



## Outdoor Learning Policy

### *Table of Changes*

Date	Section of Policy	Amendment
June 2023	Page 4	Changed residential venue from Bendrigg to overnight camp experience at school.
June 2023	Page 4	Created Assessment section
June 2023	Impact	Added Appendix 1 from Mind.org.uk

**Date of Policy:** January 27<sup>th</sup> 2020

**To be reviewed:** Annually

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies: Teaching and Learning policy, Assessment and Recording Policy, Sensory Policy, Science Policy and Communication Policy.

### **Overview**

At Delamere School 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.

Here at Delamere we are fortunate enough to have fantastic outdoor provision available for the children to access.

### **What do we mean by Outdoor Learning?**

Outdoor Learning is a broad term that includes: outdoor play [learning through play], 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, exploration, communication and problem solving– 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.

### **Objectives – Intention**

Our vision, our values and our rights underpin all of our policies and the education we deliver. Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that: “The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions that affect children”. This policy has been created to keep the children at Delamere School safe and happy.

- 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 school in celebrating our outdoor space and the rich learning that can take place within it.
- To encourage children to be aware of the natural environment

### **Strategies - Implementation**

- An appropriate range of teaching and learning strategies will be used in all outdoor learning lessons to capture pupils’ interest and to promote effective learning and progress.
- Teachers will use the schemes of work and guidelines, supported by an appropriate range of teaching and learning resources, to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of every child, ensuring that all pupils achieve high standards for their ability and make appropriate progress.
- Children will be encouraged to; ask questions, solve problems, discover new information, apply and consolidate their knowledge, skills and understanding through first-hand experience, investigations and practical work in a wide range of outdoor settings ..
- Teachers will make use of the immediate and wider environment to help pupils apply their current ,knowledge skills and understanding to see the relevance of outdoor learning to their own lives
- Teachers will assess children’s work in outdoor learning through formative and summative judgements by; asking questions, observing learners during lessons, observing pupils solving practical problems and listening to pupils’ discussions. Work will be recorded, observed and assessed regularly and frequently and pupils will be given appropriate, clear feedback which tells them how well they have done and what they need to do next to improve.
- The outdoor learning leader will support the teaching and learning of outdoor learning by; providing strategic leadership and direction, monitoring progress and standards across the school, reviewing and revising the outdoor learning policy, monitoring and supporting teachers in the teaching of outdoor learning , keeping staff up to date on new developments in all relevant areas of outdoor learning, monitoring the effectiveness of the planning and development of outdoor learning , auditing, monitoring the effective and appropriate use of resources and obtaining new resources.

## **Health and Safety**

We will support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. Pupils 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 both on a long term and short-term basis. Dynamic risk assessments will be carried out on a daily basis.

In the first instance the school'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 school 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 pupils are regularly reminded about the importance of staying safe.

Outdoor Learning is an important part of our learning journey and at Delamere we are fortunate to have fantastic outdoor learning provision.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

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

Through the monitoring of teaching and learning e.g. forward planning meetings, classroom observation, teachers' self-evaluations, summative assessment records and other school procedures we closely monitor the use of outdoor learning as a key element of the learning experience at Delamere School. 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.

## **Our Commitment to Outdoor Learning.**

We have recently invested in the development of an outdoor learning area for Forest School having employed a certified FS Leader.

We advocate that the pace of learning can be enhanced by using the outdoors and that children who have sensory difficulties will perform and behave better outdoors.

The school 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 school adopts.

We encourage children to be more resilient about weather conditions. We ask that parents provide appropriate outdoor clothing so that all pupils are able to experience different types of weather. We expect staff to ensure that they are appropriately dressed for all types of weather and to ensure that this is not a barrier to learning.

In the EYFS children are encouraged to access the outdoor area as much as possible and the learning outside is a continuation of the learning in the classroom.

In extreme weather we have uncover areas for shelter if required.

## **The local environment**

The locality around school harbours a wealth of opportunities within relatively accessible distance. Learners can develop their skills to explore their local environment. Classes use the local area on a regular basis to enhance the pupils learning, such as to develop communication skills, provide support on flexibility and life skills for the future.

### **Places further afield**

We actively encourage teachers to plan opportunities for children to engage in learning beyond the school grounds. We have two establishment minibuses and most of the classes use these on a weekly basis to plan educational visits around the local community to places such as the Trafford Centre, Dunham Massey, Longford Park, Garden Centres, local woodland and scout sites and many more.

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 adventure**

Staying away from home is a powerful way of developing key life skills, building confidence, self-esteem, communication and team working, for example.

We provide an annual overnight school camp for KS2 where the pupils camp on the school outdoor Learning field in tents and engage in a range of outdoor experiences.

Children in the EYFS / KS1 have the opportunity to visit the Children's Adventure Farm Trust for a vast range of experiences.

### **Assessment**

Pupils in the main body of school will usually already have an EHC Plan.

All pupils are assessed in their learning using P-levels via the B Squared assessment package.

Assessment outcomes are reported as part of the Annual Review process. Analysis of pupil progress data is carried out throughout the year.

Detailed observations, photographs and video evidence are recorded and form the basis of our evidence for our summative annual review reports. Interactive learning diary is used to record pupil observations.

### **Impact**

- Research from Mind.org.uk indicates how spending time in green spaces can improve mental health. (See information attached as Appendix1)
- Outdoor learning contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a Healthy lifestyle.  
Outdoor learning promotes physical activity and physical health.
- Outdoor learning enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon young children's self-esteem.
- Outdoor learning can have a positive impact upon children's behaviour.
- Outdoor learning can have a positive impact upon children's personal and social development. It supports children to develop as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to their wider community.
- Outdoor learning raises learners' attainment across the wider curriculum, including science, maths, communication, PHSE and more.

Ben Brown – Outdoor Learning teacher.