St Osburg’s Catholic Primary School

Educational Visits Policy

January 2017

Review by January 2019

Signed _________________________________ Chair of Governors.
**Context**

We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every child 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 St Osburg’s a supportive and effective learning environment. The benefits of children taking part in visits and learning outside the classroom include (but are not limited to):

- Improvements in their ability to cope with change and novelty
- 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. Students 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 giving them the tools and experience necessary to assess their own risks in a range of contexts.
- 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, whether as part of the curriculum, during school time or outside the normal school day, is covered by this policy.

St Osburg’s Catholic Primary School adopts Coventry City Council’s Policy and Guidance for Educational Visits (currently dated 2007 and available via the EVOLVE homepage or the Learning Gateway. EVOLVE is the web based notification, approval, monitoring and communication system, used by Coventry City Council, to which all staff have access.).

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with Coventry City Council’s policy. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the policy.

The rest of this policy explains how visit approval and planning takes place at St Osburg’s.
Types of visit

There are four types of visit, for each of which the approval process is slightly different:
1. Staff using the local area to deliver lessons
2. Other visits within the UK excluding adventurous activities
3. Any visit involving adventure activities
4. Any visit involving travel abroad

Roles and responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of visits but should involve both accompanying colleagues and the children in this process. Staff must make appropriate checks of any third party providers. Staff are advised to obtain outline permission for a visit, from the head teacher, before beginning to plan and certainly before making any commitments.

Suzanne Hughes is the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) who will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom. They are the first point of call for advice on visit related matters. The EVC will check final visit plans on EVOLVE before submitting them.

The Head teacher has delegated responsibility from the Governing Body for final approval of visits.

The Governors of the school have ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of all pupils and staff on any educational visits. Through full governor meetings or committee meetings educational visits may be discussed and risk assessments viewed if requested. In this way governors may fulfil their role of monitoring, supporting and challenging all school business.

Staff Competence

We realise that staff competence is the single most important aspect of safe trip management and so we support staff in developing this competence in the following ways:

- An apprenticeship system where staff new to visits assist and work alongside experienced trip leaders before taking on a leadership role
- Supervision by Senior staff of some educational visits
- Support for staff to attend training courses relevant to the role of visit leader

In deciding whether any member of staff is competent to be a visit leader the head teacher will take into account the following factors:

- Level of relevant experience
- Any relevant training undertaken
- The emotional and leadership ability of any prospective visit leader to make dynamic risk management judgements and take charge of any emergencies that may arise.
- Knowledge of the children, the venue and the activities to be undertaken
Visit Planning and approval

It is strongly recommended that at a very early stage of the planning process, the staff team identify the benefits and learning outcomes that the activity (or range of activities) might achieve. A record of these outcomes will help keep the plan focused and also be a vital part of the risk management process in providing some objectivity in a “Risk Benefit Analysis”.

To reduce bureaucracy and encourage activity, establishments need to take account of the legalities regarding a requirement for formal consent. 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 interests of good relations between the establishment and the home, it is good practice to ensure that those in a position of parental responsibility are fully informed.

This supports the move towards developing a generic operating procedure, at establishment level, for regular or routine activities. Such a procedure should make it clear how these local visits will be managed.

The degree of complexity of a particular plan will need to reflect the nature and complexity of the several variables that can impact on any given activity. These variables can be remembered as “SAGED”:

- **S**taffing requirements – trained? experienced? competent? ratios?
- **A**ctivity characteristics – specialist? Overnight / accommodation issues? ‘down’ time? near water?
- **G**roup characteristics – prior experience? ability? behaviour? special and medical needs?
- **E**nvironmental conditions – like last time? impact of weather? water levels? Other people?
- **D**istance from support mechanisms in place at the home base – transport? residential?

Refer to OEAP NG documents: *The Radar* and *Planning Basics*

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

1. Local area visits will follow the extending learning territory policy (appendix 1) must be recorded on EVOLVE at least 5 days prior to visit.
2. Visits within the UK excluding adventure activities – these are put on EVOLVE and approved internally by the Deputy Head Teacher. Visits should be submitted to the EVC via EVOLVE at least 7 days in advance.
3. Visits involving adventure activities must be put on EVOLVE and submitted to the EVC at least 35 days in advance. The school is required to submit these for Local Authority Approval 28 days in advance. Visit leaders must check if an activity provider holds either an AALA licence (http://www.aals.org.uk/aals/provider_search.php) or an LOTC quality badge (http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/search). If they don’t then they must complete an EDVIS 11 form (blank forms available to download via EVOLVE).
4. Visits Abroad require detailed planning to commence well in advance and the head must be kept up to date with progress. Checks must be made on any third party providers and permission from the
head teacher to use them be obtained before any deposits are paid. Third party providers who hold the LOTC quality badge (see above) do not require further checks. Those who do not hold this accreditation should complete and return an EDVIS 11 form which visit leaders should scrutinise. Governors would need to approve such a visit. The head will need to submit final plans to the Local Authority 28 days before the departure date.

**Checking Providers and Venues**

All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that 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. Establishment policy should clarify the circumstances where a preliminary visit is a requirement.

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.

**The Visit Leaders job list**

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.
- 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**
The school obtains blanket consent, for all local, non-residential visits, at the start of each year. For any visits not covered by the extended learning territory, but still within boundaries, information should be sent home giving the parents notice/information of the visit, but further consent is not required. For residential visits, visits extending beyond the school day or visits out of the West Midlands area specific consent should be requested using a school letter.

**Transport**
*Children may go on an educational visit using the following modes of transport:*
- **On foot** (with appropriate staff ratios and safety procedures for crossing roads etc.)
- **Coach** – using a reputable company with fitted seat belts
- **Use of staff cars to transport pupils** - Staff cars may only be used to transport pupils when the driver has business insurance and a driving licence with no more than 3 endorsements (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.

**Staffing Ratios**
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 compete

*Note: for KS2 local visits to the Partnership Centres, or similar, 1:15 ratio is appropriate.

**Early Years Foundation Stage**
• Establishments with EYFS provision must ensure that the requirements of the Statutory Framework are met. Of particular note here are the requirements for a qualified paediatric first aider to accompany any visit and the requirements for staffing qualifications.
**Inclusion**

At St Osburg's Catholic Primary School every effort is 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 is made* to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

Staff should take all *reasonably practicable* measures to include all young people. The principles of inclusion are promoted and addressed for all visits and reflected in our policy, thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

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

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.

Refer to OEAP NG document: *Inclusion*
Appendix 1 St Osburg’s Extended Learning Territory

Boundaries

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

- St Osburg’s Church

We use this area on a daily basis 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.

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 Leader of Learning must give verbal approval before a group leaves.
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved.
- 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 are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- All work in the extended territory is done in ‘buddy’ pairs as a minimum.
- 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) or have access to a mobile to collect information from school if necessary.
- 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.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (eg gloves, goggles, waterproofs etc)