



“Wild Woods”

Outdoor Classroom for Early & Foundation Years

The Wild Woods, at An Creagán, is a natural outdoor play space where children are encouraged to develop their skills and imagination through exploration and play, on a scale that is not always possible indoors.

The Wild Woods area is around one acre in size and is completely enclosed on all sides, with two gates for access. The landscape includes gravel and sand banks, rope climbs, willow houses, areas of mature trees, wildflowers and scrub, wildlife ponds and a campfire area with seating. The play sessions can be enhanced by the use of various equipment, such as pond nets, bug boxes, magnifiers, buckets and spades, art materials and a variety of ‘junk’ resources, used alongside the natural materials to be found in the woods. Groups are encouraged to bring a picnic and enjoy eating in the open air or under the shelter of the adjacent gazebo.

The play sessions are suitable for Preschool and Primary aged pupils and are intended to be almost entirely child led with just enough adult participation to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience. The project takes its inspiration from the Danish Forest Schools model where children spend their entire preschool day in the forest.

We recommend that your first visit lasts around 1½ hours and as the children get more confident throughout the year the visits increase in duration. Repeat visits allow children to get a sense of ownership of the place and to experience how the landscape, wildlife and weather change through the seasons. Frequent visits are not always possible for all schools and we would encourage classes to at least come along for a single taster session. Wellies and waterproofs are advisable as this gives children the comfort and freedom to explore, without being concerned about getting wet or dirty.

Sessions must be booked in advance with the Biodiversity Education Officer to avoid clashes with other users. The optimum number of children in the Wild Woods is one class of around 26 children although there is flexibility to accommodate larger or smaller groups. The educator will remain with your group for the duration, to be on hand to support any play opportunities that arise.

Toilets are situated in An Creagán visitor centre and our indoor classroom can be used if required for eating, changing or just to leave off bags or equipment.

If you would like to know more about the Wild Woods or to see it for yourself, contact Peter on 8076 1112 or email education@ancreagan.com



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An Creagán is situated midway between Omagh and Cookstown on the A505