



Be the best you can be, every day.

North Downs Primary School Learning Outside the Classroom Policy

THIS DOCUMENT IS a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) at North Downs Primary School.

IT WAS DEVELOPED through a process of consultation with teaching and non-teaching staff and Governors.

IT HAS BEEN TAKEN FOR APPROVAL to the Governors in the Spring Term 2023.

THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED in the Spring Term 2025.

Our LOtC Policy aims to foster children's love of learning. At North Downs Primary, 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.

Benefits of LOtC:

- LOtC helps to ensure that children are successful learners enabling children to develop knowledge and skills in ways that add value to their everyday learning experiences
- It enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon young children's attitudes, beliefs and self-perceptions as well as their overall personal and social development
- It raises learners' attainment, promotes and strengthens communication skills, team work and sense of cohesion
- LOtC contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem and self-sufficiency
- Learning outside can have a positive impact upon the children's behaviour
- LOtC contributes towards the promotion and understanding of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle
- It also brings about community cohesion and allows the children to develop as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to their wider community.
- Creates pride in the school, the wider community and promotes a sense of belonging and responsibility

Aims and Objectives of this policy:

- To continually raise the profile of LOtC
- 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, therefore developing resilient and reflective learners

- To develop skills of communication, cooperation and collaborative learning
- To provide a challenging, safe and secure environment allowing children to take and manage risks
- To encourage close links with parents, local communities and the school in celebrating our outdoor space and the rich learning that can take place within it
- To encourage children to care for their environment

LOtC Planning:

The expectation is that teaching and learning across all subjects incorporates LOtC opportunities during each school half term.

Staff record on long term and medium term planning the opportunities for LOtC

Each class will have a timetabled LOtC areas during the week.

Due to the cross curricular creative curriculum we have, LOtC will be planned as part of all National Curriculum subjects/EYFS Curriculum and within a topic.

Teaching staff will ensure that there is adequate adult supervision for groups of children working outside and that LOtC is well planned. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure that a risk benefit assessment is in place for planned activities and individual children where health and safety may be at risk.

Pupil Behaviour.

The expectation of behaviour when completing LOtC is the same as when working inside the classroom

On occasions pupils who take part in LOtC are asked to sign a behaviour contract. The latter sets out clear behavioural expectations as well as sanctions. These are explained to the pupils prior to the LOtC starting. Parents are also invited to sign. They understand that, in exceptional circumstances, they may be required to travel to a venue in order to collect their child.

Where there is some doubt about including or excluding a young person on the grounds of their behaviour prior to a visit taking place, the following points should be considered:

- Identify the issue at the earliest stage of planning.
- Involve all interested parties.
- Establish a behaviour management plan with agreed action points that may enable inclusion on the visit.
- Provide an additional adult, such as a parent or support worker, with a specific brief to manage behaviour issues.
- Ensure that what is expected of staff is reasonable and within their competence.

EYFS Curriculum:

The children in the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) have daily access to the outdoors, in the safety of the Reception outside learning areas.

Health and Safety:

At North Downs Primary School 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, teaches the children how to be safe and to be aware of others. In the first instance the schools policies relating to Health and Safety and Risk Benefit Assessment should be referred to and applied prior to any LOtC activity. Teachers will consider and plan for where additional support is required beyond the reasonable activities one would normally apply within the classroom.

Inclusion and Differentiation: (also see SEN policy):

Challenge for all is integral to our teaching and we aim to encourage all pupils to reach their full potential through the provision of varied opportunities. All children should be given open-ended tasks together with opportunities for further research and more challenging studies. We recognise that our curriculum planning must allow pupils to gain a progressively deeper understanding and level of competency as they move through our school. Any specific individual's needs must be identified in their Learning Support Plans.

Finance

Voluntary Contributions may be requested to help with providing activities even though they may be part of the normal school day or part of the curriculum. The contribution will be voluntary and if the parent is unable or unwilling to pay, the child will not be excluded from the activity as long as parental consent has been given. If sufficient contributions are not received the activity may be cancelled. Parents will be advised of this when the voluntary contribution is requested.

If appropriate and funds allow, the school or PTA may pay a proportion of the costs in order to support a visit. Parents have a right to request details of how each trip is costed.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment of the children's learning will be valued equally indoors and outdoors and should be part of the same process. This should include, book looks, learning walks, monitoring of planning, photographs.

Induction of New Staff

New members of staff are to be given a copy of this policy and the Outdoor Learning Subject Leader will spend time with new staff members supporting them with planning of LOtC experiences.

Managing the delivery of LOtC

At North Downs Primary School we provide support and professional development to enable staff to feel confident in teaching LOtC. We are able to manage the delivery of LOtC as a key element of the learning experience through teaching and learning, planning, staff meetings, classroom observation, Forest School activities and teacher self-evaluations. As children go through the school they will complete a LOtC passport with progressively challenging LOtC activities.

The Governing Body has:

- Appointed a link LOtC governor
- Responsibility to ensure that the school complies with all procedures
- Delegated powers and responsibilities to the Head teacher to ensure all school personnel and stakeholders are aware of and comply with this policy
- Responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy
- Make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy
- Responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents
- Responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

The Head teacher will:

- Work with the Governing Body to appoint a suitably experienced member of staff to be the LOtC leader
- Work with the LOtC to ensure that all outdoor learning activities have specific and appropriate objectives
- After all checks being undertaken, approve all visits and activities
- Keep the Governing Body informed of all LOtC and off-site activities especially residential.
- Ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy

- Provide guidance, support and training to all staff
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:
 - Monitoring learning and teaching through observing lessons
 - Monitoring planning and assessment
 - Speaking with pupils, school personnel, parents and governors
 - Annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

The LOfC Leader will:

- Work closely with the Head teacher, senior leadership team and Governing Body
- Lead the development of this policy throughout the school
- Make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy
- Provide guidance and support to all staff through a designated timetable
- Ensure that all outdoor learning and off-site activities have specific and appropriate objectives, ensure that the correct staffing ratios are in place
- Ensure all risks and benefits have been assessed, significant risks have been recorded and the appropriate safety measures are in place;
- Attend appropriate training;
- Provide in-house training for members of staff
- Keep up to date with new developments and resources
- Undertake risk benefit assessments when required

The Nominated Governor will:

- Work closely with the Head Teacher and the LOfC leader
- Ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date
- Ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy
- Attend training related to this policy
- Report to the Governing Body every term; annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

Class Teachers will:

- Work closely with the Head Teacher and LOfC to ensure that all procedures are adhered to
- Plan at least one outdoor learning session a week
- Include and record LOfC opportunities on all planning
- Have the permission of the Head Teacher before the visit or activity begins
- Be given training and CPD
- Have the overall responsibility of the visit or activity
- Comply with the procedures as outlined in the LOfC plans
- Comply with the policy and procedures of the Local Authority

School personnel and parent helpers who support in outdoor learning and off-site visits must:

- Undertake instruction from the LOfC leader and/or Class Teacher
- Be clear of their roles and responsibilities
- Ensure compliance with all health and safety procedures
- Be DBS checked

We ask all parents to:

- Sign the consent form if relevant
- Provide all relevant medical information for child and emergency contact details
- Support the application of any agreed code of conduct

- Take part in periodic surveys conducted by the school

The Local Authority will:

- Be sent a summary programme plus risk/ benefit assessments of all:
 - Hazardous outdoor and adventurous activities
 - Visits abroad
 - Activities with health and safety concerns

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- LOfC Policy
- The School Handbook/Prospectus
- The School Website
- The Staff Handbook
- Forest School Handbook
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- School events
- Meetings with school personnel
- Communications with home such as newsletters and Learning letters.
- Reports such as annual report to parents and Head Teacher reports to the Governing Body
- Information displays in the school

Policy Review

This policy should be considered alongside other relevant policies, particularly the Outdoor Provision in the EYFS Policy. It will be reviewed by the governing body as part of its schedule of policy review. Identify any areas of the policy that need guidance or practical interpretation for any stakeholder.