

Whitwell Primary School



Education Offsite Visits Policy

The Governing Board of Whitwell Primary School adopted
this policy on **4th March 2021**

Signed: _____

Chair

1. Introduction

Whitwell Primary School acknowledges the immense value and many benefits of outdoor learning and is committed to supporting offsite visits and activities that enrich the learning opportunities of children and young people.

The school (and any contracted external providers where an activity has been commissioned) works within the requirements set out in Derbyshire County Council's Offsite Visits & Adventure Activities Guidance and the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel National Guidance.

All staff will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and any changes that are made when the policy is reviewed.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

For all visits it is important that each person involved understands their specific roles and responsibilities as detailed in this section.

Under Health & Safety law the employer, in this case the Local Authority, has primary responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of employees and students. This overall responsibility cannot be delegated.

The employer will ensure that its employees are provided with appropriate guidance, that there are training regimes in place to support it and that the guidance is understood. The School Visits Service (SVS) team provides Derbyshire County Council visit guidance. The SVS team has a huge breadth of knowledge and experience and can provide support with any visit from a walk to the park through to extended overseas expeditions. SVS provides training courses for Educational Visits Coordinators (EVCs) and Visit Leaders. SVS monitors visits through EVOLVE (the online system for the planning, approval and management of offsite visits) and through sample monitoring 'in the field'.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that:

- offsite activities and visits comply with LA guidance and this policy,
- offsite activities and visits are notified or submitted for formal approval as required ,
- offsite activities and visits approved can be accommodated within the planned provision,
- the ethos of each visit is one with which the school wishes to be associated.

The Headteacher will ensure that the EVC, Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers are appropriately trained as required and specifically competent to carry out the responsibilities allocated to them for all visits.

The nominated deputy to approve offsite visits in the absence of the Headteacher is the Deputy Headteacher.

Educational Visits Coordinator

The EVC is a staff member who has received relevant training and induction and is delegated with the following tasks:

- To grant verbal permission that a Leader may plan a visit after deciding that the timetabling and ethos of the visit are acceptable.
- To check and approve that the planning and risk management for visits follows employer policy and guidance, and to liaise with the LA as required.
- To ensure that there is sample monitoring of visits in keeping with the recommendations of employer policy and guidance.

The EVC should be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment. The designated EVC for Whitwell Primary School is currently the School Business Officer, Sandra Froggatt, who attends a refresher course every three years.

Visit Leaders

Visit Leaders will have overall charge of the visits they lead. They are also responsible for and must demonstrate the following:

- Competence, including where necessary verification, to lead the visit.
- Awareness of potential hazards when completing the necessary risk assessments and introducing measures to control risks to acceptable levels.
- That they have informed the Headteacher of the identified risks.
- Sound judgement of what constitutes a dangerous situation and preventing access to dangerous situations.
- Ability to undertake dynamic risk assessments.
- Arrangement of adequate supervision.
- Knowledge of where to get information about the area they are travelling to which could include such things as tide tables and weather forecasts.
- That they have shared relevant visit information with parents/carers and sought informed consent where necessary.

Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers will be appropriately trained as required and specifically competent to carry out the responsibilities allocated to them for all visits.

Details relating to a visit and its participants (including staff) will be accessible to a designated 24/7 emergency contact in case of emergencies.

The Visit Leader Checklist is appended to this policy (Appendix 1).

3. Procedures

Staff wishing to plan and undertake a visit will first seek permission from the Headteacher. (Staff should follow the LA and establishment guidance if undertaking home visits. This does not form part of this policy.)

Finance

The Headteacher, EVC and Visit Leaders should take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 and detailed in the Charges for Offsite Activity guidance document. The school Charging & Remissions Policy is appended to this policy (Appendix 2).

Staff Induction and Training

All new staff will, as part of the induction process, be familiar with the local policy for offsite visits and activities and understand their role in managing, planning, leading or assisting with organising offsite visits. All staff will have access to LA and National guidance.

The EVC will identify any specific training needs and requirements and ensure staff can access relevant learning and development opportunities as appropriate and as required by the LA.

Visit Approval

Whitwell Primary School has adopted the Derbyshire County Council system for approval of visits which is based on these being categorised into three broad types:

1. Local low risk single day visits that are regular and routine.
2. Day visits and programmes that require enhanced planning.
3. Higher risk visits, further afield, that require detailed planning and leader competence.

Category 1:

These visits will be regular, routine day activities that are organised in and around the locality, usually on foot. Regularly repeated visits can be covered by a block annual consent subject to parents/carers being made aware of every visit, especially any involving a return time outside the normal day.

Visits and activities included in this category for this establishment are:

- On-site activity (excluding adventurous activities listed in category 3)
- Transporting pupils between multi-site establishments or other local schools/venues
- Regular curriculum delivery at offsite learning provider venues
- Visits in and around the base setting on foot (churches, parks, urban centres)
- Sports fixtures (involving transport)
- DCC Primary curriculum swimming programme

These visits should be planned using the establishment-specific local visits risk assessment and with approval by the EVC and the Headteacher. Activities can be covered by an annual blanket parental consent.

Where there are local activities that are a planned part of the curriculum/routine programme but are dependent upon the right conditions on the day, then the Visit Leader will sign out before departure, leaving relevant information with the base contact.

The specific establishment offsite visits risk assessment (that also includes road transport) covers general supervision of these visits. A review will be required rather than a completely new document each time. Any additions can be documented using the Event Specific Note form.

All other visits: All other visits must be planned and submitted using EVOLVE. Based on the visit types, EVOLVE automatically directs the flow of approval for Category 2 and 3 visits.

Category 2:

These visits are single “one off” day visits or a programme of visits that take place offsite but further afield than your base locality and with no element of adventurous activities (as defined in Category 3). These opportunities will usually require transport and could also require some enhanced planning and risk assessment. Example visits are:

- Visits requiring use of transport (urban areas, theatres, social events, places of interest)
- Swimming (excluding open water)
- Fieldwork visits (not in open/remote country)
- Activities at water margins (coastal locations and inland waters)
- Farm visits
- Forest Schools

These activities must be entered into EVOLVE and submitted to the EVC at least one week prior to departure. Approval is delegated to the Headteacher, and visits should be covered by a specific parental consent.

For a programme of regular visits to similar destinations, one single visit form can be completed, with the relevant dates selected and can be covered by an annual blanket parental consent.

The specific establishment local visits risk assessment (that also includes road transport) will cover general supervision of the visit. A review will be required rather than a completely new document each time. Any additions can be documented using the Event Specific Note form.

If a visit is planned to a higher risk environment, the appropriate Safe Working Procedure document should be reviewed, amended and completed for a specific visit. This will then be attached to the EVOLVE record, prior to submitting to the EVC and the Headteacher for approval.

Certain activities will require staff to hold specific qualifications or competencies before being able to deliver sessions, e.g. Forest Schools. Please refer to the activity qualifications matrix which can be

found on the EVOLVE website for further information. Relevant qualifications will be added and uploaded to EVOLVE. These activities will not be undertaken unless there is a sufficient number of suitably qualified staff to deliver them.

Category 3:

Approval from the LA will be required for all overseas visits, residential visits and those which include adventurous activities, be it provider or establishment led. The EVOLVE system will automatically pass such identified visits to the LA for approval after first being checked by the EVC and authorised by the Headteacher, who in turn will inform the Governing Board. Specific consent will be required for each visit.

Overseas visits and DofE expeditions will be submitted to the LA **four working weeks** before a visit is set to take place, and before anyone is financially committed. **Other visits requiring LA approval require two working weeks' notice.** Approval notification via email will automatically be sent out (from EVOLVE) as soon as possible up to two working weeks after receipt of the visit form.

A member of staff intending to lead an adventurous activity, must be specifically approved by the LA to do so via the EVOLVE Leader Approval Request function.

When external providers are used, it is a requirement for their safety management to have been verified either by the completion and return of a Provider Form or verified by holding an appropriate national accreditation. Providers will not be used until they have been 'vetted' by the LA.

4. Risk Management

The risk management of an activity is normally carried out by the Visit Leader and their assistants, with the support of the EVC as required. Risks are expected to be reduced to an acceptable or tolerable level, but not necessarily eliminated. Planning should achieve a rational balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity.

Whitwell Primary School takes a 'risk-benefit assessment' approach, whereby the starting point for any risk assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes.

This appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is 'acceptable'. The Health & Safety Executive endorse this approach through their 'Principles of Sensible Risk Management' and advocate that it is important that young people are exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves.

There is no legal requirement to produce a risk assessment in a particular format, but there is a legal requirement for the process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks, i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual or harm several people.

Whitwell Primary School staff will adopt and adapt the risk management materials available through EVOLVE to ease the burden of bureaucracy that might otherwise discourage leaders from making full use of educational visit learning opportunities.

A copy of the school's Generic Visits Risk Assessment is located in the EVOLVE folder in the school office and also in the Risk Assessments folder on the school computer office shared folders. A blank copy of the Event Specific Notes form can also be obtained from the EVC.

5. Monitoring

The arrangements for monitoring offsite visits within Whitwell Primary School will be a verbal or written report feeding back to the Headteacher after a visit has taken place and this will be undertaken by the Visit Leader.

6. Insurance

Appropriate insurance must be in place for all visits. The responsibility for arranging adequate insurance cover rests with the Headteacher in conjunction with the organiser of each journey. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the EVC to determine whether any additional insurance should be taken out. For visits abroad, additional journey insurance **must** be taken out.

As an employer, in addition to the standard public liability cover which all establishments will have in place, Derbyshire County Council offers schools the opportunity to buy into an annual 'blanket' personal accident cover/travel insurance, provided through CHUBB, covering any offsite activities and overseas travel ventures.

Insurance in Whitwell Primary School is arranged by Derbyshire County Council – QBE via Risk Management Partners (policy number Y088981QBE114A).

7. Inclusion

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to treat a young person less favourably and/or fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.

Whitwell Primary School endorses the principles of:

- a presumption of entitlement to participate,
- accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification,
- integration through participation with peers.

Adjustments made to include a disabled pupil should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity. Expectations of staff must be reasonable, so that what is required of them (to include a given pupil) is within their competence.

Behaviour

Whitwell Primary School encourages the use of a code of conduct as a means of establishing appropriate expectations of pupils' behaviour. The code will be explained to pupils, and those with parental authority, prior to a visit, thus reducing the opportunity for misunderstanding both expectations and sanctions that may be invoked where the code is breached.

Whilst inclusion of pupils and adults on offsite visits will be the norm at Whitwell Primary School, this will not be the case where health and safety of the individual or other group members would be significantly compromised. Visit Leaders will ensure that they consult the LA and parents/carers well in advance of the visit where inclusion is an issue.

8. Evaluation

To ensure rigorous evaluation of each visit can take place, Visit Leaders must have reached a clear understanding of the learning outcomes they hope to achieve. Given that most outdoor learning, offsite visits and activities have the potential to deliver a wide range of benefits and learning outcomes, the Visit Leader and staff team will agree on how the learning outcomes are to be prioritised, in the early stages of the planning process and documented on EVOLVE. Each identified outcome can be evaluated and recorded using EVOLVE.

For a positive safety culture to exist and develop, learning from past experience, incidents and mistakes is a crucial component in any safety system. A review/evaluation of the safety management of all of the school's educational visits by the Visit Leaders, the EVC and the Headteacher on a regular basis will take place. This should include a review of incidents, near misses and accidents.

9. Emergency Procedures

The risk management for each visit will identify the relevant emergency procedures during the visit. For any offsite visit, a home contact will be designated by the school who may be needed as a link between the party, the parents/carers, the establishment and the LA in the event of an emergency. The home contact must be an employee, be unrelated to anyone attending the visit and be confident in providing support in a crisis. The home contact should have online access to EVOLVE and Teachers2Parents (texting and emailing system).

For visits that take place outside normal establishment hours:

- A completed Emergency Card for Visit Leaders (or equivalent) must be with the visit Leader at all times.
- A completed Emergency Action Card for Home Contacts (or equivalent) must be with the emergency home contact(s) at all times, where access to EVOLVE is not possible.
- A First Contact Emergency Action Card can be used when taking an initial call from a Visit Leader in an emergency.

In the event of a delay in returning to school (of more than one hour), or of an incident resulting in harm to any attending participant, staff member or volunteer, the establishment must be contacted as soon as possible to inform the Headteacher, or the designated deputy so that they can decide:

- A. If the incident is of a less serious nature; the next of kin or parents of those affected will be informed about what has happened (e.g. that the party will be returning late or that an incident has befallen a party member) and the action that has been taken so far. In appropriate circumstances the Visit Leader will be designated to undertake this task.
- B. If the incident is very serious, whether to contact the LA using the emergency contact phone number and details given below:

The emergency contact phone number for Derbyshire County Council during office hours is 00-44-1629-538364 or outside office hours 00-44-1629-533085. This is the number for Call Derbyshire. Upon connection, please ask for the Emergency Planning Duty Officer. Please note that calls to the numbers above are to be used only in extreme circumstances, such as serious injuries and/or fatalities. Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents/carers.

10. Accident Reporting

All accidents will be handled in line with Derbyshire County Council's Accident Reporting Procedures. Accident Forms and other related documents are available in the Resource section of EVOLVE – Guidance.

Where an incident or accident occurs on an activity led by an external provider, this must be reported to the LA Visits Team.

Visit Leader Check List

This checklist is designed as a final check on planning, or as a review tool for regular visits. The relevance of some of the points and the complexity of the responses are dependent on the nature of a particular visit.

	✓
The benefits and risks of all aspects of the visit have been considered and the visit plan has an appropriate balance with an acceptable level of residual risk.	
There are clear and well considered learning aims that are particular to the development of the group as a whole and individuals within it, which contribute to the wider curricular or programme aims of the establishment.	
Monitoring and post activity/visit review and evaluation arrangements are in place.	
I am clearly identified as the Visit Leader and approved by the establishment.	
All members of the Visit Leadership Team are sufficiently confident and competent to fulfil their designated role.	
There are sufficient Leaders to ensure effective supervision and deal with incidents and emergencies.	
All members of the Visit Leadership Team have received all relevant information on both the visit and the group.	
If accompanying Leaders are taking a family member on the visit, there are arrangements to ensure that this will not compromise group management.	
I have kept the EVC informed during the planning process.	
Activities are appropriate to the aims of the visit and the nature of the participants.	
Appropriately competent Activity Leaders are in the Visit Leadership Team or a suitable provider has been contracted to lead activities.	
There is a sufficient amount of suitable equipment for activities.	
Parental consent is in place (where needed) and up to date medical information and contact details are available and shared with the Visit Leadership Team and any relevant Provider staff.	
Information has been provided to parents and young people to enable informed consent (where consent is required).	
Pupils have been provided with all required information to know what to do and what is expected of them.	
Child protection issues have been addressed.	
Inclusion issues have been addressed.	
Environmental factors (weather, daylight hours, temperature, water levels etc) have been considered.	
Accessibility issues have been addressed.	
Safety and security have been checked and considered.	

I have undertaken a preliminary visit if appropriate or required by establishment policy. In the absence of a pre-visit, I have sufficient information from other sources.	
There is access to first aid at an appropriate level.	
Where remote supervision will be used the environment is suitable for it.	
Accommodation, where used, is safe, suitable and appropriate.	
Travel or transport arrangements are appropriate.	
There is a Plan B in place, where necessary.	
There is an emergency plan in place and Leaders, helpers, participants, providers and emergency contacts have been given relevant information about it.	
Suitable insurance is in place.	
The visit meets all relevant requirements of my employer and school policy/procedures.	
My decision is that this visit is appropriately prepared and should take place.	

CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY

- A Various activities where a voluntary contribution may be sought, if activity takes place wholly or mainly within school hours (e.g. visits, specialist visits/experts, baking):**
- (i) Parents invited to make voluntary contributions.*
 - (ii) Parents advised there is no obligation to contribute and that no child will be treated any differently according to whether their parents have made any contributions.*
 - (iii) Parents advised of the average contribution required for the visit to take place and that the activity would not take place if parents were reluctant to support it.*
- B Activities outside school hours but not within the National Curriculum:**
Parents meet full cost.
- C Individual music tuition:**
Individual music tuition may be provided through school by an Authority accredited teacher. Cost of lessons to pupils will be in accordance with the Authority's charging policy for music tuition. Other music tutors may provide lessons to pupils outside school hours, i.e. lunchtime, after school. A contract will be drawn between teacher and parents. Charges will be remitted by school if part of the National Curriculum or a prescribed public examination.
- D Ingredients/materials for practical subjects:**
Parents encouraged to provide materials for practical subjects, but no child will be disadvantaged because of parents' inability/reluctance to pay. If necessary, school will pay.
- E Lost school equipment, books, etc:**
Parents expected to replace or purchase lost items of school property.
- F Breakages and damages to school buildings, furniture or property:**
Parents to be made aware that wilful damage to school buildings or property will be charged to parents by the school.
- G Residential courses – board and lodging costs:**
Parents required to meet full cost. Children entitled to Free School Meals may be eligible for a subsidy.
- H Photocopying charges:**
Private photocopying undertaken will be charged at 5p per copy.
- I Private telephone calls:**
Anyone wishing to make a private call will be charged 20p per minute.
- J Paid Nursery sessions:**
Parents wishing to pay for extra nursery sessions are able to do so. In line with the 30-hour agreement, parents will be charged for extra provision received in addition to the 30 hours at a rate of £2.50 for 25 minutes extra and £1 for every 15 minutes thereafter. Parents are required to sign a contract issued by school.