**SPECIALIST SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO ALL SCHOOLS IN THE TEES VALLEY**

**Tees Valley Wildlife Trust Wilder Schools**

**Learning outside the Classroom/Eco-schools / Sustainable Schools/Broad and balanced Curriculum**

We are offering schools support with range of environmental activities including wildlife gardening, using your school grounds and eco-schools and MUCH more.

All Tees Valley Wildlife Trust Growing Wild Schools get:

* Membership certificate
* 10% off all schools workshops.
* Wildlife Link for teachers – e-magazine for environmental educators which includes projects, publications, events and environmental activities section.
* Access to the [Wildlife Watch website](http://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/) leaders section
* 4 mailings a year to include 5 copies of “Watchword” our children’s magazine packed with wildlife features, environmental stories, quizzes, competitions, cartoons and news, including A2 full sized colour poster.
* Access to phone advice on Biodiversity and Environmental Education issues.
* Opportunities to take part in free workshops linked to Trust projects.

**Levels of membership:**

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| **Level of Support** | **What you get (eq)** | **Cost** |
| **Bronze** | 2 days | £600 |
| **Silver** | 4 days | £1100 |
| **Gold** | 6 days  | £1700 |
| **Green** | 8 days  | £2200 |

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The support will:

* enable schools in the Tees Valley to work towards their **Eco Schools Award**, **RHS Campaign for School Gardening Benchmark Scheme**, Learning Outside the Classroom Mark and the Sustainable Schools framework.
* provide specialist advice, CPD and support in various aspect of sustainability including school grounds development, sustainable resource management to cut costs, curriculum development for **Learning Outside the Classroom** (e.g. Forest Schools, John Muir) and local wellbeing.

**Improving attainment – how can outdoor learning help**

The approach will work closely with the **OFSTED** judgement criteria to improve pupil achievement, improve quality of teaching, enhance the safety and behaviour of pupils and support high quality, effective leadership.

The outdoors, particularly natural spaces, can stimulate and support learning in a way that the indoors simply cannot. Outdoor space allows children the freedom to move and express themselves and learn by doing. Nature, across all of its aspects, weather and seasons, is dynamic, surprising, and multisensory. Include adventure and fun, and all these elements can motivate the learner and support experiences that provide depth, breadth, challenge and progression. Many children and young people, who have disengaged from learning indoors, thrive in the outdoor context. Typically, high quality outdoor experiences are child-led and take an interdisciplinary approach. Often, teachers will experience a shift in attitude, seeing sometimes challenging learners in a new and positive light. Increasingly, parents want to know if their children have access to quality outdoor play and learning at nursery and school.

The importance of greenspace for health and wellbeing is recognised by the biophilia hypothesis (our innate positive response to the natural world). But how do we know outdoor learning really delivers education benefits? Anecdotal evidence, from teachers who have embraced outdoor learning approaches, is backed up by an increasing volume of empirical research. For example, recent collated evidence finds links between natural environments and learning.

* *‘School students engaged in learning in natural environments have been found to have higher achievement (in comparison to their peers or projected attainment) in reading, mathematics, science and social studies, exhibiting enhanced progress in Physical Education and drama, and a greater motivation for studying science’ (*[*Natural England Access to Evidence Information Note EIN017, 2016*](http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6292437136310272)*).*
* [*RSPB*](http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/impact_of_children%E2%80%99s_connection_to_nature_tcm9-414472.pdf) *research found that “children who were more connected to nature had significantly higher English attainment”*
* *Scottish Natural Heritage’s own research report* [*Young people’s interaction with natural heritage through outdoor learning Scottish Natural Heritage (2007, Commissioned Report No.225)*](http://www.snh.gov.uk/publications-data-and-research/publications/search-the-catalogue/publication-detail/?id=877) *found that “The effect of learning and play within green or natural places of all kinds…was particularly strong in generating greater engagement and challenge and enjoyment”*

**Eco-Schools** is an international award programme that guides schools on their sustainable journey, providing a framework to help embed these principles into the heart of school life. The programme creates positive environmental improvement but this is only half the story research shows evidence of a positive impact on wellbeing, behaviour, motivation and cognitive skills that benefit the whole community. The Sustainable Schools framework aims to encourage schools to take on board the principles of sustainable development in their everyday work, achieving educational excellence alongside the goals of healthy living, environmental awareness, community participation and global citizenship.

The **Learning Outside the Classroom Mark** is the first national accreditation for schools which recognises, and supports the development of learning outside the classroom across all subject areas.

**Forest Schools** originated in Scandinavia and aims to enable children to develop skills in a woodland setting, on a regular, sustained basis, with a child-led enquiry based approach to learning.

**Gardening** could be taught in schools from September 2014, a move very much welcomed by the Wildlife Trusts and other organisations - The consultation on reform of the National Curriculum states that pupils from Key Stages 1–3 should be taught ‘to cultivate plants for practical purposes such as for food or for decorative displays’ as a key activity in design and technology lessons. The Trusts **“Growing Food for the Future”** project has been delivering on this for the past 3 years.

The package aims to be as flexible as possible to fit in with on-going school priorities.

**What happens next?**

**An initial meeting of up to an hour will be provided free of charge to discuss how the time is best used** and will includeone stop shop signposting to further support/training focusing on the eco-schools/sustainable schools doorways and ideas of where to access funding for specific projects.

**Schools can pick and choose from the following – the list is not exhaustive**

**Specialist support for senior staff**

* Strategy meeting discussing how the school can benefit from being involved in the sustainable schools agenda.
* Presentation to governors.
* Run a staff meeting.
* Deliver CPD sessions.
* School development planning.

**Specialist support for Eco–school coordinators/subject leaders**

* 1 to 1 support to develop applications for the various awards.
* 1 to 1 support for subject areas focusing on sustainable development themes.
* Attendance at Eco-School action team meetings.
* Help with Environmental Review and Action Planning, Waste Audits, Energy Audits, Litter Surveys.
* Support with Travel Planning, Wildlife Surveys, School Grounds Development, developing a global dimension, learning outside the classroom.

**Specialist support for classroom teachers**

* Assemblies.
* Half day pupil workshops.
* Curriculum-linked “Learning Outside the Classroom”, Gardening and Forest School delivered to pupils.

**CPD**

Staff meeting, Twilight and half day CPD sessions focusing on:

* Eco-school/Sustainable schools themes:
	+ Energy / Water
	+ Biodiversity / School grounds
	+ Healthy living / Transport
	+ Waste /Litter
	+ Global citizenship
	+ Wellbeing, inclusion and participation
* How to be an eco-school .
* How to get a Green Flag – ideas for your school.
* Tailor-made sessions e.g. Growing food in schools, How to use your schools grounds to deliver the curriculum (various subjects / age groups) .
* Forest School Taster Sessions.

**Service standards**

The service will use nationally-recognised training resources, tools and methodologies to ensure high quality provision, including:

* “The Pod” Eco-Schools resources
* Sustainable Schools Framework resources
* Auditing tools, e.g. Eco-Schools Environmental Review
* Guidance on global dimension and sustainable schools
* National College sustainable schools toolkit
* Staff delivering outdoor learning are Forest School Leadership and Practise Level 3 qualified
* RHS Campaign for school gardening
* Membership of Institute of Outdoor Learning.

**Role of school**

The school will be required to make available a member of staff to work with the provider and take forward ideas developed from the initial meeting this is normally the eco-schools coordinator or similar.

To discuss this further contact Steve Ashton 01287 636382

sashton@teeswildlife.org

[www.teeswildlife.org/discover-learn/for-schools/](http://www.teeswildlife.org/discover-learn/for-schools/)

**Innovative ways to use your PE and SPORTS premium**

* Become a Tees Valley Growing Wild schools

Guidelines say the premium can be used to:

* develop or add to the PE and sport activities that your school already offers
* build capacity and capability within the school to ensure that improvements made now will benefit pupils joining the school in future years.

Here at the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust we offer a range of outdoor experiences and are members of the Institute of Outdoor Learning. Our activities are purposeful and planned experience in the outdoors. They can include discovery, experimentation, learning about and connecting to the natural world, and engaging in outdoor sports.

Outdoor Learning activities can be used for academic, social, mental health, wellbeing, inter and intra-personal development. Our experiences are led by experienced environmental educators. Outdoor Learning can help people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities reflect and learn about themselves, each other and their environment.

Our sessions can combine curriculum activities with outdoor learning, PE and sport.

Just some of the things we could offer for pupils:

**Orienteering**

Our site Woodhill Meadows is ideal for beginners, it has varied terrain but enclosed. Pupils learn how to use orienteering maps of different scales to navigate around the courses at the centre and Woodhill Meadow. Map reading skills are explained including scale, keys, symbols and orientating a map. The pupils will develop problem solving abilities and learn to work together as part of a team.

**Shelter building and survival skills**

This session can be run at any time of year; it is designed to inspire children’s creative and constructive talents. Whilst making their shelters they will also be thinking about animals’ habitats and what they need to survive.

**Moorland expedition**

The Moorland habitat exploration walk is 3 miles long and takes approximately two hours at a steady pace.

The walk goes up through the meadows to the woodlands and ascends to the heather moorland near Birk Brow. The views of the Tees Valley and coast are spectacular on a clear day. Land use and various habitats can be studied.

**Challenge Event**

The session consists of a series of outdoor challenges aimed at developing a range of skills including teamwork, co-operation, observation and communication, as well as environmental knowledge and awareness. Challenges include a three-legged beck crossing, cowpat challenge and dip and design.

Longer term opportunities include:

**Forest Schools**

Forest Schools aims to build on pupil’s innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning.

The Forest School learning environment provides opportunities for children to develop self-esteem, self- confidence, to form positive relationships with others, to develop a growing awareness of their emotional needs and the needs of others, to learn to cooperate and work with their peers and adults and develop strategies in order to take risks within the boundaries of safety. The setting allows the children to engage with the natural environment. Forest School is about exploring and experiencing the natural world through practical activities. The children go out in all weathers, all year round, exploring and learning from the four seasons and environment changes. The children’s interest along with the varied natural resources in our woodland are used to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skill development, all in the guise of play. Most of the activities are child-led but of course some activities are planned by the forest leader. Sessions cater for a variety of learning styles and give pupils the chance to develop a range of skills. Tees Valley Wildlife Trust can offer a range of sessions for you school ranging from taster activities to full forest schools programme.

**John Muir Award**

The John Muir Award aims to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to discover, enjoy and care for the planet’s wild places in a spirit of fun, adventure and exploration.

Our experienced John Muir leaders provide a varying level of support from one-off practical conservation days to taking care of everything needed to achieve your award. We provide 5, 10 or 20 day programmes that immerse you in the landscape.

**Discover** a wild place.

**Explore** its wildness through nature walks, fossil hunting, living history re-enactment, habitat investigations, bog bouncing, storytelling and sensory activities.

**Conserve** it through practical management activities.

**Share** your own interpretation of the landscape using creative writing, art, music and drama.

If you are looking to train up your staff the Trust offers number CPD opportunities “to build capacity and capability within the school to ensure that improvements made now will benefit pupils joining the school in future years.”

These all include active learning out of doors.

* **Environmental Art**
* **Numeracy out doors**
* **Outdoor literacy**

**Forest School Training**

The Trust is working with North Yorkshire Forest School Training to deliver courses based at Woodhill Meadows – Margrove Heritage Centre. North Yorkshire Forest School Training is an approved training provider of NOCN Forest School courses, established for seven years delivering Forest School training courses in Yorkshire and the North East.

The Forest School Level 3 qualification is appropriate for teaching staff interested in the Forest School learning approach. The focus of this course is to plan and lead groups in Forest School and to qualify as a Forest School Leader.

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