
Introduction

We are committed to providing a variety of outdoor learning opportunities for our pupils, strongly believing in the positive impact on wellbeing and development. It is our aim that every pupil will experience some type of residential experience by the time they leave Southgate, that is appropriate to their special educational need and developmental level.

Implementation

All classes are encouraged to take learning outdoors wherever possible, and to create opportunities to learn through experience. To support this, each class has at least one AM or PM session where they have access to a school bus.

Having two qualified Forest School's practitioners from September 2017, each class in the lower school will have a weekly session in the outdoor area. Selected classes in the upper school will also have sessions as appropriate. Alongside this, we have a senior ETA with a variety of qualifications who takes groups out onsite and offsite for outdoor and residential experiences (this includes climbing Mount Snowdon, the Calvert Trust and coastal walks). Pupils in the upper school have the opportunity to engage with the Duke of Edinburgh award which incorporates volunteering.

Planning and Assessment

Opportunities for outdoor learning are part of each teacher's class planning, with sessions linked to projects and schemes of work. It is usually appropriate to assess pupils through observations and WOW comments. These support progress towards cognition and learning, social and emotional development and communication and interaction.

The variety of additional outdoor activities including residential and exhibitions are assessed developmentally, and are offered to pupils as and when they are ready. We aim to offer all pupils the opportunity to engage in these at their appropriate level.

Resources

We are fortunate to have an outdoor area onsite with a small wood and outdoor classroom. To support this, there is a full range of outdoor equipment from waterproofs and boots to tents, shelters and cooking equipment. Our school buses allow us to take learning off site.

Curricular Links

To enhance learning in every curriculum area, outdoor learning is encouraged. Pupils also have opportunity to develop a full range of life skills through their experiences, including problem solving, resilience, communication and interaction with others.

Accreditation

Pupils have the opportunity to achieve the bronze award in the Duke of Edinburgh. We are looking into offering the silver award in the near future.