



Pilgrims School

Outdoor Learning Policy

May 2022

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Please note: 'School' refers to Early Years Foundation Stage (Little Pilgrims and Pre School) and Pilgrims Main School.

A. Value and Aims

"We believe that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances"

Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, DES 2006

At Pilgrims we recognise the valuable contribution that outdoor experiences make towards children's education and development and how it can enrich and enhance their learning. All children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. The outdoors can provide the space and freedom for a type of learning that is difficult to replicate indoors.

We believe learning and playing outdoors ...

- supports Pilgrims school Vision, aims and values
- gives children direct contact with nature and all it has to offer
- raises standards across the curriculum
- improves physical and mental health
- adheres to the key principles of the EYFS curriculum
- meets the expectations of an ECO school

This policy is underpinned by the school Values of Curiosity, Kindness and Respect. The staff, Governors and wider school community are committed to

- creating stimulating environments in which the children can feel safe, secure and confident
- promoting social and emotional development
- providing opportunities for children to build relationships
- developing negotiating skills, encouraging everyone listen, take turns, and consider the feelings of others
- encouraging team building, decision making, responsibility and respect
- bringing the curriculum alive to create lasting memories
- encouraging creativity and independence
- enabling the children to make informed decisions, assess situations and take risks
- providing exciting first-hand experiences encouraging challenge and perseverance

B. Objectives

It is important that all staff consciously seek to transmit a positive attitude to the outdoors.

1. Teaching and Learning

All children have direct access via their room to an outdoor space. Beyond this they also have access to extensive grounds including play areas, gardens, a hard court, field, small woodlands, willow tunnel, meadow and fenced pond. The school is also situated next to Bedford Park, with direct access via a private gate, and within a short walking distance to local shops. The area also makes access to a large town and river possible.

Throughout Little Pilgrims and the main school children are provided with a wide range of outdoor opportunities to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and academically through outdoor learning and play.

The outdoor areas are used in context and as a natural resource to support and inspire learning. All pupils receive a wide range of opportunities to develop socially and emotionally. They have the opportunity to engage in imaginative, investigative learning to support the development of key skills (Appendix A) including personal learning, thinking skills and the transfer of skills from outdoors to indoors.

In the Early Years the children are able to choose the outdoor area to explore and play in throughout the day encouraging their independence and confidence. In Little Pilgrims 'In the Moment Planning' is used. This is informed by observations, interests and experiences. Outdoor planning remains flexible so that opportunities that arise outdoors can be taken advantage of. For example, fresh snow falls or new birds landing in the garden.

In Pre School, Reception and Key Stage One activities using the outdoor space are planned for as part of the wider creative curriculum (a four-year planning cycle of topics). They may form part of continuous provision in Pre-School and Reception or be part of 'Star Groups' in Year One. They will also be adult led during whole class/group teaching sessions.

In Reception, Year One and Year Two the children have weekly outdoor learning sessions as part of the class topic and also linked to PSHCEE and wellbeing as appropriate. These incorporate both outdoor learning skills (Appendix A) and cross curricular learning objectives and skills.

2. Forest Schools

Forest School sessions give our children the opportunity to gain confidence and self-esteem through their involvement in a range of innovative, hands-on learning experiences led by a qualified Forest School Leader in a natural setting outside the usual confines of the classroom. Learning in this way is healthy and inspiring, and provides an education that encourages an appreciation of the wider, natural world and also promotes responsibility for nature conservation in the future. Sessions will also offer opportunities to develop the children's ability to risk assess situations and to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of our Forest School sessions. They also support the development of a relationship between pupils and the natural world. This approach supports children's learning in all areas of the curriculum. Forest School sessions at Pilgrims are run by qualified Forest School Leaders who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice

The role of the Forest School Leader

- Plan and set out activities appropriate to the needs and age of the children
- Support the learning and encourage the development and extension of appropriate vocabulary
- Develop an awareness and respect for the natural environment
- Assess, observe and record learning
- Check the environment and equipment is safe and fit for use

3. Organisation of Forest School

Forest School provides weekly teaching sessions for Little Pilgrims and Pre-School in the woodland or in another natural environment, for example a meadow, at a pond etc. The grounds of our school are ideally suited to this. Reception, Year One and Year Two have Forest School sessions which are linked to their discrete topic plans as and when they are relevant.

Behaviour and expectations

In line with our Behaviour and Assertive Discipline Policy we have an agreed set of values and expectations which we follow both indoors and outdoors.

Kindness

We treat everybody in a kind, compassionate, caring and supportive way so that everyone feels happy and safe.

- Work together to help and support each other
- Consider the feelings of others
- Be kind with our hands, feet and voices

Curiosity

We celebrate and encourage curiosity and the desire to wonder and ponder, instilling in everyone a lifelong love for learning and the skills to explore the world around them.

- Think, ask questions, find answers and create solutions
- Approach each new opportunity positively
- Persevere even when the path seems challenging

Respect

We acknowledge the feelings, interests and beliefs of others within an environment that reflects understanding, honesty and integrity.

- Stop, look and listen when someone is talking
- Take pride in knowing we have tried our best
- Take care of each other, our belongings, our school and our environment
- Be truthful and display good manners at all times

Alongside our values we also have a set of Outdoor Learning Rules:

Outdoor Learning Rules

1. We are kind with our hands, feet and voices.
2. We display good sitting.
3. We always try our best.
4. We take care of the environment we are using.
5. We tidy away all the equipment we have used.

4. Planning

In Little Pilgrims staff undertake 'In the Moment' planning which is informed by the children's interests and experiences. Staff make observations of the children which then informs their planning. Most activities will be child initiated with the exception of planned timetabled activities such as Forest School.

Pilgrims Outdoor Learning skills (Appendix A) lists are used alongside skills lists for specific subjects. These lists support planning to help create opportunities in the following areas:

Learning in Outdoor Environments

- Attitudes Towards Outdoor Learning
- Communication and Collaboration Skills
- Using Tools, Equipment and the Environment

Learning about the Outdoor Environment

- Care for the Environment
- Managing Risks

The skills lists allow for progression of types of skills and approaches to the outdoors. They also offer chances to consolidate learning and use prior knowledge or skills to inform new skills.

In Pre-School and Reception, the outdoor planning is shown on the weekly planning sheet in the Outdoor Learning column, this will show continuous provision. If a specific outdoor learning session is planned it will be linked to one of the seven areas of learning and also link to the year group skills lists for Outdoor Learning.

In Year One and Year Two weekly outdoor learning sessions are shown on the weekly planning. These will incorporate a mixture of subject areas throughout each topic e.g. Numeracy, History and Wellbeing.

In weekly year group planning meetings, the planned sessions are discussed and evaluated. Observations are made during the sessions and this then informs future sessions if needed.

5. Playtimes and lunchtimes

In line with the Care and Supervision Policy we use a variety of equipment and outdoor spaces during playtimes; before, during and after school.

During break times the children throughout the main school have access to a variety of toys. These include ride on's, skipping ropes, balls etc as well as larger climbing frames. The main school playground houses a mud kitchen for free use, and also a den building kit. The children have free access to these whilst being monitored by staff.

The children from Reception and Key Stage One are encouraged to use the school field and its equipment at break times. They have access throughout the year and in a variety of weathers. The children are expected to have wellington boots in school every day to allow them to use the field in all weathers.

We understand the importance of imaginative play and the children are able to use a range of natural objects within their play e.g leaves, sticks, stones, pebbles. The children can use these objects appropriately and we use assembly and circle times as an opportunity to discuss the correct ways to use them within play. We regularly review this approach to play and make adjustments if needed.

Tree climbing

The trees within the school grounds are maintained, and inspected yearly, to ensure that they are not climbable with the exception of one climbing tree. The tree at the bottom of the sloped entrance to the playground has been trimmed to allow the children to climb

safely to a reasonable height and to climb away from the small nearby fence. The ground under the tree is covered with bark chippings to the correct depth to allow for landing or in case of any falls from a low height. This tree has a member of staff stationed near by during all breaktimes to assist the children should they need support. The children are able to take measured risks and climb to a height that they feel comfortable and able to climb down.

Other climbing opportunities include a large natural wooden climbing frame.

6. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The nature of Outdoor learning allows us to focus on a skill or experience rather than producing an end product. During outdoor sessions the children may climb, explore, touch, hear or observe to meet the objective and this often does not lead to final product but this do not mean that learning has not taken place. Evidence of learning may be judged via questioning or transfer of skills to another session. Staff may make written observations of learning or take video/sound recordings or photographs.

7. Organisation

Outdoor Learning takes places across the school and throughout the day. It may be during continuous provision, Forest School, Outdoor Learning sessions or playtimes. All children are encouraged to embrace the outdoors in all seasons and all weathers.

8. Extra-Curricular Provision

There are a variety of clubs available to the children after school, these may involve the use of the outdoors including Eco-Club, Outdoor club and a range of sports clubs. Owls have their own garden which they enjoy planting, digging and weeding

9. Inclusion

At Pilgrims we are committed to providing for every child, whatever their individual needs. All outdoor areas are accessible by wheelchairs. (See Inclusion Policy)

10. SEND

All children have access to outdoor lessons. These will be differentiated by the class teacher in line with the needs of the child and their education plan. Support will be offered where needed and resources will be adapted to suit the needs of the child.

11. A, G & T

Children who show particular talents in a broad range of outdoor skills are identified and put on the Able, Gifted & Talented register. They are then given opportunities to further develop their skills within lessons and through the opportunity to participate in outside events or activities (See A, G & T policy).

12. Working in Partnership

We work together with Pilgrims Parents to raise funds, investigate areas of development and organise working parties to develop the school grounds. The grounds have also been used to provide outdoor learning training for other schools and their staff .

13. Health and Safety

At Pilgrims we take Health and Safety very seriously and the use of the outdoors has risk assessments carried out as are appropriate. These are collated in a file kept in the office of Little Pilgrims, Main school staff room and the Pre-School office. All staff must read and

sign all relevant assessments. These assessments are reviewed by the school's Health and Safety Officer and updated regularly.

If an outdoor session is taken by a single adult with a class or group the adult will take a school walkie talkie outside with them. These are kept in the medical room and stored in the charging unit. The walkie talkies can be used to communicate with the office should an accident or incident occur needing immediate assistance. They should be used on Channel 4.

14. Management and Co-Ordination

The curriculum co-ordinator for outdoor education supports staff in planning and delivering the curriculum through discussion, observation and monitoring of both plans and children's work and assessments. In service training is provided on a variety of aspects of outdoor learning as appropriate to keep staff up to date with current developments. The co-ordinator is also responsible for the budget and ensures that action plans for adequate and resources are available to support teaching and learning.

15. Resources & Training

Resources are available via the Outdoor Education co-ordinator and the Forest Schools leader. These are to be used to support and enhance learning outdoors. Specific equipment such as tarpaulins and ropes can be used to create shelter to allow sessions to take in any weathers.

All children are expected to have wellington boots and waterproof clothing in school each day and have sunhats in the summer months. The school provides sun cream to be administered on sunny day for all classes, unless a child has a specific prescribed cream.

Staff are expected to have wellington boots and waterproof jackets in school. There are small number of waterproof jackets kept in school for staff use if needed. Staff should also take a school walkie talkie on all outdoor sessions when the class or group is with a lone adult.

16. Cross Curricular Issues

English, Design Technology, PSHCEE, Art, Geography, History, Science, Music and Information Technology all provide realistic contexts to develop outdoor learning and the use of the outdoor spaces. Short term planning allows teachers to record possible links to these areas of learning. Where possible, outdoor learning sessions will link to the Creative Curriculum topics. If this is not applicable then it will be taught as a discrete lesson.

17. Appendix A – Skills lists for Reception, Year One and Year Two

Outdoor Learning Skills: Typically in Reception

Learning in Outdoor Environments



Positive Attitudes for Outdoor Learning	
I value the opportunity to learn outdoors.	Earlier positive experience makes me happy to work outside when I get the option.
I am an adaptable outdoor learner.	I can learn outdoors by following the instructions and modelling of others.
I am a reflective outdoor learner.	I can evaluate my outdoor learning with scaffolds of language or examples from others.
I expect the best of myself, both outdoors and in.	I follow the school expectations both outdoors and in. I know that positive behaviour supports my progress outdoors.
I make contributions to the environment and my local community.	With the help of adults my impact on the environment and local community is neutral.
Communication and Collaboration	
I listen.	I listen to and follow simple instructions. I recognise sound sources in the environment.
I observe and evaluate.	When my attention is called I can observe a process and sustain focus.
I communicate.	I use appropriate language associated with the outdoor environment e.g. weather, space, tools. I can follow signs and signals given by others.
I work with others.	With guidance I can collaborate with peers. I take turns and show concern for others' ideas, opinions and feelings. I take the lead when I feel comfortable.
I build on my learning.	I can draw on my previous learning outdoors. I can recall previous outdoor experiences in/out of school.
I use my outdoor learning to support my indoor learning.	I use outdoor learning experiences to improve my understanding of subjects in the classroom. I use my outdoor learning to improve my confidence in the classroom.
Using equipment and the environment safely	
I am prepared for the learning.	I dress appropriately. I can dress myself with some support for outdoor learning.
I use tools and equipment safely.	I use tools and equipment with support and guidance to complete a task.
I use the environment appropriately.	With guidance I can find appropriate objects and environments to support the learning session.
Managing Risks	
I can identify risks.	I know what a hazard is.
I make choices to keep myself safe.	I follow instructions from adults to keep myself safe.
My choices and actions keep others safe.	I demonstrate patience and understand that adults may need to support others. My actions are not selfish.

Learning about Outdoor Environments

Care for the Environment	
I observe how the environment is changing.	With support I can describe fundamental seasonal changes in familiar outdoor environments.
I improve the environments I visit.	I ensure the environment I visit is left as I find it.
I promote sustainability.	I appreciate the process of planting, tending and harvesting. I learn to 'reduce, reuse and recycle' to sustain our environment.

Outdoor Learning Skills: Typically in Year One

Learning in Outdoor Environments



Positive Attitudes for Outdoor Learning	
I value the opportunity to learn outdoors.	I am positive about learning outdoors and find opportunities to do so.
I am an adaptable outdoor learner.	I can build on my prior experiences to learn outdoors with some help.
I am a reflective outdoor learner.	I recognise my strengths and weaknesses as an outdoor learner. With support I can set myself targets to improve.
I expect the best of myself, both outdoors and in.	I learn outdoors with the same, or better attitude, to learning as when I am learning indoors. I follow the school expectations.
I make contributions to the environment and my local community.	With the guidance adults my impact on the environment and local community is positive.
Communication and Collaboration	
I listen.	I listen to whoever is talking. I remember to stop and look at them when they talk, or stop and listen to ambient sounds.
I observe and evaluate.	I watch demonstrations with closely. I can work with others to compare and contrast key points.
I communicate.	I can alter my volume and position – accounting for the environment – in order to be heard. I can follow and give simple signals (verbal/non-verbal)
I work with others.	I can work with different people and listen and respond within a discussion. Sometimes I need help to overcome conflict or barriers. I take a turn to lead and understand when someone else is best placed to lead.
I build on my learning.	I can draw on my previous learning outdoors and build on it. I can recall and talk about my previous outdoor experiences in/out of school.
I use my outdoor learning to support my indoor learning.	I can use the outdoors to practise skills or techniques that I will also use indoors. My outdoor learning helps build my confidence in the classroom.
Using equipment and the environment safely	
I am prepared for the learning.	I recognise the need to prepare for outdoor learning. I can follow a routine and dress appropriately doing this with increasing independence. I am beginning to prepare according to the weather – sun safety, hydration, safety equipment, thermal control.
I use tools and equipment.	I use a wider range of tools and equipment with support and guidance to complete a task.
I use the environment appropriately.	I can use found objects to support the learning session. I visit places further from school. I understand that I must respect the environments I visit.
Managing Risks	
I can identify risks.	I am beginning to identify hazards within a learning session/environment. I can discuss less likely hazards with adults. I can see that environmental changes may create hazards that have not previously been there.

I make choices to keep myself safe.	I follow instructions from an adult to keep myself safe. I immediately seek help or accept it if it is required.
My choices and actions keep others safe.	Even if others are not following instructions, I do. I understand that adults may need to help others at times and I wait safely until they are ready. If someone is in trouble I will seek help from an adult and not try to help them myself.

Learning about Outdoor Environments

Care for the Environment	
I observe how the environment is changing.	I recognise whether a change is seasonal or permanent. I am beginning to recognise which changes are natural and which are man-made.
I improve the environments I visit.	With help from adults I take opportunities to reduce pollution in natural environments I visit, for example litter picking/removal.
I promote sustainability.	I understand the process of planting, tending and harvesting from first-hand experience. I know to 'reduce, reuse and recycle' to sustain our environment.

Outdoor Learning Skills: Typically in Year Two

Learning in Outdoor Environments



Positive Attitudes for Outdoor Learning	
I value the opportunity to learn outdoors.	I am positive about learning outdoors. I can identify how learning outdoors has a positive impact on me.
I am an adaptable outdoor learner.	I can build on my prior experiences to learn outdoors. I apply my skills to new tasks to be successful.
I am a reflective outdoor learner.	I recognise my strengths and weaknesses as an outdoor learner. I understand how I can make changes to improve.
I expect the best of myself, both outdoors and in.	I can be relied upon to maximise my outdoor learning time. I follow the school expectations.
I make contributions to the environment and my local community.	With the guidance adults my impact on the environment and local community is positive.
Communication and Collaboration	
I listen.	I listen to whoever is talking. I follow instructions and ask questions where necessary. I can identify different ambient sounds.
I observe and evaluate.	I make observations of environments. I question appropriately to improve my understanding. I can work with others to compare and contrast key points.
I communicate.	I can alter my volume and position – accounting for the environment – in order to be heard. I can follow and give simple signals (verbal/non-verbal)
I work with others.	I can work with different people and listen and respond within a discussion. I take a turn to lead and include others within the task.
I build on my learning.	I can draw on my previous learning outdoors and build on it. I draw on errors from the past and know these help me learn in the future.
I use my outdoor learning to support my indoor learning.	I can transfer skills from outdoor learning to the classroom. My outdoor learning helps build my confidence in the classroom.
Using equipment and the environment safely	
I am prepared for the learning.	I know the routine for outdoor learning and dress appropriately. I am beginning to prepare according to the weather – sun safety, hydration, safety equipment, thermal control.
I use tools and equipment.	I use a wider range of tools and equipment with increasing precision and care for myself and others.
I use the environment appropriately.	I can find appropriate objects and environments to support the learning session. I visit places further from school. I understand that I must respect the environments I visit.
Managing Risks	
I can identify risks.	With greater independence I can identify likely and less likely hazards within an environment. (An adult will check my understanding)
I make choices to keep myself safe.	I follow instructions immediately. I alter my choices and actions as I identify risks.
My choices and actions keep others safe.	Even if others are not following instructions, I do. I help others keep safe by offering reminders. If someone is in trouble I will seek help from an adult and not try to help them myself.

Learning about Outdoor Environments

Care for the Environment	
I observe how the environment is changing.	I recognise whether a change is seasonal or permanent. I recognise which changes are natural and which are man-made.
I improve the environments I visit.	With help from adults I take opportunities to reduce pollution in natural environments I visit, for example litter picking/removal or reducing energy loss.
I promote sustainability.	I understand the process of planting, tending and harvesting from first-hand experience. I contribute to composting.

18. Appendix B – Associated Policies

Forest Schools Policy

Care and supervision Policy

Behaviour and Assertive Discipline Policy

EYFS Policy

Inclusion Policy

A,G&T Policy

SEND Policy