



Turning learning inside out - supporting schools to re-open by taking learning outdoors

The leading governing bodies and associations involved in helping schools take teaching and learning beyond the classroom have united to set out an ambitious but simple plan to help schools adapt their lessons, curriculum and learning environments. When schools are ready, we are here to support them to re-open to more pupils, by helping them enable high quality learning experiences in school grounds, local spaces and home environments, and to support pupils transition between these different learning environments.

The Prime Minister has indicated a gradual re-opening of more schools in England from 1 June with schools in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales having no planned reopening dates. The Department for Education Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings recommends considering which lessons or classroom activities could take place outdoors. Whenever schools across the UK reopen the consortium believes that helping schools to deliver programmes of regular, progressive lessons outside the classroom will make a significant contribution to:

- enabling schools to deliver their curriculum safely and effectively
- delivering benefits to pupil health and wellbeing, both at home and at school
- build better home school learning partnerships (enabling teachers to develop consistent learning experiences for all their pupils whether at school or home)
- mitigate against widening inequalities resulting from school closures

Turning learning inside out

An ability to take lessons outside is a vital tool for schools to help deliver their whole curriculum whilst ensuring students keep active, stay healthy and keep learning. Consortium members have years of experience and extensive reach to support schools and educational setting across home nations. We are staffed and resourced to quickly respond to support schools and teachers now, and to build their confidence in taking as many of their play, lessons and learning activities outside as possible, safely, and effectively.

The consortium can support schools through the recovery period in 3 main ways:

1. Offer schools access to quality-assured resources and CPD to help them develop, deliver, and evaluate their own programmes of learning beyond the classroom, whether at school or at home.
2. Offer schools support from independent, skilled professionals to help identify high quality support and resources most appropriate to meet their needs, and to accompany them (if needed) as they take their learning outside.
3. Help schools learn from each other by sharing their experiences of planning, delivering, and evaluating their adapted, learning beyond the classroom practice.



As well as delivering National Guidance for schools on taking education outside and the only nationally recognised accreditation for providers of learning outside the classroom services, members of this consortium are committed to ensuring schools are supported to operate in ways that reflect evolving national guidelines and are supported with the highest quality services.

Dr Anne Hunt, chief executive of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, said: *“Children and young people are dealing with high levels of disruption, uncertainty and a lack of physical connection with their friends and with the natural world and the inequalities are widening. There are few so well-evidenced interventions that offer – with almost universal availability and at very low cost - the immediate opportunity to make such a big difference to so many children and young people. With government encouraging time outdoors as part of our recovery strategies, now is the time to take learning outside the classroom.”*

Martin Smith, chair of the Outdoor Education Advisers’ Panel, said: *“The benefits of learning outdoors have never been so important or so urgently needed. The need to support schools and families take play and learning safely and effectively beyond the classroom has never been greater.”*

Colette Morris, Headteacher explained: *“Attending school is the best public policy tool available to raise skills, reduce poverty and increase social mobility. Children need to return to education, particularly those who are experiencing disadvantage, and we need to ensure learning is delivered safely and in ways that will support children reintegrate into their formal learning environments.”*

The reach to make this happen

This consortium represents bodies and associations with unprecedented reach into the networks of organisations and professionals with the skills to help schools with their immediate crisis management and to take their curriculum delivery outside. There is an immediate opportunity to harness the extensive experience and commitment of this sector to support schools adapt their practice and take safe and effective play and learning into school grounds, local spaces, and home environments.

Dr Hunt continued: *“The resources and expertise already exist, however, as a consortium of charities and not-for-profit bodies operating in very challenging times, we also need support to scale up delivery to meet the needs of as many schools and pupils as possible.”*

What we are already doing/progress so far

We are working with UK Government, its agencies and teaching unions to provide a unified voice and response to the Covid-19 situation to provide the best support for schools, families and providers of learning beyond the classroom experiences. We are working to

- promote the supporting role that learning outside the classroom and outdoor sector providers can play as more schools re-open
- promote the role of schools in an equitable green recovery from Covid-19
- secure clarity and support for all sides affected by the cancellation of educational travel and trips.



The consortium is facilitated by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC) with the support of the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel and the Institute of Outdoor Learning. Consortium members represent the following key groups:

- Council for Learning Outside the Classroom Sector Partnerships and Working Groups
 - School Grounds - Learning through Landscapes
 - Natural Environment - RSPB
 - Heritage
 - Sacred Spaces - The Jewish Museum
 - Farming and Countryside – LEAF, Social Farms and Gardens (Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG) and Care Farming UK) and Countryside Classroom
 - Adventurous Activities - Outdoor Council*
 - Museums - Group for Education in Museums (GEM)
 - Overseas Expeditions – Expedition Providers Association
 - Study, Sports and Cultural Tours – School Travel Forum

- *Outdoor Council
 - Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee
 - Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres – representing 441 organisations
 - British Activity Providers Association – representing 106 sites in the UK
 - Christian Camps International
 - Field Studies Council
 - Institute for Outdoor Learning
 - Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel
 - Scout Association
 - Young Explorers' Trust
 - Youth Hostel Association

