

# Play & Learn Outdoors

from the canopy experts

**able**  
canopies  
& outdoor projects

Issue 3.4

September 2024

*Fun Ideas to Expand a Safe Learning Environment for Your School*

**DATES FOR  
YOUR DIARY**

Page 15

**Hair-Raising  
HALLOWEEN  
FUNDRAISERS**

Pages 14

BACK TO  
SCHOOL

**Autumn  
Outdoor  
Learning Activities**

Page 6

**Sun Safety Tips  
from Shade Man**

Page 3

# WELCOME TO THE SEPTEMBER EDITION OF PLAY & LEARN OUTDOORS

Welcome back to school, I hope you enjoyed your well-deserved break and are ready for the new school year ahead.

We've got a bumper issue of P&LO this month which is packed full of inspiration for outdoor lessons, playground cover, fundraising ideas and important dates for your diary.

When you get a chance, take a break, sit back, relax with your favorite drink and have a flick through this edition of P&LO.

Hopefully you'll be able to take some ideas back to the classroom to enable you and your pupils to enjoy the great outdoors while the sun is still shining. However, with the addition of a canopy, you can enjoy the outdoors throughout the whole year.

If you enjoy reading P&LO, why not pass a copy to your colleagues to also enjoy? If they would like to receive their own copies, email us at: [marketing@ablecanopies.co.uk](mailto:marketing@ablecanopies.co.uk) and we'll add them to the list.

Enjoy the autumn and we'll be back in the winter for more ideas and inspiration.

Best Wishes

**Tracy Meakins**  
Managing Director



## CONTENTS

Page 3	Sun Safety Tips from Shade Man	Page 10-11	Case Study: John Perry Primary School
Page 4	Reasons to Invest in a Canopy	Page 12-13	Shade Sail F.A.Q's
Page 5	How Much is a School Canopy	Page 14	Hair-Raising Halloween Fundraisers
Page 6	Autumn Outdoor Learning Activities	Page 15	Dates for Your Diary
Page 8-9	Cycle Shelters for Schools		

### Become Part of the P&LO Facebook Group



It's so helpful to be part of a community of like-minded people who talk about something that interests you and supports your profession. However, being a teacher doesn't leave you with much time to go to regular meets outside of your career and personal life. That's why we have created a Facebook group where

you can meet like-minded people, fellow teachers and education specialists online to discuss any ideas and tips you have for outdoor play and learning ideas, all from the comfort of your home or staff room.

The idea of this online group is so that you can gather and share ideas, discuss what has worked for you and what didn't, saving you and others time, and enabling you to hold outdoor sessions that work out perfectly for both you and your

pupils.

How can you join the group? If you have a Facebook profile, it's really simple, search **Outdoor Play & Learning Ideas for Schools UK** in Facebook, click the join button, answer the questions, hit submit, and you're in!

We'd absolutely love to have you join us and we'd love even more to turn this into a UK wide, bustling community for teachers and education professionals to engage and offer support and advice.

# SUN SAFETY TIPS FOR SCHOOLS



As you know, keeping children safe whilst playing and learning outside is important within schools and nurseries to help protect their pupils' skin from sun damage and sun burn. And, although schools are closed for the majority of the summer, the months before and after the summer holidays including September can still produce harsh UV rays and high temperatures, which children will need protecting from.

Here's a list of five simple ways you can help protect the children in your care and make them aware of the importance of sun safety too:

## 1. Run Sun Safety Lessons

Holding sun safety lessons or running workshops in the school hall is a great way to teach sun safety regularly. It also enables you to make the classes interactive and fun with activities and question & answer sessions.

You can download your free sun safe activity pack which is full of lesson ideas, print out sheets and fun facts here:  
[www.ablecanopies.co.uk/shademan](http://www.ablecanopies.co.uk/shademan)

## 2. Adopt Sun Safety Guidelines & Post Signage

You can set out clear guidelines for pupils to follow to ensure sun safety whilst at school. This gives them the responsibility to follow the guidelines themselves with the supervision of teachers and lunch-time staff.

To download and print a free 'How to Be Sun Safe' poster visit:  
[www.ablecanopies.co.uk/shademan](http://www.ablecanopies.co.uk/shademan)

## 3. Provide Shade and Shelter

One major way you can protect children without worrying whether they have their sunscreen or hats on is to provide plenty of shade and shelter. This can be done with natural shade in the way of dense trees however, they take many years to grow to a size to provide enough coverage.

A much quicker way of providing shade from the sun is with the use of a canopy. Our canopies provide high UV protection and can cover both small and large areas to suit your requirements.

## 4. Ensure all Staff Demonstrate Sun Safety

Encourage staff to all demonstrate sun safety themselves by applying sunscreen and seeking shade when outside, particularly when teaching outside to set an example.

## 5. Encourage Parents to Support Sun Safety

You can either ask parents to attend the sun safety workshops, or send information home in the school newsletter asking them to apply sunscreen and send children into school with hats and sunscreen.

You can find out more about our sun safe mascot Shade Man and download his free teaching resources here:

[www.ablecanopies.co.uk/shademan](http://www.ablecanopies.co.uk/shademan)

# WHY SHOULD YOUR SCHOOL/ACADEMY CONSIDER INSTALLING A CANOPY?

Ensuring your school is a safe and well-equipped environment for all is one of the main priorities of a school. If you haven't yet installed a canopy on your grounds, it might be time to consider this worthwhile investment that offers long-term benefits.



## Outdoor Dining Areas

Creating an outdoor dining area allows pupils to enjoy their lunch outside in pleasant weather. By adding a canopy, this space can be used on both very hot and rainy days.

A canopy provides shade, protecting students from sunstroke and harmful UV rays, as well as sheltering them from rain and wind. This ensures that students can comfortably enjoy their meals, regardless of the weather.

Pictured above is Barking Abbey School's 20.16m x 11.66m Tarnhow Dome Free Standing Canopy which is used as an outdoor dining area.



## Sports Canopies

With the increased emphasis on physical activity and rising concerns about obesity, sports have become a crucial part of the school schedule. Children spending more time outdoors need protection from the sun to ensure their sporting experience is both comfortable and safe.

A sports canopy provides a cool, shaded area for students to rest, cool down, and for spectators to find shelter.

Pictured above is White Spire School's 16m x 11m Hamilton Big Span Canopy which covers an outside gym that can be used all year round.



## Outdoor Classrooms

Canopies can transform outdoor spaces into classrooms, allowing lessons to be held outside. This change of environment can be seen as a reward for pupils, improving their mood and engagement in class discussions.

Pictured above is an example of an outdoor modular classroom. Weald of Kent Grammar School had a 17.4m x 4m Coniston installed with side and front fills and three sets of double doors, therefore creating a outdoor modular classroom for all-year-round use.

**These are just a few of the many benefits a canopy can bring to your academy.**

**Visit our website to browse our range of canopies and download or request a copy of our brochure:**

**[www.ablecanopies.co.uk](http://www.ablecanopies.co.uk)**

# HOW MUCH IS A SCHOOL CANOPY?

While we don't provide specific prices due to the numerous factors involved, we aim to help you understand the elements that influence the overall cost of canopies.

Here's five factors that influence school canopy prices:

## 1. Type of Canopy Chosen

The type of canopy you select can significantly impact the canopy price. Options range from modest entrance canopies to larger much more complex structures such as enclosed canopies with side panels (outdoor classrooms).

## 2. Size of the Canopy

The size of the canopy is one of the most substantial factors influencing the price. Larger canopies require more materials and longer installation times, leading to higher costs.

## 3. Upgrades and Custom Features

Customisation is key to ensuring your canopy meets specific needs and aesthetic preferences. Upgrades such as side panels and branding can enhance the functionality and appearance of the canopy, but will also affect the overall cost.

## 4. Location of Installation

The geographical location of your school can impact the cost due to varying transportation and labour costs.

## 5. Number of Installation Days Required

The complexity of the installation process can vary depending on the type of canopy. More complex projects that require multiple installation days will naturally incur higher labour costs.

## Tailored Solutions for Every Budget

At Able Canopies, we pride ourselves on offering tailored solutions that cater to a wide range of budgets and requirements. Our team of experts works closely with you to understand your specific needs and provide a canopy solution that aligns with your vision and financial constraints. If our canopy prices come out higher than expected, talk to us; we can work together to find solution that fits within your budget, whilst still obtaining the level of outdoor cover you require.

## Ensuring Value for Your Investment

While the initial cost of a commercial canopy might be a primary concern, it is essential to consider the long-term



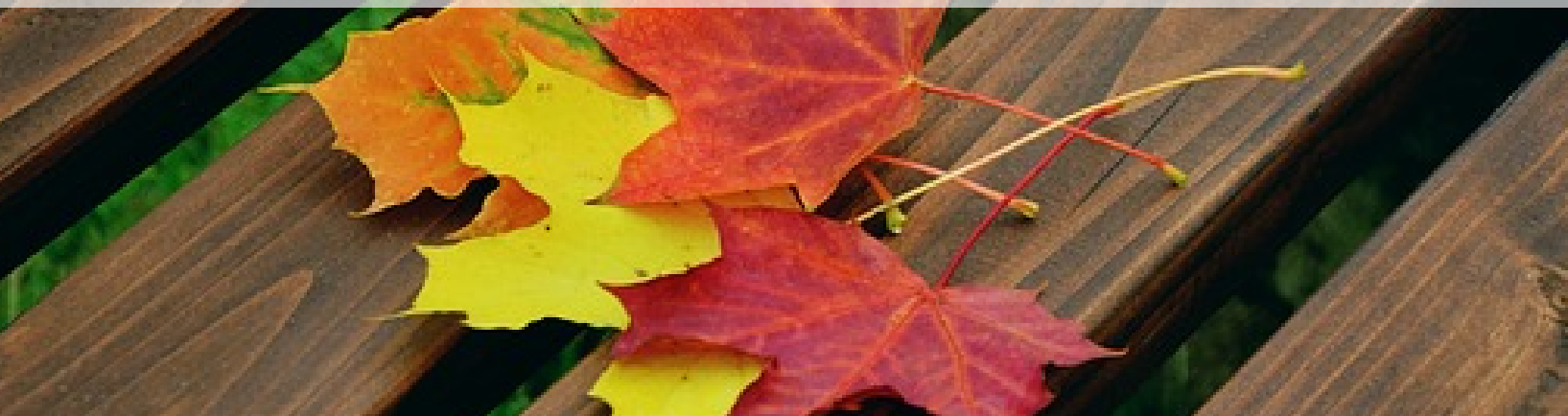
value and benefits. A well-designed and professionally installed canopy can transform outdoor spaces, providing year-round protection from the elements, enhancing the learning environment, and increasing the usability of outdoor areas. Our canopies are an investment that last for many years to come.

## Contact Us for a Personalised Quote

For detailed information on school canopy prices and to discuss your specific requirements, please contact us. Our team is ready to provide a personalised quote and help you navigate the options available to find the perfect canopy solution for your school.

At Able Canopies, we are committed to creating attractive and functional shelter solutions tailored to individual needs. Let us help you enhance your outdoor spaces with our high-quality canopies.

# AUTUMN OUTDOOR LEARNING ACTIVITIES



Although summer isn't quite over yet, I absolutely love autumn and believe it's one of the best seasons to get children outside using natural objects to learn.

Whether you simply transfer your regular classes outside and swap man-made objects for natural objects, or if you create special lessons just for the outdoors, now's the time to plan lessons that your pupils will love.

Whilst there's lots of lessons that can be taken outside this autumn, here's a handful of ideas to kick start your imagination...

## **Make A Mosaic**

One of the best features of autumn is all the colours that are naturally around. With the leaves falling from the trees, acorns, pinecones and the harvests in surrounding fields, there are lots of colours on display.

This can be very inspiring for children, and some great

artwork can be created. Consider asking your children to create a mosaic of an autumn scene with scraps of paper or using fallen leaves collected from the ground.

## **Colour Recognition and Learning**

Because of all the colours around, it's a good time to teach children about them. You can collect different coloured card and ask children to sort out an assortment of objects into their different colour groupings.

You could also take the opportunity to explore mixing colours to make new ones.

## **Nature Walks**

Autumn can be a busy time for nature. Some of the British wildlife will be getting ready for winter, while others are visiting us for a warmer season. A trip to the woods or at a nature reserve is an excellent way to connect with nature.

Children can also use this time

to see the changes in trees and learn about evergreens and the life cycle of trees, plants, and animals.

## **Leaf Foraging**

Hand out worksheets with diagrams of different types of leaves and other natural objects such as acorns and pinecones and ask the children to hunt around the playground to find all of the objects. Remember to only show images of leaves that can be found within your school grounds. If you don't have many trees nearby, you could collect some from elsewhere and scatter them around the school to be found.

## **Natural Sums**

Use small twigs and acorns to help children count, add and subtract. You can teach them in the same way that you would indoors with man-made objects but by taking the lesson outside, it adds extra excitement to the lesson and keeps your pupils more active.

# EXTEND YOUR DINING AREA INTO THE OUTDOORS WITH A CANOPY



We have been supplying and installing canopies for schools for 20 years, and many of those schools chose to extend their dining rooms into the outdoors. Outdoor dining canopies have become so popular because not only do they create more available dining space for their pupils, they avoid over-crowded dining rooms and congestion in other areas.

Designated outdoor dining areas solve your dining space issues in a cost effective manner with minimal disruption to your school.

Choose from steel, aluminium or timber canopies to suit your school's aesthetics and both small and large bespoke sizes to suit your dining capacity requirements.

**VISIT: [WWW.ABLECANOPIES.CO.UK](http://WWW.ABLECANOPIES.CO.UK)**

**CALL: 0800 389 9072 | EMAIL: [SALES@ABLECANOPIES.CO.UK](mailto:SALES@ABLECANOPIES.CO.UK)**



# CYCLE SHELTERS FOR SCHOOLS

Cycling to school boasts many benefits for both pupils and staff. The morning exercise can awaken them and give them more energy, making them more alert and energetic. It's also great for their physical health and mental health.

You are most likely already aware of the benefits, and therefore encourage your pupils and staff to cycle to school however, providing cycle parking facilities can help encourage them further.

Facilities can include anything from simple cycle racks, to cycle shelters, or if you have larger budgets, cycle compounds.

## Cycle Racks

Installing stand-alone cycle racks is a cost-effective way to provide parking for bikes in schools however, they do not provide protection from the weather. They are designed for bikes to be fastened onto them with the use of personal bike locks and therefore encourage cycling to school as bikes will be safe. However, cyclists may be put off on rainy days as their bike seat will be wet when they set upon them to go home.

If your budgets don't currently allow for a full cycle shelter, you could opt for bike racks, and then cover them with a cycle shelter once budgets allow.

## Cycle Shelters

Cycle shelters are supplied with cycle racks and offer a place to securely lock bikes with personal bike locks and also protects from the weather. This dual purpose makes them perfect for schools as well as many other establishments as cyclists can rest assured that their bikes will be safe and secure, and covered from the weather, so they will be dry when they return to ride home.

Our cycle shelters for schools can also include lockable doors if required for added security which is ideal for high-crime areas. This also makes users feel much more comfortable leaving their bikes somewhere that is doubly safe.

### Recommended Cycle Shelters for Schools:

#### Easydale Cycle Shelter

The Easydale Cycle Shelter is our most cost-effective cycle shelter and is therefore also popular within schools. The modest yet contemporary design offers the weather protection required with clear-view panels for high visibility all round, keeping bikes safe.





## Cycle Compounds

Cycle compounds can house high volumes of bikes which makes them ideal for larger schools including colleges and universities. They are provided with cycle racks and can be installed with or without secure lockable doors however, they are mostly installed with doors. Cycle compounds are particularly popular within colleges and universities and large schools that require cycle parking for high volumes of bicycles.

### Recommended Cycle Compound for Schools:

#### Easydale Cycle Compound

The Easydale Cycle Compound was derived from the Easydale Cycle Shelter and is a much larger structure that can store from 20 cycles upwards depending on the size chosen.

It features lockable doors and clear-view panels for all round visibility and security.



#### Grasmere Timber Clad Cycle Shelter

The Grasmere Timber Clad Cycle Shelter is our most popular shelter by far and its easy to see why. The design ticks all the boxes and looks great in both contemporary and traditional areas. It features a steel frame with a corrugated steel roof and is clad with lengths of timber for all round protection and an attractive finish.



# CASE STUDY:

## JOHN PERRY PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Product:** Coniston Wall Mounted Canopy on rear and front posts

**Canopy Package Additions:** Soft play safety surfacing, associated drainage & kerbings and a retaining wall

**Frame Colour:** Hipca White

**Size:** 5m x 4m

**Installation Date:** August 2020

### The Brief

London Borough of Barking & Dagenham were looking to revamp the outdoor play area at John Perry Primary School and transform it into a secure, all-weather outside area that can be used all year round.

We had previously worked with them on a number of projects at Eastbrook Primary School where we had installed two wall mounted canopies in 2019, three freestanding canopies in 2022 and a timber canopy in 2022. Also, at the time of enquiry, we had just been awarded the contract for the large timber canopy at Manor Longbridge Infant School, which both fall within LBBD's constituency.

### Proposal

The council sent over their specifications which included a canopy, soft play safety surfacing, associated drainage & kerbings and a retaining wall. They were also looking to have all works completed

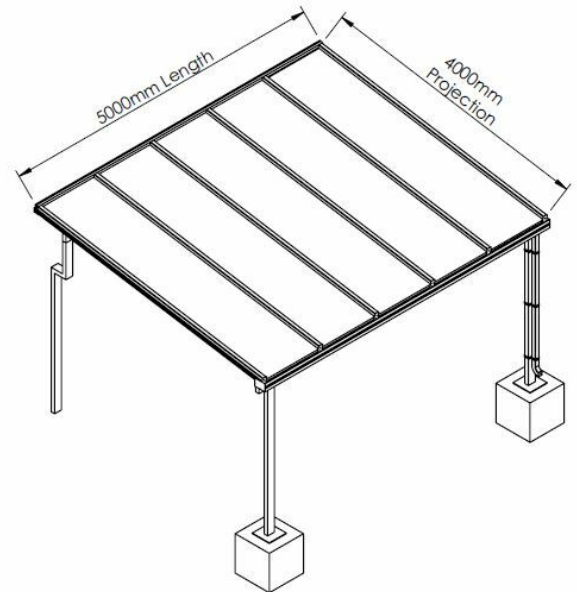
within the schools' summer break, so that all building works would be completed before the staff and pupils returned.

As part of our outdoor projects service, we can provide the whole canopy package including groundworks such as soft play, tarmac, artificial grass and aluminium decking along with fencing such as timber or steel. This helps to make the project for the client much more seamless.

### Solution

We were therefore able to send the LBBD council a quote to include all the works they required making the project much simpler for them and they would be dealing with just one company, rather than multiple contractors.

The canopy we provided a quote for was a 5m x 4m



Coniston Wall Mounted Canopy on rear and front posts. This would fit the space perfectly and provide all the cover required to keep pupils dry, cool and shaded when required.

The canopy area was not suitable for the standard Coniston Wall Mounted option, due to the makeup of the building being single storey and large windows and doors. We were able to provide a rear steel post/ bracket system, which allowed us to fix to each side of the area. This solved the obstacle perfectly without any issues, and all parties were happy with the solution.

The Coniston is such a versatile canopy that can overcome almost any obstruction, allowing schools and businesses across the UK to benefit from weather protection all year round.

## Installation

We were awarded the project at the beginning of one of our

busiest times of year, the school summer holidays. However, as we stock the components in our HQ warehouse, this enabled us to achieve a super-quick order-to-installation timescale, and we were able to find a slot available to ensure the canopy works

were completed before the school returned in September.

All parties involved were pleased with the end result, and the pupils and staff were able to enjoy their new outdoor play area upon their return to school in September.



# SHADE SAIL FAQ'S



Shade Sails are not just a stylish solution for creating shade; they're also incredibly effective at protecting you from the sun's harmful UV rays, offering up to 96.5% UV protection. At Able Canopies, we're dedicated to ensuring you get not only the best products but also the information you need to make informed decisions. That's why we've put together

the most frequently asked questions when it comes to shade sails.

If the below F.A.Q's do not answer your questions, please feel free to call us on **0800 389 9072** or email us: **[sales@ablecanopies.co.uk](mailto:sales@ablecanopies.co.uk)** and we'll be happy to help.

## Do your shades sails provide protection from the sun?

Yes, our shade sail fabric blocks up to 96.5% of the sun's harmful UV rays. The fabric is UV stabilised offering the best protection from the sun.

## Are shade sails waterproof?

Our standard shade sails are not waterproof as they are manufactured to provide excellent protection from the sun, using the highest grade commercial shade cloth. They are designed to provide protection from the sun only and that is why they are often referred to as sun canopies.

The Evershade Shade Sail and the Banbury Waterproof Shade Sail however, are both covered with waterproof fabric.

## What colours can the fabric be supplied in?

The Shade Sail fabric is available in a wide range of bright and vibrant colours, please visit our website to view the full colour range.

## Can we take the shade sails down at the end of the day?

Our shade sails are permanent structures. They have been designed specifically to be left outdoors 365 days a year and will not need re-tensioning.

## Can we attach the sails to our existing posts?

To ensure the safety and quality of our shade sails, we will only install them onto posts supplied and installed by us. Our posts are set in concrete to a maximum depth of 2 metres.

## What is the typical price of a shade sail?

All our shade sails are all made to order and we therefore do not offer standard sizes, please call us to discuss your requirements as we can provide you with guide prices over the phone. Please call us on 0800 389 9072 to receive your guide price or email us.

## What Shade Sail designs do you offer?

Our Shade Sails are available in a range of different designs and sizes and they are all bespoke to your requirements. Contact us on 0800 389 9072 to request examples of shade sail designs and for more information.

## What are your post pads made of?

Able Post Pads are filled with non-absorbent foam for maximum protection around the shade sail posts. They are manufactured from reinforced PVC and are designed with eyelets to drain off water build up.

## Do you offer supply only?

Unfortunately we are unable to provide a supply only service with our shade sails.

## How long does it take to install from order?

When you are ready to place your order, we can discuss available installation dates. The dates offered to you very much depend on the time of year but we will always endeavour to install your shade sail as soon as possible.

Please note: school holidays are our busiest periods. If you wish to have a holiday installation, please book your installation early to avoid disappointment.

With our shade sails, please bear in mind that the posts are installed into the ground first and allowed to set. Approximately 14 – 21 days later we will then install the shade sail fabric.

## Will we need planning consent?

You need to contact your local council to find out if you require planning permission or building regulations as all councils are different. We do offer help with planning. Please call us for more information regarding our free planning assistance service.

# HAIR-RAISING HALLOWEEN FUNDRAISERS



It is coming close to the spooky season of Halloween which is a great time in the school calendar as there are many fundraising opportunities

Whether you start competitions, organise activities or even host an event. Parents and carers like to take their children to events to get them into the spirit of Halloween and make an experience for them.

Here's a few fundraising ideas for Halloween:



## Halloween Cinema Night

Set up the big screen and host a spooky cinema night for your students. Sell tickets in advance, plus popcorn and drinks on the night. You could offer this event for families and put on several screenings across the week to maximise profits. Select a classic film that is sure to be enjoyed by all such as Hocus Pocus.

## Halloween Craft Event



Halloween is a great time for crafting. You could put together

a small crafting bag that pupils could purchase so they can craft together, alongside parents at an after-school event.

Place lots of fun decorations around and play some spooky tunes to create a Halloween atmosphere. You could include stained glass window painting, mask making, etc.

## Halloween Baking Competition

Halloween cakes often look great and you could run a baking competition to win a prize and then sell the cakes to raise funds.



## Spooky Treasure Hunt

Hide some spooky clues around the school grounds and furnish the school with Halloween decorations. If you're brave, you could ask teachers or parents to jump out at various times. If you host the event when it is getting darker this will add to the effect but make sure everyone is safe.

You could raise more funds by selling fun accessories on the

day like glow sticks, light-up toys and drinks.

## Fancy Dress

Ask your pupils to dress in Halloween costumes for the day for a small contribution. A little can go a long way and a fancy dress day can be a great, fun day that can make the shorter, colder days seem better.

You might also want to add some of the other options to the above to help you improve the funds raised.

## Pumpkin Carving Competition

Pumpkin carving is a fun activity that mostly everyone enjoys and is even better when there is a little friendly competition included. You could ask the entrants to pay an amount to enter or a small donation and ask them to email a photo of their carved pumpkin. When the deadline has passed for entries, you can judge the entries yourself and announce the winners at school.



# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Don't miss out, make a note of these dates in your diary pronto!

Our dates for your diary feature is back! In each edition, we will bring you notable dates for your diary for the coming months, so you can integrate them into your lessons or add a little fun to the day.

## September

13th

Roald Dahl Day

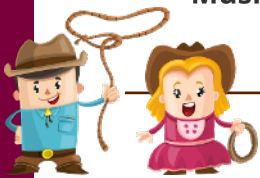


15th

International Dot Day

17th

International Country Music Day



19th

Talk Like a Pirate Day



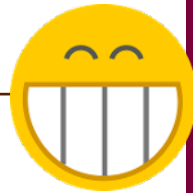
23rd

International Day of Sign Languages

## October

4th

World Smile Day



7th

World Habitat Day



15th

Global Hand Washing Day



23rd

International Artist Day



31st

Halloween



## November

1st

Diwali



5th

Bonfire Night

9th

British Pudding Day

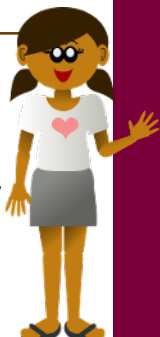


13th

World Kindness Day

21st

World Hello Day



*Disclaimer: We are not associated with any of the events listed on this page.*

# Able Canopies: The Canopy Experts



The Welford Dome Free Standing Canopy installed at St Peter's Academy in Staffordshire.

Canopies & Covered Walkways

Cycle & Waiting Shelters

Shade Sails & Tensile Structures

Awnings & Playground Accessories

External Works: Surfacing, Fencing etc.

Able Canopies are the canopy experts. We provide safe and stylish weather protection that transforms outside spaces.

- Every year we complete hundreds of successful school canopy installations across the UK
- These canopies provide schools with effective shelter & areas for outdoor learning and dining
- We also work with universities and the retail, leisure & hospitality sectors to effectively transform outside space
- Our team of canopy experts work with schools, architects & contractors to ensure on time, on budget, project completion
- To ensure consistent high quality we control the design, manufacture & installation process of our canopies

***“Great customer relationship. The school has used Able Canopies for over 15 years.***

***They have in total installed 7 canopies in the past 15 years.”***

- Ivy House School  
Installed April 2024

If you would like a canopy, shelter or shade sail quotation, contact us today:

**Call:** 0800 389 9072 | **Email:** [sales@ablecanopies.co.uk](mailto:sales@ablecanopies.co.uk)

