

Lighting the flame of curiosity:

A statement of shared beliefs about effective and motivational learning in the outdoors

*Do not try to satisfy your vanity by trying to teach a great many things.
Awaken people's curiosity.
It is enough to open minds – do not overload them.
Put there just a spark.
If there is some good flammable stuff it will catch fire.*

Anatole France

An Arbury Park camp is a relatively short, intense and powerful educational episode within a student's broader education and family experience. Arbury Park staff play a fundamental role in designing and managing the camp program to maximise the learning opportunities for students and staff. For most it will be a unique experience.

Effective learning in the outdoors is about making connections; connections between an individual learner's conceptual knowledge, connections and relationships between people, and connections between people and the natural world that supports all life.



Effective learning builds new knowledge and understandings in context.

The natural world is a rich classroom, full of things to explore and discover. Effective outdoor teaching stimulates curiosity and guides learners to make their own discoveries, through direct experience, involving all the senses. Rather than random exciting events, effective teachers help to link the learning and 'teachable moments' so they become connected to a student's prior knowledge. Enduring memories arise from episodal learning that integrates a range of understandings and experiences.

Effective learning engages the emotions. Increasingly, learners have limited personal experience with the natural world and may have some apprehensions. Their initial experiences, therefore, need to build their feelings of safety and the pleasure of being outdoors. A sense of fun and enjoyment, linked to new knowledge, creates a holistic learning experience. Emotional responses often stay with the individual for many years, and can lead to significant changes in thinking, attitude and behaviours. The outdoor classroom provides many opportunities to inspire a sense of wonder and personal connection to the peace and beauty of the natural world.



Effective learning inspires and motivates learners to take personal and collective action. Changes in an individual's behaviour are a true test of effective learning. Inspiring teachers who 'walk their talk' and show their passion and concern for environmental stewardship can leave a deep impression on young learners. When students engage in meaningful practical activities, they develop skills and confidence for taking positive action.

Effective learning builds relationships and a sense of community.

A residential camp program provides opportunities to extend the values of community beyond the normal classroom setting. At Arbury Park, learners develop behaviours that are strengthened by living together: caring and consideration for others, cooperation to complete daily routines, and independence. Small group activities, ranging from sharing equipment, to attempting complex team challenges, involve students working together to achieve a common purpose. When teachers and peers acknowledge the contribution of an individual's talents and skills, learners develop confidence and self esteem. Teachers have a responsibility to develop the positive relationships that create an effective community of learners.

