

CASE STUDY



Newquay Tretherras School - Taking up the winter challenge



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BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

The Outward Bound Trust believes that high adventure and challenge brings deeper learning. The winter skills courses which run from Loch Eil enable this process to really be embraced and experienced by participants. For Newquay Tretherras, the total immersion into the rugged Scottish winter landscape provides their sixth form students with a strong sense of self-confidence, engagement and motivation.

The school believes this translates positivity back into the classroom with higher levels of attainment and positivity for the next stage of their students' lives.



OF TEACHERS REPORTED THAT PUPILS WERE PUTTING MORE EFFORT INTO THEIR STUDIES

"We believe passionately in empowering all students to become successful life-long learners who are self-aware, creative and resourceful enough to meet the challenges, careers and opportunities of the 21st century. Outdoor Learning is a key way we achieve this: by providing our students with the opportunity for real adventure, teaching them to balance risks, and enabling them to make good choices. We have found Outward Bound to be a supportive partner in the pursuit of these ideals, sharing our student-centred ethos."

Mrs Samantha Fairbairn, Headteacher



I see outdoor education with The Outward Bound Trust as a way of allowing people to grow and develop social skills by taking part in real adventure. We say to our students that if you have the courage and fortitude to face the fierce weather conditions and sleep out in a snow hole high on the Cairngorm plateau, a job interview or writing a personal statement isn't going to phase you! The learning during the Winter Skills course is real and powerful. The students return walking a little taller. They have discovered that they are capable of doing more than they perhaps at first believed, and most importantly they feel empowered to seek new learning and growth, for their future lives and adventures.

Chris Lucas, head of Outdoor Learning





THE WINTER SKILLS COURSE

The most challenging outdoor course offered is the Winter Skills course at The Trust's Loch Eil centre in Scotland. As Tretherras is in the far south-west of England, it rarely gets any snow or really cold winter weather. The course provides a very different kind of landscape and weather as a context for developing advanced outdoor skills alongside personal, character development. Open to Newquay Tretherras Sixth Form students, it typically consists of around 10 students plus teachers and has been running for six years. There is a great deal of theory training at school prior to the expedition, in order to prepare students, who need to be thoroughly committed to and knowledgeable about the challenge.

The mini bus journey from Cornwall to Loch Eil in the Scottish Highlands takes 17 hours and is accomplished in one go. The teachers use the time travelling to and from

Scotland to solidify learning, encourage group bonding and to review the course on the return journey.

On arrival, the group gets kitted up and at 6am next morning go for a jog and a dip in the loch, despite it still being dark. The group learn winter survival tips and practice using ice axes on day one.

The following day is a mini-expedition where, if conditions allow, everyone digs a snow hole in which they sleep out under the stars. This is the crux of the experience - being out in the elements overnight.

The final day includes a certificate-awarding ceremony followed by a meal out at the base of Ben Nevis to celebrate the group's achievements. An important part of the process is to embed learning and to recognise what the students have achieved together and as individuals.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Newquay Tretherras in Cornwall is a non-selective school with Academy status. Part of a Multi Academy Trust formed in 2014, the Newquay Education Trust (NET), Tretherras has 1,637 students age 11-18, including 245 in the 6th form. The school serves a mixture of affluent and low income families. Given this profile, the school is able to access the Pupil Premium for 335 students, many of whom receive Outdoor Learning opportunities.

The school is unusual in that it has a dedicated Department of Outdoor Learning. It integrates personal development and outdoor learning across the entire curriculum and values Outward Bound® residential programmes as an integral part of the opportunities open to its students.

