



JC Prep Policy for Outdoor Learning

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Our College Vision

Our ambition for all students at JC Prep:

We aim to nurture happy, confident, caring students, who enjoy positive relationships and show compassion and respect for others. We want students to grow as individuals, to feel valued and to forge a strong and supportive community that reaches out around the world. We hope they will demonstrate a growing awareness about the choices they make and the impact these have on their environment.

We want to develop hardworking, independent students and creative thinkers. Our students will be encouraged to take full advantage of opportunities and to aspire to the highest standards. We aim for our students to be inquisitive, ambitious and motivated in their approach to learning. We want them to grow in independence, to be reflective in their thinking, to be eager for challenges and to be able to cope with setbacks.

Our goal is to prepare our students for life beyond JC Prep equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes for life-long learning.

At the heart of all we do are the College's Core Values:

Aspire, Inquire, Excel, Belong.

Aims of this policy:

- To raise the profile of outdoor learning at JC Prep
- 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 empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing their minds and bodies to thrive
- To provide a safe and secure environment that they can take risks in
- To encourage children to care for their environment
- To encourage children to develop the skills to solve problems, developing resilient and reflective learners.

Principles:

The outdoors can provide space and freedom for a type of learning that is difficult to replicate indoors. All children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors. At JC Prep, we feel it is extremely important to enable children to use the outside environment as a context for learning throughout the year.

We believe that teaching pupils to be aware of and to respect the environment is not something that can be taught in a classroom; we recognise the need to be immersed in a location that stimulates every sense, to feel part of it and to wonder and be amazed by whatever is discovered. To extend outdoor learning pupils take part in 'Forest School' type activities and lessons which aim to inspire and truly connect children with nature. Sessions are planned to combine bush-craft and country lore with the National Curriculum. Activities are linked to the work pupils have been covering in their classrooms and should be planned not as an add-on, but an extension to the curriculum and a tool for engaging all learners - making learning meaningful and memorable.

The outdoor classroom

1. Lesson Organisation and Planning

Possibilities for outdoor learning will be considered throughout our planning, using it as a context and a natural and stimulating resource for learning. Regular sessions should be planned and implemented into planning, across the curriculum.

We will:

- ensure that the outdoor space harnesses the special nature of the outdoors, to offer children what the indoors cannot. (This should be the focus for outdoor provision, complementing and extending provision indoors.)
- ensure that our outdoor area and resources within it are flexible and versatile, where pupils can choose, create, change and be in charge of their play and learning environment.
- support inclusion and meet the needs of individuals, offering a diverse range of play-based, hands-on experiences.
- enable pupils to access The OWL House and Forest School on a regular basis. In the early years, pupils should access the outside area as much as possible, throughout the seasons.
- ensure that pupils enjoy energetic activity outdoors and the feeling of well-being that it brings, including opportunities to develop their large motor skills.
- observe, assess and record outdoor learning, ensuring that there is adequate provision for pupils to extend their learning through child-led, hands-on activities.
- enable pupils to work both individually and co-operatively outside.
- enable pupils to appreciate nature and encourage pupils to use a variety of natural resources.
- give pupils the opportunity to find a quiet space for reflection and observation.
- work together (pupils, staff, parents, community) to maintain and develop our outdoor environment for all.
- organise and/or provide necessary resources (e.g. raincoats/ suits).
- develop a set of rules through discussion with pupils. Enable pupils to use resources safely and to manage and use the space and freedom responsibly.

- help pupils to take responsibility and care for the outside environment and resources within it.
- encourage pupils to respect their environment and to care for living things.

2. Outdoor Learning across the Curriculum

Outdoor Learning should reflect our development as a school towards aspects of the creative curriculum. Links should be made to other subjects to support and extend skills, knowledge and understanding. Links should also be made to environmental and ecological issues, where appropriate, as part of our role as an eco-school. Lesson plans should aim to include stimulating experiences that develop pupils' awe and wonder of the outdoors, throughout the seasons.

3. Resources

Forest School resources are stored in The OWL House and are updated regularly by the Outdoor Learning coordinator. Year groups that require additional resources for outdoor learning should identify their needs and contact the coordinator.

4. Special Educational Needs

- Outdoor Learning aims to create a learning environment which meets the needs of all pupils, regardless of their ability.
- Individual needs are met through appropriate differentiation which is identified in all outdoor learning planning.
- Outdoor Learning planning takes into account differing pupil needs and ensures tasks are appropriate to the stage of pupils' learning. This enables pupils with specific learning needs and/or physical difficulties to take an active part in learning within the environment.

5. Gifted Students

- Where pupils exhibit outstanding and continuing ability in outdoor learning, work will be given which promotes and enriches their increased understanding.
- Pupils will be given work which challenges them, encouraging them to draw on understanding from across the curriculum.
- Pupils will be given the opportunity to allow their talent to flourish and to achieve their full potential.

6. Planning and Assessment/Marking/Record Keeping

Long term planning should seek opportunities to use outdoor learning to complement and strengthen planning.

Medium term planning covers a half term and should ensure that regular opportunities are planned for outdoor learning and real-life experiences.

Short term planning will be completed on a weekly basis. Short term planning will be based upon the evaluation of prior learning to ensure it reflects the needs of the students. It will outline the learning intentions, activities and strategies for differentiation within each lesson. These will be adapted as necessary to meet the need of individual students in the class. Formative assessment notes and checklists recording the learning and progress of students within a National Curriculum Level will be included with the weekly plans.

Methods of Assessment for curriculum work are to include:

- Observations of pupils at work, both individually, in pairs and within groups.
- Questioning of and listening to pupils.
- Considering any work pupils have produced.
- Can include more informal work such as shelters and art work.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation:

Monitoring of the quality of outdoor teaching and learning is the responsibility of the Outdoor Learning coordinator. He/she may undertake lesson observations of outdoor learning across the school to ensure that standards are maintained. Plans are monitored by the Faculty team leaders on a weekly basis and by the co-ordinator as necessary.

8. The Role of the Outdoor Learning Coordinator:

- Be responsible for the development of outdoor learning in school.
- Monitor the effectiveness of outdoor learning in school.
- Support teachers in their planning and strategies for outdoor management.
- Disseminate new information.
- Provide or organise staff training.
- Be responsible for providing appropriate resources

Relationship to other policies:

Internal policies:

- Lesson observation and Quality Assurance guidelines

External policies:

- Policy Outdoor Learning– ESC

Core Components:

- Appendix 1 - Student Learning**
- Appendix 2 - Teaching**
- Appendix 3 - Monitoring Learning and Teaching**
- Appendix 4 - Professional Learning**
- Appendix 5 - ESC Outdoor Learning Policy**
- Appendix 6 - Risk Assessment Forest School**