



Kinellar School Outdoor Learning Policy



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

 HOW GOOD IS OUR SCHOOL?

 Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba



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The journey through education for any child in Scotland must include opportunities for a series of planned, quality outdoor learning experiences. Curriculum for Excellence offers opportunities for all children and young people to enjoy first-hand experience outdoors, whether within the school grounds, in urban greenspaces, in Scotland's countryside or in wilder environments. Such experiences inspire passion, motivating our children and young people to become successful learners and to develop as healthy, confident, enterprising and responsible citizens.

(LTS Curriculum for Excellence Through Outdoor Learning 2010)

Rationale and Aims

At Kinellar School, we are enthusiastic about Outdoor Learning and encourage our staff and pupils to experience and value the outdoor environment. Learning outdoors provides enjoyable, creative and challenging experiences and facilitates opportunities which are not possible within the classroom setting. We believe that all children and young people should have the chance to learn in, through and about the range of landscapes Aberdeenshire has to offer.

Through Outdoor Learning we aim for all children to become:

- Confident Individuals who are resilient and willing to take risks.
- Successful Learners who have an understanding and appreciation of nature.
- Responsible Citizens who have a positive attitude towards sustaining the local environment.
- Effective Contributors who have developed teamwork and problem solving skills.

Ethos

- Adults and children should take responsibility and care for the outside environment.
- Children should be encouraged to take risks within safe boundaries.
- Children should be encouraged to show resilience towards the challenging aspects of being outdoors such as weather conditions, nettle stings, getting dirty etc.
- Adults and children should show an appreciation for the wonder and beauty of nature.



Managing Risk

In organised outdoor learning it is common for there to be a residual level of risk that is judged to be tolerable and in balance with the benefits that will accrue. It is desirable to give equal consideration to risks and benefits throughout the planning process to avoid benefits being eclipsed by a small possibility of harm. Hazards and risks cannot be considered in isolation; it is necessary to consider the maturity and experience of learners, the expertise of those leading them, wishes of parents and many other factors. Engagement with actual risk is vital if learners are to develop the skills to deal with the succession of risks they will meet in their own lives.

The risk/benefit tool is available on Education Scotland website to clarify thinking and establish a proper balance between risk and benefit.

Teachers/leaders should ask themselves the following safety questions from Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning:

- Is the level of challenge appropriate to the learner group?
- How will risks be assessed and balanced against the expected benefits?
- Can the rationale for this experience be justified if events don't go as planned?
- Are the management arrangements suitable for the location selected?
- Are the leadership and supervisory staff suitably skilled, qualified and experienced?
- How do we communicate with parents and carers?
- Could we benefit from enrolling partners?
- Are there any relevant examples of good practice that we can draw on?

Key responsibilities of Teacher

- Overall responsibility for the supervision, safety and conduct of the excursion
- Getting approval of your plans from the head of establishment
- Following local authority regulations, guidelines and policies
- Being able to confirm the suitability of the location where the activity will take place
- Being confident that the outdoor learning planned is a good choice for all participants
- Having enough information on the proposed participants to assess their suitability (or be satisfied that their suitability has been assessed and confirmed)
- Securing parental approval and holding home contact details
- Appointing and briefing deputies and group supervisors where appropriate
- Being able to control, lead and instruct participants of the relevant age range
- Being trained in child protection issues
- The planning and preparation of the excursion including: ensuring that adequate **first aid provision** will be available, **briefing of group members** and parents, **risk assessment, emergency procedures** and how to activate them; and additional support or medical needs.



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Adult Supervision

At Kinellar School we encourage parents to become involved in Outdoor Learning as volunteer helpers. Often, our parents have skills and interests which apply to this aspect of learning and are able to lead groups during activities.

Having a suitable ratio of adult supervisors to learners is vital for any outdoor learning experience.

Factors to take into consideration include:

- gender, age and ability of group
- additional support or medical needs
- nature of activities
- experience of adults in off-site supervision
- duration and nature of the experience
- competence and behaviour of participants.

Resources

As a school we have a variety of resources for use within Outdoor Learning lessons. Some of these (knives, saws, fire starting kits etc.) carry their own risk factors and should be used in conjunction with an appropriate risk assessment and safety procedures. Resources must be treated respectfully and returned following use.

More Information

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/outdoor/>

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/approaches/outdoorlearning/>

<http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/>



Quality Assurance

We evaluate our performance against the Quality Indicators outlined in 'How Good is Our School' with the following being relevant to Outdoor Learning:

2.2 Curriculum	
<i>This indicator highlights the importance of placing the needs of learners at the centre of curriculum design and development. The structure and delivery of the curriculum should take good account of local and national circumstances. The curriculum is the totality of learning experiences across the four contexts as delivered by the school and its partners. An effective curriculum results in strong outcomes for all learners.</i>	Features of highly effective practice: Outdoor learning is a regular, progressive curriculum led experience for all learners.
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	
<i>This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements.</i>	Features of highly effective practice: Outdoor spaces are used effectively to promote positive relationships and wellbeing. Staff take account of research linking benefits of outdoor learning and green space with wellbeing.