

## Potters Gate CE Primary School and St. Andrew's Infant School

### Policy for Learning Outside the Classroom

Review Period:	3 Years
Next Review Due:	May 24
Governor Lead	
Staff Lead	Catherine Floyd

#### Intent

At Potters Gate and St Andrew's we believe that Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) increases fitness levels and raises levels of vitamin D, along with improving children's educational development and wellbeing. This is even more the case following COVID-19 Pandemic. For health and ongoing safety a significant proportion of the weekly timetable will be allocated to learning outside the classroom.

A growing body of evidence suggests that LOtC can boost children's welfare and their performance at school. Research suggests that spending time interacting with nature can reduce stress among young people, and boost their creativity and problem-solving skills. Research indicates that students taking part in an environment-based education programs report increased levels of motivation.

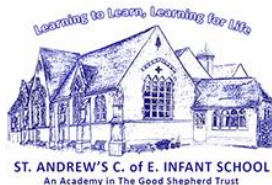
There are also untapped benefits for children with special educational needs: contact with nature can reduce symptoms of attention deficit disorder in children.

"Learning is not the product of teaching. Learning is the product of the activity of learners." – **John Holt**

**Education research by King's College London** found children who spend time learning in natural environments "perform better in reading, mathematics, science and social studies" and that exploring the natural world "makes other school subjects rich and relevant and gets apathetic students excited about learning".

#### Aims and objectives

LOtC 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 reinforcing cross-curricular links.



It can provide a dramatic contrast to the indoor classroom. Having direct experience of the outdoors can be motivating and stimulating therefore having a positive impact on a child's learning.

Active learning readily develops the learning skills of enquiry, investigation, communication, problem solving, evaluation and collaborative learning.

#### The aims of Outdoor Learning are:

- \* To develop LOTC as an entitlement for all young people.
- \* To ensure high-quality provision through LOTC experiences.
- \* To deliver a wide range of progressive and frequent LOTC activities for all year groups.
- \* To provide young people with LOTC experiences that promote personal development and well-being.
- \* To design the curriculum so that it includes progressive experiences for all young people.
- \* To improve the effectiveness of LOTC (e.g. through better planning)

#### Implementation

LOtC possibilities will be considered throughout our planning using it to ensure that it enriches the children's learning.

#### We will:

- \* ensure that the outdoor space harnesses the special nature of the outdoors.
- \* ensure that our outdoor area and the resources in it are flexible and versatile to support our skills based curriculum.
- \* ensure that the outdoor area is safely maintained.
- \* support inclusion and meet the needs of all children.
- \* enable children to have access to the school garden and grounds on a regular basis. Children in the Foundation stage should be enabled to access their outdoor learning areas daily.
- \* ensure that children enjoy energetic activities outdoors and the feeling of well-being it brings.
- \* enable children to appreciate the beauty of nature and understand the need to look after our environment.

#### Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) in the curriculum

The use of LOtC will be encouraged and developed in all areas of the curriculum across the school. Teachers will be encouraged to think creatively in their planning to stimulate children's learning in the Outdoor Learning environment.

We will embrace the seasonal changes as a learning tool rather than a restriction on LOtC possibilities. Opportunities for LOtC beyond the boundaries of the school grounds will be encouraged to support the curriculum as we offer a wide range of affordable field trips locally and further afield as well as residential opportunities which every child is entitled to participate in. These trips and visits embeds the children's learning and enhances the curriculum.

#### Inclusiveness when doing Outdoor Learning

We believe that all pupils should be able to have equal access to educational activities, in all areas. This enables children to develop a sense of worth and well-being. Each child's individual needs will need to be assessed when planning activities and individual risk assessments will be submitted when necessary.



## **Impact**

Assessment of the children's learning will be valued equally indoors and outdoors and should be part of the same process. The Outdoor Learning curriculum leaders will support curriculum leaders to develop and monitor the impact it has on their subject areas.

## **Trips and Risk Assessments**

"Advocates for children's play assert that active outdoor play always involves some risk, but that the risk are greatly outweighed by the health and development benefits." – **Gill, 2009**

When planning trips and visits a risk assessment is always completed and, where appropriate, individual ones for children with additional needs.

Risk assessments for trips and visits are always submitted to Evolve.

Risk assessments have also been completed for Forest School and the LOtC activities that take part on our school grounds such as pond dipping and orienteering.

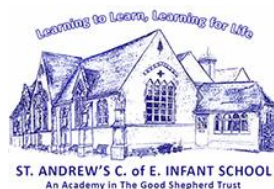
## **Forest School**

"Forest School is an inspirational process, that offers ALL learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.

Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education." **Forest School Association**

We are very lucky at Potters Gate to be able to offer all our KS1 and KS2 children the opportunity to experience the benefits of Forest School. During half-termly blocks, the children develop skills in a wide range of activities including fire lighting, cooking, tool work, den building, games and craft.

The sessions aim to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners. It offers the children the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves. It also supports our Christian values and our school learning skills.



The children are inspired to explore their environment, love the outdoors and develop invaluable skills to prepare them for their lives ahead which has a positive impact on our pupils.

### **Awards**

The school will participate in a number of awards to engage and encourage learners and develop their knowledge including John Muir Award, Woodland Trust Award, RSH awards and other local and national schemes.