



## Gairloch High School: Creating Flexibility in the Timetable to embed Outdoor Learning

### Key Facts

**Where:** Situated within the small village of Gairloch, the school serves a geographically extensive area. It shares a campus with Gairloch Primary School, and sits just over a hundred metres from the sea and a few hundred metres from paths to the surrounding hills.

**School Roll:** 140 approx.

**What:** The school has made the decision to embed Outdoor Learning across the curriculum, and have ensured space in the timetable to accommodate learning outside the classroom and beyond the school campus.

**Summary:**

The school rents a building at Slattadale Forest, which is approximately 8 miles from Gairloch – a 20 minute drive in the school mini bus. Part of the building is sound and watertight, and offers classroom facilities, a kitchen and WC facilities. The other half is semi derelict, but in itself this offers the school a learning opportunity – a teacher has suggested the idea of getting pupils to come up with ideas of how they could develop Slattadale, and learn design skills in the process. The aim is for Slattadale to be a resource for all departments to enable them to take learning outdoors, and to open it up to associated primary schools or other visiting groups.

The school also maximises the limited outdoor space they have available. A narrow strip of flat ground behind the school building has been utilised for composting spaces, and an equipment shed built by pupils. Pupils have built raised beds, researched the conditions and seasons, and have devised suitable planting schemes. Produce goes into the local horticultural show and is used in the school canteen.

**Education Benefit :**

- The school has made a conscious decision to embed Outdoor Learning across the curriculum, to make it sustainable, and to ensure that there is progression and coverage throughout S1 – S6
- Educational opportunities reflect the local context. In Gairloch, there are many outdoor education opportunities offered to pupils, some done in partnership with local businesses engaged in activity tourism

**Key Messages**

- **Block the timetable so that there are double periods to help accommodate learning outside the classroom and beyond the school campus**
- **Risk assessments are constantly being added to, and these are available to all staff, and they cover many of the regular activities beyond the classroom. Pupils are expected to take responsibility for themselves and others, and to come prepared for work whether in the classroom or outdoors**
- **Work with the local community and local businesses to access skills, resources and support, and to provide real life contexts' for learning in and outside of the classroom**
- **Context is key. As the economics of an area change, so do job prospects. Learning and teaching must reflect that. The local physical, economic and social environments can all be seen as learning resources**