

HEALTH & WELLBEING — CFE · P3–P6

Cluich a-muigh agus Forais-sgoil

Outdoor Play & Forest School — P3–P6

Outdoor learning in Scotland

1

Curriculum for Excellence and outdoors

CfE explicitly values outdoor learning. The Government's Curriculum for Excellence Through Outdoor Learning document (2010) describes outdoor learning as integral, not extra-curricular.

2

Forest School

An outdoor education approach using regular sessions in a woodland or natural setting. Emphasises child-led learning, risk-taking, and connection with nature. Scotland has one of the highest concentrations of Forest School practitioners in the UK.

3

Physical benefits

Gross motor development; vitamin D (crucial in Scotland's limited sunlight); improved cardiovascular fitness; better sleep. Children who play outdoors regularly are healthier.

4

Mental health benefits

Strong evidence (including from Scottish studies) that regular time in natural environments reduces anxiety, improves mood, and builds resilience. Green social prescribing is now used by NHS Scotland.

5

Risk and challenge

Outdoor play involves managed risk. Children who are never allowed to take physical risks do not develop risk assessment skills. Scotland's approach to outdoor learning explicitly accepts managed risk as educationally valuable.



6

Outdoor learning in all weathers

Scottish schools are encouraged to go outdoors in all weathers. 'There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing' — a Scandinavian saying widely quoted in Scottish outdoor education.

