



Outdoor Learning and Education Policy

Approved by:	Local Governing Body	Date: 17.03.26
Signed by:	Chair of the Governing Body	
Last reviewed on:	n/a	
Next review due by:	March 2027	

Aims and Objectives

At Castlefort Academy, 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 pupils' understanding of concepts that span a number of subject areas, and that can be difficult to teach effectively using solely indoor classroom methods; for example, humans' impact on the environment. Being in the outdoors can be a motivating and fascinating experience for pupils which, in turn, 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 Castlefort, we link all our outdoor learning sessions to the national curriculum in each year group. This allows children to learn and engage in the outdoors whilst deepening their understanding in various subject topic areas. In outdoor learning, we focus on the development of our eight 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 pupils learning across all curriculum areas by providing a challenging, safe and secure environment in which pupils 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 pupils to investigate, explore, problem solve and apply their imagination and creativity.
- ❖ Ensure outdoor learning allows pupils to develop their gross motor skills.
- ❖ Encourage pupils to care for the environment and increase their sense of responsibility.
- ❖ Enable pupils to work independently and as part of a team.
- ❖ Foster close links between parents and the school.

- ❖ Enhance pupils' personal and social development.
- ❖ Include the outdoor environment when planning for learning.
- ❖ Ensure pupils are able to enjoy the outdoor environment safely, through effective planning and risk assessments.
- ❖ Enhance all subject areas, with particularly strong 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 pupils 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 ground
- In our woodland area
- In the local environment
- In more distant and challenging environments
- On residential trips

Outdoor learning that takes places off the school premises will be planned in accordance with the provisions in the Educational Visits and School Trips Policy.

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

Teachers 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 teachers to develop their skills to teach outdoor learning that impacts on pupil attainment and achievement.

Health and Safety

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

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

Pupils are taught how to manage appropriate risks they encounter during outdoor education.

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

Parents 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 pupils can learn safely in the outdoor environment.

When taking part in outdoor learning, pupils will be dressed appropriately for the weather to avoid getting too cold or too hot.

Staff will model good practice and support pupils with the use of tools, equipment and living things, and will assess whether their interventions are appropriate.

Equal Opportunities

Outdoor education will be made accessible to all pupils equally, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, religion or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Pupils will be involved equally in all aspects of outdoor education.

Pupils 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 pupils 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

Monitoring and Review

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

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Lead Teacher for Outdoor Learning and Education.