

# LOUDWATER COMBINED SCHOOL

## Educational Visits Policy

### 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 Loudwater Combined 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.
- 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.

### 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, Loudwater Combined School

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: '**Bucks Requirements and Guidance**' in Evolve resources (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE.)
2. Adopts National Guidance [www.oeapng.info](http://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 carry out visits in line with school policy (i.e. this document), 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 and approval

There are three 'types' of visit:

1. **Visits/activities within the 'Local Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day. (Enrichment)**  
These follow the 'Local Learning Area' Operating Procedure (Appendix 1).
2. **Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity.**  
These are entered on EVOLVE by the visit leader and submitted to the EVC who is also the head teacher for checking and approval.

### 3. Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.

As above, but the head teacher authorises and then submits 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 prior to planning, and certainly before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements.

**The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)** is Clare Cunnington, who will support, **mentor** 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 approving them. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

**The Head Teacher**, in their role as EVC has responsibility for authorising all visits, and for submitting all overseas, residential or adventurous activity visits to the LA for approval, via EVOLVE.

**The Governing Body's** role is that of a 'critical friend'. Residential visits are notified to the Curriculum committee in advance, whilst other visits may be reported on by curriculum leaders when updating the governors on their subject areas. Individual governors may request 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

**The Local Authority** is responsible for the final approval (via EVOLVE) of all visits that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

#### 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 ready 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

The school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a serious 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 the local authority.

## **Parental Consent**

Consent is not required for activities within the Local 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, e.g. after school fixtures. Parents have the option of consenting online.

Specific (i.e.one-off) parental consent must be obtained for all other visits. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents, so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. As above, parents may consent online.

## **Inclusion**

### **Charging / funding for visits**

Where there is a cost associated with a school visit we will request voluntary contributions from parents. For those pupils eligible for the pupil premium the school may be able to cover the cost of the visit. In other circumstances where parents may experience challenges in funding the cost of a visit they should speak to the school office to see what arrangements can be made. This may be through the school funding the visit or allowing the parent to pay in instalments. If the voluntary contributions received for a visit mean that the school will not be able to 'break even', this may result in the visit being cancelled.

### **Use of staff cars to transport pupils**

For local visits which are beyond walking distance eg. sports fixtures, we may ask staff if they are willing to take pupils in their own cars. They will need to sign a form, held in the office to confirm that their vehicle is road worthy and that they have all relevant insurance and MOT checks in place where needed. School staff are also covered under the school's insurance when transporting children. Where needed we will always ask parents to provide a booster car seat for their child.

## **Insurance**

We use the Local Authority insurance for all our school visits.

## **Other topics**

### **Dismissal of pupils after school activities**

Pupils will be dismissed by the activity leader into the care of their parents or a known adult that the school has been made aware is collecting the pupil.

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## **Appendix 1 – Local 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:

- do not require parental consent, although we will let you know that your child will be going out into the local learning area beforehand.
- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).
- do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE if these are ad-hoc activities

### **Boundaries**

This area includes, but is not limited to, the following frequently used venues: *e.g.*

- Kingsmead Park to the netball courts
- St Peters' Church
- Fennels Wood
- The area up to the London Road
- The walk to Flackwell Heath Library

### **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.).

**These are managed by a combination of the following:**

- The Head or Deputy Head must give verbal approval before a group leaves school.
- Those approved to lead visits are class teachers and others with qualified teacher status.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the 'School Learning Area' is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school, and a synopsis is in the School Prospectus.
- There will normally be a minimum of two adults, however, there will be increased levels of supervision for Foundation Stage pupils and any pupils whose additional needs made increased levels of support appropriate.
- 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 (e.g. 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 an Emergency Card
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.