

POTLEY HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Context

As part of the broad balance of curriculum and learning arrangements of the school, opportunity is frequently taken to enrich and enhance this through outdoor learning, outdoor education and educational visits and ventures. These guidelines outline our policies and operational procedures in these contexts.

Definition

The term 'off-site' visit is used to describe any activity that involves the children being taken out of the school grounds. This may be a short walk to the local church or a residential visit. Different types of visits require different levels of approval.

Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all pupils have access to safe, well-planned off-site visits. These visits will be conducted in accordance with advice, guidance and training provided by the Hampshire County Council Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service and their documentation and guidance.

It is recognised that organising off-site visits places additional responsibilities and duties on staff. This policy is intended to support staff in ensuring that visits are conducted in line with accepted good practice.

We are committed to providing a range of educational visits during the school year to enhance and extend the curriculum. Such visits provide children with valuable first-hand experiences and opportunities to develop their personal and social skills.

Organisation and management

Guidelines are set by Hampshire County Council principally through the documents *Hampshire Outdoors organisation* <https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/oe-pe-dofe/pe-school-sport/advice-regulations-guidance> but also via the websites and support services, in particular approval, risk or benefit management, supervision, working with providers, and inclusion. Guidance available in the 'Resources' tab on *Hampshire EVOLVE*.

An Educational Visits Coordinator is always in post and keeps up to date with the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service. The current holder is Mr Ryan Farrer.

Governors are kept informed of the overall policy and programme, as well as being given feedback on specific events and successful ventures.

Off-site visits and educational visits are fully integrated into the ethos and culture of the school and all key policies are considered for their relevance and adaptations or agreements made as required, in particular:

- Teaching & Learning policy – outlining challenge and expectations
- Behaviour policy – rights, respect and responsibility issues, the core of agreed codes of conduct and management strategies

Roles and Responsibilities

- *The Headteacher*, together with the governing body, is responsible for ensuring that this policy is fully implemented. The Headteacher must be aware of all off-site visits.
- Where a residential visit or a hazardous pursuit is involved, the Local Authority must also give permission for the visit to take place and Governors should be aware.
- The Headteacher and the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC), will ensure that staff qualifications for off-site activities are up to date. The Headteacher and EVC are responsible for organising staff training where required.

- The EVC is involved in the planning and management of off-site visits, and must be satisfied that all off-site activities are being efficiently and safely organised, that supervision levels are acceptable and all aspects of planning & risk assessments are in place and appropriate.
- Class teachers will have read the relevant documentation and will plan visits in accordance with them. Additional support and advice is available from the Educational Visits Co-ordinator and on EVOLVE.
- Parents will be informed of the visit, before giving their permission. They are responsible for notifying staff of any significant issues affecting their child's welfare including medical needs.
- Children will be responsible for behaving appropriately whilst off-site, since they are representing the school.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

We need to ensure that every effort is used to include all pupils in educational visits in line with the expectations set out in the Disability Discriminations Act 1995. The challenge is to make the activity accessible in some form to all who wish to participate or who are required to take part. This is irrespective of their special educational or medical need, disability, ethnic origin, sex or religion.

A child cannot be excluded from a trip for any of the above reasons. Some activities may require modification to ensure accessibility for all. If staff have concerns about a specific child, this needs to be discussed with the EVC and Headteacher, as discussions with the parents and the child need to be held in advance of any planned trip.

A child should not be excluded from a visit on medical grounds unless their condition requires a higher level of supervision than would normally be expected from a parent. If this is the case all efforts should be made to include the child as long as it does not compromise their safety or that of the rest of the group.

Considerations when taking pupils off-site

When planning to take children off-site during the school day, the group leader must complete the 'Local Area Visits' module on EVOLVE **and** upload a completed risk assessment, (Appendix A). This short form can be used as long as the visit does not involve or go near to any water and doesn't involve transportation aside from walking. This will be approved by the EVC only. This can also be used for after-school sports clubs or fixtures as long as parents are providing the transportation.

For non-residential school trips, the full 'Visit Form' should be completed on EVOLVE by the trip lead – at least two weeks before the departure day. Any relevant documents such as a risk assessment, groupings and an itinerary should also be uploaded. This will be approved by the EVC and then the Headteacher.

For residential trips, EVOLVE (Hampshire's web-based approval mechanism) must be used, well in advance of the trip (ideally a minimum of 4 weeks before), in order to gain authority from the EVC, the Headteacher and the Local Authority. An itinerary and risk assessment must be provided at this early stage in the process.

When planning to undertake either a hazardous pursuit or residential visit, LA approval is required (see '*Hazardous Pursuits*' and '*Residential Visits*' section of this policy).

Points to consider are as follows:

- Purpose of the visit
- Staffing and any other adults involved (parent helpers should not be accompanied by any children other than those involved in the visit)
- Staff 'off-site' qualifications
- Children involved (any SEN/ behaviour needs etc.)

- Adult/child ratio & current DBS checks for adult helpers in place
- Any costing/financial requirements
- Date and timings
- Meal arrangements
- Mode of travel/coach details and insurance information. If staff and parents are using their own cars then this needs to be noted and they have to have the appropriate insurance cover. Insurance details are available (kept in Offsite file) to parents.
- Details of intended pre-visit for risk assessment
- Wording of the letter to parents
- Briefing meetings/all communication to staff, parents and children concerned.

Visits and activities should have significant educational value and be suitable for the children in terms of age and ability. They should be linked to their curriculum either by preparatory or follow up lessons. The teacher (group leader) in overall charge of the visit must hold a recognised 'off-site' qualification if visiting a site deemed open country. These are obtained on LA run courses such as the 'Hampshire Outdoor Leaders award'.

A pre-visit to all intended sites is compulsory and must be carried out in accordance with recognised risk assessment procedures. A completed risk assessment report containing observations from the pre-visit must be attached to the EVOLVE form when submitted to the EVC.

Parent consent must be obtained for all the children who are involved in the visit.

Staff need to clarify with the EVC/Headteacher the extent to which the costs of any visit can be met from school funds or other sources. Parents may be asked to contribute voluntarily towards the cost of a visit. If a visit is cancelled then any contributions already collected must be refunded.

Emergency contacts must be arranged before leaving the school site. The teacher in charge of the visit must carry a mobile telephone. All adults must know the contact number for the school, each other's mobile phone numbers, and any other emergency contact numbers that are deemed necessary, for example, local hospitals or doctors.

An up-to-date list of children and adults involved in the visit must have their medication available to them. Their group leader should nominate a member of staff to take charge of items such as inhalers just in case the children mislay them. Older children are to be responsible for carrying their own inhalers whenever possible. First Aid Kits are also to be carried by participating teachers.

Induction & training

All new teachers will receive an induction and training before taking children off-site on visits. This will be recorded and kept in their personnel files. Experienced members of staff will be used to train new teachers and support staff in their responsibilities and briefings will be held before visits to ensure that volunteers are clear about their roles.

Periodic training will also take part for all teachers, led by the EVC. Where appropriate, some members of staff may take part in additional 'Outdoor Leader' training.

The EVC should always hold in-date, accredited training. Certificates will be held in the school's Health & Safety training file. The school's H&S training plan will also show when relevant training has taken place and when the next refresher is due.

Succession planning will be managed by ensuring that each year group continues to have at least one established and experienced member of staff remaining in this year group in the subsequent academic year wherever possible.

Safeguarding

The school's Child Protection Policy follows and includes off-site activity, including residential activity. In particular:

- guidance on acceptable behaviour and avoiding unnecessary contact is included and taken from the resources on *EVOLVE* (also available in the *Educational Visits* folder in *Staff Resources*)
- suitable 'employment' checks are made on volunteers and other responsible adults who support these ventures in line with guidance (eg the degree of monitoring, frequency and intensity of contact...).
- external providers or outdoor centres are drawn from the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service's vetted database, which confirms that safety management checks are in place.

Transport

A variety of transport is used following Council guidance:

- staff cars – only when signed permission slips are completed by parents and staff will need to provide their driving license, proof of MOT and their insurance certificate must include business use
- parents' cars (when in the role of an allocated adult on the trip) – only when signed permission slips are completed by parents and the 'helper' will need to be DBS checked by school, provide their driving license, proof of MOT and their insurance certificate must include business use
- parents' cars – only with signed permission slips explaining they are transporting them in the capacity of a friend,
- buses (local, non-motorway travel)
- coaches (through recognised suppliers)
- trains (where appropriate or part of the learning in the venture)

Local off-site activities

Teachers are encouraged to make the most of the local environment and plan activities outside of school which will support children's learning. Parents will be asked to complete a permission slip to allow their child/ren to be taken off-site without having to fill out separate forms each time. Expected practice will be to ensure teachers have still informed parents that children will be off-site, the nature of the activity and a reminder to contact the school if there are any changes in medical circumstances.

Visitors to the school

The school encourages the use of a range of visitors such as theatre groups, religious visitors, nurses, dentists, police, local councillors and many more as long as DBS checks are in place.

Hazardous Pursuits

Any visit which involves a hazardous pursuit must have LA approval. The county online approval system, *EVOLVE*, must be accessed by the EVC (www.hampshireoutdoors.com) and an online form completed and submitted by the group leader, at least eight weeks prior to the intended visit. Staff should be aware that taking children off a recognised road and into open country constitutes a hazardous pursuit as does any activity involving water.

Residential Visits

In addition to the above considerations there are additional considerations for residential visits. A medical questionnaire is required for all children and adults participating in a residential visit. The school will ensure that all guidelines relating to child protection and safeguarding are strictly followed. On residential visits, it

is recommended that there is one teacher of each sex for mixed groups. In addition, there must be separate male and female sleeping and bathroom facilities for both pupils and adults.

Behaviour Considerations

Children who might compromise the group's safety because of their inappropriate behaviour may be excluded from visits. Whenever possible they should be given a chance to prove that they can be trusted to behave appropriately. It is therefore important that these children are identified prior to the visit and spoken to.

Parents should be informed that there is a possibility that their child/ren will be excluded and what the child/ren have to do in order to be allowed to participate. In some cases, a behaviour agreement can be drawn up whereby parents agree to collect their child/ren from the residential visit if problems arise.

Road Safety

When crossing roads, children should line up along the pavement edge with adults positioned at either end. Children cross as a single unit (wave) on a signal from the teacher. For larger groups, person A of each pair should cross first as a group, followed by the other half of the pair as a group – both on the signal of the teacher. Each group should line up behind the other one in silence. Children must always walk across the road and never run.

Incidents and emergencies

Guidance from the Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service is used to prepare leader and base-contact checklists and contact details. The incident management checklist is also available for use. The Children's Services Incident and Emergency 'Establishment Plan' has been used as the basis for all incident and emergency responses. Any concerns or 'near-misses' are discussed to consider changing strategies and reported to the EVC, Headteacher and Outdoor Education, PE and Sport Service where necessary or if the information is useful.

Support for teachers planning visits.

Teachers with queries should initially refer to the relevant documentation on EVOLVE or in Staff Resources. If this does not provide the support they are seeking they must approach the *Educational Visits Co-ordinator* or the Headteacher for advice. Further advice may be obtained from the *Hampshire Outdoors Education contacts*.

Policy Monitoring and Review

The Governors will review this policy every two years. However, if new guidance or legislation is introduced the review will be moved forward. In addition, should any problem occur with an off-site visit then the policy will be reviewed.

A record of all off-site visits can be accessed by the EVC and the Headteacher on EVOLVE.

The drafting or review of documentation will be delegated to appropriate members of staff prior to wider consultation and discussion.

Reviewed: January 2024

Next Review: January 2026

APPENDIX A – Risk Assessment Template

Potley Hill Primary School

Off-site activities and educational visits

Location..... Objective.....

Group leader.....Accompanying adults.....Group size.....Ratio.....

Identifying the hazards – assessing the risk	Control measures – reducing the risk
Site and its environment • • • •	 • • • •
Group • • • •	 • • • •

Leader and activity arrangements <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Transport <ul style="list-style-type: none">•	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
Variations: Record any additional assessments and control measures here if this sheet is used as a generic assessment. <ul style="list-style-type: none">••	
Generic/mandatory risk assessment, used and acknowledged 1. Council – risk assessments/guidance used <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••• 2. Establishment – risk assessment/guidance used <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	

Alternative plans (e.g. dictated by weather)

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Ongoing risk assessment

1. Apply the control measures
2. Monitor how effective they are
3. Change, adapt, revise as required

Examples

- monitor the weather
- monitor water/river levels
- monitor road traffic
- monitor conditions underfoot
- monitor group and leaders response and motivation
- monitor behaviour
- monitor the response of your supporting adults
- assessing group risk awareness in different environments

Date.....

Group leader.....

Headteacher.....