



STREATHAM & CLAPHAM PREP SCHOOL

Outdoor Learning Policy

Person(s) responsible for this policy		Outdoor Learning Lead	
Last review by	Helen Loach	Review date	September 2024 (needs rereviewing when VB in post)
Date of next review		September 2025	

Introduction

Our outdoor learning policy aims to foster children's love of learning. At Streatham and Clapham Prep, 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], environmental education, recreational and adventure activities, educational visits, residential trips and personal and social development. 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. It also enables children to develop physically, emotionally, socially and academically. Teachers can see the benefits

through development of the creative curriculum as well as providing unique opportunities and supporting inclusion.

Outdoor Learning can help to bring learning alive. It is exciting and inspiring in a different way to indoor learning. It is a free and natural resource which broadens a child's experience and develops their understanding of the world in a different way. For that reason the outdoors can have an impact on many areas of the curriculum. Outdoor learning also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy:

- To raise the profile of outdoor learning across the school.
- To provide opportunities for all the girls to access a well-planned outdoor environment and to meet their needs and interests through a range of resources and experiences.
- To empower the girls to take ownership of their learning, allowing their minds and bodies to thrive.
- To encourage the girls to develop the skills of problem solving and develop resilient and reflective learners.
- To develop the girls' skills of communication, cooperation and collaborative learning.
- To provide a challenging, safe and secure environment within which the girls can take and manage risks.
- To encourage the girls to care for their environment.
- To make good use of the outdoor space so that the girls are enabled to learn by working on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors.
- To access the outdoor areas and activities in most types of weather provided that the girls are appropriately dressed.

Where should Outdoor Learning take place?

The school grounds

Both the Foundation Stage playground and Main playground provide opportunities for both formal and informal learning and play. The school building can also provide a useful resource for learning about energy use and waste for example – tying in well with the schools Eco school programme and our efforts to have ecology and sustainability as an integrated theme throughout our curriculum and evident in all aspects of the life and work of the school.

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.

Residential places

Staying away from home is a powerful way of developing key life skills, building confidence, self-esteem, communication and team work. By staying at an outdoor adventure centre such as Hooke Court

(Year 4), PGL (Year 5) and a trip to France in Year 6 the girls are provided with an opportunity to widen their range of experiences and find new skills and interests in which they may excel.

Implementation

- From Foundation stage to Year 6, the girls are provided with opportunities for both formal and informal learning and play.
- In Early Years, free flow enables the girls to choose to use the outdoor area throughout the day; Outdoor learning in Early Years is largely led by the child's interest.
- In Early Years, the outdoor area is fully resourced. All resources are fully accessible to the girls.
- From Years 1 – 6, activities using the outdoors are planned for. The outdoor area is used as a context and a natural resource for learning. Activities planned offer first-hand experience of the world outside the classroom, practical and relevant learning and progression across the key stages.
- The girls are provided with a range of experiences that help develop key life skills, including personal learning, enquiry and thinking skills.
- All girls have the opportunity to explore the outdoors and grow and nurture plants through science lessons, Eco club and exploration of green areas during playtime. A further forest school area was developed in 2021.
- They have the opportunity to engage with imaginative, investigative and creative play using the outdoor area, providing strong links to science and geography.
- Playtimes are organised with good adult/pupil ratio to ensure safety. Children to use the equipment to develop hand/eye co-ordination, co-operative play and gross motor skills.
- Trips out are regularly planned throughout the school. Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils are encouraged to take part in residential trips. This is a powerful way of developing key skills, building confidence, self-esteem, communication and working throughout every child's school life.

Resources

- Resources and ideas are in the Staff drive under 'Outdoor Learning'.
- We are currently, compiling a range of useful resources to use .e.g. tree stumps, tires, clip boards, rubber tubes etc.
- The outdoor learning leader supports practitioners in using learning outside of the classroom confidently and capably.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Assessment of the children's learning is valued equally indoors and outdoors and is part of the same process.
- As the outdoors can enrich all areas of the curriculum, subject leaders monitoring planning to see how the outdoors is being used the teaching of their subject
- Outdoor learning throughout the curriculum is monitored by the outdoor learner leader

Health and Safety

We will support the girls 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 girls how to be safe and aware of others. Outdoor learning opportunities will be grasped when available and teachers will assess risk. The girls will be regularly reminded about the importance of staying safe

and are taught to manage risks in regard to outdoor learning.

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.

Inclusion

All pupils receive a wide range of opportunities to develop socially and emotionally, as well as academically through outdoor learning and play.

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.