

Educational Visits Policy



Date: January 2024

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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 Larkspur Primary 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 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, Larkspur Primary 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 school policy (ie 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

There are three types of visit:

1. Routine local visits in the 'Extended learning locality' (See Appendix 1).
2. Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity.
3. Visit that are overseas, and/or residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

Roles and responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE. They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head Teacher or EVC 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 Mrs K Anglesea, 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 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' (see National Guidance www.oeapng.info for additional information). 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 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.

Approval

The approval process is as follows for each type of visit:

1. Local visits and walks are risk-assessed in the same way as day trips. Staff complete an ESRA form and attach it to the Evolve risk assessment. This is then sent to the EVC as with all trips.
2. Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. These are entered on EVOLVE, and must be submitted to the EVC for checking at least two weeks in advance, and then forwarded to the Head for approval.
3. Visits that are overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity (see LA guidance for definition of 'adventurous') are then submitted by the Head to the LA for approval.

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 the local authority.

Educational Visits Checklist

Larkspur Primary School's Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities. 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'. Larkspur Primary School's Educational Visits Checklist may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources.

Parental Consent

The school obtains blanket consent at the start of each year for activities that fall within the 'Extended learning locality' (see Appendix 1). Parents sign an annual paper consent form permitting children to go on local walks and to use public transport.

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 sign a paper consent form.

Inclusion

At Larkspur we will risk assess each visit and consider the ratio of adults to pupils and any extra support we may need to put in place for particular pupils. We will make every effort to ensure that all pupils attend educational visits and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the safety of all pupils. We may need to ask a child's parent to accompany a trip where their child has a documented history of disruptive behaviour in order to keep all other pupils safe. It may be necessary to exclude a child if we have a history of facts (recorded incidents) and substantial evidence to demonstrate that the child disobeys instructions and could therefore put others at risk. If a child has mobility difficulties or is a wheelchair user alternative activities will be planned to ensure that the child is included in the visit, the activities will be modified for the child but not changed for the whole class.

Charging / funding for visits

Parents and carers will be asked for a voluntary contribution to cover the cost of a coach, venue or other costs of any educational visit.

Transport

Day trips from School will either use public transport or coaches. The coach company will always be one that we have used before and are happy with their service and provision.

Occasionally we will ask parents to transport their own children e.g. small groups going to sports venues. If parents decide to arrange car shares on the occasions we will have knowledge of this in advance. If at any time we use mini cabs there will always be two members of staff and we ask parental permission before the visit.

When using public transport staff will keep all children together where possible on the lower deck of a bus or in the same train carriage. The trip leader will ensure that all children are on the transport before it leaves and that all children are off before it continues its journey.

We do have a member of staff with a mini bus licence so we do hire large vehicles to self-drive.

Use of staff cars to transport pupils – *we follow the LA guidelines for use of staff cars*

Insurance

At Larkspur we are covered by the local authority blanket insurance for visits and trips.

Other Topics

Swimming Lessons

Two members of staff accompany the Y4 and Y5 class going swimming. The children are transported by coach and changing rooms are supervised by the two staff. The leisure Centre has group changing rooms for boys and girls.

Dismissal of pupils after evening activities

The trip leader will stay with pupils until all children are collected by Parents/ carers unless written permission is given by the parent for the child to walk home on their own (Y5 and Y6 only). A senior member of staff will also be present to support the trip leader. If visits are returning later than expected the school office will contact families via text to keep them informed of the situation.

Appendix 1 - Extended Learning Locality

Operating Procedure for Extended Learning Locality

The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our extended locality:

- 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).
- Use of the nature park

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- The Head, or 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 'Extended learning locality' is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school.
- There will normally be a minimum of two adults. There are no legal ratio requirements but we follow Gateshead Authority's guidelines of that EYFS should be 1:4 or 1:3, Y1-Y3 1:6 and Y4-Y6 1:10-15. The risk assessment process enables the staff member completing it to assess the needs of the individual class or group and allocate adults accordingly.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas', and know appropriate group management techniques.
- Pupils know 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 extended learning locality 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 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 'extended learning locality', the visit leader will carry either:
 - a) An LA Emergency 'Card' (see EVOLVE Resources), or
 - b) An OEAP National Guidance Emergency action card
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.