



Learning Outside of the Classroom (LOtC)

Vision

*We Value and Encourage Everyone to Grow and Exceed Beyond
Their Expectations*

Our LOtC Policy aims to further enhance our children's love of learning. At Yeading Infant and Nursery School, we believe that all children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. We believe that it is imperative to enable children to use the outside environment as a context for learning.

What is LOtC?

LOtC (LOtC) is a broad term that includes: outdoor play (learning through play), school grounds projects, environmental education, recreational and adventure activities, personal and social development, work within the local community and more. Outdoor Learning does not have a clearly defined boundary but it does have a common core in that LOtC can provide a dramatic contrast to the indoor classroom. There is strong research to suggest that good quality LOtC adds much value to classroom learning. It leads to a deeper understanding of concepts that span traditional subject boundaries and which are frequently difficult to teach effectively using classroom methods alone.

Direct experience outdoors is powerful, motivating and has impact and credibility, providing children with first hand experiences that are invaluable. 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 all different learners. 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. LOtC can help to bring learning alive.

For that reason the outdoors can have a significant impact on development in all areas of the curriculum as well as attainment and enjoyment. LOtC also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

Aims of this policy

- To raise the profile of LOTC and to provide high quality LOTC provision.
- To empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing them to thrive.
- To provide a challenging, safe and secure environment within which children can take and manage risks.
- To encourage children to develop the skills to solve problems, to develop resilience and to become reflective learners.
- To develop skills of communication, cooperation and collaborative learning.
- To encourage close links with parents, the local and wider communities and the school in celebrating our outdoor space and the rich learning that can take place within it.
- LOTC helps to ensure that children are successful learners enabling them to develop knowledge and skills in ways that add value to their everyday learning experiences.
- To encourage children to care for their environment.
- To develop LOTC as an entitlement for children.
- To ensure the curriculum is designed so that it includes LOTC experiences for children.

Benefits of LOTC

- LOTC contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem, self-awareness and self-sufficiency.
- LOTC enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon their attitudes, beliefs and self-perceptions.
- 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.
- LOTC broadens horizons and raises aspiration by enabling children to believe that they can achieve.
- LOTC 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 a 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.
- LOTC raises attainment, promotes and strengthens communication skills, problem solving skills, leadership skills, team work and sense of cohesion.

Embedded LOTC within the Curriculum

We offer a curriculum which is balanced and based on promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities,

responsibilities and experiences of later life. A challenging and stimulating curriculum encourages our children to learn and think independently and ours is designed to enable each child to reach their full potential. Learning is fun and meaningful and learning outdoors, in our extensive school grounds and the local area, broadens and deepens our children's experiences further. Beyond the classroom, our children take part in a wide range of enrichment activities including Science and Nature, Sports, Arts including Music, Technology and Maths. Teachers ensure LOTC opportunities are exploited by:

- Including LOTC within curriculum planning
- Planning cross curricular links especially with regards to English, Maths, Communication and Science
- Promoting our school's values
- Providing links with the local and wider community
- Utilising the extensive grounds for curriculum activities
- Communicating with parents and the wider community on the benefits of LOTC
- Ensuring LOTC is valued and emphasis is provided on the benefits and the impact it has
- Being committed to continuously improve and review LOTC provision within the curriculum.

This policy should be considered alongside other curriculum policies, including the Teaching and Learning Policy and the Early Years Policy.

Where does outdoor learning take place?

The school grounds

We are exceptionally lucky to have extensive grounds and a 'community garden', which offer excellent opportunities for both formal and informal learning. Children use the following to learn; discovery garden, YINS café, Gruffalo Cob oven, water park, Quad, pond, Field, planting beds, polytunnel.

Local Environment and Community

The local environment and community offer a plethora of opportunity that allow for children to apply their knowledge and skills reinforcing key learning concepts. The locality around our school harbours a wealth of opportunities within an accessible distance. Learners can develop their skills to explore their local environment including places of business, places of worship, parks, woodland areas and libraries as well as the excellent transport links with accessibility to our surrounding areas and Central London.

Forest Schools

Forest Schools is a powerful way of developing key life skills, building confidence, self-esteem, communication, language and team working. Time children spend in the discovery

garden is an opportunity to widen their range of experiences and find new skills and interests in which they may excel.

Inclusion

We ensure LOTC provides opportunities for all children, regardless of ability, special education need, ethnicity, gender or socio-economic background. Differentiated activities are well planned for by teachers and children are given opportunities to work both independently and in groups. We support children who are working below the level of their peers whilst also ensuring children are challenged by offering opportunities to engage in extended research, with the intention of developing a greater understanding of the natural world; through the rigours of scientific enquiry, good thinking skills and a strong understanding of learning processes. LOTC acts as a bridge to higher order learning and opportunities to challenge misconceptions and ways of thinking.

Leadership and Management

LOTC will be an integral part of the School Development Plan (SDP), which is written by school leaders and Governors. Curriculum leaders will be responsible for monitoring LOTC activities within their subject areas and ensuring it is a fundamental part of the school's timetable. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will be responsible for monitoring at a whole-school level. Evaluation of the impact of LOTC will be provided within the school's Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) on an annual basis. We provide support and professional development to enable staff throughout the course of the year so that they feel confident developing their expertise and knowledge base in order to adapt their practice to include opportunities for learning beyond the confines of the classroom.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Through the monitoring of teaching and learning e.g. forward planning meetings, observations and drop-ins, teacher's self-evaluations, summative assessment records and other school procedures we will closely monitor the use of LOTC as a key element of the learning experience at the school.

Assessment of the children's learning through LOTC may be by:

- Forest School assessments
- Pupil voice
- Staff INSET and conversations with teachers and leaders
- Planning and work scrutiny
- Monthly and Weekly Parental newsletters

Health and Safety

We support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. Pupils are taught 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 at these times. In the first instance the schools 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 classroom. Within Forest School sessions, Forest School Leaders will assess risk prior to carrying out each lesson in the Discovery Garden.

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 and maintaining the high expectations of behaviour we expect at this school. This links to the work we do in developing independent learners who can actively use the 5Rs (Responsibility, Reasoning, Reflectivity, Resilience and Resourcefulness).

This policy should be considered alongside our behaviour policy.

The following expectations are understood by all pupils when LOtC:

- LOtC is an important part of our learning journey.
- There is a shared understanding of how pupils safeguard themselves and others when undertaking LOtC
- We must stay with our group.
- We must uphold our school expectations of being safe at all times when we participate in outdoor learning.
- We must never go to the pond area without an adult.
- We must always ensure that we close all doors behind us.
- We must always walk on the pavement at the front of school and be aware of oncoming traffic.
- We must be sensible and ensure that we achieve our learning. If we follow the expectations above, we will enjoy learning and be safe.

Start Date: October 2022

Review Date: October 2023

GB Signature: _____



