



LONG SUTTON COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL OUTDOOR LEARNING POLICY

Introduction

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of Outdoor Learning at Long Sutton County Primary School. 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.

This policy relates to all children at Long Sutton Primary School, including EYFS. This document is intended for all teaching staff and non-teaching staff, the school Governors, parents, inspection teams and LEA.

Our Aims and expectations for Outdoor Learning:

- To raise the profile of Outdoor Learning.
- To ensure outdoor learning takes place at least twice a week in each class within different subject areas.
- 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 spaces and the rich learning that can take place within it.
- To encourage children to care of their environment.

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.

In the first instance the schools 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.

The following expectations are understood by all pupils. 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 be safe at all times when we participate in outdoor learning.
- We must never go to the pond area without an adult!
- Only our teachers are allowed to open padlocked gates.

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

Inclusion

All pupils receive a wide range of opportunities to develop socially and emotionally as well as academically through outdoor learning and play. All areas of our school are accessible to all children.

The school grounds

We are exceptionally lucky to have extensive grounds which offer excellent opportunities for both formal and informal learning and play. The Long Sutton Primary school has three dipping ponds, four wooded areas, a spacious field, willow domes, a secret garden, two large outdoor areas for nursery and reception children as well as two playgrounds. School buildings also provide a useful resource for learning about energy use and waste, tying in well with the school's Eco-warriors and our efforts to have ecology and sustainability as an integrated part of our school and home life.

The local environment

The locality around school harbours a wealth of opportunities within a manageable 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 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. Teachers use Evolve to record and submit their risk assessments to the Head teacher two months before the trip.

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, through staying at outdoor and adventure centres such as Hilltop Outdoor Centre, provides children with an opportunity to widen their range of experiences and find new skills and interests in which they may excel. Risk assessments must be submitted to the local authority and the governing body two months before the trip for approval.

Resources

Elastic bands around the trees in KS1 playground.

Orienteering markers

Mile walk

Pond dipping

Table posts

Books:

Dirty Teaching, A Beginner's Guide to Outdoor Learning by Juliet Robertson (A copy is kept in the staffroom)

Review

The Headteacher, Subject Leader and Governing Body will review this policy every two years in consultation with staff.

Reviewed – May 2017

Review – June 2019

Nikki Dowding

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