



Outdoor Essentials Grant

The application window for this grant opens periodically throughout the year - please check our [Grants webpage](#) and social media channels for details.

The Outdoor Essentials Grant is an award to UK state-funded schools to remove barriers and enable pupils to connect to nature and learn outdoors.

An award of £500 is offered to primary and special schools and a double award of 2 x £500 (£1,000) to secondary schools. Priority will be given to schools with underserved pupils in areas of high deprivation.

As well as UK-wide rounds, please note that we reserve some rounds of this grant for eligible schools in defined postcode areas. This enables us to target our support, building on the wider work of the Trust in specific geographical areas.

Grants are available for the following options:

Nature & Nurture

School grounds improvements

To enable young people to be connected to nature and the recognised benefits that this has to their wellbeing, this grant is available to schools to enhance 'nature on the doorstep' through improvements to school grounds or areas within their local community. The ambition is to see projects that provide for outdoor learning and improvements to biodiversity which could include wildflower meadows, creation of raised beds, allotment gardens, ponds, woodland areas or sensory gardens.

The grant can also be used for the purchase of outdoor learning resources that engage young people with the environment such as bug hotels, bird boxes and mini-beast investigation kits. The grant cannot be used to fund capital infrastructure such as school playground equipment or storage sheds.

Wellies & Waterproofs

Outdoor clothing

The cost of living crisis has highlighted inequalities in people's abilities to access the outdoors. Being unable to access appropriate outdoor clothing and equipment has been identified as a key barrier for schools who want to engage in outdoor learning. This grant helps to fund outdoor clothing to enable children and young people to learn outdoors.

Transport & Travel

Transport costs to outdoor learning venues

Being outdoors benefits the mental and physical wellbeing of everyone. Research commissioned by The Ernest Cook Trust has identified that transport costs are a key barrier for schools to access outdoor learning. We are also aware that the cost of living crisis has highlighted inequalities in people's ability to access the outdoors.

We believe that all children and young people should have the opportunity to create lasting, meaningful connections with nature. Therefore, this grant supports school travel and transport costs to any centre or provider that can facilitate these ambitions, including: outdoor learning centres, forest schools, countryside parks, woodlands, national parks, farm parks, farms (including city farms), coastal areas and beaches. Trips to outdoor adventure centres for outdoor activities (such as kayaking and climbing) may be considered, but nature connection and environmental learning must be the primary focus.

Teacher Training

Training in outdoor learning

Feedback from schools has indicated that training would help strengthen the skills and confidence of staff to deliver outdoor learning; this will in turn benefit children and young people and enable stronger nature connection and environmental engagement.

The grant can be used towards outdoor learning training of your own choosing. However, we can share a directory of training courses that are delivered by providers that we are aware of and have confidence in, if this would be of assistance.

"...children who struggle to engage with school have embraced this project, seen that it's a real job, loved being given true responsibility and taken pride in enhancing their school grounds."

Outdoor Essentials Grant recipient - read their story [here](#)

How much grant funding will each school receive?

- £500 per primary school
- £500 per special school
- £1,000 per secondary school

What can we fund through this round of the Outdoor Essentials Grant?

- Any UK state-funded Ofsted (or regional equivalent) registered primary, middle, secondary or special school within the postcode areas listed above with a priority for those with a higher than average percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals
- Any UK state-funded Ofsted Registered Special or Alternative Provision School listed on the GOV.UK website and within the postcode areas listed above.
- Multi Academy Trusts, but applications must be made by the individual schools

What can't we fund through this round of the Outdoor Essentials Grant?

- Individuals
- Independent Schools
- Nursery Schools
- Playgroups
- Youth groups or clubs, as this is a fund for state schools only
- Outdoor learning organisations/registered charities, eg forest schools
- Parent Teacher Associations, Governors or 'Friends of...' Trusts. Applications must be made directly from the school

Who do we prioritise?

- Schools with a significantly higher than average percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals
- Schools that are located in areas of high deprivation and/or have pupils who are living in challenging circumstances
- Schools who that are committed to enabling outdoor learning and see environmental engagement as an important part of education
- Schools who that can demonstrate that outdoor learning has a wider benefit to families and their local community
- Schools who have not received an Outdoor Essentials Grant from us before

Application process

When this grant is open, a link to a very straightforward online Application Form is shared via the [Grants page](#) on our website.

“The most valuable aspect of the transport grant was the opportunity it provided to bring students to a rich and beautiful space... For some of our students - particularly those who wear the hijab or come from culturally underrepresented backgrounds - there can be barriers, both visible and invisible, to engaging with outdoor and public spaces.”

Outdoor Essentials Grant recipient

