

Moorside Primary School



Outdoor Learning Policy



MOORSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

PURPOSE, VISION & VALUES

Our Purpose

Moorside Primary is a school at the heart of our diverse community in the West End of Newcastle.

We pride ourselves in belonging to a caring school community where everyone is welcome.

We strive to deliver an outstanding education for all our children.

We help everyone to become caring and active citizens.

We encourage everyone to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Our Vision

We want everyone in our school to work together to make us as good as any school can be.

We want to create new opportunities for everyone to succeed.

We want to create a culture which broadens all of our horizons.

We want everyone to be able to tackle the challenges we will face in an ever changing world.

We want all of our children to effectively engage with each other and with our community.

Our Values

We all believe...

Our local community deserves a school they can be proud of.

We are a caring community where everyone is welcome.

We all value, respect and support each other.

Our community has the right to be safe and healthy.

Our children should have the chance to enjoy and be enthused by their time in our school.

We all agree...

Everyone will always try their best and take pride in all that they do.

Everyone will demonstrate good manners at all times.

Everyone will respect each other and show consideration.

Everyone will respect and care for our environment and resources.

Everyone will celebrate each other's successes and achievements.

Child-friendly expectations to be used in class and around school – no others are needed.

- Learn and let others learn.
- Celebrate what makes us special and respect our diversity.
- Look after each other and our environment.
- Solve problems calmly and cooperatively.

Aims and Objectives

At Moorside Primary, we understand that good quality outdoor learning can be just as valuable as learning that takes place in the classroom. As part of the curriculum, outdoor learning can enrich children's understanding of concepts that span across several subject areas. This can be difficult to teach effectively using solely indoor classroom methods; for example, humans' impact on the environment.

Definition of Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning encompasses a wide range of learning experiences outside the classroom, including day and residential visits. However, for the purposes of this policy, Outdoor Learning is concerned with making the best use of the school grounds.

Being in the outdoors can be a motivating and fascinating experience for children. This can have an impact on behaviour, while encouraging active learning, appealing to kinaesthetic learning types, and developing skills such as the following:

- Communication
- Reflection
- Problem solving
- Enquiring
- Experimenting

At Moorside Primary, we link all our outdoor learning experiences to the national curriculum intentions for each year group. This allows children to learn and engage in the outdoors whilst deepening their understanding across the various subject theme areas. In outdoor learning, we focus on the development of essential skills. These are:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Staying positive
- Aiming high
- Problem solving
- Creativity

Cross-curricular aims and objectives

In outdoor learning, we want to support children's learning across all curriculum areas by providing a challenging, safe, and secure environment in which children can take ownership of their learning and manage risks. We want the children to develop an understanding of nature and why it is so important to everyone. We are striving to:

- Create opportunities for learning in a range of environments that allow children to investigate, explore, problem solve, and apply their imagination and creativity.
- Ensure outdoor learning allows children to develop their gross motor skills.
- Encourage children to care for the environment and increase their sense of responsibility.
- Enable children to work independently and as part of a team.
- Foster close links between Parents/Carers and the school's community.
- Enhance children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Include the outdoor environment when planning for learning.
- Ensure children can enjoy the outdoor environment safely, through effective planning and risk assessments.
- Enhance all subject areas, with particular focus on links to geography and science.

Organisation and planning

Outdoor education will provide opportunities to link the NC objectives to the outdoors and deepen their knowledge in specific subject areas. We also want our children to learn about:

- The effect that humans and their behaviour have on the environment.
- Sustainability issues in the environment, e.g. recycling.
- How people's lives and livelihoods depend upon the environment.
- Conservation and the importance of protecting the environment.
- Environmental issues and the conflicts they can cause.
- The range of habitats in the local area.
- The dangers in the local area.
- Life within and outside of the local area.

Outdoor education will take place:

- On the school grounds
- In the local environment.
- In more distant and challenging environments.
- On residential trips.
- In our new outdoor learning area

Outdoor learning that takes place off the school premises will be planned in line with the provisions in the Educational Visits Policy.

Outdoor learning that takes place on the school premises will be planned in line with the Health and Safety Policy, with the appropriate risk assessments undertaken.

All staff will identify the resources needed during the planning of outdoor learning and ensure there will be sufficient space and resources for the activities planned.

The school will provide training opportunities for staff to develop their skills to teach outdoor learning that impacts on all children's attainment and achievement.

Recommendations from Ofsted

Ofsted has made several recommendations regarding the incorporation of outdoor learning in schools. One of the primary suggestions is to ensure that outdoor classrooms are not just an isolated part of the curriculum but, integrated into subjects across the board. For instance, science lessons could use an outdoor setting to teach children about ecosystems or plant biology.

Furthermore, Ofsted encourages schools to train their staff to effectively use outdoor spaces for educational purposes. Adequate training can enhance teachers' confidence and skills in harnessing the potential of an outdoor classroom, ultimately benefiting the students. Ofsted also emphasises the importance of planning learning outcomes when using outdoor classrooms. Teachers are urged to create structured activities with clear objectives so that children can gain relevant knowledge and skills during their outdoor experiences.

Ofsted's findings regarding outdoor learning reaffirm its significance in the educational landscape. An outdoor classroom creates invaluable opportunities to meaningfully engage children and support their cognitive, emotional, and social development. By implementing Ofsted's recommendations, schools can effectively integrate outdoor learning into their curriculum, transforming how children learn and interact with the world around them.

In conclusion, outdoor classrooms offer myriad benefits recognised by Ofsted, making it essential for educators to embrace this approach in their teaching practices. By fostering a rich learning environment that extends beyond traditional classroom walls, we can prepare children for academic success and a lifetime of learning and exploration in the great outdoors. (April 2025)

England's largest outdoor learning project reveals children are more motivated to learn when outside. (Feb. 2025) Appendices 1.

Health and safety

When planning outdoor education activities, teachers will act in line with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

As part of the planning for outdoor education, staff will conduct relevant risk assessments and implement any necessary safety measures needed to be put in place to reduce risk prior to the activities taking place.

Children are taught how to stay safe and to manage, appropriate risks they encounter during outdoor education.

If outdoor education is to take place away from the school premises, staff will need to have regard to the Educational Visits Policy.

Parents/Carers will acknowledge that despite safety measures and processes, a degree of residual risk remains in outdoor education. There will always be adequate adult cover to ensure children can learn safely in the outdoor environment. When taking part in outdoor learning, children, where possible, will be dressed appropriately for the weather to avoid getting too cold or too hot. Staff will model good practice and support children with the use of tools, equipment, and living things, and will assess whether their interventions are appropriate. It is appropriate that, subject to health and safety considerations, outdoor learning should continue in most types of weather.

The school grounds

We are exceptionally lucky to have extensive grounds which offer excellent opportunities for both formal and informal learning and play. By raising the profile of outdoor learning, this resource will be used more effectively.

Equal opportunities

Outdoor education will be made accessible to all children equally, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, religion or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Children will be involved equally in all aspects of outdoor education.

Children will be encouraged to value each other's contributions and their own role and ability in practical outdoor education.

Plans for outdoor education will accommodate for all children with SEND, medical conditions, mobility problems, difficulty with fine motor skills, and English as an additional language.

When planning outdoor education, teachers will act in line with appropriate school policies, including:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

EYFS Curriculum

The children in the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) have daily access to the outdoors and this will continue.

Monitoring and review

Children will use outdoor learning and education to deepen their knowledge and understanding in subject areas discussed with their class teachers. The staff will complete termly assessments to determine progress and understanding in that chosen subject area.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team, along with Governors and all staff, and amended as necessary.

Policy implemented	September 2025
Policy Review Date	July 2027