



Learning outside the classroom policy

Red Hall Primary School

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Signature of Chair of Governors:		

Introduction

Educational visits and learning outside the classroom are an integral part of life at Red Hall Primary School. We believe that all children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors and that it must be part of our broad and balanced curriculum so that children have first-hand experiences and the opportunity to take part in activities outside the classroom.

Definition

‘Learning Outside the Classroom is about raising achievement through an organised, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance. This is not only about what we learn but importantly how and where we learn.’ (DfES Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto 2006).

Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) is the use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning. It is about getting children and young people out and about, providing them with challenging, exciting and different experiences to help them learn. The places where learning happens can have a significant effect on how a child engages with a subject or an idea. LOtC can happen at almost any time and almost anywhere – outdoors or indoors: in the school grounds, on the high street, in the park, in museums and art galleries, on mountain tops and rivers or anywhere in the world.

Outdoor Learning does not have a clearly defined boundary, but it does have a common core in that Learning Outside the Classroom 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. Learning Outside the Classroom can help to bring learning alive. For that reason the outdoors can have a significant impact on areas of the curriculum as well as attainment and enjoyment. LOtC also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

Aims of this policy

- To raise the profile of Learning Outside the Classroom and to provide high quality LOtC provision.
- To empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing them to thrive.

- To encourage children to develop the skills to solve problems, to develop resilience and to become 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, the local and wider communities 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 develop LOtC as an entitlement for children.
- To ensure the curriculum is designed so that it includes LOtC experiences for children.

Benefits of Learning Outside the Classroom

- LOtC helps to ensure that children are successful learners enabling them to develop knowledge and skills in ways that add value to their everyday learning experiences.
- LOtC enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon their attitudes, beliefs and self-perceptions.
- LOtC contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem, self-awareness and self-sufficiency.
- LOtC can have a positive impact upon children's behaviour.
- LOtC contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle.
- LOtC 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.
- LOtC raises attainment, promotes and strengthens communication skills, problem solving skills, leadership skills, team work and sense of cohesion.
 - LOtC broadens horizons and raises aspiration by enabling children to believe that they can achieve.

Embedded LOtC within the Curriculum

Teachers ensure LOtC opportunities are exploited by:

- Including LOtC within curriculum planning
- Planning makes use of cross curricular links
- Promoting Red Hall Values and our curriculum drivers
- Providing links with the local and wider community

- Communicating with parents and the wider community on the benefits of Learning Outside the Classroom
- Ensuring LOTC is valued and emphasis is provided on the benefits and the impact it has
- Being committed to continuously improve and review LOTC provision within the curriculum.

Inclusion

The **Equality Act 2010** defines several protected characteristics: disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and being on maternity leave; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. It is illegal to discriminate against someone because of these characteristics, and an employer or establishment must make reasonable adjustments to its facilities or services to include them.

Outdoor learning and off-site visits should be available and accessible to all, irrespective of any special educational or medical needs or protected characteristics. The principles of inclusion and equality should be promoted and addressed in policy and practice, ensuring:

- an entitlement to participate;
- accessibility through adaptation or modification, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services;
- integration through participation with peers.

Local Learning Area

As a school we have identified a local learning area. Activities which take place in the local area are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the school day. The boundaries of the local area are identified on a map (see attachment) and can be accessed by walking.

Operational procedures for the local learning area are in place to cover significant identified hazards including

- Slips, trips, falls and uneven surfaces.
- Being around members of the public
- Road traffic and crossing roads
- Weather conditions
- Supervision of children.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board will approve the Learning Outside the Classroom policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The Governors have delegated the responsibility for regular monitoring of the planning, management and delivery of LOTC and educational visits to the Headteacher, who will work in partnership with the EVC, Visit Leaders and other staff of the school to ensure that this policy is implemented correctly.

The Head Teacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the educational experiences provided are of a high quality, that they offer the best value and that they comply with health & safety and financial regulations. The Headteacher must also authorise all educational visits via the Dudley Council EVOLVE system before they can leave the site. The Head teacher is the Education visits coordinator (EVC)

The Headteacher will also:

- ensure that the protocols and procedures for the planning, management and delivery of LOTC experiences are consistent with the school policy and adopted guidance and recommendations.
- be aware that the appointment of an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is critical to the implementation of this guidance. The EVC should be appropriately competent to their role and should be allowed sufficient time to fulfil the role, including attendance at OEAP accredited training.
- assure the competency, experience and confidence of the visit leader to effectively supervise each educational visit.
- ensure that the Governing Body are regularly informed about the delivery of visits and outdoor learning and their contribution towards the schools effectiveness.
- have access to the expert advice of the Wiltshire Council LOTC Safety Adviser.
- approve the letter to be sent to parents.
- ensure that there updated Charging and Remissions Policy and Educational Visits Policy and Procedures.
- confirm the insurance policy covers the planned activities.

Visit Leader

The Visit Leader must be a school employee, who has overall responsibility for the planning, management, supervision and conduct of the visit and shall have regard to the health and safety of the group.

The Visit Leader is responsible for ensuring that each visit is carefully planned and a submission is prepared using the EVOLVE system which includes a specific risk assessment. All Visit Leaders will ensure that on the visit someone has a valid first aid qualification and that the first aid materials are carried with the group. They will also know how to access qualified first aid support as required.

The Visit Leader will:

- produce the EVOLVE submission for the trip.
- ensure that there are clear educational aims for the visit.

- take overall responsibility for the organisation, supervision and conduct of the visit and have an up to date knowledge of the Educational Visits Policy and Procedures.
- provide sufficient notice and ask the EVC for permission to organise the visit, ensuring that they have checked the requirements of the school calendar. In the case of higher risk visits (adventurous activities/visits to open water and farms) they require additional scrutiny and approval from the Dudley Council LOTC Safety Advisor, this should ideally be a minimum of 8 weeks prior to the start of the visit.
- research the costs of the visit and seek best value, confirming any costs being passed onto the students.
- draft the letter to parents and informed consent forms as required and pass onto the Headteacher for approval.
- check parental consent forms, medical and behaviour concerns of students attending the visit.
- complete a comprehensive risk assessment using the agreed school template, share with the EVC and upload to EVOLVE. The Visit Leader must have sufficient competence, experience and confidence to assess risks as they change throughout the visit and make decisions to stop activities if the risks become unacceptable. Where appropriate, the Visit Leader will endeavour to involve all of the adults involved in the visit and the students in the risk assessment process so that all involved can appreciate the risks involved and are aware of the control measures in place.
- as part of the risk assessment, the Visit Leader must determine the appropriate first aid requirements relative to the nature of the activity, the needs of the group and the extent to which the group will be isolated from the emergency services.
- ensure parents, accompanying staff and students are kept fully informed of visit arrangements and itinerary (and in the case of residential visits hold an information meeting for parents and a separate meeting for pupils and staff).
- ensure that all accompanying staff have a clear understanding of accident/emergency procedures – provide them with a visit information pack include: itinerary, register of students, all emergency contact details and procedures.
- ensure that all accompanying staff are fully briefed and clear about their specific duties, responsibilities and act in the same way as a careful parent ‘in loco parentis’.
- ensure adequate first aid has been considered and that first aid kits and individual students’ medical kits have been taken along as appropriate. Inform all staff on the visit should be aware of who is responsible for first aid.
- carry copies of all supporting documentation on the visit, e.g. itinerary, consent forms, emergency contacts, special medical and/or dietary requirements and ensure that copies of the

details are left with the school office and with the emergency contacts where the visit is outside school hours or is a residential.

- take a charged mobile phone on the visit and ensure that the school office/Headteacher knows the number.
- report any accidents and incidents that occur during the visits in accordance with the school Health and Safety policy.
- ensure they understand child protection and safeguarding issues.
- complete an evaluation of the visit on EVOLVE.

Additional staff and volunteers

According to the supervision requirements of each visit, the Visit Leader will assemble a team of supervising adults to help manage the conduct and health, safety and well-being of the whole group. This team can include both employed staff of the school and volunteer adults.

Staff on school-led visits act as employees of the school, whether the visit takes place within normal school hours or outside those hours. They must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent/carer would do in the same circumstances. Staff and all other adults assisting the Visit Leader must consent and agree that the Visit Leader has full authority to reasonably direct their supervision of the students.

Members of the supervising team will be sufficiently briefed as to their roles and responsibilities throughout the visit so that they are able to support the Visit Leader effectively. This may include contributing to the planning and preparation for the educational visits, the organisation of risk management and specific individual responsibilities, especially if the visit involves an extended day or residential experience. This briefing should empower them to intervene appropriately with the group or an individual young person for safety or behaviour management purposes.

Additional members of staff and other adults taking part in educational visits will:

- assist the Visit Leader to ensure the health, safety, welfare, pastoral care and supervision of the students on the visit.
- be clear about their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in a visit.
- ensure they understand child protection and safeguarding issues.
- take care of their own Health and Safety and that of others on educational visits.
- bring to the Visit Leader's attention any deficiencies in the arrangements that may create hazards

Students

All students participating in educational visits will:

- follow the school Behaviour Policy as this still applies during an educational visit.
- understand that they have a responsibility to avoid unnecessary risks.
- follow the instructions of the Visit Leader and other members of the school staff
- behave sensibly at all times, keeping to any agreed visit code of conduct.
- inform a member of staff if they become aware of any significant hazards or if there is anything that they are concerned about.

Parents, Carers and Guardians

Parents, carers and guardians of students involved in the educational visit should:

- understand that they have an important role in deciding whether any educational visit or activity is suitable for their son/daughter.
- inform the Visit Leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit.
- provide an emergency contact number on which they will be available at all times.
- sign the annual consent form.

Insurance

The school's insurance policy includes travel cover for school visits both in the UK and abroad. If planning an educational visit which includes a hazardous activity, please check with the Headteacher, as additional insurance cover may be required.

Assessing venues and providers

All venues for trips must be visited prior to the trip taking place by the Visit Leader. Visit Leaders will endeavour to work with Providers who hold a Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge as this provides credible assurances of health and safety management systems and the quality provision.

Emergency procedures and incident reporting

- The school will appoint a member of the Senior Leadership Team as the emergency school contact for each visit. All major incidents should immediately be related to this person, especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention.
- The Group Leader will leave full details of all pupils and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency school contact, including the home contact details of parents/guardians and next-of-kin, as appropriate.
- All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit will be reported back through the school systems.

· The school will have emergency funding available to support the Group Leader in an emergency.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by Head teacher and EVC lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by Head teacher and Red Hall's Governors.