



Danesholme Infant Academy.

'Develop, Inspire, Achieve'.

Outdoor Learning Policy 2018

Danesholme Infant Academy

OUTDOOR LEARNING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Our outdoor learning policy aims to foster children's love of learning. At Danesholme Infant Academy we believe that all children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. We further believe that it is important to enable children to use the outside environment as a context for learning.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY OUTDOOR LEARNING?

Outdoor Learning 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 more. Outdoor Learning does not have a clearly defined boundary but it does have a common core.

Outdoor learning 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 – to name only some of the benefits.

Outdoor Learning can help to bring learning alive. For that reason the outdoors can have an impact on areas of the curriculum as diverse as imaginative writing and personal and social development. Outdoor learning also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR LEARNING.

- 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 enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon young children's attitudes beliefs and self-perceptions. Outdoor learning contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem and self-sufficiency.
- Outdoor learning can have a positive impact upon children's behaviour.
- Outdoor learning contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a Healthy Active lifestyle.

- Outdoor learning 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 academy and wider community and promote community involvement, renewing children's pride and creating a sense of belonging and responsibility.
- It raises learners' attainment, promotes and strengthens communication skills, team work and sense of cohesion.
- There is clear evidence that boys in particular are more active in their learning in an outdoor environment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY.

- To raise the profile of Outdoor Learning.
- To empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing their minds and bodies to thrive.
- To encourage children to develop the skills to solve problems, developing resilient and 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 and the academy in celebrating our outdoor space and the rich learning that can take place within it.
- To encourage children to care for their environment.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We will support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. Children will be taught to manage risks. It is important to ensure that the outdoor environment offers challenges and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others. Outdoor learning opportunities will be grasped when available and teachers will assess risk on an on-going basis.

In the first instance the academy's policies relating to Health and Safety and Risk Assessment should be referred to and applied prior to any outdoor learning activity that may require additional support beyond the reasonable activities one would normally apply within the classroom. It is also important that the academy applies robust safety measures to effectively manage and minimise risks. It is equally important, however, that all involved, including parents acknowledge that a degree of residual risk remains. We therefore discuss with parents their views regarding outdoor learning – and the degrees of risk that apply to the varying activities.

Our children are taught to manage risks in regard to outdoor learning. All Children are regularly reminded about the importance of staying safe. 'Be Safe' is a school expectation and children are reminded of the importance of keeping themselves and members of the school community safe.

The following expectations are understood by all children . There is a shared understanding of how pupils safeguard themselves and others when undertaking outdoor learning.

Outdoor Learning is an important part of our learning journey.

- We must uphold our academy expectation 'Be Safe' at all times when we participate in outdoor learning.
- We must stay with our group.
- We must always ensure that we close all doors behind us.
- We must never open the gates or doors to visitors.
- We must be sensible and ensure that we achieve our learning objectives.

Only our teachers are allowed to open padlocked gates.

If we follow the expectations above, we will Enjoy Learning and Be Safe.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION.

Assessment of the children's learning will be valued equally indoors and outdoors and should be part of the same process.

MANAGING THE DELIVERY OF OUTDOOR LEARNING.

Through the monitoring of teaching and learning e.g. forward planning meetings, classroom observation, teachers' self-evaluations, summative assessment records and other academy procedures we closely monitor the use of outdoor learning as a key element of the learning experience at Danesholme Infant Academy. We provide support and professional development to enable staff to feel confident developing the expertise or knowledge base to adapt their practice to include opportunities for learning beyond the confines of the classroom.

We encourage children to be more resilient about weather conditions.

OUR COMMITMENT TO OUTDOOR LEARNING.

We advocate that the pace of learning can be enhanced by using the outdoors and that children who may find the classroom too constraining will perform and behave better outdoors, reducing the time spent on explanation and behaviour management. There is clear evidence that boys in particular, are more active in their learning in an outdoor environment.

The Academy will communicate the benefits to parents and the wider community of outdoor learning so that there is a greater understanding of its value and importance and provide a greater awareness of the safety standards the academy adopts.

WHERE SHOULD OUTDOOR LEARNING TAKE PLACE?

The academy grounds

The local environment

The locality around the Academy harbours a wealth of opportunities within relatively accessible distance. Learners can develop their skills to explore their local environment.

Places further afield

We actively encourage teachers to plan opportunities for children to engage in learning beyond the school grounds. Each year group has a planned programme of educational visits which complement and extend learning. These also support our work in developing enterprise education and our desire to develop more business links.

These are planned into all aspects of the curriculum and, by taking learners beyond their familiar environment, stimulate their curiosity and imagination and motivate children in a powerful way.

RESIDENTIAL PLACES.

Staying away from home is a powerful way of developing key life skills, building confidence, self-esteem, communication and team working, for example. For instance, staying at an outdoor and adventure centre or taking part in academy sleep-overs, provides children with an opportunity to widen their range of experiences and find new skills and interests in which they may excel.

CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS.

Outdoor learning can also overlap with the teaching of life skills. At Danesholme Infant Academy we will be supporting our children by using life skills training as a motivational tool, encouraging our pupils to use a range of interdisciplinary skills to meet certain targets and objectives.

ABLE CHILDREN.

Outdoor learning offers opportunities to including personal research and develop a personal understanding of their place in the natural world, further developing an understanding of learning processes, enquiry and thinking skills; and that deepen and enrich subject learning.

Outdoor Learning acts as a bridge to higher order learning and opportunities to challenge misconceptions and ways of thinking.

CHILDREN'S ENTITLEMENT.

At Danesholme Infant Academy we will ensure that our children will:

- take every opportunity to work in the outdoor environment – for cross curricular work.
- take part in a minimum of two outdoor maths sessions per week – using Maths a Day as a stimulus.
- take part in Active Science lessons at least weekly.
- have an opportunity to take part in a residential experience where they can stay away from home for at least one night in Year 2.
- have the opportunity to take part in at least 4 visits off- site every year. To include visits to the local environment, the local church and the local theatre.
- have access to an after school outdoor learning club.