

Outdoor Learning Guide For Parents/Carers



Teach
Outdoors
Learning Through Discovery

Who are Teach Outdoors?

Jo Clanfield is an experienced primary teacher who is passionate about getting children learning outside. Jo founded Teach Outdoors with the mission to encourage educators to utilise their outside spaces and natural areas effectively - creating memorable learning experiences for your child, outside the constraints of the classroom.

Teach Outdoors provides schools and educators with the training and support they need, in order to ensure all children can reap the benefits of the outdoor environment.



Our chief aims are:

- To raise the profile of outdoor learning in primary schools
- To provide children with more opportunities to experience practical and active learning. We call this 'sticky' learning because this is when the learning 'sticks' and becomes memorable
- To provide schools with professional support for developing outdoor leadership, teaching and learning
- To celebrate and share excellence in outdoor learning
- To provide opportunities to develop life skills.

Why are we following the Teach Outdoors Programme?

Our school has recently partnered with Teach Outdoors and their team of expert outdoor educators. Through the partnership, our school community will be supported in using our outside spaces in the most effective ways to engage your children in teaching and learning. Our school is aiming to become a Teach Outdoors recognised school. This shows our commitment to delivering an education that provides opportunities for all of our students to thrive.

What is outdoor learning?

You might hear outdoor learning referred to as Forest School, outdoor pursuits like orienteering, nature studies, bug hunting or playing outside. All of these are highly valuable. But Teach Outdoors offers something different - the ideas are intrinsically linked to the curriculum. In essence, we will be looking for the best environment to teach the curriculum, and apply the relevant knowledge and skills. Remember, it's all about providing opportunities for children to make learning memorable and 'stick'.



What will outdoor learning look like?

The beauty of outdoor learning is that our natural world offers us so many opportunities to provide hands-on learning experiences for your children. Outdoor learning might be used to provide active learning experiences to small groups of children who need support in a particular area. A teacher might take out a group of children to carry out an activity on the playground, for example, to help them memorise a particular times table. This opportunity will help them to re-engage with learning and look at the task in a new way.



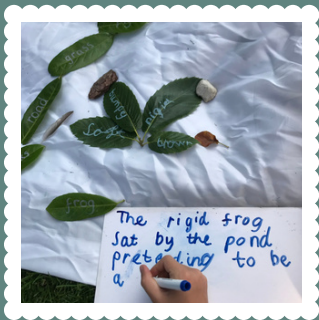
Alternatively, the outdoor environment might be used to observe real-life phenomena in action. In a lesson on evaporation and condensation, the teacher might set the scene by suggesting the children are stranded on an island and need to source clean water. The children can then be encouraged to make a water still and watch the process of evaporation and condensation. These memorable experiences really help to deepen understanding and develop enthusiasm amongst children.

Phonics, reading comprehension, vocabulary, fractions, place value, seasons, habitats, data handling, grammar, history timelines... there are so many ways to teach the curriculum outdoors. The possibilities are endless.

What are the benefits of outdoor learning?

Research has shown outdoor learning can:

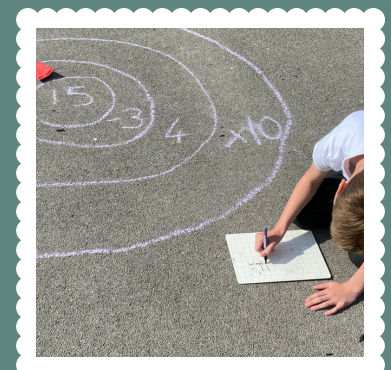
- Increase engagement in learning
- Increase academic achievement
- Improve mental health and well-being
- Increase opportunities for physical activity
- Improve behaviour and attendance rates
- Provide opportunities to foster pride, belonging and involvement in the natural environment.



How can you support your child during outdoor learning?

Don't worry - we will do the hard work for you in school! However, we hope that your child is as enthusiastic about learning outdoors as we are, and we would love for you to foster this passion at home. Here are our top tips:

- Provide appropriate clothing for the weather e.g. coats, gloves, sun hats, wellies.
- Be mindful that your child may come home with some mud on their clothing - it will all come out in the wash!
- Embrace nature. You might find that your child begins to use natural resources to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. It's not uncommon for children to continue learning outside of the lesson, especially if they have access to the same natural resources.
- Become an active member of the school community by supporting outdoor challenges, discussing changes in seasons and attending outdoor curriculum workshops.





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