



Learning Outside the Classroom Policy

Rationale

Our Learning Outside the Classroom Policy (LOtC) aims to foster children's love of learning. At Ronald Tree Nursery School, we believe that all children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. We further believe that it is important to enable children to use the outside environment as a context for learning. Our school believes it is vital that we maintain a broad, balanced and exciting curriculum which ensures that pupils have the opportunity to have first hand experiences outside the classroom. Our school grounds provide rich opportunities that can engage all pupils effectively in learning through nature. Visits outside of school are built into our curriculum and enhance children's learning either through planned whole visits, small group visits initiated by the children's interests or through our 'out and about in the community' days. A wide range of experiences are offered through our curriculum which help to develop children's self-confidence, self-awareness, skills and knowledge.

Aims

- To develop Learning Outside the Classroom as an entitlement for all children
- To ensure high-quality provision through LOtC experiences.
- To develop the curriculum through using the local environment and community
- To offer pupils exciting and stimulating experiences that enthuse them in their learning
- To develop self-esteem through providing a range of opportunities for pupils to excel
- For pupils to develop their social skills, independence and resilience through experiencing forest school type activities.
- To provide a challenging, safe and secure environment within which children can take and manage risks. To encourage close links with parents and the school in celebrating our outdoor space and the rich learning that can take place within it.
- To encourage children to care for their environment.

Policy Statement

- Ronald Tree Nursery School will fully comply with the OEAP National Guidance.
- Ronald Tree Nursery School maintains a fully trained Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC): Jackie Wilson.
- We employ the services of an External Adviser, Mike Fawcett of Longtown Outdoor Learning, who is an accredited member of the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel to provide advice, support and approval for Category C visits (see below).

Ronald Tree Nursery School will classify three categories of trip/visit:

Category A visits

These visits are close to the school, done on a regular basis involving environments known to the staff. It would include normal daily life activities. Examples include walks and exploring the area near to the school site, visits to the local church, library, school sporting fixtures and other regular non-complex activity. It can also include transport if needed.

Category B visits

These visits are to areas beyond the local area involving more complex environments and activity, and will typically be a one off or irregular activity in the school year. The leaders will be approved to lead the visit by the EVC. There may be some specialist training attached to some activities in this area. Examples include visits further afield, farm visits, local parks, museum visits, swimming lessons in offsite pools, zoo visits, sporting festivals and larger tournaments and some basic outdoor education activity.

Category C visits

These visits include residential visits, overseas visits, adventure activities and activities involving water. It is not possible to provide a completely definitive activities list. Examples of activities included would include Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, outdoor adventure activities including hills and mountains, motor sports, adventures on water or field studies involving water.

Benefits of Learning Outside the classroom (LOtC)

Direct experience outdoors is powerful, motivating and has impact and credibility. The results from outdoor learning can be instantaneous as well as active and therefore impact on behaviour as well as tapping into the learning styles of the more kinaesthetic learner. Through skilled teaching, outdoor experiences readily become a stimulating source of fascination, personal growth and can lead to breakthroughs in learning. Active learning readily develops the learning skills of enquiry, experiment, feedback, reflection, review, communication, problem solving, an enterprising attitude and cooperative learning- to name only some benefits.

- LOtC 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.
- LOtC enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon young children's attitudes, beliefs and self-perceptions.
- LOtC contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem and self-sufficiency.
- LOtC can have a positive impact upon children's behaviour.
- LOtC contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle.

- LOfC has a positive impact upon children's personal and social development. It can also bring about community cohesion and allow children to develop as responsible citizens who make positive contribution to their wider community. It 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.
- LOfC raises learners' attainment, promotes and strengthens communication skills, team work and sense of cohesion.

How we will deliver Trips and Visits

Children will have the opportunity to be involved in a number of trips and visits during their time at nursery. These will support and expand opportunities for teaching and learning. Trips and visit should:

- Be part of the curriculum and enhance teaching and learning
- Provide hands on stimulating opportunities for children
- Help develop social skills and self-esteem.

A risk assessment needs to be completed before every trip by the Educational Visits coordinator (EVC).

Use of the school garden

The school garden is a resource for use by all the children. We aim to use it all day every day to give the children free choice as to whether they would prefer to learn indoors or outdoors:

- Including it as a planned resource within the curriculum – outdoor activities are planned for daily.
- Using it as a resource to support all curriculum areas
- Using it to support our healthy schools initiatives e.g. gardening, outdoor cookery, and sustainability initiatives.
- During lunch times. Our garden will be used by the children attending the lunch club.

The local community

At the beginning of the year a standard letter is sent out to parents requesting their permission for pupils to go on short walks into the community. All groups are encouraged to make visits into the local community including:

- Visiting local religious and community buildings
- Taking part in local festivals and events
- Using local facilities such as parks
- Visiting local businesses such as the pizza shop, garages, the co-op etc.

- Visiting a local residential care home
- Visiting local schools which the children may transfer to.

Participating in productions

All pupils will have the opportunity to be involved in events such as:

- Christmas sing-a-long
- Easter Bonnet Parade
- End of year garden party

Monitoring and evaluation

Assessment of the children's learning will be valued equally indoors and outdoors and should be part of the same process. In order to monitor this entitlement the Senior Management Team (SMT) will:

- Monitor plans termly for trips, visits and visitors
- Monitor plans termly for opportunities for children to take part in gardening and food preparation activities.
- Evaluate the LOTC activities.

It is particularly important that leaders ensure that:

- All pupils are fully able to participate in age appropriate trips, visits.
- Learning outside the classroom experience support and develop curriculum plans
- Learning outside the classroom experiences are evaluated for their effectiveness.

Health and Safety

We will support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. Pupils will be taught how to manage risks. It is important to ensure that the outdoor environment offers challenges and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others. LOTC opportunities will be grasped when available and teachers will assess risk. In the first instance the school policies relating to Health and Safety and Risk Assessment should be referred to and applied prior to any LOTC activity that may require additional support beyond the reasonable activities one would normally apply within the class room. 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. Our children are taught to manage risks in regard to LOTC. All pupils are regularly reminded about the importance of staying safe. Being safe is a school expectation and children are reminded of the importance of keeping themselves and members of the school community safe.

Linked policies

These include:

- NCC Policy for the Management of Learning Outside the Classroom (June 2018)
- the EYFS
- Health and Safety Policy

Policy review

This policy should be considered alongside other relevant policies mentioned above. It will be reviewed as part of the schedule of policy reviews.

Reviewed: 10th July 2019

Signed: K L Sharman

Head Teacher