



Curricular Outdoor Learning at Dalkeith High School

Pathways from S5 and beyond

Introduction

“Children still need a childhood with dirt, mud, puddles, trees, sticks and tadpoles.” Children growing up in the digital age are more likely to be more comfortable playing on a smart phone than climbing a tree. Learning in the outdoors has proven physical and mental health benefits as well as enabling children to engage with the natural environment and show more concern and respect for said environment’s future. At Dalkeith High School there are three specific forms of outdoor learning open to our S3s as a curricular option.

The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award

Pupils undertake their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh’s Award as part of a timetabled class. Each pupil must undertake a physical activity, skill activity and a volunteering for one year which can be broken down into 6 months, 3 months and 3 months. As a class, the groups have participated in: football; mountain biking; cooking; gardening; litter-picking; beekeeping. Groups also have to prepare for an expedition of two days and one night and learn navigation skills and first aid. Expeditions have been completed by foot in the Pentland and Lammermuir Hills but this year’s group will be travelling along the Union Canal by Canadian canoe.



FOLA Level 4

Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards at Level 4 are an SQA certified qualification delivered in conjunction with Newbattle Abbey College. Pupils will develop an appreciation for working sustainably in woodland and respect for the natural environment by learning how; to harvest and use woodland materials; cook safely over open fires; use tools such as knives, saws and hatchets; improve the local environment by leaving it in a better condition than they found it; tying knots and identifying a variety of flora and fauna.



Horticulture NPA Level 4

This qualification complements and is delivered alongside the FOLA 4 Award. Pupils must learn about; propagating plants from seed, divisions and taking cuttings and keeping them alive; using and maintaining tools safely and responsibly; how to compost material and then building and maintaining a compost heap; using compost to mulch plants and beds; setting up an allotment style garden and growing and harvesting a number of different fruits and vegetables while weeding, feeding and watering appropriately.



Progression Pathways

Pupils can continue with DofE Awards at Bronze and Gold level as extracurricular activities in the senior school. FOLA and Horticulture awards are ideal for pupils looking to move into: rural skills; landscaping; forestry; agriculture; gardening; garden design; outdoor activity instruction.