

## Managing outdoor learning and social distancing

### Background - DfE Guidance, as of 30/04/20

Try to follow the [social distancing guidelines](#) – 2m relevant when outside.

Social distancing within education and childcare settings with very young children will be harder to maintain. Staff should implement the above measures as far as they are able, whilst ensuring children are kept safe and well cared for within their settings.

DfE are asking you to:

- think about how the above can be implemented in your education or childcare setting
- ensure all staff and children:
  - wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds frequently
  - are encouraged not to touch their faces
  - use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins for tissue waste
- ensure help is available for children and young people who have trouble washing their hands
- increase cleaning of surfaces in classrooms, including desks and handles, and within toilet blocks and changing rooms, adhering to [guidance on cleaning of non-healthcare settings](#)
- for children and young people with an EHC plan, work with the local authority as well as with parents to decide how best to continue supporting these children and young people to stay healthy

As much as possible, children, young people and staff should be spaced apart at all times.

This means:

- sitting children at desks that are far apart
- ensuring everyone queues and eats further apart than normal
- keeping apart when in the playground or doing any physical exercise
- visiting the toilet one after the other
- staggering break times
- putting guidelines on the floor in corridors
- avoiding unnecessary staff gatherings

We acknowledge that social distancing for settings with very young children will be harder to maintain. Staff should implement the recommended measures as far as they are able, whilst ensuring children are kept safe and well cared for.

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Staff should pay particular attention to handwashing before and after supporting children who need help with nappy changing, toileting or eating, as well as avoiding touching their own face whilst at work. Teachers and other staff may want to use age and developmentally appropriate ways to encourage children to follow social distancing, hand-washing and other guidance, including through games, songs and stories.

As much as possible, settings should seek to prevent the sharing of food, drink, utensils, equipment and toys. Equipment, toys and surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected more frequently.

### **Key consideration for schools, when undertaking outdoor learning**

Assuming any return to school will be under the requirements set out above, schools will continue to face real challenges in terms of delivering teaching and learning. Spending more time out of doors could reduce but not eliminate the chances of spreading the risk of infection and also contribute significantly towards improved health and physical wellbeing.

#### **On overview from other countries**

In Denmark, where children up to grade 5 (Primary) could return, social distancing is enforced both outside and inside schools. Classrooms and gyms as well as the outdoors are used for lessons, although the 2m distancing is enforced. However, at play times children are allowed to play in 'small groups'.

In Norway, only primary aged children have returned. They are placed in classes of 15 and must maintain 1m social distancing within their class group and they should stay with their own class group. If two groups are to collaborate then this should happen outside.

School arrival and departure is staggered.

In China, pupils have their temperature taken on arrival and they carry a 'green code of health' via a phone app as part of China's Health Code Programme. There is some distancing and staggering of arrival, all wear masks and windows are open. Outlined below are some considerations that could be borne in mind when planning for outdoor learning and managing risk in the outdoors.

#### **Location:**

The best place for outdoor learning will be the academy grounds. Spaces, distances and tasks can all be easily managed. For many activities spaces around the site need to be considered, how big are they? What is the task? How do I use it? bearing in mind group size and social distancing.

That may release other spaces for other groups.

#### **Offsite:**

Walking from the school site and travel in vehicles will be highly restrictive if social distancing is to be maintained.

### **Health and Well-being:**

Having spent a significant time in isolation with only 'family' members a return to a location where there is greater contact with others must be managed sympathetically, as will undertaking activities in outdoor settings or off-site locations. It must also be recognised that some pupils have had no regular access to a garden or green space during Lockdown and will really value opportunities to access such spaces.

The confidence of staff will also vary according to their experiences over the last few weeks and how comfortable they feel about undertaking and managing outdoor activities. Staff and children may also value areas for reflection and 'peace and quiet'.

### **Outdoor Considerations – On-site:**

The request from government is that social distancing guidance should be followed. In relation to using outdoor space this suggests that 2m distancing is maintained. However, they do acknowledge that young people should be kept apart 'as much as possible'. The challenge changes as you progress through the ages of children. Current guidance would suggest operating along the lines outlined below:

- *Minimum of 2 mtrs in all directions between people e.g. between children and between children and staff*
- *Maintain distancing when moving through the building or when outdoors*
- *Minimum allowance per person = 4m<sup>2</sup>*

In terms of managing the spread of COVID-19, briefings for young people will replicate those given for indoor work, if anything being outdoors will dilute the ability to spread the disease, though this should not breed complacency.

### **Participants:**

As with indoor work, reacting to signs of young people or staff displaying symptoms of coronavirus have to be managed according to current guidance. Vulnerable pupils' needs are to be accounted for as part of any risk management process. The ability of pupils to comply with social distancing and instructions will need consideration.

### **Activities:**

Reduce the number of activities that take place where there is a higher likelihood of even minor injury to reduce the need for first aid, close contact with pupils, or visits to hospital. Considerations may include equipment used, surfaces activities are taking place on, ability of young people etc. Adapt activities to suit this new working environment.

AfPE website quotes government guidance by saying: 'when being physically active, as with all other activities participants should have **minimal social contact and practice good hygiene.**'

### **Equipment:**

All equipment with hard wipeable surfaces are to be cleaned/sanitised after use – any soft equipment to be quarantined (for an unknown time at this stage).

For some equipment used as part of an activity there may be a value in wiping down surfaces during an activity.

Take a bag to contain any tissues, wipes used during an activity and dispose of according to current guidance.

### **First Aid**

First aid kits to be carried and contain both gloves and face masks and if possible disposable apron and eye protection. For more information see government guidance [here](#)

### **Hygiene**

Recommend hand washing, as recommended indoors, after outdoor activities, especially if equipment is shared or jointly used. Use hand sanitizer for intermediate hand cleansing while on activities. Be prepared to wipe hard surfaces down during within an activity.

### **Development of activities**

This creates both a challenge and opportunity for taking your learning outdoors as in the past this particular approach to learning encouraged team working and a range of associated skills. With the introduction of social distancing in the short to medium term this presents a challenge. On the flip side, working and being outdoors and close to nature has a very positive impact on mental health and well-being.

### **Adapting Outdoor Learning Activities – some thoughts:**

All could be managed in groups of 15 (likely class sizes) 1 teacher and 1 TA?

It may be useful to undertake some briefing on how the activities will be managed before going outside.

### **Green gym: Physical well being:**

The social distancing hike! With 2m lengths of rope or string do a 'Follow the leader' activity – take it in turns to lead. Could work in small groups up to six – also encourages team work! Stop every now and then and do 10 star jumps on the spot, run on the spot, press ups etc.

Bean game is also good – French bean, broad bean, runner bean, baked bean, jelly bean and one for me 'has been'.

Balloon – 'keepy uppies': A balloon is kept in the air by using breath. Then the 'leader' call out a body part which is then used to keep the balloon in the air, then someone else can call out another body part etc.

### **Scavenger Hunts:**

Pupils could work on their own looking for items and be aware of their need to abide by social distancing as they move around.

### **Orienteering:**

Considerations – within the overall course, set individual courses say of 3-6 check points that only one pupil will use. For a group of 12 this would mean at least 36 checkpoints. Once completed they come back to a checkpoint and check results/answers, then move to another location to collect another map. This process will need supervising, may be useful to mark out waiting zones and would probably need to look at supervision levels according to ability, numbers etc. Organise to

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reduce pupils going to the same checkpoint and waiting around one teacher before moving on to the next mini course of checkpoints. (OL Cards – OEAP Outdoor Learning cards – all PE Leads will have been given them)

Can also do sprint races, the start and finish process would have to be closely managed. O12 OL Cards

Map Symbol running game and Memory Map 04 and O14 OL cards– small teams of 4. Mark waiting lines while one person collects a symbol and comes back.

Netball numbers on a football pitch O6 OL Cards and Cardinal Cones if a bigger course O7 OL Cards.

Blind Direction (Cardinal Points!) Space the pupils out give them all a blindfold.

Identify north asking them to all face north and put their blindfolds on. Then call out various compass points and ask the group to point to where they think they are. Can be replicated for degrees and angles.

Natural health service: Mental health and well being

### **Social well-being/ team working:**

Using OEAP - OL Team building Cards:

Ski walk – 2 per ski! 2m apart! TB15 OL cards

Spiders web – one at a time TB18

Sheep and Shepherd – TB12 – One shepherd up to four sheep to get into different pens all 2m+ apart. Special comms if getting too close to another sheep!

Electric Fence – TB14 – all have to go over under fences joined by 2m rope lengths, loads of communication and support.

Toxic waste – TB13 – if all over 2m apart

Robot Race – TB8. Caller and talker 2m apart and the robot over 2m away.

### **Nature Detective:**

Close observation of nature, work in a quadrat! How big would the quadrat have to be to maintain social distancing?

Use of OEAP Environmental Learning Cards – Available from Harvey Maps:

<https://www.harveymaps.co.uk/acatalog/Environmental-Learning-Cards-MENV.html#SID=67>

Plant discovery activity – AE3 Enviro Cards

Mini beast hunt – EU8 Enviro Cards and CS19 Mini-beast models

### **Problem solving and maths:**

Individual activities – shape hunts, patterns observed around the school site. Use sticks to make a range of shapes, measure the height of a tree (EU7 Enviro Cards) or building on site, design playground mazes for other pupils try.

Fizz – Buzz: Maths and team game played in a circle. One pupil starts, by saying 'one' and deciding which way round the circle the counting goes. The next says 'two' and on it goes, however, you could ask that any number with 3 in it or divisible by three they shout out 'fizz'. Once they get the hang of this add another challenge by asking them to 'buzz' for any number that includes 5 or is divisible by 5. Of course, a number that is divisible by 3 and 5 is fizz-buzz!

Cambridgeshire Outdoor Maths Cards

NCETM – Outdoor Learning Resources. Links in Resources section of EVOLVE

Leicestershire CC – Early Years maths outdoors – Resources section of EVOLVE

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**Creative:**

Natural art installations – Andy Goldsworthy

Make a musical instrument using natural resources and create a natural orchestra.

Musical statues. One group to make 'music' and the rest are spread out and do various activities on the spot – dictated by a 'leader' and they have to stop when the music stops!

**Reflection and PSHE:**

Circle time – spaced out! May need a big circle.

Raccoon Circle work – 2 to a 4m circle and join the circles up.