

Outdoor learning: Sustainability

Sustainability

Through the priority of Sustainability, students develop the knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary to contribute to more sustainable patterns of living.

Outdoor learning enables students to develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between humans and their environment in order to promote, support and sustain the wellbeing of individuals, the community and the environment, now and into the future.

Outdoor learning provides unique opportunities for students to reflect on the ways humans interact with each other and the environment. It encourages students to reflect on ways of interpreting and engaging with the world and enables students to explore how they connect and interact with natural environments, and with other people. Students consider how these connections and interactions within systems play an important role in promoting, supporting and sustaining the physical, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of individuals, the community and the environment as a whole, now and into the future. For example, students could investigate geographical features of a place, focusing on forests and treed areas, and propose actions to care for those natural resources.

Outdoor learning gives students unique ways of experiencing and understanding ecosystems. Sensory experiences of seeing, hearing, touching and smelling can only be obtained in an outdoor setting. Understanding and appreciation resulting from a direct experience of ecosystems gives students an incentive to be active in preserving and restoring natural environments. With different world views across a student group, outdoor learning provides opportunities for the discussion of values that inform actions for sustainability.

Students can develop an understanding of their potential to contribute to sustainable patterns of living. Through outdoor movement experiences such as games and bushwalks, students are given opportunities to develop a connection in and with natural environments and to gain an appreciation of the interdependence of the health of people and environments. For example, students could repurpose a common household waste item, such as plastic bottles, and design and create a new product that could be useful while in the outdoors.

Students can develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between the health and wellbeing of the individual and the environment. They develop this understanding through a range of activities including:

- learning in and about the outdoors
- the creation of spaces for outdoor learning
- active outdoor recreation
- active transport options
- growing, sourcing and choosing food products.

Through such activities, they will gain a capacity to advocate and act for a sustainable future. For example, students could identify and investigate natural, managed and constructed features of environments and familiar landscapes, identifying the natural resources used in these places with a particular focus on soil and erosion.