



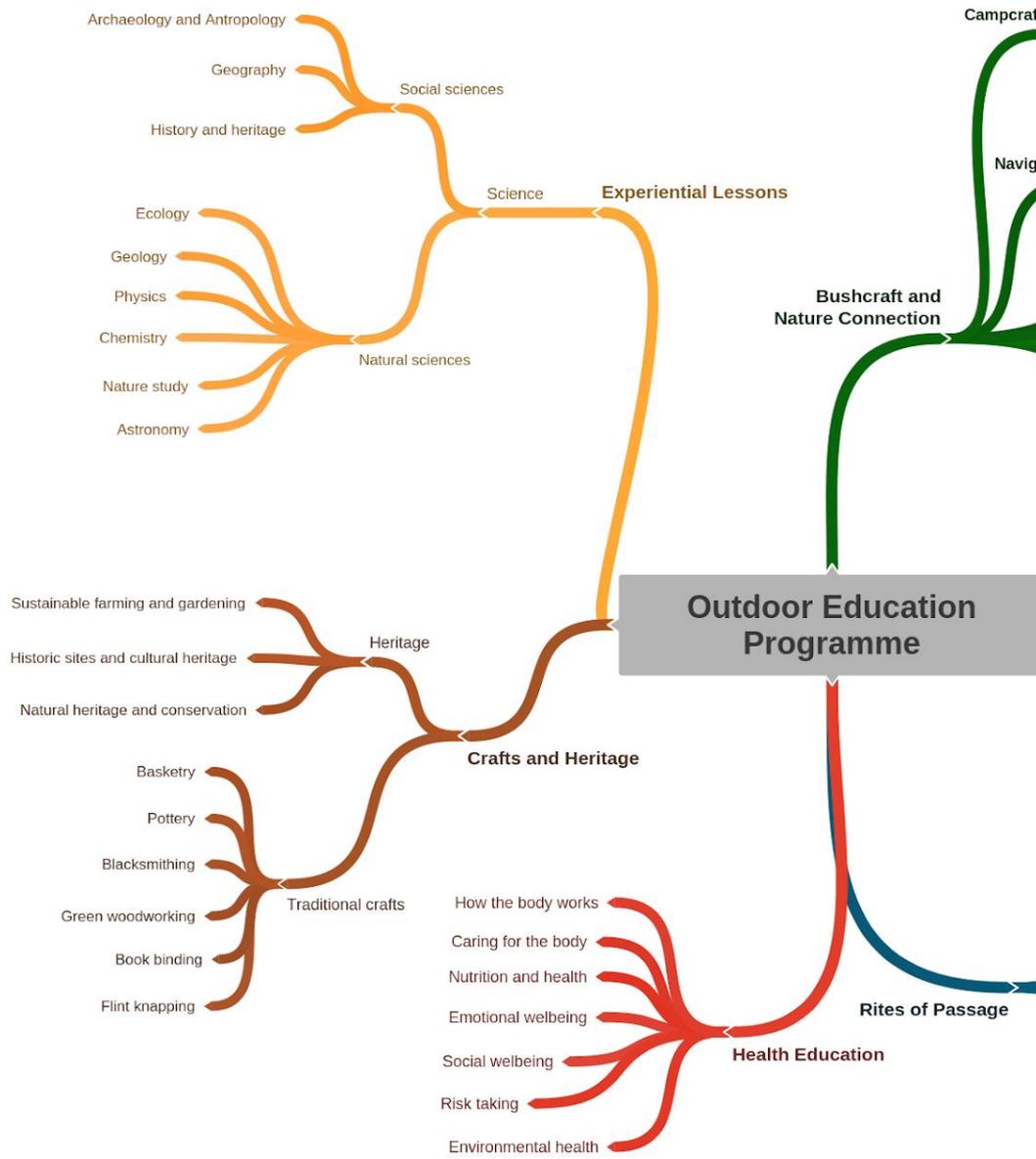
# **OUTDOOR EDUCATION HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS**

Andor Vince  
Outdoor Classroom Teacher

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## THE ETHOS OF THE OUTDOOR EDUCATION

The ethos of outdoor education at the Cambridge Steiner School is to develop in children a deep **Connection to Nature**, to encourage **Love of Learning** and to create a sense of **Community**.

In outdoor lessons the children:

1. learn to connect with and appreciate Nature
2. engage in the experience of real life learning outdoors and in active and creative exploration of the natural world
3. engage in experiential learning in both social and natural sciences, and by undertaking craft projects
4. develop friendships and healthy relationships with each other outside the classroom and with the wider community beyond the school.

These are accomplished by helping children to relate to self, to others and to nature in a healthy way. Thus the aim of the outdoor education curriculum is to provide opportunities for children for:

1. **Self-Discovery** by developing
  - 1.1. self-care to provide an optimum level of health through learning about nutritious food, hygiene and engaging in physical activities outdoors
  - 1.2. self-perception through becoming more aware of personal abilities, attitudes and values
  - 1.3. self-esteem and confidence, by enhancing children's awareness of their abilities and strengths to reach their own potential
  - 1.4. a sense of spirituality through spiritual experiences outdoors.
2. **Relating to Others** by
  - 2.1. developing healthy friendships by listening to and respecting each other's choices, opinions and values, and communicating openly and honestly
  - 2.2. providing opportunities for teamwork
  - 2.3. developing leadership skills through cultivating a culture of trust, considering each other's needs, valuing different opinions and acting with humility
  - 2.4. learning how to resolve conflict through developing different strategies and acknowledging differing viewpoints.
3. **Real life learning** through
  - 3.1. providing or creating an environment that encourages experiential learning
  - 3.2. developing thinking skills through practical problem solving
  - 3.3. developing creativity, imagination and innovation
  - 3.4. making learning fun!

4. **Relating to nature** through
  - 4.1. exploring the natural world
  - 4.2. free play to connect with nature on own terms
  - 4.3. developing respect for all living beings
  - 4.4. developing positive environmental ethics.

## THE OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The outdoor education programme outlined in this handbook is a fundamental part of the Cambridge Steiner School's curriculum. It is in line with the ethos of the school where experiential learning outdoors is considered to be a vital part of the education and healthy development of children and adolescents.

There are four aspects to outdoor education in the school:

- Experiential learning and expeditions
- Outdoor crafts
- Nature connection and bushcraft
- Health Education and Rites of passage

### Experiential learning and expeditions

*"The only source of knowledge is experience"*  
Albert Einstein

The aim of experiential learning is to engage children outdoors in direct experience with a subject they study in the main lesson blocks. The foremost role of outdoor and class teachers is to create opportunities for such meaningful learning experiences. This includes both the social sciences, such as history and geography, and natural sciences, including geology, physics, chemistry, study of nature and astronomy. The emphasis is on teaching historic and scientific thinking skills in an age appropriate way (see Appendix 1).

The subjects taught outdoors complement the school's curriculum. For example, the children can undertake a field trip with the purpose of exploring the geography and the geology of an area. To prepare for the trip the children learn expedition skills such as camping (e.g. fire making and outdoor cooking), navigation and weather forecasting. They learn how to organise field trips, including arranging equipment, food and funding, and in this way develop their organisational skills and learn about fundraising. Children learn to keep themselves and each other safe while developing a sense of a healthy risk-taking. Such an experience will develop their sensory intelligence and create a more profound relationship with the academic subject and its connection to the world around them.

During expeditions children will also develop their personal and social skills and learn leadership and soft skills. The physical activities outdoors and connection with nature will

encourage the creation of a positive-self-image and develop confidence, and lead to self-discovery and wellbeing.

## **Crafts**

There are four outdoor crafts that children will be taught at the school:

- Pottery
- Basketry
- Green woodworking
- Blacksmithing

Besides these, children experience other crafts such as leather work, flint knapping and bookbinding.

Through crafts children are exposed to different traditions of craftsmanship. They become familiar with the materials of a craft and gain knowledge of working with them. Children learn how to use different tools, including edge tools such as wood carving knives and saws, exercising caution and focus and paying attention to detail.

Crafts also serve as a rich resource to complement history, science lessons and maths. Through crafts children study and gain knowledge of the industry of which the craft is a part, learning about the history and social history of different times. For example, a number of woodworking and green woodworking tools used today were devised by ancient Egyptians or Romans and without which it would have been impossible to build their empires. The medieval guilds influenced some of the most significant changes in history and were a framework for creating institutions such as the first universities in Europe and England.

Children also learn the science of calculations and geometry involved in crafts. They gain knowledge and understanding of the physics behind some of the tools and equipment they are using, such as friction in drilling or simple machines such as the shave horse in green woodworking.

Doing crafts builds character in children and develops qualities such as integrity, resourcefulness and determination, together with the ability to respond intelligently to changing circumstances as the work proceeds. In this process they will learn how to think outside of the box. Furthermore, through craft activities children can develop their fine and gross motor skills and enhance their sense of wellbeing.

## **Nature Connection and Bushcraft**

Bushcraft activities teach children deep respect and love for the natural world. It also complements science lessons, particularly natural history, physics and chemistry. For example, when tracking and foraging, the children learn about plants and animals, their anatomy, habits and habitat. When lighting fire, children learn about friction, combustion and heat. When learning navigation or weather forecasting, children gain knowledge about the sun and stars, water cycle and formation of clouds.

Besides learning about science in practice, children gain skills in ways of living in a sustainable way outdoors and the importance of preserving the natural world and wildlife. They learn skills such as shelter building, lashing, fire lighting and cooking outdoors, and how to use materials to make containers and boxes. They study natural navigation and learn how to navigate using map and compass. This gives children confidence in living outdoors and thus prepares them for undertaking field trips and expeditions. Through activities such as foraging and tracking, children develop their sensory awareness such as sight, hearing, taste, smell and balance. They are challenged both mentally and physically, which contributes to their healthy development.

## **Health Education and Rites of Passage Programme**

Part of the school's Health Education Programme is delivered in the outdoor education programme.

The foundation of health education outdoors is embedded in the ethos of outdoor education: self-discovery, relating to others and to nature (environmental health). The areas of health education covered in outdoor lessons include:

- How the body works
- Caring for the body
- Nutrition and health
- Social wellbeing
- Emotional wellbeing
- Risk taking
- Environmental health

For details please see Appendix 2.

The topics listed above will be integrated into the outdoor lesson blocks. For example, when cooking outdoors the children will plan a healthy meal by learning about basic nutrition necessary for health and growth. This will include the role that nutrients such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats, minerals, vitamins and water play in keeping the body healthy. Learning to recognise both one's own and others' feelings and how to express them in a healthy way will be taught as part of everyday dynamics outdoors, such as during games and as situations arise. In these instances, situations that lead to certain feelings, both positive and negative, will be opportunities for individual or group reflection or class discussion, including role play. First aid and risk taking, will be taught more formally through practical sessions and exercises, decision making in real life situations, reflections and discussions.

The Rites of Passage Programme aims to teach young adolescents about healthy physical, social and emotional development and to assist them on their journey towards young adulthood by offering specific knowledge and skills and to teach certain values necessary to become well-balanced and healthy members of society. This involves physical, sexual, intellectual, moral and ethical, social and spiritual maturity. These will be achieved through activities such as:

- Circle of Trust
- Nature Walk
- Vision Quest
- Journaling
- Mindfulness exercises
- Initiatory stories and myths

The Circle of Trust is a way of empowering adolescents to speak and listen from their hearts, learning to be open to each other and to express their deepest truths in a safe environment. When this happens the Circle of Trust can become a deep encounter with self and each other. Circle of Trust will be always moderated by a teacher with experience in this kind of work.

The Nature Walk and Vision Quest are ancient practices present in many cultures with the purpose of connecting with one's deepest self and the natural world in an intimate way by spending time in solitude. This time will be spent pondering age-appropriate questions such as inherent gifts, personal values and struggles. These activities, using the words of Stephen Foster, are *“growing up” experience[s]... an initiation into values usually associated with adult maturity – patience, introspection self-reliance, self-control, self-acceptance, self-discovery, and ecological insight.”*<sup>1</sup>

Adolescents are encouraged to keep journals as a way of self-reflection, of processing their emotions and thoughts and of practicing mindfulness. They will be taught how to be mindful in the present moment, through exercises such as simply paying attention to the breath, scanning the body or being aware of sounds, sight and touch.

Specific stories, myths and legends will be told to adolescents to help them reframe their experiences, interpret what is happening to them and understand more fully some of the events in their lives. For example, mythological stories that ask the bigger questions of life and can give shape to adolescents' understanding about how they fit into the bigger picture of this world. Language of myth can describe their experience in terms of heroic rites of passage which can lead them to take a more active part in their own development or in resolving personal crises.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Foster, *Crossroads, The quest for Contemporary Rites of Passage*

## THE CURRICULUM

The outdoor curriculum will be taught through a range of lesson blocks listed in the table below. The subjects will be delivered in four to six week lesson blocks. The lesson blocks are planned in collaboration with the classroom teachers. The Outdoor Education Curriculum is organic and adaptable to the needs of each class and individual children in the class, when this is appropriate or required. However, the core subjects are always covered over the school year, so that the teaching is consistent and each generation of children receives the same knowledge and skills.

Class 3 (age 8-9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campcraft, Traditions and Creation Stories</li> <li>Green Woodworking &amp; Measurements (length)</li> <li>Primitive Pottery, Basketry and Measurements (capacity and weight)</li> <li>House Building</li> <li>Farming</li> <li>Tracking, Foraging and Natural History</li> <li>Rites of Passage and Health Education</li> <li>Camping</li> </ul>
Class 4 (age 9-10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campcraft and Vikings</li> <li>Green Woodworking and Environmental Studies (ecosystems)</li> <li>Primitive pottery and Basketry</li> <li>Blacksmithing (a week-long course)</li> <li>Natural Navigation and Landscapes</li> <li>Tracking, Foraging and Natural History</li> <li>Rites of Passage and Health Education</li> <li>End of year expedition</li> </ul>
Class 5 (age 10-11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bushcraft (campcraft, navigation and weather forecasting)</li> <li>Prehistoric Britain and Primitive Technology (with flint knapping)</li> <li>Green Woodworking</li> <li>Pottery and Geometry</li> <li>Tracking, Foraging and Natural History</li> <li>Environmental Studies (ecology)</li> <li>Rites of Passage and Health Education</li> </ul>
Class 6 (age 11-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bushcraft and Physics (sound, heat and light)</li> <li>Tracking, Foraging and Natural History</li> <li>Green Woodworking</li> <li>Roman Crafts and Technology (pottery and mosaics)</li> <li>Navigation</li> <li>Geology and Environmental Studies (environmental geology)</li> <li>Rites of Passage and Health Education</li> </ul>
Class 7 (age 12-13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bushcraft and Weather Forecasting (synoptic charts)</li> <li>Green Woodworking and Physics (mechanics)</li> <li>Pottery, Basketry and Medieval History</li> <li>Chemistry and Environmental Studies (environmental science)</li> <li>Tracking, Foraging and Natural History</li> <li>Navigation, Age of Exploration and Astronomy (celestial navigation)</li> <li>Rites of Passage and Health Education</li> <li>End of year expedition</li> </ul>
Class 8 (age 13-14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bushcraft, Food Production and Nutrition</li> <li>Green Woodworking</li> <li>Raku Pottery and Technology</li> <li>Basketry</li> <li>Expedition Skills and Environmental Studies (navigation, weather forecast etc.)</li> <li>Rites of Passage and Health Education</li> <li>End of year expedition</li> </ul>

The contents of each subject and what the children will learn will be sent to parents at the beginning of each lesson block. This includes information about any additional costs for these activities not covered by the school fees.

## THE OUTDOOR LESSON

In Class 1 the outdoor lessons are delivered by the class teacher. For children this is a time to settle into the new environment of the school and rhythm of learning, form social bonds with peers and learn to work as a group.

Outdoor lessons formally start in Class 2/3 when the children are introduced to their Outdoor Classroom Teacher. The lessons and activities are delivered in four to six week lesson blocks. Each block is designed to experientially support the learning in the classroom. For example, when the children are learning botany in Class 4, in the outdoor classroom they explore the use of edible and medicinal plants in practice. When learning geography or astronomy, outdoors they are learning navigation.

Each class has an outdoor lesson once a week. The lessons start at 11:10 and finish at 15:00. At the beginning of each lesson the children are briefed about the day and assigned daily chores such as cooking or setting up the workshop for crafts. The lessons are delivered on the school grounds or outside of the school, depending on the activity and weather conditions.

In the lessons, the children are encouraged to be self-reliant and to learn how to look after themselves and each other. This practice starts with having to look after their personal outdoor equipment. For every outdoor lesson the children will be asked to have the following gear:

- Backpack
- Spare clothing in a waterproof bag (socks, trousers, base layer and fleece)
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Sun hat or woolly hat
- Water bottle (1 litre)
- Mug
- Bowl
- Spoon
- Small medicine kit with plasters, wound cleaning wipes and bandages

The amount of personal equipment and gear required outdoors will change depending of the season and weather conditions. As the children progress through the classes they are also required to have further equipment, such as a sleeping bag and a tarp. The parents are informed about what equipment and clothing their children will need at the beginning of each school year or as the seasons change.

The lessons are delivered outdoors regardless of the weather conditions, except when temperatures drop below 0°C. Equally, the teacher will abandon the planned lesson if the

circumstances are such that the activity planned is considered risky or unsafe because of weather conditions, tiredness or other unforeseen circumstances.

## **ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN**

The Cambridge Steiner School carries out both formative and summative assessment of children in outdoor education. These include:

- Development assessment
- Assessment for learning
- Performance assessment

### **Development Assessment**

The purpose of development assessment in outdoor education is to monitor children's physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development. This includes the ability to stay open to learning, persist in a task, use their senses (sensory awareness) and imagination, innovativeness, questioning and listening skills, independent and interdependent thinking and to empathise with others. Besides these, the children will be assessed in time management, self-awareness, motivation and cooperation. They will be expected to show responsible risk-taking through all the outdoor activities and this will be rated throughout their life in the school.

Developmental assessment of children will be carried out using:

- rubrics with clearly-described assessment criteria for each indicator
- anecdotal evidence – written records from child observations
- interviews - leading children to share their reflections about their own development
- journaling - children reflecting on their own development
- performance - such as presentations and challenges.

Development assessment will be carried out in close cooperation between the outdoor classroom teacher, class teachers and SENCO.

### **Assessment for Learning**

The purpose of assessing for learning is to collect evidence about children's learning and provide information about what they know, understand and are able to do. This will serve the teachers by identifying gaps between children's learning and the desired level of knowledge and skills.

Assessment for learning will include:

- self-assessment, a critical reflection on one's performance and learning

- peer assessment, commenting on each other's performance, formally or informally
- observations about what children know and do not know
- questioning by asking open-ended questions during lessons to find out what children know and understand
- group debrief or a group discussion, focused on making sense of the experience and clarifying the learning that has occurred.

## **Performance Assessment**

Performance assessment will measure children's ability to apply skills and knowledge learnt in outdoor lessons. This will include:

- individual or group assessment
- task performance based on an agreed set of criteria (e.g. night navigation by stars, paddling a canoe from one spot to another in a straight line)
- a portfolio of chosen collections of performance-based work (e.g. carving, pottery)
- practical application of specific knowledge
- description of observations from a science experiment relevant to outdoor education
- essays and tests

Additionally, at the end of each term or lesson block the children will be assessed through a challenge. In this they will need to apply all the skills and knowledge they have learnt. For example, taking part in an expedition trip where they will need to employ skills such as camp craft and knowledge of navigation. On these outings the emphasis will be on assessing their leadership abilities and application of skills and knowledge in a new situation.

The summary of the assessment for each child will be made available to parents and children in written form.

## **PARENTAL CONSENT**

Parents will be asked to sign a one-off consent form for taking children outside of the school premises for outdoor activities during school hours, in line with school policy.

Written consent will be requested for particular activities that carry a higher level of risk management. These include:

- lessons taking place outside of school hours
- adventure activities
- school trips within the UK or abroad
- residential visits
- community work.

Parents will be informed of each activity and will be given an opportunity to withdraw their child from any particular activity or school trip if they wish to do so.

## **CHARGES FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

All the general costs of outdoor education are covered by school fees. These include materials, equipment and tools. This excludes personal outdoor clothing and protective equipment that parents will need to acquire for their child in accordance with the school's recommendations.

The parents will bear the cost of the following activities:

- school trips
- adventure activities (e.g. sailing, canoeing or mountaineering)
- craft activities delivered by professional crafts person

These events will be planned ahead and all parents informed in good time about the nature of the activity, with appropriate justification of how these activities will enrich their children's education.

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN OUTDOOR EDUCATION**

Protecting the safety, health and the well-being of children is the foremost requirement of all staff in the school. All outdoor activities in the school are risk assessed. The assessment takes into consideration both those who will accompany the children and the adults they will come in contact with during their visit or at places they will stay. Parents accompanying children on occasional day trips are not expected to undergo DBS checks. Adults without DBS clearance will never be left alone with children. Volunteers will have enhanced DBS clearance if they have regular contact with children. Where the visit involves an overnight stay, parents and volunteers will require a DBS check.

Centres providing activities for children will be asked to provide evidence that staff who have substantial or unsupervised access to children have been checked. Children will not be left unsupervised in any centre that is not able to provide evidence of appropriate checks.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The school recognises that exposure to challenge and risk can play a positive role in children's personal development. The school also recognises that by nature, outdoor activities carry both negative and positive risks. For this reason the Cambridge Steiner School implements the principles of Risk Assessment and the Safety Management Model (RASM) for assessing and managing risks in its outdoor education programme.

The purpose of employing RAMS is to balance risk decisions that have a potential for loss, injury or harm to children (negative risks) with ones that have a potential of benefitting growth and development (positive risks). The focus of the outdoor programme will be on activities where potential benefits outweigh the negative risks,

keeping in mind that the overall levels of negative risks for children outdoors must always be low.

If you require further information about the outdoor education at the school or would like to discuss your child's needs please feel free to e-mail to Andor Vince at [andor.vince@cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk](mailto:andor.vince@cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk). For any other enquires or concerns you might have relating to your child's education please contact the class teacher or Sarah Fox, Lower School Coordinator. Thank you.

I am looking forward to work with your children!

Andor Vince, Outdoor Classroom Teacher

	History, Anthropology and Archaeology	Science
<p><b>Class 1/2 (Age 7-8)</b></p>	<p><b>Introduction to history and anthropology through stories (Year 1)</b></p> <p>Learning about the significance of history through stories about historic people and places visited during walks around the school and the local area such as the Horse Pond, the oldest cottage in Fulbourn, the village Memorial.</p> <p>Stories of hunter-gatherers and their way of life in the past and present such as tracking, ways of hunting and gathering food, building shelters and relating to each other.</p>	<p><b>Introduction to scientific thinking</b></p> <p>Make <b>OBSERVATIONS</b> and share them with the class to understand the world by watching closely, waiting for results, and using all the senses in the process of investigation.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> friction during sawing wood, evaporation of water and its importance for early life, water cycle, close observation of plants and animals.</p>

**APPENDIX 1: Historic and Scientific Thinking Skills**

	<b>History, Anthropology and Archaeology</b>	<b>Science</b>
<b>Class 3/4 (Age 9-10)</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Introduction to history and anthropology through stories (Year 2)</b></p> <p>Learning about <b>HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE</b>. <i>What is the significance of certain events that have happened in the past?</i> Listening to family stories and studying historic aspects of some of the subjects in the main lesson blocks, such as farming and Vikings. <b>COMPARE</b> how people lived in the past and today through personal stories, looking at and examining old photographs and listening to stories about the everyday life of people who lived in the past. <i>What changes can we observe in farming? What are some of the differences and similarities between how we live today and how the Vikings lived in the past?</i></p> <p>Listening to stories that aboriginal peoples tell to their children about their past, both historic and mythological, and their significance in learning practical skills such as hunting and navigation. The importance of storytelling in communication and survival (e.g. finding food and water).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Introduction to scientific</b></p> <p>Make <b>OBSERVATIONS</b> and gather data about the natural world by asking questions like <i>what happens with these plants?; what happens with these animals different and/or similar to others? different from others?</i></p> <p>Children record their observations and draw pictures in their field books.</p>

	<b>History, Anthropology and Archaeology</b>	<b>Science and the M</b>
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<p><b>Class 5/6 (Age 11-12)</b></p>	<p><b>Introduction to historical thinking</b></p> <p>Deepening the understanding of <b>HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE</b>. <i>How do we decide what is important to learn in history?</i> Understanding <b>HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE</b>. Introduction into social, cultural, intellectual and emotional settings of historic events. For example through studying Ancient History such as the everyday life of Ancient Greeks. <i>How did the Ancient Greeks view their world? How do we see them today and how might this influence our understanding of their way of life or decisions they made? For example, their attitude towards slavery on one side and their passion and love for democracy on the other?</i> Discuss <b>ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY</b> such as slavery in Ancient Greece.</p>	<p><b>OBSERVE</b> the natural world, <b>COM</b> scientific information and <b>PREDI</b></p> <p><b>EXPERIMENTS</b> by questioning and group and organise materials in d their findings in pictures, tables make further comparisons of scien can sort plants? (with and without many ways we can organise leave and three-lobed), what will happ</p> <p><b>APPLY</b> their understanding gain experiments and they will be thinking by asking open ended q happen to plants if covered? Would</p>
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	<p><b>History, Anthropology and Archaeology</b></p>	<p><b>Science</b></p>
<p><b>Class 7/8 (Age 13--14)</b></p>	<p>Learning further about the <b>HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE</b> of events that have resulted in great changes for large numbers of people, such as the Age of Discovery, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. Pondering and analysing the <b>CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES</b> of these events. For example, <i>what beliefs and circumstances lead to the French Revolution and what were the consequences of this historic event for people who lived at the time and for us today?</i> Learning to read and study <b>PRIMARY HISTORIC SOURCES</b> such as letters, diaries, newspapers and drawings. Discuss the <b>ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF HISTORY</b>. <i>Can we make ethical judgments of events that happened in</i></p>	<p><b>OBSERVE</b> the natural world, <b>COM</b> scientific observations and info outcomes. Carry out <b>EXPERIMEN</b> trying out ideas. Students allow and time to conduct independent to ask questions such as: <i>How ca would you like to know about...?</i> the results of their scientific end findings to others through writt They will present their findings us and charts.</p>

	<i>the past with our values today? How learning about the past helps us to face ethical issues today?</i>	
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## APPENDIX 2: HEALTH EDUCATION

<b>How the Body Works?</b>	Bones and muscles Cardiovascular system Digestive system Central nervous system	Organs and their function Respiratory system Urinary system
<b>Caring for the Body</b>	Body hygiene Benefit of exercise Sleep First aid	Dental health Obesity Exposure of body to sun
<b>Nutrition and Health</b>	Planning meals and calories Nutrients (protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals and water) Healthy eating habits Eating disorders	
<b>Social Wellbeing</b>	Values and character (manners, respect, responsibility and accountability) Friendships and privacy: care and respect, boundaries and safety. Family: love, security and stability Relationships with other children and adults based on kindness, consideration and respect Community work	
<b>Emotional Health</b>	Recognising, naming and expressing emotions in a healthy way Managing anger Bullying Self-esteem	
<b>Risk Taking</b>	Safety outdoors Injury prevention Healthy risk taking	
<b>Environmental Health</b>	Global warming Population growth Air pollution Noise pollution Protecting the natural environment	Destruction of the Rain Forests Thinning of Ozone layer Water pollution and plastic Waste and recycling Looking after our immediate environment