



Outdoor Education - Alternative Ideas During Remote Learning – Stage 1

This information resource is the first instalment in a series to be delivered by the TAS Outdoor Education Department during the COVID-19 crisis. It is designed specifically for TAS students and their families. The suggestions are appropriate at the time of but may need to be modified as government regulations and recommendations change over time. Many of these outdoor activities can be done in your own backyard, your local park (if allowed and appropriate) or even on your balcony for those in apartments. The benefits around getting some sunshine (vitamin D), exercise and stress-relief opportunities are crucial in the current COVID-19 situation.

With all outdoor activities please carefully consider key safety measures including sun safety and having an adult know where children are and what they are doing. Some of these activities will require direct adult supervision, depending on the location of the activity and the age of the child. Be aware also of adequate hydration and take the usual precautions when visiting natural areas, such as being aware of potential animal bites and stings as well as dangerous plants (eg stinging tree, what-a-while). Observe minimal impact / leave no trace environmental principles (take only photographs, leave only footprints) when in natural areas such as parks. Do these activities in your family or household groups to observe the social gathering rules. **As these are activities that occur outside of the regular school environment, parents must ultimately take responsibility for these and the duty of care lies with parents.**

At this point we would highly recommend that students create their own daily reflection journal or diary. This is an important learning tool we use on our outdoor education programs and will serve as an invaluable personal record of this unique time in history. It can be handwritten, or in electronic format (thereby allowing for easy addition of photos or videos). It could even be a video diary / vlog. There is a



separate information resource available on journaling, with a useful primer acronym of GOLDEN, designed by Dr Arne Rubinstein, the founder of the Rites of Passage Institute. G – How are you *G*oing? O – How have you *O*ccupied yourself in the past 24 hours? L – what have you *L*iked? D – what have you found *D*ifficult? E – What are you *E*xcited about for next 24 hours? N – What do you *N*eed?

The three sections below are broken into outside activities, online resources (websites) and apps for mobile devices. A top five list for each is presented herein, with more ideas to follow on a regular basis.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITES

- 1 **Outdoor alphabet scavenger hunt.** For each of the letters of the alphabet, find (locate, don't need to move) an object or thing starting with that letter. Variations include finding only animals, or man-made objects, or items of a certain colour etc.
- 2 **Bush art creations.** Using non-living natural materials (eg leaves, sticks, rocks), create your own bush art masterpiece. Take a photo of your creation, and perhaps a video explaining what it is, and return items to where they were found. For inspiration visit www.jamesbruntartist.co.uk
- 3 **Find you own outdoor sit space.** Find / designate / make a space for one person to sit and reflect. Make it comfortable to sit in for some solo time (not directly in the sun, perhaps with a comfortable chair / cushion / mat – can be on balcony if needed. This space can be used on a regular, perhaps even a scheduled bases for relaxation and reflection, writing, drawing / sketching, practicing meditation and mindfulness etc. See ideas for journal writing above also.
- 4 **Create your own garden.** One for each child for them to have the responsibility for and to look after each day. Have students research what plants grow best at this time of year, with an edible garden achieving a few purposes at this time. Even planting or taking ownership of one small plant would be a great exercise to see how some things can still flourish through challenging times if given the basic care they require.
- 5 **Hike one of the local walking tracks.** Consider the red/yellow/blue and green arrow trail network on Mt Whitfield for those near the central Cairns area, Earl Hill at Trinity Beach for those on the north side and the Ivan Evans walk at Bayview Heights for those on the south side of town. Make sure you let others know where you are going (and know this well yourself), take a communication device (eg phone), some water and



snack food and some basic first aid equipment (to manage a snakebite, for example).

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- 1 **Nature Play.** www.natureplayqld.org.au Check out the Lists resources in the things to do section.
- 2 **Kidspot – Outdoor Activities Page.** <https://www.kidspot.com.au/things-to-do/outdoor-activities> A huge information resource for outdoor activities and play for children.
- 3 **Little Blue Birds.** <http://www.littlebluebirds.org.au/> Creative outdoor ideas for children focusing on nature, art and music.
- 4 **Wet Tropics Rainforest Explorer.** www.wettropics.gov.au Extensive website from the Wet tropics Management Authority. Check out the Rainforest Explorer Learning Resource.
- 5 **Outdoors Queensland.** www.qorf.org.au The peak industry body for the outdoors in Queensland. A great web-based hub for finding further information.

APPS FOR USING IN THE OUTDOORS

- 1 **Astronomy.** Many potential apps, free and paid. Popular ones include Star Walk, Sky Guide and Solar Walk.
- 2 **Google Earth.** Take a virtual journey wherever you choose without leaving home! Make a list of where you want to go in the future. Find your house, and your friends' houses etc. Find famous landmarks by navigating there (not by searching).
- 3 **Smiling Mind.** One of the many apps available for mindfulness / meditation. Can use in outdoor sit space mentioned above.
- 4 **Freshwater Macroinvertebrates.** A great app created by the QLD Museum (and they have many others also). Will need access (and adult supervision) to a freshwater environment such as a creek or other safe waterway. Use a fine strainer or net to see what you can find and then use the app to identify what it is.
- 5 **Nature Passport.** This app was developed by Nature Play (see point 1 in the above section). It is a mobile resource to help children play, explore and learn in nature – at school, at home, in parks and in wild places. With



activities designed by experts in outdoor play and experiential education, the app is an awesome tool for students and families.

For further information feel free to visit the school website COVID-19 hub, the TAS Outdoor Education Facebook Group, or email outdooreducation@tas.qld.edu.au.

Yours in the outdoors,

Darren Osmond, Director of Outdoor Education.