

# **School Policy for Educational Visits**

## **Context**

We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every pupil to an effective and balanced curriculum. Appropriately planned visits are known to enhance learning and improve attainment, and so form a key part of what makes our school a supportive and effective learning environment. The benefits to pupils of taking part in visits and learning outside the classroom include, but are not limited to:

- Improvements in their ability to cope with change.
- Increased critical curiosity and resilience.
- Opportunities for meaning making, creativity, developing learning relationships and practicing strategic awareness.
- Increased levels of trust and opportunities to examine the concept of trust (us in them, them in us, them in themselves, them in each other).
- Improved achievement and attainment across a range of curricular subjects. Pupils are active participants not passive consumers, and a wide range of learning styles can flourish.
- Enhanced opportunities for 'real world' 'learning in context' and the development of the social and emotional aspects of intelligence.
- Increased risk management skills through opportunities for involvement in practical risk-benefit decisions in a range of contexts by encouraging pupils to become more risk aware as opposed to risk averse.
- Greater sense of personal responsibility.
- Possibilities for genuine team working including enhanced communication skills.
- Improved environmental appreciation, knowledge, awareness and understanding of a variety of environments.
- Improved awareness and knowledge of the importance and practices of sustainability.
- Physical skill acquisition and the development of a fit and healthy lifestyle.

## **Application**

Any visit that leaves the school grounds is covered by this policy, whether as part of the curriculum, during school time, or outside the normal school day.

In addition to this Educational Visits Policy we:

1. Adopt the Local Authority's (LA) document: 'Guidance for Educational Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance and EVOLVE'. (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE)
2. Adopt National Guidance [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info) (as recommended by the LA)
3. Use EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for off-site activities.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with this school policy, Local Authority policy and National Guidelines.

## **Planning**

EVOLVE provides a means of recording planning during the planning phase and enables the EVC and Head to contribute to, support and monitor the activity. The extent of planning required is related to the complexity of the visit. It is essential that formal planning takes place before setting off. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties, which may arise, and making plans to reduce them. When selecting a possible visit site, it is important to consider the purpose of the trip, as well as aims and objectives. Clarity regarding the intended outcomes of the visit will help ensure that the potential benefits can be achieved. Preparatory work should take place in advance of the visit and this in conjunction with the visit activity should feed into any follow up work. Once the trip is booked and date confirmed, teachers are then able to make an inspection visit which is normal procedure for most visits within the UK and is good practice.

Other factors which should form part of the planning stage, include:

- The facilities/equipment the group will need to take on the visit
- The facilities/equipment to be provided at the venue
- Staff training needs
- The designation of someone to carry accident forms and first aid kit etc.
- Transport arrangements and insurance arrangements
- Communication arrangements
- Supervision ratio
- Contingency measures for enforced change of plan or late return
- Information to parents and pupils
- Emergency arrangements
- Arrangements for sending pupils home early

## **Types of Visit**

There are three 'types' of visit:

- 1. Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day.**  
These follow the 'School Learning Area' Operating Procedure (Appendix 1). These do not need to be entered onto EVOLVE. The school sign out sheet should be with base contact in the office before departure.
- 2. Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. Eg. Visits to museums and theatres etc.**  
These are entered onto EVOLVE by the Visit Leader and submitted to the EVC for checking. The EVC then submits to the Head for approval.
- 3. Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.**  
These follow Point 2 above, but require additional checks by the Governing Body prior to approval.

## **Approval Process**

The approval of all visits is delegated to the Head. In approving visits the Head and the EVC should ensure that the Visit Leader has been appropriately trained, and is competent to lead the visit. Visits outside of the School Learning Area should be recorded and approved via EVOLVE in order that a robust audit trail exists. Staff should complete EVOLVE information as soon as the trip is confirmed. Parents should be informed and written consent received. Permission from the Governing Body will need to be sought if the proposed trip is **overseas, residential or involves an adventurous activity**. The visit will also need to be registered with the LA by completing EVOLVE. The Head has nominated a senior teacher as the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) and the Governing Body has approved this appointment. This person will have attended the LA EVC training course and updates and will be given sufficient time and resources to carry out the role. They must ensure that a policy is in place for educational and off-site visits and that this is updated as necessary. The Governing Body has delegated the consideration and approval of educational visits and other offsite activities to the Head and has nominated a governor to liaise, as necessary, on behalf of the Governing Body. The Head will keep the Governing Body aware of any Educational Visits via the normal Head to Governors reporting process.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places overall responsibility for health and safety on educational visits with the employer. All persons involved in a visit have a specific responsibility which they should be clear about prior to the visit taking place.

**Visit leaders** are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering visits outside of the School Learning Area on EVOLVE. They should obtain permission for a visit from the Head or EVC

prior to planning, and before making any commitments. Visit Leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements, and should seek advice from the EVC where necessary. The appointed Visit Leader will be fully supported in the tasks required to arrange the visit.

**The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)** will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) activities. The EVC is the first point of contact for advice on visit related matters, and will check final visit plans on EVOLVE before submitting them to the Head. The EVC is assisted by The Educational Visits Administrator (EVA) who sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE.

**The Head Teacher** has the responsibility for authorising all visits and for submitting those that are overseas, residential or adventurous to the LA for approval.

**The Governing Body's** role is that of a 'critical friend'. Individual governors may be given 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

**The Local Authority** is responsible for the final approval (via EVOLVE) of all visits that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

## **Staff Competence**

We recognise that staff competence is the single most important factor in the safe management of visits, and so we support staff in developing their competence in the following ways:

- An apprenticeship system, where staff new to visits assist and work alongside experienced visit leaders before taking on a leadership role.
- Supervision by senior staff on some educational visits.
- Support for staff to attend training courses relevant to their role, where necessary.

In deciding whether a member of staff is competent to be a visit leader, the Head will take into account the following factors:

- Relevant experience.
- Previous relevant training.
- The prospective leader's ability to make dynamic risk management judgements, and take charge in the event of an emergency.
- Knowledge of the pupils, the venue, and the activities to be undertaken.

All adults should have a clear idea of the expectations and schedule for the visit. Supervision should be defined and written instructions issued if necessary. The Visit Leader should avoid assigning parents to a group where they have direct responsibility for your own child. Guidance for adult helpers is at [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info)

## **Staffing and Supervision**

The Visit leader, EVC and Head must make a professional judgement regarding the number and suitability of staffing on an individual visit basis. Visit Leaders must ensure that young people are effectively supervised, requiring them to take account of:

- The nature of the activity (including its duration).
- The location and environment in which the activity is to take place.
- The age and gender (including developmental age) of the young people to be supervised.
- The ability of the young people (including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs).
- Staff competence.

This means that arrangements for supervision, including staff/student ratios, must take into account the nature of a group and the individuals in it. It is therefore important that, when planning a repeat visit or a series of activities, the previous plan (no matter how well it worked in the past) is reviewed to ensure it meets current group needs. Ratios are a risk management issue. It is not possible to set down definitive staff/student ratios for a particular age group or activity. Some guidance documents do set out ratios, but these should be regarded as starting points for consideration rather than being definitive, as they may only be

appropriate where the activity is relatively straightforward and the group has no special requirements. The DfES (1998) suggested the following “starting points”:

- **School years 1 - 3, 1:6**
- **School years 4 - 6, 1:10/15**

These ratios will not be adequate to meet the needs of most residential or more complex visits.

Staff who are assigned to support the special needs of an individual cannot be included in the overall staffing ratio. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework no longer sets out different requirements for minimum ratios during outings. As with other age groups, ratios during outings should be determined by risk management, which should be reviewed before each outing. It is not unusual for a ratio of 1:1 or 1:2 to be necessary.

### **Direct and indirect supervision definitions**

Direct supervision is where a member of staff is with a group. Indirect supervision is where the group is unaccompanied by a member of staff, but where there is a member of staff in the vicinity for example at a museum, a shopping centre or ‘down-time’ at an activity centre. The decision to allow indirect supervision should be based on professional judgement.

### **Vetting and disclosure and barring (DBS) checks**

The school will ensure that Disclosure and Barring clearance is obtained for adults assisting with educational activities and visits.

## **Risk Management**

Our ‘Educational Visit Checklist’ forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities. A visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is ‘YES’. Risks are expected to be reduced to an acceptable or tolerable level and not necessarily eliminated. Visit Leaders should consider the overall risk management of visits. This is achieved through a combination of the EVOLVE visit form, Event Specific Notes (ESN) and any attachments. As risk assessment does not require any specific format, if ESNs are being used it may not be necessary to attach any additional risk assessment documents.

### **Event specific notes (ESN)**

Visit planning includes consideration of the question ‘What are the really important things that we need to do to keep us safe?’ Significant issues should be recorded on EVOLVE and shared with all relevant parties. It is good practice to involve participants in the planning and organisation of visits. They will therefore become risk aware. A Young Person’s Checklist is available to use at [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info)

The risk management should take account of what is ‘reasonably practicable’ and proportional to the proposed activity. As soon as a group is taken out of its usual environment it comes into contact with different and usually increased levels of environmental and human hazards, with all the associated risks. To ensure that the programme is safe the ‘hazards’ likely to be encountered during specific activities must be identified and the group must be managed, to avoid the risk of injury from these hazards. Risk Management recognises:

- Absolute safety in any programme can never be guaranteed
- Only foreseeable risks can be identified and managed
- Every situation is different
- Sound judgement should be used to manage the risks appropriate in each case.

### **Safety during the visit**

Prior to the visit, staff must ensure that all participants understand what is expected of them. This should be reemphasised during the visit and monitoring of the visit must be on going throughout.

## **Emergency Procedures**

**A critical incident is any incident where events go beyond the normal coping mechanisms and experience of the Visit Leader.**

The school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a critical incident during a visit (Appendix 2). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is tested annually and following any major staffing changes. Teachers in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Whilst it is never comfortable to think that problems may occur during a visit, advance planning can help to ensure that the correct actions are taken in the event of an accident or emergency. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action. If an incident occurs that involves serious injury or fatality and/or is likely to attract media attention the following protocol should be adopted:

- Assess the situation
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group including staff
- Attend to any the casualties
- Call the emergency services
- Contact the LA emergency contact number
- Contact Base Contact

### **Emergency cards:**

A completed EMERGENCY CARD (VISITLEADER) must be with the Visit Leader at all times and a completed EMERGENCY CARD (BASE CONTACT) must be with the emergency base contact at all times. The Head is the emergency base contact for each visit. All major incidents should be communicated to this person, especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention. The Visit leader will leave full details of all pupils and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency base contact, including the home contact details of parents and next-of-kin, as appropriate. The school has a robust means of ensuring that changes to parent and staff contact details and child and staff medical details are up-to-date. The school will have emergency funding available to support the Visit Leader where required. Accidents that occur off-site should be recorded on the standard Accident Report Form.

### **First Aid**

On visits there should be a responsible adult with a good working knowledge of first aid. A first aid kit appropriate to the visit should be carried. For EYFS outings, there must always be at least one member of staff who holds a current paediatric First Aid Certificate. Medications can be administered to those children with written permission from their parents.

### **Parental Consent**

Written consent is not required for activities within the School Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum during normal school time. The school does however obtain blanket consent when children join the school. Parents consent through a paper consent form. The school does inform parents of where their child will be at all times. Specific parental consent is obtained for all other visits. For these visits, sufficient information is made available to parents via letters so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. Parents consent through a paper consent form. For all overseas visits, residential visits or visits that include adventurous activities parents will also be invited to a meeting where they can ask for clarification of any aspect of the itinerary and organisation of the visit.

### **Inclusion**

We comply with the Equality Act 2010.

### **Charging for School Visits**

The education provided wholly or mainly during school hours is free. Therefore, parents should be made aware that the contribution is a voluntary contribution. It must be made clear to parents that there is no obligation to contribute, and students must not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution. It is important to provide written information to parents. This should explain the nature of the proposed activity or visit, the likely value in educational terms and the financial contribution per student which would be required if the activity were to take place. However, it must be made equally clear whether the activity or visit is likely to be cancelled if there are insufficient contributions. There is no limit to the level of voluntary contribution, nor is there any restriction on the way in which such contributions may be

used. Thus voluntary contributions may be used to subsidise students of lesser means and to pay the travel and accommodation costs of accompanying teachers. Where external providers are involved in organising all or part of the visit the contract will be made with the school on behalf of the pupils. The Head may charge parents for board and lodgings on a residential visit as well as full costs when a visit is deemed to be an 'optional extra'. All payments and contributions for visits will be made through the school's accounts. The Finance Officer is responsible for presenting a financial account for the visit, which will be audited as part of the schools' procedures.

## **Transport**

We follow National Guidance.

### **Use of staff cars to transport pupils**

Where transporting young people in private cars is considered, checks should be made to address the following, staff will complete a 'Use of a private car to transport young people' form (available on EVOLVE) and the Head should:

- see evidence that the driver has a valid licence.
- see evidence that there is a valid insurance policy covering the intended use. This requires that the vehicle owner has "business use" cover.
- see evidence that the vehicle is properly maintained and has an MOT.
- ensure that there is explicit parental consent to transport young people in this way.
- ensure that drivers properly understand their duty of care in this situation.
- ensure that staff are not be put in a position where they are alone with a young person.
- ensure that appropriate child seats or booster seats and restraints are available and used.

## **Insurance**

The school is covered by Zurich Insurance. This information is available on the school website. For travel within the European Union all participants must hold a valid EHIC (European Health Insurance Card)

## **Evaluation**

The Visit Leader will evaluate all visits and the Head will ensure that they highlight the benefits of its educational visits in self-evaluation reports.

## **Farm Visits, Water-Margin Activities, Residential Visits, Overseas visits, Swimming lessons**

Staff ensure that the intended outcomes are balanced with all reasonably practicable safety precautions. Staff follow National Guidance available at [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info)

## **External Providers**

The visit leader, EVC and Head teacher must ensure that the provider holds a LOtC Quality Badge or a 'Provider Form' has been completed by the provider.

## **Staff Alcohol Use**

Staff alcohol consumption is an issue to be discussed and agreed in the planning stage of a residential visit. The key points are:

- The effect of alcohol on health and safety of self and others
- The effect of alcohol on decision making ability
- What constitutes being 'off duty'
- Staff members being fit to return to duty.

It is expected that single day visits will be alcohol free. Alcohol misuse will be considered a disciplinary matter. On residential visits young people should always be supervised by an alcohol-free staff member. A rota should be established, so that staff members have a clear understanding of when they are on and off duty. In terms

of drinking in front of young people a glass of wine in the evening is acceptable and can be interpreted as modelling sensible drinking.

## **Appendix 1 – School Learning Area**

**The School Learning Area includes the following frequently used venues: Petts Wood Library, Jubilee Park, Petts Wood High Street, St James the Great RC Church and Southmore Court.**

Visits within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day follow the Operating Procedure below.

These visits:

- do not require parental consent however parents are informed in advance.
- do not need additional risk assessments other than following the Operating Procedure.
- do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE

### **Operating Procedure for School Learning Area**

The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our School Learning Area:

- Road traffic.
- Other people / members of the public / animals.
- Losing a pupil.
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, and falls.
- Weather conditions.

### **These are managed by a combination of the following:**

- The Head must give verbal approval before a group leaves. Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the 'School Learning Area' is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school.
- There will normally be a minimum of three adults.
- Staff are familiar with the area and have practiced appropriate group management techniques.
- Pupils have been trained and have practiced standard techniques for road crossings in a group.
- Pupils are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- Pupils' clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving school.
- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.
- Staff will deposit in the office a list of all pupils and staff, a proposed route, and an estimated time of return. Staff will use the 'School Signing-out sheet' (available on EVOLVE)
- A mobile phone is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.

## **Appendix 2 – Emergency Procedure**

The school's emergency response to an incident is based on the following key factors:

1. There is always a nominated emergency base contact for any visit (during school hours this is the Head/Deputy via the office and outside of school hours this is the Head/Deputy).
2. This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the senior management team, or will be able to contact an experienced member of the senior management team at all times.
3. For activities that take place during normal school hours, the Visit Leader will be aware of any relevant medical information for all participants, including staff.
4. For activities that take place outside normal school hours, the Visit Leader and the emergency contact/s will be aware of any relevant medical information and emergency contact information for all participants, including staff.
5. The Visit Leader and the base contact know to request support from the local authority in the event that an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention.
6. The Visit Leader will carry The Visit Leader Emergency card and The Emergency base contact will carry The Emergency Base contact card.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be updated in line with any new developments in the school and/or any new government guidance. All staff are expected to follow the policy and the Leadership Team, following ongoing regular reviews of classroom practice, will be responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of practice across the school.

This Policy will be renewed annually.

It was last reviewed in: September 2017

It will next be reviewed in: September 2018

This statement of policy was approved by the Governing Body at their meeting on:-

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Head teacher)

