



Educational Visits Policy

St Thomas CE Academy

Approved by:

Local Academy Board

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God's Love in Action

Our children are at the heart of everything we do through *Christian values and relationships*. *Living and learning together* we celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of everyone in our family. We nurture a sense of *self-belief, mutual respect and belonging* through Social Emotional Learning and academic excellence. We are dedicated to building the foundations for *happy and successful life-long learning*.



Faith



Friendship



Love



Trust

1. Introduction

St Thomas CE Academy aims to provide a variety of high quality and unique experiences outside the classroom to enhance our children's learning in all areas of the curriculum. We will ensure the health and safety of all those involved as well maintaining the educational quality of visits and value for money. We believe that all the visits have a positive impact that promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development that contributes to building a foundation for happy and successful life-long learners.

St Thomas CE Academy adopts recommendations from the National Guidance from the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) website which can be accessed via the link <https://oeapng.info>.

2. Scope and Remit

This policy applies to staff whose work involves in any one of the following:

- 2.1 Direct supervision of children and young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal classroom environment.
- 2.2 Direct supervision of children and young people undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of learning outside the classroom.
- 2.3 Deploying staff who will supervise or facilitate experiences for children and young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal school environment.

This applies regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal school hours, or extended visits including residential.

3. Training Requirements

The school is required to ensure that staff are provided with access to appropriate guidance relating to educational visits, templates and procedures that are currently in place.

Training must be provided to the school EVC (Educational Visits Coordinator) to enable them to provide support and advice to other staff.

It is recommended that the EVC is an experienced visit leader so that they can understand trips and what can go wrong. The EVC should also be able to assess capabilities of staff to lead visits

Visit Leader training for staff who plan, and lead visits is available from the OEAP; this will be particularly beneficial for inexperienced staff.

4. Consent and Notification of Visits

At the beginning of each academic year, parental consent is requested for children to take part in educational trips. This 'blanket consent' allows children to take part on most visits that are during the normal school timetable including those in the designated local learning area. Parents are informed about any visits that are due to take place via newsletters, text messages and/or a letter.

Additional consent must be obtained for:

- Visits that take place outside the normal school day
- Visits that are not part of the normal curriculum
- Visits that involve an adventurous activity

The school will notify parents of all trips and give them an opportunity to withdraw their child.

5. Risk Management

Risk management must be proportionate to the activity and professional judgement should be used to reduce significant hazards to an acceptable level, that is, avoiding serious injury or harm. Risk assessments should be used to identify what is above and beyond what is normally encountered and therefore not covered by regular policies and procedures.

Three types of risk assessment normally recognised in educational visits:

Generic – Risk Assessments which are determined by the school and are normally used unamended (e.g. coach travel). They may only give an impression of what might take place on a visit and may assume all participants have the same needs.

Event Specific – Risk Assessments which are specific to a particular visit, which may relate to the venue, activity, transport, group (incl. Specific medical or other needs). These should cover any significant issues that are not included within generic policies.

Ongoing/dynamic - Unwritten risk assessments undertaken in real time in response to changing situations. These are 'on the spot' judgements by staff to changing situations. Where appropriate activities must be modified or curtailed to suit changed or changing circumstances.

Low risk, everyday activity could be risk managed and planned based on an operating procedure adopted by the school. For example, local visits with competent and experienced staff do not require much planning or risk assessment. These could include regular visits to the local park, library, church or any outdoor curriculum-based work, e.g. local surveys, shop studies. The DfE refer to these as 'Routine Visits': "These involve no more than an everyday level of risk, such as slips and trips and are covered by the school's current policies and procedures. They only need a little extra planning beyond the educational aspect of the trip. They can be considered as "lessons in a different classroom."

Local Learning Area would have its own generic operating procedure to cover all these types of visits.

In summary, RAs should be:

- Simple
- Manageable
- Proportionate
- Suitable and sufficient to inform planning

Good practice guides can be found in the National Guidance section of the OEAP website <https://oeapng.info/downloads/good-practice/>

NG 4.3f Risk Management – some practical advice for leaders

NG 4.3g Risk Management – What to record and how

Department for Education guidance can be found on this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>

6. Planning Procedures

There are two types of approach in planning educational visits based on distance and complexity:

1. Non-complex 'Local Learning Area' activities
2. More complex/further away activities that require careful planning, formal risk management, clear competencies, and documented specific risk assessments.

For the second category, the **STAGED** approach should ensure that they meet the requirements of the school in terms of the policy and the intended learning outcomes of the visit.

Staffing

All activities and visits must have a single designated, competent leader. Competence of the team is a combination of skills, knowledge, awareness, judgement, training and experience. *NG 3.4k Visit or Activity Leader*

Transport

Consideration should be given to the mode of transport to be used, e.g. coach, minibus, private car, pupils making their own way and the suitability of any transport provider used. *NG 4.5a - 4.5f Transport*

Activities

Activities vary in range and suitability. Both the planned learning activities and any supplementary activities, such as those associated with travelling, 'free time' and accommodation, etc., must be considered. Some activities may require specific training or qualifications, some may need specialist equipment, and some may require a particular level of competence or prior training of the participants.

Providers holding the LOTC (Learning outside the classroom) Badge have been assessed and accredited by independent inspectors. Using providers without this accreditation means evidencing due diligence in choosing the provider – personal liability insurance, financial bonding, H&S, risk management, competence and qualifications. Use a Provider Statement for this.

Visit Leaders should not request documentation from any LOTC quality badged provider as risk assessments have already been carried out. LOTC providers can be found via this link:

<https://www.lotc.org.uk/educators/developing-your-lotc/find-a-lotc-quality-badge-holder>

Group

The age, competence, maturity and behaviour of the participants must be matched to the other variables and any individual, medical or special needs addressed.

NG3.3f Young People Checklist

Environment

Outdoor learning takes place in a range of locations from farms to mountainous terrain. These all present their own challenges for staff managing groups.

Consideration should be given to level of supervision required and the individual needs within these environments. An example could be a student with audio sensitivity travelling to a big city; planning would be needed to prepare and manage this student's needs effectively.

The EVC should be notified at the earliest stage of planning. After initial checks and risk assessments have been completed, the EVC will then seek approval from the Head of School. Residential visits require further approval from the Executive Headteacher. Approval of educational visits should be based on judgement of whether:

- The visit is appropriate for the group
- The leader(s) is/are competent and suitable for the planned activity
- The best value for money has been considered

Once the visit has been fully authorised, necessary bookings can be completed and amendments to risk assessments made. Some visits may require a pre-visit or a review of evaluations to plan an effective visit.

The lead-in time for organising the educational visit should be proportionate to the complexity and level of approval required. Ideally, educational visits will be planned at least four weeks in advance. If there is a need to organise a visit at short notice, there should be no compromise in planning or completing risk assessments.

EVOLVE software is used in the school to assist with the planning and management of educational visits. The software provides detailed guidance and checklists to ensure that all aspects of the educational visit are considered and appropriately documented as well as being used for risk assessments. Visit leaders are responsible for completing everything that is required in the system and for using it to obtain the appropriate approvals.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation is an integral part of the management of educational visits, as it provides important feedback to inform learning and support future visits. Evaluations help to reassure school stakeholders that time and money spent on educational visits are worthwhile.

There are two aspects of evaluation:

- Evaluating the visit against the intended learning outcomes
- Evaluating any venue or provider used during the visit

Using the EVOLVE software, both simple and more detailed evaluations should be carried out as soon as possible after the visit by the visit leader or visit team.

Reviewing whether the intended outcomes were achieved and having an overview of good, neutral or poor experiences should inform future visits, helping to ensure high quality outdoor learning takes place consistently.

In addition, the formal evaluation of educational visits assists in evidencing the impact of the use of Pupil Premium or PE & Sports funding.

Reviewing a venue or provider provides valuable information to other schools intending to use that venue or provider. It also gives feedback to the venue or provider which will help them improve their own practice.

The Kaddi review system gives school staff the ability to leave venue and provider feedback with reviews being added via EVOLVE. The advantage of Kaddi reviews over other review websites (e.g. TripAdvisor) is that the only people who can post reviews are Visit Leaders who have used the venue or providers with school or youth groups via EVOLVE. The general public are not able to add reviews to Kaddi.

Kaddi reviews comments are particularly useful in an educational context, so it is recommended that the school considers these comments prior to committing to a particular venue or provider. Reviews can be found via this link: <https://kaddi.com/latestreviews.asp>

8. Effective Supervision

Effective supervision is a legal requirement for educational visits. In the past this was known as the staff to pupil ratio. As all visits vary in requirements according to STAGED, the appropriate level of staffing must be based on risk assessment.

The visit leader, in conjunction with the DHT and Head of School, should make a professional judgement regarding the number and suitability of staffing on an individual basis, after consideration of the following factors:

- The type, level and duration of activity
- The nature/requirements of individuals within the group, including those with additional needs.
- The experience and competence of staff and other adults
- The venue, time of year, and prevailing/predicted conditions, if applicable.
- The contingency or Plan B options available.

OEAP guidance can be found here <https://oeapng.info/downloads/good-practice/>:

NG 4.2a Group management and supervision

NG 4.3b Ratios and Effective Supervision

Staff must follow this policy and planning and approval procedures so that they can be supported in the event of an incident.

If parents are attending a visit, they cannot be classed as an adult for staff ratios.

Ratios for St Thomas are as follows:

KS1 1 adult to 6 – 10 children

LKS2 1 adult to 8 – 10 children

UKS2 1 adult to 10 – 15 children

Early Years ratios must be in accordance with the EYFS statutory framework

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e29ed27ca001327b2c6/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_childminders.pdf

9. Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurance

All educational visits learning outside the classroom activities should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third-party provision will meet group needs and expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of children and it used a vital dimension of risk management.

It is good practice that visit leaders to check if the venue has a nationally accredited, provider assurance schemes. Where a provider holds one of the below accreditations, there should be no need to seek further assurances regarding risk assessments of the provider.

- The Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge
- AALS licensing
- Adventuremark
- Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres Gold Badge
- National Governing Body centre approval schemes (applicable where the provision is a single, specialist activity).

If the centre, provider does not have the above schemes, the visit leader should request risk assessments from the provider and complete additional risk assessments for the EVC to approve. A pre-visit may be required.

10. Emergency Planning and Critical incident Support

The vast majority of incidents will be dealt with by the visit leadership team. However, some incidents may be or become more serious and require support from the school and /or Trust.

Incidents can occur at any time. Accidents, and particularly road traffic accidents, are potential hazards to consider on educational visits.

Minor Incident

This is a situation in which the Visit Leader should be able to remain in control and cope with, without referring to the Emergency Contact. The majority of problems occurring on educational visits fall within this definition. The Visit Leader and any accompanying staff would be expected to deal with these.

Examples:

- A pupil who feels ill.
- Minor injury.
- Poor behaviour.
- A homesick pupil.

Emergency

This is an incident which the Visit Leader cannot deal with alone and would need to refer to the Emergency Contact for help.

Emergencies are infrequent. There should be a support structure within the school to advise and guide Visit Leaders when a situation is beyond their own experience, training or coping strategies. An Emergency Contact at the school should be named and be available at all times to provide support as required.

Examples:

- Stomach bug affecting several pupils.
- Safeguarding issue.
- Repeated poor behaviour causing concern.
- Hospitalisation due to injury.

Critical Incident

Critical incidents are very rare.

These are incidents which overwhelm the coping mechanisms of both the Visit Leadership Team and the School Emergency Contact(s). The criteria for these incidents are laid out in the school's critical incident plan.

Examples:

- A road traffic accident.
- Life-threatening injury or fatality.
- Group member missing for a significant period of time.
- An incident that attracts media attention.

Major incident

Major incidents are extremely rare and are declared by authorities such as the UK Police, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) or other relevant authority.

Examples:

- Terrorist activity.
- Forest fire.
- Severe flooding.

On any educational visit, whether local, adventurous or residential, careful planning is necessary to help prevent, and if necessary, deal with both minor and serious incidents.

Planning for incidents

There are a number of factors that need to be considered when planning for and dealing with an emergency. For example: group management, first aid, communication, control of information etc. Visit leaders need to ensure that emergency planning is in place for all visits. More complex visits such as those involving transport, residential accommodation, adventurous activities will require more detailed planning and consideration.

When visiting major cities, the Visit Leader should consider potential terrorist threats which could result in mobile networks being closed down, the group being separated, or transport being disrupted.

Critical incident plans

All staff should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the event of an incident. The school's critical incident plan for visits should be shared with and understood by all staff involved.

Visit Leader Considerations

1. Briefing - Have you briefed all staff clearly before the visit?
2. Supervision -
 - How will you safeguard the rest of the group?
 - Have you considered how different supervisors (including both teachers and parents) would react in an emergency situation? Should you revise the supervision ratio with this in mind?
3. Responsibilities -
 - Is there a designated assistant leader and what is their role?
 - Have you delegated tasks, e.g.: first aider, note-taker or photographer, foreign language speaker, etc.?
4. Communication -
 - How will you manage communication to avoid misinformation being distributed?

- Are all stakeholders clear on their responsibilities regarding handling and distributing information?
- Have you established parent/pupil communication channels? Was this preplanned?
- What is the school mobile phone policy?
- Is there a reliable internet connection?
- Is there access to public phones?

Emergency Action Cards

Visit Leaders and the emergency contacts must have records containing the medical information and emergency contact details for all those involved in the visit. EvolveGo covers this.

Emergency cards – having an emergency card will help staff to follow the necessary procedures and help ensure they carry out their responsibilities.

OEAP guidance can be found here <https://oeapng.info/downloads/good-practice/>: NG

4.1g Model Emergency Procedures for Visit Leaders

Medical and other required information about pupils, for example emergency contact information, is downloaded from the Arbor MIS system into EVOLVE. This enables visit leaders to hold all relevant documentation with them on the educational visit.

11. Insurance

The school buys into the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) cover provided by the DfE which protects the school against losses due to any unforeseen and unexpected event and includes educational visits. The RPA cover is renewed annually, and details of cover provided for educational visits and contact details are available in the school and can be provided to Visit Leaders if applicable.

12. Inclusion

Visit leaders should set out with the intention to include all eligible students and to work closely with the SENDCO and DSL – consider disabilities, mobility, medical needs, dietary requirements, behaviour etc.

Key principles of inclusion, which must form part of planning: include:

- An entitlement to participate
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- Integration through participation with peers

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: NG3.2c Inclusion
<https://oeapng.info/downloads/good-practice/>

12. Links to Other Policies

- Critical Incident Plan