

Scottish Outdoor Access Code – information for leaders

Scotland's outdoors is varied and often spectacular, ranging from urban parks and greenspace to wild coasts, moorland, forests and hills. Connecting with the outdoors can transform young people's lives, and places close to home can be a fantastic resource for outdoor learning.

In Scotland, everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water for recreation, education and for going from place to place providing they act responsibly. These access rights and responsibilities are explained in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.



The [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#) replaced the old UK Country Code in 2005. Access legislation also changed in England and Wales and Northern Ireland, their new codes are called the Countryside Code.

The Code is based on three key principles:

- Respect the interests of other people
- Care for the environment
- Take responsibility for your own actions.

Outdoor access rights in Scotland

Everyone, whatever their age or ability, has access rights established by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. You only have access rights if you behave responsibly, so it's essential to follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

These rights of responsible access apply over most land and inland water in Scotland, including mountains, moorland, woods and forests, grassland, margins of fields in which crops are growing, paths and tracks, rivers and lochs, the coast and most parks and open spaces. These rights also apply at any time of the day or night.

You can use access rights for recreational purposes (such as pastimes, family and social activities, and more active pursuits like horse riding, cycling, wild camping and taking part in events), educational purposes (concerned with the natural and cultural heritage), some commercial purposes and for crossing over land or water.

Some older rights, including public rights of way and navigation, and various rights on the foreshore, continue to exist.

The main places where access rights do not apply are:

- houses and gardens, and non-residential buildings and associated land;
- land where crops are growing;
- land next to a school and used by the school;
- sports or playing fields when these are in use, if access would interfere with this;
- other land developed and in use for recreation, if access would interfere with this;

- golf courses (but you can cross a golf course provided you don't interfere with any games of golf);
- places like airfields, railways, telecommunication sites, military bases and installations, working quarries and construction sites;
- visitor attractions or other places which charge for entry.

Local authorities can exclude land from access rights for short periods. Local authorities and some other public bodies can also introduce byelaws.

Access rights do not extend to:

- being on land for the purpose of doing anything which is an offence, such as theft, breach of the peace, nuisance, poaching, allowing a dog to worry livestock, dropping litter, polluting water or disturbing certain wild birds, animals and plants;
- hunting, shooting or fishing;
- any type of motor vehicle (except for people with a disability using a vehicle or vessel adapted for their use);
- anyone responsible for a dog which is not under proper control;
- anyone taking anything away from the land for a commercial purpose.

These access rights do not include some places or activities that the public have enjoyed on a customary basis, often for a long time. Such access is not affected by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and will continue.

Responsible access at a glance

You must use access rights responsibly and the Code explains how to do this. Think ahead before outdoor visits.

Your main responsibilities are as below.

Take personal responsibility for your own actions by:

- caring for your own safety by recognising that the outdoors is a working environment and by taking account of natural hazards;
- taking special care if you are responsible for children as a parent, teacher or guide to ensure that they enjoy the outdoors responsibly and safely
- Finding out in advance about planned land management activities or sensitive wildlife sites

Respect people's privacy and peace of mind by:

- using a path or track, if there is one, when you are close to a house or garden;
- if there is no path or track, by keeping a sensible distance from houses and avoiding ground that overlooks them from close by;
- taking care not to act in ways which might annoy or alarm people living in a house;
- at night, taking extra care by keeping away from buildings where people might not be expecting to see anyone and by following paths and tracks.

Help land managers and others to work safely and effectively by:

- not hindering a land management operation such as crop spraying or tree felling and harvesting, by keeping a safe distance and following any reasonable advice from the land manager;
- following any precautions taken or reasonable recommendations made by the land manager, for example by avoiding an area when hazardous operations such as tree felling and crop spraying are underway;
- checking to see what alternatives there are, such as neighbouring land, before entering a field of animals;
- never feeding farm animals;
- avoiding damage to crops by using paths or tracks, by going round the field margins, by going on any unsown ground or by considering alternative routes on neighbouring ground;
- leaving all gates as you find them.

Care for your environment by:

- not intentionally or recklessly disturbing or destroying plants, birds and other animals, or geological features;
- following any voluntary agreements between land managers and recreation bodies;
- not damaging or disturbing cultural heritage sites;
- not causing any pollution and by taking all your litter away with you.

Keep your dog under proper control by:

- not allowing your dog to approach animals or people uninvited (in open country, it may not be obvious when animals are around);
- where possible, avoiding animals - release your dog if threatened by cattle;
- always keeping your dog in sight and under control – if in doubt use a lead;
- keeping it on a short lead or close at heel during the bird breeding season (usually April to July) in areas such as moorland, forests, grassland, loch shores and the seashore;
- picking up and removing any faeces if your dog defecates.

Take extra care if you are organising an event or running a business by:

- contacting the relevant land managers if you are organising an educational visit to a farm or estate;
- obtaining land managers' permission if your event needs facilities or services, or is likely to unreasonably hinder land management operations, interfere with other people enjoying the outdoors or affect the environment;
- talking to the land managers who are responsible for places that you use regularly or intensively.



Further information on access rights and responsibilities

Scottish Outdoor Access Code publications

The full Scottish Outdoor Access Code can be downloaded from www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code is available in [summary versions in other languages](#): Gaelic, Turkish, Bengali, Norwegian, Punjabi, German, Arabic, Italian, Swedish, French, Spanish, Chinese, Urdu, Hindi, Polish, and Dutch.

The Code for specific activities

<http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot> is where you can find out all you need to know about statutory access rights and, responsibilities, and how to manage access management. There are different areas of the site specifically for Land Managers, Outdoor Users and Recreation Managers. The Practical Guide section provides guidance for a wide range of places and activities, including outdoor learning.

There are a number of [guides](#) that summarise what the Code means for different users of the outdoors. These include:

- [Do the Ride Thing - Off-Road Cycling](#) – good practice advice, including key points from the Scottish Outdoor Access Code
- [Are You Riding Responsibly?](#) – The British Horse Society Scotland provides information and advice
- [Paddlers' Access Code](#) – access advice for paddlers in Scotland
- [Orienteering and Access in Scotland](#) – advice from Scottish Orienteering.

Equally, land managers have to manage their land and water responsibly in relation to access rights and:

- respect access rights;
- act reasonably when asking people to avoid land management operations;
- work with the local authority and other bodies to help integrate access and land management;

Getting out there!

Other resources to take learning outdoors

[Outdoor and Woodland Learning Scotland](#) is a great source of information and ideas.

[Beyond Your Boundary](#) is a useful place to find out more about learning outdoors, places to go close to your school and organisations that can help you.

[Learning and Teaching Scotland](#) is where you can find out about how A Curriculum for Excellence supports the outdoor learning approach and find out where to go, what to do and how to keep safe in the outdoors.

Find a local route

There are many guides to local routes produced by local authorities and other organisations and groups. Contact your local [tourist information office](#) or [local access officer](#) or [ranger](#) for more information.

Visit a farm

The [Royal Highland Education Trust](#) (RHET) can support teachers with farm visits on a range of topics. RHET can also arrange for a farmer to visit a school to talk to the children.

Work towards an award

- [Duke of Edinburgh Award](#)
- [John Muir Award](#)
- [Nature Awards](#)

Other organisations that can help you get out there!

- [Learning through Landscapes Scotland](#)
- [Forestry and Land Scotland](#)
- [National Trust for Scotland](#) (NTS)
- [Royal Highland Education Trust](#)
- [Royal Society for the Protection of Birds](#) (RSPB)
- [Scottish Wildlife Trust](#) (SWT)
- [The Soil Association](#)
- [The Woodland Trust](#)
- [Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park](#)
- [Cairngorms National park](#)

There are lots of other contacts to be found at www.outdooraccess-scotland.com.



Access Rights and Responsibilities and the Curriculum for Excellence

This resource supports the four contexts for learning in the refreshed curriculum:

Opportunities for personal achievement

- gaining confidence in accessing outdoor spaces and understanding good behaviour;

Interdisciplinary learning

- designing and delivering methods of communicating the Scottish Outdoor Access Code to others;

Ethos and life of the school as a community

- developing a positive understanding of rights and responsibilities in the outdoors;

Curriculum areas and subjects

- the activities cover many curricular areas and can be adapted for all ages and abilities.



The activities will help young people to develop all 4 capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence. For example, it will help them to become:

Successful Learners

- with enthusiasm and motivation for learning, who have an openness to new thinking and ideas and are able to link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations;

Confident Individuals

- who are able to relate to others and manage themselves, assess risk and make informed decisions, and pursue a healthy and active lifestyle;

Responsible Citizens

- with respect for others, who are able to make informed choices and decisions, understand different beliefs and cultures, and participate responsibly within their life;

Effective Contributors

- who are able to communicate in different ways and in different settings and solve problems, making informed choices and decisions.

Cross Curricular Themes

Learning Outdoors

An 'excellent' curriculum needs to offer real-world learning experiences outdoors. Learning outdoors engages and motivates learners through first-hand experiences and can develop the values young people need to choose to live more sustainable lives. This resource seeks to enhance these outdoor experiences further, through the introduction of rights and responsibilities in the outdoors as they apply to young people in Scotland.

Education for Citizenship

Education for Citizenship is about learning to be a good citizen now – and having opportunities to exercise that citizenship – as well as learning to be an effective citizen in the future. The activities in this resource will help children to consider the exercise of rights and responsibilities at local and national level. This will help them to make informed decisions and take thoughtful and responsible action.

Learning for Sustainability

Caring for the natural world and behaving responsibly outdoors are part of Learning for Sustainability. The positive values and attitudes coupled with developing the knowledge, skills and confidence around being outdoors form an invaluable experience of learning to be part of a sustainable and equitable society. School grounds and the school environs should support learning for sustainability.

Health and Wellbeing

Mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing are all enhanced by being outdoors. Learning about and feeling confident in the outdoors will encourage young people to follow a healthy lifestyle. Taking an active part in caring for their environment can make them feel more positive about themselves and their future. Regular outdoor visits can establish a pattern which will be sustained into adult life - and it is fun!



Experiences and Outcomes

This section is directly linked to the [curriculum for excellence experiences and outcomes document](#). The aim of this section is to provide advice about the most relevant experiences and outcomes in the curricular areas which can be delivered by the activities in this pack.

Curricular Links at a Glance		Starter Activities				Creative Activities			Active Games					Activities					
		Photo Cards	Story Cards & Posters	Poster Adventures	Story Cards	Make a Code Poster	Tell a code Tale	Design a Trail Guide	Key Principles	Obstacle Course	Doggy Doo	Code Quest	Do you Know the Code	Access on Your Doorstep	Wearing a Deifferent Hat	Irresponsible Acting	Local Access Forum	Make a Game	Using the Photo Cards
Health and wellbeing	Mental & emotional; Social; Physical	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Listening and talking	●	●	●	●		●							●	●	●			●
Literacy	Reading	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Writing					●		●										●	
Expressive arts	Performances, presentations. Drama							●						●	●	●			
	Art and design					●		●										●	
Science	Biodiversity and interdependence	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Social studies	People, place and environment	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	People in society, economy & business	●	●	●	●		●							●	●	●			●

Health and wellbeing across learning

The pack activities are designed to develop positive behaviour and confidence in being outdoors. Spending time outdoors in green spaces supports and nurtures the health and wellbeing of children and young people and can establish a pattern of outdoor physical and mental activity which will be sustained into adult life.

Promoting positive behaviour in the outdoors is the role of all group leaders and enabling groups to learn and work together to achieve this creates a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust. Many of the activities allow active involvement of parents and carers - strengthening family links with health and wellbeing and the school.

For some groups getting out into nature is quite difficult, and understanding the rights and responsibilities around access in Scotland is empowering, helping children and young people to understand where and how they can enjoy the outdoors. The pack encourages and capitalises on the potential to learn and experience new challenges in the outdoor environment.

Specific Experiences and Outcomes associated with undertaking learning about the Scottish Outdoor Access Code using this pack include:

Mental and emotional wellbeing

- I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them.
- I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave.
- I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop

and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others.

Social wellbeing

- As I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others.
- Representing my class, school and/or wider community encourages my self-worth and confidence and allows me to contribute to and participate in society.
- Through contributing my views, time and talents, I play a part in bringing about positive change in my school and wider community.
- I value the opportunities I am given to make friends and be part of a group in a range of situations.

Physical wellbeing

- I am learning to assess and manage risk, to protect myself and others, and to reduce the potential for harm when possible.
- I know and can demonstrate how to keep myself and others safe and how to respond in a range of emergency situations.
- I know and can demonstrate how to travel safely.

In addition, being confident about being outdoors can help learners of all ages develop the skills required to plan for choice and change, develop social and emotional resilience, enjoy physical activity and maintain positive relationships with a variety of people.

Activities: All

Literacy across learning

All of the activities positively encourage language and literacy using realistic situations to learn and develop within the uniquely Scottish context of freedom of outdoor access with responsibility. In particular the activities encourage thinking and debate and allow for expression of local and individual experiences. Talks, presentations and group discussions are encouraged. A range of texts can be explored including the importance and value of branding and behavioural change.

Specific Literacy experiences and outcomes developed as a result of the activities:

Listening and talking

Enjoyment and Choice – all E's and O's apply

'Within a motivating and challenging environment, developing an awareness of the relevance of texts in my life'

- Personal responses to the variety of ways the Scottish Outdoor Access Code can be presented and explained.

Tools for listening and talking - all E's and O's apply

'To help me when interacting or presenting within and beyond my place of learning'

- Making contributions to the discussion around issues, rights and responsibilities in your local greenspace and the wider countryside. Awareness of a variety of opinions of land users for both recreation and for work.

Finding and using Information - all E's and O's apply

'When listening to, watching and talking about texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and specialist vocabulary'

- Using a variety of information to form different types of communication for different audiences

Understanding, analysing and evaluating - all E's and O's apply

'Investigating and/or appreciating texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and specialist vocabulary for different purposes'

- Asking questions, identifying fact and opinion, using different forms of text to influence others. Developing an informed view.

Creating texts – all E's and O's apply

'Applying the elements others use to create different types of short and extended texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and vocabulary'

- Exchanging information, experiences, ideas and opinions about outdoor access in Scotland. Clarify points by asking questions or asking others to say more. Working independently or with others to create clear and expressive short and extended texts of varying degrees of complexity. Use selected resources.

Activities: All, but particularly those that encourage discussion and debate - Photo cards; Story cards and posters; Poster Adventures; Story Cards; Tell a Code Tale; Wearing a different hat; Irresponsible Acting; Local Access Forum; Using the Photo Cards

Reading

Enjoyment and choice – all E's and O's apply

'Within a motivating and challenging environment, developing an awareness of the relevance of texts in my life'

- Selecting and reading, listening or watching the information supplied about the Scottish Outdoor Access code for enjoyment and interest.

Tools for reading –all E's and O's apply

'To help me use texts with increasingly complex or unfamiliar ideas, structures and vocabulary within and beyond my place of learning'

- Selecting strategies and resources to help me learn about the Scottish Outdoor Access Code

Activities: All

Writing

Enjoyment and choice – all E's and O's apply

'Within a motivating and challenging environment, developing an awareness of the relevance of texts in my life'

- Creating texts about the Outdoor Access Code in Scotland and selecting for the needs of my audience.

Tools for writing – all E's and O's apply

'Using knowledge of technical aspects to help my writing communicate effectively within and beyond my place of learning'

- Using knowledge of the presentation, spelling and vocabulary associated with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code to write in a way that makes sense.

Organising and using Information - all E's and O's apply

'Considering texts to help create short and extended texts for different purposes'

- Using a range of texts and media explore problems, generate ideas and use suitable vocabulary associated with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Consider my audience.

Creating texts - all E's and O's apply

'Applying the elements which writers use to create different types of short and extended texts with increasingly complex ideas, structures and vocabulary'

- Persuade, argue, explore issues, events and characters associated with outdoor access in Scotland, express an opinion and cite evidence.

Activities: All but particularly those that involve some creative outcome – Make a Code Poster; Design a Trail Guide; Make a Game

Numeracy across learning

A project about Access in Scotland might involve some collection and analysis of numerical data – for example a questionnaire about family, friends or other pupils knowledge and understanding of access rights would generate opportunities for interpreting and presenting data, evaluating and clearly communicating findings to others.

Expressive arts

Participation in performances and presentations and drama

The activities in the Scottish Outdoor Access code pack that encourage role play offer the opportunity to create, present and perform short improvised drama to class, school, parents or community. Choosing and accepting roles, using movement expression and voice, exploring real and imaginary situations.

Activities: Tell a code tale; Wearing a different hat; Irresponsible Acting; Local access forum

Art and design

Using a range of media to share information about the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, expressing thoughts and ideas, using imaginative design solutions and using a design brief (the branding guidelines).

Activities: Make a Code poster; Design a trail guide; Make a game

Gaelic (learners) - Principles and practice

This pack will be made available in Gaelic offering students the opportunity to practice their language skills – listening, reading and writing through active learning. The [summary of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#) is in Gaelic as well as English.



Sciences - Principles and practice

A project based on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code using the activities in this pack will include:

- ‘the application of science in the protection of the natural environment’ and the impact of science on the health of the Scottish environment;
- Interest in, curiosity about and understanding of the natural world;
- The importance of the need for responsible use of natural spaces;
- Expressing opinions and making decisions on social, moral, ethical and environmental issues based upon sound understanding.



Biodiversity and Interdependence – all E's and O's apply

‘Learners explore the rich and changing diversity of living things and develop their understanding of how organisms are interrelated at local and global levels. By exploring interactions and energy flow between plants and animals (including humans) learners develop their understanding of how species depend on one another and on the environment for survival. Learners investigate the factors affecting plant growth and develop their understanding of the positive and negative impact of the human population on the environment.’

- Our impact on living things in the environment and how our actions can make a difference, the importance of acting responsibly in the outdoors, following the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Activities: All

Social studies - Principles and practice

A project based on the Scottish Outdoor Access Code using the activities in this pack will include:

- Developing an understanding of the history, heritage and culture of Scotland, in particular in relation to land access;
- Developing understanding of their own values, beliefs and cultures.

People, place and environment

- Exploring the local environment, landscape features and ways of caring for the school and local greenspaces
- Understand the impact of human activity and how behaviour can make a difference to shared spaces
- Exploring the local area and sharing information about places to visit
- Understanding the interactions between humans and the environment by an assessment of the impact of human activity on an area
- Learning outdoors, observing impacts and considering solutions
- Discussing land use in the local area and how landscapes influence human activity
- Using maps for a variety of uses.

Activities: All

People in society, economy and business

- Collecting evidence and presenting an informed view (for example using questionnaires about the use of and behaviour in local greenspaces)
- Looking at the need for access to greenspace and the wider countryside and how this is supported in the local area
- Exploring equality of access and cultural differences in relation to outdoor spaces and the wider countryside

Activities: Those that generate discussion – Photo Cards; Story Cards and Posters; Poster adventures; Story Cards; Tell a Code tale; Wearing a different hat; Irresponsible Acting; Local Access Forum; Using the Photo Cards

SCOTTISH OUTDOOR
ACCESS CODE
outdooraccess-scotland.scot

