

Parent information:

Learning Outside the Classroom and the National Marine Aquarium

Please read the following information to find out why we would like to take your child's class to visit the National Marine Aquarium as part of their curriculum activities.

Learning Outside the Classroom

● **What is Learning Outside the Classroom?**

Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) is the use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning. It is about getting children and young people out and about, providing them with challenging, exciting and different experiences to help them learn.

The 'places' where learning happens can have a significant effect on how a young person engages with a subject or an idea. Learning outside the classroom can happen at almost any time and almost anywhere – outdoors or indoors: in the school grounds, on the high street, in museums, zoos, aquariums, on mountain tops and rivers, in Britain's remote places, or elsewhere in the world.

● **How can LOtC help my child to learn?**

There are many theories about how humans learn, but it remains a fact that young people are intensely curious and will always take the opportunity to explore the world around them if it is offered. For many young people, it is not sufficient to acquire knowledge without seeing its relevance to themselves and the world around them. So, they learn better through practical experience and acquire their knowledge and understanding through real-life tasks that stimulate their natural curiosity.

There is a wealth of evidence which clearly demonstrates the benefits for young people's learning and personal development outside the classroom. In summary, learning outside the classroom:

- Gives children new and exciting experiences that inspire them to reach their true potential.
- Young people who experience learning outside the classroom as a regular part of their school life benefit from increased self esteem, and become more engaged in their education both inside and outside the classroom walls.
- Supports improved standards back INSIDE the classroom, raising attainment, reducing truancy and improving discipline.

Learning outside the classroom is known to contribute significantly to raising standards & improving pupils' personal, social & emotional development.

● **Ofsted's view of LOtC**

Ofsted has produced a range of documents and case studies to demonstrate the importance of LOtC, and to support schools to develop LOtC opportunities for their pupils. A key document is the 2008 report '*Learning outside the classroom: How far should you go?*' Key findings of the report include:

- When planned and implemented well, learning outside the classroom contributed significantly to raising standards & improving pupils' personal, social and emotional development.
- Learning outside the classroom was most successful when it was an integral element of long-term curriculum planning and closely linked to classroom activities.

Learning outside the classroom is about raising young people's achievement through an organised, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance.

School visits to the National Marine Aquarium

Learning comes to life when you.....



You may have visited the National Marine Aquarium with family and friends over the years, but did you know that the entrance fee you paid helps support our successful schools learning programme? Every year around 30,000 children benefit from reduced entry costs for school visits or outreach sessions (we visit schools) as

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part of our Just Add H₂O Learning Programme. A school visit is vastly different from visiting as a member of the public. Depending on what your teacher has booked, students could take part in any of the following exciting activities:

- **Interactive tour** – your child's class will meet a member of the Aquarium Discovery and Learning team who will take them on an interactive tour full of challenges and lots of time for children's own questions. All tours are linked to your teacher's learning outcomes and the national curriculum.
- **Workshop** – Your teacher may have added a workshop onto the day. This may be a craft based activity so that your child can take an amazing creation back to school to help remind them of their visit. Or they may taking part in a science workshop of which there are several to chose from, including ocean experiments, dissection, pollution investigations and much more.
- **Science Show** – Our team can provide a selection of exciting and fun science shows to help cement the learning that takes place during the interactive tour.
- **Immersion Day** – If there is more time your teacher may have booked an immersion day. These are full days to help children really get involved in their learning. They may make a film in our green screen studio, go rockpooling at a local beach or design a tank for the aquarium using their maths skills.

- **Learning Principles**

As discussed, the most meaningful learning occurs through acquiring knowledge and skills through real-life, practical or hands-on activities. As such, when we design our school activities we use the following 4 principles:

- *Learning from Fun* – all of our sessions are designed with the enjoyment of the learner as the most important aspect
- *Learning from Experience* – all of our sessions are hands on and interactive
- *Learning from People* – our team is made up of scientists, teachers and environmental education specialists, all of whom are trained to engage and enthuse the students that visit us.
- *Learning from Science* – all of our programmes aim to give students a positive view of science and scientist.

- **Evaluation**

From our rigorous evaluation procedure, we know that a visit to the National Marine Aquarium, covers teachers learning outcomes, the national curriculum and also helps children to understand more about the amazing marine environment that we all rely on. The animals and learning resources that we have provide an inspiring and engaging hook to teach all subjects of the curriculum from science to art, geography to maths, business studies to animal care!

On return from an activity off-site, there may be follow-on activities that can be carried out within the school grounds, thus extending the learning outside the classroom and making the most of the visit. In these ways, knowledge, skills and understanding take on a deeper meaning and help to raise achievement. The teachers from your child's school are able to download curriculum materials from our website and we are always on hand to discuss pre and post visit lesson plans with teachers to ensure that the visit to eh Aquarium isn't just a 'one off' activity – it really will help your child to learn.

- **Prices**

The standard entry price for a child is £10.75. All schools sessions fall well beneath this price. The most expensive session that your teacher could chose is our immersion day at a cost of £8.00 per child.

- **Contact us**

If you have any questions, please contact our team on 01752 275233 or JustAddH2O@national-aquarium.co.uk