



Outdoor Learning at Kilcreggan Primary School

At Kilcreggan Primary School, play and learning in all curricular areas take place both indoors and outdoors.

In Scotland, children have a legal right to the UNCRC. The following Articles are applicable to learning outdoors:

Article 3: When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.

Article 23: Every child with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to participate actively in the community

Article 29: Children's education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people's rights, cultures and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment.

Article 31: Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.

A full list of Articles can be found here: [convention-rights-child-text-child-friendly-version.pdf \(unicef.org\)](https://www.unicef.org/convention-rights-child-text-child-friendly-version.pdf)

What does Education Scotland say about learning outdoors?

Scotland is one of only a handful of countries which now explicitly includes the use of the outdoor environment as a necessary approach and context for delivering its education curriculum. P4

The benefits of outdoor learning:

There is now a substantial base of national and international evidence about the benefits of taking learning outdoors. The impact of outdoor learning on children and young people's health and wellbeing, wider achievements, attainment and personal development is often recognised by practitioners.

Below are some general benefits of taking learning outside within and across curriculum areas:

- connections are made experientially with the real world outside the classroom, helping to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in a meaningful context, e.g. Science scores improve through environmental stewardship.
- 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 who experience school grounds with diverse natural settings are more physically active, more aware of



nutrition, more civil to one another and more creative. Being outside has a positive effect on children's behaviour.

- 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. Physical co-ordination is improved when playing and learning outdoors.
- learning in a less structured environment can provide a different learning experience from that of the classroom, e.g. Results from a study of children with attention deficit disorder (ADD) indicate that children function better than usual after activities in green settings. The 'greener' a play area is, the less severe the ADD symptoms are.
- being outdoors can be a more relaxing learning experience for many learners. Nature is a buffer of life stress. The life stress impact is lower among children with high levels of nearby nature than among those with little nearby nature.

Full documents can found here:

[Outdoor Learning \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

[A summary of outdoor learning resources | Learning resources | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

What does Argyll and Bute say about outdoor learning?

The first objective of the Argyll and Bute vision and strategies for education, as detailed in 'Our Children, Their Future', is to **raise educational attainment and achievement for all**. The priority actions to achieve this are

- Improve the overall quality of learning experiences
- Tackle disadvantage and deprivation to close the attainment gap
- Improve literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing outcomes for children and young people
- Continually improve curriculum design and development



Our Children, Their Future': [argyll_bute_vision_strategy_final_web.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](https://argyll-bute.gov.uk/argyll-bute-vision-strategy-final-web.pdf)

This can be read along with Education Scotland's stance on outdoor learning, *above*.

What does outdoor learning look like at KPS?

Having conducted research into the benefits of outdoor learning during session 2022-23 as part of the School Improvement Plan, staff and practitioners at Kilcreggan Primary School aspire to:

- include outdoor learning for learners every day
- enable learners to experience a range of activities and curricular areas, outdoors
- include learners in the planning of outdoor teaching and learning
- plan for outdoor learning in all curricular areas

What is the impact of outdoor learning at KPS?

What our learners say

When learners go outside to learn:

It makes me feel happy. We learn better outside – Skye P3

It is fun. It just gets better and better – Loxa P2

It is better outside. We do more stuff, not like in the classroom – Archie P6

We enjoy it more so we learn more – Emma P7

What our parents say

They think things through and solve problems themselves – P3 parent

Going outside and learning sounds good.

Playful and outdoor learning are the best medicine!

Outdoor playing and learning is great!

What our staff say

'The focus on outdoor learning this year has impacted both pupils and some of my approach as a practitioner, particularly in numeracy. The addition of frequent outdoor numeracy activities has led me to think differently in my planning and develop unusual/new approaches to various tasks, leading to higher pupil engagement and understanding of various themes. It has been particularly beneficial in pupils' understanding of more complex/abstract themes such as fractions or percentages and has also led to improved



engagement from some pupils who find occasional challenge in their focus during class based activities.'

'Outdoor learning has allowed pupils to apply their learning in a variety of ways in different curricular areas. Pupils are visibly more focused and eager to learn outdoors. As their engagement has increased, their wellbeing has improved too.'

This position statement should be read in conjunction with the position statement on outdoor learning.

