



# Grounds for Learning

Raising attainment through outdoor learning and play in Scotland

September 2016

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## Welcome



Welcome to the Autumn edition of Grounds for Learning's newsletter.

Our team here in Stirling have been busy over the summer term and break. **Polli:Nation** surveys of school grounds are happening daily across Scotland. Our training team are busy preparing for our **long term courses**, as well as many individual In Service days booked by schools and nurseries.



Our **Nurturing Nature** project has moved into a new phase - supporting more parents and children to experience the outdoors and build relationships with nursery staff at the same time.

This weekend sees a professional learning group of teachers head away to the Highlands as a start to our **Scotland's Natural Larder** course - let's hope their foraging is good enough to feed themselves on Saturday!

If you have some news or information you think colleagues would benefit from, please do reply to this email and share it with us for the next newsletter in November. Please also forward this newsletter on and share with your colleagues.

**Alison Motion**

Scotland Director - GfL

## Education Updates



The **recent statement** from HM Chief Inspector is food for thought. It encourages us to reduce bureaucracy and focus on back on teaching and learning. The statement also asks us to deliver the curriculum based around the four capacities, values based learning and simple, clear curriculum linked learning opportunities.

As a context for learning, outdoor learning meets much of this expectation in a very authentic way. This entitlement to outdoor learning is echoed in many other policies:

- GTCS **professional standards** require every teacher to use outdoor learning
- For nurseries, **Care Inspectorate** expect daily contact with nature and outdoor play
- **HGIOS4** inspections require regular and progressive outdoor learning
- The **Curriculum for Excellence** states 'outdoors is often a better place to learn than indoors'
- The **Learning for Sustainability Vision 2030+** encapsulates all this and more

This means that in Scotland, outdoor play and learning should be a routine experience for all our learners, and that it is the responsibility of us all to support it.

Or, to put it in simpler terms, instead of 'should', we now 'have to'.

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## Training and Support



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If you have **outdoor learning on your development plan**, we can help with your **staff training**. Our courses are led by experienced educators, and are packed with simple and creative ideas for learning opportunities directly related to the curriculum. More [here](#)

William Grant Foundation have **funded us to support 15 schools** in starting to use their school grounds. This is available to schools in Scotland. There is a simple competitive application via email by the 30th of September 2016 - you can read more about it [here](#)

Our **Lead Teacher in Outdoor Learning** or **Teaching in Nature** courses are now **fully booked**, however we are gathering a waiting list. Please email [gfl@ttl.org.uk](mailto:gfl@ttl.org.uk) stating which course, your name and school name.

RHS is running an **Edible Schools Garden** course in Inverness on the 19th September - book [here](#)

The **John Muir Award** is running **leader training** and **introductory courses** if you are interested in this superb award for your learners.

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## Free play resources



Our **Natural Play Project** has drawn to a close. It has been incredibly successful in transforming spaces, practices and attitudes towards play in schools across Scotland.

We directly worked with 60+ schools, changing practices and changing spaces. This work has inspired many more schools across Scotland, and it continues to delight us how many schools and authorities are working hard to improve outcomes through play.

Some key resources remain online. They are:

- The Good School Playground Guide - [here](#)
- Play Out of Hours - [here](#)
- Playtime Revolution (self-led training course) - [here](#)
- Managing Risk in School Grounds - [here](#)
- Advice on [Play Tree](#), [Woodland Play](#) and [Play Sand](#)
- Scottish Case Studies - [here](#)
- The Just Playing [website](#)

This project started in 2011 with visits to Berlin, and our initial work with Architecture Design Scotland produced useful information for designers - [here](#)

## Managing Risks



*'Well managed school trips and outdoor activities are great for children. They won't learn if wrapped in cotton wool' - Health and Safety Executive*

We have published guidance and resources, not only on good practice, but how to reduce bureaucracy. You can view all the resources [here](#)

Our Outdoor Learning Officer at Grounds for Learning has recently written an article on how to make some of the changes that are needed. Read it [here](#)

It's not just us - there are excellent [statements](#), good practice guides from [Care Inspectorate](#) and [Play Safety Forum](#), and the Scottish [Going Out There Framework](#). These are all supporting a positive approach to learning and play out of the classroom.

We also now have evidence that this positive approach has benefit when refuting injury claims. Read more from Tim Gill [here](#)

If you want to know more, join in the conversation at our Striking a Balance When Managing Risk event in Stirling. Book [here](#)

## Funding



The **Tesco Bags for Help** fund continues to support schools across Scotland, with community linked green space development and projects. We would urge you to look and apply to this fund, as it is time limited.

Greenspace Scotland - can help advise initially - contact them [here](#)

Tesco Bags for Help - full information is [here](#)

## Attainment Challenge

The replacement for the Attainment Challenge Innovation Fund is due to be announced this autumn. A good number of schools across Scotland used the fund for staff training in outdoor learning, provision of outdoor resources and outdoor learning trips away. It will be worth keeping an eye on the [webpage](#) for announcements.

### Travel Grants

Finally, our regular suggestion of travel grants from various organisations is still appropriate. This makes visits to various locations very affordable - and all of them encourage teacher led learning outside of their provision.

[Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park](#)

[Cairngorms National Park](#) (currently spent for 2016/17)

[Historic Environment Scotland](#)

[New Lanark Heritage Site](#)

[National Trust for Scotland](#)

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Grounds for Learning is the Scottish programme of the UK charity [Learning through Landscapes](#) and it supports outdoor learning and play for children.

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