Altrincham
CE Aided Primary School

'Some fell on good earth, and produced a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.'

Matthew 13:8, The Message

Grow Strong and Bear Fruit

Learning Outside The Classroom (LOTC) Policy including Forest School

Date Ratified	May 2026
Date of Review	September 2027
Policy Created by	Sam Thompson (LOTC) & Susie Hornby (Forest School)
Policy Ratified by	Curriculum & Standards Committee

Policy Intent & Rationale

At Altrincham CE Primary School, we believe every child should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances. Our Learning Outside the Classroom Policy (LOTC) aims to foster children's love of learning further by moving educational opportunities from classrooms to other inspirational learning spaces.

We believe it is vital to provide a dynamic, engaging and inspiring curriculum that ensures all pupils have the opportunity to have first-hand experiences using the outside environment as a context for learning. This approach increases motivation and a willingness to learn, contributing to raised levels of attainment. Our school grounds provide rich opportunities that can engage all pupils effectively in learning through nature, supporting pupils in understanding about sustainability and the environment.

We recognise that learning outside the classroom often provides the most memorable learning experiences and helps us to make sense of the world around us. These experiences allow us to generalise skills and transfer learning between the outside and the classroom and vice versa. Learning outside the classroom is about raising achievement through an organised, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance. This is not only about what we learn but importantly how and where we learn.

Government guidance (*Learning outside the classroom: How far should you go?* October 2008, Ofsted; Learning Outside the Classroom manifesto, 2006) and research (*Every experience matters*, Dr Karen Malone; *Learning Outside the classroom; theory and guidance,* Simon Beames et, al, 2012) informs us that learning outside the classroom "contributes significantly to raising standards and improving pupils' personal, social and emotional development."

This policy is informed by DfE guidance 'Health & Safety on Educational Visits':
Health and safety on educational visits - GOV.UK
We have adopted the principles as laid out in the OEAP National Guidance:
National Guidance |

Aims

We aim to:
• Ensure high-quality provision through LOTC experiences
• Learn new facts, ideas and concepts through LOTC activities
• Offer children exciting and stimulating experiences that enthuse them in their learning and broaden aspirations
• Improve emotional well-being, soft skills including team work and resilience, and help all children realise their potential
• Provide a challenging, safe and secure environment within which children can assess, take and manage risks.
• Support pupils to develop their social skills, independence and resilience
• Apply LOTC activities and experiences daily to help raise attainment
• Improve the effectiveness of LOtC through additional monitoring of effectiveness

• Carefully plan provision to ensure all pupils are included in LOTC activities and adaptations are made where necessary to ensure full access and success

Types of Educational Visits

ACE has a strong commitment to the added value of learning outside the classroom, some of which takes place beyond the statutory school day and beyond our premises.

Each year, we arrange a number of educational visits and activities that take place offsite and/or out of school hours, which support our school aim, which is to provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum tailored to meet the individual learning needs of its pupils.

The following types of activities are arranged in support of the educational aims of the school:

- Lunchtime clubs (board games, craft, dancing, games etc)
- Forest School
- Inter-school competitions and visits
- Swimming
- Local walks (to the park, church, library, cinema, other schools, into town etc)
- Curriculum enrichment trips requiring transport
- Residentials

At the start of the year, we ask families for consent to take their children on local, low-risk walking activities (church, park, into Altrincham).

For activities which require a more detailed risk assessment because we are going further afield, using transport or staying overnight, we seek parental consent.

Educational Visit Responsibilities

The ACE Governing Body has given its approval to the following types of activities in support of the educational aims of the school:
• Out of hours clubs run by external providers (one free club per term offered to chilren in receipt of Pupil Premium funding)
• ARK Breakfast Club and After School Clubs run by school staff
• School sports teams, using Sports Premium funding
• Lessons taught in the school playground, on the school field, the Forest School area or in another part of school other than the children's usual classroom
• Visits within the local area to include church, local library, places of worship, visits to other schools, cinema, bookshop etc
• Day visits outside the local area
• Residential visits to be offered to all Key Stage 2 pupils, giving progression in length of time away, distance and independence

At ACE, the Head Teacher is the lead EVC and is responsible for reviewing risk assessments and approving all educational visits and LOTC.

Educational visits are tracked on our ACE EVC spreadsheet.
Teachers are responsible for creating their own risk assessments based on the ACE model (see Appendix 1).

Teachers are responsible for ensuring correct adult:child ratios are in place for the visit they are planning. Ratios depend on the children attending and the nature of the visit. Children who normally have a 1-2-1 adult must still have a 1-2-1.

For short, local, low-risk walks and activities:

Reception: 1 adult to 3 children

Year 1: 1 adult to 5 children

Year 2: 1 adult to 8 children

Years 3-6: 1 adult to 10 children

Teachers are responsible for adding all visits to the ACE EVC spreadsheet.

The School Business Manager is responsible for working with teachers to ensure residential visits are recorded on the Trafford EVOLVE system, for an extra level of oversight.

We only work with external partners who have LOTC accreditation.

Assessing Risk

Our risk assessment process is designed to manage risk when planning trips whilst ensuring that learning opportunities are experienced to the full.

The group leader initially draws up a visit plan and timetable (who, what, where, why, when and how?).

Staff are encouraged to make an effective preliminary visit to any new venues to support making a good risk management plan.

The risk assessment will be shared with staff and volunteers prior to the visit. The process is as follows:

- Identify the hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide on precaution
- Record your findings and implement them
- Review your assessment and update if necessary

Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to monitor and evaluate, the Head Teacher will:

- Monitor and evaluate plans for trips, visits and visitors

• Monitor and evaluate plans for opportunities for classes to take part in LOTC activities to ensure parity of opportunity and access

• Monitor and evaluate the uptake of extra-curricular opportunities

• Monitor and evaluate the participation of pupils in productions and special events

• Collect evaluation forms from pupils participating in activities and use these to review activities

It is particularly important that:

• All groups in the school are given equal opportunity to participate in extra-curricular opportunities including sports' tournaments

• All pupils are fully able to participate in trips, visits and residential trips

• Learning outside the classroom experiences support and develop curriculum plans

• Learning outside the classroom experiences are evaluated for their effectiveness

In addition, children's surveys confirm the experiences that all pupils take part in throughout each half term. These are analysed, based on vulnerable groups (e.g. SEN, PP, boys/girls, EAL), discussed, evaluated and reported to governors.

Inclusion

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled participants because of their disability, without material or substantial justification. You are required to make reasonable adjustments to avoid participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage. However, the Equality Act does not require responsible bodies to place employees or participants at inappropriate risk if a health and safety issue 6 arises. It is also the case that the adjustments made to include a disabled young person should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity.

At ACE, we will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort will be made to support them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention will be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage. We will work with families to find ways so that all children can attend educational visits.

Equal Opportunities

At ACE, we undertake to provide equality of access to all aspects of the curriculum to all members of the school community. Staff will endeavour to help all children reach their full potential irrespective of race, gender, age or ability in accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities policy.

Appendix 1: ACE Risk Assessment 2026

ACE Risk Assessment: Educational Visits

Altrincham
CE Aided Primary School

Visit to: _____

Date: _____

Completed by: _____

Section 1: local walking activities

Includes:

- John Leigh Park **INCLUDING AS PART OF FOREST SCHOOL**
- St George's Church
- Altrincham Library
- Other walking destination which will take <15 minutes

HAZARD	WHO IS AT RISK AND HOW?	WHAT ARE YOU DOING ALREADY?	DO YOU NEED TO DO ANYTHING ELSE TO CONTROL THIS RISK?
GENERIC RISKS			
Walking through park	Children becoming separated from the group and lost	- Staff vigilance at all times. - Children understand need to stay with group. - Minimum ratio 2 adults per class - Class teachers to be aware of children with additional needs and position those children with adults	Ensure children do not stray from main group – regular roll calls; children in groups and aware of line order
Walking on and crossing roads	Children and adults – road safety	- Children briefed beforehand regarding road safety (social story if appropriate). - Single file along narrow pavements. - Adults wear hi-vis jackets. - One adult at the front of the line, one at the back and one in the middle (positioned at intervals if more adults available). - One adult stands in the middle of the road whilst children cross. - Constant vigilance: children reminded to stay away from the edge of the pavement and the road.	Ensure children do not stray from main group – regular roll calls; children in groups and aware of line order. Constant vigilance whilst on pavements and crossing roads.
Dogs	Children or adults bitten or frightened	- Children briefed beforehand regarding possibility of encountering dogs (social story if appropriate). - Nervous children to be positioned near adults. - Children told how to behave if approached by a dog.	Staff designated to specific groups of children while walking and remain vigilant throughout.
Interfacing with members of the public	Children or adults intimidated or distracted	- Children briefed beforehand regarding possibility of being approached (social story if appropriate) and how they should respond.	Staff remain vigilant and ensure appropriate behaviour from children.
Weather extremes	Children or adults – ice, rain or wind might mean slips, overbalancing and/or reduction in visibility	- Children wearing appropriate clothing. - Additional care if heavy rain or high winds. - Decision taken whether to proceed if weather is too inclement.	Check children have and are taking appropriate clothing. Speak to Head teacher regarding whether trip should proceed if weather conditions are dangerous.

HAZARD	WHO IS AT RISK AND HOW?	WHAT ARE YOU DOING ALREADY?	DO YOU NEED TO DO ANYTHING ELSE TO CONTROL THIS RISK?
SPECIFIC RISKS BASED ON ACTIVITY/GROUP			

Section 2: activities requiring transport

Includes:

- Sports tournaments
- Crucial Crew
- Trips to Manchester
- Other destination requiring a journey using public transport, coach/minibus or taxi

HAZARD	WHO IS AT RISK AND HOW?	WHAT ARE YOU DOING ALREADY?	DO YOU NEED TO DO ANYTHING ELSE TO CONTROL THIS RISK?
GENERIC RISKS			
Using public transport	Children and adults – separation from group	- Children briefed beforehand regarding personal safety when using public transport (social story if appropriate). - If on train/tram, children seated altogether and adult between children and doors	Ensure children do not stray from main group – regular roll calls and headcounts
Travel sickness	Children & adults	- Adults carry sick bags/buckets and paper towels. - Parents asked to advise if their child suffers from travel sickness.	Seat children on the coach where they are least likely to be affected.
Walking on and crossing roads to transport	Children and adults – road safety	- Children briefed beforehand regarding road safety (social story if appropriate). - Single file along narrow pavements. - Adults wear hi-vis jackets. - One adult at the front of the line, one at the back and one in the middle (positioned at intervals if more adults available). - One adult stands in the middle of the road whilst children cross. - Constant vigilance: children reminded to stay away from the edge of the pavement and the road.	Ensure children do not stray from main group – regular roll calls; children in groups and aware of line order. Constant vigilance whilst on pavements and crossing roads.

HAZARD	WHO IS AT RISK AND HOW?	WHAT ARE YOU DOING ALREADY?	DO YOU NEED TO DO ANYTHING ELSE TO CONTROL THIS RISK?
Interfacing with members of the public	Children or adults intimidated or distracted	- Children briefed beforehand regarding possibility of being approached (social story if appropriate) and how they should respond.	Staff remain vigilant and ensure appropriate behaviour from children.
Transport breaks down/is delayed	Children and adults	- Adults all have mobile phones to inform school and seek help if required. - Children briefed what to do in the extent of an emergency (keep calm, follow instructions)	Ensure reputable transport is used.
Weather extremes	Children or adults – ice, rain or wind might mean slips, overbalancing and/or reduction in visibility	- Children wearing appropriate clothing. - Additional care if heavy rain or high winds. - Decision taken whether to proceed if weather is too inclement.	Check children have and are taking appropriate clothing. Speak to Head teacher regarding whether trip should proceed if weather conditions are dangerous.
SPECIFIC RISKS BASED ON ACTIVITY/GROUP			

Section 3: residential activities

Includes:

- Min-y-Don (Year 6)
- Catalyst Museum (Year 4)

HAZARD	WHO IS AT RISK AND HOW?	WHAT ARE YOU DOING ALREADY?	DO YOU NEED TO DO ANYTHING ELSE TO CONTROL THIS RISK?
GENERIC RISKS			
Travelling by coach	Children and adults – separation from group when moving to/from coach	- Children briefed beforehand regarding personal safety (social story if appropriate).	Ensure children do not stray from main group – regular roll calls and headcounts
Travel sickness	Children & adults	- Adults carry sick bags/buckets and paper towels. - Parents asked to advise if their child suffers from travel sickness.	Seat children on the coach where they are least likely to be affected.
Walking on and crossing roads to transport	Children and adults – road safety	- Children briefed beforehand regarding road safety (social story if appropriate). - Single file along narrow pavements. - Adults wear hi-vis jackets. - One adult at the front of the line, one at the back and one in the middle (positioned at intervals if more adults available). - One adult stands in the middle of the road whilst children cross. - Constant vigilance: children reminded to stay away from the edge of the pavement and the road.	Ensure children do not stray from main group – regular roll calls; children in groups and aware of line order. Constant vigilance whilst on pavements and crossing roads.
Interfacing with members of the public	Children or adults intimidated or distracted	- Children briefed beforehand regarding possibility of being approached (social story if appropriate) and how they should respond.	Staff remain vigilant and ensure appropriate behaviour from children.

HAZARD	WHO IS AT RISK AND HOW?	WHAT ARE YOU DOING ALREADY?	DO YOU NEED TO DO ANYTHING ELSE TO CONTROL THIS RISK?
Transport breaks down/is delayed	Children and adults	- Adults all have mobile phones to inform school and seek help if required. - Children briefed what to do in the extent of an emergency (keep calm, follow instructions)	Ensure reputable transport is used.
Weather extremes	Children or adults – ice, rain or wind might mean slips, overbalancing and/or reduction in visibility	- Children wearing appropriate clothing. - Additional care if heavy rain or high winds. - Decision taken whether to proceed if weather is too inclement.	Check children have and are taking appropriate clothing. Speak to Head teacher regarding whether trip should proceed if weather conditions are dangerous.
SPECIFIC RISKS BASED ON ACTIVITY/GROUP			

Attach Risk Assessments below from providers:

Appendix 2: ACE Forest School Policy

Introduction

Forest School takes place regularly, with the same group of learners, over an extended period of time, if practicable encompassing the seasons.

A Forest School programme has a structure, which is based on the observations and collaborative work between learners and practitioners. This structure should clearly demonstrate progression of learning.

The initial sessions of any programme establish physical and behavioural boundaries as well as making initial observations on which to base future programme development.

Procedure

● All sessions will be led or overseen by a Level 3 Practitioner (minimum qualification).

● All sessions will have a minimum of two staff when delivering per 30 children, but this may be a higher ratio according to the individual needs of the group.

● Risk assessments will be completed yearly and updated throughout the year as necessary for all activities. These include: general welfare, collecting materials, den building, rope use, tree climbing, tool use (bow saw, loppers, sheath knife, bill hook and secateurs).

● There will be a minimum of one Forest School first aider at every session and they will be responsible for carrying a first aid kit and following the ACE first aid policy.

● Practitioners will be responsible for ensuring the site used on the grounds and outside of school are managed and have a management plan for use.

● Practitioners will adhere to and update the siting of fires policy.

● Practitioners and teachers are responsible for ensuring that children and staff have the correct clothing and PPE available at each session.

● Practitioners will adhere to the Forest School principles stated below and will be responsible for educating the wider staff team about good practice.

Principles

The Nature Principle

Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

● Whilst woodland is the ideal environment for Forest School, many other sites, some with only a few trees, are able to support good Forest School practice.

● The woodland is ideally suited to match the needs of the programme and the learners, providing them with the space and environment in which to explore and discover.

● A Forest School programme constantly monitors its ecological impact and works within a sustainable site management plan agreed between the landowner/manager, the Forest School practitioner and the learners.

● Forest School aims to foster a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences in order to develop long-term, environmentally sustainable attitudes and practices in staff, learners and the wider community.

● Forest School uses natural resources for inspiration, to enable ideas and to encourage intrinsic motivation.

The Holistic Learning Principle

Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

● Where appropriate, the Forest School leader will aim to link experiences at Forest School to home, work and/or school education.

● Forest School programmes aim to develop, where appropriate, the physical, social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of the learner.

The Risk Principle

Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

● Forest School opportunities are designed to build on an individual's innate motivation, positive attitudes and/or interests.

● Forest School uses tools and fires only where deemed appropriate to the learners, and dependent on completion of a baseline risk assessment.

● Any Forest School experience follows a Risk–Benefit process managed jointly by the practitioner and learner that is tailored to the developmental stage of the learner.

The Leadership Principle

Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

● Qualified Forest School practitioners, who are required to hold a minimum of an accredited Level 3 Forest School qualification, oversee Forest School.

● Where staffing allows, there is a high ratio of practitioners/adults to learners.

● Practitioners and adults regularly helping at Forest School are subject to relevant checks into their suitability to have prolonged contact with children, young people and vulnerable people. Practitioners need to hold an up-to-date first aid qualification, which includes paediatric (if appropriate) and outdoor elements.

● Forest School is backed by relevant working documents, which contain all the policies and procedures required for running Forest School and which establish the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.

● The Forest School leader is a reflective practitioner and sees themselves, therefore, as learners too.

The Community Principle

Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

● A learner-centred pedagogical approach is employed by Forest School that is responsive to the needs and interests of learners.

● The practitioner models the pedagogy which they promote during their programmes through careful planning, appropriate dialogue and relationship building.

● Play and choice are an integral part of the Forest School learning process, and play is recognised as vital to learning and development at Forest School.

● Forest School provides a stimulus for all learning preferences and dispositions.

● Reflective practice is a feature of each session to ensure learners and practitioners can understand their achievements, develop emotional intelligence and plan for the future.

● Practitioner observation is an important element of Forest School pedagogy. Observations feed into 'scaffolding' and tailoring experiences to learning and development at Forest School.

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body has:
● responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

Role of the Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will:
● ensure that the nominated member of staff is suitably trained, has sufficient time to undertake their role and an adequate budget to purchase any equipment required;
● monitor and evaluate this policy.

Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed every 36 months or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Head of School and/or the nominated governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement.