



## Bell Farm Primary School

### Outdoor Learning Policy



Bell Farm aims to develop positive learning attitudes among all pupils, encouraging perseverance, independence and increasing confidence through acknowledging and building on the child's previous learning experiences. The school provides a supportive environment where children feel secure, respected and able to make a valued contribution.

At Bell Farm, we are committed to ensuring that teaching standards are high in the all subjects across the school and that activities are adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. A large body of evidence suggests that Outdoor Learning has great benefits to learners, and with this in mind, our SDP is committed to increasing this provision by raising the profile of outdoor learning across the school and developing an entitlement for all children.

#### Definition of Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning encompasses a wide range of learning experiences outside the classroom, including day and residential visits. However, for the purposes of this policy, Outdoor Learning is concerned with making the best use of our school grounds.

#### Aims of the policy

This policy document aims to set out the expectations for Outdoor Learning at Bell Farm in order to ensure that every child experiences Outdoor Learning on a regular, progressive basis in different contexts and that maximum benefit is gained from the resources available to us.

#### Benefits of Outdoor Learning

Outdoor Learning offers the following potential benefits:

- A healthy and happy body and mind.
- Improved fine and gross motor skills.
- New experiences, developed in a progressive way.
- The opportunity to learn new ideas, facts and concepts in a real world context.
- Problem-solving skills and creative learning.
- Increased confidence, self-awareness and social skills (e.g. responsibility for self and others, working individually and collaboratively, leadership, communication)
- Personal growth through challenge and become more independent.
- Increased motivation and willingness to learn – contributing to raised levels of attainment.
- Improved behaviour.
- Awareness of and commitment to nature and the world around us.

## Outdoor Learning Planning

The expectation is that teaching and learning across all subjects incorporates Outdoor Learning opportunities and that these are planned for. Teaching staff will ensure that there is adequate adult supervision for groups of children working outside and that outdoor learning is well planned. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure that planned activities have been risk assessed. During the academic year 2020/21, it is expected that every class will have one curriculum lesson outside per half-term **as a minimum**. This is in addition to any Forest Schools sessions provided. Where an outdoor space is required for the lesson, this should be booked, or coordinated using the outdoor timetable provided as appropriate. Planning for Outdoor Learning sessions should be retained for monitoring and evidence of learning, which may include photographs of activities, should be taken where appropriate.

## Forest Schools

Forest Schools is a unique learning experience that offers children opportunities to work outside and to develop a love of nature through a variety of activities and play. The ethos of Forest Schools is to encourage all involved to learn about the environment that surrounds them and to learn how to manage their own risks. Activities during sessions may include nature trails, art work using natural materials, story-telling, imaginative construction and teamwork games.

Bell Farm has a number of Level 3 Forest Schools practitioners and is committed to training more on an ongoing yearly basis. The intention is that every child will experience a programme of six Forest Schools sessions per year, subject to staffing and safety requirements. Sessions will be run by trained practitioners with groups of half-class size, with classes covered by HLTAs and mutual swaps between teachers as appropriate.

## School gardening

During the academic year 2020/21, Bell Farm will be investigating the feasibility of having a school garden and how this can be managed.

## Health and Safety

At Bell Farm Primary School and Nursery we will support children in taking and managing risks within a safe and secure environment. It is important to ensure that the outdoor environment offers challenges and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others. In the first instance, school policies relating to Health and Safety and Risk Assessment should be referred to and applied prior to any outdoor learning activity that may require additional support beyond the reasonable activities one would normally apply within the classroom.

## The school grounds

We are exceptionally lucky to have extensive grounds which offer excellent opportunities for both formal and informal learning and play. By raising the profile of Outdoor Learning, this resource will be used more effectively.

## Resources

The school has some specific Forest Schools resources and will be renewing and extending these as needs arise and budgets allow.

## Inclement weather

It is appropriate that, subject to health and safety considerations, Outdoor Learning should continue in most types of weather. Forest Schools sessions will not take place during high winds. Children should be appropriately dressed, accessing school waterproof equipment where required.

## Trips

Teachers plan opportunities for children to engage in learning beyond the school grounds, both using day trips and residential experiences. Each year group has a planned programme of educational visits which complement and extend learning by taking learners beyond their familiar environment and these will continue as usual. These trips are not the subject of this policy.

## Inclusion and Differentiation

(also see SEN policy)

Challenge for all is integral to our teaching and we aim to encourage all pupils to reach their full potential through the provision of varied opportunities. Work must be differentiated to aid children's learning and this extends to outdoor learning.

## EYFS Curriculum

The children in the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) have daily access to the outdoors and this will continue.

## Monitoring and review

The Outdoor Learning Subject leader is responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching in the outdoors, for being informed about current developments in this area and for providing a strategic lead and direction for outdoor learning in the school. In addition, the subject leader will be monitoring frequency and content of Outdoor Learning at Bell Farm on an ongoing basis.

<b>Status of Non-Statutory Policy</b>	<b>Date</b>
Authored by Jennie Stevenson	September 2017
Policy reviewed	September 2020
Agreed by Staff	October 2020
Agreed by Governors	N/A
Review	Every three years (September 2023)