



Outdoor Learning Policy

November 2023

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Rationale

We aim to instil a love of the outdoors and enjoyment of outdoor experiences across our school community, by embedding the necessary knowledge and skills pupils will need both now and in the future into our weekly outdoor learning experiences.

Aberuthven Primary School sets out to provide opportunities for pupils to become knowledgeable about nature; be aware of what constitutes safe practise outdoors; able to discuss the benefits of learning outdoors and develop skills for life to enhance their learning in other curricular areas where appropriate.

Our Aims

- All children and young people will participate in a range of progressive and creative outdoor learning experiences which are clearly part of the curriculum.
- We aim to provide regular, frequent, enjoyable and challenging opportunities for all children and young people to learn outdoors throughout their school career and beyond.
- We aim to embed outdoor learning in the curriculum so that learning in the outdoor environment becomes a part of their lives.

Benefits for Learners:

There is now a substantial base of national and international evidence about the benefits of taking learning outdoors. The impact of outdoor learning on children and young people's physical and mental health and wellbeing, wider achievements, attainment and personal development is often recognised by practitioners. There are some general benefits from taking learning outside within and across curriculum areas:

- Connections are made experientially with the real world outside the classroom, helping to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in a meaningful context.
- Outdoor environments and surroundings act as a rich stimulus for creative thinking and learning. This affords opportunities for challenge, enquiry, critical thinking and reflection.
- Children and young people find that not everything outside matches the models or the textbooks. This does not mean that what they have found is 'wrong'. Instead, it develops awareness of the complexities of the real world and can help to develop critical thinking skills.

- Children and young people are able to understand the relevance of a subject taught in school to everyday life.
- Children and young people can sometimes behave differently outdoors. Quiet pupils may speak more, others become calmer and more focused when outside, especially in a natural space.
- The multi-sensory experience outdoors helps children and young people to retain knowledge more effectively. There are opportunities for pupils to learn with their whole bodies on a large scale.
- Learning in a less structured environment can provide a different learning experience from that of the classroom.
- Being outdoors can be a more relaxing learning experience for many learners.

Teaching & Learning

Pupils of all stages will take part in one cross-curricular, outdoor learning experience per school week, where possible. Outdoor learning sessions will be timetabled to ensure adequate staffing to support sessions, for both classes in our School. Outdoor Learning opportunities will be carefully planned to ensure they offer coverage in other curricular areas, with staff utilising resources to enhance the learning opportunities when appropriate.

Assessment

Staff will plan and assess individual pupil stage of learning using Curricular Benchmarks for guidance. Regular feedback will be collated in a variety of ways to measure pupil engagement and enjoyment of outdoor learning sessions.

Professional Development

- Staff will access ongoing relevant CPD provided in School/organised by Perth & Kinross Council which will support professional development in Outdoor Learning and enhance educator confidence and skill set.
- Staff will have the opportunity to develop their skill set through opportunities to shadow/team teach/ observe colleagues and specialists.
- Staff will access relevant texts and materials to aid their professional development and engage with up-to-date guidance from Scottish Government, PKC etc.