

Exploring the natural world

Half day option – (all year, approx. 1 hour in classroom, 1½ hours in forest)

In the classroom children will be given an opportunity to handle some of the Suntrap animals such as stick insects, giant African snails, corn snakes and fire salamanders. They will then be taken on a discovery walk in Epping Forest which may include: a paddle in the stream, climbing over logs, collecting natural materials or looking for small animals under the leaves.



Suggestions for visit preparation

1. Make sure the children understand what a forest is and talk to them about what they might see in a forest.
2. Talk about what to wear for going outside, dependent on the weather.
3. Read a story about going on a trip or about a forest.

Suggestions for follow-up activities

1. Discuss aspects of the trip that children liked and disliked.
2. Make a display of the forest environment including the features children encountered.
3. Sort and count objects collected in the forest.

Learning Objectives

- to have the confidence to try at least one new experience
- to be able to tell an adult something about an animal they have seen or touched using the correct vocabulary

Early learning goal links

Communication and language

Children have opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical development

Providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement.

Personal, social and emotional development

Help children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Understanding the world

Guiding children to make sense of their physical world through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about places and the environment.



Issue	How to manage it
Understanding/behaviour	Class teacher to advise Suntrap staff of any children who may need extra support out in the forest to help them to follow instructions. School to ensure that there is appropriate adult: children ratios as required.
Medical conditions	Suntrap staff to check that school staff brings medication out into the forest. All adults to be made aware of any medical conditions. Suntrap staff will carry a first aid kit.
Getting lost	Keep within sight of teacher/adult & observe boundaries as directed by the staff.
Choking/Poisoning	No eating outside unless directly instructed by Suntrap staff.
Falling branches	During extreme weather conditions Suntrap staff will make an assessment to ensure it is safe to enter the forest.
Injury from horses/dogs or bikes	Group to be instructed to stand to the side, be quiet and still when horses, dogs or bikes are near.
Accident when crossing the road	Group to be instructed on follow safe procedures for crossing roads (Suntrap Line). No one to walk across the cattle grid.
Injury through falling & throwing	Climbing of trees and throwing sticks/stones prohibited.
Injury/disease from animals	Hands should be washed after handling all of the animals. Children should never be allowed to handle animals unsupervised.
Soil borne disease	Children instructed not to put fingers in mouth during/after activities which include handling plants, soil and sticks. Hands should be washed with warm soapy water before eating lunch/snack.
Allergic reaction to animals	Suntrap staff to be made aware of any allergies to fur/feathers by teaching staff.