



Hello Dogwood Forest Families!

We're very excited to welcome new and returning families this year!

To briefly introduce ourselves, we are Brad & Michelle Graves, certified Ontario Teachers, and we began our forest school journey in September 2017. Now in its 7th year and joined by a fantastic team of mentors, some who are also certified teachers and forest school practitioners, Dogwood Forest offers a variety of unique outdoor learning, mentorship, and leadership opportunities for children, youth, families, schools and the wider community in the Durham Region.

We aspire to promote and nurture the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development of those we work with through meaningful interactions in the natural environment. Through exploration, inquiry, reflection, environmental stewardship, and community building we strive to create a positive learning environment rooted in kindness and curiosity. This fosters a sense of belonging, self confidence, self efficacy, and the development of transferable lifelong skills.

Explore, Learn, Create & Play with Dogwood Forest!

We would like to share with you helpful information and reminders to prepare for your upcoming program.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Brad Graves: 905-429-1498; bradgraves@dogwoodforest.ca

- General Program inquiries
- Weekly/Monthly Programs (Seeds, Sprouts, Saplings & Forest Rangers)
- PA Day Programs
- Absence/late arrival reporting (email or text)

Michelle Graves: 705-826-6862; michellegraves@dogwoodforest.ca

- Registration/office inquiries
- Group Programs/Park Rentals
- Family/Parent & Tot Programs
- School Programs, Educator Professional Development, Field Trips

FOREST SCHOOL MENTORS

- We have a fantastic team filled with enthusiastic, friendly, and dynamic educators - you will get to know them by their Forest Names at daily drop off/pick up
- All Staff are certified in Standard First Aid & CPR-C and have completed Vulnerable Sector Screening/Annual Offense Declarations; some are certified Ontario teachers and forest school practitioners
- At each site, we have one lead mentor who maintains student attendance records & has parent/guardian contact info should you need to be contacted

GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES - <https://dogwoodforest.ca/resources>

PROGRAM DATES & HOURS - <https://dogwoodforest.ca/youthprograms>



PROGRAM LOCATIONS/SITES

All programs take place at **620 Scugog Line 4, Port Perry, ON L9L 1B5** and we have two designated sites: The Den & The Nest, with other meeting locations on site as well

- **The Den:** head up the hill towards the garden path
- **The Lazy Forest:** forest adjacent to the parking lot near the pond
- **The Nest:** meeting location is at the Lazy Forest near the pond, once most campers have arrived the group will head towards the Nest site in the front cedar forest

	PROGRAM	LOCATION	MENTORS
MONDAY	Weekly Seeds & Sprouts	The Den	Mosquito, Otter, Dragonfly Pine, Sunflower
	Weekly Roots & Shoots	Lazy Forest	Doe & Scooter
TUESDAY	Monthly Seeds	The Den	Otter & Dragonfly
	Monthly Sprouts	The Den	Pine & Dragonfly
	Monthly Saplings	The Nest	Mosquito & Otter
	Wilderness Wolves	The Den with access to the Nest	Clover & Pine
WEDNESDAY	Weekly Sprouts	The Den	Otter & Pine
	Weekly/Monthly Rangers	The Nest	Mosquito
THURSDAY	Weekly Seeds	The Den	Mosquito, Otter, Pollywog
	Weekly Sprouts	The Nest	Pine & Dragonfly
	Weekly Roots & Shoots	Lazy Forest	Doe & Scooter
FRIDAY	PA Day Programs	The Den/The Nest	TBD

DROP OFF/PICK UP LOCATION

- Staggered drop off between 8:45am - 9:00am to help with parking lot capacity
- The upper loop is off limits as sign in/out and health screening takes place here
- The middle/lower loops are for short term parking; Please do not park on the grass
- Programs begin at 9am and pick up is at 3:30pm at the same location as drop off

SIGN IN/OUT

- A mentor will greet you each morning for sign in
- Sign out location is the same as sign in; please come to the pick up location for your child and let the mentor know you have your child before leaving
- The parking lot is a busy place - please drive slowly, watch for children, and escort your child to and from programs



PERSONAL INFORMATION: Health Forms & Participant Waivers

- When you registered for your child's program in Amilia, you were required to answer health questions and read and digitally sign off on the Health Waiver & Participant Waiver
- Please ensure your child's personal & health information is accurate and up to date prior to the start of programs:
- **Anaphylaxis/Asthma Alert:** If your child has one of these health conditions and carries an epi-pen/inhaler, please connect with Michelle; there is an additional form that is required to be completed for your child's participation prior to the start of term

PACKING GUIDE & COLD WEATHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Packing List** - <https://dogwoodforest.ca/resources>
- Highlights:
- Litterless, boomerang, nut free lunches & reusable water bottles (water jugs are available for refilling bottles); all garbage goes home with your child
- Appropriate closed-toe footwear & clothing for daily forest activities, hats, sunscreen, bug repellent, extra pairs of socks and other warm clothing - be sure to check the daily weather!

WASHROOM ACCESS

- We have 2 portable toilets on site with hand sanitizer at each washroom
- We also have 2 handwashing stations, one at each site - The Den & The Nest
- "Nature Pees" are an option and we will have appropriate supplies (toilet paper, tarp, etc.) as needed

WEATHER UPDATES

- As our programs run entirely outdoors, it is our intention to continue programs as planned even if there is forecasted rain; time will be spent both under tarps for activities and out in the forest
- If at any time the weather becomes severe (torrential rain that is not letting up or thunderstorms/lightning/high winds) and it is no longer safe to remain outside, we will be contacting families for an early pick up.
- If this is the case, we will try to provide as much warning as possible (i.e. the night before if forecasted severe) and notify families via email
- Please review our **Inclement Weather Policy** for further details - <https://dogwoodforest.ca/resources>

BE TICK SMART - <https://dogwoodforest.ca/resources>

- As we spend our days outdoor in the forest, it is common practice for us to do tick checks with the students
- We encourage you to review this resource and also conduct daily tick checks with your child at the end of a camp day

DOGWOOD FOREST CLOTHING

- Current stock can be ordered online and picked up at your next program
 - <https://dogwoodforest.ca/store>
- New items and some of our favs (like hoodies) will be available once again for purchase through pre-orders only - details to come this Fall



THE DOGWOOD DIGEST - A TOOL FOR REFLECTION

- All of our days are full of exploration, learning, adventure & play! Each day, mentors take photos to document the learning experience and make notes of the highlights of the day
- At the end of the week, we will be sharing via email/PDF the “Dogwood Digest” that provides families with a recap of the activities and photos from the week
- As we saw from this past year, sharing our stories of the day with families was a great way for parents/guardians to connect and reflect with their children about their learning experiences!

STUDENT & FAMILY COMMUNICATION

- We believe in the importance of open, positive, and timely communication and encourage families to check in with mentors at any time about their child’s development
- Email and phone are the primary forms of communication, along with in-person meetings during drop off/pick up times
- Mentors are available at drop off and pick up to chat with the possibility of scheduling meetings between 8 - 8:45 am and 3:30 - 4 pm; connect with Brad directly for meetings outside of this time
- We will encourage Respect in every aspect – Self, Environment and Others through ongoing open discussion of expectations and community goals

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Throughout the course of the year, Dogwood Forest will be hosting a variety of events to help connect like minded families within our community
- These will include:
 - Monthly Family Open Houses: (dates to be determined)
 - Scheduled from 3:30 - 4:00 pm at pick up - parents/caregivers will have the opportunity to visit their child’s site and explore what the group has been up to
 - Seasonal Fireside Chats
 - Adult only gatherings to discuss Dogwood Forest activities and direction
 - Seasonal Weekend Family Events
 - Mindfully Outdoors Club (MOC)
 - Typically adult only activities within the community

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES - <https://dogwoodforest.ca/resources>

STAY CONNECTED

- <https://www.instagram.com/dogwoodforest/?hl=en>
- <https://www.facebook.com/dogwoodforestportperry/>

We’re very excited for the year ahead and look forward to getting back to the forest with everyone!

Brad & Michelle Graves

Dogwood Forest Ltd

620 Scugog Line 4, Port Perry, ON L9L 1B5

www.dogwoodforest.ca