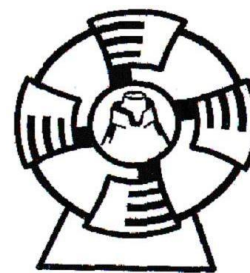


*Windmill Hill Academy*  
**Outdoor Learning Policy 2015**



## Windmill Hill Academy Policy for Outdoor Learning

### Vision

We are committed to the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto (DfES 2006)

**'We believe that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances'**

As policy reflects our commitment to the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto (DfES 2006). Which provides a powerful route to the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes in particular enjoying and achieving, staying safe and being healthy.

### Introduction

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

At Windmill Hill Academy we follow the definition by the DEFS (2006, p1) as 'The use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning'. These, are often the most memorable experiences for the learner, helping them to make sense of the world around them by making links between feelings and learning. 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. Outdoor learning influence our values and the decisions that we make which allow us to transfer learning experience outside to the classroom and vice versa.

Outdoor Learning can help to bring many school subjects alive as they focus on real results and consequences. Outdoor learning also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

### The value of outdoor Learning

- It is about raising achievement through an organised, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance
- Outdoor learning is a vehicle to develop the capacity to learn as it improves children's understanding, skills, values and personal development which can significantly enhance learning and achievement
- Enable children to construct their own learning and live successfully in the world that surrounds them
- Provide a deeper understanding of the concepts that span traditional subject boundaries
- Provide a context for learning in many areas, general, subject based knowledge, thinking and problem-solving, life skills such as co-operation and interpersonal communication

### What are the educational benefits

When these experiences are well planned, safely managed and personalised to meet the needs of every child they can:

- Improve academic achievements

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- Provide a bridge to higher order learning
- Develop skills and independence in a widening range of environments
- Make learning more engaging and relevant to children
- Develop active citizens and stewards of the environments
- Nature creativity
- Provide opportunities of 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
- Improve children's attitudes to learning

### **Aims**

Here at Windmill Hill Academy we set out to achieve these actions as set out by the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto (DfES 2006)

- We will provide all children with a wide range of experiences outside the classroom, including extended school activities and on or more residential visits
- We will make a strong case for learning outside the classroom, so there is widespread appreciation of the unique contribution these experience make to children
- We will offer learning experience of agreed high quality
- We will improve training and professional development opportunities for our school, our partner schools within the trust, and the wider workforce
- We manage visits safely and efficiently
- We will provide easy access to information, knowledge, expertise, guidance and resources
- We will identify ways of engaging parents, careers and the wider community in learning outside the classroom

### **Our Key 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

### **Where will outdoor learning take place**

Overall a wide range of environments can be used anywhere outside of the classroom such as

- The school grounds
- The local environment
- Places further afield
- Residential places

### **Policy into Practice**

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

We will:

- ensure that the outdoor space harnesses the special nature of the outdoors
- ensure that our outdoor area and resources within it are flexible and versatile, where children can choose, create, change and be in charge of their play environment.

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- support inclusion and meet the needs of individuals, offering a diverse range of play-based experiences.
- enable children to access the outdoor environment on a regular basis through a wide range of learning activities
- ensure that children enjoy energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of well-being that it brings, including opportunities to develop their large motor skills.
- observe, assess and record outdoor learning, ensuring that there is adequate provision for children to extend their learning.
- plan for outdoor learning with the children to offer experiences which have meaning to them and which are 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.

### **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.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

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

### **Policy Review**

It will be reviewed by the governing body as part of its schedule of policy review.

Written by Outdoor Learning Leader Miss Taylor

Date May 2015

To be reviewed May 2018