



Queen's Croft High School

# LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM - EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Prepared by: Jackie Hesslegrave, Business Manager  
Checked by: Peter Hawksworth, Headteacher  
Adopted by Governors: November 2018  
Review Date: November 2019

## **Introduction**

An educational trip or visit has enormous potential for enriching the school curriculum. School trips/visits take place every year, the vast majority safely and without incident. It is very important that all trips/visits are properly planned and organised and that all staff involved with school trips/visits take all reasonable steps to ensure that risks are minimised. This policy has been developed to help and support all those involved in the approval, organisation and planning of educational visits and trips in order that young people may contribute to and benefit from well-organised, successful, safe and enjoyable activities.

## **Policy Overview**

This policy should be read in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management Arrangements for Learning outside the Classroom - Educational visits. This document has been adopted by the school.

Other relevant documents include:

- The Charging and Remissions Policy
- The Staff Handbook
- Business Continuity Plan

Staffordshire County Council has formally adopted Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP), National Guidance' (NG) as its guidance for the management of off-site visits and learning outside of the Classroom (LOtC). This guidance can be found on the following web site: <http://oeapeg.info/>

It is a legal expectation that employees must work within the requirements of their employer's guidance; therefore employees must follow the requirements of NG, as well as the requirements of this policy statement, if there is a conflict between the School's policy and the NG the School's policy must be followed and clarification sought from the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) and the Headteacher.

Where the school commissions LOtC activity, they must ensure that such a commissioned agent has either:

1. adopted NG or
2. have systems and procedures in place where the standards are not less than those required by NG

Queen's Croft High School visits are organised using an online system called Evolve. It is a system for the planning, approval and management of educational visits, sports fixtures and extra-curricular activities.

## **Definition**

For the purpose of this policy, a LOtC activity, school trip or visit is defined as any occasion when a student or group of students are away from the classroom, undertaking a school activity and under the supervision of a member of staff. This policy pays attention to the following guidance:

- Pupils should be able to experience a wide range of activities. Health and Safety measures should help them to do this safely, not stop them;
- It is important that pupils learn to understand and manage the risks that are a normal part of life;
- Common sense should be used in assessing and managing the risks of any activity. Health and safety procedures should always be proportionate to the risks of an activity;
- Staff will keep themselves and the pupils safe and manage risks effectively.

The EVC must be notified on all occasions when a school trip is to go ahead. It is not easy to give a definitive list of such trips, but examples include trips to museums, theatres, outdoor establishments, trips to educational conferences, all sports fixtures, residential trips such as our annual skiing experience in Italy, or our year 9 trip to Standon Bowers.

The Headteacher and the EVC must give permission before any trip can take place. Staff wishing to organise a trip must complete an Evolve Form together with a risk assessment and submit it as far in advance as possible.

## **Clarification of roles**

The following people are responsible for the planning, notification approval and leadership of activities and visits:

- The Governing Board's role is to enable and ensure otherwise described as being a critical friend to the school
- The Headteacher, Mr Peter Hawksworth, has responsibility for the formal approval process of LOtC ensuring that the appropriate processes are in place and the EVC is trained and experienced in the role. The Headteacher will approve all Visit and Activity Leaders and ensure that all staff have the appropriate training and induction. The EVC will receive regular update training on a 3 yearly basis.
- The school's Educational Visits Co-ordinator, Mrs Suzanne Hewitt, ensures that all visits meet the employer's and establishment's policies, procedures and requirements. This includes appropriate monitoring evaluation and recording to ensure that the Headteacher and Governing Board can access the data they require.

- The Visit leader is usually a Teacher or Teaching Assistant. The key requirements for Visit/Activity Leaders are that they must be competent to lead and they are confident and accountable for the trip. The Headteacher will approve all Visit and Activity Leaders

## **Approval and Notifications of Activities and Visits**

Staffordshire uses an online system, EVOLVE, for notification and approval. A key feature of this system is that visits and LOtC activities requiring approval are automatically brought to the attention of the Local Authority (LA). Those visits and activities not requiring approval may be viewed, sampled or monitored using the database and diary facilities of the system.

It is a requirement that all 'Staffordshire' schools use the EVOLVE system.

## **Procedures**

### **Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances**

If possible an exploratory visit should be made by a teacher before any trip is undertaken. A key factor in reducing risk is knowledge of the place to be visited. Whilst such visits may not always be practical, staff should make every effort to consider such an undertaking.

A member of staff who is to lead a group abroad, on a residential visit or on an outdoor activity should make a special effort to carry out a preliminary visit. It is important to remember that places such as outdoor pursuits centres, leisure centres, museums, theatres, etc., have to carry out their own risk assessments for the facilities they provide. Whilst it is best practice for the group leader to familiarise himself/herself with their risk assessments and obtain copies, we as a school provide our own.

## **Planning and Preparation**

Staff organising a trip must consult as widely as possible with colleagues who might be affected and think carefully about the possible impact of a trip. For example, as far as possible, trips should not be organised when there are assessments going on or when any exams are to be taken place, staff should take particular notice of this for our year 11 pupils. It is essential that all people concerned with the trip are fully informed and are made aware of the risk assessment attached to the evolve form.

For every trip a letter will be sent to parent/carers informing them of an forthcoming trip, however at the beginning of the year a parental permission slip is given out requesting permission for their child to go out on 'little trips' such as a walk into Lichfield exploring an educational experience and for that we do not send a letter out, however an evolve form at the beginning of an academic year is completed by the EVC and submitted to the head with a risk assessment that will cover all known/likely events.

If a trip involves overnight accommodation, parents will be given full details of the type of accommodation provided and the security arrangements which are in place to ensure the safety of their child. They will be fully informed as to the nature of the trip. Parents must acknowledge that their child is fit enough to go on the trip, outline any health problems and authorise the leader of the party to act on their behalf in an emergency. They must also provide a contact number for the duration of the trip.

For longer trips, particularly those overseas, we hold parents' information evenings. This allows information to be shared, questions to be asked and answered, and reassurance to be given where appropriate.

The trip leader must ensure that he/she is in possession of all parental consent forms and all contact number details throughout the trip. The teaching assistant associated with the trip can help with the production of contact numbers and any medical details before due time. The EVC and Head teacher acts as the school contact for the trip.

It is a requirement that the leader of the trip gives all contact details of pupils and staff to the EVC and a copy to the office before they undertake a residential trip. For clarification, contact details means, pupils/staff name, their next of kin, their relationship to that person, home address and telephone numbers.

There are no exact ratios for school trips. The trip leader must ensure that the staffing for a trip is 'reasonable'. This will depend on the age, gender mix, ability and behaviour of the pupils involved. It will depend on the type of activity undertaken, the nature of the journey and the type of accommodation, if the trip is overnight. Trip leaders must assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular trip.

There are circumstances where parents/carers and volunteers can be used to supervise trips. All adults who supervise school trips will have completed an enhanced DBS check (disclosure and barring service).

## **Monitoring**

The Educational Visits Co-ordinator will ensure that there is a system in place for appropriate monitoring of visits and activities.

## **Induction, Training and Succession Planning**

- The Educational Visits Co-ordinator will attend appropriate training and revalidation, (every 3 years)
- Visits leaders will be approved by the Headteacher and will have attended appropriate training
- Records will be kept of training and induction
- To ensure sustainability of important visits, deputy leaders will be appointed in order that contingency plans can be put in place should a visit leader be indisposed.

## **Risk Management and Risk Benefit Assessment**

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, it is then up to the leader to assess whether they have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

A risk assessment is required for every trip. Some activities, such as high risk activities, i.e. climbing, canoeing and skiing, involve higher levels of risk and will require an EVC1 form completing and attaching to the evolve form. This is an activity provider checklist.

Providers are asked to complete this questionnaire so that Visit Leaders can assess the provision in planning a visit.

The School must ensure that the person assessing the risk understands the risks and is familiar with the activity planned and informs all colleagues accompanying him/her on the trip of those risks. We take a common sense and proportionate approach, remembering that in schools the purpose of risk assessment and management is to help pupils to undertake activities safely, not to prevent activities from taking place. Any trips involving overnight stays require an EVC2 form completing and attaching to the evolve form.

An EVC2 form is a checklist for providers of residential accommodation to Staffordshire County Schools and groups.

It is our duty of care that although providers have their own risk assessments, we as a school provide our own and risk assess our own trips.

Providers are asked to complete this questionnaire. Premises will be considered suitable, provided the Visit Leader, Head teacher and EVC is able to make appropriate arrangements based upon risk assessment.

The risk assessment must be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be harmed and how?
- What are you already doing?
- What are the risk levels?

Staffordshire County Council takes the view that where a provider holds an award from one of the following nationally accredited provider assurance schemes [Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality badge, Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS), Adventure mark, or National Governing Body centre approval where the provision is a single specialist activity, then no further assurances should be sought. There is no need for a provider that holds one of the above accreditations to complete this form.

## **Volunteers**

Any volunteers who accompany a visit or activity will be vetted and be directly supervised by a member of staff. All volunteers are required to undertake an enhanced DBS disclosure and they will undergo induction and training in their role and responsibilities during the activity.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Teachers in charge of pupils have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy before undertaking a trip. Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school visit. If an emergency happens the priorities are to:

- Assess the situation
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group
- Attend the casualty
- Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident

As an employer, 'Staffordshire' is committed to providing emergency planning procedures to support establishments in the event of a critical incident.

The emergency contact phone number for Staffordshire County Council outside office hours is given to the trip leader and the EVC. This is the number for Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service Fire Control. Calls to this number are to be used only in extreme circumstances, such as serious injuries and/or fatalities.

All incidents will be recorded appropriately following the school's reporting procedures.

## **Behaviour**

Appropriate behaviour is essential for the smooth running of educational visits and activities and ensures effective learning can take place. Young people, parents and carers will be made aware of the code of behaviour, expectations of students and sanctions which may be invoked should the code be breached. In addition parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities for removing students in prescribed circumstances.

## **Inclusion**

At school we endorse the following principles;

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

We acknowledge it is unlawful to;

- Treat a disabled student less favourably
- Fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification

## **Insurance**

The school has Public Liability Insurance and Employers Liability Insurance providing indemnities for employees and non-employees. The school also has a School Journey Insurance Policy providing cover for students participating in visits and activities.

## **Finance**

Charges for LOtC activities, including charges for visits and transport, requests for voluntary contributions and remissions of charges are made in line with the guidance and requirements of Staffordshire County Council's School Finance Manual. Further details are available in the Charging and Remissions Policy which is available on the school website.