



Through wisdom, compassion and endurance, we endeavour to make the best decisions possible for our children

SCHOOL VISITS POLICY



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School Visits Policy

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 Whaddon CofE 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.
- 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. I.e. 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, Whaddon CofE School:

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: '**Bucks Requirements and Guidance**' in Evolve resources (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE.)
2. Adopts National Guidance www.oeapng.info, (as recommended by the LA).
3. Uses EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for off-site activities.

All staff are required to plan and carry out visits in line with school policy (i.e. this document), Local Authority policy, and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

Types of Visit & Approval

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. (Enrichment)**
These follow the 'School Learning Area' Operating Procedure (Appendix 1).
- 2. Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity.**
These are entered on EVOLVE by the visit leader and submitted to the EVC/Head for checking.
- 3. Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.**
As above, but the Head authorises and then submits to the LA for approval.

Roles and responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE (where required). They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head or EVC prior to planning, and certainly before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements. If the Visit Leader has not visited the site of the visit before, they must do so to ensure the visit can be carried out safely.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is the Headteacher, who will support, mentor 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. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

The Head Teacher has responsibility for authorising all visits and for submitting all overseas, residential or adventurous activity visits to the LA for approval, via EVOLVE.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'. Class governors accompany their class on at least one visit a year to understand health and safety procedure. Individual governors may request '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. (For academies, approval by the LA is acknowledgment that the plans attached to Evolve are sound but responsibility sits with the academy.)

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 ready 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.

Emergency procedures

The school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a serious incident during a visit (see Appendix 2). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is tested at least bi-annually and following any major staffing changes.

When an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, or where it involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention then assistance will be sought from the local authority.

Parental Consent

Consent is not required for activities within the School Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum during normal school time.

Parental consent will always be sought for

- 1. Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity.**
- 2. Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.**

The school obtains blanket consent at the start of each year for certain other routine activities, e.g. after school fixtures, walks around the village. Parents have the option of consenting online, or through a traditional paper consent form.

Specific (i.e. one-off) parental consent must be obtained for all other visits. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents, so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. As above, parents have the option of consenting online or through a traditional paper consent form.

Inclusion

Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 is compulsory. See National Guidance www.oeap.info for more information.

Charging / funding for visits

Voluntary funding will be sought for visits and visitors to cover costs. If contributions do not cover costs, visits/visitors may be cancelled.

Transport

When hiring self-drive minibuses, the driver is responsible for carrying out pre and post checks on the vehicle. They will have written BCC authority to drive the vehicle. We follow Bucks Requirements and Guidance which reflects National Guidance. Children will always be expected to sit calmly and quietly, with their seatbelt fastened during all car, mini-bus, coach, train journeys.

Use of staff/volunteers cars to transport pupils

Staff/volunteers cars may be used to transport children on local trips. The driver must have a valid driving license, MOT and taxed vehicle. The driver must also hold business insurance. Cars will travel in convoy or 2 adults will accompany the children in one vehicle.

Insurance

Whaddon CofE School always take out the LA's insurance for visits.

Appendix 1 – School Learning Area

General

Visits/activities 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/activities:

- do not require one off parental consent and are covered by an annual consent form which is sent out in the first week of the Autumn Term.
- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).
- do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE if these are ad-hoc activities

Boundaries

The boundaries of the School Learning Area are shown on the attached map. This area includes, but is not limited to, the following frequently used venues: *e.g.*

- *St Mary's Church*
- *The Park*
- *The Village Hall*
- *The Farm*
- *Woodland, Copses around Whaddon*

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.
- Activity specific issues when doing environmental fieldwork (nettles, brambles, rubbish, etc.).

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- The Head, must give verbal approval before a group leaves.
- A current list of staff approved to lead in this setting is maintained by the EVC and office.

- There will normally be a minimum of two adults.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas', and have practiced appropriate group management techniques.
- Pupils have been trained and have practiced standard techniques for road crossings in a group.
- Where appropriate, pupils are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- All remotely supervised work in the School Learning Area is done in 'buddy' pairs as a minimum.
- 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.
- A school mobile is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (e.g. gloves, goggles)

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 office).
2. This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the senior management team, or will be able to contact an experienced senior manager at all times.
3. For activities that take place during normal school hours, the visit leadership team 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 leadership team 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/s and the base contact/s 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. For visits that take place outside the School Learning Area, the visit leader will carry an Emergency Card

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