

Beverley St Nicholas Community Primary School

Educational/Offsite Visits Policy

Introduction

All offsite visits and activities (apart from work experience or college placements which are dealt with separately) that are organised and undertaken by the school are regarded as “educational visits”. Whenever pupils leave the school site under the direct or indirect supervision of school staff, they are undertaking an educational visit.

Aims and Objectives

The school aims to offer children a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for adult life. The school’s headteacher and governors recognise the value and importance of learning outside the classroom, and encourage staff to organise educational visits that enrich the curriculum and enhance the learning and development of our pupils.

Types of visits organised by the school

The school offers a wide range of educational visits, including:

- Visits to museums eg Eden Camp, Burton Agnes Hall
- Local walks
- Theatre visits
- Y6 residential

Compliance

The school’s policy is to comply with the LA’s “Guidance for the Management and Leadership of Offsite Visits”. The school’s Educational Visits policy should also be read in conjunction with the other relevant school policy documents, such as the following:

- Health and Safety policy statement
- Charging policy
- Safeguarding/Child Protection
- Equality/Inclusion/SEN
- Behaviour

Access to Policies and Guidelines

Staff involved in the leadership and management of visits should be familiar with all relevant guidelines and policy documents, and should know how and where this information can be accessed. The educational visits risk assessments are reviewed annually and relevant staff are expected to read and sign prior to any visits taking place.

The LA’s “Guidance for the Management and Leadership of Offsite Visits” are accessible via the LA Educational Visits webpage <http://www.eriding.net/all-ages/educational-visits/> and also via EVOLVE, an on-line system for recording and approving visits.

Roles and responsibilities (for details see LA Offsite Visits Code of Practice)

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for all the school’s educational visits. New/Acting Headteachers should contact the LA for guidance on taking up the position, and should access training from the LA as soon as possible during their first term regarding their responsibilities with respect to the management and approval of educational visits.

If the Headteacher is absent or unavailable, the Deputy Head will act as the appointed person, and fulfil the same responsibilities regarding the management and approval of educational visits.

The School’s Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is the headteacher. The EVC oversees the planning and organisation of the school’s visits, and provides advice and guidance to staff, including recommendations regarding the approval of visits. New EVCs should access training from the LA during

their first term regarding their responsibilities with respect to the management and approval of educational visits, and should attend refresher / update training at least every 3 years.

The Governing Body representative who is responsible for overseeing educational visits and for assisting with the approval of res/overseas/high risk visits is the Chair of Governors.

The LA Educational Visits Officer is Ms Clare Johnson (tel 01482 392417 clare.johnson@eastriding.gov.uk).

Advice and Guidance

Staff should seek advice and guidance regarding educational visits from:

- the school EVC
- the Headteacher
- the LA Educational Visits Officer
- other experts with specialist/local knowledge (e.g. National Park ranger)

Training

The LA provides a range of training opportunities for staff involved in the management, organisation, and leadership of educational visits. Visit leaders are able to update their experience and training on EVOLVE.

The school ensures training opportunities with regard to educational visits are made available:

Monitoring

To assure quality of standards on educational visits:

- the school's Headteacher will accompany at least one visit per year to monitor real practice, and to assist with the review of policies and procedures
- The school's Headteacher will complete the Manager Review (an online audit of our school's educational visits policies and procedures that is accessible for managers via the front page of EVOLVE online) and share the findings with the Governors and the LA Educational Visits Officer. This will be completed at least every 3 years. Proposed actions in response to the review will be carried out in accordance with the target completion dates stated on the Review form.

1. Planning and approval procedures

Visits should be recorded, checked, and approved in accordance with the following procedures:

Category 1 - DAY VISITS (ROUTINE)

Local visits that take place frequently or regularly throughout the year, or over a specific period of time (e.g. a series of six weekly visits) e.g. visits to local library/swim pool/away sports matches.

Category 1 visits should be recorded using:

- EVOLVE online recording system

Category 1 visits should be checked and approved:

Internally - by the Headteacher (with EVC support)

Category 1 visits should be submitted for approval:

- at the beginning of the academic year to obtain "blanket approval" for the year and at least 2 weeks in advance of the first of a series of visits.

Category 2 – DAY VISITS (NON ROUTINE)

One-off or occasional visits e.g. day visit to York Minster/Scarborough Sea Life Centre

Category 2 visits should be recorded using:

- In-house form

Category 2 visits should be checked and approved:

Internally - by the Headteacher (with EVC support)

- In addition, the Governing Body should be informed of visits that have taken place

Category 2 visits should be submitted for approval:

- at the beginning of each term/half term through the EVOLVE online system at least two weeks before the visit takes place.

Category 3 – UK RESIDENTIAL VISITS

Visits that involve one or more nights away from home in UK or Overseas.

Category 3 visits should be recorded using EVOLVE Online

Category 3 visits should be checked and approved:

Internally - by the Headteacher (with EVC and Governor support), and

Externally – by the LA Educational Visits Officer

Category 3 visits should be submitted for approval:

- at least 6 weeks in advance of the first of the visit.

For visits with significant financial commitment, “Outline Approval” should be obtained before firm bookings are made.

If any of the above 3 types of visit involve what may be regarded as “High risk activities or environments” they MUST be given an additional subcategory “A” classification:

Sub Category “A” – HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES and ENVIRONMENTS

All day visits, or residential visits that involve hazards that are significantly different or more serious (in terms of severity and/or likelihood) than might normally be encountered in everyday or school life e.g. a weekly climbing day visit = 1A, a day visit to dry ski slope = 2A, a residential stay at outdoor centre = 3A, an overseas trekking expedition = 4A. All Sub Category “A” visits should be recorded using EVOLVE Online. All Sub Category “A” visits should be checked and approved:

Internally - by the Headteacher (with EVC and Governor support), and

Externally – by the LA Educational Visits Officer

All Sub Category “A” visits should be submitted for approval:

- at least 6 weeks in advance of the visit

For visits with significant financial commitment, “Outline Approval” should be obtained before firm bookings are made.

All staff who lead visits are required to input their own information and assurances on EVOLVE online.

2. Visit objectives

All educational visits should have a defined purpose, with clearly stated, justifiable educational objectives, or else they may not be approved, and may not be covered by the LA insurance.

3. Selection of young people

Every effort is made to ensure that school journeys and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion.

Should the situation arise where staff are considering exclusion of a pupil from a visit, a discussion with the EVC needs to take place. Adaptations can be discussed in order to facilitate inclusion. Parents will be consulted following this discussion to involve them in any arrangements and final decision. This may include the attendance of the parents on the day to support their child. Any pupil, who has a one to one adult support appointed to them, should attend the visit alongside the child and cannot be included in the overall adult / class ratio. A full up to date list of children and staff attending the visit should be left with the office prior to departure.

4. The Overall Group Leader/Visit Organiser

The Overall Group Leader must be assessed and approved as suitable and competent to fulfil their role and responsibilities by the Headteacher.

5. Deputy, Assistant and Volunteer Leaders

Visits normally require a Deputy Leader who is able to deputise, and take full responsibility for the Overall Group Leader, if necessary. Assistant Leaders should be chosen carefully, and must be assessed and approved as suitable and competent to fulfil their roles and responsibilities by the Headteacher, EVC and Overall Group Leader.

Leaders must have relevant child protection training in order to fulfill the responsibilities associated with this role.

Leaders should consider carefully the implications of family members being present, and the possible complications that might arise. Children of staff or volunteer parents should not be in their allocated group of children and any issues that arise in regard to the child should be dealt with as it would in school and not involve the parent unless required.

The school has a responsibility to ensure that all adults involved in the supervision of children during school-related activities (including visits) are suitable people to work with children, and pose no threat to the young people in their care. Concerns about possible child abuse or poor practice by a member of staff, volunteer or other adult should be reported immediately. Young people on educational visits should at all times have ready access to a competent adult who has an appropriate level of first aid training. This normally requires at least one of the group's leaders to have an appropriate and current first aid qualification (6-8 hours of emergency aid training is the minimum training recommended for leaders on educational visits)

6. Staffing selection and supervision ratios

Effective supervision is of the utmost importance in maintaining the safety and welfare of the children on educational visits. The LA's "Guidance for the Management and Leadership of Offsite Visits" provide recommended minimum staffing ratios, but the choice of staff and the decision regarding ratios is still a matter of judgement for the Headteacher, after consultation with the EVC and Overall Group Leader (and LA Ed Visits Officer, if necessary), as part of the risk assessment and management process. It is generally good practice to have at least two adults accompanying any off-site experience so that there is some flexibility and reserve capacity if things go wrong. Particular consideration should be given to staffing levels and qualifications required for visits that involve adventurous/high risk activities, and those that involve indirect or remote supervision.

7. Selection and suitability of accommodation or venues to be visited

As part of the overall risk assessment process, and in keeping with their legal duty of care, the Overall Group Leader must take reasonable steps to check that any accommodation (e.g. youth hostel) that is used, and any venues (e.g. castles or museums) that the group plans to visit, are suitable, satisfactory, and acceptably safe. Many organisations now have websites or supply teacher information packs that provide all reasonable assurances regarding standards, or have obtained a Learning Outside the Classroom "Quality Badge". However, if necessary, the Provider Assurance Form (EV2) can be sent to the manager of a place of accommodation or venue to be visited, requesting signed, written assurances regarding their safety management systems and operating procedures. When planning a visit, the Visit Organiser (and other group leaders) should, wherever possible, undertake an exploratory visit to inspect and familiarise themselves with the accommodation to be used and venues to be visited.

8. High risk activities and environments

Leaders who organise visits that involve high-risk activities and environments must be aware that such visits normally require a greater degree of planning and preparation by virtue of their complexity and unpredictability. All Category 1 and 2 (Day) and Category 3 (UK Residential) visits that involve high risk activities and environments are classified as subcategory "A" and must be recorded on EVOLVE, and approved by the EVC, Headteacher, Governors, and Local Authority. Leaders and other supervisors must be sufficiently competent to supervise pupils in the activity/environment.

Visit Organisers should plan alternative activities and venues to cater for possible changes in circumstances (e.g. worsening weather or rising river levels), and all staff should be aware of these possible contingencies. The EVC will sometimes ask to see and check these plans.

9. Risk assessments and management

The school has a legal duty of care for its young people, and must therefore give careful consideration to the hazards involved during an educational visit, and ensure that risks are managed at reasonable and acceptable levels. The Visit Organiser should undertake an appropriate risk assessment for each visit, and this should be shared/discussed/agreed by all visit leaders before the visit takes place. Appropriate written evidence of this process should be provided.

The process of risk assessment should be a positive means of raising awareness of hazards and prompting constructive discussion regarding the best means of risk management – it should therefore be of real practical value to the leaders and group members, not just a paper exercise. A set of written generic risk assessments and a blank specific visit form is available on EVOLVE Online.

School specific policy/procedures

- all relevant generic risk assessment forms are reviewed, amended, and agreed at the start of each academic year by all relevant staff
- these generic forms are accessible through EVOLVE
- new leaders/volunteers are asked to read all relevant forms and add their signed agreement before assisting with the leadership of a visit.
- an additional specific visit risk assessment should be completed by the visit leaders for each visit to record and share information about potential hazards and precautions that may be particularly noteworthy for that specific group, doing particular activities, at specific sites on that visit.
- completed assessments are spot checked/approved by the school EVC/Head.

10. Insurance and finance arrangements (including charging arrangements)

The Headteacher/EVC/Overall Group Leader must ensure that adequate insurance arrangements are in place for all educational visits, and Group Leaders should check carefully that the scope and level of cover provided is adequate for each visit. Visit Organisers should also check that any external service providers have sufficient public liability cover (normally at least £5 million).

School specific arrangements.

- The school pays annually for LA Voyager insurance which covers all school visits within the UK (providing the visits are correctly approved). The Council also provide additional travel insurance for visits abroad, if required – contact the Council’s Insurance team (01482 394195).

The Visit Organiser and school EVC should ensure that:

- each visit is accurately costed and budgeted for;
- adequate allowances are made for additional unforeseen costs and changes in circumstances;
- financial plans – especially for more complex and committing visits – are checked over and agreed first by the EVC/Headteacher before financial commitments are made;
- for visits that involve substantial commitment financially (e.g. overseas expeditions), no firm bookings or financial commitments are made until the visit has been agreed and received “Outline Approval” by the relevant authorities;
- the costs of the visit are made clear to all concerned (including parents), including how much will come from school funds, and how much each parent will be charged or asked to contribute;
- money collected for visits is kept in a separate school account, and secure systems are in place to ensure that money is accessed and accounted for correctly.

Charging arrangements (for more details see school charging policy)

No charge may be made in respect of any activity that is deemed to take place in school hours. An activity is deemed to take place during “school hours” if 50% or more of the activity, takes place within school hours. If more than 50% is deemed to be outside of school hours then a charge may be made for “optional extras” only. For residentials, a school trip is considered to have taken place within school time if the number of school sessions missed by the pupils amounts to half or more of the number of half days taken up by the activity. The school will not charge for:

- any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip
- transport provided in connection with an educational trip during school hours.

The school may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of these visits, but it must be clear that any contribution is genuinely voluntary.

Where it is not permissible to charge parents, any subsidy will come from:

- voluntary parental contribution.

The school may charge for activities that are provided wholly or mainly outside school hours, as long as these activities are optional extras (see details in the school charging policy) but any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. The costs of the visit should be clear to all concerned,

stating how much will be given from other school funds and how much parents are being expected to contribute. The school will normally make a charge for board and lodging on residential trips, and ask for a voluntary contribution towards transport and specialist instruction for certain activities.

11. Transport

As part of the overall risk assessment process, the Visit Organiser must take reasonable steps to check that any transport used during the visit is suitable, satisfactory, and acceptably safe, and that any specific Local Authority or legal requirements are met. Leaders should refer to the Local Authority's generic risk assessments that give detailed recommendations for all standard forms of transport.

The school hires coaches/buses from:

- Companies that have already been checked and approved by the Council's Transport Services team
- Companies whose safety management systems and operating procedures have been checked using the "Coach/minibus hire company enquiry EV3 form"

For the safe supervision of pupils on coaches/buses, group leaders are required to:

- sit in various locations, spread throughout the coach
- sit near emergency exits
- carry a first aid kit and the school mobile phone.

The Headteacher must ensure the safety of pupils travelling by private car, and should:

- assess and decide if the driver is suitably qualified, experienced and competent;
- inform parents and obtain their written consent (this may not be possible in emergencies);
- gain assurance on main points of reference – insurance, licence, roadworthy, seatbelts, etc;
- carry out suitable Child Protection checks if appropriate
- ensure that drivers are aware of any specific requirements (e.g. compulsory use of seatbelts – individual school policies may require the use only of full 3-point seatbelts)
- ensure that drivers are aware of their responsibilities and school procedures (e.g. use of seat belts, keeping to speed limits etc).
- drivers have appropriate insurance – inc business cover for employees

For visits that require the use of staff cars, drivers must:

- have business insurance
- be assessed as competent and suitable by the headteacher

For visits that require the use of parents' cars. Drivers must:

- be assessed as competent and suitable by the headteacher (using the Driver validation form)
- sign to say their car is roadworthy, taxed and insured
- be DBS checked

For visits involving the use of minibuses (if applicable):

The school follows National and Local Authority regulations and guidance, and all minibus drivers have been assessed and approved by the LA Transport Services (from Sept 2008, all new minibus drivers will be required to successfully complete the MiDAS courses, and existing minibus drivers will be required to complete the MiDAS course at least once every 4 years).

12. Parent/Guardian information and consent

The Overall Group Leader and EVC must ensure that parents/guardians are provided with appropriate and sufficient information about all visits. The amount of information and method of provision will depend upon the type of visit planned and the assessed level of risk involved. Parents/guardians of each pupil on a visit are asked to complete and sign a written consent form, whether it be an annual "rolling" consent for routine visits, or specific consent for a particular visit/activity. There is no legal requirement to obtain parental consent for visits/activities during normal school hours but it is nonetheless good practice to inform parents and seek consent for any activities that parents might be particularly concerned about.

Any special/medical needs of pupils are collated by the first aid Teaching Assistants and supervising staff are briefed and trained accordingly. Parents are asked to give written consent to the administration of plasters and off-the-shelf first aid/medication, if deemed necessary. Medical information and consent forms can be obtained from the school office. Parents should be clearly informed of the arrangements and responsibilities for collecting a pupil after a visit. The Visit Organiser/EVC must obtain parent contact details for all pupils on the visit.

13. Staff briefing and emergency procedures

It is important that all staff (including volunteers) involved in the leadership of a visit are fully briefed about each visit. Staff should be aware of their expected roles and responsibilities before, during and after a visit. Group leaders should be aware of emergency procedures and how to obtain outside assistance or contact the emergency services if required. Part of the planning for emergencies must involve the recording of one or more Emergency Home Contact(s) who should be available at any time during the visit. The Visit Organiser must ensure that group leaders have immediate access to the emergency contact details of the school managers and the parents of those on the visit. A properly equipped first aid kit is always available to staff during school visits and must be checked and taken on all visits. The school first aid kits are stored in the first aid cupboard. All staff should be made aware of the conduct and behaviour expected of them during the visit, particularly in regard to issues such as smoking and alcohol use.

14. Briefing and preparation of young people

Providing relevant information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for all school visits. Pupils should be briefed about safety arrangements and what clothing/equipment should be brought. Leaders must ensure that pupils clearly understand what will be considered unacceptable behaviour or conduct, and the consequences of non-compliance. "Buddy systems" are an effective means of promoting safety and welfare within the group. During any time that remote supervision takes place the visit leader must ensure that pupils are aware of the supervision and emergency contact arrangements, and that they have the necessary skills, maturity, responsibility, knowledge and equipment to operate safely as an independent individual/group. Pupils should be briefed what to do in an emergency, or if they become separated from the rest of the group. It is good practice to teach pupils how to recognize dangers and manage risks sensibly.

15. Documentation (and visit records)

The EVOLVE database will store key elements of Category 3,4 and "A" visit details securely and indefinitely. Other visit details are stored in the Educational Visits folder. Hard copies of other supporting documentation (e.g. risk assessments) are stored and retained in the school's central "Educational Visits" file. This information is stored until such time that the Headteacher decides that all issues/incidents arising from the visit have been dealt with fully. If no significant incidents occurred during the visit, the school disposes of the paperwork at the end of the academic year. If a minor incident occurred during the visit, the school disposes of the paperwork after a period of 6 years. If a significant incident occurs during a visit that could be investigated at a later date, all relevant details are retained until the young person becomes 21.

17. Visit Approval

Low risk day visits (Cat 1 and 2) are approved in-house by the Headteacher (with EVC guidance and support) using the school's own paper form.

Day visits involving high-risk activities or environments (Cat 1A or 2A) are approved by EVC/ Governors/ Headteacher/ LA, using EVOLVE online.

UK and overseas residentials (Cat 3 and 4) including those involving high risk activities or environments (Cat 3A and 4A) are approved by EVC/Governors/Headteacher/LA using ROVER Online

The Visit Organiser must carefully check all visit forms before submitting for approval.

When required, Governor Approval for a visit is given by the Chair of Governors.

The procedure for Governor Approval involves:

For low risk day visits (Cat 1 and 2) –not required

For high-risk day visits (Cat 1A and 2A) – email (via EVOLVE) to the governor with specific responsibility for overseeing educational visits. A hard copy of the visit form is given to and signed by the Chair of Governors.

For residential (Cat 3) and those involving high-risk activities/environments (Cat 3A) - email (via EVOLVE online) to the governor with specific responsibility for overseeing educational visits. A hard copy of the visit form is given to and signed by the Chair of Governors.

18. Visit approval status and feedback

The procedure for Managers (Headteacher/EVC) to notify the Visit Organiser of approval decisions and to give feedback involves:

For low risk day visits (Cat 1 and 2) – By signed hard copy (with comments)

For high-risk day visits (Cat 1A and 2A) – an email is automatically generated via EVOLVE Online and sent to the visit organiser after the LA approval decision has been given. At any time, the visit organiser can access and view all approval decisions and any feedback given by accessing EVOLVE Online (see “View All Visits”)

For residential (Cat 3) and those involving high-risk activities/environments (Cat 3A) - an email is automatically generated via EVOLVE Online and sent to the visit organiser after the LA approval decision has been given. At any time, the visit organiser can access and view all approval decisions and any feedback given by accessing EVOLVE Online (see “View All Visits”)

If a visit is not approved or only given “Outline Approval” by a manager, they must give reasons for their decision and state clearly any changes that would be necessary

If a visit does not obtain the correct level of approval, it may not be covered by LA insurance and support.

19. Amendments to visits

If there are significant late changes to visit plans that have already been approved or submitted for approval, the Visit Organiser must notify all relevant approving authorities (EVC/Headteacher/ Governors/ Local Authority) of these changes, and ensure that their additional consent is given. There should be a clear system for the notification and approval of amendments to visit plans, so that there can be no misunderstanding or confusion by any parties involved.

For low risk day visits (Cat 1 and 2) –By notifying in writing to EVC/Headteacher

For all Cat 3/4/A visits recorded on ROVER, there is a clear procedure for recording minor amendments that do not need further approval in 19.1 “Late Minor amendments”. For significant amendments that require further consideration and approval, the ROVER system requires visit organisers to access section 19 (by clicking “Amend” in right hand column of visit summary in “View All Visits”) and superceding the original submitted form by clicking on 19.2 “Significant Amendments” to create an unlocked version of the form that will need resubmitting after the amendments have been completed.

20. Post visit review and evaluation

It is good practice for Visit Organisers, on return from a visit, to review the visit with the EVC and/or Headteacher, and to record any examples of good practice and lessons learned that might assist with the planning and leadership of future visits. In particular, it is important to record and review any accidents, incidents, or near-misses (i.e. dangerous incidents that nearly happened, but fortunately didn’t). It is important that details are recorded as soon as possible after an incident whilst they are still fresh in the memory, preferably with signed witness accounts. Visit Organisers should take several blank photocopied pages from the school’s accident book to record details of any incidents. These can then be copied or added to the school accident book on return home. Serious incidents must be notified to RIDDOR and to the Local Authority using the procedures and standard forms.

Post visit reviews and accident/near misses records are reviewed regularly by the Headteacher /EVC and Governors. Any lessons learned are shared with all relevant staff, and any necessary changes to procedures made.

After any major accident, the school will undertake a review of the incident and their emergency procedures, and will share the findings with the Local Authority for the benefit of other schools. Staff are encouraged to express any concerns regarding the organisation and management of visits in writing to the Headteacher, and these will taken seriously and dealt with in confidence. If necessary, issues will be considered further by the Governing Body. Significant incidents and issues of concern should also be brought immediately to the attention of the LA Educational Visits Officer.

This policy has been reviewed and revised by:

Name *Liz Pollard*
Date *June 2013*
July 2016
December 2019

Position *Headteacher*

Signature

