



WEST BUCKLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND NURSERY

West Buckland Primary School and Nursery

Outdoor Education Policy

What do we mean by Outdoor Learning?

Outdoor Learning is a broad term that includes: outdoor play, school grounds projects, environmental education, recreational and adventure activities, and personal and social development.

There is strong evidence that good quality learning outside the classroom adds much value to classroom learning. It leads to a deeper understanding of concepts that span traditional subject boundaries and which are frequently difficult to teach effectively using classroom methods alone. Through skilled teaching, outdoor experiences readily become a stimulating source of fascination, personal growth and can lead to breakthroughs in learning.

Outdoor Learning can help to bring learning alive. For that reason the outdoors can have an impact on areas of the curriculum as diverse as imaginative writing and personal and social development. Outdoor learning also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

Benefits of Outdoor Learning Outdoor learning:

- Helps to ensure that children are successful learners enabling children to develop knowledge and skills in ways that add value to their everyday learning experiences.
- Enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon young children's attitudes beliefs and self-perceptions.
- Contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem and self-sufficiency.
- Can have a positive impact upon children's behaviour.
- Supports wellbeing and promotes the benefits of fresh air and being active.
- Contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a Healthy lifestyle.
- Impacts positively upon children's personal and social development.
- Supports community cohesion and allows children to develop as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to their wider community.

- Creates pride in the school and wider community and promote community involvement, renewing children's pride and creating a sense of belonging and responsibility.
- Raises learner's attainment; promotes and strengthens communication skills, team work and sense of cohesion.

Health and Safety

We will support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. Pupils will be taught to manage risks. Staff ensure that the outdoor environment offers challenges and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others.

Outdoor learning opportunities will be grasped when available and teachers will assess risk. In the first instance teachers will refer to and apply the schools policies relating to Health and Safety, and Risk Assessment prior to any outdoor learning activity that may require additional support beyond the reasonable activities one would normally apply within the classroom. It is also important that the school applies robust safety measures to effectively manage and minimise risks. It is equally important, however, that all involved, including parents acknowledge that a degree of residual risk remains.

Our children are taught to manage risks in regard to outdoor learning. All pupils are regularly reminded about the importance of staying safe. 'Safe' is a school value and children are reminded of the importance of keeping themselves and members of the school community safe.

The following expectations are understood by all pupils:

- Outdoor Learning is an important part of our learning journey.
- We must uphold our school expectation to be safe at all times when we participate in outdoor learning.
- We must stay with our group.
- We must listen and follow the instructions of the adult(s).
- We must only use the equipment for its intended purpose.
- We must be sensible and ensure that we achieve our learning objectives.

Managing the Delivery of Outdoor Learning

Through the monitoring of teaching and learning, we closely monitor the use of outdoor learning as a key element of the learning experience at West Buckland Primary School and Nursery.

We provide support and professional development to enable staff to feel confident developing the expertise or knowledge base to adapt their practice to include opportunities for learning beyond the confines of the classroom.

EYFS Provision

There are no boundaries to outdoor learning within the EYFS. Outdoor learning is integral part of our day - the range of activities can be endless. Children have free access throughout the sessions, with range of free flow and planned activities. Children wear appropriate protective clothing.

KS1 Provision

In KS1 we try to utilise the outdoor space as much as possible. Opportunities to take learning outside are seized and taken full advantage of. KS1 have access to their own outdoor area where they can grow plants and participate in seasonal/topical outdoor activities.

KS2 Provision

In KS2 learning is taken outdoors wherever possible such as science lessons involve studying the weather, and geography lessons may involve work in the locality, orienteering, and following maps.

Our Commitment to Outdoor Learning

We are lucky to have grounds which offer opportunities for both formal and informal learning and play.

We have recently invested in the development of the outdoor learning area for KS1 and EYFS have their own hard surface and grasses areas. Additionally, we have an outdoor classroom and Forest School area which can be used by the whole school for a range of activities. Our mound and pond are also accessible

to all classes and groups and these are enhanced by teepees and willow walkways.

Outdoor learning activities might include den building, cutting firewood and fire building, crafts, cooking, gardening, maintenance and caretaking, games, plant identification and sketching, as well as stories and singing.

The Local Environment

The locality around school harbours a wealth of opportunities within relatively accessible distance (Church, village hall, woodland, playparks, fields, farms). Learners can develop their skills to explore their local environment, for example, geography or history fieldwork, surveys and collection of data etc. Each year children will go on a series of rambles through the local countryside exploring nature and engaging with the local community and landscape.

Further Afield

We actively encourage teachers to plan opportunities for children to engage in learning beyond the school. Each year group has a planned programme of educational visits which complement and extend learning. These are planned into all aspects of the curriculum and, by taking learners beyond their familiar environment, stimulate their curiosity and imagination and motivate children in a powerful way.

Residential Visits

Staying away from home is a powerful way of developing key life skills, building confidence, self-esteem, communication and team working, for example. Children have the opportunity to widen their range of experiences and find new skills and interests in which they may excel. They take part in a wide range of outdoor and adventurous activities such as climbing, abseiling, canoeing and rafting. Residential visits offer so many benefits including the opportunity to participate in first-hand learning.

Children with Additional Needs

Moving beyond the classroom has been found to have a range of advantages for children of all abilities and backgrounds. A particular benefit for those children and young people with learning difficulties or SEND can be the new, and sometimes therapeutic, visual and sensory stimulation they experience when learning in an outdoor environment. This can be liberating for those who struggle in a structured school atmosphere and is often demonstrated through improvements in children's social skills and behaviour.

Able Children

Outdoor learning offers opportunities to deepen and enrich subject learning, for example through conducting research and developing enquiry and thinking skills, and a personal understanding of their place in the natural world.

The above issues allow opportunities to access discussion on a moral code, ethics, humanity, sustainability, science in its widest sense, problems pertaining to globalisation and philosophical enquiry, for example. Outdoor Learning acts as a bridge to higher order learning and opportunities to challenge misconceptions and ways of thinking.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by SLT and the LGB.