

Outdoor Learning Policy

February 2023



Why do we take learning outdoors?

Being outdoors and active is a vital part of growing up and living a healthy and fulfilled life. Outdoor learning benefits children, young people and adults alike. It engages our hearts through what we feel and the emotions we experience; our heads through what we think, see and say; and our hands through our physical experiences including how we move through the space the outdoors provides.

The research evidence is clear: outdoor learning motivates and engages learners, improves behaviour and attainment and meets the needs of different learners.

In short, taking learning outdoors is part of good teaching and learning.

Insch School Vision: ***Reach for the Stars***

Our Values: ***Aiming High, Being Safe, Showing Respect, Valuing our Community***

What is the national policy?

In Scotland it is the right of every child to have a series of planned, routine, and progressive outdoor learning experiences, throughout their time at school. We believe that our children are healthier and happier, connect with nature and sustainability, and have a deeper and more engaging learning experience when they are outdoors. Outdoor learning sits within the cross-cutting theme of 'Learning for Sustainability' and is also a context for delivery of all areas of the curriculum. Our school is inspected on our outdoor learning and play provision, all teachers are expected to teach outdoors regularly, and ultimately it is a right for all our learners.

Outdoor learning will be accessible by all, and our staff will consider individuals when they plan experiences outdoors. This is in line with our policy on Accessibility.

What is outdoor learning?

Outdoor learning can happen anywhere – from the school grounds to local greenspace, from the high street to national parks; from outside your front door to the rest of the world. It can be outdoors in nature, or indoors at a cultural or educational facility. It is hard to confine outdoor learning, and therefore we consider anything beyond the school building to fall within the definition of outdoor learning.

All our outdoor learning experiences connect back to our curriculum and school ethos in very clear ways, and we assess and measure the benefit of learning outdoors as part of our practice.

What does this mean for pupils?

As part of our teaching provision, all children will benefit from regular, quality outdoor learning experiences. This means that they will be outdoors, in all seasons, in a variety of weathers and undertaking practical tasks.

We expect that our pupils are dressed to access outdoor learning. This includes practical footwear, a waterproof coat and an expectation that any clothing may on occasion get dirty.

Underlying this is our aim to provide as wide a set of experiences that we can for our children. We expect that for some children this will be an opportunity they have never had before, and which will open new opportunities in school and into life.

The frequency of outdoor learning will vary. We do however suggest endeavour to plan weekly outdoor sessions for our primary pupils.

Health and Safety

On occasion, pupils will have learning experiences which have an element of risk and challenge attached. We manage this carefully, preparing our learners for the real world by equipping them with the social, emotional and practical skills to manage risk and challenges for themselves. We strike a balance of considered risks and the benefit the learning experience brings.

We also expect that our learners are an active participant in keeping safe. Their behaviour and decisions have a direct impact on this, and we expect all our learners to behave responsibly in order to contribute to their own safety.

Values

Our outdoor learning practice and policy is also reflected in our **Play Policy**.

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