



Educational Visits Policy

September 2018

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 Polam School 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:

- 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, Polam School

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 this school policy, 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 & Approval

There are three 'types' of visit:

- 1. Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day.**
These follow the 'School Learning Area' Operating Procedure (Appendix 1).
- 2. Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. Eg. visits to museums, farms, theme parks, theatres, etc.**
These are entered on EVOLVE by the visit leader and submitted to the EVC for checking. The EVC then submits to the Head for approval.
- 3. Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.**
These follow 2. above, but the Head then submits the visit to the LA for approval.

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 before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements, and should seek advice from the EVC where necessary.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is Darren O'Neil, 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 Head Teacher has responsibility for authorising all visits, and for submitting those that are overseas, residential or adventurous to the LA for approval.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'. Individual governors may be given 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

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.

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 Cognita.

Educational Visits Checklist

Polam Schools Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities, and may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources. 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'

Parental Consent

Consent is not required for activities within the School Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum during normal school time.

The school obtains blanket consent at the start of each year for certain other routine activities, eg. after school fixtures, etc. Parents will consent through 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 have the option of consenting through a traditional paper consent form.

Financial arrangements

- The leader keeps official and separate accounts for all costs and payments.
- Records of all payments by individual pupils are kept by the leader who liaises with the School Secretary.
- Residential visit payments are staggered.
- All payments should be made by cheque, if possible. Cash payments are kept to a minimum.
- Maximum security of money and other valuable documents is essential at all times. Money and passports are placed in the school safe, or the centre's safe on a residential visit.
- To safeguard all concerned, the visit leader neither banks, nor has access to, the money collected from pupils. All payments by cheque are to the school account and all payments have a receipt issued by the Bursar.

Transport

If a coach / bus or other mode of transport is used, then a head count will be undertaken before departure and upon arrival.

Use of staff cars to transport pupils –

In the event of an emergency or unavoidable instance where a staff car may be required to transport pupils, the following must be considered:

- The driver of any vehicle transporting children or young people cannot drive and supervise at the same time. Therefore, a judgement needs to be made about the likely behaviour and individual needs of the passengers. If any of the children or young people may require close supervision, then another adult should travel in the vehicle so that the driver is not distracted.
- The driver must hold a full Driving License
- The car must be legally roadworthy including tax, MOT and insurance.

Appendix 1 – School Learning Area

General

Visits/activities within the ‘School Learning Area’ that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day follow the Operating Procedure below.

These visits/activities:

- have parental consent at the beginning of the year for all Local Area trips
- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).
- should be recorded on EVOLVE if regular, e.g. Outdoor PE, or a trip that contains uncommon hazards, e.g. water risk
- do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE if these are ad-hoc activities

Boundaries

The boundaries of the School Learning Area are shown on the attached map. This area includes, but is not limited to, the following frequently used venues:

- *Plantation Park*
- *Bedford Park*
- *Alexander Sports Centre*
- *Bedford Town Centre*
- *Bedford Modern*

Operating Procedure for School Learning Area

The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our School Learning Area:

- Road traffic.
- Other people / members of the public / animals.
- Losing a pupil.
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, and falls.
- Weather conditions.
- Activity specific issues when doing environmental fieldwork (nettles, brambles, rubbish, etc).
- Large pond at Bedford Park

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- The Head and EVC must give verbal approval before a group leaves.
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved. A current list of approved staff is maintained by the EVC and office.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the ‘School Learning Area’ is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school.
- There will normally be a minimum of two adults.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any ‘no go areas’, and have practiced appropriate group management techniques.
- Pupils have been trained and have practiced standard techniques for road crossings in a group.
- Where appropriate, pupils are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- All remotely supervised work in the School Learning Area is done in ‘buddy’ pairs as a minimum.
- Pupils’ clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving school.
- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.

- Staff will deposit in the office a list of all pupils and staff, a proposed route, and an estimated time of return.
- A school mobile is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (eg gloves, goggles)

Appendix 2 – 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 School Learning Area, 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.