



Outdoor Learning Policy

The wellbeing of our school community is at the heart of all that we do and is linked to our Core Values of Belief, Effort, Community & Kindness. These values help us to better understand and improve the wellbeing of our school community with this policy, and all others, being consistent in promoting those values.

Approved by: [Name]

Date: [Date]

Last reviewed on: [Date]

Next review due by: [Date]

Outdoor learning is an umbrella term for actively inclusive facilitated approaches that uses activities and experiences in the outdoors which lead to learning, increased health and wellbeing and environmental awareness. Experiences can be physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual.

It covers Sports, adventurous activities, nature studies, expeditions, Field studies, curriculum work , play , group tasks , ropes and challenge courses , forest schools, arts , bushcraft, green crafts and conservation . It can take place in school grounds, outdoor classrooms , chosen venues, parks and gardens , allotments , beaches , woodlands and forests , grasslands and meadows

Reasons to plan for consistent use of outdoor learning across all classes:

Children make connections between the classroom and the real world.

Provides stimuli for creative thinking and problem solving skills.

Children find it relevant and learn life skills

The multisensory approach to learning can be a more relaxing environment for many learners

Encourages risk taking

Gives pupils more fresh air and opportunities to be active

Reduces stress when they are in nature , being outdoors releases dopamine and serotonin

Pupils can move away from conflict with peers more easily in an outdoor environment

Allows pupils opportunities to think for themselves and extend their independent learning skills , learning can be formal and informal

Allows pupils to become ambitious and skilful learners and encourages metacognition

Promotes pupils physical skills and wellbeing in a highly purposeful manner

Helps to develop pupils curiosity and independent skills in a meaningful and creative manner

Develops skills such as Co-operation , leadership, resilience , creativity , thinking , physical

Develops pupils relationship with themselves and others , helps informed decision making and conflict resolution

Develops and understanding of the environment , science and technology and raise environmental awareness and appreciation

Creates disposition of being ethical capable learners who challenge themselves and learn resilience

Develops Empathy , respect and curiosity and prepares pupils for the real world

Aspects to consider for your setting :

Curriculum integration – how does it fit in , what is your plan ?

Safety guidelines, what is needed and how to communicate risk assessment etc

Staff training, who is trained , who else needs training?

Resources and equipment, what do you have , what do you need , what would you like to aim for ?
How will you keep resources in good condition and relevant ?

Partnerships and community engagement- who can help you with leaning in the outdoors , where can you ask for resources and help ?

Inclusion and accessibility- how will you make sure all learners have access to outdoor learning and will you provide extra access for those who need it the most ?

Communication and parents ,how do you let parents and the community know the value you place on outdoor learning and what it gives the pupils

Equal opportunities, how will you make sure all pupils of all ages and abilities are equally involved , how will you make sure disadvantaged pupils don't miss out or those with behavioural challenges ?

Social cohesion- will you look to work with partners, develop the social area around the school , give access to those who can benefit from it and encourage parental involvement in the outdoors .

Learning outside the classroom door, do all your classes have space outside them , within range of supervision and safe for pupils to take their learning outside regularly ?

Learning in school grounds , are your grounds safe , well equipped and well maintained

Learning in the local area, what areas do you have access to and what can they be used for across differing age ranges , can you timetable visits over the pupils school journey?

Learning in and about and for the outdoors can be any of the following or a combination:

Teaching new skills through directed activities, e 'g literacy , numeracy , digital or Welsh activities done in the outdoors by teaching . supporting , showing and explaining e, g visitors working with them on the environment , PE leaders , science and technology activities, maths problem solving

Reinforcing skills through more independent activities such as pupils accessing similar activities as above but in a more independent way , using these skills in other contexts and areas by adults supporting , challenging pupils to extend themselves, modelling, reinforcing ideas and vocabulary and naming skills e.g. carrying out an activity modelled independently , following up on things learned , continuing a project with their own ideas , using skills learned in the class to measure , record , plan and observe nature

Using skills independently with adults only intervening and prompting when purposeful , using skills across the continuous provision outdoors , using the skills in new ways of their own choice , using their imagination to shape what they do and problem solving naturally e.g. solving an outdoor challenge , finding ways to overcome problems set , deciding what and how to find things out outdoors , using the environment independently and selecting own resources.

92% of schools said outdoor learning improved pupils mental health

72% of schools said it improves staff wellbeing

Things to try:

Investigating trees and leaves and fruits

Making a sustainable garden

Growing veg and produce

Keeping animals like chickens

Studying rivers and ponds

Doing movement and yoga

Enjoying forest school activities

Team building challenges

Planning for grounds maintenance

Orienteering

Daily mile

Playtime games

Litter pick

Natural art

Photography

Literacy about nature

Mapping and measuring

Investigating the weather and climate

Looking at growth cycles

Planning better outdoor areas

It increases engagement and motivation

Resources we have in Flintshire

Pippa Jagger contact for Greenfield valley and Wepre park :

Greenfield ponds

Wepre woods and brook surveys

Orienteering course at Wepre

Victorian school at Greenfield

ID sheets for pond dipping

Polly snape – North Wales outdoor learning

Book a day at your school.

Variety of training courses

Practitioner courses at all levels

Can run from Wepre or their woodland site or at your school.

Natural resources Wales have many courses for teachers on thematic work in the outdoors covering a range of the new curriculum.



Version	From	To
1	April 2024	