



# Learning Outside the Classroom Policy

Written September 2016  
To be reviewed September 2018

## Rationale:

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, teaching staff and Governing Body are committed to providing high quality and effective opportunities for learning outside the classroom (LOtC) at West Cliff Primary School.

Having the beach on its doorstep certainly places West Cliff in a unique position! Living by the sea, we believe that it is essential to equip our children with the necessary safety skills for the beach. However, we also believe that Whitby provides a perfect resource to develop and extend new skills under the umbrella 'learning outside the classroom'.

This policy aims to outline the aims, key strategies and techniques that, as a school, we will use to engage West Cliff children in learning outside the classroom. OfSTED (2008) identify that: "*When planned and implemented well, learning outside the classroom contributed significantly to raising standards and improving pupils' personal, social and emotional development.*" (Learning Outside the Classroom: How far should you go?)

## Related policies/documents:

- Educational Visits
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- New Staff induction
- Charging policy
- Assessing learning outside the classroom
- West Cliff: Learners Outside the Classroom (70 Things to do on West Cliff beach)

## Communicating this policy:

This policy is freely available for any parties (including parents) who may wish to access it. The key messages and aims for West Cliff children are regularly communicated to the parent body through the school's Facebook page and displays.

## What is 'Learning Outside the Classroom?'

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom define LOtC as "*the use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning. It is about getting children and young people out and about, providing them with challenging, exciting and different experiences to help them learn*"

As West Cliff Primary School is very limited in terms of outdoor space, the main place for LOtC for our children is the nearby beach. Visits to the beach take place regardless of the weather and should occur approximately once a fortnight. It is essential that the beach visits have a purpose (linked directly to the



curriculum). Visits to the beach may also be to tackle something from the '70 things to do at West Cliff beach' list.

A range of other local sites are also used by class teachers to engage children in learning outside the classroom.

In **all** cases, Learning Outside the Classroom is an integral part of the curriculum - not a bolt on!

#### **Aims:**

At West Cliff Primary School, learning outside the classroom aims to be a key driver in raising standards and pupil engagement. By providing children with practical and real life opportunities to develop their own learning, we aim to inspire and motivate, leading to outstanding progress.

Part of the West Cliff ethos is 'Taming Tigers'. This is a mantra focused on tackling the things that scare you. This idea is one that is placed well alongside learning outside the classroom. By removing the constraints (and comfort!) of a desk and classroom, children may find themselves out of their comfort zones and facing a fear. By combining this and learning outside the classroom, we believe that we are offering our children a direct approach to **developing their confidence, and personal development**. This **inspires** learners to believe they can achieve!

Learning outside the classroom also provides a vast range of **experiences** for children to engage with. Through the creation of the 70 things to do on West Cliff beach, children are provided with **frequent** and **progressive** opportunities to **build on their skills** and gain a range of learning outside the classroom experiences.

The 70 things to do on West Cliff beach provide a starting point for children to develop **leadership** and **team work** skills through **direct challenge** and **problem solving**. Over their time at West Cliff, children will develop these skills year on year, working up to a producing a final showcase in year six. These showcases will be an opportunity to **utilise** the different skills that children have been taught in a real context.

At West Cliff, we are committed to ensuring that learning outside the classroom is for everyone. Nobody, regardless of gender, educational needs or disability will be prevented from engaging in learning outside the classroom opportunities. At present, a number of plans are in place to ensure the inclusion of all learners, e.g. wheelchair use travelling to and from the beach.

In summary, West Cliff aims to provide an inspiring, engaging, challenging and inclusive learning outside the classroom curriculum that teaches children new skills, but builds on existing ones. Learners will be motivated, excited and making excellent progress.

#### **Learning Outside the Classroom in the curriculum:**

At West Cliff, LOtC is an integral part of the curriculum. When planning topics, class teachers will always consider how this could be enhanced by LOtC. This may include a visit to the beach, a museum day or walk in the local area. LOtC is integrated across the curriculum, including mathematics, English and science.

The 70 Things to do on West Cliff beach have been designed to be progressive and build on learners' skills year on year. Progression should always be considered when planning any LOtC opportunities. Staff should consider whether the activity they are planning is suitable to the age range and competence of the group they are working with.



When planning opportunities for LOtC, class teachers should consider timetabling. This could be in relation to actual travelling time, or, when visiting the beach, tide timetables.

At the time of writing this policy, the school has recently gained a piece of land which will be developed to enhance the learning outside the classroom provision on site.

### **Establishing links for Learning Outside the Classroom:**

Amongst the staff at West Cliff, there is a wealth of knowledge of different places to visit or organisations to work with in relation to LOtC. Staff work hard to build relationships with these organisations to support and enhance the West Cliff curriculum. These links may be found through discussions with parents or conducting further searches and investigation on a wider scale (e.g. internet).

These relationships may be with local families or business. Staff are courteous and polite when working with organisations and engender positive working relationships that lead to effective and purposeful trips. Where organisations have not been used by the school before, the staff will discuss any potential visits at length, where appropriate, conduct a preliminary visit and check the provider's Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge status.

To maintain positive relationships, following a school visit, children will write thank you letters, as a sign of appreciation and thanks.

### **Management issues, including procedures (see Educational Visits policy)**

Andrew Wood and Beth Grason are the school's Educational Visits Coordinators (EVCs) Before engaging in any offsite LOtC, class teachers must share their arrangements and planning with the EVCs for their approval. Prior to this stage, a preliminary visit may have taken place (depending on the location of the proposed trip). At this stage, the EVCs may offer suggestions or challenge on specific aspects of the planned trip. Only when initial plans have been approved by the EVCs can a trip proceed.

Staffing issues are an essential consideration for planning LOtC opportunities. Staff experience in relation to previous experiences must be considered when arranging trips or visits. Only if the EVCs and group leaders are happy with the level of competence of accompanying adults should they attend the trip.

When children arrive at West Cliff, their parents sign a consent form that allows them to engage in school trips throughout their time at school. Parents continue to update this consent with any changes to medical history or updates to addresses or contact details. As a result of this, no additional consent is needed prior to engaging in LOtC. However, staff must still inform parents of the planned trip, along with any additional items or equipment that may be required.

### **Assessment of Learning Outside the Classroom:**

To ensure that the learning outside the classroom opportunities that are provided continue to challenge, motivate and engage West Cliff children, each term a simple assessment tracker is completed. This tracker supports teachers in identifying children's strengths and weaknesses in relation to learning outside the classroom.

#### **What is assessed?**

Learners are assessed using characteristics of effective learning:

- We are explorers and learn through play.
- We are motivated and involved in active learning.
- We are creators and critical thinkers.

Within each of these areas, three additional statements are included.



### **How are children assessed?**

At the end of each term, class teachers award children a judgement that indicates how well they are engaging in learning outside the classroom activities. These judgements are linked to each of the three characteristics of effective learning.

Very simply, children are awarded a score of Emerging (Red), Expected (Green) or Exceeding (Blue).

Indicators to support teacher judgement are also provided to staff.

### **Evidence for awarding a score:**

The 70 things to do on West Cliff beach is organised into the different characteristics of effective learning. Coverage of these activities should be used to inform judgements. However, **all** activities that involve learning outside the classroom should be considered when awarding children a grade (not just beach activities).

### **What next?**

When scores have been given, a class teacher is able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their cohort in relation to the characteristics of effective learning. During the next term, the activities that are planned should be tailored to ensure those emerging or weaker areas are addressed.

In addition to awarding children with a score, class teachers also record narrative evidence of children's abilities and experiences in relation to learning outside the classroom. Completed on this form, class teachers will record short notes and observations relating to children's engagement, behaviour and confidence when participating in learning outside the classroom. Any notes should be dated.

### **Celebrating achievements**

The school Facebook page is regularly updated with achievements of children in relation to LOtC. Individual children will also update their Pledge and/or Dream books with work they have completed.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Scott Grason (Deputy Headteacher) has the main responsibility for overseeing Learning Outside the Classroom. This includes curriculum design, implementation and assessment.
- Approval of LOtC activities and risk management is the responsibility of the Education Visits Coordinators, Andrew Wood and Beth Grason.
- Class teachers are responsible for ensuring there are planned opportunities for learning outside the classroom. This includes the effective risk assessment and planning of trips, including identifying relevant support from adults and checking the status of any provider's LOtC Quality Badge.
- The Governing body has the responsibility to ensure that the school's LOtC policy meets the demands of health and safety policies and procedures (including child protection). The Governing Body will also oversee the school's Charging Policy in relation to ensuring LOtC is accessible for all of West Cliff's children.



- It is the responsibility of Christina Zanelli - Tyler (Headteacher) to appoint an EVC and ensure the safety of LOtC opportunities (including: staffing, child protection, insurance and inclusion)

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring of the policy is the responsibility of the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Governing Body. It will be reviewed one year from writing (September 2016)

The effectiveness of the policy and work related to Learning Outside the Classroom will be evaluated by assessing children's learning and implementing change if required. Throughout the year, monitoring, including pupil interviews, will gather feedback in relation to how well the school is meeting the identifying aims for learning outside the classroom.

