



Newall Green Primary School

Aiming High To Reach Our Goals

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Outdoor Learning Policy

Add photo of children using outdoor learning areas

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Intent

The curriculum that we teach has been planned to promote the (Manchester) five key skills for life: problem solving, teamwork, self-management (initiative, organisation, accountability), self-belief (confidence, resilience, positive attitude), and communication.

In addition to these skills, we place a high priority on developing all our pupils' understanding of their place within the natural world. We strive for our pupils to have respect for nature, an understanding of where food comes from and an appreciation of the benefits that nature gives humanity.

We aim to ensure all children develop, build and are adept in their skills physically, socially and creatively. Through the curriculum, clubs and Eco-Council, we also strive to promote well-rounded students who are equipped with a strong transferrable skillset that can aid their physical and emotional well-being for lifelong success.

Implementation

At Newall Green Primary, our approach to outdoor learning is as a strategy for learning rather than a separate subject. Class teachers are responsible for identifying opportunities to take learning outside of the classroom. Learning should be conducted outside of the classroom at least once per week in the most appropriate subject or lessons.

Teachers will identify opportunities for learning outside of the classroom as part of their medium-term planning. These can be a mixture of whole-class teaching, individual tasks or group activities. Teachers can conduct whole lessons outside or part of a lesson. Teachers will use opportunities to incorporate outdoor learning across the curriculum and encourage pupils to make connections between their learning and their experiences within nature.

We encourage pupils to collaborate and to evaluate their own work as well as the work of others. Suitable learning opportunities are provided for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child and stretching them to their potential. Teachers should also provide scaffolding to enable all pupils to access learning.

Impact

Evidence shows that healthier pupils have higher educational attainment. Research shows that spending time outside increases levels of physical activity as well as mental health and wellbeing. Teachers taking part in the Natural Connections project ([Transforming Outdoor Learning in Schools SCN.pdf](#)) reported that learning in natural environments had a positive impact in the following areas for their pupils:

- Enjoyment of lessons (95%)
- Engagement with and understanding of nature (94%)
- Social skills (93%)
- Engagement with learning (92%)
- Health and wellbeing (92%)
- Behaviour (85%)
- Attainment (57%)

As outdoor learning is a strategy for learning rather than a separate lesson, we are not able to measure progress through data analysis. Instead, we will monitor the effectiveness of our curriculum through:

- Regular learning walks to observe lessons
- Yearly Progress Meetings between the Outdoor Learning Subject Lead and SLT
- Pupil voice, habits and behaviours

Barriers to outdoor learning

Despite the clear benefits, many teachers cite barrier to learning in an outdoor environment such as:

- Unpredictable weather
- Lack of suitable space
- Difficulty in timetabling outside space
- Limited adult support
- Concerns about controlling behaviour
- Additional organisation for resources
- How to record learning outside.

Whilst we acknowledge these barriers, we also recognise the need to overcome them. It is our intent to work with our teaching staff to find solutions to these problems through discussions and by sharing good practice.

Aims

Outdoor Learning at Newall Green aims to provide a learning environment and curriculum that develops the children's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural world. Whilst the national curriculum doesn't give specific aims as in other areas of learning, our approach to outdoor learning aspires to enhance children's education experience and support their academic performance in other areas. As such we aim to:

- enable free movement between the indoor and outdoor environments.
- promote sustainable life choices which reduce their impact on the planet.
- guide pupils to lead healthy, active lives and understand the importance of physical and mental fitness
- make connections between the natural world and the food we eat.

By the end of year 6, we want our pupils to be able to:

- be confident working outdoors and understand that barriers to the outdoors can be overcome by planning and utilising appropriate equipment
- identify appropriate clothing and equipment to use in a range of different situations (e.g. camping, hiking, gardening)
- understand how risks can be managed by identifying and planning for them
- develop their tier 3 vocabulary with relation to the natural world so that they can communicate effectively and confidently on a range of topics.
- understand the benefits of being outdoors for their physical, mental and emotional health
- understand the responsibilities they have as citizens to look after the natural world.
- understand that their life choices have an impact on the natural world.
- be inquisitive and ask questions about the natural world

Outdoor learning for children with Special Educational Needs

At Newall Green Primary School, we teach all lessons to all children, whatever their ability. Outdoor learning forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through the teaching of outdoor learning, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges, assessing risk and responding to each child's different needs.

Health and Safety

The general teaching requirements for health and safety apply to this subject. We encourage the children to consider their own and others' safety at all times. In addition: -

- Pupils are expected to change into a PE Kit or agreed clothing for each activity
- Teachers are expected to set a good example by wearing appropriate clothing when teaching PE
- No jewellery or unfixed attire (e.g. watches/Fitbit) is to be worn for any physical activity. Medical aids (e.g. hearing aid/glasses) are permitted.
- Staff pay particular attention to any medical needs or medication a pupil may need

Staff teaching Physical Education are made aware, and have access to the Safe Practice guidance set out by PESSPA (Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity)

Extra-curricular activities

Newall Green strives to ensure that our children are increasing the amount of time that they spend being active and to ensure that the children are offered a wide range of lunchtime and after school clubs. All children who apply for a club are offered a place or placed on a waiting list and prioritised the following half term.

The school also plays regular inter fixtures and tournaments against other schools, in a range of sports. This introduces a competitive element to team games, and allows the children to put into practice the skills that they have developed in their lessons. These opportunities foster a sense of team spirit and cooperation amongst our children.

We work with various sporting organisations where PE specialists come in to the school to support teachers and pupils in their PE lessons. Teachers have the opportunity to work with these specialists, whilst pupils also have the opportunity to attend extra-curricular activities and sports clubs provided by these organisations.

Modifications

Newall Green's community relies heavily on school to facilitate sports and healthy lifestyles. Local rates of morbidity and illness due to heart disease, addictions, obesity and poor mental health are higher than average. Therefore: -

- Children who are assessed to not engage in P.E or whom are not as fit and healthy as their peers are offered support from the head of PE via our 'Healthy Heart Healthy Brain' and 'Change for Life' clubs.
- The 'Healthy Schools' Strands are woven into teaching across several subjects including PE (Science, PSHE, Literacy, Numeracy)
- Extra staff are deployed to ensure that even in the absence of parental support, pupils can attend sporting events and inter school competitions.
- Whole school initiatives around physical and mental health are championed by all staff e.g. Walk to school week/rethink your drink etc