



# Outdoor Learning Policy

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# BARLEY LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Outdoor Learning Policy

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**We aim to provide a wide range of learning experiences that help children to learn more, remember more and make connections across subjects. It is designed to empower our children to develop an understanding of their place in the world, and have a clear understanding of their heritage. This is strengthened through their knowledge of how past generations have shaped their present lives. To achieve this, the curriculum is centred on humanities topics, incorporating key quality texts and a ‘big question’ for each topic, which will reflect the diversity of the children in our school. The importance of celebrating the diversity of our pupils is key and is part of our curriculum at all ages. We aim for our children to become resilient, well-rounded individuals with a strong sense of self, developed through the culture and values of their community.**

**We are an inclusive school and provide access to all areas of the curriculum for all children with SEND. We aim for them to follow the curriculum for their year group, as much as possible as long as it is appropriate for their learning needs.**

We aim to **Believe in Ourselves, Learn together, Persevere and Succeed.** In order to achieve this, and to achieve national standards for all of our children, we aim that our children:

- Communicate clearly and respectfully
- Have a good knowledge of the world and how history has impacted on this
- Develop cultural appreciation through rich and valuable experiences
- Show resilience, especially when faced with new situations

Our curriculum is underpinned by our five core values: Compassion, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility and Resilience. We aim to widen the life experiences for our children, with a particular focus on cultural and creative experiences. It is our intention that we provide regular opportunities for our children to visit different places of interest, experience the work of different international artists and to visit museums and places within their locality. These are designed to be memorable learning experiences which help to build character.

## **Inclusion Statement**

Barley Lane is a multicultural school where all children and adults are valued and respected as individuals, irrespective of:

- race
- religion
- belief
- gender
- ability
- disability
- social circumstances
- sexual orientation
- age
- part time contract or trade union memberships

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and the emotional wellbeing of staff so that every child and adult feels welcomed, fulfilled, safe, secure and confident.

Children and adults must be aware of their responsibility to report incidents of inappropriate behaviour.

## **Rationale**

The Department for Children, Schools and Families has found that there is evidence that when learning outside the classroom, children:

- attain higher levels of knowledge and skills
- improve their physical health and increase their motor abilities
- socialise and interact in new and different ways with their peers and adults
- show improved attention and enhanced self-esteem and mental health
- change their environmental behaviours and their values and attitudes.

The outdoors can provide space and freedom for a type of learning that is difficult to replicate indoors. All children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. At Barley Lane Primary School we feel it is important to enable children to use the outside environment as a context for learning throughout the year.

## **Aims**

- To raise the profile of outdoor learning
- 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 empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing their minds and bodies to thrive
- To provide a safe and secure environment that they can take risks in
- To encourage children to care for their environment

## **Intent**

Outdoor Learning is a broad term that includes: learning through outdoor play, learning through planned curriculum lessons, involvement in school grounds projects such as developing planting areas, environmental education including issues related to sustainability, forest school skills and activities beyond the school grounds.

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

It can provide a dramatic contrast to the indoor classroom. Direct experience outdoors is often very motivating and can have a significant impact on a child. The effect of outdoor learning can impact on behaviour as well as tapping into the learning styles of the more kinaesthetic learner. Through skilled teaching and planning the provision of different 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, experimentation, personal reflection, communication, problem solving, an enterprising attitude and cooperative learning.

Outdoor learning can help to bring many school subjects alive as they focus on real results and consequences. For that reason the outdoors can have an impact on all areas of the curriculum. Outdoor learning also allows pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

There is strong evidence that good quality learning outside the classroom adds much value to classroom learning. It can lead to a deeper understanding of the concepts that span traditional subject boundaries and which are frequently difficult to teach effectively using classroom methods alone. Quality learning experiences in 'real' situations have the capacity to raise achievement across a range of subjects and to develop better personal and social skills. When these experiences are well planned, safely managed and personalised to meet the needs of every child they can:

- Improve academic achievement
- Provide a bridge to higher order learning
- Develop skills and independence in a widening range of environments
- Make learning more engaging and relevant
- Develop active citizens and stewards of the environment
- Nurture creativity
- Provide opportunities for informal learning through play
- Reduce behaviour problems and improve attendance
- Stimulate, inspire and improve motivation
- Develop the ability to deal with uncertainty
- Provide challenge and the opportunity to take acceptable levels of risk

## **Implementation**

Possibilities for outdoor learning will be considered throughout our planning, using it as a context and a natural resource for learning.

As a result of effective planning we will:

- ensure that Barley Lane's outdoor spaces are used effectively, offering the children what the indoors cannot - this should be the focus for outdoor provision, complementing and extending provision indoors.
- ensure that our outdoor areas and resources within them allow our children to choose, create and be in charge of their play environment.
- support inclusion and meet the needs of individuals, offering a diverse range of play-based experiences.
- enable children to access the school grounds on a regular basis.
- ensure that children enjoy energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of wellbeing that it brings, including opportunities to develop their large motor skills.
- plan for outdoor learning with the children to offer experiences which have meaning to them and which are also led by the child.
- enable children to work both individually and co-operatively outside.
- enable children to appreciate the beauty of nature, encouraging children to use a variety of natural resources.
- give children the opportunity to find a quiet space to relax.
- encourage children to enjoy and have fun outdoors in many contexts.
- work together (children, staff, parents, community) to create a better environment for all.
- organise and/or provide necessary resources (e.g. wellington boots, raincoats).
- develop a set of rules through discussion with children.
- enable children to use resources safely and to manage and use the space and freedom responsibly.
- help children to take responsibility and care for the outside environment and resources within it.
- encourage children to respect their environment and to care for living things.

## **Impact**

Through the monitoring of teaching and learning, for example through the scrutinising of planning, session observations, teacher's self-evaluation etc. we closely monitor the use of outdoor learning as a key element of the learning experience at Barley Lane Primary 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

Assessment of the children's learning will be valued equally indoors and outdoors and should be part of the same process. Subject leaders will be responsible for monitoring their subject area outdoors.

## **Health and Safety**

We will support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. 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. Risk assessments will be carried out where appropriate. School Health and Safety Policy will be followed.