



Outdoor Learning Policy

Rationale

At Backworth Park Primary School we believe that outdoor learning encompasses many different experiences in the outdoors: from visits, residentials and outdoor PE to Nature School. In fact, any experience outdoors that allows children to engage and learn in a different way. 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 at Backworth Park Primary School contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem, self-sufficiency, and good behaviour for learning. Outdoor learning also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges, and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

Outdoor Learning can help to bring many school subjects alive as they focus on real results and consequences. For that reason, the outdoors can have an impact on areas of the curriculum as diverse as imaginative writing and moral education. It promotes children's understanding of the importance of developing a Healthy lifestyle. It can also bring about community cohesion and allow children to develop as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to their wider community.

Aims

Outdoor learning can enhance a child's personal, social, and emotional wellbeing and development.

Research suggests the need to re-engage learners with the world as they experience it – 'experiential' or 'authentic' learning. It provides a framework for learning that uses the child's own environment to enable them to construct their own learning. Quality learning experiences in 'real' situations have the capacity to raise achievement across a range of subjects and to develop better personal and social skills. When these experiences are well planned, safely managed and personalised to meet the needs of every child they can:

- Improve academic achievement.
- Provide a bridge to higher order learning.
- Develop skills and independence in a widening range of environments.
- Make learning more engaging and relevant to young people.
- Develop active citizens and stewards of the environment.
- Nurture creativity.
- Provide opportunities for informal learning through play.
- Reduce behaviour problems and improve attendance.
- Stimulate, inspire, and improve motivation.
- Develop the ability to deal with uncertainty.
- Provide challenge and the opportunity to take acceptable levels of risk.

Implementation

- From Nursery to Year 6, children are provided with opportunities for both formal and informal outdoor learning and play.
- In Early Years, free flow enables children to choose to use the outdoor areas throughout the day, regardless of the weather. Nursery/ Reception classes have outdoor clothing to be used when appropriate. Outdoor learning in Early Years is largely led by the children's interests.
- In Early Years, the outdoor areas are well resourced, and these resources are easily accessible to children.
- From Year 1 to Year 6, activities using the outdoors, including Nature School sessions are becoming more integrated into the curriculum.
- The outdoor area is used as a context and a natural resource for learning.
- Throughout the school year extra-curricular clubs use the outdoor environment to provide a range of experiences for all children.
- Children are provided with a range of experiences that help develop key life skills, including personal learning, enquiry and thinking skills.
- Children can explore, grow, and nurture plants through class-based work.
- Children can engage with imaginative, investigative, and creative play using the outdoors.
- The locality around school harbours opportunities within relatively accessible distance (e.g., the local park). Teachers plan for children to develop their history, geography, and environmental skills through exploring their local environment.
- A residential trip is a powerful way of developing key life skills, building confidence, self-esteem, communication, and team working.
- Termly trips out are planned in every year group to develop cultural capital.

Where does outdoor learning take place at Backworth Park Primary School?

On the school grounds

On the extensive green areas around the school and in the 'Forest School' Area. The children in Nursery and Reception have full-time access to the outdoor area. The two hard-core playground areas, the MUGA grassed area and the field are well utilised spaces.

In the local area

We use local features to examine the land use in our community. For example, we have the wagonways, rising sun country park and Holywell dene. Here, amongst other things, they examine the local environment for history and geography projects.

Road Safety projects – including walks in the local community and local nature parks and monuments.

Bikeability – Children will cycle around the local area, learning how to use roads and paths safely to travel.

Further afield

Within the school year children will visit a range of locations for educational visits where the outdoor spaces are well utilised including:

- Whitley Bay Beach
- Fish Quay
- Newcastle City Centre
- Newcastle Ouseburn Farm

- Tyne Bridges

Residential locations

KS2 children complete a multi-day residential at Lockerbie which allows them to have daily access to the outdoors, developing physically, socially, and emotionally as they take part in obstacle courses, climbing and abseiling, orienteering and many other activities to interact with the outdoors.

Health and Safety

- Children are supported in taking risks within a safe and secure environment.
- The outdoor area offers challenge and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others.
- Teachers ensure that all outdoor learning activities conform to the School's Health and Safety Policy.
- The school applies robust safety to effectively manage and minimise risks in all activities and trips.
- Risk Assessments are always carried out when visiting places off site or for activities within the school environment which have potential risks.

Allergies

- All staff are aware of pupils with allergies. Any activity which could potentially bring a child into contact with an allergen is risk assessed and measures are put in place to ensure no child is put at any risk.

Resources

- Large trim trail.
- Science equipment
- Selection of wood for construction and small art and design projects.
- Gardening tools.

SEND/Inclusion

Children who are identified as being on the SEND register will be given support as identified on their Individual Support Plans. A variety of support materials are available from the SENDCo. Children are supported in the first instance through quality first teaching. Lessons will be differentiated in line with the individual needs of the children. All provision for pupils with SEND is in line with the school's SEND policy.

Monitoring and Assessment

- Assessment of the children's learning is valued equally indoors and outdoors.
- As the outdoors can enrich all areas of the curriculum, subject leaders monitor planning to see how the outdoors is being used to support the teaching of their subject.
- Outdoor learning throughout the curriculum will be monitored on a termly basis by the teacher responsible for leading outdoor learning.