



PRESS RELEASE

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Grant to give schoolchildren a chance to enjoy the outdoors tops £1 million

A sought-after grant to help schoolchildren get outdoors and connect with nature has now given out more than £1 million.

UK educational charity The Ernest Cook Trust launched the Outdoor Essentials Grant in 2019, and since then thousands of pupils and hundreds of schools have benefited. The grant can help cover travel costs to get to natural open spaces; pay for kit like wellies and waterproofs for the children to wear; or go towards improvements to school grounds.

The grants – which are distributed via three funding rounds each year – have now totalled more than £1 million.

The most recent Outdoor Essentials Grants round was given an additional boost from the Aurora Trust, a grant-making charity and one of the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts. The Aurora Trust generously match-funded the £90,000 put in by The Ernest Cook Trust, bringing the total for that round to £180,000.

Ed Ikin, Chief Executive of The Ernest Cook Trust, said: “There’s a really compelling body of evidence to show that time in nature, especially time in nature when we feel properly connected to it, has massive mental and physical health benefits. We want to get to the point where it’s nationally understood that being in nature is a fundamental good for everybody, and that everyone deserves the chance to spend the time in nature.

“There is always a very high take-up every time we issue a funding round and are very grateful that, on the last occasion, we were able to partner with the Aurora Trust to double the funds available.”

(continues...)

Sian Ferguson, the Aurora Trust's Trust Executive, said: "Evidence shows children's health and wellbeing improves when they're in nature. The Outdoor Essentials Grant is a fantastic way to help schools deliver Outdoor Learning activities and we were excited to partner with The Ernest Cook Trust to match-fund the latest round of grants."

Qualifying primary and special schools can apply for a £500 grant, with £1,000 available for secondary schools. Priority is given to schools located in areas of high deprivation and/or with pupils living in challenging circumstances, as well as to schools which regard Outdoor Learning and environmental engagement as an important part of education.

Applications for Outdoor Essentials Grants are now closed and the next round is expected to be open in April/May 2024

For more details of The Ernest Cook Trust's programmes, charitable spend and future plans, visit <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/The-Ernest-Cook-Trust-Annual-Report-202223-lite.pdf>.