

SFSM

# EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY



*The school believes that every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstance.*

*These, often the most memorable, learning experiences, help us to make sense of the world around us by making links between feelings and learning. They allow us to transfer learning experienced outside the classroom and visa versa.*

*Learning outside the classroom is about raising achievement through an organized, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance. This is not only about what we learn but importantly how and when we learn.*

The school has formally adopted through its Governing Body, the Lincolnshire County Council 'Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE' 2016.

Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE' 2016 are available to view under resources at:

[www.evolve.edufocus.co.uk/evco10/docs.asp](http://www.evolve.edufocus.co.uk/evco10/docs.asp) in the LCC guidance tab under 'Guidance and Policy 2016'. A paper copy can also be found in the EVC folder in school.

National Guidance from the OEAP must be followed and the full guidance can be found at: [www.oeapng.info/](http://www.oeapng.info/). This can also be accessed through the LCC guidance tab on EVOLVE.

All off-site visits must comply with these guidance documents as well as this Educational Visits Policy. In the event of any apparent conflict between the employer's policy, our establishment's policy or National Guidance, then the employer's policy must be followed and clarification sought from the head teacher or EVC.

### **Aims and Purpose of Educational Visits**

The school has a strong commitment to the added value of learning outside of the classroom, some of which takes place beyond the statutory school day and beyond the school premises.

Each year the school will arrange a number of educational visits and activities that take place off the school site and/or out of school hours, which support the aims of the school. The range of opportunities and activities each year are communicated via the school website and letters home. In addition, the criteria by which pupils are able to access them and the methods by which parents will be notified, and asked for their consent are made clear through letters home and information is displayed on our website.

The Governing Body has given its approval to the following types of activities being arranged in support of the educational aims of the school:

- Out of hours clubs (music, art, science, sport, homework, drama)
- School teams
- Regular nearby visits (places of worship, parks, museums and attractions within walkable distance e.g. The Collection, Lincoln Castle)
- Day visits for particular year groups
- Residential visits
- Adventurous activities, which might be classed as higher risk.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The head teacher has nominated a member of the senior leadership team as the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) for the school and the Governing Body has approved this appointment. The Governing Body has delegated the consideration and approval of educational visits and other offsite activities to the headteacher and EVC as signatories, as necessary, on behalf of the governing body. The head teacher assesses staff competence to lead and supervise off-site visits.

Within our school, roles and responsibilities follow the OEAP National Guidance for:

- Governors
- Headteacher
- EVC
- Visit Leader

These roles and responsibilities (along with a checklist of key roles) are outlined in the OEAP National Guidance which can be found at: [www.oeapng.info/guidance-by-role/](http://www.oeapng.info/guidance-by-role/) and in the staff handbook on the educational visits page.

Governor page – [www.oeapng.info/governors/](http://www.oeapng.info/governors/) - sections 3.3c/3.4f

Headteacher page- [www.oeapng.info/head-manager/](http://www.oeapng.info/head-manager/) - sections 3.3b/3/4g

EVC page- [www.oeapng.info/evc/](http://www.oeapng.info/evc/) - sections 3.3a/3.4j

Visit leader page – [www.oeapng.info/visit-leader/](http://www.oeapng.info/visit-leader/) -sections 3.3e/3.4k

Copies of these documents are stored on the school G:drive- staff only-EVC folder and a paper copy can be found in the EVC folder.

## **Procedural requirements**

Before a visit is advertised to parents, the Headteacher and EVC must approve the initial plan.

Visit leaders need ensure the suitability of the venue of any trip for meeting their educational aims and objectives and safety requirements. Wherever possible the visit leader should undertake an exploratory visit to

- Ensure the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit
- Assess potential areas and levels of risk
- Ensure the venue can cater for the needs of staff and pupils in the group
- Ensure the visit leader is familiar with the venue before taking pupils.

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. In addition, it may be worth seeking views from other schools who have recently visited the venue. These can be found using EVOLVE. For quality assurance,

through EVOLVE, staff should check that the venue has the LOTC (Learning Outside the Classroom) quality mark. If a venue does not have a LOTC quality mark, Lincolnshire County Council Guidance will be followed.

### **Risk Assessments**

A risk management form (Risk assessment matrix and Risk Assessment Summary) needs to be completed for any off-site activity by the visit leader. Electronic copies are available in the EVC folder on the G:drive. On this form the visit leader needs to highlight any foreseeable risks, reasonable risks, practical risks and significant risks.

The risk assessment should include the following considerations:

- What are the risks on the journey and at the venue?
- Who is affected by them?
- What safety measures need to be in place to reduce the risk to an acceptable level?
- Can the visit leader guarantee that these safety measures will be provided?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?
- What is the acceptable ratio of adults to children for this visit? (See supervision section).

The visit leader and other adults should continually reassess the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action if pupils are in danger.

The visit leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:

- The type of activity and the level at which it is being undertaken.
- The location
- The competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff
- The group members age, competence, fitness and temperament
- Students with special educational needs or medical conditions
- The quality and suitability of available equipment
- Seasonal conditions, weather and timing.

Within the risk management form, alternative arrangements (Plan B) should be included where appropriate, for example where weather conditions or water levels might be critical, or where an overcrowded venue may necessitate an alternative option.

### **Day Visits**

Day visits that do not include adventurous activities need to be registered on EVOLVE, including a risk management form and itinerary of activities for approval by the EVC and Headteacher by the visit leader. Forms for these visits need to **be submitted to the EVC at least 2 weeks prior to the trip date**. It is the EVCs responsibility to make sure all staff members have a username and password for Evolve.

### Residential/outdoor adventurous/trips abroad

Visits that include adventurous activities (see Lincolnshire guidance for activities classed as adventurous) and/or a residential element or a trip abroad require approval from the local authority via the on-line Visit Notification and Approval System – 'Evolve'. Water based activities also need to be local authority approved apart from school swimming lessons. Risk assessments for these trips need to be **submitted to the local authority at least 4 weeks prior to the trip date**. Without this approval the trip cannot take place.

Risk assessments for activities run by an external provider do not need to be sent for approval as in these circumstances the responsibility for safety rests with them. Visit leaders need a risk management plan for schools from the provider. Visit leaders also need to ensure the provider has liability insurance in place to the value of

### School Swimming Lessons

As for any trip out of school, risk assessments need to be completed for school swimming, however, they do not need local authority approval and can be signed off within school. It is the pool operator's duty to take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure that teaching and coaching activities at their pool are conducted safely. Visit leaders do need to make sure that the swimming teacher in charge or other pool employees/supervising adults are qualified according to current guidelines. Unless suitably qualified, school staff are not to have responsibility for lifeguarding and so visit leaders need to make sure pool staff with life guarding qualifications are present during lessons.

### Parental Consent and communication

Parents need to be informed of all visits their child will be taking part in. For out of hours clubs, school teams and nearby visits, parents will be asked to sign a general letter of consent for participation in these activities **annually**. It is the visit leader's responsibility to make sure any pupil attending one of these visits has returned their annual consent form. This information can be found at the school office.

For other day trips and residential visits, parents will be sent a letter informing them of the planned trip with a consent form which will need to be returned to the school. The letter will inform the parent of date, time, mode of transport, curriculum aims, planned activities that pupils will be involved in and any specific requirements e.g. packed lunch/wellies/sun cream etc.

Parental consent has to be written e.g. permission slip, text or email not verbal. Written consent needs to be kept in the school office for a minimum of 2 years after the visit. Reply slips for all trips will be collated by the office and a register detailing those who have returned them kept. This register must be taken on the trip and then returned to

the office. The office also has emergency information for all pupils which is checked annually and it is the parent's responsibility to make sure this is kept updated with any relevant changes within an academic year.

For any residential visit, a school 'Emergency Information' form must be completed by the parents which includes emergency contact details, any dietary requirements, medical conditions, medication which will need to be taken and any other information specific to a child. Every child must have a completed form before they can take part in a trip and all forms need to be taken by the visit leader so they have the information to hand. The deputy leader also needs a copy of these forms, in case of emergency. It is the group leader's responsibility to make sure they have information for every child.

If parents withhold consent absolutely, the pupil should not be taken on the visit, but the curricular aims of the visit should be delivered to the pupil in some other way, wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent, the Headteacher will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not.

If for any reason a trip needs to be cancelled, parents will be informed by letter, parent-mail, or phone call (depending on nearness to activity).

### **Students with special educational needs and medical needs.**

Pupils with special educational needs or medical needs will not be excluded from school visits. Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

These pupils should be specifically highlighted on the risk assessment with the risk management strategy being deployed (e.g. 1:1 supervision, use of off-road wheel chair provided by venue to access areas.). Supervisory adults need to be made aware of these children and their requirements. Any information shared to ensure the safety of all pupils must be kept confidential by the supervisory adults.

Where it is considered unsafe to include a particular pupil because there is serious doubt concerning their behaviour or it is felt that they represent a significant risk to themselves or others within the group (including staff), the head teacher will make the final decision on whether the pupil should access the trip and suitable alternatives that will meet the educational needs of the visit will be planned.

### **Effective Supervision**

The arrangements for supervision must take into account the nature of the group and the individuals within 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. Visit leaders also need to consider staff competence, where they are going and the activities they will be doing when deciding on safe staff numbers.

A useful framework staff should use when assessing requirements for ratios and effective supervision is **SAGE**:

- **Staffing**: who is needed/available? The plan must work within the limits of available numbers, abilities and experience.
- **Activities** to be undertaken: what do you want the group to do and what is possible?
- **Group characteristics**: prior experience, abilities, behaviour and maturity, any specific or medical/dietary needs.
- **Environment**: indoors or out; a public space or restricted access; urban, rural or remote; quiet or crowded; within the establishment grounds, close to the establishment or at a distance; and the ease of communications between the group and base. Do not overlook environments to be passed through between venues. For residential visits consider the accommodation and surrounding area. For outdoor environments, consider remoteness, the impact of weather, water levels and ground conditions.

When arranging trip supervision there are no legally required ratios just guidance for adult to child ratios. It is not possible to set down a definitive staff/student ratio for a particular age group or activity. However, the **minimum requirement for any visit is 1:10**.

Without special safeguards or control measures staff must be aware that these ratios will **not** be adequate to meet the needs of most residential or more complex visits.

If the school is taking part in adventurous activities. E.g. Robinwood, visit leaders must check the provider is approved to ensure supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. If a member of staff wishes to lead an adventurous activity themselves, they must be suitably qualified and their qualification checked with the National Governing Body of that pursuit e.g. ARLA. In these circumstances the Local Authority would also need to be informed and approve the individual via EVOLVE.

### **Parent Volunteers**

If a parent/school volunteer is frequently (once a week or more) or intensively (four or more days in a month, or overnight) working with pupils, including accompanying school trips, they need to have an enhanced DBS check with barred list check.

If a parent/school volunteer is accompanying a trip as a one off, and they do not have a DBS check, as in school, they must not be left alone with any children or given a group to lead. They must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

It is the visit leader's responsibility to make sure that any parent/volunteer is clear on their roles and responsibilities during the visit. Visit leaders need to have gone through the risk assessment and also provided the volunteer with their mobile phone number.



Parents/volunteers must not be given a group to supervise which includes their own child. Parents/volunteers should not be left in charge of crossing roads- this is the responsibility of school staff accompanying the trip.

### **Safety during a visit**

A register, first aid kit, contact details and the school 'Visit Leader Emergency Card' should be carried on all trips. The visit leader and deputy should have the school phone number and mobile number of the head teacher and an SLT member in case of emergency.

Prior to the visit, staff must ensure that all participants understand what is expected of them. This includes any 'rules' that will be in place. These should be reemphasized as appropriate during the visit. Expectations while travelling and at the venue should be made clear, as should any risk management strategies the pupils need to employ to stay safe.

A register should be taken before commencing the trip and before leaving the venue. Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of students should take place. The visit leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party. All children should carry a school help card, with the school's telephone number in case they get separated and be given instructions of who it is appropriate to give it to so the school can be contacted. All supervisory adults should carry a mobile phone and the visit leader and deputy leader's number should be issued to accompanying adults in case of emergency.

It is the visit leader's responsibility to ensure that all other adult supervisors understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any students who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties. The visit leader retains overall responsibility for the group at all times.

During a visit, it is primarily the responsibility of the visit leader, in consultation with other staff where appropriate, to constantly monitor the visit and decide if and when it is appropriate to modify or curtail the visit/activity (e.g. Plan B) to suit changes or changing circumstances e.g. over-busy lunch area, rain, rising water levels etc.

### **Residential Visits**

In addition, for residential visits, the visit leader and deputy should carry the school critical incident plan and 'Emergency Card for Visit Leaders' and 'Emergency Plan Home Contacts Card' as well as having a copy of each child's emergency information form.

On residential visits, the consumption of alcohol by supervising staff is prohibited. Even if a residential establishment has staff who take charge of the children at certain times (e.g. nighttime), staff must remember that they still always have ultimate duty of care of the pupils. It is expected that even if activities are run by centre staff, all groups will be accompanied by a member of school staff who will continue to monitor safety.

Smoking – During off-site visits the school's no smoking policy remains in force for all accompanying members of staff. If a member of staff has been asked to take part in a residential visit and feels this could cause them an issue, they need to speak to the head teacher.

### **First Aid**

A first aid kit appropriate to the visit must always be carried.

For all visits there should be a responsible adult with a good working knowledge of first aid appropriate to the environment (e.g. urban, remote, water etc).

General 'life experience' or a 3 hour non-assessed 'Basic Skills' course is suitable for routine urban visits. However, the head teacher may decide the nature of a visit may indicate a higher level qualification is appropriate, especially in circumstances where it is likely that access by emergency services may be delayed and make sure an appropriate member of staff is assigned to the trip.

### **Transport**

If transport is needed for a trip, the visit leader needs to speak to the school business manager and give them the relevant details so they are able to arrange a coach, minibus or taxi.

For after school events, parents are asked to arrange their own transport to and from the venue for their child.

If a private car (staff or parent) is to be used to transport pupils this must be approved by the head teacher and a PRIVATE CAR form must be completed and retained by the school along with copies of the insurance and driving license on an annual basis.

## **Emergencies**

Before the trip, the school will appoint a member of SLT (usually the headteacher) as emergency school contact for each visit. All major incidents should immediately be related 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 school contact, including the home contact details of parents/guardians and next of kin, as appropriate.

The visit leader will take a copy of the school Critical Incident Plan, along with contact details of the appointed emergency contact. It is the visit leader's responsibility to make sure each member of staff is clear on their role within the critical incident plan before the trip.

In the event of an emergency, the visit leader and supervisory staff will put the school critical incident plan into action and follow procedures for informing appropriate bodies using the Emergency Cards.

All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit will be reported back through the school systems. The Lincolnshire County Council Emergency Contact needs to be informed of any serious incidents or accidents.

The school will have emergency funding available to support the visit leader in any emergency that occurs in the UK or abroad.

## **Evaluation of visits**

All visits will be evaluated by the Visit Leader using the evaluation tool on EVOLVE to inform future visits to venues. This needs to be completed within 28 days of the visit. If the visit leader has any concerns about the venue then these need to be documented on the EVOVLE form but also highlighted to the EVC as soon as they return from the visit.

## **Monitoring of Educational Visits**

The head teacher gives permission for visits to take place and alongside the EVC checks that appropriate risk management strategies are being deployed and the venue meets the LOtC requirements or equivalent as stated in Lincolnshire's guidance. The EVC monitors evaluation completed evaluation forms and liaises with visit leaders to evaluate effectiveness of trips.

## **Insurance**

The responsibility for ensuring adequate insurance cover is in place for any visits is the responsibility of the head teacher in conjunction with the visit leader.

As a local authority school, we buy into the local authority's insurance arrangements which means the council automatically provides worldwide travel insurance.

For travel abroad the school follows Lincolnshire County Council's guidance.

### **Finance**

With trips which incur a cost, parents are asked to make a contribution to help cover the costs. This is voluntary and no child would be excluded from a trip for lack of payment. However, the school reserves the right to cancel a trip if overall contributions are not enough and funding cannot be found elsewhere.

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