

## Our Approach to Outdoor Learning

### Purposeful learning beyond the classroom

We use the outdoors as a setting for meaningful learning, not simply as a backdrop for activities. Our outdoor learning approach is designed to support young people's wellbeing, confidence, and engagement by placing them in real, supportive learning environments where challenge and reflection are built in.

### Why Learning Outdoors Matters

Outdoor environments offer something that is increasingly rare for young people: space to engage, explore, and learn without constant pressure to perform. Being outdoors encourages young people to:

- Engage more openly and confidently
- Learn through experience rather than instruction alone
- Take manageable risks and problem solve-solve
- Regulate emotions and focus more effectively

These conditions support not only learning, but also wider personal development, particularly for pupils who may struggle to engage in traditional classroom settings.

### Building Resilience Through Experience;

Resilience develops when young people are trusted to face challenge with the right level of support.

Outdoor learning provides opportunities to:

- Navigate uncertainty
- Persist with unfamiliar tasks
- Learn from mistakes in a safe environment
- Work collaboratively with others
- These experiences help young people develop confidence, adaptability, and a stronger belief in their own abilities.

### Further Reading

The Institute of Outdoor Learning (IOL) have produced a guide to the research that supports the effectiveness of Outdoor Education, you can access it [here](#).

## **How We Facilitate Outdoor Learning**

Our focus is on facilitation, not activity delivery.

Sessions are carefully planned to balance:

- Clear structure and flexibility
- Safety and appropriate challenge
- Support and independence

Our Instructors guide learning through observation, questioning, and reflection, allowing young people to take ownership of their experience while feeling secure and supported. Activities are adapted to ensure inclusivity and meaningful engagement for all participants.

## **What Makes the Difference**

Outdoor learning works best when:

- Learning outcomes are discussed before the activity
- Reflection follows activity rather than quickly moving on
- Success is celebrated
- Effort is rewarded rather than absolute outcomes

By creating the right conditions for young people to engage, challenge themselves, and reflect on their experiences, outdoor learning becomes a powerful tool for long-term development rather than just a positive day outside.

### **Residential Preparation Checklist for Teachers**

Before you arrive at Peat Rigg there are some things you can do with your class to prepare them and help them feel reassured, excited, and ready to engage.

These include

#### Set expectations

- Talk positively about the experience, focusing on teamwork, challenge, and enjoyment
- Be clear about behaviour expectations and routines
- Emphasise that effort and attitude matter more than “being good at” activities

### Reduce anxiety

- Encourage pupils to ask questions and share worries in advance
- Reassure them that feeling nervous is normal
- Reinforce that activities are adaptable and support is always available
- Show the Peat Rigg Video Presentation

### Build readiness

- Discuss how pupils can support one another
- Highlight the importance of communication, cooperation, and resilience
- Introduce the idea of reflection and talking about learning

### **Working together to support young people**

Teachers play a key role in helping pupils feel confident and secure during a residential. We work alongside accompanying staff to create a calm, consistent, and supportive environment.

During the residential, teachers can support learning by:

- Encouraging participation while allowing pupils to engage at their own pace
- Reinforcing positive effort rather than focusing on performance or outcomes
- Helping pupils reflect on challenges and achievements, both big and small
- Supporting routines such as mealtimes, down time, and personal organisation
- Sharing insight about pupils' needs or concerns with our staff

We see residential as a partnership. When pupils experience consistent support from familiar adults and our instructors, they are more able to take on challenge, enjoy themselves, and grow.

Our courses are designed to deliver a number of outcomes listed below;

- Improve Self-confidence
- Develop Teamwork
- Strengthen Resilience
- Improve Risk Management
- Develop Appreciation of nature
- Foster Independence
- Improve Problem Solving skills
- Improve Communication skills

This list isn't exhaustive and if your organisation would like to discuss specific learning outcomes the please feel free to contact your course director to discuss options.

