



FSA Introductory and Recognised Forest School Provider Scheme: Guidance Note (November 2017)

This guidance note provides you with background on the FSA's Forest School Provider scheme and helps you to complete the application form.

Section 1 – Why become a FSA Forest School Provider?

Part of the role of the FSA is to help everyone work towards a common understanding of what Forest School is in practice. Becoming an Introductory or Recognised Forest School Provider demonstrates that the FSA recognises your school or organisation as providing Forest School programmes for children, young people and/or vulnerable adults in line with the 6 core Forest School principles.

Through consultation with members and the wider Forest School community, the FSA now acknowledges two categories of Forest School programme through the scheme:

- 1) FSA Recognised Forest School Provider:** defined as a long-term programme runs for:
 - a minimum of 2 hours per session, for 24 consecutive weeks (or the equivalent of 2 full school terms) within 1 year, covering 2 seasons with the same core group of participants; or
 - a minimum of 2 hours per session, for 12 consecutive weeks (or the equivalent of 1 full school term) in each of 2 years covering 2 seasons with the same core group of participants.

- 2) FSA Introductory Forest School Provider:** defined as a short-term introductory programme runs for a minimum of 2 hours per session, for 6 consecutive weeks (or the equivalent of half a school term) within 1 year with the same core group of participants.

If you offer both introductory and long-term programmes you can apply for to become a **FSA Recognised Forest School Provider**.

If you are currently delivering short-term introductory programmes of Forest School, we would encourage you to aspire to provide long-term programmes in line with Forest School Principle 1 so you can become a 'recognised' provider.

Being approved through the scheme brings other benefits:

- Your provision is recognised by the FSA as according with the 6 good practice principles of Forest School.
- You are provided with an e-badge and certificate to display on your website and on other marketing materials to publicise your recognition.
- Your school or organisation goes onto our online, searchable map of Forest School Providers accessible to the Forest School community and the public.
- Up to 4 individuals in your organisation are eligible to receive individual membership of the FSA which gives them access to the FSA website and a vote at our Annual General Meeting. If you wish to add more than 4 individuals, an additional fee of £20 for each individual will be payable.
- Under strict guidelines, you will be able to use the FSA logo.
- You will have full use of the FSA website including the membership area.
- You will also have access to a range of Member Discounts e.g. 5% discount on Liability Insurance from Birnbeck Insurance; on products; courses and conferences; books.

What the scheme cannot offer you:

- Becoming a FSA Introductory or Recognised Forest School Provider **does not** provide any quality assurance (QA) at this present time. Instead we are acknowledging that, as a provider, you are following the Forest School ethos and 6 principles as endorsed by the FSA.
- **It is not possible for a school or organisation to become a 'Forest School.'** The name does not refer to an actual place. Instead, it refers to the philosophy – the ethos which links to the 6 Forest School principles. Forest School programmes work in a variety of situations and locations (not just schools). Therefore, it is not possible for schools to become 'a Forest School.' However, schools can provide Forest School programmes for their pupils. Qualified practitioners carefully facilitate programmes which are uniquely tailored to

the needs of the individuals within the group and have the fundamental aim of building participants' self-esteem, confidence, independence and creativity.

Section 2 – Who can apply for the scheme?

The FSA Recognised Forest School Provider scheme is open to any setting, nursery, school or organisation, including sole-trading freelancers which has **at least one Forest School Level 3 practitioner who has been practising and actively leading programmes within the last year.**

Section 3 – How do you apply for the scheme?

If you have a copy of this guidance note you will have either received it from our Development Officer or downloaded it from the FSA's Forest School Provider application page:

<http://www.forestschoollassociation.org/join-the-fsa-as-a-school-and-organisation-member/>

Please do not submit your application form and evidence until you have had your phone or Skype consultation with our Development Officer. This will guide you through the application process and evidence requirements. Once you have submitted your notification to apply for the scheme and made your payment, our Development Officer will be in touch with you to find a suitable time to undertake this consultation with you.

To apply, you then just need to follow the guidance on this webpage.

Section 4 – Assessing your Application

Assessment process:

The assessment element of the application process will be undertaken by the FSA's Development Officer. We aim to complete the assessment stage in 14 days. Please note this timescale may vary if, for instance, the Development Officer is on Annual Leave or the scheme is under review.

If the application indicates major evidence gaps the application will be deemed unsuccessful. See Section 6 below.

If the application indicates gaps in some of the evidence requirements, the Development Officer will come back to you to ask you to provide the missing evidence/clarify any points giving you an appropriate time to respond.

Please note we have an internal review panel for the scheme to review any aspect of an application should we need to do so.

Section 5 – Approval documents

If your application is successful, the FSA will contact you by email to advise you that you are now a **'FSA Introductory or Recognised Forest School Provider.'**

You will be emailed a membership pack including details of membership benefits, a certificate and an electronic badge to post on your website/literature/premises as well as merchandise you can purchase such as FSA Recognised T-shirts. You will also be added to our online, searchable map of FSA Forest School Providers at <http://www.forestschoolassociation.org/find-a-forest-school-provider/>

We will also send you a copy of our Guidance Note on How to market Your Forest School.

Section 6 – Unsuccessful application

If your application is not successful because of major evidence gaps, the FSA will provide you with the reason(s) for this decision.

If you wish to re-submit evidence relating to these evidence gaps, you will have a period of 3 months to do so and an additional fee (currently set at £45) will be payable to re-process the application and if approved, will cover your first year of membership for this scheme.

Alternatively, you can appeal the unsuccessful decision by request a copy of our appeal procedure and following the appeal process in this guidance note.

Section 7 – Annual Declaration

To remain a FSA Introductory or Recognised Forest School Provider, you will need to pay an annual fee and complete an annual declaration form to:

- clarify that the original evidence submitted in your original application is still up-to-date e.g. details of Forest School staff changes including email addresses.
- ask you for additional information to show evidence relating to any areas of continuous improvement flagged up in your approval email.
- clarify whether you wish to apply to become a FSA Introductory or Recognised Forest School Provider. You will be able to do so through the annual declaration process.

We will contact 1 month before your renewal date to ask you to complete the annual declaration form.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this guidance note.