



**Weobley
Primary
School**

Off-Site Visit Policy

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Reviewed by:	Sharon Thomas – Educational Visits Co-ord.
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Approved by:	Stephen Warrell – Head of School
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1. Introduction

Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds, having been authorised to do so by the Head of School or Lead Teacher. The governors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school and the pupil's personal growth.

This policy sets out our approach to planning and operating educational visits, to ensure the health and safety of our pupils and staff, and to make sure that our visits are available to all pupils. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of staff, pupils and volunteers when it comes to visits.

This policy applies to activities taking place within and outside of normal school hours, including weekends and holiday periods. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Visits to places of interest in the local area
- Day visits to places such as museums and other cultural and educational institutions
- Sporting activities
- Adventurous and recreational activities
- Residential trips organised by the school
- Trips abroad organised by the school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's guidance on [health and safety on educational visits](#), and the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022](#)
- Sections of this policy are also based on the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#).

3. Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Approving staff requests for educational visits, including having final authority to approve any educational visit of less than 24 hours
- Making sure staff, including the educational visits co-ordinator, have received any necessary training
- Working with the governing body to approve residential trips of more than 24 hours

The educational visits co-ordinator (EVC)

Sharon Thomas is the appointed EVC at our school. Their role is to:

- Oversee and guide other staff to arrange and organise educational visits
- Assess the ability of other staff to lead visits and a designate suitable trip lead for each visit
- Assess outside activity providers
- Advise the headteacher and governing board when they're approving trips
- Access the necessary training, advice and guidance
- Evaluate all visits once complete, from planning to the visit itself, and use this to improve future arrangements

Trip lead

Every educational visit will have 1 member of staff designated as the trip lead. The trip lead will:

- Plan the proposed visit, taking into account the health and safety risks to pupils, staff and volunteers
- Assign staff and volunteer roles, as needed
- Make sure the school has accurate and up-to-date information about the trip destination, to be used in risk assessments
- Make sure the needs of everyone taking part are considered, including co-ordinating any additional support needed
- Make sure parents and carers are given accurate information about educational visits, including any costs or necessary equipment not supplied by the school or a third party
- Communicate key details about the visit and all locations to staff, pupils and parents/carers, including roles and responsibilities and expected behaviour
- Make sure staff are capable and able to fulfil their roles at all times while responsible for pupils and others

Staff

Staff have a responsibility to make sure all pupils and staff who take part in visits are kept safe and understand the proper way to prepare for trips, as well as how to act while taking part. Staff will:

- Seek and obtain approval for all educational visits from the headteacher
- Carry out any required risk assessments and work with the trip lead
- Communicate with parents and carers and make sure trips are inclusive of all pupils' needs
- Look out for the health and safety of themselves and those around them
- Help manage pupil behaviour and discipline as required while on the visit
- Share any concerns or worries with the trip lead and others, as appropriate

Parents and carers

By agreeing that pupils can take part in educational visits, parents/carers agree that they will:

- Provide all information required, such as emergency contact details and health/medicine information if applicable
- Sign and return consent forms and any other documentation required in a timely manner
- Share any concerns or information about the pupil that may affect or impact their ability to safely take part in the trip

Volunteers

Volunteers attending school trips, including parent volunteers, agree to:

- Follow the directions of staff and act accordingly
- Behave appropriately and model good behaviour for pupils
- Report any concerns to the trip lead or other staff present as soon as possible
- Make sure pupils under their supervision are acting safely and appropriately, and raise any issues with staff as soon as possible

Pupils

Our school behaviour policy also applies to all educational visits. This includes the expectation that pupils will:

- Follow instructions given to them while on the trip
- Dress and behave as expected for the length of the trip
- Take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others, reporting any concerns to a staff member or trip supervisor

Pupils will always be reminded of our behaviour expectations before going off-site for a visit, and will be expected to uphold the school's behaviour policy at all times.

4. How visits may be authorised

The head of school will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher employed at the school.

The school's educational visits coordinator, who may be the head of school, will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits.

S/he will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- support the head of school and governing body in their decisions on approval;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks, and that the letter from our coach company (see 6.5) assures us that their drivers, too, have had police checks;
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits, and ensure that there are regular generic assessments of the risks (e.g. road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (e.g. a swimming facility).

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the LA (and available from the school office). All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LA's instructions.

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the head of school before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made.

Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, the head of school will seek the approval of the governing body and the LA before permitting the activity to take place.

5. Inclusion

All pupils, regardless of background or abilities, should be able to take part in every aspect of our school life, including visits. If a pupil with a disability, statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education health and care (EHC) plan, or any other specific needs (e.g. medical conditions including allergies) is participating in the visit, they will have the same support that is available to them during the school day.

We will adjust the trip programme where necessary, working with parents/carers to provide additional support, making reasonable adjustments to itineraries, providing additional support staff and other adjustments as appropriate. Additional risk assessments may be carried out to ensure the safety of all staff and pupils.

6. Risk assessment

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. S/he should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. S/he will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve. The LA will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the Visit Plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum ratios:

- 1 adult to between 10 and 15 pupils in Years 4 to 6;
- 1 adult to 6 pupils in Years 1 to 3;
- 1 adult to 3 pupils in Early Years.

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach company we use on a regular basis has provided us with a letter detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts;
- proper vetting of the driver by the police;
- proper insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- breakdown procedures.

The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip have been subject to police checks.

A copy of the completed risk assessment will be given to the head of school, the governing body, the LA, our educational visits coordinator, and all adults supervising the trip.

7. Transport

The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- entrance fees;
- transport;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers;
- any refreshments that the school has opted to pay for.

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

Where private cars are used for transport, the group leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and double-checking that each driver has been subject to the normal police checks.

Our minibus meets LA guidelines, and each seat has a belt. We instruct all children, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, to attach their seat belts.

8. Volunteers

Where appropriate, parents and carers may be asked to volunteer to attend and supervise pupils alongside staff members on trips. Where more parents/carers volunteer than required on the visit, those invited to attend will be selected as fairly and transparently as possible, whilst taking into consideration:

- The needs of the pupils going on the trip
- The setting and circumstances of the trip
- Volunteers' skills, attitude and past behaviour, including previous volunteer experience

Parents/carers selected to volunteer will be informed at least 2 weeks ahead of the visit, and asked to confirm their attendance in writing. They will also be asked to confirm they agree with the expected behaviour.

Volunteers will receive a full induction from staff members on the day of the visit, prior to departure, including on their responsibilities, expected behaviour, the process for raising concerns, emergency procedures and contact details, and the expected timetable of the trip.

Where practical and as required by the nature of visits (i.e. when volunteers may be left with children without staff members present), volunteers may be asked or required to undergo safeguarding checks, including DBS checks.

At no point will volunteers on whom no safeguarding checks have been carried out be left alone with pupils or given sole responsibility for the care of a pupil.

9. Communication with parents and carers

The parents/carers of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents or carers must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities.

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary, except in the case of residential visits), with a limited subsidy from the parent—teacher association. This must be made clear to parents and carers in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents and carers will be informed of this principle through the school prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits.

The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the head of school to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

10. Emergency procedures and incident reporting

Generally, emergency planning will be defined as planning for:

- Serious and unexpected risk
- Serious and life-threatening injury
- Individuals going missing
- A serious breach of safeguarding expectations

The trip leader will be familiar with these plans for each visit.

In the case of an emergency, the trip leader or other supervising adult will contact the school office. The school office will then contact parents/carers as required, and inform them of changes to plans or cancellations of trips and/or alternative travel plans. This will form part of a wider communication plan that covers how routine communications should be handled in such situations.

One member of staff will always accompany a pupil seeking medical treatment.

In a case of a pupil being unaccounted for, the trip leader will search the area while another member of staff remains in charge of other pupils. In the unlikely event that a pupil cannot be found within 30 minutes, the trip leader will contact the school office who will notify the parents/carers. The trip leader will then contact the police and provide them with the relevant information so they can take over the search, staying with them to comfort the pupil when found. The remaining staff and adults will return to the school with the rest of the pupils.

All incidents and accidents will be reported in line with our health and safety policy, including required reporting to Ofsted and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Smaller incidents, accidents or near misses that do not require external reporting will still be covered by an internal report, to include steps that can be taken in the future to avoid similar incidents.

Group leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities: 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide' (DfES 1998) and its supplements:

- 'A Handbook for Group Leaders' (DfES 2002)
- 'Group Safety at Water Margins' (DfES 2002)

They must consult the LA's documentation detailing procedures and requirements, including guidance on Emergency Planning and Crisis Line organisation, and must draw up a Visit Plan which records in writing (including standard forms, where appropriate) the arrangements that have been made.

There will also be a clear process for evaluating all visits and trips once they have been concluded from the planning through to the visit itself. This will help with evaluating whether planning worked and to learn from any incidents that took place.

11. Visit Plan

For all visits the school uses the LA Evolve system. The system ensures the following are included for educational visits:

- risk assessment;
- report on preliminary visit;
- applications for approval of visit;
- general information;
- names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
- travel schedule;
- accommodation plan (if applicable);
- full plan of activities;
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
- intended arrangements for supervision;
- insurance arrangements for all members of the group;
- emergency contacts and procedures;
- general communications information;
- guidance for party leaders;
- guidance for the emergency contact and head of school;
- medical questionnaire returns;
- first-aid boxes.

12. Charging and insurance

We will ask for a voluntary contribution to the costs of educational visits, but this will be entirely optional (except for residential visits) and will not affect pupils' ability to take part fully in the trip.

We will make sure adequate insurance is in place for all trips, including, but not limited to: cancellation insurance for contracts with external providers, travel insurance, accident and medical cover, and loss of luggage and other personal items.

13. Residential visits

The headteacher, together with the governing body, will approve all residential trips longer than 24 hours. The planning and preparation laid out in this policy will apply to residential visits as well as 1-day visits. In addition, the trip lead will make sure:

- Staff have received any necessary training
- All necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained at least 1 month before the start of the trip
- All adults, including volunteers, have had adequate safeguarding checks. Where appropriate – e.g. if the volunteer will be in direct unsupervised contact with pupils – this will include relevant DBS checks

Parents and carers will be given information about the visit and asked for permission at least 2 months before the first day of the visit. Information shared with parents will include:

- The dates and time of departure and return to school
- The full address and contact details of the destination
- Planned activities and options
- Meal provision
- Costs and optional charges, including deposits and the date by which this must be received, in line with our charging and remissions policy (this will include information about exemptions)
- Clothing and equipment provided, and what pupils must bring themselves
- Public health requirements, including any required vaccinations
- Accommodation options and arrangements
- The names of staff attending

For residential visits, we will make sure that any organisation providing activities hold the LOtC Quality badge or similar local accreditation.

14. Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by SLT and will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

The School uses the LA 'EVOLVE system for processing Off-Site Visits. The school trained EVCs are Mr S Warrell and Mrs S Thomas.