

‘Outdoor learning’ encompasses the entire range of learning experiences undertaken outside; whether it is reading a book outside or participating in an overseas expedition. There is a place for a full spectrum of outdoor learning experiences. The continued vision for outdoor learning in Scotland:

- all children and young people are participating in a range of progressive and creative outdoor learning experiences which are clearly part of the curriculum
- schools and centres are providing regular, frequent, enjoyable and challenging opportunities for all children and young people to learn outdoors throughout their school career and beyond
- teachers and educators embed outdoor learning in the curriculum so that learning in the outdoor environment becomes a reality for all children and young people.

Successful approaches to learning outdoors: A report by HM Inspectors (February 2022)

Outdoor Learning is a crucial aspect of Learning for Sustainability which contributes to improved outcomes for children and young people. These outcomes include benefits to wellbeing, improved skills particularly within the **Meta-Skills Framework**: Self-management, Social intelligence and Innovation, as well as an enhanced understanding of the world in which we live. Fife Education is committed to answering the Scottish Government Call to Action for all 3-18 places of education to become Sustainable Learning Settings by 2030 as outlined in the refreshed LfS Action Plan 23-30.

Learning for sustainability: action plan 2023 to 2030 (June 2023)

This Outdoor Learning Skills Framework has been created to support practitioners to develop confidence and skills in the planning and delivery of progressive, creative and collaborative Outdoor Learning experiences. Maximising the use of the immediate and local outdoor environment will enhance Outdoor Learning opportunities for all and deliver key aspects of the Fife LfS Learner Entitlement. The focus of this Framework is on the development of learner independence, knowledge and skills in:

- Being in the Outdoors (Connecting with the Outdoors)
- Being Respectful Outdoors
- Being Safe Outdoors

Nature Kindergarten in Fife resources provide additional information and support around Outdoor Learning provision in Fife Early Learning Settings. The Fife Outdoor Learning Toolkit provides further ideas and links to support taking the curriculum outdoors.



<p>Being in the Outdoors (Connecting with the Outdoors)</p> 	<p>Being Respectful Outdoors</p> 	<p>Being Safe Outdoors</p> 
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Being in the Outdoors (Connecting with the Outdoors)

Being in the outdoors is about exploring and experiencing our living and physical environment. Children and young people should have frequent and regular opportunities to connect, enjoy and engage with the outdoors throughout the year.



Discovering nature	Biodiversity	Ecosystem maintenance and management	Adaptation	Weather/Climate Change
Positive relationships	Physical environment (geography/geology/urbanisation)	Navigating	Journeying	Adventuring

Early Level	First Level	Second Level	Third / Fourth Level / Senior Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiences the seasons and different weather conditions outdoors and observes nature and the changes in the environment throughout the year. Discusses and selects appropriate clothing and equipment for the season/weather. Navigates by choosing the best route using man-made paths, natural paths, footprints and landmarks. Demonstrates adventuring by exploring different terrains e.g., mud, rocks, sand, grass etc. Demonstrates journeying by making and following basic maps using drawings and simple symbols. Explores and identifies local natural, rural and urban environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiences the seasons and different weather conditions in a wider range of outdoor settings while observing nature and comparing the changes in the environment throughout the year across those settings. Identifies and classifies features of the different environments – e.g., leaf identification, choice of building materials etc. Discusses and selects appropriate clothing and equipment for the season/weather. Navigates and demonstrates path finding by choosing the best route while comparing man-made paths, natural paths and clearing pathways. Identifies footprints and landmarks, measures distance and features. Demonstrates adventuring by exploring a variety of outdoor environments including natural (wild) and managed (e.g., park, woodland). Demonstrates journeying by making and following maps using own drawings and symbols. Explores and classifies a range of local natural, rural and urban environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiences the seasons and different weather conditions outdoors. Spends time in and cares for gardens and growing spaces. Discusses and selects appropriate clothing and equipment for the season/weather/activity. Navigates and demonstrates journeying using maps (including ordnance survey maps) within and out with the school grounds. Uses own drawings/symbols to create maps, then recognises standard map symbols to identify and navigate to features of the landscape. Calculates distances. Adventures out with the local area, day trips and residentials including opportunities for bush craft, fire making & safety, climbing and traversing skills, water activities and water safety. Explores and classifies a range of natural, rural and urban environments further afield and makes connections with their learning and life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares for and experiences different weather and climate conditions outdoors. Discusses, selects and takes increasing responsibility for appropriate clothing and equipment for the season/weather/activity. Navigates and demonstrates journeying using ordnance survey maps for extended or multi-day journeys. Recognises and uses symbols to identify and navigate within the features of the landscape. Calculates distances and journey times. Adventures out with the local area, day trips and residentials, including opportunities for bush craft, fire making & safety, climbing and traversing skills, water activities and water safety. Ideally opportunities to travel out with Scotland would be provided. Explores and classifies a range of natural, rural and urban environments further afield in Scotland and abroad. Takes opportunities to use the outdoors as a lens to look at the curriculum from different perspectives.

Being Respectful Outdoors

Being respectful outdoors is about developing a deeper appreciation of the wider world. Children and young people will learn to care about and contribute positively to the environment, understanding how their actions can impact on the world now and in the future.

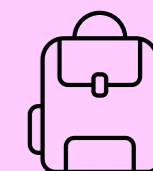


Waste management	Leave no trace	Environmental impact	Our place in the local and global community	Interdependence	Our ecosystem – sharing space with others
Protecting the environment	Countryside Code	Conservation	Safeguarding nature	Carbon footprint	Collaboration

Early Level	First Level	Second Level	Third / Fourth Level	Senior Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of caring for the environment e.g. litter picking, leaving no trace. • Develops an awareness of sharing spaces with all other living things (plants and animals) i.e. protecting biodiversity and ecosystems. • Participates in whole school initiatives e.g. bring your own bottle, no single-use plastics etc. • Demonstrates understanding of reduce, re-use, recycle. • Cares for outdoor spaces in the setting/school grounds e.g. window box, planter, garden etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops understanding of our impact on the local environment. • Discusses the importance of protecting biodiversity within local ecosystems (school grounds and beyond). • Participates in whole school initiatives – level of involvement and responsibility increases. • Makes sustainable and environmentally friendly choices within their sphere of influence e.g. active travel (Carbon footprint). • Cares for the extended environment beyond the school e.g. local public spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops understanding of how our choices impact on the local and global environment (e.g. coastal erosion, flooding, carbon footprint, climate change). • Identifies ways to protect biodiversity in a variety of ecosystems in the local environment. • Identifies and supports local and national charities and organisations leading environmental action and campaigns (link to being safe outdoors e.g. RNLI, Mountain rescue). • Begins to lead sustainable and environmentally friendly choices to support school improvement. • Cares for and improves the local environment and beyond (possible links to social enterprise). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops deeper understanding (IDL) of how our choices impact on the local and global environment (e.g. coastal erosion, flooding, carbon footprint, climate change). • Takes responsibility for protecting biodiversity when accessing a variety of ecosystems both locally and beyond. • Identifies, supports and gets involved with local and national charities and organisations who lead environmental action and campaigns (volunteering, visits etc.) • Leads sustainable and environmentally friendly choices to support school improvement. • Cares for and improves the local environment and beyond (possible links to social enterprise impacting on national or global issues). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes sustainable choices to reduce their impact on the local and global environment. • Makes informed decisions to protect biodiversity both locally and beyond. • Leads whole school engagement in partnership with local, national and international charities and organisations who lead action and campaigns (volunteering with external partners, work experience placements etc.) • Leads sustainable and environmentally friendly choices to support school and local area/authority improvement. • Leads social enterprise projects which aim to improve the local, national or international environment.

Being Safe Outdoors

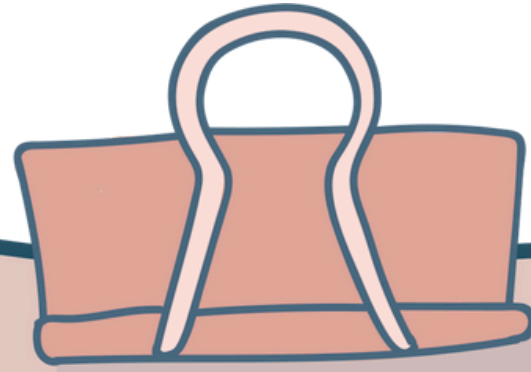
Being safe outdoors is about growing an awareness of the outdoor environment and developing an understanding of boundaries and problem-solving to safely navigate risks. Children and young people will build these skills, strengthening their confidence and independence when accessing the outdoors.



Assessment of risk/benefit	Recognising hazards	Social awareness (people/cars etc.)	Understanding our own boundaries	Making choices/decisions
Supporting access to the outdoors for all	Problem-solving	Fire Safety	Water Safety	Highway Code

Early Level	First Level	Second Level	Third / Fourth Level	Senior Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses obvious risks and takes appropriate steps to protect themselves and others in different contexts e.g., road safety, water safety, fire safety, climbing, den building, exploring the environment (litter picking), hygiene, accessibility for all. Discusses the appropriate action to stay safe, remain calm and get help in different unsafe or emergency situations outdoors (e.g., shout for help, find an adult, phone 999). Follows directions and uses basic directional language. Plans for being in the outdoors – identifies suitable clothing and demonstrates basic hazard awareness. Shares information and learning about being safe outdoors with others e.g., parental engagement, peers etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When prompted, identifies risks and hazards and ensures safe use of equipment and follows directions and procedures. e.g., road safety, water safety, fire safety, climbing, den building, exploring the environment, hygiene, accessibility for all. Recognises unsafe situations and discusses emergency situations outdoors. Knows the appropriate action to stay safe, remain calm and get help. Identifies and respects the importance of safety and life-saving equipment in the local environment. With support, gives and follows basic directions in familiar locations on foot. Plans for being in the outdoors beyond the school boundaries: Basic risk assessment of the journey; What clothing and equipment is needed etc. Shares information and learning about being safe outdoors with others in a variety of ways e.g., learner led assemblies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to identify risks and mitigations independently. Plans for and applies appropriate safety measures when going outdoors. With support participates in the creation of risk assessments considering road safety, water safety, fire safety, climbing, den building, exploring the environment, hygiene, accessibility for all etc. Recognises unsafe and emergency situations identifying the different responses and challenges caused by being in the outdoors. Identifies, respects, and describes how and when to use safety and life-saving equipment located outdoors. Gives and follows directions to navigate in familiar and unfamiliar environments within a physical boundary (school grounds, activity centre grounds, farm or ecology centre visit, transition to new schools etc.) using maps and other resources. Plans and experiences a trip beyond the school boundaries and local area. Risk assessment of the journey and activities. Identifies required clothing and equipment and checks it is all fit for purpose. Promotes safety in the outdoors including campaigns to encourage safe behaviours and improvements to local infrastructure. e.g., safe driving campaigns, Eco-Schools, Rights Respecting Schools, LfS, Sustainable Development Goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies safety measures to control main risks and hazards identified (e.g., hygiene, shelter, food safety etc.). Creates and adheres to risk assessments, formally for trips and activities (e.g., visits, D of E etc.) but also informally in their daily lives (e.g., daily commute, visiting friends & family, free time activities, accessibility for all etc.). Begins to assess and take the appropriate action to keep themselves and others safe in emergency situations outdoors including carrying out first aid. Gives and follows directions to navigate routes in familiar and unfamiliar environments within and out with a physical boundary (e.g., city centre, set distance etc.) using maps and other resources. Plans and experiences an extended trip beyond the school boundaries and local area, possibly overnight and/or abroad. Risk assessment of the journey and activities. Identifies required clothing and equipment and checks it is all fit for purpose. Promotes safety in the outdoors including campaigns to encourage safe behaviours and improvements to infrastructure. e.g., pupil voice, pupil council, DYW, LfS & Sustainable Development Goals, local ecology groups, or other local groups/businesses linked with school etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks for and complies with risk assessments in new environments e.g., at work, work experience placements, trips etc. Takes responsibility for the safety of themselves and others when away from home including consideration of accessibility for all. Manages an emergency outdoors and takes the appropriate action to keep themselves and others safe including carrying out first aid and deploying emergency equipment if appropriate to do so. Gives and follows directions to navigate increasingly complex routes in familiar and unfamiliar environments within and out with a physical boundary (e.g., city centre, set distance etc.) using maps and other resources. Opportunities to take a leadership role when planning and experiencing an extended trip beyond the school boundaries and local area, possibly overnight and/or abroad. Risk assessment of the journey and activities. Identifies required clothing and equipment and checks it is all fit for purpose. Promotes safety in the outdoors including campaigns to encourage safe behaviours and improvements to infrastructure. e.g., leadership opportunities within pupil voice, pupil council etc., engagement with national or international campaigns etc.

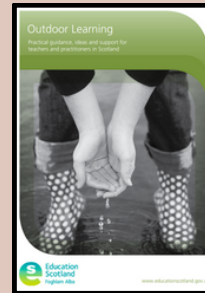
Fife Outdoor Learning Toolkit - Advice and Guidance



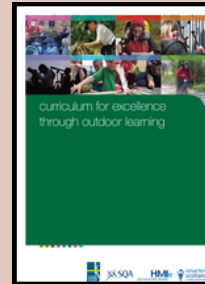
Access to Outdoor Spaces

The Outdoor Learning Practical guidance, ideas and support for teachers and practitioners in Scotland provides key considerations for places to learn outdoors including:

- Section 4: school and centre grounds (p61-72)
- Section 5: using the local area and community including day visits by foot or using transport (p73-80)
- Section 6: outdoor residential experiences (p81-88)
- Section 7: going abroad (p89-92)



Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning (p17) provides a set of questions which may help with decisions on the best places to learn outdoors.



When enjoying the outdoors, we must follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code which is based on 3 key principles:

- Respect the interests of others.
- Care for the environment.
- Take responsibility for our own actions.

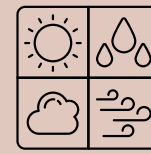
Key Considerations:



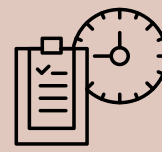
Clothing



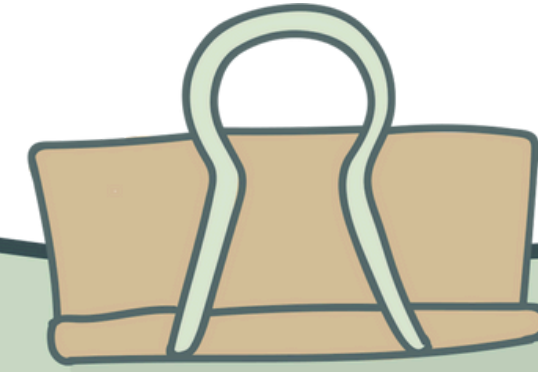
Resources



Weather



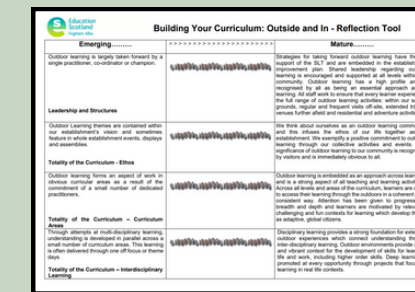
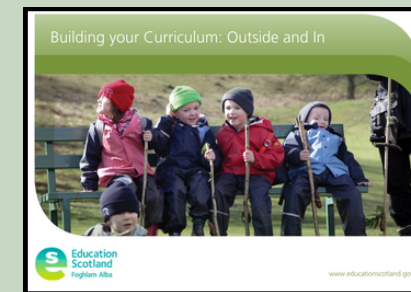
Timing



Improving Outdoor Learning

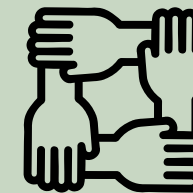
Schools need to take a strategic approach to developing outdoor learning. Do all children and young people have the chance to learn, explore and develop a range of progressive skills outdoors throughout the year?

Access Building your Curriculum: Outside and In, and accompanying Reflection Tool to support discussions around improving outdoor learning.



Partners

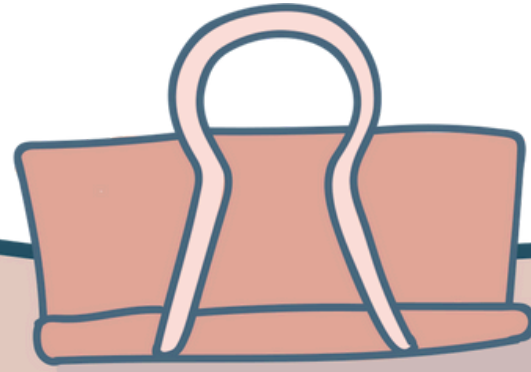
There are many different partners who can support outdoor learning including parents, carers, families, local community, Council teams and organisations such as Outdoor Education Fife etc.



Further Advice and Guidance

<https://education.gov.scot/resources/learning-for-sustainability-advice-and-guidance/outdoor-learning/>

Fife Outdoor Learning Toolkit - Health and Safety



Risk Assessments

We have a duty to effectively manage risks. This is important in the wider context of risk management, but it's particularly important in relation to the health and safety of children and young people, staff and anyone involved in school activities on school premises or beyond.

- You must carry out risk assessments to identify the main risks of any activity, and how best to mitigate them.
- This is just as important for day-to-day activities and lessons as it is for more unusual activities, like serving food at a school fayre or taking pupils out on adventurous activities.
- Each situation is different. It's not enough to download and date documents.

More information on risk assessments can be found [here](#).

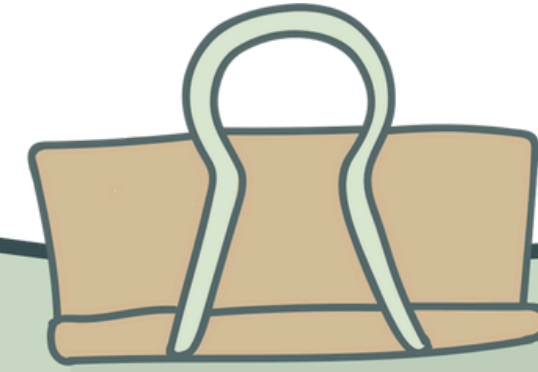


EVOLVE

Evolve is Fife's risk assessment online documentation. This supports all outdoor excursions and ensures the safety of children and young people, teachers and adults. You will require a username and password from your line manager to access Evolve. Guidance Sway available [here](#).



Going Out There
Scottish Framework
for Safe Practice in
Off-site Visits

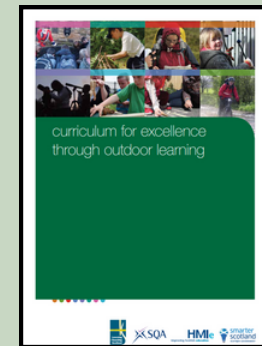


Health and Safety Considerations

Taking children and young people outdoors can be daunting. There is extensive support available to make this process seamless and rewarding.

Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning documentation provides information, guidance and support for teaching and learning in the outdoor environment.

<https://education.gov.scot/media/isxg4lb0/cfe-through-outdoor-learning.pdf>



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Learning in and about the outdoors is for everyone. As with the classroom it is our responsibility and part of Fife's educational policy to create an inclusive and equitable education system.

The Institute of Outdoor Learning provides guidance on how to support everyone outdoors.



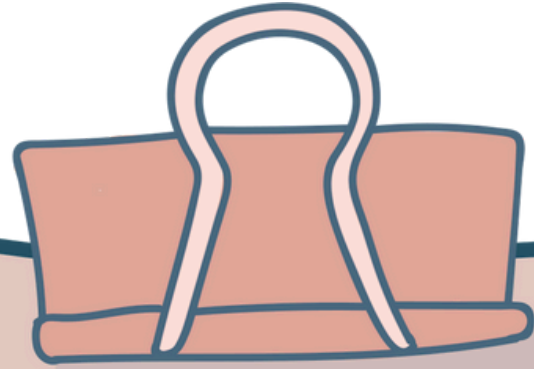
Further Support



Learning through Landscapes provide detailed support on how to safely take children out of school to learn.



Fife Outdoor Learning Toolkit - Additional Resources and Links



Resources and Ideas

There is an array of excellent websites which provide lesson ideas and resources to support outdoor learning across different settings.



[Learning through Landscapes](#)



[Creative Star](#)



[Outdoor Classroom Day](#)



[NatureScot](#)



[Nature Discovery Map Scotland](#)

Professional Learning and Further Reading

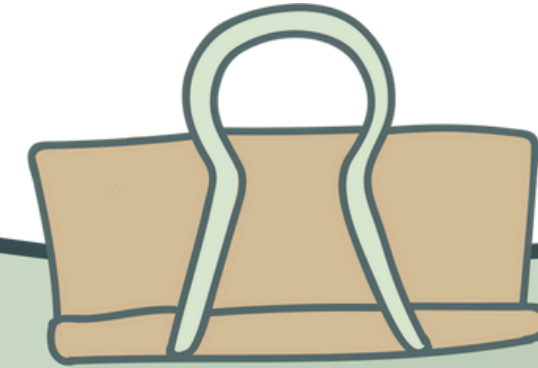


[High Quality Outdoor Learning 2025](#)



[Outdoor Learning Directory](#)

[SAPOE](#)



Programmes, Awards and Qualifications

There are a growing number of local and national outdoor learning linked programmes, awards and qualifications.



[Natural Connections](#)



[Climate Action Schools](#)



[Scottish Wildlife Trust](#)

Fife Outdoor Learning Supporters and Sites



[Fife Coast and Countryside Trust](#)

[Climate Action Fife](#)

[RHET Fife](#)

[Outdoor Education Fife](#)

[Lochore Meadows](#)

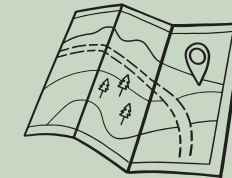
[Fordell Firs](#)

[The Ecology Centre](#)

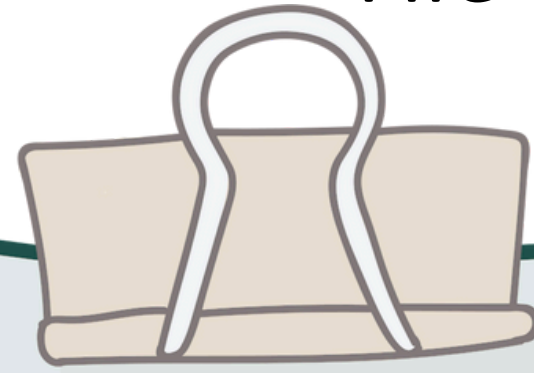
[Tentsmuir Forest](#)

[Fife Beaches](#)

[St Andrews Botanic Garden](#)

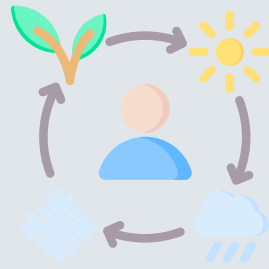


Fife Outdoor Learning Toolkit - Glossary



Adaptation

The process of adjusting to new conditions or environments in order to survive or thrive. In the context of nature, it refers to how organisms or systems modify to better suit their surroundings, like how species evolve traits to survive in changing climates.



Adventuring

Developing new skills and working to improve them, challenging ourselves, finding out what we can do, getting new perspectives and feeling the thrill of success.



Biodiversity

The variety and variability of life on Earth, including different species, ecosystems, and genetic variations. A high level of biodiversity is crucial for ecosystem health and resilience.



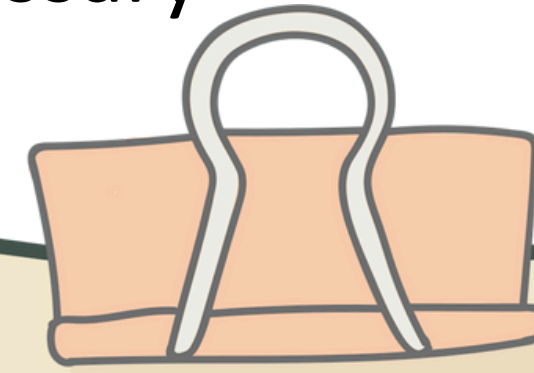
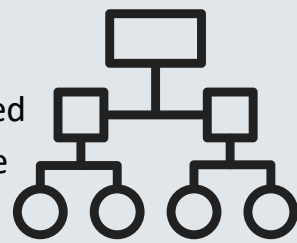
Carbon Footprint

The total amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere as a result of human activities, typically measured in equivalent tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂). It includes emissions from transportation, energy use, and food production.



Classifies

The act of organising or grouping things based on shared characteristics. In biological classification, organisms are grouped into categories like species, genus, and family.



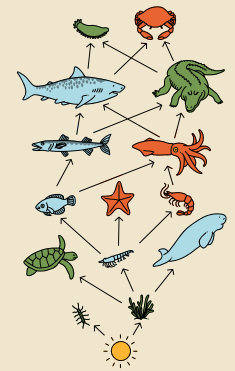
Climate Change

Long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, and other atmospheric conditions on Earth, primarily due to human activities such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes. It leads to global warming, extreme weather events, and rising sea levels.



Ecosystem

A community of living organisms interacting with each other and their shared physical environment (such as air, water, and soil). Ecosystems can vary in size, from small ponds to large forests or oceans.



Environment

The surrounding conditions, influences, and elements that affect an organism or system. It includes natural elements like air, water, and land, as well as human-made features like buildings and infrastructure.



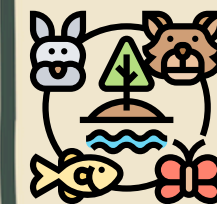
Hazard Awareness

The understanding and recognition of potential dangers or risks in an environment. It involves identifying hazards like extreme weather, wildlife, or unstable terrain, and taking precautions to avoid harm.

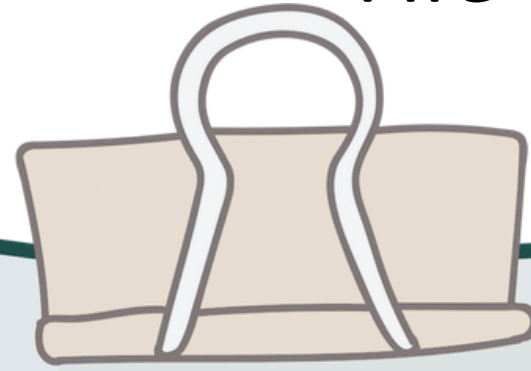


Interdependence

The reliance of organisms, species, or systems on each other for survival and functioning. In ecosystems, species depend on one another for food, shelter, pollination, and other vital functions.



Fife Outdoor Learning Toolkit - Glossary



Journeying

Making our way together through the natural world, reaching the parts that planes, trains and cars can't reach. Sharing the ups and downs, the sunshine and the showers.

Man-made

Refers to objects, structures, or changes to the environment that are created by humans, as opposed to those that occur naturally. Examples include cities, roads, and machines.



Natural

Relating to the physical world and the organisms or processes that occur without human intervention. Natural elements include mountains, rivers, forests, and animal species.

Navigating

The process of planning and directing a route or course, especially across unfamiliar terrain. It involves using tools like maps, compasses, or GPS to determine position and direction.

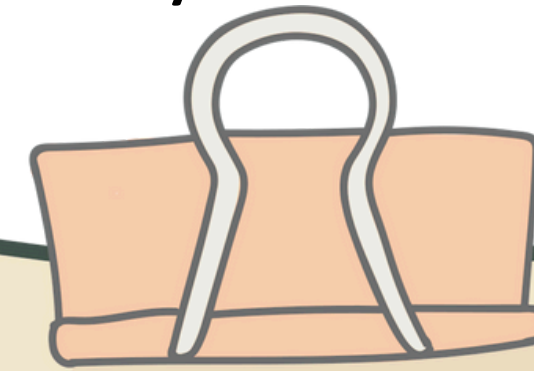


Ordnance Survey Map



A detailed and standardised map used for navigation, created by the Ordnance Survey, a national mapping agency in the UK. These maps include information on terrain, roads, and geographical features.

<https://osmaps.com/>

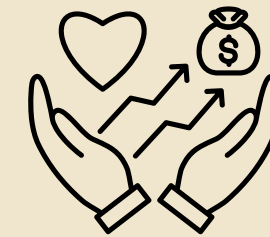


Rural

Areas characterised by open land, low population density, and often agriculture or natural spaces. Rural areas are typically outside of urban centres.



Social Enterprise



A business model that aims to address social, environmental, or community issues while also generating profits. The focus is on creating positive change through sustainable practices.

Sustainability

Sustainability means meeting present needs without harming future generations, by balancing environmental care, economic growth, and social well-being to ensure a healthy planet and society for all.



Terrain

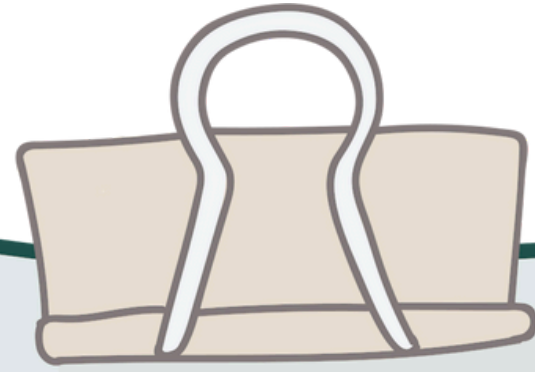
The physical features of a piece of land, including its elevation, slope, surface type, and natural characteristics. It can vary from flat plains to rugged mountains.

Urban

Relating to cities or towns, particularly those with high population density and infrastructure such as roads, buildings, and public services. Urban areas are typically more developed and industrialised than rural areas.

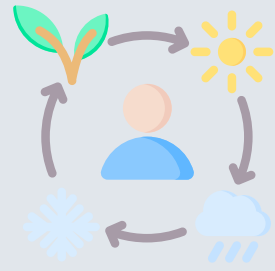


Fife Outdoor Learning Toolkit - Glossary (Simplified)



Adaptation

When living things change in some way to help them survive in their environment. For example, some animals grow thicker fur to stay warm in cold weather.



Adventuring

Developing new skills and working to improve them, challenging ourselves, finding out what we can do, getting new perspectives and feeling the thrill of success.



Biodiversity

The many different types of living things on Earth, like animals, plants, and insects. The more variety there is, the healthier the planet is!



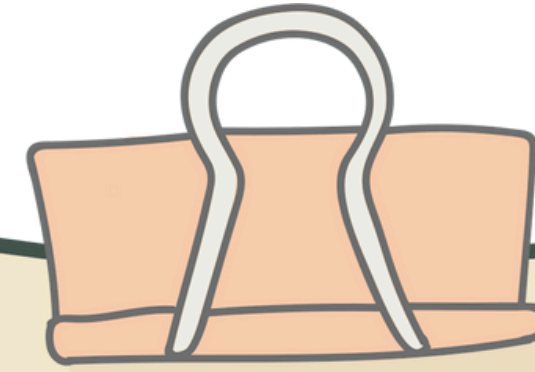
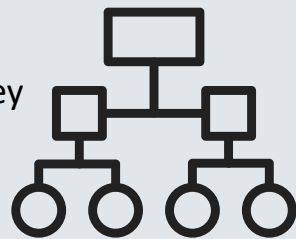
Carbon Footprint

The amount of pollution we make, from things like cars or using electricity. We try to make less to keep the Earth clean.



Classifies

When you sort things into groups based on what they are like. For example, animals can be classified into groups like mammals, birds, and reptiles.



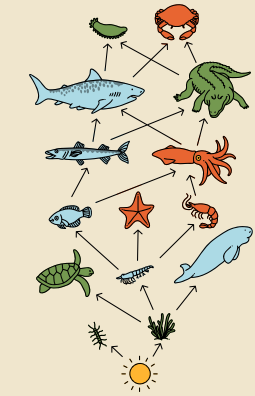
Climate Change

When the weather on Earth changes over a long time because of things like pollution. It can cause problems like hotter temperatures, storms, and rising sea levels.



Ecosystem

A community of living things (like plants and animals) and their shared environment (like water, air and soil). They all depend on each other to stay healthy. Ecosystems can vary in size, from small ponds to large forests or oceans.



Environment

Everything around us, including nature (like trees, animals, and water) and human-made things (like buildings and roads). We all live in the environment and need to take care of it.



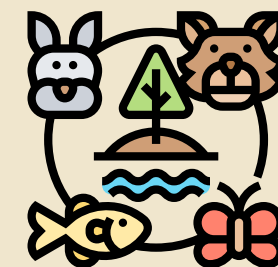
Hazard Awareness

Knowing about possible dangers in the environment, like floods, roads or wild animals, and understanding how to stay safe.

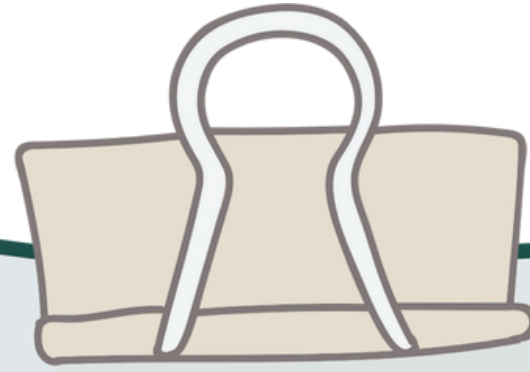


Interdependence

When living things rely on each other to survive. For example, bees help flowers grow by spreading pollen, and flowers give bees food.



Fife Outdoor Learning Toolkit - Glossary (Simplified)



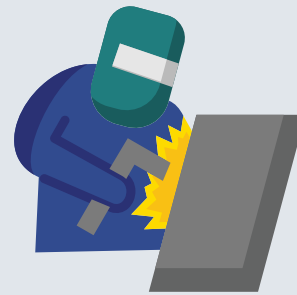
Journeying

Making our way together through the natural world, reaching the parts that planes, trains and cars can't reach. Sharing the ups and downs, the sunshine and the showers.



Man-made

Things that are created by people, not nature. For example, buildings, cars, and roads are man-made.



Natural

Things that come from nature, like trees, rivers, mountains, and animals. These are not made by humans.



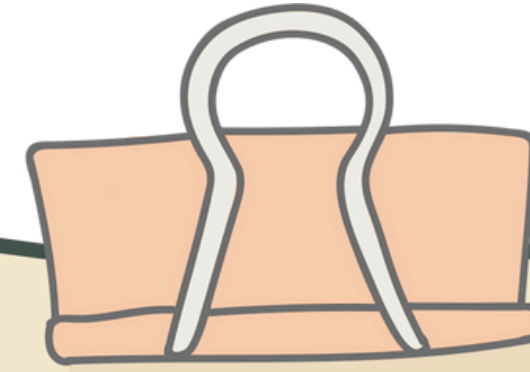
Navigating

Finding your way around our world. Learning to interpret maps and directions, identifying features that help us know where we are and where we are going.



Ordnance Survey Map

A special map that shows details about land, like hills, roads, rivers, and buildings, created by the Ordnance Survey, a national mapping agency in the UK. They help people navigate. <https://osmaps.com/>



Rural

Places far from the city with lots of open land, like farms or forests. It's usually very quiet and peaceful.



Social Enterprise

A business that tries to make the world better, like helping the environment or supporting people in need, while still making money.

Sustainability

Sustainability means taking care of the Earth so that people, animals, and plants can live happily now and in the future. It is about sharing and not wasting things!



Terrain

The physical features of a place, like whether it is flat, hilly, or rocky. It's what the land is like in a certain area.

Urban

Places like cities or towns where there are many people, buildings, roads, and lots of activity. It's the opposite of rural areas.

