



# Balcombe C of E Primary

## Information

### for Parents and Carers.

Balcombe CofE Primary School  
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2024

## Introduction

Balcombe C of E Primary School runs Nature Ninja sessions throughout the year. Every class will have the opportunity to experience outdoor learning on the Nature Ninjas' site for at least one half term during the school year. During their time at Balcombe School, pupils will experience a bespoke and progressive programme of outdoor learning.

This Information Pack contains:

- The learning areas covered during Nature Ninjas sessions.
- An example of the activities children will take part in.
- Practical details, e.g. clothing needs.

**Please complete and return the online consent and medical forms before your child is due to begin Nature Ninjas as they will not be able to take part without them.**

If you have any further questions not covered by the Information Pack please ask at the school office.

## Nature Ninjas

During our Nature Ninjas sessions we aim to inspire our young Nature Ninjas to love and respect the natural world by helping them to develop a deeper appreciation for their local natural environment.

We have a dedicated Nature Ninjas' site situated directly behind our school. The site benefits from many natural features including an open wild flower meadow and a woodland area with a stream meandering through its centre.

During the sessions we aim to enrich learning across the curriculum, through inspirational and challenging outdoor activities. To help children develop essential skills and qualities such as resilience, team-work, risk management, independence and self-motivation. In addition, physical fitness and well-being are promoted, along with an appreciation and understanding of the natural world and a sense of place and belonging.

All sessions will focus on one or more of the following key learning areas:

### 1. Bush craft

Bush craft activities include: den and shelter building including knots, whittling, using tools, campfires and outdoor cooking.

## 2. The Natural world

Plant and animal observation and identification, sustainability and biodiversity.

## 3. Creativity

Arts and crafts using natural materials, problem solving and design using natural resources available.

## 4. Team Building

Games, challenges and team problem solving.

During their time at Balcombe School pupils will visit and revisit all of the four areas in order to develop their skill and proficiency in each. They will also experience the woodland in all seasons to order to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the environment.

## Nature Ninjas

- Involves **bespoke and progressive learning** with regular contact with our Nature Ninjas' site.
- It is **child-centred learning**, where children have opportunities to learn about and manage risk, solve problems and suggest possible solutions, work as part of a team and independently.
- It has a **high adult/child ratio**.
- It encourages **deep appreciation for the natural world**.
- It makes **explicit links in order to enrich** other areas of the **school curriculum**.

## Nature Ninjas Staff

Chief Ninja (CN)

Elizabeth Taylor

Nature Ninja Leader (NNL)

Alistair Graham

Volunteer Adult Helpers

# Essential Information

## Clothing and kit for Nature Ninjas

**Nature Ninjas sessions continue in all weathers** except very windy conditions (wind speed over 25 mph) and lightning storms, so appropriate clothing is essential. **Children may get very muddy and wet, so please send only those clothes which will not be ruined by these conditions!**

### Footwear

Sturdy, waterproof shoes or boots, e.g. hiking boots are best all year round. Wellies may be worn, but offer less protection from heat and cold and less freedom of movement.

### Summer

- **Long-sleeved tops and trousers** give protection from sun, stings, scratches and insects. Shorts and t shirts are not adequate for the conditions.
- Waterproof coat and trousers.
- Warm fleece/jumper.
- Sun cream (insect repellent is optional).
- Water bottle.
- Any essential medication, e.g. inhalers.

### Winter

- Waterproof coat and trousers.
- Layers of warm clothing, e.g.
  - T-shirt/vest, long-sleeved top, hoodie/warm jumper, fleece.
  - Long trousers/tights/leggings/'skins', extra socks.
  - Hat, scarf, gloves etc.
- Water bottle.
- Any essential medication, e.g. inhalers.

On the day of their Nature Ninjas' session your child should arrive at school in uniform, with their Nature Ninjas' clothing in a named bag. Children may go home in these clothes unless they are very muddy or wet in which case they will change into dry clothes. **Please supply a plastic bag for wet and muddy clothing and footwear to go home in.**

**Please note:** long sleeved clothing and waterproofs are **essential** for every session. Even if it doesn't rain the woods may be wet and muddy, and long sleeves protect against scratches and stings. **Children without the appropriate clothing may not be allowed to take part in the session.**

If you have any problems supplying appropriate clothing, please speak to the school office as soon as possible.

## **Toileting**

Children will return to Balcombe School with an adult to visit the toilet during Nature Ninja sessions.

## **After-school clubs.**

If your child attends an after-school club on the day of their Nature Ninjas' session please be aware that some children, particularly younger ones, may be cold, wet or tired. If staff consider that a child would be better off going straight home rather than attending a club the office will telephone you to discuss this.

## **Health and Safety**

Nature Ninja sessions include activities which may be considered higher risk than usual. This may be a concern to parents at first, but there are many benefits to be gained from such activities as they offer opportunities for participants to:

- learn how to manage risks for themselves;
- learn how to do so in a safely managed and supervised environment;
- benefit from associated health and development gains;
- Build character, resilience and self-confidence.

A framework of policies and procedures is in place in order to ensure that sessions are as safe as possible and any risks are properly managed.

- The site, tools and activities are all risk assessed before each session (copies may be seen by parents on request.)
- Activities and conditions are continuously monitored for safety.
- A high adult to child ratio is maintained.
- Sessions are run by trained staff.
- Staff have up to date DBS checks and a First Aider is always present.

## **Ticks**

Participants should wear long-sleeved tops and long trousers to protect against insects such as ticks; insect repellent may give additional protection and may be sent to school for children to apply prior to Nature Ninjas sessions, as with sunscreen. We advise you to check for ticks after sessions as a matter of routine and to seek medical advice if one is found,

particularly if a red rash is present. If a tick is found on one of the children, a plaster will be placed over the tick for removal and treatment at home. Additional government advice and information may be found [here](#) and a printed copy is available in the parent info sheet in the school office.

### **Dates for Nature Ninjas**

The dates when your child will be at Nature Ninjas will be sent to at the start of the school year. All children will experience learning on our site during the year. Over their time at Balcombe C of E school they will experience Nature Ninjas during each season. Sessions run from after afternoon registration for the whole afternoon. **Children will need to bring Nature Ninjas' clothing and any essential medication on the day.**