

# The forest school revolution in Hong Kong

Anne Murphy, Director of ITS Education Asia, explains the concept.

The 'Forest School' concept is spreading, spurred by concerns about children's loss of contact and understanding of nature. The approach, which was introduced to Britain in the early nineties, involves taking children into an outdoor, ideally woodland, environment to develop confidence, problem solving, risk taking, creativity and teamwork through hands-on learning experiences. In an age where we are concerned that children are more sedentary, the Forest School programme supports physical development goals, encouraging children to adopt healthy lifestyle habits, explore nature and acquire life skills.

## Forest School Programmes in Hong Kong


At **Forest Waldorf School** in Sai Kung, practical and outdoor learning are essential features of the curriculum. Students are engaged in hands-on-activities, which link thematically with their academic classes,

such as beeswax modeling, woodwork, clay work and gardening. Children explore local topography through their nature walks and examine their biological environment.

**Discovery Bay International School (DBIS)** adopted the Forest School programme at its Early Years campus last September. DBIS has created its very own garden based around typhoon-salvaged wood and a range of other recycled materials.

**ICHK Hong Lok Yuen's** beautiful green campus at Hong Lok Yuen provides students and teachers with the perfect location to develop this pioneering approach. Innovative work is now underway to establish their very own 'Forest School' and outdoor classrooms.

**Malvern College Pre-School Hong Kong (MCPS) and Malvern College Hong Kong (MCHK)** will also run the Forest School programme from August 2017. It will be run by qualified Level 3 practitioners trained by the U.K.'s Forest School Association.

Excited for your child to attend a Forest School Programme outside of school? **HK Forest Adventures**, (also known as HK Forest Kindergarten) specialises in taking toddlers and young children, aged 1.5 - 6 years old, into the forest to play. It is an all-weather activities company, meaning children mostly play outside regardless of the elements - if it's hot, they play in the water, if it rains, they play in the mud and puddles. The programmes are child-led and not curriculum driven. Visit [www.hkforestadventures.com](http://www.hkforestadventures.com) 



ITS Education Asia provides an education consulting service that works with families and employers to find the right schools for individual children in Hong Kong, from nursery to secondary schools. ITS also offers research, policy and advisory services for corporations. For more details, contact [es@itseducation.asia](mailto:es@itseducation.asia), 3188 3940 or [www.itseducation.asia](http://www.itseducation.asia).