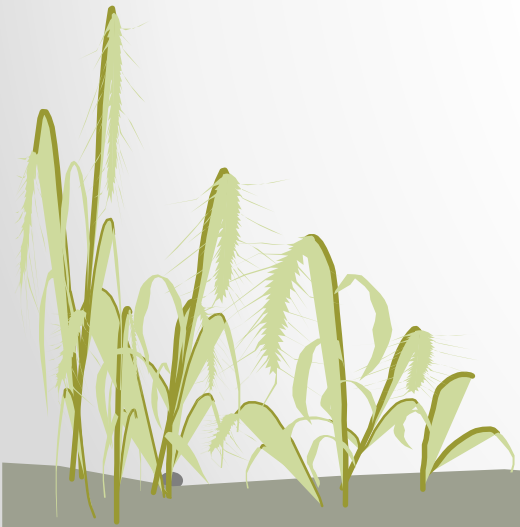


# Outdoor learning at Blackwater School

February 2024



# Welcome to Blackwater

*At Blackwater we have amazing outdoor spaces. Our Wild area is a special place that our children, and adults, are incredibly lucky to have as one of our learning spaces.*

*Through our outdoor learning, Wild Time, the children have countless opportunities to experiment, discover, learn and experience the natural world. It creates a sense of belonging as they are actively involved in the constant development of our wild area.*



# Outdoor learning at Blackwater

## *We have a Thrive / Trauma Informed approach*

*providing set activities whilst valuing the importance of free play, viewing each child as unique in their needs, interests and motivations, supporting them with their learning and to be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.*

## *We believe play helps children's development*

*Free play allows children to practice decision-making skills, learn to work in groups, share, resolve conflicts and advocate for themselves. It also allows them to discover what they enjoy at their own pace.*

*Risky play has been shown to be beneficial to children's development by helping them cope with stressful situations, allow them to assess situations and surroundings, learn how to follow-through, improve social interaction skills, increase creativity, assist in understanding their own limitations, recognize areas for improvement, and help form positive, pro-active 'give it a go' attitudes.*



# Outdoor learning at Blackwater

- 1. Standalone outdoor learning sessions*
- 2. Outdoor learning in the main Curriculum*
- 3. Outdoor Warrior sessions*
- 4. Hidden Curriculum*



# Outdoor learning at Blackwater

## 1. Standalone outdoor learning sessions

As part of our curriculum, ALL children have the opportunity to take part in outdoor learning as part of their offer here. These are organised as six sessions (2 hours a week) on a rolling programme. These stand alone sessions link in with our SMSC offer.

## 2. Outdoor learning in the main Curriculum

There are countless opportunities to link the learning outside. This is done as part of our practice and ethos here at Blackwater. Due to the children (and staff) being trained in making the most out of the outdoors, this happens now very organically. Additional resources have been bought to support this e.g. orienteering around the school.

## 3. Outdoor Warrior Sessions

All year groups have the opportunity to go out and explore different ways that make us Cornish. This is part of our Personal Development offer.



# Outdoor learning at Blackwater

## 4. Hidden Curriculum

*The effort and passion from staff and parents means that children get an even better offer through additional support e.g. growing in the polytunnel, support with the outside areas, donations from local communities.*



# Outdoor learning at Blackwater

## *Standalone outdoor learning sessions*

### Wild Time Progression

Each child in each year group will be encouraged to develop their knowledge, skills and independence as they learn and practice outdoor learning throughout their school journey, whilst constantly considering the Wild Expectations:

- *To be safe*
- *To listen*
- *To be kind and respectful to humans and wildlife*
- *To be responsible for their own behaviour and belongings.*

The learning will be fluid, incorporating, amongst others, play, creativity, social skills, fire skills, tool skills and den making.



# Outdoor learning at Blackwater

Our aim is to support children to be able to take risks in a safe environment so then they can grow become well-rounded individuals in society.

Individuals, who can manage social situations with ease, challenge others on their beliefs and strive to live a healthy and harmonious lifestyle.

We want our children to foster a love of the environment to take a responsibility in the community from a young age.





# Where to start . . .

- **Start with what you have** . . . Use available space to provide different learning experiences. Once you start using them, you will soon get your eye in on how to develop them.
- **Train the children** . . . It will take some time for the children to adjust to learning outdoors and being adult guided. Start with small easy activities and be prepared to spend money on wellies and waterproofs.
- **Forage and collect** . . . Use as much natural material as possible in your outdoor learning.
- **Assess the risks** . . . Risk assessments are your friends. DfE Health and Safety guidance recommends that children should be able to experience a wide range of activities, and health and safety measures should help us do that, not stop them.
- **Mix it up** . . . Use all aspects of being outdoors, don't just stick to one subject - stretch across the curriculum until it becomes embedded as part of your school life.
- **Work as a team** . . . Whole school CPD, giving different classes different areas to grow, brainstorm in insets, get everyone involved.
- **Have fun!** . . . Try to step away from trying to prescribe what the children do instead of encourage them to think, do and explore for themselves. The process being the main focus, not the outcome.

