



Outdoor Learning



Sithney School Outdoor Learning Handbook





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1. Intent

Gaining a full understanding and experience of the outdoors and nature is fundamental to building a child's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Sithney School is fully committed to providing pupils with meaningful experiences for curriculum enrichment through hands-on learning in the outdoors.

We run a progressive programme of outdoor learning throughout a child's journey through school. This starts at EYFS and culminates in Year 6 as the children are supported to develop skills, experiences and healthy living in the natural world throughout their time at school. Gaining a deep connection with nature and enhanced responsibility for the care of the environment is central to this extensive programme.

2. Implementation

The Outdoor Learning programme encompasses a range of environments to enable the children to gain a broader and fuller experience and understanding. By the time a child reaches Year 6 they will have benefitted from exposure to the following environments and contexts:

- Forests and woodland areas
- Coastal, beach and tidal zones
- Rivers and waterways
- Ponds, lakes and reservoirs
- Moorland and open countryside
- Historic sites

We offer two programmes of study which are progressive and build year by year to ensure that pupils leave our school as well rounded, skilled and experienced in their abilities to confidently and respectfully access the 'great outdoors'. Adults leading sessions will have received Wild Tribe Outdoor Practitioner training or relevant alternative Outdoor Learning experience / qualifications.

EYFS Programme

Starting in Early Years the EYFS programme incorporates 18 sessions through the Reception Year. All sessions are designed to closely link to the Prime and Specific areas of learning and development of the EYFS curriculum. This forms the foundation element of our Outdoor Learning offer where children gain a clear understanding of the boundaries and behaviour expectations of the outdoor learning programme whilst developing their knowledge and use of a variety of tools and equipment. Children start this programme accessing half day sessions prior to building to full day long learning experiences. By the end of the EYFS programme the children will have a strong foundation and the building blocks needed to move through the KS1/KS2 programme of study.



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KS1/KS2 Programme

In Years 1-6 children take part in a tailored series of Outdoor Learning which focus on the one of the following key areas:

- Traditional Forest School skills
- Team Challenges
- National Curriculum Focus

Each year group will take part in three outdoor learning sessions per year. Each session will be a full day with one taking place in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. This ensures that children gain valuable experiences of the outdoors through the changing seasons. By the end of Year 6 each child would have received a further 18 days of Outdoor Learning experiences which culminate in a final challenge 'The Final Frontier' at Year 6 which enable the children to showcase all that they have learnt. This comprehensive programme teaches the children about utilising outdoor spaces to build structures, make tools and create products, in addition to developing navigation and leadership skills.

3. Impact

Throughout the children's Outdoor Learning programme they work towards The Wild Tribe Achievement Award which is their own personalised journey of achievements and where the children work towards their bronze, silver and gold awards.



The aim of the award is to develop the child as a rounded individual; a child that has fun, grows in confidence, learns new life skills and gains an appreciation of nature. These children will be able to cope with successes and failures and will have a positive outlook on life. It is divided into 3 levels, Bronze, Silver and Gold and within each level there are four strands:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Volunteering and Leading
- Life Skills
- Respecting and Enjoying the Environment



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To complete a level, the child will need to take part and have signed off a number of elements in each strand. Many of the elements involve being outdoors. Once the four strands have been completed, the child **MUST** take part in the **Adventure Challenge** to complete that level of the award.

In addition to measuring impact through the Wild Tribe Achievement Award, we undertake pupil conferencing, session evaluations and parent/pupil/teacher questionnaires. Teachers' plan and link outdoor learning objectives to the National Curriculum therefore enabling them to map, assess and track pupil progress across a variety of subject areas.

Through this holistic Outdoor Learning programme we aim for all children to leave school as responsible, resilient custodians of themselves and the environment. We aim to develop children who will have the skills to be able to thrive in the outdoors whilst having the confidence to apply this learning to all areas of their existing and future studies / lives.



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4. Code of conduct

2.1 Entering outdoor spaces

At Sithney we incorporate a wide variety of outdoor spaces and environments which have nature and wilderness as the central focus. These include:

- Forests and woodland areas
- Coastal, beach and tidal zones
- Rivers and waterways
- Ponds, lakes and reservoirs
- Moorland and open countryside
- Historic sites

Outdoor areas are a calm, positive environment where the children can enjoy being in and around nature. For this reason entering these zones needs to be done calmly and respectfully. When beginning an outdoor learning session the children and class adults are to be invited to enter the area, especially the fire circle. Only when all the children are showing calm attentive behaviour will they be invited into the area of focus.

2.2 Use of the outdoor learning spaces.

The outdoor learning spaces are first and foremost habitat for wildlife, we are only visitors. Therefore these areas need to be treated with respect and left as they are found. Interactions between the group, including adults, and the area must have the welfare of nature at its heart. The 'outdoor environment' is there for us to engage with and enjoy, but once we have gone, there should be limited trace of our presence. All resources that are human-made need to be collected and returned to school, unless specified by Outdoor Learning Leader.

2.3 Boundaries

When using the on school site there are clear boundaries. These may alter slightly if the school grounds are being used by other classes, and these alterations will be shared with the group as they occur. Off site: when we go off site and there are not designated boundaries before the session begins children are to be made aware of how far that they can explore and any fixed boundary markers should be identified. If children move to explore hidden areas an adult should also move into the cover deep enough to be able to see the children, but allowing the children the freedom to explore independently. Children are taught that they need to be able to see an adult at all times.

2.4 Break times

Children will be accessing break times and lunchtimes within the outdoor learning environment. This will closely match pre-existing school scheduled break times. Hot drinks and toilet breaks will be provided throughout the session and in most cases children will leave and return to school site within existing school times.



2.5 Leaving the site

We work according to the 'leave no trace' ethos. Shelters should be taken down (unless specifically needed for future session. All rubbish should be removed and disposed of in school. If artefacts have been found or made these may be taken off the site with the consent of an adult.



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5. Policies

3.1 Safe Guarding

In the delivery of Outdoor Learning we follow the schools' safe guarding policy.

We abide by Ofsted requirement in respect of references and criminal record checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works within the Outdoor Learning experience or has access to our pupils.

We have procedures in place for recording the details of visitors to Outdoor Learning sites and take steps to ensure that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to our students.

3.2 Health and Safety

We aim to make all pupils, parents and staff aware of the health and safety issues and to minimise the hazards and risks to enable students to develop. Outdoor Learning is delivered in line with the school's health and safety policy.

Everyone on arrival at the Outdoor Learning site will be registered.

A basic first aid kit is kept for the treatment of minor injuries by qualified staff. A record of incidents is kept. A mobile phone will be carried. There will be a qualified first aider present at every Outdoor Learning session.

The first aid kit is regularly checked and complies with the health and safety first aid regulations 1981.

Any injury requiring a GP or hospital treatment to a member of staff or pupil will be reported to the appropriate body.

Staff understand the first aid procedures for HIV and AIDS, the disposal of sanitary waste and uphold hygiene regulations accordingly. Protective equipment will be used by staff when dealing with spills or bodily fluids.

Site and equipment are regularly checked for damage and hazards and are dealt with accordingly and immediately.

Basic hygiene is taught to students.

All persons who have been checked for criminal records by an enhanced disclosure from the criminal records bureau and are registered with Ofsted as child carers have unsupervised access to pupils.

All equipment is regularly checked for cleanliness and safety and any dangerous items are repaired or discarded. All materials – including paint and glue are non – toxic.

We abide by the health and safety and work act.



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3.3 Behaviour

The delivery of the Outdoor Learning programme is in line with the school behaviour management policy.

We believe that all participants of the group should develop their learning in an environment in which group members develop self -discipline and self -esteem as they take increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions, and they consider the well -being of others.

Outdoor Learning encourages positive behaviour by focusing on activities that require pupils to negotiate and cooperate. We encourage responsibility in caring for others and for the environment. We increase pupils' self- esteem by enabling them to be successful.

We have procedures in place for reporting incidents and any events which result in poor behaviour are recorded. Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom names and witnesses) Are recorded on incident report forms. A parent is informed on the same day of the incident. (reference to DFES circular 10/98)

Procedure for unacceptable behaviour: 1. Talk to the child involved until calmed down. 2. Remove other children from the area of risk, if it is deemed to be necessary. 3. Inform office and call for help as needed. 4. Debrief child after calm down period. 5. Log incident. 6. Inform parents/guardian 7. Create risk assessment, if necessary 8. Close supervision and monitoring of behaviour.

3.4 Inclusion, Equality and Diversity

Outdoor Learning sessions are open to all pupils, and are adapted according to the pupils/groups individual needs. In Outdoor Learning sessions all persons will be treated equally.

We aim to and are committed to:

- providing a secure environment in which pupils can flourish and in which all contributions are valued;
- including and value the contribution of all students and adults to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- make inclusion a thread which runs through all of the Outdoor Learning activities.

3.5 Complaints procedure

We follow the school's policy with regards to complaints.

We will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of wild tribe. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns.



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3.6 Staffing and employment

The nature of Outdoor Learning means that it is important to maintain a high staffing ratio to ensure that students have sufficient individual attention and to guarantee care and education of a high quality.

Ratio of 1:10 is the ratio we would wish to use.

We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice.

3.7 Risk Assessment

The risks in Outdoor Learning are carefully managed: children and adults are taught the rules for safe handling and use of tools, and fire safety, before being given access. Tool use is carefully controlled and monitored, correct PPE (personal protective equipment) is essential before activities take place. A risk assessment of Outdoor Learning activities is written and reviewed annually. This includes use of tools and fire lighting. The risk assessments are the responsibility of the Outdoor Learning Practitioner, whose duty it is to review, and communicate them to all adults leading Outdoor Learning sessions. It is then the responsibility of the teacher in charge of individual sessions to inform other staff members and volunteers of the relevant risk assessments.

3.8 First Aid

A first aid kit and fire safety equipment is always taken to the forest school area.

A health check must be completed in order to ascertain allergies, and any personal health requirements, including those of adult helpers. Any minor injuries should be logged/reported in the usual way, after returning to school.

3.9 Lost child Policy

In the event of a child become lost the outdoor learning team will put into practice procedures. These will ensure that a systematic approach to find the child is taken and consideration is given to the levels of risk to the child.

In the event a child is lost, we will ensure a search is made for the child as soon as possible. Parents and authorities are notified at the appropriate stage, and a high level of care is maintained to children while the procedures are followed.

3.10 Eating and drinking

Nothing found in the outdoor learning environment should be eaten unless agreed by a competent adult. Children must be reminded not to put their fingers in their mouths or up noses. When eating in a predefined activity the children must first wash their hands or use alcohol gel. If food is provided by the outdoor learning team we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the pupil's individual dietary needs, including any allergies. All staff are fully informed about a pupil's dietary needs.



3.11 Toileting

Children will be reminded to use the toilets before they leave the school building. Access to toilets off school premises will be supervised by adults and where sites are accessed without toilet facilities children will be supported to use 'wild' toileting where appropriate.

3.12 Tools and Equipment

All tools have their own risk assessment and correct use procedures. These must be adhered to at all times, by children and adults. Their correct use includes PPE (personal protective equipment), specific body postures and activities that the tool may be used for. (See tool risk assessment and procedures). Pupils must be trained in the safe use of tools before using them. Tools must be cleaned after use and stored correctly in tool bags. Tools must be counted and checked before any member of the group leaves the site at the end of every session. Broken or damaged tools should never be used.

3.13 Protective Personal Equipment

Staff must ensure that pupils are wearing appropriate clothing for weather conditions, and the activities to be undertaken. PPE must be evaluated according to the risks of each session. Waterproof coats with hoods must be worn in wet weather. Footwear must be sensible, waterproof in wet weather, and fully enclosed shoes or trainers in dry weather. Sandals are not appropriate for forest school. Sunhats may be appropriate in hot weather. Long hair must be tied back. "Dangly" jewellery or scarves should be removed or tucked inside clothing.

3.14 Sticks

Children can carry sticks that are shorter than their arms-length. Longer sticks may be dragged, rolled or carried with other children. Children must be encouraged to think about their proximity to other children when moving sticks. Sticks must not be thrown or pulled from living trees.

3.15 Stones

Stones may be carried and relocated on the site. Stones must not be thrown unless it is part of a specific adult led activity. As long as consideration for what is below them has been taken they can be dropped.

3.16 Digging

Children may dig as long as they are considering the impact that the hole may have on the habitat around them. Fingers and small sticks can be used for digging. The digging of large holes should be discouraged. Digging may not occur in the 'fire circle' or designated work area.



3.17 Climbing

Children are allowed to explore to their own limits but adult intervention should be non-evasive offering verbal support and encouragement as opposed to lifting and carrying. Don't let children climb higher than your arm reach. Children will be briefed as to possible hazards and discussions should take place with regards to 'safe' limits.

3.18 Collecting wood

Wood collected for fire lighting purposes using the 1, 2 and 3's principle. Wood collected for crafting and habitat making will be a variety of shapes and sizes. Refer to Manual handling and wood collecting procedures.

3.19 Rope and string

Rope and string should not be used inappropriately. Children should have the appropriate knots modelled to them by an adult, using a knot story.



6. Tool Talk Cards

Tool	<u>BOW SAW</u>
Parts	<p>This is a bow saw. This is the handle. This is the blade. This is the blade cover. I take the cover off like this. This is the cutting edge When i have finished sawing I put the blade cover back on like this.</p>
Movement	<p>I hold the bow saw like this. I walk with the bow saw like this. I pass the bow saw like this.</p>
Use	<p>When I use the bow saw I use it two arms and a tool's width away like this. I use the bow saw to cut anything bigger than a 2p piece.</p>
Non use	<p>When I am not using the bow saw I place it down beside me with the blade facing in and the handle facing out like this. When I have finished with my bow saw i put it back in the designated area or back in the tool box provided.</p>

Tool	<u>BILL HOOK</u>
Parts	<p>This is a Bill hook. This is the Bill Hook Cover. This is the handle. This is the blade. I take the cover off like this. This is the cutting edge When I have finished, I put the blade cover back on like this.</p>
Movement	<p>I hold the Bill hook like this. I walk with the bill hook like this. I pass the bill hook like this.</p>
Use	<p>When I use the bill hook I use it two arms and a tool's width away like this. I use the bill hook to cleave (split) wood in half.</p>
Non use	<p>When I am not using the bill hook I place it down beside me on its cover, with the blade facing in and the handle facing out like this. When I have finished with my bill hook I put it back in the designated area or back in the tool box provided.</p>



Tool	<u>LOPPERS</u>
Parts	<p>This is a pair of loppers.</p> <p>This is the handle.</p> <p>This is the blade.</p> <p>This is the cutting edge</p>
Movement	<p>I hold the loppers like this.</p> <p>I walk with the loppers like this.</p> <p>I pass the loppers like this.</p>
Use	<p>When I use the loppers I use them two arms and a tool's width away like this.</p> <p>I use the loppers to cut anything bigger than a 2p piece.</p>
Non use	<p>When I am not using the loppers I place them down beside me with the handles facing forwards and the blade facing behind me, like this.</p> <p>When I have finished with my loppers I put it back in the designated area or back in the tool box provided.</p>

Tool	<u>SHEATH KNIFE</u>
Parts	<p>This is a sheath knife.</p> <p>This is the handle.</p> <p>This is the sheath.</p> <p>I take the sheath off like this.</p> <p>This is the blade.</p> <p>This is the cutting edge</p> <p>When I have finished using it I put it back in its sheath, like this.</p>
Movement	<p>I hold the sheath knife like this.</p> <p>I walk with the sheath knife like this.</p> <p>I pass the sheath knife like this.</p>
Use	<p>I use the sheath knife on the outside of my body with the blade facing away from me.</p> <p>I use it two arms and a tool's width away like this.</p> <p>When I use the sheath knife I always cut down ward onto a hard surface.</p> <p>I use a glove on my non-knife hand if appropriate.</p>
Non use	<p>When I am not using the sheath knife I place it down beside me with the blade facing in and the handle facing out like this.</p>



	When I have finished with my sheath knife, I put it back in the designated area or back in the tool box provided.
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