



Grow-Wellbeing Training Centre

AIM Qualifications Level 3 Certificate for Forest School Leaders

There is an increasing recognition of the value of outdoor learning amongst teachers, parents, policymakers and of course learners themselves. Our shared experiences during and after the pandemic have shown how vital access to nature is in supporting our mental and physical health.

The Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Leadership will qualify and equip you to research, deliver and evaluate a dynamic programme of Forest School Sessions in your setting. Many find the course a revelatory experience. Renew and reinvigorate your teaching practice and deepen your connection with nature.

A growing body of research supports the multiple benefits of outdoor learning across a range of settings. Often the learners who struggle most in classrooms find Forest School to be an arena of success. Opportunities for self-directed learning and closer observation of learners can reveal otherwise hidden characteristics and abilities. However, forest school benefits all learners and most will perform better in formal classroom settings after outdoor learning experiences.

Beyond the benefits of Forest School for children in early years and primary education, the Forest School Leader training is increasingly being seen as valuable to people working with young people and adults in a diverse range of disciplines, including counselling and therapeutic services, nature wellbeing and community horticulture. Please don't hesitate to contact a member of our team if you wish to discuss your specific circumstances and ambitions in this context.





The course consists of 10 face-to-face teaching days during which you will cover in depth the five units of the specification. Ecology, learning theory, planning and delivery are explored and explained in a range of practical and academic sessions.

The course consists of 5 units:

Forest School Programme: Delivery (15 credits)

Forest School Programme: Learning and Development (30 credits)

Forest School Programme: Planning and Preparation (15 credits)

Forest School Programme: Practical Skills (18 credits)

Forest School Programme: The Woodland Environment (18 credits)

All of the practical skills needed will be introduced during the teaching days and all abilities are welcome.

There will also be a number of online webinars throughout the duration of the course.



Course structure

The structure of the course consists of:

- 10 face-to-face training days including practical skills training taking place largely in an outdoor environment (over different seasons). Some elements of the course may be taught in a classroom environment. There will also be several online webinars with the Training Lead throughout the duration of the course.
- The completion of a written portfolio (including 84 hours of self-study time) which may usually be completed over 3-6 months. *(If you think you may need additional support with undertaking this element of the course, please let a member of the course team know as soon as possible).*
- The final element is that the learner is required to plan and deliver a programme of 6 pilot forest school sessions to the same group of participants, with one of the sessions being observed by one of the course assessors.

Following the taught dimension of the course, a member of Grow-Wellbeing training team will be nominated to offer you the tutorial and mentoring support you need to complete and submit your portfolio and a member of our assessment team will observe your pilot delivery session. As your pilot sessions will need to be covered by insurance, we recommend that they be carried out within an established organisation or school. If you are not already working or volunteering in a school/ nursery/ community organisation which can offer this opportunity, we can help you to find a suitable placement.



Who is the training course aimed at, and what can I do once I am qualified?

Forest School Training Level 3 provides a complete foundation to working in nature with groups of participants of all ages and capabilities.

Once qualified, you'll be able to take groups of young people, families and adults outdoors, enabling them to discover the natural world, increase their learning, confidence and sense of wellbeing.

Qualified Forest School leaders work in schools, colleges, charities, health-based organisations, early years, older groups, nature-based organisations, social services, playwork, and independently as freelancers.

Grow-Wellbeing Course tutors

Our tutors are dedicated, experienced and, best of all, have up to date knowledge of Forest School and environmental education, as well as issues relating to mental health and learners with additional learning needs.

The trainers for this course include Course Leader Jim Loftus, Alice Kuchemann, Kate Brennan, Kris Willow-Turner and Grow-Wellbeing Programme Director Duane Chong.



Applying for a place on the course

Please complete the application form [here](#). Once we have received your application, one of our course team may contact you to discuss your application further.

Once we have confirmed your place on the course, we will send you an invoice for the deposit or for full payment of the course fee.

Course cost

The full course cost is £995. We have 2 tiered early bird offers available as follows.

Early Bird 1: If you enrol before 30th June 2026 you will receive £50 off the total course cost (early bird cost £990) and an Opinel No.12 Folding Saw.

Early Bird 2: If you enrol before 14th August 2026 you will receive an Opinel No.12 Folding Saw.

Anyone who pays in full before the start of the course will receive a £50 voucher for our Forest School Kit Shop. If you wish to pay in instalments, you can pay across 6 months or 12 months via Direct debit on Go Cardless.

A deposit of £200 is required to secure your place, though full payment is due if the course start date is within 30 days (if paying in full).

Please note: All costs above are VAT exempt so the cost stated is the final total cost. Course costs are non-refundable once paid.



Dates for next training course

- Day 1: Monday 14th September 2026
- Day 2: Monday 21st September 2026
- Day 3: Monday 28th September 2026
- Day 4: Monday 5th October 2026
- Day 5: Monday 12th October 2026
- Day 6: Monday 19th October 2026
- Day 7: Monday 2nd November 2026
- Day 8: Monday 9th November 2026
- Day 9: Monday 16th November 2026
- Day 10: Monday 23rd November 2026

Deadline for portfolio submission 30th November 2027

Ready to apply? Complete the application form [here](#).



What our previous trainees have said about the course

"If all my education had been outside, I think things would have been very different for me."

"I loved the teaching, the essence, the camaraderie, the energy, beautiful."

"It has reinvigorated my teaching practice."

"It's been wonderful getting to spend time and engage with others who share a similar ethos and passion for nature."

"I have learned so many new skills, things I never thought I could attempt."

"Being out all day helped me feel more connected, I believe I can be outdoors all day in relative comfort."

"I feel a sense of achievement and want the children I facilitate to feel how I felt."

"I loved the chance to develop personally and be able to pass these skills on to others."

"It has been great to have contributions from a range of different FS leaders."

"Love getting to camp, bonding as a group, establishing camp as common space."

"Particularly enjoyed the group discussions and testing out our ideas."

"Every moment was filled with learning and in engaging and interesting ways."

"I was impressed and thrilled with how much we were learning, new skills with tool use and great fun with games, loved using axes and saws."

