

Whitwell Primary School



Education Off-site Visits Policy

The Governing Board of Whitwell Primary School adopted
this policy on 13.03.2025

Signed: _____

Chair

1. Introduction

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

Whitwell Primary School (and any contracted external providers where an activity has been commissioned) works within the requirements set out in Derbyshire County Council's Off-site Visits and Adventure Activities Guidance and the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel 'National Guidance' (both accessible via EVOLVE).

All establishment 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.

Employer: The Local Authority via the School Visits Service for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. For Academies, Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools the Governing Board/Trust .

Under Health & Safety law the employer has primary responsibility for Health, Safety & Welfare of employees and students, this overall responsibility cannot be delegated. In establishments where the LA is not the employer the Governors or Management board will normally hold this responsibility and should be fully aware of the responsibility this entails.

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 will provide 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 and through sample monitoring 'in the field'.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring off-site activities and visits comply with the SVS Guidance and this Visit Policy and are notified or submitted for formal approval as required, that all visits approved can be accommodated within the planned provision and that the ethos of each visit is one with which the establishment wishes to be associated.

The Headteacher will ensure that the Educational Visit Co-ordinator (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 off-site visits in the absence of the Headteacher is the Deputy Headteacher.

Educational Visit Co-ordinator

The Educational Visit Co-ordinator (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 SVS 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 is Laura Williams, Teacher, who received training in the role on 21.01.2025 and will attend refresher training every three years.

Visit Leader

Visit Leaders will have over-all 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, dangers and competence when completing the necessary risk assessments and introducing measures to control risks to an acceptable levels.

- Informing 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.
- Ensure relevant visit information is shared with parents/carers and informed consent is sought 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 related to a visit and its participants (including staff) will be accessible to a designated 24/7 emergency contact in case of emergencies.

3. Procedures

Staff wishing to plan and undertake a visit (prospective Visit Leaders) will first seek permission from the Headteacher/Manager or EVC.

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 the Education Act.

The establishment charging policy for off-site visits is included in the Charging and Remissions Policy.

Staff Induction and Training

All new staff will as part of their induction into the establishment, be familiar with the local policy for off-site visits and activities and understand their role in managing, planning, leading or assisting with organising off-site visits. All staff will have access to county 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 Derbyshire County Council School Visits Service.

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 and Forest School listed in category 3)
- Transporting young people between multi-site establishments or other local schools/venues
- Regular curriculum delivery at off-site learning provider venues
- Visits in and around your 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 All Visits risk assessment and with approval by the EVC and the Headteacher. Activities can be covered by an annual blanket parental consent. These visits should be added to Evolve as a Local Area visit, using the given form.

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 off-site All Visits Risk Assessment (that may also include road transport) covers general supervision of these visits. A review will be required rather than completing a new document each time. Any additions can be documented using the Event Specific Notes form.

Category 1 visits can be inputted on Evolve as a Local Visit or by using inhouse procedures.

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 off-site but further field 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 in public lifeguarded pools (excluding open water)
- Fieldwork visits (not in open/remote country)
- Activities at water margins (coastal locations and inland waters)
- Farm visits
- Forest school programmes

These activities will be entered onto 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. Consent should be ‘informed’ 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 All Visits Risk Assessment (that also includes road transport) will cover general supervision of the visit. A review will be required rather than completed a 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 risk assessments must be completed for your specific visit. This will then be attached to the EVOLVE record, prior to submitting to your EVC and Headteacher for approval.

Certain activities will require staff to hold specific qualifications or competencies before being able to deliver sessions. e.g. Forest School. Please contact SVS if you require any clarification regarding competencies and qualifications. 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.

Evolve: Category 2 minimum document uploads

- Itinerary
- All Visit Risk Assessment
- Specific Risk Assessment/Care Plan (amended for off the school site)

Category 3:

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

Overseas visits and DofE expeditions will be submitted to the SVS a minimum of **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 SVS to do so via the EVOLVE Activity Leader Approval Request Form.

When external providers are used it is a requirement for their safety management to have been verified either by completion and return of a [Provider Form](#) or verified by holding an appropriate national accreditation e.g. AALA licence, Learning Outside The Classroom Quality Badge (LOTC). Providers will not be used until they have been 'vetted' by the LA.

Evolve: Category 3 minimum document uploads

- Itinerary
- All Visit Risk Assessment
- Specific Risk Assessment: e.g. Activity, Transport, Residential, Oversea, Care plan etc.

4. Risk Management

The risk management of an activity is normally carried out by visit leader and assistants with the support of EVCs 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.

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'. HSE endorse this approach through their Sensible Health and Safety Management in Schools 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.

5. Monitoring

To ensure policy and procedures are being followed the establishment will undertake monitoring of off-site visits.

SVS will provide sample monitoring of visits 'in the field'.

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.

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 LA Schools the opportunity to buy into an annual 'blanket' personal accident cover/travel insurance, covering any off-site activities and overseas travel ventures.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Board, Headteacher and EVC to determine whether any additional insurance should be taken out.

Academies and other non-school based establishments must make their own insurance arrangements.

Insurance in Whitwell Primary School is provided by XL Insurance Company and Aviva Insurance Limited Via Maven Public Sector - Policy number P23CASLFG00026

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 they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification. There are 9 protected characteristics in the act: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Whitwell Primary School endorses the principles of:

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

Reasonable adjustments should be made to include a child or young person with additional needs and/or protected characteristics which 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 young person) is within their competence.

Behaviour

Whitwell Primary School encourage the use of codes of behaviour conduct as a means of establishing appropriate expectations of young person's behaviour. Such codes will be explained to both young people and those with parental authority prior to a visit, so reducing the opportunity for misunderstanding both expectations and the sanctions that may be invoked where a code is breached.

Whilst inclusion of young people and adults on off-site 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 SVS and parents well in advance of the visit where inclusion is an issue.

8. Evaluation

Visit leaders must have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes they hope to achieve. Outdoor learning, off site visits and activities have the potential to deliver a very wide range of benefits and outcomes, these should be prioritised and recorded on 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, EVC and/or Headteacher will take place following the visit. 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 off-site visit a home contact will be designated by the establishment who may be needed as a link between the party, the parents/carers, the establishment and the County Council 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 (School Communication System).

For visits that take place outside normal establishment hours:

- A completed Emergency Card for Visit Leaders (or equivalent) is recommended be with the Visit Leader at all times
- A completed Emergency Action Card (or equivalent) is recommended to 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 (of more than 1 hour), or of an incident resulting in harm to any attending participant, staff member or volunteer, then the establishment must be contacted as soon as possible to inform the Headteacher or designated deputy so that they can decide:

- A. If the incident is of a less serious nature then 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 to contact Derbyshire County Council using the emergency contact phone number and details given below, or your multi-academy trust emergency line:

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. 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 or guardians.

10. Accident Reporting

All accidents will be handled in line with Derbyshire's County Council's Accident Reporting Procedures.

Where an incident or accident occurs on an activity led by a provider, please ensure this is reported to the School Visits Team.

<p>This checklist is not an exhaustive list though it tries to cover the main actions and considerations the visit leader will take when planning an off-site visit</p>	
<p>Permission: Before any other actions do you, have permission for this visit from the senior leadership? Have you informed your EVC?</p>	
<p>Justification: Are you clear on the visits aims and objectives for your students?</p>	
<p>Cost: Have you considered all the financial costs including contingency funds?</p>	
<p>Insurance: Are you insured for the activities, country to be visited and does it cover everyone including any pre-existing medical conditions?</p>	
<p>Pre-visit/informed planning: Have you undertaken a preliminary visit or are already familiar with the venue and any provider or have sufficient information from other sources?</p>	
<p>Provider: have you made sufficient checks that they are suitable and evidenced that you have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge (LOTC) • Adventurous Activity Licence Scheme (AALS) • DCC Provider Form completed 	
<p>Provider/school staff responsibilities: If the visit involves an external provider, is there clarity about the respective roles of provider staff and school staff?</p>	
<p>Informed consent: Have you sent out information on all aspects of the visits and any potential risks so that parents/carers and students can give informed consent</p>	
<p>Consent can be written consent form, electronic consent, email, text if linked to a student database system.</p>	
<p>Consent: does it state, “I have read the visit information”</p>	
<p>Staffing: Have you nominated an assistant who is competent to lead the visit if you can’t?</p>	
<p>Sufficiently competent: Do you have sufficient competent staff to supervise the students and deal with incidents and emergencies?</p>	
<p>Informing staff: Have staff and helpers received all relevant information about the visit and the group and are clear about any risks and their role in managing them?</p>	
<p>DBS: Do staff and helpers have a current DBS if required? e.g. for residential</p>	
<p>Staffing needs: Do staff have any additional needs that require consideration and or risk assessing? e.g. a pregnant member of staff</p>	
<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there students with additional needs? • Are there any accessibility issues? • Will any students struggle physically or mentally? • Medical and medication issues • Dietary issues • Allergy information • Are contact details up to date? • Have students been well informed about what is expected of them, and – if it is appropriate – have agreed to a code of conduct? 	

<p>Safeguarding: Have known safeguarding issues been addressed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual vulnerable students? • Supervision in public? • Residential safeguarding issues? • Where remote supervision will be used, is the environment suitable? 	
<p>Risk assessing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General supervision: The All Visits Risk Assessment has been reviewed and additional control measures added if required. • Activities: The hazards and risks involved in specific activities have been considered and appropriate risk assessments completed . • If it's a residential, any accommodation is safe and suitable, and a risk assessment has been completed. • All 'free time' opportunities for students are considered and direct or indirect supervision is in place. • All modes of travel have been risk assessed. • Environmental factors (e.g. weather, daylight hours, water levels, tides, natural and man-made hazards) have been considered. • Any risk of terrorism has been considered if appropriate to the venue/location. 	
<p>Emergency Procedures:</p>	
<p>There are alternative options (a 'Plan B') if necessary</p>	
<p>There is suitable first aid cover for the visit</p>	
<p>An emergency plan has been considered</p>	
<p>Staff carry emergency action cards</p>	
<p>Students have emergency contact cards if required (in the country's language if overseas)</p>	
<p>A base emergency contact is in place</p>	
<p>Overseas: The Foreign Office country information site has been reviewed for the destination country. Entry requirements and political situation can be fluid, current information from government source is essential.</p>	

1. **Day visits within or mainly within school hours**

When organising school trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents/carers to contribute to the cost of the visit. All contributions are voluntary. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel a visit. If a visit goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat those children any differently from any others.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip, visit or activity or event but is unwilling or unable to make a contribution, we do allow the child to take part in the trip, visit or activity. Sometimes, school pays additional costs in order to support the visit. Parents have the right to know how each trip, visit or activity is funded and school will provide this information on request. Children in receipt of Free School Meals or Universal Free School Meals will be offered a free school packed lunch.

2. **Residential visits in school time**

If the school organises a residential visit in school time (or mainly school time), which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum we do not make a charge. However, we do make a charge to cover accommodation, food and travel expenses. To ensure all children are provided with the opportunity to participate on school visits, parents/carers experiencing financial difficulty are invited to talk to/write to the Headteacher in confidence.

3. **Activities outside or mainly outside school hours**

Parents will be expected to meet the full cost. Participation in these activities will be voluntary when the activity is not part of the national curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination or not part of religious education. Prices for individual activities will be provided to gauge interest. Activities will not run where full costs cannot be recovered.

4. **Ingredients/materials for practical activities such as cookery and craft**

To help school finances, parents may be asked to pay the cost of materials where the finished product is to be kept by the pupil. Costs for these will be calculated based on the cost of the material. No profit will be made. No child will be disadvantaged because of parents’ inability or unwillingness to pay, and, therefore, all children will be able to participate in these activities.

5. **Lost school equipment, books, etc.**

Parents will be expected to replace or purchase lost items of school property including IT equipment and books. The cost of these items will be the replacement cost to purchase the same or similar items at the time the loss occurs.

6. **Breakages and damage to school buildings, furniture or property**

In cases of wilful damage to the school building, furniture or its equipment, the Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Board may decide to make a charge. The cost of repairs will be as quoted on an individual basis. Where items cannot be repaired a charge will be made to replace the item based on the current cost to buy new at the time the damage was incurred. Each incident will be dealt with on its own merit and at their discretion.

7. **Extended Services**

Parents/carers who choose to use the school’s extended hours provision will be informed in advance of the charges applicable which will be reviewed on an annual basis. The charges for Breakfast Club for the current year are:

	Pupil Premium pupils	All other pupils
Per session from 7.45am	3.00	3.50
Per session from 8am	2.50	3.00

Nursery: 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 and £1 for every 15 minutes thereafter.

8. **Music Tuition**

Charges may be made for vocal instruments tuition provided either individually or to groups, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil’s parent/carer.

9. **Swimming Lessons**

The school does not make a charge for swimming lessons as these take place in school time and form part of the National Curriculum. We will inform parents/carers when these lessons take place and ask for written permission for the child to take part in lessons.

10. **Other Charges**

The Headteacher or the Governing Board may levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services, e.g. photocopying.

11. **Equality**

The school is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents, carers and visitors irrespective of their race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or pregnancy and maternity.