA understands that your school will be on a tight budget, and will only recommend what is essential to you. We will undertake a detailed site assessment of your school grounds, and will then discuss your needs and plans with you, how much it will cost and when we can do it.

Maintenance is also an important part of your outdoor learning area and is often neglected. We often see structures, such as sheds and outdoor classrooms falling apart from neglect, hedges and trees dying because they have not been weeded and so on. NIFSA can undertake agreed annual maintenance of your outdoor learning site to ensure that it is safe and will last for many more years.

NIFSA Site Improvement Team staff all have recognised professional certificates of competence e.g. chainsaw, pesticides, machinery operation etc. NIFSA holds appropriate relevant insurance.



Cost: £400 per day
This does not include the cost of materials

SUMMARY SHEET

Page	Package	Cost
2	NIFSA Membership	£125/annum
3	Outdoor Learning Action Plan	£150
5	Introduction to Forest Schools	£350/group
6	Forest School Leader Level 3	£1,500
7	Forest School Leader Level 3 (Mentoring)	£175/person
8	Forest School Manager Level 4	£350/person
9	Clandeboyne Forest School Visit	£5/pupil (NIFSA members) £7/pupil (Non-Members)
10	Forest School Family Day	£350
11	Nature Rangers Club	Basic £350 Premium £900
12	Nurture Rangers Programme	£2,000
13	NIFSA In-person Presentation	£175
14	Customised Training Courses	£POA
15	Outdoor learning site maintenance and development	£400 per day (excludes materials)



CONTACT AND SOCIAL MEDIA

For more information on any of the NIFSA Training Packages please contact Caoimhe at

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NIFSA Website

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NIFSA Social Media Links

