



# Adventure Learning Policy

## Our Vision

We want Virginia Primary School to be a community of happy, confident, motivated lifelong learners. We want our children to be successful citizens who value themselves and each other. Therefore, we are continually striving to ensure that we nurture, challenge and enable each and every one to be the very best they can be in all areas of school life.

## Rights Respecting School

We are a Right Respecting School and this policy supports the following articles from the United Nations on the Convention on the Rights of a Child:

- Article 29: Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.
- Article 31: Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

**Policy Updated: June 2023**

**Policy Renewal frequency: 3 years**

**Policy Renewal Date: June 2026**

## Rationale

Adventure is one of our core values. Adventure enhances our willingness to embrace challenges, to explore ourselves and to nurture every opportunity that life presents us. It expands the way we see and interact with the world. We know that outdoor learning and adventure when planned and integrated into the curriculum is a powerful vehicle for the development of children.

The benefits of adventure are far reaching and long-lasting, ranging from immediate improvements in social skills to better longer term understanding of curriculum subjects.

We believe that direct experiences are the most memorable and powerful learning tools – seeing, touching and experiencing something first hand is the best way to learn. Through participation in these challenging physical and emotional activities, outdoor adventure learning will support pupils to develop non-cognitive skills such as resilience, self-confidence and motivation.

The application of these non-cognitive skills in the classroom may in turn have a positive effect on academic outcomes.

Learning through adventure is a powerful personal development experience that helps promote and develop:

- Creativity
- Self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation
- Teamwork and communication skills
- Leadership and responsibility
- Decision making skills
- Independence
- A positive attitude to approaching new challenges
- Grit and determination
- A growth mind-set

We also aim to inspire our children by showing them places they may never otherwise visit and to show them ways of living and working that may appeal to their long term aspirations. We aim to truly widen their experiences and to enable them to get to know themselves in different contexts.

Outdoor Adventure Learning will provide opportunities for all our pupils to participate in activities that they otherwise might not be able to access.

Our Adventure Learning offer is carefully planned to develop a range of skills and confidence over the 8 years of a child's life at Virginia Primary School. The experiences gradually develop in skills, intensity and duration to ensure all children are able to access every experience and make the most of it.

## Adventure Learning Offer

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
<b>Nursery</b>	Local visits	Local visits	Local visits
<b>Reception</b>	Local visits/Forest School	Local visits /Forest School	Local visits
<b>Year 1</b>	Local visits	London visits/Forest School	London visits/Forest School

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
<b>Year 2</b>	Local Visits/London	London visits	London visits Shadwell Basin (bell boating- rock climbing- orienteering)
<b>Year 3</b>	London visits	Swimming 2 weeks intensive London visits	London visits Sleepover in school (crafting and t-shirt design, team games)
<b>Year 4</b>	London visits Swimming 2 weeks intensive	London visits Sayers Croft (2 nights/3 days) (orienteering , outdoor wall climbing, basic bouldering, pond dipping, shelter building and night walk as well as team games and problem solving)	London visits
<b>Year 5</b>	Dorset (Swanage -one week) (Rock climbing, fossil hunting and coastal walk, bushcraft, team games, tag-archery, night hike and beach games.) London visits	Cycle training and route planning London visits	Swimming 2 weeks intensive London visits
<b>Year 6</b>	London visits	London visits	Wales (Llangollen- one week) (Canoeing, wild climbing and abseiling, wild bouldering, gorge walking, whole day mountain climb, as well as night line, team games, low ropes and archery.) London visits Swimming 2 weeks intensive

We aim to structure our adventure learning so that children have the following experiences:

- Activities that challenge pupils physically (and emotionally).
- Opportunities for collaborative learning, problem-solving and explicit reflection on thinking processes and emotions.
- Support for pupils to overcome challenges and experience success.
- Building on the relationship between adult and pupils once everyone is back in school
- Learning about the local environment and further afield
- Comparing and contrasting localities
- Enhancing our curriculum learning

From the sleepover in year 3 onwards, children are also taught to make their own beds, personal hygiene, to keep their bedrooms and belongings tidy, lay the tables and clear up after each other as well as eating in a convivial way to encourage conversations and sharing of lived experiences.

## **Progression of learning**

### **Forest School**

There is often a misconception that Forest School needs to happen in a larger woodland environment and that it can be a 'one time' experience with a whole class of children. This is not the Forest School approach. Children should have the opportunity, in small groups, to interact with the natural environment regularly and consistently and these interactions can take place in a smaller scale woodland environment, as long as children can interact with their natural surroundings.

In their home environments children are often told that cold weather (wind, rain etc) and playing in water causes them to get sick. They are told that touching mud is dirty and that they must not do this. This means that children may come into the setting with beliefs that prevent them from exploring and interacting with the natural world around them independently and freely without anxiety.

Therefore, Forest School is incredibly important and the priority in the Autumn, particularly in the early years when their Forest School journey begins, is to try and build confidence in our children and encourage them to unlearn these false beliefs about the natural world around them through sensory exploration of the natural woodland environment. This takes time and it is built on as children progress to year 1. Over the seasons we develop different skills and secure previous ones.

### **Nursery**

Children will build their confidence touching the mud with their hands, exploring with their senses and feel comfortable being in a woodland environment. This will include:

- Tree climbing with support
- Moving heavier items such as logs etc
- persisting and trying in different ways

Children will be encouraged to collect natural materials and an adult will model how these resources could potentially be used to create something if children are finding it difficult. Adults will also be:

- Modelling how to set up a basic shelter using the tarp and rope.
- Introducing them to a basic knot.
- Introducing children to simple tools like a saw, hammer, peeler for different activities.

Children will be collecting different materials and through conversations will be discovering a range of plants and seeds.

### **Reception**

Children will be empowered to identify natural objects themselves, make decisions about how to pick/use these items in their play. They will be building on tree climbing but with less support. Children will be choosing themselves the type of tree that would be more suitable to climb. This supports the development of skills like:

- Planning and thinking through ideas
- Building on their ideas
- Developing a vision for what they want to create and being able to share and talk about this with each other.

Adults will be starting with the most basic shelter and developing shelter building further by:

- encouraging children to work as a team to put it up.
- Introducing children to different types of knots when pulling items and when setting up shelters.

Children will be learning different techniques at this stage when using the tools with adult supervision. They will discuss names of plants/seeds/trees, what they look like and dissect them using our tools.

## **Year 1**

Children will gain a deeper knowledge about the purpose of different natural objects, where to find certain items, their properties etc. They will have built their confidence to make independent decisions when interacting with the natural environment. These will include:

- Creating and persisting with nature obstacle courses –
- Designing with and in nature their own challenges and persisting.

Children will have had enough practise designing and creating with natural materials and should be more independent at this stage. They will:

- be able to choose their favourite types of shelter and have a go at independently creating these as a team.
- have an excellent understanding of the risks and the importance of safety and will be beginning to use tools more independently (still with supervision)

We will all work together to support each other to be able to tie a range of knots by the end of the year.

Children will be able to decide which tool would be best for a particular activity and plan accordingly. As children progress into year 1 they will have knowledge of their surroundings and the plants within the forest.

## **Year 2 Shadwell Basin**

Children will explore several indoor and outdoor activities and learn new skills. These will include:

- Basic climbing – rock climbing - indoor wall no harness
- Bell boating – basic use of paddles –
- Team building and problem solving

## **Year 3 Sleepover**

Children will be involved in a range of situations, activities and routines that will help to develop skills and offer new experiences. These will include:

- Working together to design and decorate t-shirts or other craft ideas (*creativity, teamwork and collaboration, perseverance and growth mindset*)
- Eating dinner together and helping to clear up (*life skills, communication skills*)
- Playing team games in the playground (*problem solving, team building, growth mindset, enjoyment*)
- Being taught how to set up their sleeping areas (*pyjamas, teeth-brushing, personal hygiene*)
- Preparing for bed – night-time routines (*personal hygiene, personal care, independence*)
- Enjoying movie time and bedtime (*independence, enjoyment*)

## **Year 4 Sayers Croft Residential**

Children will be staying away from home overnight and will experience new situations and routines. These will include:

- Travelling by coach
- Bed making, washing and grooming, unpacking and packing bags – keeping bedrooms clean and tidy, keeping personal belongings together (*life skills, personal hygiene, independence- teamwork*)
- Clearing up after themselves after every meal (*independence – basic skills*).

Children will also be learning new outdoor skills taught by qualified and experienced staff alongside school staff.

These will include:

- Basic bouldering skills in a controlled playground environment with soft landing
- Climbing skills on a climbing wall accessible to all skill level with harness
- First survival skills : shelter building wind/waterproof
- Basic orienteering : maps/landmarks
- Pond dipping – basic recognition of fauna

## **Year 5 Dorset Residential**

Children will be travelling further afield and staying away from home for a longer period. They will encounter new situations and build on previous experiences including:

- Travelling by underground and train
- Bed making, washing and grooming, unpacking and packing bags – keeping bedrooms clean and tidy, keeping personal belongings together (*life skills, personal hygiene, independence, teamwork*)
- Clearing tables up after meals (*life skills, independence*)
- Personal and peer reflections on teamwork and personal growth - stepping outside your comfort zone
- Evening circle time, reflections around the campfire (*personal growth – teamwork and collaboration, developing a growth mindset*)

Children will learn new outdoor and adventure skills including:

- Climbing skills - intermediate/advanced on a rockface with harness and abseiling
- Walking/trekking negotiating different terrain for a prolonged period of time
- Survival skills: bushcraft, fire lighting
- Orienteering – landmarks/compass points

## **Year 6 Wales Residential**

Children will build on their experiences from previous residential trips, developing independence and confidence.

They will be:

- Travelling by underground, train and minibus
- Bed making, washing and grooming, unpacking and packing bags – keeping bedrooms clean and tidy, keeping personal belongings together (*life skills, personal hygiene, independence, teamwork*)
- Laying the tables, clearing up and cleaning the shared areas (*life skills, independence, teamwork*)
- Goal setting and personal reflections, peer reflection and feedback
- Night-time reflections, the dinner gong- reflections around the campfire, personal journals (*personal growth, emotional intelligence, teamwork and collaboration, developing a growth mindset*)

Children will build on previous outdoor and adventure experiences and take on new challenges including:

- Wild bouldering – intermediate – on a mountain
- Canoeing – use of paddles to control the canoe and perform various challenges
- Abseiling – intermediate- on a high rock face
- Walking/trekking negotiating different and challenging terrain for a prolonged period of time to reach a mountain summit
- Gorge walking – negotiating a very difficult terrain in cold water – including climbing and canyoning
- Pond dipping – more advanced – recognition and classification (including adaptation)

We expect all children to take part in our adventure learning programme; this is something we discuss with the families as they join Virginia. In order to do that we aim to almost fully fund every activity, with families only needing to contribute to the Year 5 residential (£100). All other activities will be funded through Pupil Premium funding, the school budget and through our adventure learning fundraising. We will never exclude a child for financial reasons and we will always aim to keep any cost to families as low as possible.