

# **Stoke Heath Primary School Educational Visits Policy**

*Date: September 2023*

*Review date: September 2026*

## Context

We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every pupil to an effective and balanced curriculum. Visits which are planned as part of the learning sequence, are known to enhance learning and improve attainment and support the development of cultural capital, and so form a key part of what makes Stoke Heath 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. ie. 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, Stoke Heath:

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: '**Guidance for Educational Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE**' (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE).
2. Adopts National Guidance [www.oeapng.info](http://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 execute visits in line with school policy (ie 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

There are three types of visit:

1. Routine local visits in the 'Extended learning locality' (See Appendix 1).
2. Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity.
3. Visit that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

## 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 Teacher 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.

**The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)** is Mrs Madeleine Harrison, who 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 sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

**The Head Teacher** has responsibility for the final approval of all visits, including overseas, residential or adventurous activity visits before approval from the LA, via EVOLVE.

**The Governing Body** have agreed to this policy and will be reviewed by the governors as required.

**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 Teacher 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.

## Approval

The approval process is as follows for each type of visit:

1. Local visits follow the 'Extending learning locality' policy (Appendix 1).
2. Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. These are entered on EVOLVE, and must be submitted to the EVC for checking at least 14 days in advance where possible, and then forwarded to the Head for approval.
3. Visits that are overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity (see LA guidance for definition of 'adventurous') are then submitted by the Head to the LA for approval. Visit leader must check if an activity provider holds either an AALA licence or a LOTC quality badge. If they don't, they must complete a provider questionnaire (National Guidance document 8p).
4. Visits abroad require detailed planning to commence well in advance and the head must be kept up-to-date with the progress. The head will need to submit the final plans to the LA 28 days before the departure dates.
5. Checks must be made on any third party providers and permission from the head teacher to use them must be obtained before any deposits are paid. Third party providers who hold the LOTC badge, do not require further checks. Those who do not hold this accreditation should complete and return the provider questionnaire which visit leaders should scrutinise.
6. If a school visit/sporting activity finishes after the school office is closed, a member of SLT will remain at school until pupils have returned or stay contactable via mobile phone.
7. Both generic risk assessments and sporting activities risk assessments are in place which the visit leader must share with staff and upload to Evolve.
8. An Edvis 19 form must be completed for visits beyond the school's extended learning territory, taking into account: staffing, activity, group, environment and distance. A deputy visit leader must be assigned and indicated on the Edvis 19. If a child with a medical condition, or any other specific need is taking part in the activity, this information must be included on the Edvis 19 form.
9. All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that the facilities and third party provision will meet group expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of young people. It is a vital dimension of risk management. Wherever reasonably practicable it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit.
10. The EVC and head teacher will monitor educational visits in line with the OEAP guidance and the school's monitoring procedures. Visit leaders will evaluate their visits on Evolve against the objectives and identify any near misses etc to make future planning more robust.
11. When an activity is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time and no parental contributions are requested, then a formal consent is not necessary. However, in the interest of good relations between the school and home, it is good practice to ensure that those in a position of parental responsibility are fully informed.

## Emergency procedures

**A critical incident is any incident where events go beyond the normal coping mechanisms and experience of the visit leadership team.**

The school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a critical 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.

To activate support from Coventry City Council. The following telephone number should be used:

- CSW Resilience Team 24 hour Emergency Contact. 02476 832 673  
(This number must not be issued to the public)
- When calling this number ask the operator for the Duty Emergency Planning Officer

When calling the Visit Leader should state that they need support from People's Directorate senior management; say who they are; that they are from Stoke Heath Primary and give brief details of the incident, the group, the location and a phone number to be called back on.

## Educational Visits Checklist

Stoke Heath's Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities. This has been adapted from the LA's generic checklist. A visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is 'YES'. Stoke Heath's Educational Visits Checklist may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources.

The visit leader will ensure all the following steps are completed for any type 2 or 3 visit:

- Gain outline approval from the head to begin planning the visit and agree funding mechanism / charging policy.
- Ensure the visit:
  - has clear learning outcomes
  - has activities appropriate to the group
  - is planned to maximise benefits to the children while managing significant risks
  - is appropriately staffed
  - complies with the school's safeguarding policy
- Involve children in the planning of the visit, and how it will be managed, wherever possible.
- Ensure the LA procedures are followed and that the visit plan is recorded on EVOLVE.

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- Ensure all other staff, accompanying adults and children are:
  - fully briefed about their roles and responsibilities during the visit
  - know what to do in the event of an emergency
  - 
  - are given information they need about individual pupil needs.
  - Emergency procedures must include what would happen in the event of illness or injury affecting the party leader.
- Ensure the base contact back at school is fully briefed and has copies of all relevant information.

## Parental Consent

For any visits not covered by the extended learning territory, information should be sent home giving the parents information on the visit and including a request for information on any changes in their child's medical details.

For residential visits, visits extending beyond the school day, or visits out of the City, specific consent should be requested using the EDVIS system.

## Procedures for dealing with medication.

If a child will need medication during the visit then this will be carried by the teacher and administered following the school agreed protocols. If a child has asthma, they will keep their inhaler with them and a spare one will be carried by the group leader. The visit leader will check the child has their inhaler before they leave and ensure it is in date.

## Inclusion

Every effort will be made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion. If a visit needs to cater for young people with special needs, every *reasonable* effort will be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

The school will take all *reasonably practicable* measures to include all young people. The principles of inclusion will be promoted and addressed for all visits thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

- an entitlement to participate
- accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- integration through participation with peers

The Head, EVC and Visit Leaders should be aware of the extent to which Inclusion is or is not a legal issue.

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- The Equality Act 2010 states that the responsible body of a school must not discriminate harass or victimise a pupil (to whom one of the protected characteristics applies Disability; Gender reassignment; Pregnancy and maternity; Race; Religion or belief; Sex and sexual orientation) in the way that it affords the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service or by not affording the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service. There is a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

## **Charges for Off-site Activities and Visits**

The head, EVC and Visit Leader must take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996.

Refer to OEAP NG document: ***Charges for Off-site Activity***

## **Vetting and DBS Checks**

Adults forming part of the staff team for a visit, or school-based activity, must undergo an enhanced DBS check before the visit. Volunteers, such as parent helpers, must not be left alone in sole charge of a child or group.

However, it must be clearly understood that a DBS check (or other vetting procedure) in itself, is no guarantee as to the suitability of an adult to work with any given group of young or vulnerable people.

The placement of an adult within a situation of professional trust (where young people could be vulnerable to physical or mental exploitation or grooming) should always be on the understanding that an overview based on a common sense risk-benefit assessment process has been considered.

Refer to OEAP NG document: *Vetting and DBS Checks* plus HR recruitment guidance for employees.

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## Effective Supervision

In general terms, the Law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is “effective”.

Effective supervision should be determined by proper consideration of:

- age (including the developmental age) of the group;
- gender issues;
- ability of the group (including special learning needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics etc);
- nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, as well as the time of year and prevailing conditions,
- staff competence.

The EYFS statutory framework no longer sets out different requirements for minimum ratios during outings from those required on site. Staffing ratios are determined by considerations of the above. However, a qualified paediatric first aider must accompany an EYFS visit.

When planning a visit, reference will be made to OEAP NG documents: Group Management and Supervision and Ratios and Effective Supervision.

## Checking Providers and Venues

It is good practice for Visit Leaders to take full advantage of the nationally accredited, provider assurance schemes that are now available, thus reducing bureaucracy.

Examples of such schemes include:

- AALA licensing
- LOtC Quality Badge
- Adventuremark

EVCs and Leaders must be aware under what circumstances an AALA licence is a legal requirement, and ensure that in this case only licensed providers are used. Leaders are reminded that the AALA license is an assurance of safety, it does not accredit educational or activity quality.

Coventry City Council takes the view that where a provider holds one of the above accreditations, there should be no need to seek further assurances. Where a provider of activities does not hold one of these accreditations they should be required to complete a Provider Questionnaire (National Guidance document 8p).



## **Transport**

**Use of staff cars to transport pupils** - Staff cars may only be used to transport pupils when the driver has business insurance and a clean driving licence (a record of both of these being checked will be kept by the EVC). Any use of private vehicles will be subject to a specific risk assessment.

The Visit Leader and School Business Manager should ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company, preferably one with the 'Coach Marque', where available ('Hiring a coach' 4.5e OEAP National Guidance).

## **Insurance**

Coventry City Council Insurance is used for all trips. The usual insurance arrangements for public liability and employers' liability insurance will apply to off-site activities and visits as will the personal accident covers where these have been selected as part of the service level agreement.

## **GDPR**

All data for the planning of school visits is securely stored on EVOLVE, which is password protected. In the interests of pupil and staff safety, it is necessary to have documentation that contains pupils' and staff personal information. The visit leader and deputy visit leader will keep a copy of this information for the duration of the visit. After returning to school, all paperwork will be shredded, in line with the school's GDPR policy and procedures.

## **Communication and Social Media**

Digital technologies, such as social media, enable images of school visits to be shared with parents over the internet. This often reassures parents whilst their child is away. Only those pupils who have parental permission for their image to be shared online will be uploaded to the web. Children who appear in the photographs should not be named.

Social media should not be used to communicate with parents directly. Parents/carers should be encouraged to communicate via the school office. Furthermore, social media should not be used to advertise future visits.

## **Appendix 1 - Extended Learning Territories Boundaries**

The boundaries of the territory are shown on the attached map. This area includes the following frequently used venues:

- Morris Common
- St.Alban's church
- Godiva and Leofric Lodge

We use this area regularly for a variety of learning activities and approved staff are allowed to operate in this area without completing the visit approval process so long as they follow the agreed standard operating procedure. The EVC and the office maintain a list of currently approved staff.

## **Operating Procedure**

The following are potentially significant hazards within our extended territory:

- Road traffic
- Other people / members of the public / animals
- Losing a pupil
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, 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, deputy or EVC must give verbal approval before a group leaves.
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved. A current list of approved staff is maintained by the EVC
- The concept and operating procedure of the extended learning terrain is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school.
- There is always a minimum of two adults.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas' and have practiced appropriate management techniques.
- Children have been trained and practiced standard techniques for road crossings in a group.
- Children's clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness before leaving school and staff carry additional spare clothing, a survival blanket and a first aid kit
- Staff carry student medical information and emergency contact details (collect this from the office on the way out)
- 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.

## 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 'extended learning locality', the visit leader will carry either:
  - a) An LA Emergency 'Card' (see EVOLVE Resources), or
  - b) An OEAP National Guidance Emergency action card (*Available via [www.oeap.info](http://www.oeap.info)*)
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.
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