

# Broomwood Primary School

## Outdoor Learning Policy & Handbook

*Together we believe. Together we achieve*

### Rationale

At Broomwood Primary School we believe that every child should have access to outdoors on a regular basis as research shows that Outdoor Learning has a positive impact on children's wellbeing as well as a positive impact on attainment. Many of the families in our community have limited, if any, access to greenspace and so it is our responsibility to provide this for them in a carefully structured way.

#### **It is recognised that Outdoor Learning has a positive impact on children's wellbeing**

- An Australian [review by Keniger et al.](#) categorises the purported benefits of interacting with nature as psychological, cognitive, physiological, social, spiritual and tangible.
- There is also relatively good evidence for 'adventure learning', with [the EEF concluding](#) that there are benefits for academic learning, particularly for vulnerable students and teenagers.

#### **Outdoor Learning has a positive impact on attainment**

- In 2008, Ofsted published a report "Learning Outside the Classroom - how far should you go?" which found overwhelming evidence that LOTC (Learning Outside the Classroom) contributes significantly to raising standards and the quality and depth of learning.
- Ofsted is clear that the more planned and integrated LOTC is, the more effective it is. LOTC should not be about a once a year school trip, but **about frequent, continuous and progressive opportunities** to learn outside the classroom that build on knowledge and skills gained during previous experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

### Aims

- To have a planned, progressive Outdoor Curriculum – from Pre-school to Year 6 - to enhance our already existing broad and balanced curriculum.
- We aim for children to develop socially and emotionally whilst developing new skills and knowledge of the wider world.
- For all children to develop a positive mind-set allowing them to achieve their goals and be successful in their core learning.
- To tie in our Outdoor Curriculum with the Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and ensure our Children and their families recognise their impact on the planet and how to make a more positive contribution.

## The School Curriculum in England

At Broomwood Primary School we have planned an Outdoor Learning Curriculum which reflects our community, compliments our broad and balanced curriculum and meets our statutory requirements as stated in the National Curriculum:

*2.1 Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:*

- *promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and*
- *prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.*

*2.5 All schools should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), drawing on good practice. Schools are also free to include other subjects or topics of their choice in planning and designing their own programme of education.*

## The Broomwood Curriculum

Outdoor Learning is a broad term that includes:

- outdoor play in the early years,
- school grounds projects,
- environmental education,
- recreational and adventure activities,
- personal and social development programs,
- expeditions,
- team building,
- leadership training,
- management development,
- education for sustainability,
- adventure therapy

Outdoor Learning does not have a clearly defined boundary therefore we have worked together as a staff and pupil team to generate our own Core Principles of Outdoor learning. These pull together the Principle of Forest Schools and those identified by other organisations such as Learning Through Landscapes.

## Policy Links

This policy should be read in conjunction with the First Aid policy, the Fire Safety and Lockdown Polices and the Health and Safety policy.

## Curriculum Intent

At Broomwood Primary School our Outdoor Learning Curriculum is built around 8 core principles. It is our INTENT that;

1. Children enjoy participating in outdoor activities and adopt a positive attitude to challenge, learning and adventure.

2. Children develop an increased motivation and appetite for learning which contributes to raised levels of attainment and progress in other areas of their development.
3. Children are offered the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to themselves and their environment.
4. Holistic development is promoted fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
5. Children are able to develop their self-awareness and social skills, and their appreciation of teamwork and collaboration.
6. Children are able to demonstrate increased initiative, self-reliance, responsibility, perseverance, tenacity and commitment.
7. Children develop an appreciation of the benefits of participation in outdoor activities for their physical health and emotional well-being and seek to continue their interest in activities beyond their immediate learning environment.
8. Children gain a deeper awareness and understanding of the environment and actively seek opportunities to reduce the impact that they and others have on the environment – locally and globally – and to understand the importance of conservation and sustainable development.

### Curriculum Implementation

In order to fulfil our principles, we have planned a curriculum that will allow children to meet the same principles repeatedly over time and build on previous experiences.

Year Group	Learning Opportunity	Principles Covered	Timescale
Pre-school	Wellie Walks	1, 2, 5, 7	Weekly
Nursery	Wellie Walks	1, 2, 5, 7	Weekly
Reception	Forest School	1, 2,3, 4, 5	Summer Term - Weekly
Year 1	Forest School	1, 2,3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Autumn Term - weekly
Year 2	Forest School	1, 2,3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Spring Term - weekly
Year 3	Living off the land/Cooking	5, 6, 7, 8	After school club – Spring Term Cooking weekly 3 x half terms
	Visit to Tatton Park – kitchen garden	6, 7, 8	1 day – Summer Term
Year 4	Gardening	5, 6, 7, 8	Monthly across the year
	Visit to Dunham Massey	6, 7, 8	1 day – Summer 1
	Canoeing	5, 6, 7	PE week
Year 5	Map work and walking in the countryside - Expedition	1, 5, 6, 7, 8	Summer 1 - weekly
	Skiing	5, 6, 7	PE week

Year 6	Outdoor and Adventure Residential	1, 2, 3, 5, 6,	Autumn 1 – 3 days
	Orienteering	5, 6, 7	Summer 2 - weekly

## Early Years

Outdoor Learning is a key part of First Quality Teaching within the Early Years and as such all children have access to the outdoors throughout the day as part of their core learning. In addition, planned activities such as Wellie Walks and Forest School allow us to focus on building knowledge and understanding of their local area and how it changes throughout the seasons.

**Welly Walks** – These will take place on a fortnightly basis for Pre-School and Nursery and will mostly be within our school grounds. The purpose of these sessions is to explore the grounds, use their senses to notice things and to observe changes across the year. It is also a great opportunity to experience the freedom of the wide-open space and to climb and explore within the Eco Area. Reception will carry out a wellie walk each half term and look to going beyond our school.

**Forest School** – During the Summer Term, the Reception children will begin their Forest School journey. Each of the reception classes will have an extended session each week (approx. 1.5 hours) led by our Forest School Leader. The format of these sessions will be based around a theme, have some skills and knowledge taught at the start of the session and then the freedom to develop their own learning in the second half. These sessions will be run in our Forest School area as well as the wider school grounds including visits to the pond area.

## Key Stage 1

Within KS1 our children are given the opportunity to continue with their Forest School learning and build on the experiences in Early Years.

**Forest School** – Following on from the summer Forest School sessions in Reception, the Year 1 children will continue to have weekly sessions during the Autumn Term and then the Year 2 children will continue in the Spring Term. The sessions will follow a similar format to those on Reception but the children will become increasingly independent. There will be a greater focus on learning how to use tools safely, den/shelter building and the use of fire. By the end of Year 2 it is our intention that the children have experienced all four seasons within Forest School sessions.

## Lower Key Stage 2

Our intention for Years 3 and 4 is to build on their love of the outdoors and develop a greater understanding of sustainability through gardening and the idea of living off the land. Children in Years 3 and 4 will learn how to sew and grow a variety of plants and then use their produce to cook. The children in Year 3 will take part in cooking projects across the year using seasonal, locally sourced food. Ultimately, we aim that the children will be able to source their food from our school garden.

Year 4 children will focus on gardening with children getting the opportunity to visit a local nursery and learn how to sow and grow seeds.

These are seen as skills for life and building towards a greener future.

In order to enhance this learning, the children in Year 3 and 4 will have the opportunity to visit one of our local national trust properties; Dunham Massey or Tatton Park. The purpose of these visits would be to visit the gardens, in particular the kitchen garden at Tatten Park, but also to enjoy the wide-open space and find out about how they are protecting the land and the habitats within. Our hope is that children will be able to visit these places again with their families and continue their learning themselves.

## Upper Key Stage 2

In Years 5 and 6 the children will experience a range of more adventurous activities to encourage a love of the outdoors beyond the school gates. Across the two years they will experience the following;

**Hiking** – The children will learn about how to stay safe in the countryside, what to wear, what to pack and the country code. They will also have an introduction to map reading. Following this preparation, the children will go on a day hike. This will be led by qualified staff, ie Grip Adventure.

**Rivers and Mountains** – Years 5 & 6 children will visit Derbyshire and go to the source of a river during their rivers and mountains topic (Year A).

**Residential** – All Year 6 children have the opportunity to go on a 2-night residential with school. This is to an activity centre where they get to experience a range of adventurous activities including; climbing, abseiling, high ropes, zip line and canoeing.

## Extra-Curricular Activities

In order to complement our outdoor curriculum we continue the Forest School Provision at an after-school club for KS2. This will essentially be child led and build on the skills they developed in KS1. In addition, we have a “Living off the Land” club which looks at sustainability and gardening. The children are involved in growing things and then cooking with them. This club is on for six weeks each term and with a different age group each time. The Forest School club also runs for six weeks each term and there is the opportunity for different KS2 children to take part each time.

## Forest School

These sessions will be led by a Level 3 qualified leader and it is considered good practice to take a child-led approach and actively work between sparking children's interests and quietly observing learning to allow you to plan for future forest school experiences that will challenge their learning. A key function is for the leader to model skills and behaviours, rather than telling the children what to do, and how to do it.

Forest School practitioners will plan and run sessions, taking into consideration all the health and safety issues that could arise and inform teachers, other adults and parents clearly of their role. Certain activities such as tool use and tree climbing offer children the opportunity to take safe, supported risks.

An important role of the Forest School leader is to boost and develop children's self-esteem, self-belief and confidence by suggesting small, manageable tasks and ensuring that they have time and freedom to learn at their own pace. This needs to be done without pressure and in an encouraging way which allows the children to develop a greater awareness of their own and other's emotional needs.

In addition providing opportunities for children to work in group activities enhances their social

competency, teambuilding skills and problem-solving capabilities as they learn to listen and work with other children's ideas and accept differences.

## Working with Fire

For the children at Broomwood Primary School, fire is one of the most exciting activities within Forest School and as such we have a purpose-built fire shelter which houses our fire pit. It is vitally important that appropriate steps are taken to make sure the children enjoy the fire safely and we have a comprehensive risk assessment in place. When working with fires, the following steps will be followed;

- Fires will only be lit in designated area in the central fire pit
- Seating is at least 1.5 metres from the fire pit and is secured benches round the edges of the shelter
- Children must be supervised whilst around the fire at all times and the fire is never left unattended by staff
- When accessing or moving around the fire, children must walk around the outside of circle, then remain sitting whilst they are around the fire
- Children/staff are not permitted to throw anything onto the fire
- Fires will not be lit in strong winds
- No flammable liquids or plastics are to be used on the fire
- The fire blanket/heat proof gloves and water are always on hand during fire sessions
- At the end of the session, the fire must be extinguished with water until all smoke and steam has ceased
- Only adults are permitted to light fires, unless children are under the direct supervision of the Forest School leader
- The children are only allowed to approach the fire if invited by the Forest School leader, in small groups.

Our aim is that during a term there would normally be at least two/three sessions focused on cooking over a campfire. Together, we will make, cook and share food around the campfire.

## Working with Tools

Forest School includes offering activities that require the use of tools to craft different items or to learn the art of whittling. Tool use may include the use of potato peelers, bow saw, hand drill, and knives. Using tools enables the children to develop new skills and increase self-confidence. We aim to ensure all participants use tools safely with little risk to their health and safety.

The following guidelines are to be followed when using tools:

- Regular checks made to ensure tools are fit for use. The Forest School leader will sort repairs, clean or replace any unsafe, worn out dirty or damaged tools and equipment.
- When using tools, a designated area will be marked out with rope and children will be made aware of this.
- Tool talks will be given prior to use.
- Tools will only be used when a level 3 Forest Leader is present.
- The use of tools with children will be introduced on a 1:1 basis with a Forest School leader.
- Activities where hand tools are used will be matched to the children's previous experiences and will move at their own individual pace, gradually working towards independent use within a small supervised group.
- Tools should not be left unattended.

- Personal protective equipment can be provided in the tool area (gloves).
- All tools must be accounted for at the end of the session and will be stored away in a locked box and kept in a locked storage unit.

## Den Building

Within Forest School sessions the children will be challenged to build dens and shelters of various types. In order to do this they will be taught how to collect sticks safely and how to use knots and lashings to secure tarpaulins and sticks. When working with sticks, ropes and tarpaulin, children will be taught;

- Children can carry sticks shorter than their arm's length but are encouraged to think about how close they are to other children.
- Longer sticks may be dragged or carried with the help of another person, when each person is at either end.
- Sticks must not be thrown.
- Sticks must not be pulled from living trees.
- The appropriate use of ropes and tarpaulins will be modelled.
- Ropes are only to be used as a way of securing sticks and Tarpaulins.
- The dangers of tying ropes to any part of the boy, especially necks
- The importance of not leaving any ropes lying around and that they all need to be accounted for.

As with all areas of Forest school, safety talks will always take place at the start and risk assessments are in place to minimise risk.

## Forest School Code of Conduct

Each session at Forest School starts the same way, with a welcome and a reminder of the three key rules.

**1. Look after yourself-** We discuss ways for the children to keep themselves safe during forest school this includes:

- using our eyes for looking when exploring & walking and looking above, below and around for hazards.
- Keeping fingers out of mouths and always washing hands once back in school
- Wet can mean slippery
- Wild mushrooms- never touch, never eat.
- Twigs and branches can bounce back so be careful.
- Listen and follow instructions.
- Always stay out of the fire circle.

**2. Look after your friends**

- Show respect to others.
- Use kind words and actions.

**3. Look after the environment**

- Tread carefully, don't trample on delicate plants

- Don't pick from plants and trees, use what we find on the ground for crafts and games.
- Look after the wildlife.

Throughout Forest School session, the children are reminded to always try their best, don't give up and to take pride in their achievements.

## Inclusion

Broomwood Primary School is an inclusive school and we aim to ensure that all children have access to all provision regardless of their need, whether it be physical, emotional or academic. Prior to any class or group of children working outside, the Forest School leader will meet with the class teacher/SENDCo so that they have an awareness of individual needs and can put specific measures in place if required.

In order to make it accessible the Forest School area is flat with bark paths and logs/trees low enough to reach. For any children with a physical disability, they will have 1:1 support in the area and we will liaise with specialist services for advice regarding any additional equipment that might be needed.

SEMH – Some children may struggle with the freedom of the outdoors and so at the induction session for their class/group we will discuss a safe space that children can go to if they become overwhelmed. All staff will be aware of individual needs within the group.

Communication and Language – Forest school and outdoor learning are by their very nature a more practical and visual approach to learning. This is more suitable for our learners who have language and communication difficulties, however adjustments do need to be made for some children particularly when it comes to safety instructions. The adults working outside will ensure that identified children have any information repeated on a 1:1 and they have regular check-ins to ensure they understand the next stage of the process.

## Therapeutic Interventions

Within our long term plan, we are looking to further develop our Forest School provision to provide therapeutic sessions which focus on physical activity and grounding. These sessions will be based on individual need and will be supportive of any EHCP or PEP requirements.

## Curriculum-Led Outdoor Learning

Teachers are encouraged, as part of our multi-sensory approach to learning, to take some lessons outside. This may be active maths, some role play or sensory experience to inspire writing, or bring their topic work alive. As a school, we recognise that some children are more engaged outside and so value outdoor learning as tool to deliver our core curriculum.

Each year, in May, we take part in Outdoor Classroom Day in order to promote the value of spending more time each day outdoors. This is led by Learning through Landscapes.

## Curriculum Impact

At Broomwood Primary School, the IMPACT of our Outdoor Learning Curriculum is that;

- Children develop a love of the outdoors and recognise the health benefits that it brings.

- Children are emotionally ready to engage in their formal learning and therefore achieve their potential and beyond.
- Children build confidence and put into practice the school core values of Respect, Nurturing, Welcoming, Commitment and Togetherness.
- Language skills are developed resulting in improved social communication and increased vocabulary.
- Children are given opportunities to experience the world beyond their home and school and learn how to protect it for future generations.

This will be measured through pupil and parent feedback, SEMH audits and engagement within lessons.

## Risk Assessments & Health and Safety

Our Forest School Provision has a general risk assessment for the site and for the various activities, tools and equipment that the children are likely to encounter. Any additional activity would have its own specific risk assessment.

As a school we have a number of policies which directly link to Outdoor Learning including our Behaviour and Discipline policy. All elements of these policies can continue to be adhered to when working outside. However, the Fire Safety Policy and a Lockdown Policy require some adaptations, along with the First Aid Policy due to the nature of the work being carried out and the fact that it is outdoor and away from other staff and resources.

### Fire Safety

On hearing the fire alarm, the following steps will be taken:

- The children are stopped and brought together – Forest School Leader does a head count.
- The supporting adult takes the children to the assembly point on the field and a register will be taken and follow normal school fire safety procedures.
- The Forest School Leader to secure the forest school site ensuring the fire is put out and any tools are put away safely.
- If there is a fire on the Forest School site, follow the Forest School Fire Risk assessment:
  - Raise the alarm with the school office
  - Additional adult to take the children to the assembly point

### Lockdown

On hearing the lockdown alarm, the following steps will be taken:

- The children are stopped and brought together – Forest School Leader does a head count and the supporting adult takes the children to the reception classroom as quickly and safely as possible.
- The Forest School Leader to secure the forest school site ensuring the fire is put out and any tools are taken with them inside.
- If you are raising the alarm because of an intruder or a vicious animal, follow the following steps:
  - Take the children in to the reception classroom immediately, carry out a head count and then raise the alarm with the office.
  - Activate the intruder alarm and then follow school lockdown procedures.

## First Aid

In addition to the school First Aid procedures, the following is put in place for Forest School sessions.

- A school first aider will always be present during forest school sessions – this is the Forest School Leader.
- All Children with asthma will bring inhalers with them.
- Prior to a class working attending forest school, the leader will have a meeting to look at health care plans and if necessary will meet with parents and make any alterations to their individual health care plans and risk assessments so they can fully access forest school.
- An outdoor first aid kit is always available and is regularly checked and replenished.
- An outdoor first aid accident book is used for Forest School.
- In a medical emergency the first aider will ensure that the child is safe from further danger and will direct the other adult present to supervise the other children in a safe space away from the injured casualty.
- In the event of a more serious first aid incident the session will be stopped and the rest of the group will be taken back inside school. The school office will be contacted and additional help sought, including an ambulance if needed.
- In terms of allergies, liaise with class teacher before sessions start to discuss any allergies and adjustments that need to be made. Make parents aware of what activities we will be doing so they can make an informed judgement.
- The children are reminded, at the start of each session, of the rules and what they need to do to keep themselves safe.
- Children are aware not to ever eat anything they find, there is a no fingers in mouth rule and if they ever experience any itching or breathing difficulties to let an adult know.
- If children become unwell during a forest school session staff will give appropriate first aid or care if necessary. The forest school leader will contact the school office and ask for another member of school staff to collect the unwell child and then follow normal school procedure.
- Should the Forest School Leader become unwell or injured during a forest school session, the other adult present would manage the situation by sending the red triangle to the school office to alert them to an emergency and provide further support.

## Communication with Stake Holders

Communication with all stakeholders is key and will be done in a number of ways in order to serve all levels of stakeholder. Information about Outdoor Learning and Forest School in particular will be communicated through a number of sources along with opportunities for stakeholders to share their views;

- School Policy and Handbook
- School Website
- Governor updates
- Letters to parents at the start of a project
- Newsletter and Twitter
- Staff meetings and training sessions
- Annual survey for parents, staff and pupils
- Outdoor learning team meetings – staff and children

- Forest School Network sessions

## Roles and Responsibilities

**Children** – The children are expected to challenge themselves by trying new experiences and learn to respect their environment. In order for children to get the most out of their experiences we expect them to engage with other children and adults, work together and ask questions.

**Forest School leader** – They will be Level 3 qualified and will lead all Forest School sessions. They will liaise with senior leaders with regards to the curriculum but will be responsible for planning and resourcing the sessions as well as the health and safety. The Forest School Leader will liaise with class teachers and SENDco in relation to the individual needs of the children and will all school wide policies.

**Forest School Support** – This is a role that we are looking to develop within our team. We will provide local training, including first aid, and their role will be to support the Forest School leader in the deliver of sessions, particularly therapeutic sessions.

**Class teachers** – Class teachers have a responsibility to promote outdoor learning within their core curriculum and will be supported to do this through staff training and access to Learning through Landscapes materials. They will also be responsible for planning activities for an annual outdoor learning day which is held in May.

**Parents** – It is the parents' responsibility to make sure that the children are prepared for their outdoor learning by ensuring that they have the necessary equipment; wellies and waterproof clothes when appropriate. It is our aim that parents are actively involved where possible and are provided with enough information to extend their children's learning through further experiences at home ultimately share our passion for spending more time outdoors.

**Outdoor Team** – This is a group of staff and children who have worked together to plan the outdoor curriculum and who will provide feedback about the implementation of it. The team will meet twice a year to review the curriculum.

**Site Management** – As a part of the health and safety team, our site manager will do regular checks of the area and identify where potential risks are and then work to rectify them. The site manager and Forest School leader will also carry out a termly walk around of the site to look at issues specific to the Forest School area. Paths and upkeep of wooden structures will be on the inspection list and restored when needed.

**Head/Deputy** – The Head and Deputy will liaise with the curriculum leaders to ensure that the provision is fit for purpose and impacting positively on pupil outcomes. They will delegate responsibility to members of the staff team to ensure the appropriate upkeep of the site and allocate funds when appropriate.

**Governors** – It is the role of the governors to ensure that policy and practice are up to date and the outcomes for pupils are being met. The governing body will assign a link governor for this purpose.

**Policy Written by:** Allison McCarthy in conjunction with Lisa Powell

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