



## Section 1 – Introduction

This policy is aimed at developing outdoor learning for all of the children in Bell's Brae Primary School.

### **What do we mean by Outdoor Learning?**

Outdoor Learning is a broad term that includes: outdoor play [learning through play], school grounds projects, environmental education, recreational and adventure activities, personal and social development, and more. The weather will not hinder classes from going outside therefore all children need to be equipped appropriately.

Outdoor learning can provide a dramatic contrast to the indoor classroom. There is strong evidence that good quality learning outside the classroom adds much value to classroom learning. It leads to a deeper understanding of concepts that span traditional subject boundaries and which are frequently difficult to teach effectively using classroom methods alone.

Direct experience outdoors is powerful, motivating and has impact and credibility. The results from outdoor learning can be instantaneous as well as active and therefore impact on behaviour as well as tapping into the learning styles of the more kinaesthetic learner. Through skilled teaching, outdoor experiences readily become a stimulating source of fascination, personal growth and can lead to breakthroughs in learning.

Active learning readily develops the learning skills of enquiry, experiment, feedback, reflection, review, communication, problem solving, an enterprising attitude and cooperative learning – to name only some of the benefits.

Outdoor Learning can help to bring learning alive. For that reason the outdoors can have an impact on areas of the curriculum as diverse as imaginative writing and personal and social development.

Outdoor learning also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

#### **Benefits of Outdoor Learning:**

- Outdoor learning helps to ensure that children are successful learners enabling children to develop knowledge and skills in ways that add value to their everyday learning experiences.
- Outdoor learning enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon young children's attitudes beliefs and self-perceptions. Outdoor learning contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem and self-sufficiency.
- Outdoor learning can have a positive impact upon children's behaviour.
- Outdoor learning contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a Healthy lifestyle.
- Outdoor learning has a positive impact upon children's personal and social development. It can also bring about community cohesion and allow children to develop as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to their wider community. It can create pride in the school and wider community and promote community involvement, renewing children's pride and creating a sense of belonging and responsibility.
- It raises learners' attainment, promotes and strengthens communication skills, team work and sense of cohesion.

## Section 2 – Rationale and aims

We believe that the outdoor learning environment has much to offer children. It can provide relevant, engaging experiences that support learning in all areas of the curriculum (appendix 1). These can be presented as building on existing outdoor play, transferring activities normally carried out indoors, school garden projects, environmental education, or off-site visits. Providing positive opportunities for active learning, the outside environment can promote skills of enquiry, problem solving, communication, co-operation, creativity and evaluation, therefore we seek to offer outdoor experiences that allow children to:

Find space to be alone or interact in social groups of different sizes

Plan, build, evaluate and sometimes demolish

Find similarities and differences, observe and classify

Be energetic, adventurous and assess risk

Make marks, use large scale media, be messy

Plant, grow and harvest

Hide, explore and discover

Investigate, make predictions, test theories

Imagine, pretend and reflect

Measure, locate, transport and record

Aims and Objectives of this policy:

- To raise the profile of Outdoor Learning.
- To empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing their minds and bodies to thrive.
- To encourage children to develop the skills to solve problems, developing resilient and reflective learners.
- To develop skills of communication, cooperation and collaborative learning.
- To provide a challenging, safe and secure environment within which children can take and manage risks.
- To encourage close links with parents and the school in celebrating our outdoor space and the rich learning that can take place within it.
- To encourage children to care for their environment.
- To ensure children are provided with a range of Outdoor Learning activities that promote the school's values of Learning, Safety, Respect, Enjoyment, Resilience, Confidence, Healthy, Caring, Responsible, Nurturing, Inclusive and Co-operation.
- To provide children at all stages in the school with opportunities to experience outdoor learning across the four contexts of learning- interdisciplinary studies, discrete curricular areas, personal achievement and Ethos and Life of the School.

### Section 3 –Resources and Activities

We aim to build a range of resources in the following area. Many of these exist within school already.

Sow and grow	Habitats	Eco-kits	minibeasts	weather
Windy days	Renewable energy	Large scale construction	Role play building site	Outdoor PE
Outdoor literacy	Outdoor maths	Outdoor clothing	Road safety	Outdoor music and movement
Bikes and trikes	Outdoor art	Music	Outdoor observation	

Outdoor Learning Boxes are available for staff to take outside. These contain a range of natural and bought items to enhance outdoor learning across the curriculum.

A new Polycrub is a positive addition to our outdoor area.

There are numerous outdoor learning ideas and free resources on the internet. The following websites provide good links:

<http://www.ltl.org.uk/ltlscotland/>

<https://outdoorclassroomday.com>

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/learning-kids/schools/Pages/stuff-to-do.aspx>

<http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/>

Further activity ideas and resource ideas can be found in the following folder:

\\Bbpsserver2\pool\Staff Pool\Teaching staff folder\Curriculum\Outdoor Learning

### Section 4 – Assessment and Recording

Good practice in assessing outdoor learning is no different from assessment elsewhere in school. Where possible activities should allow children to demonstrate “performance of understanding” i.e. they should be given tasks that show they can use what they have learned to:

- Generalise
- Apply exceptions
- Give explanations
- Make predictions
- Evaluate
- Find examples
- Find solutions
- List strategies or argue by analogy.

Assessment may be teacher lead, peer or self assessment. Most importantly it should be applied to determine next steps.

## **Section 5 – Supporting the Policy**

### **Outdoor Journeys**

Outdoor Journeys is an approach that enables pupils to learn about the people and place in which they live. By planning and undertaking local journeys, pupils are able to learn across the curriculum in manner that is active, holistic and contextualised. Staff are encouraged to take their classes on Outdoor Journeys. Appendix 2 contains guidance, a planning format and a risk assessment proforma to support this area.

#### **Parents**

Activities that involve off-site visits will be notified to parents. Standing permission applies to those in the immediate vicinity of the school i.e. the park or local walks, but permission slips will be issued for all visits that require transport.

#### **Health and safety**

All activities should be considered for a risk assessment, but only those which might deliver activities not normally undertaken in school should proceed to full risk assessment. Off site visits and any activity involving ponds, pools, the beach, streams etc must have an approved risk assessment before the activity goes ahead.

#### **Weather**

Shetland weather is nothing if not changeable. Children are encouraged to come to use with appropriate clothing and footwear. Extreme wind can bring other dangers against which children cannot be wrapped up such as flying debris, or simply being blown over. Decisions to work outdoors should assess this possibility and decide if the activity can go ahead on any given day. The sun too can bring its own concerns. Be aware of the slip-slap-slop code (Clothing, hats and sun cream). If the activity outdoors is prolonged ensure that children remain hydrated.

#### **Equality and inclusion**

We endeavour to ensure that all children whatever their abilities are able to play and explore outdoors within the school grounds and further afield. Activities are not offered on the basis of gender and we try to balance out over time the specialist visits offered to children. At all times we aim to respect cultural issues such as dress and inappropriate off-site visits. If we have overlooked an aspect of this kind when planning a visit we will make alternative arrangements for individuals as soon as we become aware of it.

## **Section 6 –Monitoring and Review**

The policies and practices outlined in this document will be review every at least every three years by school staff. Normal mechanisms of school self evaluation will be used to assess the provision, record performance and identify areas for improvement. All staff have a contribution to make in this respect.