



Supporting Learning Outdoors: Policy Context

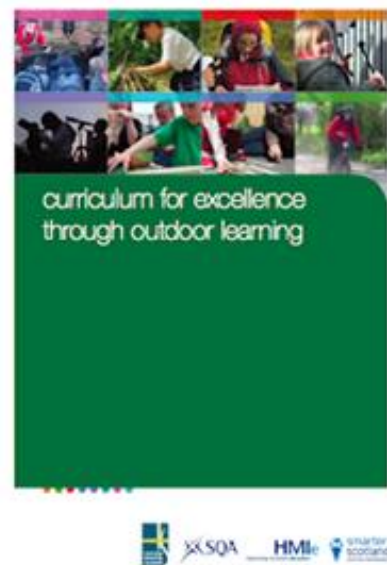
Outdoor learning provides opportunities to enable active learning for better outcomes and achievements for our learners. Several key reports and policies support and outline the benefits of taking learning outdoors. It is important as a practitioner, who will be supporting outdoor learning, to have some knowledge of these documents.

Listed below are some of the key documents with a short summary of the main messages. You can access the full documents by clicking on the images.

Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning (2010)

This vision for outdoor learning in Scotland aims to ensure that:

- All children and young people are participating in a range of progressive and creative outdoor learning experiences which are clearly part of the curriculum.
- Schools and centres are providing regular, frequent, enjoyable and challenging opportunities for all children and young people to learn outdoors throughout their school career and beyond
- Teachers and educators embed outdoor learning in the curriculum so that learning in the outdoor environment becomes a reality for all children and young people.



Vision 2030+ (2016)

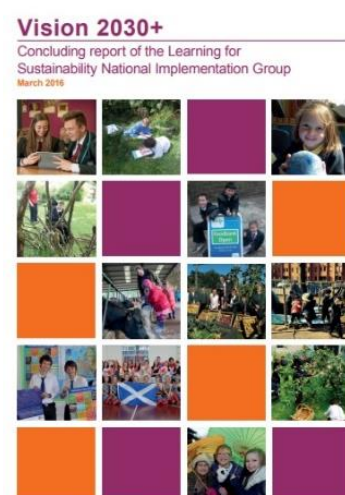
This landmark report calls for every school and centre to develop a coherent, whole school approach that impacts on their establishment's culture, curriculum and campus and connects them fully to their wider communities.

The report introduced LfS (Learning for Sustainability) as a concept and process which weaves together sustainable development education (SDE), global citizenship and **outdoor learning** into a unifying vision of learning for a better world.

A number of recommendations are included in this sustainable vision:

“Through Learning for Sustainability pupils have an entitlement that includes outdoor learning and daily contact with nature” (John Swinney, Education Minister for Scotland)

“As part of this entitlement, outdoor learning should be a regular, progressive curriculum-led experience for all learners. (Recommendation 1.1)





GIRFEC (Getting it Right for every Child) 2014

The Scottish Parliament enacted the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The new legislation embeds key elements of the GIRFEC approach into law. GIRFEC is the national policy framework aimed at supporting the wellbeing of children and young people. It embeds the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into practice and promotes a rights-based approach.

It also outlines key wellbeing indicators and factors known as **SHANARRI** (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected Responsible, Included) to ensure the best start in life for our young people.

Outdoor learning is well placed to support many of these factors including providing *“opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community”*.

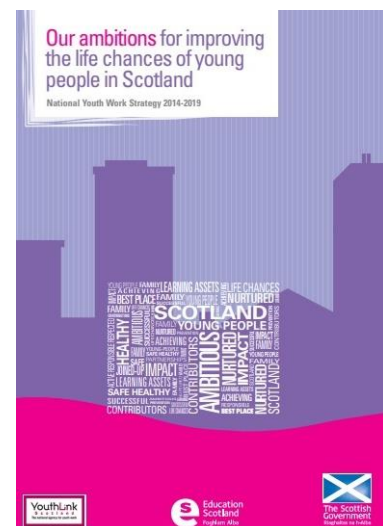


National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019- Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland (2014)

This Strategy was developed jointly by the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and YouthLink Scotland to set out ambitions for improving outcomes for young people through youth work.

The strategy highlights outdoor learning, the outdoors and outdoor pursuits and its ability to support the purposes of youth work as *“defined in Step it Up, following extensive discussion and consultation with the youth work sector”* (p36) to;

- Build self-esteem and self-confidence
- Develop the ability to manage personal and social relationships
- Create learning and develop new skills
- Encourage positive group atmospheres
- Build the capacity of young people to consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control
- Develop a ‘world view’ which widens horizons and invites social commitment





My World Outdoors (2016)

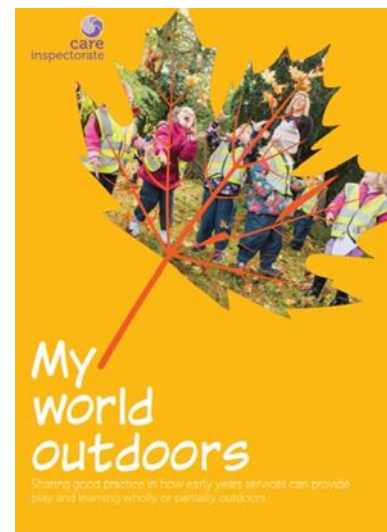
This document produced by the Care Inspectorate has actively encouraged nursery settings in Scotland to embrace outdoor learning and notes the importance of outdoor learning in child development and learning.

“There is significant evidence that playing outdoors is more than just fun: it can contribute positively to child development, child health, and early learning” (p 2)

“(Outdoor Learning) ..supports a move away from a risk-averse approach to one where proportionate risk assessment supports children to enjoy potentially hazardous activities safely” (p3)

It also notes that Outdoor-based services are popular with parents and provide;

“a uniquely positive nurturing and learning experience for children. Generally, these services are achieving higher grades than the national average for children’s day-care. This is illustrated by the relatively high rate of ‘excellent’ grades awarded to outdoor-based services” (p 10)



How Good is Our.. (2016)

These Education Scotland frameworks underpin effective self-evaluation as the starting point for improvement. They provides a suite of quality indicators that support staff in all sectors to look inwards, to scrutinise their work and evaluate what is working well for learners and what could be better.

HGIOS 4 for example highlights the need to *“ensure children and young people have access to high-quality learning in all curriculum areas and through outdoor learning”* Outdoor learning is included in a number of the quality indicators and supporting challenge questions e.g. (HGIOS 4, 2016)



1.2 Leadership of Learning

1.5 Management of Resources to Promote Equity

2.2 Curriculum

2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment



3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion

3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement

GTCS Standards for Teachers (2013)

Revised Standards for full & provisional GTCS registration outline the importance of outdoor learning

As part of GTCS registration registered teachers will:

“Skilfully deploy a wide variety of innovative resources and teaching approaches, including digital technologies, and where appropriate actively seeking outdoor learning opportunities”

“Use outdoor learning opportunities, including direct experiences of nature and other learning within and beyond the school boundary”

“Understand and develop the most important contexts and environments for learning, including outdoor learning and be able to apply appropriate pedagogies for these environments”

DRIVING FORWARD PROFESSIONAL
STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS



The Standards for Registration: mandatory
requirements for Registration with the
General Teaching Council for Scotland

December 2012

Play Strategy for Scotland our Vision (2013)

This strategy developed by the Scottish Government emphasises the importance of play. The outdoors and the importance for play opportunities outdoors are identified throughout the strategy. The vision also notes the importance of outdoor environments for play.

*“The type of environment for play is also important, having an impact on children and young people’s experiences, choices and relationships, both with other people and with the environment itself. In particular, **outdoor play especially in natural spaces is beneficial and provides experiences which cannot be replicated indoors**” (p28)*

The document also highlights *“The importance of outdoor play times for disabled children and young people with complex healthcare needs “ (p28) and that **“play opportunities are needed at all ages and stages as a frequent part of family life... As children grow older they need opportunities to develop independence through playing outdoors, helping to develop and practise important life skills within the real world”** (p28)*

