

Oldbury Park Primary School

Educational Visits Policy

Introduction and Link Statement to Employer Guidance

This Policy is directly linked to the under-pinning Legal Framework and the Employer Guidance.

Other relevant guidance can be found on:

OEAP GUIDANCE <https://oeapng.info/>

The Manifesto for Outdoor Learning Guidance forms the basis of the philosophy that supports visits, off-site activities and Learning Outside the Classroom. <https://www.lotc.org.uk/about/manifesto/>

<http://www.lotc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/G1.-LOtC-Manifesto.pdf>

Outdoor learning plays an increasingly important part in our everyday life at Oldbury Park. Whole staff training in Learning Outside The Classroom (LOTc) has included the part outdoor learning plays in the life of our school. The school supports the benefits and learning outcomes that are part of the aims and objectives of each activity. Risk Benefit Assessments to identify benefits and learning outcomes are part of the planning process for each activity or visit. Learning outcomes are recorded and communicated to the staff team involved, to the children and to parents.

Off-site activities and visits are reviewed and evaluated as required by Ofsted (See Learning Outside the Classroom – How Far should you Go?) as a key aspect of ensuring best value and quality assurance. This helps to ensure sound visit planning so that the school can see the value of the event.

The Role of the Head - Delegation of Responsibility to the EVC

The following guidance is provided by the DfE to be used when appointing an EVC. These criteria have been used in the selection of the EVC at Oldbury Park.

"The EVC should be specifically competent. The level of competence required can be judged in relation to the size of the school as well as the extent and nature of the educational visits planned. Evidence of competence may be through qualification, but more usually will be through the experience of practical leadership over many years of off-site education. Commonly, but not exclusively, such competence will be identified in a person on the senior management team of the school."

Such a person should be an experienced Visit Leader with sufficient status within the school to guide the working practice of colleagues leading off-site activities. Since one of the main functions of the EVC is to take a lead on assessing the competence of activity and visit leaders, it follows that the role should not be regarded as administrative.

The delegated EVCs for Oldbury Park Primary School are Teresa Marks and Margaret Phillips.

The following functions have been delegated to the EVCs from the responsibilities of the Head:

- having an understanding of the Manifesto for LOTc and its supporting rationale.
- ensuring that all outdoor learning activities comply with guidelines provided by Worcestershire County Council and are officially notified and approved as required by employer guidance.

- checking that all members of staff involved in LOtC are specifically competent to carry out responsibilities allocated to them. All staff should be clear about their role when taking part in the visit and should follow the instructions of the designated Visit Leader, who will have sole, over-all charge of the visit.
- ensuring that suitable child protection procedures are in place.
- arranging appropriate training for Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers (as required by employer guidance) so that they are competent to carry out such tasks as allocated..
- ensuring that sufficient time is given by staff to organise visits properly.
- ensuring that visit information has been shared with parents and that consent has been sought where necessary.
- checking that arrangements have been made for the medical needs and special educational needs and inclusion of all the children.
- arranging, through the Business Manager, that insurance arrangements are appropriate and are set up.
- ensuring that all visits are evaluated with regard to best value, teaching and learning, quality experiences, and address issues raised by any incidents that might inform the operation of future activities or visits.
- making sure that a set format for recording written risk benefit assessments is in place.

The Head, Deputy and EVC ensure that visits are effectively supervised with an appropriate level of staffing. Suitable transport arrangements are put in place and meet any regulatory requirements.

The Head and EVCs ensure that details related to the visit and participants (including staff) are accessible to a designated 24/7 emergency contact(s) at all times in case of a serious incident.

The Head and EVCs ensure that there are contingency plans in place should the visit plan be significantly changed or cancelled.

The Head and EVCs ensure that a preliminary visit is carried out where appropriate and reasonably practicable.

The Head and EVCs ensure that, where the activity involves a third party provider, appropriate assurances have been sought. The following national schemes make seeking provider assurances unnecessary: LotC Quality Badge, AALS licence, Adventure mark, or a clear management Statement of Competence.

The Head and EVCs have appropriate emergency procedures in place in case of a major incident. This includes a procedure to ensure that parents are appropriately informed in the event of a serious incident. Serious incidents will be reported to the LA Emergency Planning department to enable the employer's public relations unit to deal with the media.

The Role and Functions of the EVC

The EVC should:

- have an understanding of the Manifesto for LOtC and the supporting rationale.
- have attended such EVC training as recommended or required by the LA.
- ensure that off-site and LOtC activities meet employer guidance requirements.
- ensure that the Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers involved in visits are given training at an appropriate level to ensure that employers' guidance and establishment procedures are properly understood.
- have an Educational visit Policy.
- support the Head with approval and other decisions;
- ensure that off-site activities are led by competent leaders.
- check that assistant supervisors are competent to carry out the tasks to which they are assigned.
- monitor visit planning and sample monitor in the field as appropriate.
- organise the training of leaders and assistant leaders, including voluntary helpers.
- keep the Headteacher informed of issues arising and decisions made regarding all off-site visits.

- check that DBS checks are in place where required.
- provide sufficient guidance to visit and activity leaders regarding information for parents and parental consent.
- have a 24/7 emergency contact(s) for each and every visit and ensure that emergency arrangements are in place.
- be clear that medical and first aid issues are addressed
- ensure that emergency arrangements include emergency contact access to all relevant visit records, including medical and next of kin information for all members of the party and including staff.
- ensure that visits and LotC activities are reviewed and evaluated and this process will require the reporting of accidents and incidents.
- check that visit policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis and immediately following any incident or systems failure.
- keep up to date via EVC training events and employer information updates.

The Role of Governors

On each Headteacher Report to the Governors, all the educational visits that took place that term will be reported. If there have been any issues on any visits this will also be reported together with whether it was considered that the visits were value for money.

The Governor responsible for Educational visits will make sure that:

- they have access to and understand the LOtC Manifesto.
- they have access to both employer visit guidance and educational visit policy.
- they have access to training packages to support employer guidance and school policy.
- there is at least one but (best practice) two appropriate EVC's in place who have received employer-approved training.
- there are notification and approval processes both at school level and between the local authority.
- the educational visit policy supports inclusion.

The Role of Staff Leading LOtC Activities and Off-site Visits

Staff can access this policy and its linked guidance through the staff shared area in a folder marked Educational visits. Guidance on planning visits is available from the Head, Deputy Head or the EVC. A hard copy of this policy is kept in the Educational visits (Risk Benefit Assessments) folder in the Deputy Head's office. This is also available for Governors to access.

Staff can access the national documentation that support outdoor learning in the RBA folder e.g. HASPEV and supplements, Group Safety at Water Margins, and Weils disease.

Procedural Requirements for LOtC and Off-site Visits

Support is available to staff at every stage of planning and carrying out any LOtC activity and off-site visit. Once an activity has been identified by staff the following process is followed:

- the Headteacher and Deputy Head are informed of outline plans for the proposed activity and a possible date for discussion and approval.
- teachers plan staffing and visit details, including a pre-visit where required.
- the Visit Leader is identified and discusses the trip with the EVC.
- the Office staff are asked to make booking enquiries for the venue and organise transport.
- the activity is discussed with pupils and letters prepared and sent out to parents.
- the risk benefit assessment is prepared by the Visit Leader and shared with the EVC at least a week ahead of the trip.
- final details are arranged on the day before the visit (contact lists, medical equipment – inhalers, etc, first aid, cameras)

- pupils and adult helpers are briefed and risk benefit assessments are shared with them and signed by all adults.

Following the activity any issues arising from the visit are discussed with the Head and EVC. A review is carried out by teaching staff and any other staff involved and the RBA is annotated accordingly.

A checklist to support staff in this process is available in the staffroom. The RBA forms and procedures aim to make the planning of any activity as straightforward as possible.

We take full advantage of any national schemes that provide assurances regarding safety and quality of provision, eg there should be no need to seek assurances from adventure activity providers who hold the LOtC Quality Badge, or a current AALS Licence, or Adventure mark.

If a member of staff wishes to lead their own adventure activity we would require that their leader competence be confirmed by the holding of an NGB leadership / coaching award at an appropriate level, or by a "signing off" process by a technical adviser approved by the LA.

Arrangements for Monitoring

Educational visits are subject to approval and monitoring. All visits are discussed with the Head, Deputy Head or EVC as part of the planning process. The EVC checks on visit planning before a trip takes place and ensures that leaders are competent and the adult help is sufficient and appropriate. Most trips are across a year group so that there are opportunities for peer support and monitoring as part of the process. An experienced member of staff may join trips where a member of staff is inexperienced or not Educational visit trained (eg an NQT). Consultation with the LA adviser takes place through the EVC for advice if necessary before a trip goes ahead.

Procedures for staff induction, apprenticeship and succession planning

All staff involved in the organisation of visits must be specifically competent to carry out the tasks they are assigned. As a school we ensure the leader is VL trained and that a trained first aider is amongst the adults supporting the trip.

Copies of all documents are then updated regularly by the EVC and kept in the educational visits (Risk Benefit Assessments) folder in the Deputy Head's office for reference.

The EVC keeps records of staff training and books new staff on VL training. New staff are taken on visits as helpers but not given any responsibilities.

Risk management and risk benefit assessment processes and procedures

In the context of visits and off-site activities there is a requirement that risks are managed in accordance with the procedures and recommendations of LA guidance.

As part of our responsibilities to ensure effective risk benefit management of visits we ensure that:

- all staff are given specific training on risk management and risk benefit assessment in the context of off-site activities
- such training is kept up to date with HSE recommendations on "sensible risk management" based on proportionality and minimising bureaucracy
- there is a requirement that the Visit Leader involves other staff (and children where appropriate) in the planning and preparation of the visit, including the risk management and recording of the risk benefit assessments
- bureaucracy is minimised by adopting generic RBAs and making use of any exemplar, (event-specific RBAs as are provided by the LA)

Generic RBAs are made available to Visit Leaders as hard copies and on staff shared.

Requirements regarding provider assurances and preliminary visits

The LA guidance sets clear expectations on the extent to which visit leaders should seek assurances from providers. To reduce bureaucracy for both visit leaders and providers, the guidance should encourage leaders to take advantage of national schemes that have been established to eliminate the need for questionnaires and forms eg LOfC Quality Badge, AALS Licence, Adventuremark and management Statements of Competence. Holding one of the above is a credible assurance and visit leaders should seek no further verification.

Visit leaders should not ask for copies of risk assessment documentation from venues but they should gain an assurance that there is a risk assessment in place.

The school prefers that a preliminary visit is made where the visit leader has not been to the activity venue in person unless another experienced member of staff has visited the venue in the recent past and can give clear guidance. Telephoning the venue to check that nothing has changed that would compromise the risk benefit assessment is necessary in such a case.

The Use of Voluntary Helpers

A volunteer cannot be held accountable through a legal audit trail (as would exist were their involvement based on a contractual relationship). It is therefore the case that a volunteer helper should never be appointed as the visit leader.

Voluntary helpers can be used to assist visit leaders to support with groups at a venue. The minimum vetting procedures for volunteers is that a current DBS must be held. A volunteer is always under the supervision of the class teacher or teaching assistant and must have been briefed before leaving school. Volunteers do not assist with toileting children or with road crossings. This may only be done with a member of staff – teacher or teaching assistant.

Emergency procedure requirements

For most educational visits, the school office coordinates any emergency contact needs with the senior members of staff present in school. When an Educational visit extends beyond the hours of the school day, the EVC, in discussion with the Head, is responsible for ensuring that there is a nominated person(s) that can provide 24/7 cover as an emergency contact and that the person(s) so nominated have 24/7 access to all details of the visit. This should include medical and next-of-kin information regarding staff, as well as young people.

The nominated emergency contact should be someone who knows the full details of the trip, who can be available at any time to be in contact with the visit leader, and someone sufficiently experienced to be able to make decisions and give support.

In cases of residential visits the minimum number of emergency contacts should be two people so that there is always someone available.

Copies of visit plans are left with the school office (and taken off the premises each day by one of the emergency contact persons) to enable them to be accessed in the event of an emergency. A list of accompanying staff and volunteer helpers must be left at the school office by the visit leader.

Codes of Behavioural Conduct

Codes of behavioural conduct are always discussed with pupils before a visit with reminders about behaviour and expectations of behaviour being given when necessary during the visit itself. Such codes are explained to both adults and children before the visit, so reducing the opportunity for misunderstanding both the expectations and the sanctions that may be invoked where the code is breached. Pupils do not usually sign up to a "behavioural contract" for residential visits although verbal agreements are made with pupils where necessary.

In some cases parents may be made aware that they will be expected to take responsibility for removing their child if their behaviour is not as expected. The standards of behaviour on a visit are the same as they are during the normal working day at school. The school behaviour policy applies on an Educational visit in the same way as it does at school.

Inclusion

At Oldbury Park, we are fully committed to inclusion for every child regardless of their age, ability, racial background, faith, culture or physical needs.

For every pupil there is:

- a presumption of their entitlement to participate in every Educational visit
- a commitment for us as a school to ensure accessibility for all pupils on Educational visits through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- the need to be given the opportunity to integrate through participation with peers.

The school makes sure that the expectations of staff are reasonable, so that what is required of them is within their competence and normal work practices.

Teresa Marks – EVC

Margaret Phillips – Deputy Head and EVC

Sarah Boyce – Headteacher

Governor

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