



Kilbarchan Primary School
Outdoor Learning and Teaching Policy
Revised December 2022



Aim – What do we want to achieve?

For every child to explore and learn from our school grounds and local community, so that sustainability and care for natural resources is a prominent part of how we put our school values in to action. By building their curiosity, enthusiasm, love and care for their local environment stronger emotional connections are fostered which can result in environmentally responsible behaviours in adulthood.

The Planning Process

When planning to go outside it is important to involve children and young people in the process, to better understand what motivates them or captures their imagination so that they are more engaged.

Suggested questions to reflect on when planning

- Which experiences will have more impact on learning if done outdoors?
- How can learning outdoors enhance and deepen learning within curriculum areas?
- Which experiences are best suited to a combination of indoor and outdoor learning?
- How can learning indoors best be consolidated, progressed or enhanced using the outdoors?
- What opportunities exist for linking learning across the curriculum?

Progression in outdoor learning is not necessarily linear: children and young people and practitioners can be on a journey of discovery as they explore new experiences together and in a range of circumstances and environments.

How does this link this to the Health and Wellbeing Indicators?

Safe

- Enable children to take calculated risks and be involved in risk assessment planning, to feel a sense of achievement.
- Create trusted bonds between the child and adults who will be involved with the child to keep them safe.
- Seek advice from outdoor education professionals, eg introducing more adventurous activities or access to adventure activities in the local area.
- Provide den-building materials and support children to make shelters. This helps to turn places into spaces that have meaning for them, they gain a sense of belonging.
- Ensure that health and safety guidelines and child protection protocols are followed.
- Learn about road/water safety and other practical risk–management skills are taught.

Healthy

- Learning about food, vegetables, Farm-to-Fork
- Being out in the fresh air
- Interaction with peers and adults in a different setting therefore requiring changes to social cues and interactions
- Being physically active outside and how this benefits both physical and mental health

Achieving

- Learning about self-care and life skills
- Children demonstrating application of their learning in different contexts, with different resources and with different people
- Working with adults who form positive role models and can demonstrate a wide range of jobs and volunteering opportunities
- Development of interpersonal, communication and social skills

- Plan activities and lessons that appeal to the naturalist intelligence within a young person and allow them to achieve in a range of real-world contexts.
- Provide opportunities for formal recognition of achievement such as ASDAN, John Muir Award, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Youth Achievement Awards, etc.
- Find a means to enable a child or group to develop an expertise outside that can be used as a positive focus or distraction if needed. Some children will accept praise outside but not inside.
- Provide opportunities to access natural areas and attend residential courses or expeditions where young people experience intrinsic rewards through meeting physical or social challenges.

Nurtured

- Listening and observing children playing outside, can be used to further develop opportunities for free play based on children's interests.
- Adults can demonstrate respect for living things and the environment.
- Observing how children respond to nature away from the perceived stress of school can give a measure of how nurtured they are.
- Some children need to run off aggression or anger. Working on specific behaviours outside benefits some children. Children can then transfer skills inside, creating a more nurturing environment in general.
- Using open-ended equipment that relies on collaboration provides opportunities for bonding.
- Extend children's opportunities to get to know the community within their local area.
- Be planned, prepared and positive about spending time outside with children. Model appropriate behaviours, including a willingness to try new activities, and rise to challenges.
- Provide big open-ended resources, such as guttering, planks of wood, bread crates, etc that children can play with, making trails, obstacle courses, etc.
- Encourage children of different ages to play together.

Respected

- Involve the children in outdoor projects that interest them and develop a sense of ownership and belonging, for example: - growing plants of their choice in containers or gardens - improving the play facilities in a playground - participation in schemes such as the John Muir Award, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network ASDAN or Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which set clear goals for achievement for individuals or groups.
- Listen to children and involve them in decisions at their level of understanding in a familiar context. Some children are more talkative outdoors and in play situations.

Responsible

- Create a collaborative learning environment, indoors and out, that enables children to have and to take responsibility for themselves, resources, and the environment.
- Create opportunities for children to make decisions that have clear consequences. Group challenges or team-building activities can help. Adventurous activities with clear systems and instruction may appeal.
- Develop routines around going outside that encourage responsibility, for example: - involving children in the planning of work outside, including risk-benefit assessments - ensuring children carry their own snack, water, portable seat and toys - learning how to manage in different situations such as walking near a busy road, crossing safely, dealing with different (and uneven) surfaces, appropriate communication with others in the community

Included

- All children can succeed outside especially when a supportive practitioner seeks creative ways of engaging children. Look for interests a child displays indoors and extend the possibilities outside. For example, a child who likes cars could take a toy car on a string outside for a walk or simply to participate in a group activity.
- Children often accept each other readily outside whereas they may be competitive inside. Rather than excluding a child from class, try to include them outside first, within a small team.

What does Outdoor Learning look like across the curriculum?

Expressive arts

Developing an awareness of space and its use as a stimulus for creativity and expression is another reason for taking learning outdoors. Contributing to or creating public performances outdoors can enhance the sense of community and understanding of what it means to belong to a place. There are specific practical skills and problem solving associated with taking expressive arts outdoors, such as projecting voices, making works of art that can withstand the elements and managing musical instruments outdoors.

Health and wellbeing

Research that suggests that direct, frequent experience of being outside, particularly in contact with nature, produces positive physical, mental, and emotional benefits that affect children's overall development. There are times and places to be noisy and active or to be quiet and reflective. Through exposure to everyday risks outside children and young people can develop an awareness of their own and others' safety. Many outdoor activities require more physical activity and skill than those indoors.

Languages

Many of Scotland's well-known poets and authors use nature and outdoor events as creative inspiration. Some children and young people who are reluctant to write or mark-make indoors will choose to do so outdoors in a less formal setting. Engaging with events and processes outdoors allows children and young people to build specific vocabulary. Learners benefit from engaging with environmental print and learning about the process and purpose of writing in the real world. There are meaningful opportunities to use different texts, including charts, maps, instructions, and timetables.

Mathematics

Taking maths into the outdoors provides an ideal vehicle for this approach. Numbers are tools people use to make their lives less complicated outside or in. Children and young people benefit from learning maths outdoors through having access to limitless mathematical resources and contexts. There are increased opportunities for dialogue and developing mathematical language and concepts when working practically with others.

Religious and moral education

Being outside heightens the senses, prompts a sense of connection to the environment and raises the questions of identity, meaning and purpose fundamental to learning about what it means to be human in religious and moral education (RME). Times to be still, to look and listen, to touch, to move and to wonder offer rich experiences for discussion. Make the most of religious and cultural events taking place in local communities, establishments or support learners to explore spirituality, religious texts, symbols and festivals in their school grounds or outdoor space.

Examples could include:

- creating peace gardens and quiet areas outside for reflection
- designing temporary or fixed labyrinths
- putting multicultural games and markings on the asphalt, such as an Islamic hopscotch or dance steps from traditional dances in different cultures
- placing artefacts that capture important or special events, the passing of the seasons, reminders of growth and change
- providing pathways for journey making, doorways and entrances for moving through different spaces, circular trails for work on life stages and life cycles

Sciences

Environmental sciences are particularly relevant and demonstrate principles and practice that cut across biology, chemistry and physics. Outdoor learning frequently involves teamwork and a different ethos of working in a less structured environment. In sciences this learning can lead to a lifelong interest in a particular aspect of the environment. Science taught outdoors encourages considered thought about our use of resources and the impact of this on the local environment,

and about the scale of the natural world. It demonstrates the wonders of the environment and allows learners to learn to interact with the living world in a climate of safety and respect. A simple walk around the school grounds can provide opportunities for learners to experience and observe a range of scientific principles and their applications.

Social subjects

Experiencing the sights and sounds of their school grounds, outdoor space and local area can help children and young people to become more connected to their local community. It is an opportunity for learners to meet and talk to people in context and experience different points of view. When studying local or national issues the subject may become more relevant and meaningful and make greater sense. Developing social studies skills such as map making becomes purposeful and relevant outdoors. It improves learners' spatial and temporal sense of place in the world through learning experientially how to locate, explore and link features and places locally and further afield.

Technologies

Being outdoors aids reflection on the designs, materials and processes that are used and which influence all our lives. This is an opportunity for partnerships to develop and to support the transition process through work-related learning in a diversity of careers, which might include jobs in the 'green' or environmental sectors. The links between the planet and consumption of finite resources can be made through gardening, allotment and farming projects. Growing plants that have different purposes, such as medicinal or dyes for clothing, can help embed sustainable principles when explicitly taught and demonstrated.

The Journey through Kilbarchan Primary School – illustrative examples

Early level

A child announces that she is moving house. This creates a lot of interest as the other children ask questions. The lead adult asks if the children would like to create a new house outside. A group of children want to do this and start drawing their ideas of what it should look like. Together they think about the materials needed and collect them together. Before long there are several little dens built from milk crates, umbrellas, and old sheets. The adult encourages the children to think about what they need inside their homes. The children have their own ideas and before long are immersed in role-play using shells, bark, and other natural materials to represent different household objects. The next day the children are visiting their local woodland. The adult shows them photos of their new homes in the outdoor space and wonders what they would look like here. Some children decide they want to be squirrels and other woodland animals. One child tries building a drey in a tree but the sticks keep falling out. Eventually he moves the sticks over to a pair of children who have decided that the 'Gruffalo' lives in a nest on the ground. Their key worker wonders why the nest on the ground is easier to build. 'It just is,' answers the child.

First level

What animals live in or use our grounds? Undertake a simple investigation, looking for evidence of animals. The animals can be classified simply, and the variety noticed and recorded. If children are interested in wildlife, then suitable homes can be researched and built, such as bird boxes, log piles, hedgehog houses or other places for animals to live. Ideally, locally sourced natural materials and reused household items will be the materials used to create the homes. The children can map where the homes are located. Through asking questions, children can find out more about local wildlife. The animal homes can be monitored monthly to see which creatures move into the grounds. The children may wish to experiment with the siting of the wildlife homes to find the most effective place. Invite the local Biodiversity Action Plan officer to meet the pupils to discuss their findings and suggest any further action the pupils could take, such as planting specific plants as food sources and shelter.

Second level

The vegetable plot This works well linked to, or following on from, a project about World War II and creating a 'Dig for Victory' garden. Discuss the planting of an area of a vegetable plot. Think about what the plants need to grow and discuss the use of fertilisers. Invite a local farmer or vegetable gardener to explain their use of fertilisers, including organic products. Pupils plan how they could investigate which fertiliser is best for their garden. Pupils can take soil samples, test compost from their own compost heap, inspect commercial fertilisers, etc. Prepare the soil in separate plots or containers to allow groups to carry out their investigations. Display their results and produce to the class. Use mini compost columns set up in different parts of the school grounds to investigate the best conditions for composting. Use the observations to select the site for a full-size compost bin and set up a composting system with the support of the school's kitchen staff. Using ingredients from the school garden or grown locally, plan and cook a healthy meal. Ensure that the recipe is balanced and includes ingredients from a range of food groups. Find out the minimum number of food miles it is possible to use to make the meal. Compare this with food eaten during World War II.

Third and fourth levels – An outdoor performance Find an outdoor place such as a community woodland or local beach that is keen to attract more visitors. Challenge groups to rebrand and promote it in a new way through a performance. Design the performance as a guided walk with groups taking inspiration from their specific area, using music, visual art, the spoken word and other forms to create site-specific experiences. A focus could be made on spirituality and religion, with the English and art departments working to display key concepts, ideas and values within the performance. The business department can assist pupils in marketing the performance to parents and the local community. Learners can explore the area looking for 'found objects' such as attractive pebbles, sticks, or flotsam and jetsam. Create works of art which can be displayed along the route of the performance to add additional interest.

Helpful links to support Interdisciplinary learning

Early

- Place names of Scotland - <http://bit.ly/2PEV5rJ>
- Colours - <http://bit.ly/3cgo7FO>
- Going out to play with Fred the Ted - <https://creativestartlearning.co.uk/resources/> click on drop down menu for resource pack
- Sensing the World - <https://bit.ly/3otnXPU>

First

- Place names of Scotland - <http://bit.ly/2PEV5rJ>
- Plastic Investigators - <https://bit.ly/3qAdfsB>
- Les Trois Petit Cochons - <http://bit.ly/3chBx4j>
- Outdoor Journeys - <https://www.outdoorjourneys.co.uk/>

Second

- Place names of Scotland - <http://bit.ly/2PEV5rJ>
- Scottish Forestry suggest IDL study of What is a woodland? Which is good for first/second level considering sustainable forest management, using local sites to discover Scottish woods/forests and link to DYW and land based jobs. Lantra has some useful resources to support - <https://www.lantra.co.uk/> Scottish Forestry resources which can support include: Wolf brother's wild woods – <http://bit.ly/38niogg>
- Climate Change materials - <http://bit.ly/3qCxLYu>
- Water - <http://bit.ly/3cgo7FO>

Helpful links to support Opportunities for personal achievement

Early

- RSPB Wild Challenge <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/schools-wild-challenge/>
- Little Feet Challenge - <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/walk-to-school/early-years>
- Green Tree Schools Awards - <https://bit.ly/3gsEHnK>
- Crest Awards - <https://www.crestawards.org/which-level>

First

- The Big Pedal Challenge - <https://bit.ly/3owqUPA>
- Walk to School Week - <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/walk-to-school/primary-schools>
- Junior Award Scheme Schools is similar to Duke of Edinburgh Award but aimed at younger children - <https://www.jasschools.org.uk/>
- Crest Awards - <https://www.crestawards.org/which-level>

Second

- The John Muir Award - <http://bit.ly/30tY4Wb>
- Heritage Hero Awards - <http://bit.ly/3ck7pFG>
- Walk to School Week - <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/walk-to-school/primary-schools>
- Crest Awards - <https://www.crestawards.org/which-level>

Helpful links to support Ethos and life of school as a community

Early

- With parents and members of your local community organise a one planet picnic to hold in the school/ELC <https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/one-planet-picnic>
- Bookbug activities with parents and carers with an outdoor focus around literacy outdoors (e.g. campfires and reading). <https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/reading-and-stories/bookbug/bookbug-bags>
- Organise & run a 'litter pick' in school grounds. Resources can be found at <http://bit.ly/3rvnGxM>
- Trip with families to: Beecraigs, Almondell or Polkemmet Country Park - <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/ranger-service> or local walks in West Lothian - <http://bit.ly/3cgtlff>

First

- Green Gym Projects with TCV - <https://www.tcv.org.uk/scotland/>
- Sustainable Development Investigations - <https://bit.ly/3ouvFsV>
- Earth Hour - <https://www.earthhour.org/>
- Trip with families to: Linlithgow canal/barges - <https://bit.ly/2O9r6YN> or local walks in West Lothian - <http://bit.ly/3cgtlff>

Second

- Join the Great Science Share <https://www.greatscienceshare.org/> and share your "I wonder" about science outdoors.
- Host a foraging workshop - <http://bit.ly/3vacj0y>
- Exploring the outdoors with 'Know the code before you go' - <http://bit.ly/2OljgT>
- Trip with families to: Jupiter Artland - <https://www.jupiterartland.org/> or local walks in West Lothian - <http://bit.ly/3cgtlff>