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Cornerstone Multi Academy Trust

Outdoor Education School Policy

What is Outdoor Education?

Outdoor Education provides experiences in which pupils learn and develop a wide range of life skills, promoting self-confidence and self-reliance, personal organisation, teamwork, responsibility, leadership, and environmental awareness.

These skills are achieved through an extensive programme of opportunities to allow all pupils to try out new activities and develop a wide range of skills. We organise activities for the whole year group as well as numerous options that allow pupils to pursue activities of existing interest or to sample new ones.

From Forest School in Nursery to mountain biking in Year 6, the Outdoor Education programme at Cornerstone grows with your child. It will help your child gain the self-confidence to try something new, the independence to take responsibility for themselves, and share the joy of spending time outdoors, connecting with the natural environment. In addition to providing a program that is fun and adventurous, your child will also develop communication and teamwork skills, and gain the ability to problem solve. During all their adventures we also aim to foster a sensitivity for our environment

Throughout the Trust we have developed our own, progressive Outdoor Education curriculum. Our programme enhances our broad and balanced curriculum which aims to develop the whole person. Our programme encompasses our school motto 'Fortune Favours the Brave': Supporting children to feel confident to try new things, take risks, and reach their full potential.

Policies and Procedures

Environmental Policy and Impact

Every activity in the outdoors will have an impact on the immediate environment.

We aim to keep this impact to a minimum.

The current plan at The Cornerstone Academy Trust is for small groups from years 1, 2 and 3 to participate in weekly 'Forest School' sessions in our Outdoor Learning areas throughout the course of the school year. Years 4, 5 and 6 are involved in larger projects such as residential and trips.

The issue of environmental impact will have to be managed sensibly and sympathetically by surveying the area regularly. This will be done at the end of each term/season by taking photographs and by monitoring the levels of flora and fauna using quadrats. Activities will be adapted or moved to alternative sites if considered necessary.

As members of the Woodland Trust 'Green School Scheme' helps us further maintain, develop and improve our existing woodland and program of educational, outdoor activities.

At Broadclyst the Outdoor Learning area is part of the Killerton, National Trust Estate where we will continue to work within their guidelines to maintain the natural balance of the area, encourage and support existing wildlife and improve biodiversity. This will be achieved by

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pruning and managing the existing trees and protecting and encouraging native, self-seeding hedgerow plants and trees in barren areas for future generations to enjoy. We will also protect and provide additional habitats for a variety of wildlife.

Minimising the impact of specific forest school activities

(See Section 5 of the Outdoor Learning Handbook)

General guide for minimising environmental impact:

(See Section 5 of the Outdoor Learning Handbook)

Key Stage Progression

Within all Key Stages, our Ethos for Outdoor Learning is promoted.

Ethos

Outdoor education seeks to deliver experiences to children that are difficult to obtain within the classroom through active engagement with the outside world. Building an awareness for the natural environment aims to provide children with an understanding of Physical Geography including: Biogeography, Climatology & meteorology, coastal geography, environmental management etc.

Geography derives from a Greek meaning “earth description”.

The sessions are equipped to deliver a range of activities that aim to strengthen dexterity and improve fine and gross motor skills. This is through the handling of materials and objects that are usually available within a woodland area such as sticks, leaves as well as using a range of tools such as saws, fire-building equipment and rope. The type of activity required to use these items aim to improve the children’s writing stamina as well as increasing their endurance throughout the working day, reducing fatigue which commonly leads to poor decisions, minimal productivity and unsettled behaviour.

Interaction with the natural environment is also thought to tap into their innate abilities, which derives from primitive instincts. Provided with the opportunity to gather, create and use tools and shelter as well as prepare food in this environment satisfies that instinct creating a purposeful and fulfilling experience which without, could lead to poor mental health and life-choices.

EYFS

In Early Years Foundation Stage, Outdoor Learning introduces the children to new experiences in the wider world.

- Understand and explore the outdoor world through visits to the Allotment and Forest School.
- Look at similarities, differences, patterns and change in the outdoors throughout the year.
- Experiment with different outdoor textures
- Use natural objects to create artwork.
- Show an understanding of the need for safety when tackling new challenges and consider and manage some risks.
- Plant and grow vegetables in their allotment plot.
- To appreciate and understand the natural world through sensory exploration.

Key Stage 1

Year 1

The Year 1 programme focuses on using the outdoor spaces safely, developing their imaginations through exploration and free play. Familiarising themselves with being outdoors and the emotions that this can evoke. They are also encouraged to appreciate the natural environment and understand importance's of preserving and sustaining outdoor spaces.

- Identify some trees and plants in the Forest School Site.
- Identify risks in the Forest School site and how we can overcome them.
- Identify the risks and benefits of using fire and how to enjoy it safely.
- Use tools to make specific items during Forest School – use drill bits to make forest cookies and pixie telescopes.
- Grow the necessary vegetables to create this to create a main meal to eat.

Year 2

The Year 2 programme will focus on the wildlife in our natural outdoor spaces. Alongside organised games and free play, children will learn about different species of wildlife and their behaviour through the seasons. They will identify trees and safely use tools to cut their

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own materials for woodland crafts. They will also be taught the 'fire triangle' and learn to make a dragon sneeze!

- Identify most trees and wildlife habiting in our Forest School site.
- Find out about the different kinds of plants & animals in the local environment.
- To describe shapes & differences between leaves.
- To make & use keys for tree identification.
- Introduced to fire starting techniques and the fire triangle.
- Grow the necessary vegetables to create this to create a main meal to eat.

Key Stage 2

Year 3

The Year 3 Forest School programme focuses on 'Surviving in the Outdoors'. Alongside organised games and free play, children will learn about extreme weather and how to tie knots to make shelters and for useful functions. They will be introduced to use how food and drink can be prepared safely on open fires and learn how to safely use sharp tools and build and light fires themselves - recapping the safety element and the fire triangle. Children will put these skills together for a challenge to 'survive in extreme weather scenario'!

Years 4, 5 and 6

The children access the outdoor environment via organised residentials, projects and gardening activities including:

Residentials

Kingfisher Project

Allotment

Sports

National Trust 50 things.

The Escot residential is intended to be a continuation of the skills they developed whilst at Forest School, allowing them to engage with the outdoors with the entire year group.

Year 4

Engage with the outdoors through swamp walk and night hikes – working together to identify noticeable plants and animals.

- Learn about animals of Britain and how they are useful to the ecosystem.

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- take part in outdoor and adventurous activity challenges both individually and within a team.
- recognise that environments can change and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things.
- explore and use classification keys to help group, identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment.
- Grow the necessary vegetables to create this to create a main meal to eat.

Year 5

River Study

Residential

National Trust 50 things.

Sports

Outdoor Activities

- Use keys based on observable external features to help them identify and group living things systematically.
- Use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping.
- Use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies.
- Use the eight points of a compass, four and six-figure grid references, symbols and key (including the use of Ordnance Survey maps).
- Grow the necessary vegetables to create this to create a main meal to eat.

Year 6

Residential

Dartmoor

National Trust 50 things.

Sports

Develop crucial life skills:

- Make emergency phone calls.
- Use beaches safely.
- Maintain good levels of hygiene.
- Act responsibly around electricity.
- Avoid creating fire hazards.
- Take part in outdoor and adventurous activity challenges both individually and within a team.
- Grow the necessary vegetables to create this to create a main meal to eat.

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Equal Opportunities

All pupils will have equal opportunity to reach their full potential across the Outdoor Learning curriculum, regardless of their race, gender, cultural background or ability. Class teacher will be responsible for planning activities that are differentiated and suitably challenging to meet the needs of all children, enabling access for all to the study of Outdoor Learning.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Individual progress in Outdoor Learning will be assessed and marked by the class teacher in accordance with the school's marking policy. There is planning made available to all teachers via the Staff OneNote offering a breadth of coverage and clear progression. Teachers are encouraged to share and celebrate the children's work via social media.

Monitoring and Review

The Leadership Team, in combination with the Outdoor Learning subject leader, will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and the specific schemes of planned work.