



Context

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 St John Evangelist School a supportive and effective learning environment. There are many 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, 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. ie. 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.

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, St John Evangelist;

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: '**Guidance for Educational Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE**' (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 off-site activities.

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

Types of visit

There are three types of visit:

1. Routine local visits in the 'Extended learning locality' (See Appendix 1).
2. Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity.
3. Visit that are overseas, and/or residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

Roles and responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE (where required). 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.

The School Secretary will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) activities. They are 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.

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 Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'. Governors are kept up to date on visits, their purpose and range through Committee meetings and the Head's Report to Governors on a termly basis. 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.

Staff Competence

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.

Approval

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

1. Local visits are authorised by parents in writing at the start of each academic year.
2. Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. These are entered on EVOLVE, and must be submitted to the School secretary for checking at least 7 days in advance, and then forwarded to the Head for approval. Visits that are overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity (see LA guidance for definition of 'adventurous') are then submitted by the Head to the LA for approval.

Emergency procedures

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

The school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a critical incident during a visit (see Appendix 2). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is tested at least bi-annually and following any major staffing changes.

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

Educational Visits Checklist

St John Evangelist School's Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities. This has been adapted from the LA's generic checklist. A visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is 'YES'. St John Evangelist School's Educational Visits Checklist may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources.

Parental Consent

The school obtains blanket consent at the start of each year for activities that fall within the 'Extended learning locality' (see Appendix 1). Parents use a traditional paper consent form.

Specific, (ie. one-off), parental consent must be obtained for all other visits. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents (via EVOLVE, letters, meetings, etc), so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. As above, parents through a traditional paper consent form.

Inclusion

Arrangements are made to ensure that all children can take part in off-site activities, however the Headteacher reserves the right to exclude any pupil from participating in a trip or expedition, particularly in cases where a child may put the safety of themselves and others in jeopardy on the school site and/or is unable to follow adult instruction.

Charging / funding for visits

Contributions are requested for each school trip however no child is excluded from off-site activities for non-payment.

Transport

Where a travel company, an activity centre or similar agency is engaged by the school, the distinction between the responsibility of the teacher and the staff of the Travel Company or agency needs to be clearly defined in writing.

Hired transport must be of a suitable quality and be fitted with seatbelts. Drivers of school minibuses must be authorised to drive the vehicle.

When trips involve public transport clear procedures must be given to adults and children prior to the visits of what to do in case of emergencies or if children/adults become separated from the main group.

Use of staff cars to transport pupils

Staff are not permitted to use their cars to transport any children in the school.

Insurance

The school uses the LAS's insurance procedures for all trips.

Appendix 1 – Emergency Procedure

The school's emergency response to an incident is based on the following key factors:

1. There is always a nominated emergency base contact for any visit (during school hours this is the office).
2. This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the senior management team, or will be able to contact an experienced senior manager at all times.
3. For activities that take place during normal school hours, the visit leadership team will be aware of any relevant medical information for all participants, including staff.
4. For activities that take place outside normal school hours, the visit leadership team and the emergency contact/s will be aware of any relevant medical information and emergency contact information for all participants, including staff.
5. The visit leader/s and the base contact/s know to request support from the local authority in the event that an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention.
6. For visits that take place outside the 'extended learning locality', the visit leader will carry either:
 - a) An LA Emergency 'Card' (see EVOLVE Resources), or
 - b) An OEAP National Guidance Emergency action card (*Available via www.oeap.info*)
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.

Appendix 2 – Keeping Children Safe

Visit planning and risk assessment

1. Generic – Policies and procedures that apply across a range of visits. This is guidance or practice that remains constant regardless of the nature of the visit. It covers the management of risks identified as relevant to all visits involving similar activities.
2. Visit-specific – Carried out before the visit takes place. This is the identification and management of any risks not already covered through generic risk management. It is unique to each occasion and should address staffing, activity, group and environment.
3. Dynamic/on-going – Carried out continuously throughout the visit. This refers to the on-going monitoring of all aspects of the visit/activity by the visit leadership team. The group and the level of risk must be monitored and assessed throughout and, if circumstances dictate, activities should be curtailed or amended (e.g. change to plan B).

The following considerations may help ensure trips away from school are as safe as possible, and that communication with the school is clear should there be an emergency. Keep this information confidential for adults participating in the trip only, issue to volunteers on the day. Do not share with parents who, if concerned, may start making independent phone calls.

- Make sure there is a good adult: pupil ratio.
- There must be trained first aiders, a first aid kit must be carried.
- Medication for specific children must be taken with clear pupil information.
- Have high vis vests for all adults and children
- Consider school mobile phones with minimum price SIM or pay as you go.
- All adults on the trip to have a mobile phone, they can use their own phones if there are no school mobiles; a list of all numbers issued to adults on the trip, on the day, and confidentially disposed of at the end of the day.
- Data protection must be adhered to.
- Make sure you have landline as well as mobile phone number contacts for parents, as far as possible.
- Have a clear telephone tree for use in an emergency.
- Make sure the staff in school know what actions to take should there be an emergency.
- The information they need and actions they should take should be written down. In an emergency a staff member may be easily distracted.
- Have alternative transport routes planned. Even if you are on a coach know at least 2 routes to and from your venue - don't assume the driver will have this

planned, the driver may rely on satnav; if there are problems be ready to offer advice.

- Have more than one tube/train route planned. Know which bus numbers you could take if there was a problem.

Have transport plans printed, or saved on a device, accessible even if Internet/phone signals go down.

- Alternative transport suggestions are likely to mean delays, but would enable safe alternative travel.
- Have a refuge place identified near to your destination, maybe a hotel. If there were transport shut down, if mobile phone networks went down, your staff would take the children there. It would be very unlikely that a hotel would turn away a group of children if there was a serious problem. You don't need to inform the hotel they are your place of refuge, you just make sure all adults on the trip know, and know how to get there.
- The school would be able to ring the hotel, they'd have a landline. Safe communication could be established.

Useful advice and resources:

- DfE - Health and safety: advice on legal duties and powers for local authorities, school leaders, school staff and governing bodies

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335111/DfE_Health_and_Safety_Advice_06_02_14.pdf

School employers should always take a common sense and proportionate approach, remembering that in schools risk assessment and risk management are tools to enable children to undertake activities safely, and not prevent activities from taking place.

- Health and Safety Executive

School trips and outdoor learning activities Tackling the health and safety myths
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf>

HSE fully recognises that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life – it provides deeper subject learning and increases self-confidence. It also helps pupils develop their risk awareness and prepares them for their future working lives. Striking the right balance between protecting pupils from risk and allowing them to learn from school trips has been a challenge for many schools, but getting this balance right is essential for realising all these benefits in practice.

- Government guidance - Recognising the terrorist threat Stay safe: terrorist attacks

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recognising-the-terroristthreat/recognising-the-terrorist-threat#stay-safe--terrorist-firearms-andweapons-attacks>

- National guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom <http://oeapng.info/visit-leader/>

Includes useful templates, including Visit Leader Emergency Card and specific guidance for the Visit Leader.