

Informed Consent Form for Adult Participants

Dear Participant,

This form seeks your informed consent to allow your outdoor education session leader to collect and process your name and email address. This information will be used to create a participant record on the Nature-based Education, Tracking, and Application (NETA) platform. This document provides information on how your data will be used, where it will be stored, and how it will contribute to research into outdoor education, enabling you to give informed consent for the use of this data.

About NETA

NETA is a prototype online web application designed to support outdoor education by facilitating the collection of feedback through surveys. These surveys measure changes over time in five key areas: *confidence, creativity, resilience, independence, and wellbeing*. Surveys consist of 25 linked questions and will be sent to the provided email address three times: before the outdoor education program begins to establish a baseline, at the mid-point to assess the effectiveness of the sessions, and at the end or just after the program to evaluate changes over time. This prototype is designed for participants aged 8 years and older.

These surveys serve two purposes:

- They help your session leader advocate for outdoor education by measuring the effectiveness of sessions and demonstrating development in the five key areas, supporting reflection and improvements in delivery.
- Anonymized survey responses contribute to broader research efforts, illustrating positive trends in outdoor education across different groups (e.g., adults or children).

About the Testing Phase of the Prototype

NETA is a prototype application currently being tested for functionality, safety, and user experience. While we have taken every precaution to protect your data during the testing phase, full functionality can only be evaluated through testing. The risk is minimal, as we collect only the bare minimum of data. To ensure data safety, the testing phase will last no longer than 24 months, after which your data will be deleted as we begin developing an updated version, NETA 2.0.

Data Collection and Use

The Forest School Association (FSA) takes data security seriously and has designed this process with advice from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in line with GDPR regulations. With your consent, we will:

- Collect your name and email address to create a participant record on the NETA platform.
- Use the provided email address to send surveys related to your participation in outdoor education activities.
- Use survey responses to evaluate the effect of sessions in five key areas (resilience, independence, creativity, wellbeing, and confidence) through feedback to the school, funders, or delivery organizations.

Data Storage and Security

All personal data (name and email address) collected through NETA is securely stored on an encrypted database. Access to this data is strictly limited to authorized personnel for managing participant records and sending surveys. Data is handled in compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) to ensure privacy and security.

Sharing Anonymized Data

With your consent, anonymized survey responses (containing no personally identifiable information) will be shared with the Forest School Association (FSA), the professional body for Forest School in the UK. The FSA will use this data as part of a longitudinal, mass-participation research project to understand the benefits and impact of outdoor education.

Purpose of the Research

The data collected through NETA will deepen our understanding of the role of outdoor education in personal development and learning, as experienced by participants and observed by session leaders. By participating, you are contributing to a growing body of evidence that may shape future educational policies and practices, promoting the value of nature-based education.

Your Rights Using NETA

- Your consent is voluntary, and you may withdraw it at any time by contacting your session leader by email.
- If you withdraw consent, you may request the deletion of your participant record, which will be removed from the NETA platform within a reasonable time frame, and no further surveys will be sent.
- The FSA cannot delete anonymized data already shared, as it contains no identifiable information.
- You have the right to request access to your data, request corrections, or raise concerns about data handling by contacting your outdoor learning session leader.

NETA Consent Declaration

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided by the FSA about the NETA platform, including how my data will be collected, stored, and used. **Once completed, please return this page to your outdoor education or Forest School session leader.**

I consent to the following (please check/tick the box for each item you agree to):

- Taking part in the beta test phase of NETA.
- The outdoor learning session leader using my name and email address to create a participant record on NETA.
- NETA sending surveys to my provided email address to complete three times: before the program begins, midway through, and at the end of the program.
- Allowing NETA to share my anonymized survey responses with the Forest School Association (FSA) for use in longitudinal research projects and to promote outdoor education and Forest School.
- The use of this data by the FSA to improve understanding of outdoor education, inform future educational policy, and promote Forest School or other forms of outdoor education.

Participant Signature: (sign here)

Date: (please add today's date here)

Please provide the following information for your session leader to set up your participant record.

Participant Name:

Participant Email Address:

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your outdoor learning session leader.

Thank you for supporting outdoor education, testing NETA, and contributing to this important research.