



Caversham Preparatory School

Policies and Procedures

711 Outdoor Learning Policy

Outdoor Learning Policy

Introduction

Our Outdoor Learning Policy aims to foster children's love of learning. At Caversham Preparatory School, we believe that all children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. We further believe that it is important to enable children to use the outside environment as a context for learning.

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. Outdoor Learning does not have a clearly defined boundary but it does have a common core.

Outdoor learning can provide a dramatic contrast to the indoor classroom. 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.

Direct experience outdoors is powerful, motivating and has impact and credibility. The results from outdoor learning can be instantaneous as well as active and therefore impact on behaviour as well as tapping into the learning styles of the more kinaesthetic learner. Through skilled teaching, outdoor experiences readily become a stimulating source of fascination, personal growth and can lead to breakthroughs in learning.

Active learning readily develops the learning skills of enquiry, experiment, feedback, reflection, review, communication, problem solving, an enterprising attitude and co-operative learning – to name only some of the benefits.

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

- 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.



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- 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. It can also bring about community cohesion and allow children to develop as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to their wider community.
- It can create 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, teamwork and sense of cohesion.
- Motivates boys to be more active in their learning.

Aims and Objectives

Practice described in this Policy aims to:

- Raise the profile of Outdoor Learning.
- Empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing their minds and bodies to thrive.
- Encourage children to develop the skills to solve problems, developing resilient and reflective learners.
- Develop skills of communication, cooperation and collaborative learning.
- Provide a challenging, safe and secure environment within which children can take and manage risks.
- Encourage close links with parents and the school in celebrating our outdoor space and the rich learning that can take place within it.
- Encourage children to care for their environment

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.

We therefore discuss with parents their views regarding outdoor learning – and the degrees of risk that apply to the varying activities.

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



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There is a shared understanding of how pupils safeguard themselves and others when undertaking outdoor learning. 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 never walk across the car park area.
- We must stay with our group.
- We must be sensible and ensure that we achieve our learning objectives.
- If we follow the expectations above, we will enjoy learning and stay safe.

There are detailed risk assessment for the all areas of the school grounds and risk assessments are written for all trips out of the school grounds.

Managing the Delivery of Outdoor Learning

Through the monitoring of teaching and learning, for example forward planning meetings, classroom observation, teacher's self-evaluations, summative assessment records and other school procedures, we closely monitor the use of outdoor learning as a key element of the learning experience.

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 can choose from a wide range of resources and activities, including a mud kitchen, large loose parts for climbing and building water and sand areas.

KS1 Provision

In KS1 access to learning beyond the classroom is more limited so we try to overcome these barriers and utilise the outdoor space as much as possible. Opportunities to take learning outside are seized and taken full advantage of. Year 1 have access to the EYFS learning during allocated times.

KS2 Provision

KS2 also faces barriers to outdoor learning. However, teachers endeavour to take lessons outside whenever possible. For example, science lessons involve studying the weather, and geography lessons may involve work in the locality, river studies, orienteering, and following maps.

All year groups have access to the sensory garden where we have a mini allotment.



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Where should Outdoor Learning take place?

We are lucky to have grounds which offer opportunities for both formal and informal learning and play. School buildings can also provide a useful resource for learning about energy use and waste for example – tying in well with the schools Eco School programme. We are extremely proud to hold the Green Flag Award and recognise the importance of making links between Eco studies and outdoor learning wherever possible.

Woodland Experiences in the EYFS and Key Stage 1

Woodland activities are included within the EYFS and KS1 curriculums. During our woodland trips, children take part in engaging and memorable activities that encourage creativity and exploration. Sessions are planned and led by class teachers.

Children are not taught in the same way as the classroom but are encouraged to find things out for themselves through exploration, for example games, stories, creative expression and sharing. Through play the child develops their initiative and imagination (problem solving), learns resilience and resourcefulness (perseverance and determination), how to give and ask for help and support from peers (emotional intelligence and teamwork), and how to appropriately self-manage risk in an increasingly risky world.

Our woodland activities can include den building, crafts such as dream catchers or whistles, games, flora and fauna identification, as well as stories and sharing.

The obvious benefits of improved co-ordination and physical health from doing activities outside are enhanced by opportunities to develop imagination and initiative; problem solving and perseverance. Children are encouraged to try things out and learn from experience, rather than rigidly following a set of instructions. This often involves learning to work as a team to get something done, feeling comfortable with asking for and offering help, and learning how to cope with failure or setbacks -all crucial emotional skills to take with them into the adult world.

One of the principles of our Woodland trips is to promote environmental awareness and encourage sustainability. The children are taught respect and responsibility for the world around them. Both children and adults are encouraged to respect their environment and to be aware of conservation issues of the woodland around them.

We aim to promote respect for wildlife and our woodland environment. This will be achieved partly through detailed long-term, medium-term and lesson planning.

Gardening Opportunities

Children from Reception to Year 6 have access to outside gardening areas. They have a potting shed and greenhouse to germinate seeds and store tools. Additionally, the garden areas are equipped with raised beds for growing vegetables and fruits. Harvested vegetables are used in cookery lessons to promote healthy eating and sustainable living.



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After-school Provision

We offer a range of after school clubs, many of which are outdoors. Clubs range from hockey and fencing to gardening club and art club.

The Local Environment

The locality around school harbours a wealth of opportunities within relatively accessible distance. Learners can develop their skills to explore their local environment, for example, geography trips to the River Thames in Caversham or Henley or history fieldwork, surveys and collection of data etc.

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. For example, children learning about the Romans have the opportunity to visit a Roman Villa, thus enhancing their learning and understanding of the topic.

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

Children have the opportunity to widen their range of experiences and find new skills and interests in which they may excel during the year 5/6 residential trip. They enjoy a stay at a thrilling outdoor centre where they take part in a wide range of outdoor and adventurous activities including climbing, abseiling, canoeing and rafting. Residential visits offer so many benefits including the opportunity to participate in first-hand learning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment of the children's learning will be valued equally indoors and outdoors and should be part of the same process.



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Policy Administration

Linked Policies

This policy also needs to be in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Early Years Foundation Stage
- Subject Specific Policies
- SENDCo Policy
- PSCHE
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Quoted Legislation and Guidance

None

Review Schedule

This policy is subject to 3 yearly reviews unless circumstances require an earlier review.

Update and Review Log

| Updated/ Reviewed By | Date | Notes |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Andrea Hutchison | 23.1.21 | Edited and formatted. |
| A Lawson | April 2021 | Formatting and Updating Links |
| A Lawson | Sep 2022 | Formatting and Review |
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