

St. Paul's CE Primary School

Educational Visits Policy



Approved by the Governing Body: Spring 2024

Review Date: Spring 2026

Jesus offers life in all its fullness, and so we inspire our children to flourish and grow in school, the community and the wider world.

Our school is a safe and caring environment, with Christian values at its heart. Our school respects, and welcomes, all faiths, cultures and communities.

We ensure every child is valued, encouraging them to discover their gifts and potential.

Unique and precious in God's eyes, be the best that you can be.

Jesus said, "I have come in order that you may have life - life in all its fullness." John 10:10

St. Paul's CE Primary School has put this policy in place, which is based upon the national guidance published by the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) on the website <https://oeapng.info/>.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all external visits involving children. It applies regardless of whether the activities take place within or outside of normal school hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

DEFINITION:

External visits are defined as events that involve children being away from their normal school or residential home premises, while in the care of the school or other service. This includes educational visits, outings, school trips and off-site activities such as: local visits to parks, museums, libraries and sports facilities; cultural, educational and recreational trips; outdoor activities; residential; field trips.

Benefits

All children should be given the opportunity of benefiting from participation in a wide range of visits and activities, including learning outside the classroom, local activities, day visits, residential, field studies and outdoor adventure activities. Whether their emphasis is adventurous, academic, sporting, cultural, spiritual or creative, off-site visits and outdoor learning provide first hand experiences that inspire and enhance learning and development in ways which are powerful and lasting. They provide a foundation for life-long learning and healthy lifestyles, as well as complementing classroom learning and enriching the curriculum.

Assessment of Risk

As an employer, we have a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed - requiring them to be reduced to an "acceptable" or "tolerable" level. Risk is a natural part of everyday life: all activities involve risk, and it is impossible to entirely eliminate it. Indeed, the human spirit thrives on adventure and journeys into new territory, both physical and metaphorical. It is important that children and young people learn to understand and manage risk and uncertainty for themselves. If we attempt to be too careful, they not only miss huge opportunities for growth but also emerge into society unable to cope with the uncertainties and challenges of adult life. Well-managed external visits, including outdoor and adventurous activities, play a vital part in helping children and young people learn about the real world, and to understand and manage risks for themselves.

Schools are therefore encouraged to provide such opportunities for children and young people. Good planning and management of activities should be about reducing risks to an acceptable level, taking into account the potential benefits. The starting point for such a risk-benefit 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.

Employees who follow this Code of Practice, work within the limits of their own competence, and use their common sense and professional judgement, will be fully supported by the school.

Although some paperwork is required in order to record and communicate the decisions made, risk management should be largely a common-sense process centred upon competent staff. It should focus on significant risks, not trivial ones, and it should not become a restrictive and onerous bureaucratic exercise.

Risk assessment is a legal requirement and assessing risks associated with external visits is no different. It is simply a systematic examination of what might harm people, and should be based on common sense. Although an assessment is always required, a written risk assessment is only required when significant risks have been identified, and the school/LA form is to be used. The reasons for recording significant risks include:

- Deciding whether to proceed, modify or cancel a proposed visit or activity
- Deciding what precautions need to be taken to prevent unnecessary harm
- Making the planning process systematic and thorough
- Informing all those involved about the risks and precautions
- Providing evidence for those responsible for approving a visit
- Demonstrating that good practice has been observed in the case of an incident.

It is also necessary to include an assessment of risk to staff members during visits that may not be identified during the assessment of risk to the children taking part.

Procedure for submitting a RA form:

- identify significant risks
- identify sufficient controls

- adapt procedures to ensure pupils and staff with medical needs and/or SEN are appropriately met
- complete the form in the agreed time scale
- send risk assessment to EVC/Headteacher for approval
- the EVC will approve Category 1 visits
- Visits higher than Category 1 will always be forwarded to the Headteacher, if they aren't the EVC, for approval
- if the risk assessment is appropriate, then the RA form will be approved. If not- then the form will be returned for amendment.

Inclusion & Equality

External visits should be available to all pupils regardless of background or abilities. All visits and activities must ensure that their provision meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Review & Evaluation

All visits should be reviewed after the event, with particular regard to any accidents, incidents or other significant occurrences during the visit, followed by any necessary review of procedures and/or risk assessments.

Consent

As identified in National guidance, 'Schools are not required to obtain consent from parents for pupils to participate in off-site activities that take place during school hours and which are a normal part of a child's education, such as local studies and visits to the library etc.' (Education Act 2002 section 29). However, where activities are deemed as higher risk or take place outside of the normal school day, additional consent will be sought from parents/carers. We ask for consent for local trips at the beginning of each school year.

Charging

School will ask for a voluntary contribution to the costs of educational visits whenever necessary. However, costs may be amended at the discretion of the school - visit expenses may be subsidised by school fund.

External/Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The school has an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) in post. The role of the EVC is described in the OEAP National Guidance. EVCs will undertake an EVC training course and a refresher / revalidation course every three years, both of which are provided by the Local Authority to fully comply. The course includes training on visit planning, risk assessment, leader competence and required procedures.

Local Authority Health and Safety Team

The LA Health and Safety Team, which can be contacted at
HRSafety&HealthTeam@stockport.gov.uk

- provides advice and guidance to EVCs about planning visits, and clarification when required regarding this Code of Practice or the OEAP National Guidance. Requests for advice will receive

a response within one week of the request being received (except over the Christmas / New Year holiday period).

- provides information on the advisory service pages of the documents and support on SLA Online
- monitors and approves visits using the Health and Safety Team email address
- provides training for EVCs, Visit Leaders and Group Leaders.

Notification and approval of visits

The H&S Team online system is used for notification, approval and monitoring of visits in Category 2 and 3. EVCs and/or Headteachers are able to use their guidance and documentation to plan, authorise and monitor visits within their establishments, and visits requiring Local Authority approval are automatically brought to the attention of the Council.

For the purposes of notification and approval, external visits are classified into three categories. These are based on the model described in the OEAP National Guidance.

At St. Paul's CE primary School, there is a requirement for Category 2 and 3 visits to be authorised by the Headteacher at least four months prior to the visit, which provides time for any issues arising to be dealt with, and to allow for LA approval to be given.

All other visits must be approved by the EVC at least one month prior to the visit. The EVC is responsible for ensuring that all the necessary paperwork is completed and available to all those who need sight of it.

Adventure activities are defined as including:

- Abseiling
- Air activities (excluding commercial flights)
- Camping (except 'official' campsites)
- Caving, potholing, mine exploration
- Climbing (including indoor climbing walls)
- Coaststeering, coastal scrambling, sea-level traversing
- Fishing in hazardous environments (e.g. sea, fast rivers, on deep water)
- High level ropes activities
- Horse riding & equestrian sports
- Mountain Biking
- River/gorge/ghyll walking or scrambling, canyoning
- Shooting, Archery, Paintballing
- Skiing (including Indoor or Dry Slope)
- Snowboarding (including Indoor or Dry Slope)
- Swimming (all forms, excluding UK public pools with lifeguards)
- Trampolining
- Walking (hills, mountains, open country)
- Watersports - Canoeing/Kayaking
- Watersports - Rafting or improvised rafting
- Watersports - Rowing
- Watersports - Sailing / windsurfing / kite surfing
- Watersports - Surfing

Remote or hazardous locations include:

- areas more than 30 minutes walk from a road or refuge
- coastal areas with significant tidal hazards
- hazardous quarries
- steep terrain

These lists are not exhaustive: if in doubt advice should be obtained from the Headteacher, EVC and/or the LA H&S Team.

Leader Competence and Approval

A visit leader is the person responsible for planning and leading a visit and will be a senior member of staff, which may involve other members of staff and volunteers, including group leaders.

A group leader is responsible for the supervision of a group of children or young people during a visit.

The Headteacher must ensure that visit leaders and group leaders are competent to carry out their responsibilities.

The Local Authority provides visit leader and group leader training courses and can advise about competence requirements.

The OEAP National Guidance includes documents on "Assessment of Competence" and "Good Practice Basics". Visit Leaders, Group Leaders and other staff who require guidance or support should contact the Headteacher/EVC.

Staff who wish to lead adventure trips and activities, must have the authority of the Headteacher, being the person with authority to approve visits. Approval will be based upon evidence of competence, which may include evidence of relevant qualifications, training and experience.

Accident/Incident Procedure

In the case of an incident or illness:

- Medical conditions checked by staff
- First aid must be sort from a qualified first aider on visit
- All medication recorded (time, type and amount)
- Visit leader informed
- Decision made by visit leader - is further medical advice needed?
- Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher in absence of Headteacher) informed
- Visit leader to stay with injured pupil/adult at all times (including hospital visits) and act in Loco Parentis
- Supervision of unharmed pupils to be given to the next Senior member of staff on the visit or another member of staff from the school
- Parents informed of incident by the Headteacher
- Appropriate documentation completed

Emergency Planning and Critical Incidents

A critical incident is an incident where any participant in a visit:

- has suffered a life-threatening injury or fatality
- is at serious risk
- has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period

Services and establishments should follow their code of practice on responding to crises and critical incidents. The OEAP National Guidance also includes information on planning for and managing critical incidents on visits. The School's CIP, a model policy produced by the LA, provides resources on planning to deal with a school emergency, and emergency contact numbers. This document is always taken on residential visits.

Accident/incident Reporting

Serious incidents must be notified immediately to the Headteacher who will inform the Governing Board and LA. If additional support is required from the Council, the Control Room can be contacted on 0161 474 5555, which is available 24 hours a day, and includes emergency Health & Safety cover. The school number and Headteacher's mobile number should be carried by leaders at all times during visits.

After any significant incident, schools must undertake an investigation of the incident, and review their risk assessments and emergency procedures, and should share the findings with the Governing Board and the LA H&S Team, for the benefit of other schools and services. It is also good practice to record and learn from 'near misses'. These will be recorded using the agreed proforma, and kept with the relevant paperwork for that visit. The form will consider how best to share the learning outcomes of such incidents, and key learning from the review. Any "near misses" should also be reported to the Corporate Health & Safety Team using the council's IR1 form, who will investigate where appropriate to enable preventative strategies to be developed.

Supervision

OEAP National Guidance includes documents on "Ratios and Effective Supervision" and "Group Management and Supervision". The school does not prescribe minimum staff to child ratios for visits (except where the law requires minimum ratios for Early Years). However, we base our ratios on the guidance provided by the LA. Ratios and other arrangements for the effective supervision of children and young people should be determined as part of the risk assessment process by proper consideration of factors including:

- age (including the developmental age) of the group
- gender issues
- ability of the group (including special 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 competence.

Staff induction/training

- All staff will receive appropriate induction training
- Staff to sign to say they have read, understood and agreed to follow the school policy
- Experienced staff to lead on educational visits (visit leader to be approved by the Headteacher)
- Where appropriate, staff to visit the venue with visit leader to identify risks before the visit.
- EVC to share developments in Risk Assessments and Educational Visits after updates and training

Volunteers

- A DBS is required for regular volunteers
- All volunteers will receive induction (particularly on confidentiality and protocols on appropriate behaviour)
- Volunteers must not act as visit leaders
- Volunteers must not be left unsupervised with pupils if they do not have an appropriate DBS

Behaviour of pupils and staff

Staff and pupils must agree to follow the School Behaviour Policy, staff Code of Conduct, all policy related to online and social media use and Part 2 of Teaching Standards, whilst on educational visits. This includes dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

Monitoring

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the monitoring of visits organised by the school. The EVC is often best placed to carry out routine monitoring. The OEAP National Guidance includes a document on monitoring.

Overall compliance with this Code of Practice is monitored by the Local Authority.

Monitoring may take place by:

- a review of visits using the paperwork submitted, including approval of Category 3 visits.
- a review with the Head Teacher / EVC / Visit Leader of specific issues and relevant procedures and documentation, including policies, risk assessments and plans for specific visits
- direct observation of a visit in progress

The monitoring process is intended to be positive, supportive and developmental, and feedback and recommendations will be given. Areas of significant risk will be referred to the Headteacher, and high-risk issues which cannot be resolved at the school level will be referred to the Governing Board and the LA H&S Team.

Assessing Venues and Providers

The OEAP National Guidance includes guidance on Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances. The Learning outside the Classroom Quality Badge provides sufficient reassurance that a provider meets nationally required minimum standards of safety and quality. Details of a provider's status can be checked on the Quality Badge website www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk.

If a provider of activities does not hold the Quality Badge, then detailed checks should be made to ensure that it meets required standards. The most straightforward way of doing this is to use a Provider Statement Form.

Insurance

The OEAP National Guidance includes guidance about insurance for visits.

The Council provides an opportunity for schools to arrange and purchase annual insurance cover, which covers visits and journeys. We buy this annually through the buybacks.

Category	Definition	Requirement for notification and approval
Category 1	<p>Straightforward routine visits defined as Category 1 in a written policy by the school, covered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A generic risk assessment, regularly reviewed ▪ Blanket informed parent/carer consent ▪ School operating procedures 	Generic risk assessment is in place, and parents will be notified of the visit.
Category 2	<p>Visits requiring enhanced planning with event-specific risk assessments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All residential visits not in Category 3 ▪ Non-residential visits not in Categories 1 and 3 	<p>Must be authorised by the Headteacher.</p> <p>Notification of the visit must be sent to the H&S Team at the Local Authority at least 1 month prior to the visit.</p>
Category 3	<p>Higher risk visits, defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visits outside the UK ▪ Visits which include adventure activities ▪ Visits to remote or hazardous locations 	<p>Must be authorised by the Headteacher at least 4 months before the visit, and LA approval must be sought at least 1 month before the visit.</p>