



THE ACADEMY OF  
**ST FRANCIS  
OF ASSISI**

# Educational Visits Policy

Review Period:	Biannually
Date Policy Last Reviewed:	October 2021
Person Responsible for Policy:	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Governing Committee:	SGB
Date of Governing Committee Approval:	October 2021
Date for Review:	October 2023

# I. Introduction

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 us a supportive and effective learning environment. The benefits to pupils of taking part in visits and learning outside the classroom include, but are not limited to:

- Enhanced opportunities for 'real world' 'learning in context' and the development of the social and emotional aspects of intelligence.
- Increased cultural curiosity and resilience.
- 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.
- Increased risk management skills through opportunities for involvement in practical risk-benefit decisions in a range of contexts i.e. 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.
- Physical skill acquisition and the development of a fit and healthy lifestyle.

This policy will help us conduct educational visits in a safe and well-structured manner, giving our pupils and staff the best experience possible.

## 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, we:

1. Adopt the Local Authority's (LA) document: (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE)
2. Adopts National Guidance [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info), (as recommended by the LA)
3. Uses EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for all 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.

## 2. Clarification of roles

**Visit leaders** are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE. They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Headteacher 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. Our expectations are that visit leaders are both competent and confident in leading a visit as described in 3.4k visit or activity leader in National Guidance.

**The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)** is Colette Singleton, who will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) activities. The EVC is 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 EVC's role is described in detail in 3.4j EVC role in National Guidance.

**The Headteacher** has delegated the responsibility for authorising all visits to the EVC and for submitting all overseas, residential or adventurous activity visits to the LA for approval, via EVOLVE. The EVC is responsible for ensuring the planning and risk management for this visit has been checked and approved according to the current Educational Visits policy. That the visit complies with the LA's current planning checklist for off-site activities. The visit leader and staff are competent to supervise the visit. The Risk management is fit for purpose. The EVC ensures that the Headteacher is aware of all off site visits.

**The Governing Body's** role is that of a 'critical friend', see National Guidance 3.4f for additional information. 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.

### **3. Procedural requirements**

As set out in the Local Authority Educational Visits Policy, visits can be categorised into three categories, these are:

#### **Category A**

These are activities that present no significant risks. They should be supervised by a teacher who has been assessed as competent by the LA or Educational Visit Co-ordinator, where appropriate, to lead the activity. Examples include walking in parks, field studies in environments presenting no technical hazards or low risk sports competitions.

#### **Category B**

These comprise some higher-risk or higher-profile activities. LA approval is required for this category of activity. Safe supervision requires that the Group Leader should as a minimum, have undergone familiarisation specific to the activity and / or the location. The Group Leader will have to be approved as suitably competent by the LA, and hold any necessary qualification/award. Examples include; walking in non-remote country, camping or cycling on roads.

#### **Category C**

This is the most demanding category. It includes all those activities that if not school-led, would be in the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996. LA approval is required for visits in this category. In the case of sports, where safe supervision requires the leader to complete some prior test of his/her specific competence, such testing might include a recognised course of training, the recorded accumulation of relevant experience or an assessment of competence by an appropriate body.

#### **Parental Consent**

Specific consent is gained for each trip. It is important that all students have given consent to the trip.

It is essential that parents are sent letters with information regarding the visit which must include details, time of visit and return, location, any specific requirements and to remind parents to ensure medical information is up to date (this list is not exhaustive).

Category B and C visits must have specific consent and up to date medical information from parents for children to participate.

## **Approval**

For Category A visits the group leader should request permission to lead no later than **7 days** before the trip takes place. Information should be inputted onto EVOLVE within this time frame.

Section 7 *Risk management and risk benefit* determines whether a generic risk assessment is sufficient or if a visit specific risk assessment needs to be conducted.

For Category B/C visits, the group leader should request permission no later than **6 weeks** before the trips take place. Information should be inputted onto EVOLVE within this time frame. Visit specific risk assessments must be conducted for these visits.

## **Evaluation**

All trips must be evaluated, no later than 4 weeks after return. This should be done on EVOLVE by the group leader.

## **4. Monitoring**

In order to ensure safe, quality visits, we understand that national Guidance provides advice about monitoring in 3.2b monitoring.

The EVC has the responsibility of monitoring visits to ensure that;

- Visits and activities are carried out safely and effectively and in line with the Local Authority policy and procedures.
- Relevant policies and procedures are reviewed and updated to remain current and in line with good practice.
- Staff have easy access to the school policy
- Staff have access to relevant training that supports the implementation of this policy
- The school appoints, trains and revalidate EVCs in accordance with the LA policy
- The school keep proper records.

The EVC monitoring should also include an element of field observations.

## **5. Induction, training, apprenticeship, succession planning**

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 EVC 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.
- Any member of staff leading a residential or self-led adventurous activity must have attend visit leader training

## 6. Risk management and risk-benefit assessment

### Risk Assessments

We understand that in order to deliver safe visits comprehensive risk assessments need to take place. For a number of visits, generic risk assessments are suitable for safe trips. Generic risk assessments are developed by the EVC and are reviewed every year. They are kept for a minimum of 3 years. These generic risk assessments are stored on EVOLVE under establishment documents and include:

Walking

Hired coach with driver

Park visits

Sports competitions in school hall

Public buildings

Use of public toilets etc

For all category B and C trips, event specific risk assessments must be completed and attached to the EVOLVE form.

### Ratios

Activity and Visit Leaders must ensure that young people are supervised in accordance with the principles of "Effective Supervision", requiring them to take account of:

- The nature of the activity (including its duration).
- The location and environment in which the activity is to take place.
- The age and gender (including developmental age) of the young people to be supervised.
- The ability of the young people (including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs).
- Staff competence.
- Distance

In order to determine the actual number of staff needed we will use the framework described through SAGE

- **S**taffing: who is needed/available? The plan must work within the limits of available numbers, abilities and experience.
- **A**ctivities to be undertaken: what do you want the group to do and what is possible?
- **G**roup characteristics: prior experience, abilities, behaviour and maturity, any specific or medical/dietary needs.

- **Environment:** indoors or out; a public space or restricted access; urban, rural or remote; quiet or crowded; within the establishment grounds, close to the establishment or at a distance; and the ease of communications between the group and base. Do not overlook environments to be passed through between venues. For residential visits consider the accommodation and surrounding area. For outdoor environments, consider remoteness, the impact of weather, water levels and ground conditions.
- **Distance:** how far is the activity away from school or homebase

#### Ratios

- Always a minimum of two staff required (Residential is a minimum of three)
- Local Visits/Visits in the local area close to support at school/base **Years 7-11 1:15** (one supervisor per activity or supervision group)
- Day Visits more than 60 miles or one hour from school/base (minimum of two supervisors required) **Years 7-11 1:15** (one supervisor per activity or supervision group)
- Residential Visit, UK or abroad (minimum of three supervisors required) **Years 7-11 1:10** (one supervisor per activity or supervision group, these do not include any centre residential staff)
- Open Country/Working by water or away from a road or building **Years 7-11 1:15** (one supervisor per activity or supervision group)

## 7. Assessing venues and providers

In line with Local Authority we accept and acknowledge the LOtC quality badge. This ensures that the provider we are using has the correct risk assessments and insurance in place and are suitable to use. In all other cases we will ask providers to fill in a provider form which is available in the resources on EVOLVE.

## 8. Volunteers

In order for us to support our students on school visits we use a range of different volunteers. These volunteers must comply with our school safeguarding policy.

Responsibility will be delegated to them by the visit leader. They must be sufficiently competent and confident to carry out their responsibilities. The level of competence and the thoroughness of the engagement process depend upon the role that the volunteer is to take, and the degree to which they will be working independently or under supervision. Where they are working independently it should be to the same standard as would be expected of an employee or contractor taking on the role.

## 9. Emergency procedures and incident reporting

For all trips taking place outside of school time, two emergency contacts must be inputted on to EVOLVE.

**This should be the Senior Deputy Headteacher and safeguarding lead.**

Visit leaders and deputy leaders should have access to the emergency contact details, EVOLVE form, parents contact details and children's medical/behavioural details. They will also take the school Emergency Action Plan crib card with them in how to deal with an emergency

**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 School Emergency Management Plan). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is tested at least biannually 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 Trust and local authority.

## **10. Behaviour**

As a school we expect all children to behave to the standards described in our code of conduct.

Before any residential, parents are made aware of consequences of breaking the school code of conduct. This may include parents being asked to remove a child in prescribed circumstances. The safety and wellbeing of the child will always be paramount when making decisions about removing a child from the trip.

## **11. Inclusion**

We are a fully inclusive school and believe in the following principles:

- A presumption of entitlement to participate.
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification.
- Integration through participation with peers.

It is our aim that reasonable adjustments should be made to allow any child to attend a school trip. In the case of students who require medicine to be taken on the trip, all of the guidance in the Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy. The trip will take overall responsibility for the storage and administering for medicines, however other trip staff may be asked to fulfill this duty on a larger trip.

We follow the standards set out in National guidance 3.2e Inclusion

## **12. Insurance**

We are covered by the Risk Protection Arrangement for Academies (RPA).

## **13. Finance**

All charging and voluntary contributions requested for the visits are in line with National guidance 3.2c

## **14. Check list before you organise a trip**

### **Trips and visits- procedures**

- For a non-residential trip there is a minimum requirement of 7 days' notice. For a hazardous or residential there is a minimum requirement of 28 days' notice. **This includes Ice skating, theme parks and field trips.**
- Read the trips and visits policy thoroughly if you are not already familiar with it.
- Inform you Subject Leader and DOC of the trip proposal
- Inform EVC of your trip proposal via e mail
- Apply for date of absence through Mark Dos. This includes the additional staff needed for the trip. If there is already significant staff demand the trip may not be allowed to take place.
- Complete the form on Evolve. This will require the following:-
  1. Trip type and purpose (hazardous/residential/non-residential)
  2. Destination
  3. Travel arrangements and contact details
  4. Risk assessments- Form 2 in the resources section of Evolve
  5. First aid provision
  6. Letter to parents including any medical and additional needs
  7. Staff members with correct ratio (see below)
  8. Emergency contacts
  9. All students you are planning to take
  10. Insurance- if it is a residential through a company seek advice through the provider. If it is hazardous check with EVC (LH)
- Once you have submitted the form you must **wait for approval**. The EVC and Headteacher will quality assure the visit. You will receive an e mail to log on and see the status of your trip.
- Once you have received approval you can promote the trip.

### **Hazardous Activities**

**The activities listed below require LA approval.** Please complete Form 1 and Form 2 and send to the Outdoor Education Officer at the Local Authority at least 28 days in advance. (both forms are in resources under guidance on Evolve)

This list is not exhaustive; if in doubt seek advice from the LA Outdoor Education Officer.

- airborne activities
- archery
- **Open country activities and field studies**
- camping
- orienteering



- canal boating
- Paintballing
- canoeing
- rafting
- caving/potholing
- rowing and sculling
- climbing
- sailing and power boating
- expeditioning
- Sea-level traversing and coasteering
- Farm visits
- fishing
- shooting
- Horse riding/pony trekking
- Snow sport activities
- **ice skating**
- sub-aqua/snorkelling
- Kite flying/kite surfing
- Surfing
- Low and high ropes courses
- swimming in open water
- Moorland, fell and mountain

#### Activities

- **theme park visits**
- Motor skills
- Off road cycling/journeying

#### Water skiing