

Handbook



Nature Rangers



Part of the 'Learning Without Walls' initiative

Our History



Clandeboy is most famous for the legacy of the 1st Marquess (1826-1902), who laid out the historic parklands under the guidance of James Frazer. The project was so extensive that the estate still boasts the largest area of broadleaved woodland in Northern Ireland. To honour the inspiration of the 1st Marquess, the Dufferin Foundation now acts as a focus for environmental projects throughout Northern Ireland and works closely with TCV formerly Conservation Volunteers NI.

Lady Dufferin resides in Clandeboy House and is a keen painter with a passion for conservation. In 1975 Lady Dufferin was responsible for encouraging Conservation Volunteers to set up their Northern Ireland base within the estate. The Conservation Volunteers continue to be associated with Clandeboy Estate and are making a difference in local communities throughout the province.

Nature Rangers were set up in 2018 at Clandeboy Estate, by Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) supported by the Dufferin Foundation and with great success are opening more throughout Northern Ireland. NIFSA

Our Ethos

The ethos of Forest School is based on a fundamental respect for children and young people and for their capacity to instigate, test and maintain curiosity in the world around them. It believes in children's right to play; the right to access the outdoors (and in particular a woodland environment); the right to access risk and the vibrant reality of the natural world; and the right to experience a healthy range of emotions, through all the challenges of social interaction, to build a resilience that will enable continued and creative engagement with their peers and their potential.

Our Staff

All our staff are registered with their local Social Service Agency and have been Access NI checked.

Our Routine

- 2pm - Collection from schools
- 2.15pm - 3pm - Snack and free play in the classroom
- 3pm - Collection from schools
- 3.15pm - Change into outdoor clothing
- 3.30pm - 5.30pm - Activities in the woodland
- 5.30pm—6pm - Collection from the classroom



Accidents & Incidents



We aim to provide an environment that children can play and learn in, this will involve some elements of risk which may result in accidents and incidents. We will do robust risk assessments before and during the sessions which will minimise risk if there is no benefit to the child involved.

All staff will hold or will complete paediatric first aid training within three months of commencing employment. We will keep an accurate record of all accidents and incidents that occur during their time with us. When they are being picked up we will ask for a signature to ensure the information has been passed on.

For more information you can read the full Accidents and Incidents policy

Activities

Because forest school learning is child-directed, the scope of the activities that can take place is enormous. Typical activities include:

- Sensory walks
- Shelter building
- Mini beast hunts
- Tree climbing
- Campfire cooking
- Woodwork
- Nature art
- Fire building and lighting



Payments & Late Collections

Invoices will be emailed at the beginning of each month to be paid a month in advance. Late payment fee will be applied. Payments can be made via bank transfer or childcare vouchers. If you need any assistance setting up payments please contact a member of staff. If you would like to cancel your place we require one month notice.

Children with Additional Needs

We provide an environment in which all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), are supported to reach their full potential. We work in partnership with parents and other agencies in meeting individual children's needs and we monitor and review our practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments.

Safeguarding



Nature Rangers strictly adhere to the principle that “the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration” (Children N.I. Order 1995).

All educational facilities have a pastoral responsibility towards their young children and Nature Rangers take all reasonable steps to ensure that the welfare of the children in our care is safeguarded and that their safety is preserved. Children are individuals whose rights, needs and welfare are paramount. Every child is valued as an individual, is treated with dignity and respect and their right to personal privacy is respected. Every child has the right to be involved and consulted on their own intimate care to the best of their abilities and their views should be taken into account.

All staff will be given guidelines to follow as to how to:

- 1) become aware of what constitutes abuse
- 2) identify possible signs of abuse
- 3) contact the designated officers if required
- 4) follow the correct procedures
- 5) follow the correct procedure when an allegation has been made against a member of Staff.
- 6) Promote the relationship and partnership with parents.

The full Safeguarding and child protection policy will be in your welcome pack and if you have any questions please contact the manager.

Inspection & Insurance

We are registered and inspected annually by HSC Trust Early Years Team.

We are insured with Zurich Insurance.

Communication with families

Families will be asked to fill in a child record form and consent form before their child takes part in Nature Rangers activities. The consent form will ask for relevant medical information, consent to take part in all forest school activities and photograph permission.

Each term we will send out a Nature Ranger Newsletter updating on past activities and events and also looking ahead. We will also be regularly updating our Facebook page and parent noticeboard.



Snack



It is always our aim to ensure that the children in our care receive high quality nutrition at snack time. Healthy eating paired with physical activity is vital for proper growth and development, and we recognise our position to have a positive influence on the attitudes that children and their parent/guardians have towards food and a healthy lifestyle. We encourage children to eat healthily and teach them that a healthy eating is not about denying foods that they enjoy but is having a varied and balanced diet and enjoying lots of different foods.

Kit List

Children will need a named water bottle, footwear should be waterproof, however we would advise against Wellies. Shoes can be taken home if required. We strongly encourage that all clothes and equipment are labelled with your child's name.

We will provide all children with waterproof clothing that will be kept at the Estate.

Spring/Autumn

- One pair of comfortable trousers (jogging bottoms or leggings)
- One long sleeved t-shirt or top
- One thick jumper
- Extra jumper or zip-up jacket (just in case)
- Thick Socks
- Sturdy closed toe shoes (which you don't mind getting wet and muddy!)
- Spare trousers & socks



Winter

- Base layer - thermals (optional)
- Bottom layer - fleece or other warm tracksuit bottoms
- First top layer - long sleeve t-shirt or thin jumper
- Second top layer - fleece jumper
- Third top layer - fleece jacket
- Hat and gloves (we advise packing spares)
- Two pairs of socks (on the bottom, one thin cotton sock, and the top, a thick wool or bed sock)
- Extra Jumpers and socks to be packed for really cold days
- Snow boots or sturdy warm outdoor boots



Summer

- One pair of comfortable trousers (jogging bottoms or leggings)
- One long sleeved t-shirt or top
- Extra jumper or zip-up jacket (just in case)
- Socks
- Sturdy closed toe shoes (which you don't mind getting wet and muddy!)
- Sun hat for sunny days
- Spare trousers & socks
- High factor sunscreen with name on



Extreme Weather



At Forest School “there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing.” Nature Rangers runs in all weathers rain, snow or sunshine. Before entering our forest school area, staff will do an appropriate risk assessment of the site and the weather and make sure the pupils are correctly dressed for the session. We run indoor sessions if there are high winds, extreme temperatures or during any other extreme weather warnings that may be in place.

Closures

Nature Rangers will be closed on all statutory holidays during the year. New Year's Day, St. Patricks Day, Easter Monday & Tuesday, May Bank Holiday, 12th July, August Bank Holiday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Holiday care will be available during school holidays dependant on demand.

Privacy

All Nature Ranger staff, volunteers and placement students understand the importance of keeping all personal information in the strictest of confidence. Nature Rangers will not share any personal information with outside agencies unless specific consent is given.

Policies

All parents will receive a welcome email this will include our handbook, policy pack with important policies for you to read these include - Safeguarding, privacy, behaviour management and complaints. All other policies will be available in hard copy in the classroom and online @ www.learningwithoutwalls.net

Consent

Families will be asked to fill in a child record form and consent form before their child takes part in Nature Rangers activities. The consent form will ask for relevant medical information, consent to take part in all forest school activities and photograph permission.