

## OUTDOOR EDUCATION LEARNING In NATURE

### INTRODUCTION

Primary education is a crucial stage in the development of a person's behaviour, social awareness and selflessness. At school, we learn values and behaviours that will stay with us throughout our adulthood and define who we are. That is what makes it so important to spark an interest in caring for and protecting the environment while children are still at school.

The aim of teaching children environmental education is for them to make caring for nature part of their lives, as opposed to just studying it. The idea behind this subject is for young people to develop a firm ecological mind-set and use it to overcome today's environmental challenges with a proactive attitude and a strong commitment.

Environmental education also has other positive effects on young people.

Environmental education is a process that allows individuals to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving, and take action to improve the environment. As a result, individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to make informed and responsible decisions.

The components of environmental education are:

Awareness and sensitivity to the environment and environmental challenges

Knowledge and understanding of the environment and environmental challenges

Attitudes of concern for the environment and motivation to improve or maintain environmental quality

Skills to identify and help resolve environmental challenges

Participation in activities that lead to the resolution of environmental challenges

Environmental education does not advocate a particular viewpoint or course of action. Rather, environmental education teaches individuals how to weigh various sides of an issue through critical thinking and it enhances their own problem-solving and decision-making skills.

# CONTENT

Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practical – Exploration</li><li>• Outdoor living knowledge and skills – Introduction to self-reliance and minimal impact</li></ul>
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group Dynamics Skills and Leadership – Introduction to care for others during outdoor activities</li></ul>
Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outdoor activity knowledge and skills – Introduction to comfort in the outdoors</li></ul>
Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety and well-being outdoors – Introduction to safe immersion in outdoor environments</li><li>• Environmental awareness – Promoting curiosity, identifying fears of nature and outside environments, and promoting discussion about nature</li></ul>
Day 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental management, conservation and culture –Minimal impact on a walking excursion</li><li>• Ecological literacy key themes – Nature as friend</li><li>• Health and the Outdoors – The importance of fresh air and open space for play</li></ul>

# OUTCOMES

- The potential benefits of outdoor learning are grouped below in four broad categories: background, planned, bonus and wider benefits.
- Background benefits of Outdoor Learning are benefits that arise from spending time in the natural environment.
- Five key ways in which exposure to the natural environment is beneficial to human health:
  - Enhanced personal and social communication skills
  - Increased physical health
  - Enhanced mental and spiritual health
  - Enhanced spiritual, sensory, and aesthetic awareness
  - The ability to assert personal control and increased sensitivity to one's own well-being.
- Planned benefits of Outdoor Learning
  - Develop self-esteem, take personal responsibility, co-operate with and respect the needs of others;
  - Extend their personal horizons through greater appreciation and understanding of the world and its peoples around them;
  - Understand the need for sustainable relationships between people and their environment;
  - Enhance practical problem solving and teamwork skills.
  - Promote a positive and knowledgeable response towards personal health and well-being.
- Bonus benefits of Outdoor Learning
  - Arise where participants gain more value than was expected. Such benefits happen more by chance than by design, but they are more likely to happen when there is a supportive climate for learning.