



Parkside Middle School

Educational Visits Policy

1. Policy Scope

This policy applies to Governors, the Headteacher, the Educational Visits Co-Ordinator and the Visit Leader and covers all Off-Site Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC).

This policy applies to all visits and LOtC activities whether or not they occur during normal working hours, weekends or during holidays.

By helping young people apply their knowledge across a range of challenges, learning outside the classroom builds bridges between theory and reality, schools and communities, young people and their futures. Quality learning experiences in 'real' situations have the capacity to raise achievement and to develop better personal and social skills. When these experiences are well planned, safely managed and personalised to meet the needs of every child the following can be achieved:

- Improved academic achievement.
- Develop skills and independence in a widening range of environments.
- Make learning more engaging and relevant to young people.
- Develop active citizens of the environment.
- Nurture creativity.
- Stimulate, inspire and improve motivation.
- Provide challenge and the opportunity to take acceptable levels of risk.
- Improved young people's attitudes to learning.
- Helps them to learn from their successes and failures.

Learning outside the classroom provides support for many different curriculum areas. Linked to the curriculum, these activities provide direct and relevant experiences that deepen and enrich learning.

Parkside Middle School's Educational Visits Policy is to ensure that the safety of our pupils, staff and others is managed, to minimise risk as far as practicable and in developing its procedures, is guided by National Guidance issued by the DfE and the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel.

2. Guidance being adopted

Parkside Middle School adopts the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) National Guidance as sited within the WCC Corporate Policy document. All staff involved in Off-site Visits and LOtC activities must follow this guidance unless WCC has provided alternative guidance either as a whole or in parts of the OEAP National Guidance. Clarification of the schools' guidance must be sought from your Educational Visits Co-Ordinator (EVC).

WCC has facilitated visits and LOtC activities by the provision of an Off-site Visits Advisor (a panel member of the OEAP), the electronic management system EVOLVE and OEAP accredited training provision.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governors will ensure that:

- There is Local Authority guidance in place which they have access to.
- Robust systems support implementation of the guidance.
- They challenge in order to be clear about how outdoor learning and visits lead to a wide range of outcomes for children and young people and contribute towards establishment effectiveness.
- There is an Educational Visits Policy including emergency procedures, and it supports the principles of inclusion.
- The involvement of the Governing Body in the visit approval process is clear and approval and notification procedures operate effectively. There should be standing items at the appropriate Governors meetings where approval to proceed with plans is given.
- There is a trained EVC who meets the employer's requirements, with a sufficient time allowance to fulfil the role and training to support the planning and delivery of visits and outdoor learning.
- There are monitoring procedures in place, activity is evaluated, good practice is shared and any issues are followed up to comply with statutory and employer's requirements.

The Headteacher should:

- Have an Educational Visits Policy and procedures that conform to and follow the requirements and recommendations of their employer's guidance.
- Be aware that the appointment of an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is critical to the implementation of this guidance. The EVC should be appropriately competent to their role (see below) and should be allowed sufficient time to fulfil the role, including attendance at OEAP-approved training. The Headteacher may choose to designate themselves as EVC. Where the Headteacher has not designated a named member of staff, then the functions of the EVC will automatically be attached to those of the Headteacher.
- Keep the Governing Body informed about the delivery of visits and outdoor learning and their contribution towards establishment effectiveness. This could be as a standing item in the Headteachers report to the Governing Body.
- Where needed, have access to expert advice such as from the Outdoor Educational Advisers Panel (OEAP) at Worcestershire County Council.

Educational Visits Co-ordinator

The EVC is the school's focal point for planning and monitoring visits and outdoor learning. In appointing an EVC, careful consideration should be given to:

- Significant experience of practical outdoor learning and visit leadership.
- Status within the school that enables guiding of the working practices of their colleagues.

Sufficient time should be agreed to fulfil the role and to attending OEAP approved EVC training and update/revalidation as required. The school may choose to train more than one member of staff so that the administrative tasks can be separated from the operational functions.

For an EVC to be effective, their responsibilities and functions should be clearly stated in the school's policy providing clarity to:

- The role of the EVC in the formal approval process.
- The nature of monitoring (EVC, governor, peer monitoring etc).
- What activities, if any, require consultation/approval from the OEAP at Worcestershire County Council.
- Where needed, access to expert advice such as from the OEAP at Worcestershire County Council.

The EVC should ensure that all visits meet the employer's and school's policies, procedures and requirements. This includes appropriate monitoring, evaluation and recording to ensure that the Headteacher and Governing Body can access the data they require.

Parkside Middle School will also assign a Deputy EVC who will be conversant with the relevant guidance and policy and will comply with these requirements.

They will undertake duties as agreed between themselves and the educational visits senior leadership member. Reference to common duties and responsibilities should be made as contained within the Worcestershire County Council's EVOLVE system.

The Visit Leader

The Visit Leader has the overall responsibility for supervision and conduct of the visit. To ensure accountability and to avoid potential confusion, a single Visit Leader should be designated. If this role changes during a visit, a clear handover should be made. An Activity Leader is responsible for a particular activity during a visit.

The key requirements for Visit Leaders are that they must be competent to lead, confident and accountable, not that they hold a particular post, title, or job description.

- Being **competent** means that the leader has demonstrated the ability to lead to the level demanded by the visit, and has sufficient relevant experience and knowledge of the activities, the group, and the environments they will operate in.
- Competence is a combination of skills, knowledge, awareness, judgement, training, and experience. It is not necessarily related to age or position within the establishment. It is situational – a leader who is competent in one activity or environment may not be so in another, and it involves breadth as well as depth. Relevant experience is not necessarily gained by repeating the same thing several times, but by experiencing a range of different activities and environments.
- Being **confident** includes the Leader's capacity to take charge of a situation and their awareness of their abilities as well as their limitations.

- Being **accountable** means that the leader has been engaged through a clear process which includes vetting and appropriate induction into the establishment's policies and procedures. Regardless of employment status, Leaders must be clear about the chain of accountability and what is expected of them.
- The Visit Leader **must** follow the employer's guidance and Educational Visits Policy and Procedures.
- The Visit Leader **must** ensure that the activity is carefully planned to include assessing the risks to ensure that there is wide understanding about what everyone needs **to do**. The Visit Leader **must** ensure that the roles and responsibilities of other staff (and young people) are properly defined and communicated, ensuring effective supervision.
- The Visit Leader will liaise with the EVC throughout the planning and preparation of their visit to ensure that any activities or events that may place staff or other participants at significant risk are assessed and that safety measures are in place prior to the trip taking place.
- The Visit Leader will ensure that all parents/carers of children on their visit are provided with all the required information, which may include risk assessment information, and that any questions raised are answered prior to the trip taking place.
- The Visit Leader named for each visit will have overall responsibility for that visit whilst it is underway.
- The Visit Leader will be fully familiar with emergency procedures and contact numbers and assign a Deputy Visit Leader to be fully conversant with all the visit information.

4. Procedural Requirements

The following procedures are not exhaustive but summarises what needs to be done during the planning and organisation of an off-site visit.

- EVC training is required every 3 years using employer approved providers.
- Other staff may be trained by shadowing of experienced staff or internal cascade training from EVC.
- Venue to be checked for suitability and when booked ensure Public Liability Insurance is in place for a minimum of £5m along with providers Risk Assessment.
- Visit Leader to draft a letter to parents detailing the nature and purpose and learning outcomes of the trip, the date, time, and cost along with any clothing or equipment they will need.
- Risk Assessment to be provided to EVC, Safeguarding Lead and Office Staff. The following safeguarding issues should be addressed; including medicines and first aid kits, care plans for specific children, collection of children and someone is present to ensure all pupils leave the premises safely after the trip.
- Visit Leader to carefully plan for pupils with SEND, medical or additional needs and meet with office first aider.
- Permission slips and a list of emergency contact numbers for the pupils along with the school mobile phone which must be taken on the trip in a lockable bag.
- A copy of the Emergency Procedure Card, including contact numbers must be provided to all staff and Parkside wristbands for each pupil.

- Visit Leader to gather feedback from staff participants and office staff to evaluate the visit and input on EVOLVE.
- Parents and Carers should provide consent and confirmation of their child's place on a school trip 48 hours before the trip is due to take place. This is because comprehensive risk assessments have to be submitted on Evolve.

Please see Appendix II for specific guidelines and individual roles for booking and organising trips.

5. Monitoring: Approval and monitoring roles of the below

- Headteacher/Governing body – board approval and monitoring.
- EVC – approval to head, and any delegated approval of certain visit types and monitoring.
- Peer monitoring.
- Consultation on visits requiring specialist advice with Offsite Visit Advisor.

6. Induction, Training and Succession Planning

- Induction requirements, including reference to Appendix I – Health and Safety on Educational Visits and Appendix II – Guidelines for Booking and Organising Trips.
- Training requirements of VL and EVC (WCC requires an EVC to also be a competent VL).
- Requirements planning of record keeping on EVOLVE and internal paperwork.
- Succession planning to maintain LOtC activities.
- EVC to provide cascade training to VL and emergency contacts.
- EVC to provide critical incident training to VL and emergency contacts.

7. Risk Management and Risk Benefits Procedure

- Training for staff in risk management and risk-benefits assessments.
- Requirements for carrying out, recording, approval and reviewing of risk assessments.
- Who (i.e., staff and if appropriate young people) should be involved in the planning and preparation of visits, including risk management, and recording of the risk-benefit assessments.
- Provision of generic risk assessments.
Recording of information about specific and/or local hazards associated with the planned visit.
- Ratio numbers for the planned visits.
- Transport arrangements.

8. Providers – Selection and assessments

- Website – Visit the providers website or seek its official literature
- Quality badge – Find out what if any quality badge they have and what it assesses/inspects to gain the quality badge, check out if the provider holds the quality badge stated (WCC recognise LOtC, Adventure Mark, AALS)
- Engage with the provider – talk to them, get risk assessments from them and any other information they can provide e.g., plans, map directions, car parking etc.
- Past visit – Check using EVOLVE if other schools have used this provider or look at own past school visits and feedback after the visit.
- Preliminary visits – Carry out a preliminary visit, if possible, if not try to seek a contact from another school who have used the provider by using the EVOLVE system.
- Governing bodies – Check if any of the activities planned are affiliated to a governing body e.g., rugby – Rugby Football Union, canoeing – British Canoe Union.
- Off-site Visits Advisor – consult with WCC Off-site Visits Advisor, Rachel Whiteley.

9. Volunteers

- The vetting procedure for volunteers including when an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Scheme) check is required.
- Induction and training.
- Assessment of competency to carry out any specified roles.
- Requirements for supervision of volunteers by staff members.
- Under what circumstances, IF ANY, a volunteer can act as a visit leader. If this is permitted, then the volunteer becomes accountable as it implies that they volunteer and have been engaged via a recruitment process.

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10. Emergency Procedure and Incident Reporting

- WCC Children's Services Critical Incident SLA provides advice and guidance through their 'Critical Incidents in Schools' training.
- The OEAP National Guidance provides advice about planning for emergencies and WCC also provides you access to the Off-site Visits Advisor, Rachel Whiteley.
- WCC Emergency Planning Unit (if school has subscribed to the Critical Incident SLA) can access planned visit details in the case of a critical incident via the EVOLVE system.
- WCC provides Visit Leader and EVC training and requires EVC's to be re-certified every 3 years and recommends a refresher for VL's between 3-5 years.
- Advice and guidance are provided on EVOLVE.
- WCC provides an online accident/incident reporting system and requires all incidents to be recorded as soon as possible, minor incidents to be recorded in an accident book with the first aid provision during the visit.
- Staff should have access to Parkside Middle School's Emergency and Critical Incidents Plan and be handed a copy when taking a visit.
- Emergency cards should be issued with the appropriate guidance and contact numbers
- A copy of all contact details and information should be kept at Parkside Middle School prior to any visit departing.

11. Behaviour of Staff, Volunteers and Pupils

- Staff and volunteers should follow the Worcestershire County Council Code of Conduct.
- Staff are required to always supervise pupils, including night times on residential visits.
- The expectation of staff to ensure a suitable ratio of supervision is in place throughout the trip/visit.
- Parents/carers are made aware of the school's expectations with regards to their child's behaviour. Therefore, we reserve the right to withdraw any child from trips where we feel their behaviour or attitude is or has been an issue.
- Parents/carers to sign that they understand they are to remove a young person from the visit if he/she does not comply with the set codes of conduct.
- Expectations and rules are made clear to all pupils to follow the 'Parkside Standard' and adhere to the Parkside Middle School Behaviour Policy.

12. Exclusion and Inclusion

- It is unlawful to treat a disabled person less favourably or fail to take steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.
- Expectations of staff must be reasonable and within their own competency to provide inclusion of a young person.

This policy endorses the following principles:

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

13. Insurance

Parkside Middle School holds an Off-Site Activities Insurance Policy which is renewed on an annual basis. Please see the School Business Manager for full details of policy cover.

14. Finance

Parkside Middle School holds a Charging & Remissions Policy in line with the WCC arrangements and this is reviewed every two years. Disadvantaged Learners in receipt of Pupil Premium will be given a discount on school visits at the discretion of the Headteacher and in line with the Charging & Remissions Policy. The procedure for all monies collected in school for trips/visits are in line with the school Finance Policy.

Where appropriate, some visits will have a financial plan that will be approved by the Headteacher before any authorisation of a visit can be made.

Monitoring, support, and review

As part of Parkside Middle School's commitment to best practice and quality assessment, regular meetings will take place to review visits, share best practice, and create an environment of support and collaboration. Moreover, a sample check of the processes being undertaken by the school in line with policy procedures will be conducted by the Chair of Governors at least annually.

Other Relevant Policies

- Health and Safety Policy
- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy (including Child Protection)
- Quality of Education Policy
- Finance Policy

Policy dated: September 2021

Review date: September 2023

Chair of Governors

Headteacher.....

Date.....