

OUR LADY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY -

Introduction

School trips provide unique opportunities for kinaesthetic learning i.e. 'learning by doing' and encourage students to engage with people, places and buildings in new ways. 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 us 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 and 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.

This policy will help us conduct educational visits in a safe and well-structured manner, giving our pupils and staff the best experience possible.

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: (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 all off-site activities.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with school policy, Local Authority policy and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

2. Clarification of roles

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits and for entering these on EVOLVE. 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. Our expectations are that visit leaders are both competent and confident in leading a visit.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is Nicola Coulson, 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.

All EVCs must undertake SIL EVC training and must renew this training every 3 years, as stated in SIL policy (p.5).” [\[SIL EVC policy | PDF\]](#)

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 head teacher is responsible for ensuring the planning and risk management for this visit has been checked and approved according to the current Educational Visits policy. That the visit complies with the LA's current planning checklist for off-site activities. The visit leader and staff are competent to supervise the visit. The Risk management is fit for purpose.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend' and their main function is 'to enable and ensure'. 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.

Safeguarding and DBS Compliance

- DBS requirements for residential volunteers (must have enhanced + barred list) (p.15).
- Volunteer risk assessment must be completed.
- Volunteers supporting multiple establishments must share DBS details with each school.
- Safeguarding considerations for:
 - Social media use
 - Online risk
 - Mixed-gender accommodation planning

3. Procedural requirements

As set out in the Local Authority Educational Visits Policy, visits can be categorised into three categories, these are:

Category A

These are activities that present no significant risks. They should be supervised by a teacher who has been assessed as competent by the LA or Educational Visit Co-ordinator, where appropriate, to lead the activity. Examples include walking in parks, field studies in environments presenting no technical hazards or low risk sports competitions.

Category B

These comprise some higher-risk or higher-profile activities. LA approval is required for this category of activity. Safe supervision requires that the Group Leader should as a minimum, have undergone familiarisation specific to the activity and / or the location. The Group Leader will have to be approved as suitably competent by the LA and hold any necessary qualification/award. Examples include; walking in non-remote country, camping or cycling on roads.

Category C

This is the most demanding category. It includes all those activities that if not school-led, would be in the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996. LA approval is required for visits in this category, including animal visits to school (chicks/farm animals). In the case of sports, where safe supervision requires the leader to complete some prior test of his/her specific competence, such testing might include a recognised course of training, the recorded accumulation of relevant experience or an assessment of competence by an appropriate body.

Parental Consent

- Blanket annual consent recommended with clear scope (p.4). [\[SIL EVC policy | PDF\]](#)
- Verbal consent only in emergencies and must be documented.
- Specific consent required for residential, adventurous and overseas.

All visits which are category A visits are covered by the annual consent form which is sent to parents at the start of each academic year. It is important that visit leaders check annual consent has been granted for individual children on the trip.

It is essential that parents are sent letters with information regarding the visit which must include details, time of visit and return, location, any specific requirements and to remind parents to ensure medical information is up to date (this list is not exhaustive).

Category B and C visits must have specific consent and up to date medical information from parents for children to participate.

Approval

For Category A visits the group leader should request permission to lead no later than **14 days** before the trip takes place. Information should be inputted onto EVOLVE within this time frame.

Section 7 *Risk management and risk benefit* determines whether a generic risk assessment is sufficient or if a visit specific risk assessment needs to be conducted.

For Category B/C visits, the group leader should request permission no later than **6 weeks** before the trips take place. Information should be inputted onto EVOLVE within this time frame. Visit specific risk assessments must be conducted for these visits.

Evaluation

All trips must be evaluated, no later than 4 weeks after return. This should be done on EVOLVE by the group leader.

Monitoring

In order to ensure safe, quality visits, we understand that National Guidance provides advice about monitoring.

The EVC has the responsibility of monitoring visits to ensure that

- Visits and activities are carried out safely and effectively and in line with the Local Authority policy and procedures.
- Relevant policies and procedures are reviewed and updated to remain current and in line with good practice.
- Staff have easy access to the school policy.
- Staff have access to relevant training that supports the implementation of this policy.
- The school appoints, trains and revalidate EVCs in accordance with the LA policy.
- The school keep proper records.

The EVC monitoring should also include an element of field observations.

Induction, training, apprenticeship and succession planning

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.
- Any member of staff leading a residential or self-led adventurous activity must have attend visit leader training

Risk management and risk-benefit assessment

Risk Assessments

- Risk assessment is a **legal requirement**.
- Evidence of RA must be attached via EVOLVE.
- Pre-visits required where reasonably practicable.

We understand that in order to deliver safe visits comprehensive risk assessments need to take place. For a number of visits, generic risk assessments are suitable for safe trips. Generic risk assessments are developed by the EVC and are reviewed every year. They are kept for a minimum of 3 years. These generic risk assessments are stored on EVOLVE under establishment documents and include:

Mini-bus

Walking

Hired coach with driver

Park visits

Sports competitions in school hall

Public buildings

Crossing roads in safe place

Use of public toilets etc

For all category B and C trips, event specific risk assessments must be completed and attached to the EVOLVE form.

Ratios

Activity and Visit Leaders must ensure that young people are supervised in accordance with the principles of “Effective Supervision”, 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.
- Distance.

Our starting point for minimum ratios are as follows:

Local visits:

EYFS – Nursery 1:2-3 & Reception 1:3-6 (minimum 2 staff)

Y1 – Y3 – 1:6

Y4 – Y6 – 1:10 or 1:15

Day visits:

EYFS – Nursery 1:2-3 & Reception 1:3-6 (minimum 2 staff)

Y1 – Y3 – 1:6

Y4 – Y6 – 1:10

Residential/adventurous/UK or abroad):

EYFS – Nursery 1:2-3 & Reception 1:3-6 (minimum 2 staff)

Y1 – Y3 – 1:6

Y4 – Y6 – 1:10

In order to determine the actual number of staff needed we will use the framework described through SAGE

- **Staffing:** who is needed/available? The plan must work within the limits of available numbers, abilities and experience. **Minimum 3 staff** on residentials unless fully justified.
- **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.
- **Distance:** how far is the activity away from school or home base?

Assessing venues and providers

In line with Local Authority we accept and acknowledge the LOTC quality badge. This ensures that the provider we are using has the correct risk assessments and insurance in place and are suitable to use. Where a provider does not hold the LOTC Quality Badge, the SIL Provider Form must be completed prior to approval.

Emergency procedures and incident reporting

For all trips taking place outside of school time, two emergency contacts must be inputted on to EVOLVE – head teacher, deputy headteacher/EVC.

Visit leaders and deputy leaders should have access to the emergency contact details, EVOLVE form, parents contact details and children's medical/behavioural details.

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

Our school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a critical incident during a visit. All staff on visits are familiar with this plan. (See Evolve for contact details and staff to use the Emergency Plan template).

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

- Annual testing of emergency procedures.
- 24/7 access to visit information by base contact.

Behaviour

As a school we expect all children to behave to the standards described in our code of conduct.

Before any residential or visit, parents are made aware of consequences of breaking the school code of conduct. This may include parents being asked to remove a child in prescribed circumstances.

Inclusion

We are a fully inclusive school and believe in the following principles:

- A presumption of entitlement to participate.
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification.

- Integration through participation with peers.

We follow the standards set out in National Guidance around Inclusion.

Staff Children on Visits

Staff must *not* bring their own children on school visits unless they are pupils of the school.

Bouncy Castles/Inflatables

- Bouncy castles are classed as adventurous.
- Must be approved via EVOLVE 28 days ahead.
- PIPA tag or ADIPS documentation required (p.19). [\[SIL EVC policy | PDF\]](#)

Insurance

We are covered by the local authority blanket insurance for visits and trips.

Financial procedure for collecting payments for trips/visits

Once trips and visits are decided upon, a timeline is set to give parents the opportunity to pay any costs over a suitable period of time to avoid causing any financial burden to our families. Payments for trip and visits are mainly cash transactions, although the school does have an online payment portal available to parents, who wish to make cashless payments. Trip collection sheets are prepared for the classes, who are attending the trip/visit, along with a plastic wallet for holding cash. Payments are recorded by the teaching assistant/teacher responsible for the class on this sheet and both the sheet and the cash, are returned to the Finance office for verification. A separate record is kept of which children are required to pay for trips, if any subsidy is provided through pupil premium or if any pupil is excluded from the trip and the reason for this exclusion, i.e. senior management decision, parental objection. On arrival at the finance office, the amount is counted and verified by a third party and the trip collection sheet is initialled to show this verification has taken place. The wallet and a collection sheet are then returned to the class to be used the following day. This process is repeated until the trip/visit takes place. NB dependent on the duration of the collection period, this may involve a number of weeks. All cash received by the school for trips/visits, once it passes into the finance office, is recorded on the daily cash collection sheets and is banked as a part of the weekly banking process for cash in accordance with the local authority financial scheme of delegation.

PE/Sports competitions

For local and regular sports competitions we use a generic risk assessment with it being a Category A activity. Separate risk assessments would be completed and uploaded onto EVOLVE for longer distance and high risk activities/competitions.