



Cults Academy
Outdoor Learning Strategy
2017



Definition

Outdoor Learning has many different interpretations and is referred to in several sources. Aberdeen City Council define Outdoor Learning as:

“taking the learner out of doors to use locations that uniquely provide the most appropriate context for learning through direct experiences”

It is a means to enable learning and deliver outcomes across the whole of the curriculum through developing the values, purposes and principles of the Curriculum for Excellence.

OL enhances learning experiences at all levels from Early Years to the Senior Phase and beyond using projects which focus on learning in real life contexts.

Aberdeen City Council shares the vision of the Scottish Government expressed in “Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning” (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2010).

- *All children and young people should participate in a range of progressive and creative outdoor learning experiences which are clearly part of the curriculum.*
- *Schools and centres will provide regular, frequent, enjoyable and challenging opportunities for all children and young people to learn outdoors throughout their school career and beyond.*
- *Teachers and educators will embed outdoor learning in the curriculum so that learning in the outdoor environment becomes a reality for all children and young people.*

“How good is our school?” (4th Edition) defines **Outdoor Learning** as:

“an approach to learning embedded within the curriculum. It takes place in a range of contexts such as the school grounds, local areas, on day excursions or field trips and residential experiences. Its purposes include developing environmental understanding, encouraging physical activity, health and wellbeing and personal and social development.” (Education Scotland, 2015, p. 60).



Rationale

The increased emphasis on **Outdoor Learning** in 21st century Scottish education originated in public concern and specialised evidence that children are increasingly separated from the natural environment, that they have little opportunity to learn to deal with risks in modern society, and that they exercise physically less than they should. This led to the most comprehensive and integrated national scale research programme on outdoor education ever undertaken in the UK or overseas through the “Outdoor Connections Development Programme”, which was initiated in 2005, by the Scottish Executive and led by Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS).

The research provided strong evidence for the health and educational benefits of education outdoors and led to national policy promoting and supporting the delivery of outdoor learning across all sectors. It is now accepted that “the journey through education for any child in Scotland must include opportunities for a series of planned, quality outdoor learning experiences”.

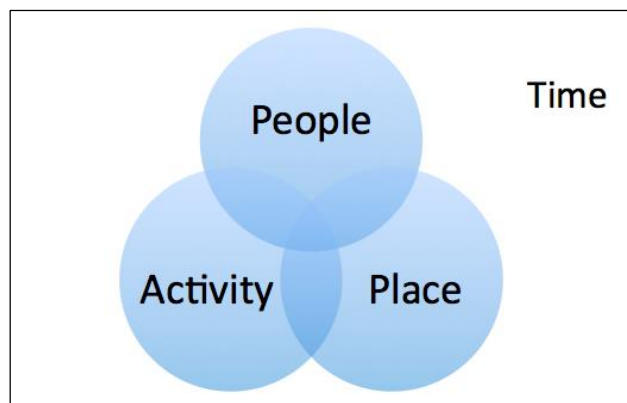
Some general benefits of **Outdoor Learning** are identified (Education Scotland) as:

- connections are made experientially with the real world outside the classroom, helping to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in a meaningful context
- outdoor environments and surroundings act as a rich stimulus for creative thinking and learning. This affords opportunities for challenge, enquiry, critical thinking and reflection
- children and young people find that not everything outside matches the models or the textbooks. This does not mean that what they have found is ‘wrong’. Instead, it develops awareness of the complexities of the real world and can help to develop critical thinking skills
- children and young people are able to understand the relevance of a subject taught in school to everyday life
- children and young people can sometimes behave differently outdoors. Quiet pupils may speak more, others become calmer and more focused when outside, especially in a natural space
- the multi-sensory experience outdoors helps children and young people to retain knowledge more effectively. There are opportunities for pupils to learn with their whole bodies on a large scale
- learning in a less structured environment can provide a different learning experience from that of the classroom
- being outdoors can be a more relaxing learning experience for many learners



Outdoor Learning is almost prominently featured within “How good is our school? 4th Edition” (Education Scotland, 2015) across a wide array of quality indicators. It is also one of the four components of “Learning for Sustainability”.

Learning outdoors is about engaging children and young people in many different ways.



The spectrum of taking learning outdoors is broad. It allows breadth, depth, diversity and progression of experiences across all subjects and through interdisciplinary learning encompasses the entire range of learning experiences undertaken outside within and across all subject areas. Whether it is reading a book outside or participating in an overseas expedition, the curriculum design principles apply. Practitioners need to know how the experience benefits their learners. The quality of learning and teaching is of paramount importance regardless of the place in which it occurs.

Within these contexts are opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work. The numeracy, literacy and health and well-being experiences and outcomes that are the responsibility of all adults can be developed by taking learning outdoors during and out with school hours. Outdoor places provide a diversity of resources and spaces which are hard to replicate in an indoor environment.

Outdoor Learning at Cults Academy

Teaching and Learning

Outdoor learning is incorporated into Learning and Teaching experiences in many Faculties. This ranges from making good use of our extensive grounds to more planned off-site experiences and, in the Senior Phase, project fieldwork. Some examples of current (2017) Outdoor Learning experiences include,

Technologies	designing and testing raincoats outside
Sciences	projection work outside on the school grounds with 'rockets' and golf balls quadrat sampling in local woodland area
Support for Learning	using the school environment for measuring perimeter and data collection for surveys
Expressive Arts	project on the Courtyard Garden in BGE
Social Subjects	local community site visits, field work at geographical features e.g. beach

Extra-Curricular

We have a vast and extensive Opportunities for Personal Achievement programme at Cults Academy. Numerous opportunities are given to pupils which allows them to expand upon the Teaching and Learning they have received in class in a more challenging environment. This takes place in the form of both sporting and non-sporting activities both locally and further afield.

Activities Week

The introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence gave us the opportunity to reappraise our traditional Activities Week which no longer felt fit for purpose. Our aim was to refresh and re-launch to ensure an **inclusive, progressive** and **valuable** experience for all youngsters in S1-3.

S1- a set programme is organised for all pupils within their House groups. A mix of in-school and away days with approved providers of a range of activities gives young people opportunities to mix with different pupils and participate in new, healthy experiences. Costs are subsidised by the school to have a standardised minimal fee for all.

S2- a week long residential trip is organised, across two centres to accommodate numbers. The focus here is to increase the cohesion of the year group across Houses and current friendship groups. Activities will be delivered by Outdoor Education staff from the sites. For those youngsters unable to attend e.g. medical, cultural or social choice, a non-residential



programme is devised by staff in conjunction with the pupils themselves.

S3- at the end of their Junior Phase pupils are offered an opportunity to go on Cultural/Sports trips further afield, either in the UK or Europe. To help keep these inclusive and proportionate, all trips are expected to limit costs to £500-£550 max. The nature of the trips also vary to ensure that we are providing something for every pupil. This allows them to develop socially with peers in different settings and work with teachers who they may not typically work with in school. These trips also provide pupils with experiences which they may never encounter again either as a foreign trip or being with away with friends for a prolonged period.

Activities Week - Phase Two

The next stage of Activities Week development will see us offer pupils in S3 with a wider range of trip choices. This will obviously result in smaller trip numbers but it would be hoped we can tailor the trips to link into pupils' areas of interest within the school curriculum. This could be linked into the areas they are considering for their S4 course choices. For example, we would offer a trip which looked at the Social Subjects of Modern Studies and History, a Geography themed trip, a Health and PE themed trip and a Music and Drama trip etc. It would not necessarily be teachers from that subject area who were on the trip but it would be beneficial if there was at least one.



Supporting Teachers

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessments should not be a barrier to teachers taking part in Outdoor Learning. No physical Risk Assessments are required for Outdoor Learning within the school grounds and local environment. A Dynamic Risk Assessments covers generic ongoing activities.

On off site visits, the leader should check with Val Dow if existing Risk Assessments are in place. If not, then teachers should use the Living Template (attached and on Adventure Aberdeen Website) and make any adaptations which are required. Any venues on ACC list of Approved Providers (see Adventure Aberdeen Website) will already have a Risk Assessment as part of the approval process. For these visits then only a Risk Assessment for the travel aspect is required. The Living Template has a travel element to it so this would be what you use. Thereafter teachers should add anything relevant e.g. Pupil with Epipen, ASN needs, staff contact number pertaining to the individual trip.

The whole paperwork process is straightforward.

1. Parental consent ([V4 form](#)) for trips out of school or activities out of school hours
2. Complete a visit plan (V3 form) for residential trips
3. Risk assessment using the living template which can be found [attached](#)

The Risk Assessments do not need to be sent anywhere, although they should be registered in school with Val Dow and copies for the staff leading the excursion.

Extra-Curricular

Extra-curricular activities allows us to provide pupils with Outdoor Learning opportunities. Again Risk Assessments should not deter teachers. For ongoing and regular sporting fixtures, Dynamic Risk Assessments should be used on top of the standard Risk Assessment which is recompleted at the beginning to each academic session. All teams should maintain a will have First Aid kit, available from the School Nurse, and keep a file of medical and parental contact information provided by the V4 for each pupil who is taking part. For any additional or non-regular events, Risk Assessments will be carried out by the providers e.g. Sport Aberdeen. In this case the transport section of the Living Template will suffice.



Transport Booking Procedures

We are required by Aberdeen City Council to get quotations before booking anything and this is the same for buses. Teachers should follow these steps when booking transport for any school event, whether it is sporting extracurricular, Activities Week or a visit to a lecture.

1. Confirm the date, location and number of pupils going;
2. Inform the office staff of the above details **at least two weeks** prior to the date. You also need to inform the office staff which fund will pay for the transport;
3. The office staff will then contact bus companies to receive quotes and will then book the most appropriate for our needs;
4. Once the booking is confirmed, this will be forwarded onto the member of staff who required the booking

Parental Permission and Payment

We require parental permission for taking pupils out of class for Outdoor Learning and Extra Curricular. We also require permission if we are taking pupils out with the City even after school hours. In these situations, staff should use the letter template which is attached as appendix [A1](#) & [A2](#) for sporting extracurricular and appendix [B](#) for non-sporting.

For destinations within the City, pupils should make **£5** payment contribution. For visits outside the City, pupils should make **£10** payment contribution.

Staff Development

Developing Staff Leadership Skills is one of the key benefits of our Activities Week model. When allocating staff placement on residential trips, and daily activities, three pieces of information are taken into account. We use the Aberdeen City Council experience scale (1 being the least experienced, 4 being the most experienced), gender and faculty. This allows for staff to build friendships across the school which will benefit all round school ethos. Staff who do not have experience of leading trips but want to lead are matched with an experienced leader who they can shadow and assist, building up their experience. We also rotate staff allocations across all types of residential trips to ensure all staff to experience variety and work with a range of colleagues.



Aberdeen City Council – Education and Children’s Services

CULTS ACADEMY

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Quarry Road
Cults
Aberdeen
AB15 9TP

XX/XX/XXXX

APPENDIX A1

X v Cults Academy – XXXX Competition Name XXXX

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your son/daughter has been selected to represent the school by playing in the up and coming XXXXXX tie against XXXXXX on XXXXXXXX. Due to the distance involved, the pupils will be leaving school at XXXXXXXX with your permission. We will hopefully return to the school at approximately XXXX. Pupils will miss XXX periods of school and it is their responsibility to ensure they catch up with any work missed. **Please let me know if there are any changes to the medical information you have provided already.** (If V4 already provided)

Please return the attached slip and £XX contribution for the bus payment by **XXXXXXXXXXXXXX**. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at XXXXXXXXXX@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXX



X v Cults Academy – XXXX Competition Name XXXX

Name _____ Tutor Group _____

I give consent for my son/daughter is able to attend the above event

Signed _____ (parent/guardian)

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APPENDIX A2

X v Cults Academy – XXXX Competition Name XXXX

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your son/daughter has been selected to represent the school by playing in the up and coming XXXXXXXX on XXXXXXXX.

We will be leaving the school at the end of the school day with a return time of approximately XXXXX. *Pupils will be provided with a rugby top and socks but will need their own shorts, boots and mouth guard.* We would also recommend a tracksuit top & bottoms, a waterproof jacket and any water or snacks which they may require. Players **must** wear a mouth guard. Please let me know if there are any changes to the medical information you have provided already. (If V4 already provided)

Please return the attached slip and £10 contribution towards the payment for the bus by XXXXXXXX. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at XXXXXXXX@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

XXXXXXXX



X v Cults Academy – XXXX Competition Name XXXX

Name _____ Tutor Group _____

I give consent for my son/daughter is able to attend the above event

Signed _____ (parent/guardian)

Aberdeen City Council – Education and Children’s Services

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APPENDIX B

EVENT TITLE

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We have been fortunate enough to secure a booking at this event run by XXXX. It is intended to XXXXX.

INFORMATION ON THE EVENT

It will take place XXXXXX from XXXXXX.

A bus has been organised to transport the pupils to and from the EVENT. The bus will leave Cults Academy at XXXX and return at XXXX. Pupils will miss XXX periods of school and it is their responsibility to ensure they catch up with any work missed. Please return the attached slip, V4 form and £XX contribution for the bus payment by XXXXXX. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at XXXXXX@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

XXXXXX



EVENT TITLE

Name _____ Tutor Group _____

I give consent for my son/daughter is able to attend the above event

Signed _____ (parent/guardian)



Line Manager name: J McWilliam		Line Manager signature	Assessment No
Date: 25/1/17	Assessed by: Signature:	Location: Activity: Indoor Activities	Review date:

Risk Assessment (general)

This is a Live Template of a risk assessment identifying typical hazards and control measures for Routine and Expected visits. Visit Leaders should add specific details relevant to each venue and on a regular basis. Delete elements that are not relevant

What has the potential To cause harm (hazards) and what harm might result?	Who and how many people might be at risk?	What measures are already in place?	Severity	Likelihood	Risk rating	What further action (s) needs to be taken to reduce risk	By whom and by what date
Possible hazards include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doors • Nets • Equipment and trolleys • Litter / dirt on floor • Spillages • Third parties • Medical/ASN 	Staff x 1 Pupils x 30	Adequate staff ratio Ensure Visit Leader has prior knowledge of site / venue Carry out staff training for new staff Carry out dynamic risk assessment Identify suitable supervision techniques Participants clearly briefed on working areas, behaviours, specific hazards, timings etc. Emergency procedures (fire alarm) in place and reviewed with participants Class register completed prior to lesson. Staff aware of school procedure when					

What has the potential To cause harm (hazards) and what harm might result?	Who and how many people might be at risk?	What measures are already in place?	Severity	Likelihood	Risk rating	What further action (s) needs to be taken to reduce risk	By whom and by what date
		dealing with a first aid issue. Staff aware of first aid supplies within the department. Staff familiarisation with Medical and ASN information.					

This is the Risk Assessment for Indoor Sporting Activities.

Appendix C

Risk Assessment (general)



Line Manager name: J McWilliam		Line Manager signature		Assessment No:	
Date: 25/1/17	Assessed by: Signature:	Location: Activity: Outdoor Activities		Review date:	

This is a Live Template of a risk assessment identifying typical hazards and control measures for Routine and Expected visits. Visit Leaders should add specific details relevant to each venue and on a regular basis. Delete elements that are not relevant

What has the potential To cause harm (hazards) and what harm might result?	Who and how many people might be at risk?	What measures are already in place?	Severity	Likelihood	Risk rating	What further action (s) needs to be taken to reduce risk	By whom and by what date
Possible hazards include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates/Steps • Nets • Equipment • Litter/broken glass • Wet/soft ground • Third parties • Medical/ASN 	Staff x 1 Pupils x 30	Adequate staff ratio Ensure Visit Leader has prior knowledge of site / venue Carry out staff training for new staff Carry out dynamic risk assessment Identify suitable supervision techniques Participants clearly briefed on working areas, behaviours, specific hazards, timings etc Emergency procedures (fire alarm) in place and reviewed with participants Class register completed prior to lesson.					

What has the potential To cause harm (hazards) and what harm might result?	Who and how many people might be at risk?	What measures are already in place?	Severity	Likelihood	Risk rating	What further action (s) needs to be taken to reduce risk	By whom and by what date
		<p>Staff aware of school procedure when dealing with a first aid issue.</p> <p>Staff aware of first aid supplies within the department.</p> <p>Participants will be given information on facility to ensure appropriate footwear is used.</p> <p>Staff familiarisation with Medical and ASN information.</p>					
Adverse weather	All participants	<p>Obtain weather forecast if necessary Issue clothing advice and check before visit</p> <p>Spare clothing available in PE Base</p> <p>Alternative facility identified</p>					

This is the Risk Assessment for Outdoor Sporting Activities.

Appendix D

Risk Assessment (General)

Line Manager name:		Line Manager signature		Assessment No:	
Date:	Assessed by:	Location:		Review date:	
	Signature:	Activity:			

This is a Live Template of a risk assessment identifying typical hazards and control measures for One-off Day Visits. Visit Leaders should add specific details relevant to each venue and on a regular basis. Delete elements that are not relevant.

What has the potential To cause harm (hazards) and what harm might result?	Who and how many people might be at risk?	What measures are already in place?	Severity	Likelihood	Risk rating	What further action (s) needs to be taken to reduce risk	By whom and by what date
<p>Vehicular traffic contact. Class walking on pavements adjacent to roads crossing drives, roads; leading to impact injuries</p>	<p>All participants</p>	<p>Adequate staff ratio All staff familiar with route. Clear staff procedures / traffic warning / calming techniques established. Clear briefing / procedure set for walking as a group Leader front and back and at appropriate intervals Group clearly briefed on behaviour / conduct Pairs, hand holding, older pupils on outside next to road Clear hand/arm signal Communications established for staff and group High visibility clothing considered for some poor lighting conditions</p>				<p>List specific extra actions to control hazards to a reasonable level</p>	

Living Template – Appendix E

		Sub division of group considered					
		when crossing roads Emergency procedures in place. (list any other specific control measures here)					
Vehicular traffic contact; transporting groups on coaches, service buses, mini buses leading to impact injuries	All participants	Adequate staff ration Clear staff procedures for group transport Clear briefing for group behaviour on all aspects of travel Getting to vehicle and boarding Use of seat belts if appropriate Monitor driving standards Emergency procedures in place					
(At the venue) Possible hazards include Stairs Balconies Activities River banks / deep water Park traffic / mowers Litter / broken glass Used needles Dogs / horses Third parties List possible result of hazard	All participants	Adequate staff ratio Ensure Visit Leader has prior knowledge of site / venue Carry out staff training for new staff Carry out dynamic risk assessment Identify suitable supervision techniques Group clearly briefed on zones, where staff will always be, behaviours, specific hazards, timings etc Have plan B available Emergency sign out / in procedures in place including mobile phone policy					
Adverse weather leading to minor or significant cold / heat injuries	All participants	Obtain weather forecast if necessary Issue clothing / snacks/ sun cream advice and check before visit Carry spare clothing when necessary Have plan B available Emergency sign out / in procedures in place					

Living Template – Appendix E

<p>Activities provided by External Provider (list activities and possible result of hazards if appropriate)</p>	<p>All participants</p>	<p>Adventurous activity provider on approved Register for current year. Reputable provider of activity, assurances made. Has provided detailed and suitable programme (list specific control measures if appropriate)</p>
<p>Difficulties of access to information in an emergency; leading to communication breakdown</p>	<p>All participants</p>	<p>List of participants and V6 left with Base Contact List of participants and required Medical details and medicines carried by Visit Leader Mobile phones carried with pre loaded important numbers</p>

CONSENT, MEDICAL INFORMATION AND EMERGENCY CONTACTS FORM

VISIT TO		DATE	
LEADER			

VISIT MEMBER		AGE & D.O.B.	
Address of Visit Member		Parent / Carer Name	

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

First option - Name		Tel (home)	
Address		Tel (mobile)	
Second option - Name		Tel (home)	
Address		Tel (mobile)	

SWIMMING – For water based activities and swimming pools

Can the above named person swim YES NO If yes, how far do you think they can swim metres.
If they cannot swim would they be confident in water with an approved buoyancy aid or life jacket YES NO

MEDICAL – Please give full and accurate information

Doctors name		Practice		Tel	
Recent medical issues / illnesses / surgery					
Has your child / ward been in close contact with any contagious diseases?					
If yes please give details					
Any infections in the last 4 weeks					
Any current course of medication					
Any restrictions you would wish to place on emergency treatment:					

I authorise all medical and surgical treatment, including X-ray, laboratory, anaesthesia and other medical and/or hospital procedures as may be performed or prescribed by the attending doctor and/or paramedics for my child and waive my right to informed consent of treatment. This waiver applies only in the event that neither parent/carer can be reached in the case of an emergency.

Parent / Carer's signature		Date	
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PHOTOGRAPHY

Please tick the box if you do not consent to photographs being taken of your child / ward that could be used to promote activities in the Establishment / Council.

CONSENT

I, being over 18yrs of age or having parental rights and responsibilities towards the above named person understand the nature of the excursion / activities and agree to them taking part and that they are fit and able to do so. By signing this form I agree to Aberdeen City Council's terms and conditions which can be found at www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/AdventureAberdeen/About/adventure_about.asp and also understand that it is my responsibility to inform the excursion leader of any significant changes to the information I have provided about the person named in this form between now and the excursion taking place.

Name (Block Capitals)		Signature		Date	
Counter signature for young persons aged 16 – 18					
Name (Block Capitals)		Signature		Date	

PARENTS / CARERS PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO EXCURSION LEADER