**Planning ahead: Outdoor Learning in the recovery phase and beyond**

Background

As we start to consider the complexities of schools reopening on 11th August there is widespread agreement that learning outdoors will need to be central to those plans. The benefits of using school grounds, local greenspaces and the wider local community, as an integral part of teaching and learning has never been more apparent.

Outdoor Learning is embedded in Curriculum for Excellence, and in our GTCS standards and the benefits are well documented. In the current context, the immediate benefits of outdoor learning include:

* **a positive impact on health and wellbeing**
* **engaging learners**
* increased space **for social distancing** and extra capacity in schools.
* **a connection with home learning** and parental engagement, which is accessible and supports a blended approach to learning between home and school.

However there is a real opportunity to ensure that outdoor learning becomes normalised in schools and ELCs beyond COVID -19, and that we realise the ambition of Scottish Government set out [Vision 2030+](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/res1-vision-2030.pdf) , in which Outdoor Learning in key.

Purpose of guidance

There is an assumption that where possible, and appropriate, learning will take place outdoors. The purpose of this guidance is to **raise awareness and prompt thinking about what additional resources** might be required to facilitate this.

* Further guidance and support will be provided in the coming weeks to assist with staff training, teaching approaches and the practicalities of working outdoors.
* Where schools have identified an indoor capacity issue, discussion will take place to establish the most appropriate solution for that establishment **and how that will be resourced.**
* **Other establishments will be provided with central financial support in the form of …….**

Resources

The following information is broken down in to sections with some key questions for consideration. This is complemented with a resource list and potential options for purchasing. Establishments should start to consider what they will require. When thinking about your outdoor space [this resource](https://www.ltl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/covid-school-grounds-poster_landscapesinschools.pdf) produced by Learning through Landscapes might be useful.

**Clothing**

Adults and children need to be adequately dressed to be comfortable outdoors. Key considerations:

* If staff are expected to be outdoors they should be provided with a water/wind proof jacket and trousers
* It is reasonable to ask children to bring their own outdoor clothing and footwear but a small stock should be available in a range of sizes to cater for anyone that can’t provide their own
* In EY settings it is more common for all in one suits, or bibbed dungarees and jackets, to be available for all children

**Going Off-site**

Many schools and ELCCs do not have suitable grounds for outdoor learning and play, and will need to consider where their local green spaces are and how these could be used. Further guidance will be issued regarding the practicalities of going off-site, but this guidance is focused on the equipment you will require, which needs to include shelter, a temporary toilet facility and handwashing equipment. See the section on **Going Off-site** list for options.

**On-site shelter**

Having somewhere to shelter from wind and rain or to get some shade from the sun is important. As well as protection from the weather your shelter can provide a ‘base’ for your group. The type of shelter/s required will vary depending on age of children, location, whether it has to be transported etc. Key considerations:

* How many groups are you likely to have working outdoors at any one time? How many temporary shelters are you going to need?
* What have you already got in your ELCC/school grounds that can be used as a sheltered base?
* Will your shelter be going on to tarmac or grass?
* Will your shelter need to be transported?
* Will the location have attachment points eg trees/railings/grass for pegs

**On-site handwashing**

Having additional temporary handwashing facilities outdoors will be required to avoid a potential bottleneck if only indoor facilities are available. Key considerations:

* How many groups are you likely to have working outdoors at any one time? How many hand washing stations are you going to need?
* Can the system be used independently by the group?
* Is it possible to set the system up easily and quickly?
* Will the handwashing station require to be carried to where it will be used?

**On-site temporary toilets**

Having additional temporary toilet facilities outdoors may be required to avoid a potential bottleneck if only indoor facilities are available. Key considerations:

* Who is going to be responsible for set up and cleaning etc?
* If you left something in the grounds overnight is it likely to be vandalised?

**General outdoor equipment**

As well as the basic requirements for shelter, toilets and handwashing, additional resources may be required to enhance learning and play. Key considerations:

* What do we already have that can be used on/off site?
* Can items be cleaned easily?
* What type of learning/play are we hoping to engage with and what equipment might be required?