



Inspiring All to Excellence



Edge Hill Academy

LOtC/Forest School Policy

Document Control

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Rationale

At Edge Hill, we believe it is vital that we maintain a creative, broad and balanced curriculum. This includes ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to experience the world first hand and have chance to see and take part in activities outside the classroom. Our school grounds provide rich opportunities to stimulate learning and promote health and well-being amongst our pupils. As a school community, we are devoted to developing these areas. We believe that well planned and facilitated outdoor experiences give children the opportunity to explore their learning in a way that is difficult to reproduce indoors.

All children have a right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. Providing positive opportunities for active learning, the outdoor environment can provide a scaffold through which resilience, resourcefulness, and independence are fostered and one where creativity, curiosity and imagination is encouraged and valued.

Through our curriculum, we will inspire children through positive outdoor experiences and provide them every opportunity to appreciate the wider, natural world to encourage a responsibility for nature conservation in later life.

Aims

- To continuously raise attainment by meeting the learning needs of all pupils and enable them to make good progress.
- Where children have every opportunity to develop an inquisitive and positive relationship with the natural world.
- Where Forest Schools is the driver for Learning Outside the Classroom and provides a holistic learning process that aims to raise confidence and self-esteem in participants whilst promoting a feeling of well-being.
- To continue to develop and evaluate a curriculum that is inclusive and reflective of a sustainable lifestyle and one that feeds our children's imagination and stimulates their creativity.
- For pupils to develop their self-esteem, social skills, independence and resilience through experiencing the world beyond the classroom.

LOtC - Policy into Practice

We will offer the following entitlement to all pupils:

- Relevant, interesting topics and units of work which are planned by the staff and pupils and include opportunities for LOtC (appendix – LOtC provision/ progression)
- Motivational learning opportunities across the curriculum
- Access to experts and educational places including museums, historical buildings and outdoor centres

- Access to the local environment and the opportunity to explore, ask questions and express wonder
- Progression in skills for learning both in and outside the classroom
- Planned opportunities to work with pupils from different school communities
- At least 1 residential opportunity focused on developing skills, confidence and self-esteem and the opportunity to attend a residential abroad (pre-covid)
- Opportunity to perform and celebrate learning
- Opportunity to learn through practical experience- for example drama, outdoor adventure, indoor adventure, workshops, as appropriate to the learning intention
- Opportunity to lead
- Opportunity to develop relationship skills for learning and life

How we will deliver this.

The long-term plan for each year group ensures that trips and events are timetabled annually.

1. Expectations for learning from LOtC are known by all staff and used to plan activities which are progressive and build upon previous learning.
2. Teacher's medium-term plans and topic plans identify opportunities for LOtC. These are planned with reference to the skills and expectations.
4. The school actively seeks out experts from within the school community, makes use of the local environment and works to develop partnerships to enhance provision and opportunity.
5. The schools partnership with other local schools enables us to engage effectively with pupils from other schools.
6. Teachers identify pupils with particular needs for support during LOtC activities to ensure that they make good progress.

Organising LOtC

- All classes will have Forest schools for 1 week per term and activities will be planned linked to topic work during the term. Forest Schools is led by qualified Forest Schools practitioners.
- Pupils are provided with suitable clothing for Forest Schools.
- Many LOtC activities take place with a minimum of additional organisation:
- All parents sign a permission slip in the Home School Link book for free and local trips which are held within the school day and are undertaken to teach the national curriculum reducing the need to chase permission. Where donations are asked for, letters are sent home.

- Year groups hold a budget which enables them to purchase equipment for LOtC if appropriate.
- Forest Schools has its own budget.
- Parent volunteers are DBS checked and a list is kept of available parents for LOtC activities.
- Pupils are encouraged to help plan LOtC activities.
- The school follows the Educational Visit Policy using the Staffordshire Evolve system.

Trips and visits

All staff are encouraged to make use of community facilities. All staff are reminded to use accredited visiting professionals to support and extend learning. It is essential that staff carry out preliminary visits for all new trips to ensure that Risk Assessments are fully informed, risk benefit of activities is appropriate and external users and visitors are appropriately credited. It is expected that all year groups have at least two trips during the school year. These will be included in the year groups' curriculum plans and will support and expand opportunities for teaching and learning. Trips and visits should:

- Be part of the curriculum and enhance teaching and learning
- Provide hands-on, stimulating opportunities for pupils
- Be with quality badge providers wherever possible
- Help develop social skills and self-esteem

All trips must be planned using Staffordshire 'Evolve' system prior to the visit and approved by the EVC and Headteacher. High risk and overseas trips are submitted to the LA for additional authorisation. This ensures that external expert advice is used and the appropriateness and quality of external providers can be ensured.

Please also refer to the Educational Visits Policy (September 2022)

Risk Assessments:

Forest Schools a central part of our LOtC provision, Risk Assessment and Management. Risk Assessments for Forest School activities are regularly reviewed by Forest school leaders and updated depending on planned activities

Edge Hill Academy has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed – requiring them to be reduced to an 'acceptable' or 'tolerable' level – and not to eliminate risks. This requires that proportional (suitable and sufficient) risk management systems be in place, balanced by the potential benefits to participants from a visit, through consideration of the intended learning outcomes. The appreciation of the benefits to learning gained through participation provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e., the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is 'acceptable.' HSE (Health and Safety Executive) endorse this approach

through their 'Principles of Sensible Risk Management' and advocate that it is important that young people are exposed to well managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves.

In addition to the planned risk assessment and management, it is acknowledged that dynamic (i.e., ongoing, environment-driven) risk assessment and management is essential to meet unforeseen, changing needs of a visit.

Use of the school grounds

The school grounds are a resource for use by all the school and community. We aim to use it as frequently as possible:

- as a planned resource within the curriculum e.g. 'habitats', orienteering.
- as a resource to support other curriculum areas e.g. for sketching in art, as a stimulus for writing and Maths activities, Science and problem solving
- to support our healthy schools' initiatives e.g. gardening club, cookery, sustainability initiatives
- Opening it up for events and welcoming its use by members of the community

The local community

A standard letter is sent out to parents requesting their permission for pupils to go on short walks into the community. This is included in the Home School Link Books. All classes are encouraged to make visits into the local community including:

- Visiting local religious and community buildings
- Taking part in local festivals and events
- Making links with local clubs, sports teams, Salvation Army etc.
- Using Business/organisations to enrich curriculum
- Using local facilities such as parks, swimming pools, library

Parents and family members will be invited into school wherever possible to support pupils while engaged in the outdoor environment. All parents are invited at least once a term to join their children to take part in their Forest Schools activities.

Extra-curricular activities

A full range of after-school activities are provided on a weekly basis. These are led by a mixture of school staff and external clubs. The programme changes termly to reflect the seasons, the availability of staff and the interests of the children. A timetable is circulated at the beginning of each term listing the clubs, their time and location. The range and timing of clubs takes into consideration:

- The interests of the pupils at the school
- The facilities available
- Links with the local community

- Expertise of parents and other adults associated with the school [□] The balance and range of activities available

Separate guidance is available for club leaders including health and safety, contact numbers and term dates. Attendance at clubs is monitored to ensure that clubs are accessible to all our pupils. Evaluation sheets are issued during the year to enable clubs to receive formal feedback.

Monitoring and evaluation

- The HT will also provide termly reports to Governors based upon pupil voice and activities completed.
- Parents are invited to join in Forest Schools activity 1 x per week with their child's class. Feedback surveys are carried out by Forest School Practitioners - 1 x per ½ term.
- Staff will complete evaluation forms for trips and events to evaluate the value for money and aspects of safety/ organisation etc.
- The head teacher will observe LOtC through learning walk and at least once a year in each class group and report to governors.
- Pupils not making expected progress in the skills for LOtC will be identified and supported.

Health and Safety

At Edge Hill Academy, we believe that it is important to ensure that our outdoor learning environments offer challenges that give children the opportunity to extend their life skills, develop their confidence and foster their resilience and sense of responsibility as well as teaching them how to be safe and aware of others. We also believe that children should be given the opportunities to manage risks for themselves. Outdoor learning opportunities and risk assessments will therefore be assessed by staff and will be carried out when appropriate following our school Health and Safety policy.