

UNLEASHING YOUR SCHOOL'S POTENTIAL

GUIDE TO MAXIMISING YOUR SCHOOL GROUNDS



NBB
School
Shelters

Call us today on **0800 1777 052**
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INTRODUCTION

Unleashing Your School's Potential

Ever wondered what learning experiences you could discover outside the classroom? A new eco-garden, grow your own vegetables, a geography or science project or even a work of art perhaps? Any of these possibilities can offer valuable learning activities to keep young enthusiastic minds active whilst being outdoors.

NBB School Shelters believe that school grounds are very important to children in aid of benefitting to help shape their experience of the outside world around them. Which are all achievable through active teamwork, management and development of unleashing the potential of your school grounds.

"Students spend up to 25% of their time – more than one day a week – in the school grounds. Despite this, many schools fail to exploit the potential of playgrounds and fields as a resource for learning and enjoyment."

"Children who are active at playtime return to lessons refreshed and ready to learn"

Engaging Places

School grounds are important as a valuable asset if they are imaginatively designed, well maintained and with a useful purpose which can have a positive impact on children's behaviour, development and learning. Especially during a time when local authorities nationwide are cutting costs and funding, schools need to demonstrate a significant contribution to their grounds for education and pupil development, the wider community and the environment.

BENEFITS OF THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

There are many opportunities where you can develop your school grounds to provide support and enhance the quality of their outside environment and enrich their learning experience to practice and develop skills through play, sport, educational activities, as well as relaxation.

• Education

Here are a few examples of activities that can support areas of learning from the National Curriculum;

Science – experience working outdoors anytime of the year by studying different habitats by demonstrating and observing e.g food webs, nutrient recycling, sound, movement and light through use of different materials.

Mathematics – the natural environment can help with skills such as applying maths involving measuring e.g lengths of fencing or paths, recognising patterns, estimations, data collection and presentation e.g planting densities or shapes.



Art – capture their imagination and creative skills by providing stimulus for observational drawing and colour such as mosaics/murals, natural art through colour/texture and 3-D structures.

Geography – experience fieldwork beyond school to get the most of field trips, by investigating environmental change and improving local environments and gain other skills such as map reading or surveying.

• Active Play

School grounds are likely to be used as playgrounds whether for breaks or sport activities, this can be greatly enhanced by increasing children's imagination by providing different environments and or equipment.

Influencing a child's behaviour in a positive way, can involve ideas such as playground markings to develop co-ordination and movement e.g pathways or stepping stones. Traditional games and sports particularly in the secondary sector could incorporate colour coded zone marked areas for team sports e.g rugby, hockey, etc to other individualised activities such as orienteering or exercise trails.

• Rest & Relaxation

Creating a quiet seating area can provide children with the opportunity for rest and relaxation as well as play on school grounds as an outdoor classroom, such as developing raised planting beds and sensory gardens areas can offer a valuable and welcoming environment to relax that can improve their behaviour, health and well-being.

DEVELOPING SCHOOL GROUNDS: SHARING THE VISION

Once you have identified a need and some ideas of the best possible design for the development of your school grounds this is the first step in sharing your vision to the wider school community. Initially your school will need to present and involve the Head Teacher and Governing Body as well as other teachers, pupils, parents, the local authorities and landscape architects. By approaching them they are more likely to offer support, enthusiasm and commitment which is crucial for the direction, conduct and strategic planning behind the project.

Headteachers and Governing Bodies

It is essential to obtain the support of the schools governing body as they have clear visions for the schools future and for developing the grounds in terms of ethos and teaching are met to high standards. So a well-designed and managed school ground is key to promoting high levels of educational achievement. Once this project is secure along with the Head teacher, the initiation of consulting other members of the school community can begin.

Pupils and Staff

To gain a successful project it is vital to involve the school staff and pupils to the whole process, as they will need to have an active role in the development of their outdoor spaces – from surveying, raising funds for the project or carrying out practical work such as painting or planting. Engaging school pupils from the early stages will help them to feel confident in interacting in their environment.

Local Authorities

Local authorities are fundamental in contributing to the strategic process in the development of new school grounds particularly with the new-build schools. Some authorities will appoint a General Education Adviser who can be consulted at this stage they will offer guidance and support on aspects such as design and health & safety.

Architects, Building and Development Teams

Designers and contractors have specific skills in assisting on good design, build, use and management of schools for outdoor space development. Their high quality design expertise can make a difference to learning and children's experiences, offering consultative and participative skills.

Local Community

Approaching local residents and/or businesses near to your school whom are likely to be affected by any developments to the grounds, can offer their support in the early stages of the project. Especially if your school has out of school hours local activity groups, they can be consulted on any proposed ideas.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN...

Now is the time to establish a group to help co-ordinate and drive your new project idea once this has been shared and agreed with the school community. All members of the community should be consulted if possible to ensure that all viewpoints are represented so the project can continue and that all responsibility is shared.

Points to consider:

What have you got already?

Before the development stage it is important to identify your existing resources, what it consists of, how it's used and people's point of view. This is a critical step which can help to establish what is physically possible and identify any constraints which need to be considered.

This may involve a scale base plan of your grounds by recording all survey work on a map by marking main features such as trees and shrubs, services; water, drainage, play equipment and any other landscape features; like main access points and pathways.

What would you like to have?

It is essential to clarify what specific needs and functions the grounds will be expected to fulfil like what activities pupils would like to be able to do in the grounds. A concept plan or generate a list of ideal spaces/features, on what teaching activities staff would like and/or what improvement would other users benefit such as local community, sports clubs like to take part in? Here proposals can be translated into detailed plans, drawings and models to produce a 'schools grounds improvement plan'.

HOW NBB SCHOOL SHELTERS CAN HELP WITH OUTDOOR CLASSROOM SPACE...

NBB School Shelters can help provide a wide range of specific products such as seating and sheltered areas around your school grounds for longer periods of outdoor learning, storytelling, active play and furniture for quiet activity and socialising during break times.

Create an outdoor classroom such as the timber shelter below for pupils to take mats or cushions outside to sit on can allow pupils to create a base near features or specialist learning they are working on e.g close to a wildlife area or provide a backdrop to a performance. This is a perfect shelter to protect students and pupils from the elements. Simple benches and seating areas can be added for formal or informal activities and can sometimes double up as play equipment for different purposes.

Visit www.nbbschoolshelters.co.uk



HOW NBB SCHOOL SHELTERS CAN HELP WITH LANDSCAPE FEATURES...

Pathways

Pathways and **Walkways** can provide an important feature of well-designed school grounds which can lead pupils and staff from one zone to another, also providing protection from potential hazards e.g wet areas and protect eco wildlife areas such as meadows from being trampled.

All of our **Decking** to create pathways, bridges and Walkways is 100% weatherproof with an anti-slip finish, making safety and performance essential in high slip risk areas. We can also provide additional features including handrails, toe boards and hazard edging. With Recycled Plastic it will never rot, resists mildew, sun fade, moss growth and requires hardly any maintenance - saving you money!

Fencing

Fencing is ideal for providing useful boundaries and segregation between areas, but could also be used as vertical surfaces for plants to grow upwards using trellising or hanging baskets and add other activities such as displaying artwork.

Signs and notices

Signs and notices can help bring the inside out, highlighting school grounds are part of the learning environment by labelling or defining different zones or useful information to parents and visitors and reminders for school children as guidelines to instruct good behaviour.



100% Recycled

HOW NBB SCHOOL SHELTERS CAN HELP PLAY, BE ACTIVE ...

We can help provide new and imaginative features to fulfil your outdoor play and learning spaces within your school grounds to keep children active through physical exercise by running about and playing other activities.

All of our playground equipment and furniture is ideal for either soft or hard surface playgrounds easy to install and to move around allowing freedom of playground layout. Imaginative and active play can be supported in areas designed around a specific theme e.g riverside, pirate or viking theme.

Most of our indoor playground equipment can be transferred outdoors such as Sand Pits, Imagination houses, Crawl Thru Tunnels, Storytelling Chairs or Animal Themed Benches. All playground furniture and play equipment are manufactured from 100% recycled plastic, are weather proof and rot resistant - and will last for many years!



REST AND RELAX AND SOCIALISE TOGETHER.

NBB School Shelters have a wide range of outdoor furniture for children, ranging from Picnic Tables, Seating and Benches. Fun or novel designs perfect for any seating area indoors or outdoors for children of all ages to relax, learn and socialise together.

100% Recycled Plastic outdoor furniture is built to last for many years to come (up to 5 times longer than timber furniture!)

www.nbbschoolshelters.co.uk

***"100% of children
play regularly in
natural spaces"***

The National Trust

***"Every learner should have
the opportunity for contact
with nature in their school
grounds on a daily basis and
throughout the season..."***

Scottish Government



WHERE TO FIND FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL GROUNDS PROJECTS?

Finding some funds from your school such as fund raising to help unite the community can help to start the process and implement plans for your proposal. Also it would be necessary to seek advice on and identify a variety of other possible sources of funding for school ground development, including grants from trusts, promotional campaigns, government schemes and donations from local businesses or community groups such as PTA or school clubs.

Seeking grants from your local county council can administer environmental grants and are an excellent source of funding which will need to be thoroughly investigated. Most grants require you to meet a certain criteria, therefore your school will need a clear aim and set of objectives as to what you want to achieve before you apply. Investing in a little time and energy is required which grant awarding bodies, trusts or charities would be willing to support your school grounds development.

Sponsorship is another direction to pursue to help raise extra funds for your school development plan. This may involve preparing a promotional pack with copies of drawings, plans, and photos of the school grounds with school members contact details as material to distribute to local businesses, shops, supermarkets, and media organisations e.g newspapers.

List of sources that may support school grounds projects:

Awards for All – offer small grants scheme funded by National Lottery programme aiming to improve local communities – www.awardsforall.org.uk

Biffaward – offers funding to community and environment projects across the UK – www.biffa-award.org

CSV Action Earth – campaign supports projects that make positive difference to local environment – www.volunteermatters.org.uk

John Laing Charitable Trust – can provide grants up to £25,000 for both education & environment – www.laing.com (John Laing Charitable Trust)

Tree Council – grant programme for schools which can help towards the cost of planting trees within your schoolgrounds – www.treecouncil.org.uk/Grants/Trees-for-schools

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) – can provide advice on how to source funding as well as access to funder finder an database of trusts for specific requirements – www.ncvo.org.uk

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) – a UK charity working with local people to bring positive environmental change. Can produce a list of grant awarding bodies as well as help & advice – www.btcv.org.uk

Government funding programmes:

Building Schools for the future – www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education

The Academies Programme (National Audit Office) – www.nao.org.uk (department for education)

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

The Countryside Classroom –
www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk

Learning Outside the Classroom –
www.lotc.org.uk

FSA – www.forestschoollassociation.org

Eco Schools England –
www.eco-schools.org.uk

Learning Through Landscapes –
www.ltl.org.uk

Food For Life - www.foodforlife.org.uk

Schools for the future – Designing School
Grounds – www.gov.uk/government

Engaging Places –
www.engagingplaces.org.uk

Good Practice Guide – Making the most of
your school grounds –
www.seeforum.org.uk

Ernest Cook Trust – Learning from the land –
www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk





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