

Bilston Church of England Primary School

‘Hand in hand towards faith and high achievements’



Off Sites Visits Policy

Our Vision

‘Hand in hand together with faith we will strive to achieve all things’

‘I am able to do all things through him (Jesus) who strengthens me’

Philippians 4:13

Approved by Governors at:	
Date approved:	
Review date:	
Chair of committee:	

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Context

At Bilston Church of England Primary School, we recognise that educational visits and learning outside the classroom are an integral part of the curriculum and learning experience for every child. Appropriately planned visits enhance learning and improve attainment, and so form a key part of what makes Bilston Church of England Primary School a supportive and effective learning environment. We endeavour to make good use of our own buildings, grounds, the neighbouring area and beyond to support learning.

The benefits to pupil 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 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, 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.
- Improved awareness and knowledge of the importance and practices of sustainability.

- Physical skill acquisition and the development of a fit and healthy lifestyle.
- Visits are memorable and enjoyable

Our priority is to ensure that all visits are safe, educational and enjoyable.

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 Bilston Church of England Primary School ,

- 1) Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: '*Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Adventure Activities*' (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE).
- 2) Adopts Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP) National Guidance www.oeapng.info
- 3) Uses EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for off-site activities, with an emphasis on all Visit Leaders uploading their own trips onto the system to initiate the approval process.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with this school policy and the guidelines outlined above. Staff should be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance and agree to adhere by them.

All staff at Bilston C of E Primary attend Visits Leader Training.

Types of Visit & Approval

There are three 'types' of visit:

- **Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day (category A).**

- **Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity, e.g., visits to museums, farms, theme parks, theatres, etc. (category B).**

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.

- **Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity (category C).**

These follow bullet point 2 above, but the Head then submits the visit to the LA for approval.

Roles and Responsibilities for Authority Schools

The **Governors** will approve the Educational Visits policy and will ensure it is implemented within school and reviewed every three years.

The **Head Teacher** has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that educational visits follow the agreed procedures in the Local Authority's (LA) guidance document: '*Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Adventure Activities*'. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that there is an Educational Visits Coordinator, and that this person has received the appropriate training and is competent in this role.

The **Educational Visits Coordinator** (EVC) 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.

The **Visit Leader** is the member of staff who is leading the visit, who is responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE **at least 21 days** prior to the visit. The competence of the visit leader is the single most important contributory factor in the safety of participants; they should be competent to run the intended activity or visit. 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. All risk assessments must be seen by the EVC three weeks before the visit to check all significant risks are controlled.

The Visit Leader is responsible for ensuring a risk assessment is carried out and that a risk assessment is signed and dated by the Visit Leader and that the EVC and the Head approve that RA before the visit takes place. The risk assessment will include the ratio of adult to children supervision and the number of first aiders or appointed persons needed. The visit leader will share this information with all staff involved in the visit. The visit leader will share the risks with the children and how to manage the risks with a safety talk to the children prior to the trip taking place if this is appropriate. The visit leader is responsible for ensuring the Emergency Card, mobile phone, first aid kit and pupil medication are taken on the visit.

It is the visit leader's responsibility to inform the school when they have arrived at their location and when they leave, to return to school. In case of any delays the school must be informed. This is to notify the Headteacher, EVC and parents.

After the visit, leaders must ensure they inform the EVC and Headteacher of how the trip went, record any significant issues to the EVC both for reference and to inform future visits and fill in an evaluation sheet on EVOLVE.

Accompanying staff must follow agreed risk assessments, policies and practice to ensure the safe running of the visit. Prior to the visit, staff must ensure that they understand what is expected of them and have seen and signed the risk assessment.

Parents are responsible for completing and returning requested documentation and ensuring they are contactable throughout the visit.

Children need to follow instructions, the school rules, the behaviour policy and any additional rules that may be put in place for the visit.

The **Local Authority** will adhere to the guidance issued by the LA and will use EVOLVE to approve all visits that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity where this is appropriate. Where schools are academies or other trusts, and the authority is not the employer the roles and responsibilities are different even if the school has bought the SLA with the authority. In this case the authority will advise the school when approval should be given but the employer must give that final approval.

Risk Assessment

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the visit leader before the proposed visit, this can be done in collaboration with other staff on the trip. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the significant hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?

- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to consider the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the pupils. They will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve. The Head Teacher/Governing Body will not give its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors, and their risk assessment procedures.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety, or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the visit plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue.

Supervision

The following ratio of adults to children could be used in normal circumstances:

Nursery 1:4

Reception 1:8
Key Stage One 1:10
Key Stage Two 1:10
Children who need support (i.e. children with Special Educational Needs) 1:1

Without special safeguards or control measures, these ratios will **not** be adequate to meet the needs of most residential or more complex visits.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework no longer sets out different requirements for minimum ratios during outings from those required on site. As with other age groups, ratios during outings should be determined by risk assessment, which should be reviewed before each outing. The appropriate ratio on an outing is always likely to be lower than the legal minimum that applies otherwise (for children aged three and over in early year's settings either 1:8 or 1:13 and 1:30 in infant school reception classes in maintained schools). It is not unusual for a ratio of 1:1 to be necessary.

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The visit leader should establish rendezvous points and tell adults, groups and pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

Additional Support

Parent helpers are welcome on educational visits and will attend a briefing with the teacher before the visit. Helpers who are not DBS checked will not be alone with children and must be guided by school staff at all times.

Preparing Pupils

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected and why rules must be followed. Lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety. Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues. If there is the possibility that a pupil may be excluded from the visit due to behaviour issues, a meeting would be arranged with the Deputy or Headteacher in advance to discuss concerns and agree what action is to be taken.

Parental Consent

Parents should be given information about the purpose and details of the visit at least one week prior to the visit. Consent is not legally required for activities within the School Learning day and that is part of the normal curriculum during normal school time. This school considers it polite and correct to gain parental consent for all visits. The visit information must be made available to parents- via letters, meetings, etc. and must contain sufficient information so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. Parents should be told where their child is at all times, and of any extra safety measure required. Specific written "signed-for" consent is only requested for activities that need a higher level of risk management or those that take place outside of school hours, for example: for adventure activities, off-site sporting fixtures outside the school day or residential visits. Parents should have the opportunity to withdraw their child from any particular visit.

Mobile Phones and Social Network

- Under normal circumstances adults should not use their mobile phone to take photographs or make phone calls.
- No photos should be posted on social media such as 'Facebook' and 'Twitter' and instant messaging services such as 'WhatsApp'.
- Only the Lead teacher and class teachers will have the phones switched on to communicate with the school or in case of any emergency.
- Any information about a child should only be passed onto the child's parent or guardian through the class teacher or head teacher.
- If you need to make an emergency call please speak to the Lead teacher who will support you in any way possible.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. It is particularly important for a first aider to accompany pupils on educational visits, the minimum requirement is that an appointed person must take charge of the first aid arrangements. A decision based on the risks and children involved should be made for each visit. Trips for the Early Years must have at least one qualified Paediatric First Aider. For adventurous activities, there should be at least one trained first-aider in the group.

Inclusion

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled participants because of their disability, without material or substantial justification. You are required to make reasonable adjustments to avoid participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage. However, the Equality Act does not require responsible bodies to place employees or participants at

inappropriate risk if a health and safety issue arises. It is also the case that the adjustments made to include a disabled young person should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity.

At Bilston Church of England Primary School we will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort will be made to support them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention will be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

We will work with families to find ways so that all children can attend educational visits.

Farm/Animal Visits

Staff should ensure that the intended outcomes of the activity are balanced with all reasonably practicable safety precautions. Refer to EVOLVE National Library: 'Preventing or controlling ill health from animal contact at visitor attractions- Advice to Teachers' and associated documents. Refer to: Farming & Countryside Education: www.face-online.org.uk; 'Farm Visits' in National Guidance www.oeapng.info

Water Margin Activities

Where pupils might participate in learning activities near or in water, such as a walk along the riverbank, collecting samples in ponds or stream or paddling in shallow water, then the 'Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Adventure Activities' will be followed and regard will be given to the DfE guidance 'Group Safety at Water Margins. All visits including water margins must have these aspects specifically risk assessed.

Regular Local Visits and Activities

Regular visits and activities such as sporting fixtures, walking visits to

locations within a mile of the school and coach travel are covered by generic risk assessments which form the agreed principles for conducting these visits. However, these may need to be accompanied by an additional risk assessment if needed. Times when this may be required is when the groups being taken has additional needs or requirements, the activity is to be changed or the venue has altered. They do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE if these are ad-hoc activities but should be recorded on EVOLVE if regular, e.g., swimming lessons.

Transport

On coaches seat belts must be provided and all children must wear a seat belt whilst travelling. The visit leader is responsible for the conduct and behaviour of children whilst they are travelling. All aspects of transport and road crossing should be risk assessed. Use of staff cars to transport pupils – staff must have personal business use insurance and must ensure that they do not chauffeur children on a 1:1 basis.

Accident/incident reporting

The Council's Incident Reporting Procedure must be followed i.e. all accidents or near- misses involving employees or service users are reported on an IR1 form. Serious incidents must be notified immediately to the corporate Health & Safety team. After any significant incident, schools/services must undertake an investigation of the incident, and review their risk assessments and emergency procedures. It is also good practice to record and learn from 'near misses'.

Insurance

The school will hold insurance for trips. For adventurous trips or trips abroad or residential, the school will ensure that sufficient insurance is in place.