



Learning Outside the Classroom Policy

Reviewed – November 2021

For review – November 2023

It is a failure if we are *only* producing children who are able academically. Parents who are the centre of a child's life, must be supported by the school in helping their child be confident, by providing something, be it a club or a subject, that enables their child to understand and feel success.

from the Keevil CofE Academy Mission Statement

Learning outside of the classroom is part of our philosophy, so that we can deliver our stated aims from our mission statement (see above). Therefore, we see it as part of our core provision, rather than an added extra.

Learning outside of the classroom is a broad term, that to us includes: activities undertaken in the school grounds and in our local environment, visits to places further afield, residential trips, adults other than the class teacher working with children within the school or in other locations, to name a few.

There is strong evidence that good quality learning outside the classroom adds much value to classroom learning. It leads to a deeper understanding of concepts that span traditional subject boundaries, and can help bring learning alive. It can be powerful and motivating for children, having real impact and credibility. Through skilled teaching, learning outside of the classroom readily becomes a stimulating source of fascination, personal growth and can lead to breakthroughs in learning. It can be a powerful way for us to develop the Keevil Characteristics (Resilience, Communication, Problem-Solving, Team-Work, Learning and Diligence) in our pupils.

Benefits of learning outside the classroom:

- helps to ensure that children are successful learners enabling children to develop knowledge and skills in ways that add value to their everyday learning experiences.
- enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon young children's attitudes beliefs and self-perceptions.
- contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem and self-sufficiency.
- can have a positive impact upon children's behaviour.
- contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a Healthy lifestyle.
- has a positive impact upon children's personal and social development.
- can bring about community cohesion and allow children to develop as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to their wider community.
- can create pride in the school and wider community and promote community involvement, renewing children's pride and creating a sense of belonging and responsibility.
- raises learners' attainment, promotes and strengthens communication skills, team work and sense of cohesion.

Health and Safety

We will support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. Pupils will be taught to manage risks. It is important to ensure that the environment outside of the classroom offers

challenges and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others. Opportunities for learning outside the classroom will be grasped when available and teachers will assess risk.

In the first instance the school's policies relating to Health and Safety and Risk Assessment should be referred to and applied prior to any learning activity outside of the classroom. It is also important that the school applies robust safety measures to effectively manage and minimise risks. It is equally important, however, that all involved, including parents acknowledge that a degree of residual risk remains. However, we believe in evaluating risk benefits: the positive benefits of any activity should always be balanced against the risk that is involved.

Our children are taught to manage risks in regard to learning outside of the classroom. All pupils are regularly reminded about the importance of staying safe. Children are reminded of the importance of keeping themselves and members of the school community safe.

The following expectations are understood by all pupils, creating a shared understanding of how pupils safeguard themselves and others when undertaking learning outside of the classroom:

- We must prioritise safety at all times when we participate in any learning.
- We must stay with our group when told to do so.
- We will only go in areas and places that we are instructed to, never leaving these boundaries unless accompanied by an adult.
- Rules relating to use of equipment must be followed.
- We will wear appropriate clothes and use equipment as instructed by the adult in charge.
- We must be sensible and ensure that we achieve our learning objectives.
- If we follow the expectations above, we will enjoy learning and stay safe.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment of the children's learning will be valued equally in and out of the classroom and should be part of the same process. This policy should be considered alongside other relevant policies. It will be reviewed by the academy council as part of its schedule of policy review.

Managing the Delivery of Learning Outside the Classroom

Through the monitoring of teaching and learning e.g. forward planning meetings, classroom observation, teachers' self-evaluations, summative assessment records and other school procedures we closely monitor the use of learning outside the classroom as a key element of the learning experience at Keevil CofE Academy.

We provide support and professional development to enable staff to feel confident developing the expertise or knowledge base to adapt their practice to include opportunities for learning beyond the confines of the classroom.

We encourage resilience in our response to all learning activities.

We recognise and give importance to the part played by learning experiences outside the classroom at the school. We actively encourage teachers to plan opportunities for children to engage in learning beyond the school grounds. Each year group has a planned programme of educational visits which complement and extend learning. We have worked with staff to develop a full understanding of the benefits of learning outside the classroom.

Procedural Requirements

The school grounds

For us, the school grounds include St Leonard's Church and our school field (located behind the church) as well as our own site. Teachers are encouraged to use all parts of our grounds as and when appropriate for the learning and development of the children in their class.

Teachers can take their class to the church or the school field accompanied by one other DBS-checked adult, preferably the class TA. They will take the school walkie talkie with them, to ensure that there is an open line of communication with a member of staff on site at all times.

Risk Assessments for all parts of our grounds are up-dated annually and include contingencies for emergencies.

The local environment

We try to make as much use as possible of the wonderful environment around the school, from welly walks through the village, cross-country running using local footpaths, sport at the village field, to productions at the village hall.

Teachers can take their class out into our local environment accompanied by at least one other DBS-checked adult, ideally the class TA. They will take the school walkie talkie and/or a phone with them, so that there can be communication with the school site at all times.

If the route being taken involves walking along and/or crossing any roads, staff and children will wear 'high vis' vests, and appropriate measures taken to ensure that any road crossing is concluded safely.

Risk Assessments for particular activities are up-dated annually and include contingencies for emergencies.

Forest School

Forest School is an integral part of our school curriculum and all children have the opportunity to take part in it every year. Our Forest School base is within our school field, but activities also make use of the countryside around us.

Forest School sessions are run by members of staff with appropriate Forest School training and accreditation, plus at least one member of staff who has undertaken outdoor first aid training. The school walkie talkie is used to ensure contact is maintained with the school at all times.

Children wear appropriate clothing for Forest School activities.

Forest School staff operate a checklist system prior to each session to ensure that equipment and activities are correctly prepared for.

Risk Assessments are carried out for all Forest School activities, and staff follow the procedures in these to ensure that everyone is kept safe and learning opportunities are maximised. Emergency contingency plans are also detailed within these.

Places further afield

Class teachers are encouraged to organise trips for their classes that will bring alive their curriculum learning, and/or add breadth and depth to children's educational experience.

Parental consent will always be sought, in writing, for a trip beyond our local environment.

Approval of an intended trip is given by a member of the school's leadership team.

Teachers are encouraged to evaluate the provision provided in an off-site activity/visit prior to the children going.

Teachers will ensure that their class is accompanied by an appropriate number of DBS-checked adults on such trips. They are responsible for briefing these adults prior to departure.

Teachers will be responsible for any medication that needs to be taken and administered during the trip, following the school's usual protocol.

Teachers are encouraged to maintain contact with the school throughout the duration of the trip, and should also take emergency contact details for all children with them.

Risk Assessments from the external sites are used in conjunction with school ones. These detail procedures to follow in emergency situations.

Residential places

We believe in the power of residential trips to allow our children to grow and develop, and we encourage and support all children in KS2 to participate in the two trips we offer – 3 days in Danywenalt for Y3 and Y4 children, and 5 days in Pencelli for Y5 and Y6 children.

Parental consent will always be sought, in writing, for a residential trip.

The school will ensure that children are accompanied by an appropriate number of DBS-checked members of staff on residential trips. These adults will be briefed prior to departure.

A designated member of staff will be responsible for any medication that needs to be taken and administered during the trip, a specific form will be completed by parents/carers prior to the trip.

Members of staff are encouraged to maintain contact with the school during the trip, and should also take emergency contact details for all children with them.

Risk Assessments from the external sites are used in conjunction with school ones. These detail procedures to follow in emergency situations.

Risk Management and Risk-Benefit Assessment

Risks are expected to be reduced to an acceptable or tolerable level, and not necessarily eliminated. Planning should achieve a rational balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity.

Visit planning includes consideration of the question: *What are the really important things that we need to do to keep us safe?* It should focus on those issues that are specific to the individual event, taking into account the needs of the group, the experience and competency of the staff team, and the leader in the context of the event. We use EVOLVE to help us plan for and manage risks for learning outside of the classroom.

Planning that includes activities delivered by an external provider, will rely on the provider risk assessing and managing the activity.

We use generic risk assessments for activities and visits that we do regularly. These are up-dated annually.

Volunteers

The use of parents and other adults with a clear association with the school as helpers on trips and other activities taking place outside of the classroom, is invaluable to us in facilitating the many opportunities we give to our children. It also maintains close links with our community, and enables us to access a wider set of skills and experience than exist amongst our staff.

Volunteers understand and consent to the fact that they are answerable to the lead member of staff during the activity.

All volunteers will hold current DBS-checks, plus will have undergone other relevant vetting checks..

The member of staff in charge of the activity will ensure that they brief any volunteers before the start of the activity so they are familiar with the expectations of their role, and any important health and safety information.

Emergency Procedures

In the case of an emergency during an activity outside of the classroom, the lead member of staff will follow the procedure outlined for such an incident in the Risk Assessment for the activity, or taken from the school's Critical Incidents Policy.

The lead member of staff will have emergency contact details for all children on the activity with them at all times, and will inform a member of the school's leadership team as soon as is possible and take further advice and guidance from them.

Insurance

The school's insurance policy is organised by the Acorn Education Trust annually, and covers all outdoor learning undertaken by the school.

Finance

It is often necessary to ask parents/carers for a voluntary contribution to help fund trips and other activities outside of the classroom. Any letter asking for a contribution will explain that it is voluntary, but also that the trip will not be able to go ahead if enough money is not collected.

No child will ever be excluded from a trip for financial reasons. To the best of its ability, the school will support a family to make staggered or reduced payments. All letters will inform parents/carers who to speak to about the financial arrangements of an activity.

All payments are made directly to the school, and under no circumstances will money be processed through personal accounts.

Keevil CofE Academy will take a common sense approach to refunds and cancellations, ensuring that all pupils are treated equally.

Inclusion

We endorse the following principles:

- A presumption of entitlement to participate
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- Integration through participation with peers

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled participants because of their disability, without material or substantial justification.

Members of staff in charge of activities must make reasonable adjustments to avoid participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage.

However, the Disability Discrimination Act does not require responsible bodies to place employees or participants at inappropriate risk if a health and safety issue arises.

It is also the case that the adjustments made to include a disabled young person should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity.

Expectations of staff must be reasonable, so that what is required of them (to include a given young person) is within their competence and normal work practices.