



CLOUGHWOOD ACADEMY

Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC) Policy

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1. Rationale

At Cloughwood Academy we believe it is vital that we create a broad and balanced curriculum. This includes ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to experience the world first hand and have the chance to see and take part in activities outside the classroom. Our school grounds and local area provide rich opportunities to stimulate learning and promote health and well-being amongst our pupils. We also believe that a well-planned and facilitated outdoor experience further afield gives children the opportunity to explore their learning in a way that is difficult to reproduce indoors. The outdoors experience can provide a scaffold through which resilience, resourcefulness and team work are fostered and one where creativity, curiosity and imagination is encouraged and valued. Many opportunities for LOTC are available to our pupils, irrespective of their age, ability or SEND, through subject based trips, the daily enrichment program, our residential provision and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

2. Management considerations

Welfare

All staff have a duty of care. Members of staff should remember that they act in loco parentis at all times and that the duty of care states that they should act as 'reasonable prudent parents would'. Pupils should never be alone or isolated from the rest of their class, particularly on LOTC activities.

Keys to success of LOTC

- There is an expectation that all subject areas should plan at least 1x LOTC or drop down each term.
- If you have any concerns about a pupil participating in your LOTC please see relevant Headteacher.
- Early and thorough planning is essential for any visit.
- Based on pupils' individual risk assessments there should be an appropriate ratio of staff to pupils.
- All activities to be risk assessed in advance of the activity, by the Trip Leader, and added to Evolve for approval by the Headteacher and MOLI.
- All risk assessments to be checked by MOLI to ensure that all sections are fully completed and vehicles, medication and lunches have been organized before being submitted to Headteacher for full approval.
- Relevant ABAS strands must be highlighted on Evolve.
- Timely approval for LOTC activities through the Evolve system (2 weeks minimum in advance).
- Appropriate transport fitted with seat belt and a first aid kit on board the vehicle. Vehicles to be checked by the driver prior to the LOTC to ensure that the vehicle is fit for purpose.
- Medication – The trip leader will nominate a member of staff to ensure that pupils receive their daily medication.
- Meals – pupils and staff to receive a packed lunch that needs to be ordered 2 weeks prior to any LOTC from the catering staff.
- Finance – Payment for activities or petty cash must be requested minimum 2 weeks in advance.
- As part of Natasha's Law all pupils must state what lunch they want on the relevant form, submitted to Edsential, minimum 2 weeks in advance. The form must state any allergies.
- Ensure vehicles have adequate fuel prior to the trip leaving.
- Staff involved in trip should refresh their knowledge of the pupils' risk assessments and IBPs.

3. The benefits of learning outside the classroom

There is a substantial base of evidence about the positive benefits of taking learning outside of the classroom. The impact of outdoor learning on pupils' health and wellbeing, wider achievements, attainment and personal development has been recognised by practitioners and in research. LOTC has an important role to play in helping children understand about our planet and the complex life systems it supports through observation, interaction with and interpretation of natural events and changes all year round.

It helps children and young people make connections to the world in which we live. Outdoor learning can motivate people of all ages to think about and take action at local, national and global levels to live harmoniously and deal effectively with the impact we have on our environments. An appreciation of the natural world and society largely depends on direct personal, aesthetic and spiritual experiences outdoors and in the real world. One of our aims at Cloughwood is to produce pupils who are able to succeed in the world and are prepared for the challenges of life in modern Britain.

There are some general benefits from 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;
- Outdoor environments and surroundings act as a rich stimulus for creative thinking and learning. This affords opportunities for challenge, enquiry, critical thinking and reflection.
- Pupils find that not everything outside matches models or 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.
- Pupils are able to understand the relevance of a subject taught in school to everyday life.
- Pupils can sometimes behave differently in learning environments outside of the classroom e.g. quiet pupils may speak more, others become calmer and more focused when in new environments.
- Pupils with a limited childhood experience can be enabled to learn how to behave in a range of contexts, e.g. in a theatre, in the countryside or in a church.

4. Making connections to the curriculum

LOTC at Cloughwood encompasses the entire range of learning experiences undertaken outside. Whether it is simply reading a book outside or participating in overnight expeditions for Duke of Edinburgh, our expected curriculum design principles apply. Curriculum leaders and managers should recognise the full spectrum of outdoor learning experiences.

Each LOTC experience should complement the other and should form a progressive and coherent range of experiences for Cloughwood pupils. Teachers need to know how the experience benefits their pupils. Curriculum areas are expected to make use of appropriate science museums, art galleries, theatres and sport related sites and activities in order to support, enrich and extend learning.

ICT and the use of digital technology can be an important aspect of any LOTC experience. Whether this is planning, photocopying letters, taking photos while you are away or sharing your experience with others, technology is an enabler and if used in the right way can add considerable value to LOTC. The Academy website allows pupils an opportunity to share their experiences more widely through blogs, photographs and written pieces describing the LOTC experience.

Within these contexts are opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work. The numeracy, literacy and health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes that are the responsibility of all teaching staff can be developed by taking learning outside of the classroom during and outside school hours.

5. Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

LOTG can provide a range of opportunities for our pupils to develop skills for learning, life and work. Stepping out of the classroom gives access to a range of real-world learning experiences that allow pupils to understand the relevance of their existing skills and enable them to understand areas for development.

As an example, practical challenges outside that require pupils to solve problems can provide opportunities to develop thinking skills by providing a context that requires them to analyse issues, understand the problem, create potential solutions and evaluate those which may be successful before applying them to solve a particular challenge.

By providing opportunities to work and communicate in groups, pupils also learn that they have different abilities and attributes from others, enabling them to understand that their skills are valuable and relevant. By working practically with others, Cloughwood pupils are also able to evaluate their own skills and reflect on the next steps.

6. Evidence and Review

For each LOTG experience staff are to ensure that evidence of the LOTG is provided by pupils. Photographs, drawings and blogs completed by pupils are to be forwarded onto Mrs. Couch who will display the evidence onto the academy website. Evidence collected can also be used to promote the experience on classroom displays and in assemblies. LOTGs are celebrated on the school's Instagram page.

It is important to review the success of the LOTG experience both through pupil voice activities and by staff review; especially now ABAS strands are incorporated into the planning stage of the LOTG. Pupil questionnaires give an opportunity to gain valuable feedback from pupils which can be used to inform future LOTG activities. Staff meetings give an opportunity for staff to share and discuss the LOTG experience to decide if it achieved the desired outcomes as well as share the success of the LOTG activity across the academy.

7. Equal opportunity/inclusion

- Give all our pupils the best possible rounded education and ensure their on-going physical, emotional, and mental health needs are met and developed.
- Help all our pupils to enjoy their education and maximise their learning potential and outcomes.
- All our pupils will receive a wide range of opportunities to develop socially and emotionally in a safe environment outside the classroom regardless of race, culture or disability.

8. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

- All LOTC will encourage appropriate social interactions to take place in year groups and efforts will be made to mix the ages, to give the younger pupils good moral standards and example set by the older pupils. Invariably LOTCs are organized through our House System where year 10 and 11 Captains role model and peer mentor younger pupils.
- The spiritual and cultural backgrounds of pupils will be considered when planning LOTC activities. Also there will be curriculum emphasis on spiritual and cultural education if the opportunity arises during any activity.

9. The Daily Enrichment Program

The Enrichment program at Cloughwood offers an extensive range of extracurricular activities to all pupils designed to broaden their experience and world view. Many of these activities take place outside the classroom. The school enrichment program offers pupils the opportunity to develop leadership, team work and problem-solving skills. These activities aim to both enhance the pupil's learning experience and broaden the scope of what they are learning through practical experiences that link the academic theory with real world applications and offer personal and social development opportunities to the learners involved.

10. Duke of Edinburgh

The Duke of Edinburgh is the world's leading achievement award for young people. It is a balanced programme of activities aimed at developing a pupil in an environment of social interaction and team work. It also encourages young people to take on challenges and live life as an adventure.

Cloughwood understands it is more important than ever that young people are able to learn and demonstrate key employability skills after they leave school. By doing the Award, pupil will learn employability skills like communication, team work, decision making and leadership. At Cloughwood, we teach the Duke of Edinburgh award in line with learning outside the classroom. This allows pupils to gain various experiences whilst working through the qualification.

11. Health and Safety

- i. All activities to be risk assessed in advance of the activity.
- ii. All risk assessments to be checked by MOLI before being submitted to Headteacher.
- iii. Trip Leaders should ensure there is a First Aider on the staff.
- iv. Any accident is immediately assessed to ensure risk is minimised.
- v. All safety points for any activity are explained beforehand to all staff and pupils. This includes meeting staff in advance for a briefing.
- vi. Trip Leader to nominate a member of staff responsible for the administration of medications.
- vii. When planning a trip involving another organisation, their assessments and procedures are considered.
- viii. Staff apply a sensible and responsible safety approach at all times to ensure risks are minimised and effectively and proportionately managed.
- ix. Staff to focus on "real" risks when planning and executing trips to ensure learning opportunities are experienced to the full.

- x. Risk assessments and the proportionate system put in place are to be reviewed at the end of each term by MOLs taking into consideration all staff feedback.
- xi. In an emergency, a member of Senior Leadership Team is to be contacted immediately and the situation to be coordinated via one of the team.
- xii. Staff are required to carry a mobile phone in case of an emergency.
- xiii. When hire vehicles are required the Trip Leader is to work with CFOO to book in a timely manner.
- xiv. Vehicles used for any LOTC are to be checked by staff at the end of trip and ensure that the vehicles are left in a clean and tidy manner.
- xv. Staff are required to ensure that their driving license incorporates the correct categories to drive the relevant school vehicle.
- xvi. Staff are responsible for ensuring CFOO has up to date driving license details annually.