

Educational Visits Policy

Forest Skies Federation



Approved by:

Matthew Davies

Naomi Haughton

Joanne Bingwa

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Context

Forest Skies Federation 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 Forest Skies 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:

- Enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- Provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone;
- Promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

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, Forest Skies Federation:

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 this school policy, 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 & Approval

There are two 'types' of visit:

1. **Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day.**
These follow the 'School Learning Area' Operating Procedure (Appendix 1).
2. **Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. E.g. visits to museums, farms, theme parks, theatres, etc.**
These are entered on EVOLVE by the visit leader and submitted to the EVC for checking. The EVC then submits to the Head 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 Headteacher, or the EVC, prior to planning and before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements, and should seek advice from the EVC where necessary. Risk assessments need to be submitted to the EVC via the EVOLVE system at least **7 working days prior to the visit**.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) 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 Headteacher. 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 those that are overseas, residential or adventurous to the LA for approval. These trip risk assessments need to be submitted two to three weeks before the event (sooner if dates and visit are known in advance) enabling any changes or errors to be corrected.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'. Governors will monitor the educational value of the outdoor education to ensure that high quality learning experiences are available to pupils which will enhance and extend the national curriculum programmes. They will ensure that school makes reasonable adjustments to include all children, including those with SEN. Governors will also ensure that school has suitable charging and remissions policies in place and have oversight of outdoor learning and educational visits to ensure that best value is obtained and financial regulations are adhered to.

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.

When planning category 2 visits, Tracey Bowman and Mrs Clark will be involved in the planning process. All visits require the approval of Tracey Bowman, and Mrs Clark will be available to help plan visits and make assessment of risk.

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 Headteacher 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

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.

Any incidents, however minor, that occur whilst on a trip should be reported to the EVC, this will aid with the planning and risk assessment of future trips. Incidents should also be recorded in line with the Critical Incidents Policy.

Administration of medicines must follow that of the school Medicine Administration Policy.

First Aid requirements should form part of the risk assessment. The level of first aid cover will be decided at the planning stage. Group leaders will be competent in basic first aid. The level of competence will depend on the nature of the visit. A full first aid kit will be taken on any visit, where additional first aid is not available. This will be determined through preliminary checks. Additional medications required by pupils must also be made available, along with the necessary protocol for use. Every visit will include a qualified first aider.

Educational Visits Checklist

Forest Skies Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities, and may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources. 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'.

Risk Assessments:

A comprehensive risk assessment will be carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit is put forward to the Headteacher. It will assess the risks that might be encountered on the visit and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Risk assessments will be recorded on the Evolve system in line with LA guidelines and RA will be kept and filed after the trip securely.

Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. They will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if he/ she lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve. The Headteacher /Governing Body will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and the risk assessment procedures.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the visit plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself. It is advised that staff prepare a "Plan B" option for trips where disruption may be caused by weather. This must also have a risk assessment and consent from parents.

Parental Consent

Consent is not required for activities within the School 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, eg. after school fixtures, etc. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents (via ParentMail, letters, etc), so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. Parents should provide emergency contact details. Letters of consent should also be provided when travelling by coach, along with the travel company details.

Inclusion

No child will be excluded from a school visit due to inability to contribute to the trip or on the ground of SEN. Activities should be available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs or protected characteristics. When a visit or activity is being planned, all reasonably practicable measures must be taken to include all young people. Every reasonable effort should be made to find a venue and activities that are both suitable and accessible and that enable the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

- To ensure the safety and inclusion of all children there may be times or occasions when we ask a parent to support their child on a school visit or trip to ensure that they get the best out of the experience and can access everything.
- There may be occasions where accessing the trip may not be felt suitable by the parent or school. In this cases a discussion will always be had an alternative put in place based on individual needs.

Charging / funding for visits

When organising school trips, visits or workshop activities which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost of the activity. All contributions are voluntary. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel the activity. If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, the child is still allowed to participate fully in the trip or activity as long as parental consent has been given. If appropriate and funds allow, the school may pay a proportion of the costs in order to support a visit. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded and the school will provide this information on request.

- Once a trip has been paid for unless cancelled by school or the venue the payment will be non refundable eg due to child's absence from school that day.

Transport

As a federation we follow the National Guidance and will seek out quotations before committing to a travel company. Any coach booked should have suitable seatbelts fitted for young children to wear. This will be checked by the supervising staff before setting off for their destination.

Use of staff cars to transport pupils – Staff transporting children in their cars do have relevant Business Insurance and car seats to be able to do this. Staff will have a clean driving licence and a minimum of 2 adults per car.

Insurance

The school is covered by the LA insurance and all visits are covered by the Employer's Liability and Public Liability Insurance.

Appendix 1 – School 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 but parents will be informed of up and coming events by ParentMail for information purposes
- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).
- should be recorded on EVOLVE

Boundaries

The boundaries of the School Learning Area are shown below: This area includes, but is not limited to, the following frequently used venues: *e.g.*

- Shops on Woodfield Avenue
- Birchwood Library
- Birchwood Shopping Centre
- The Birchwood Junior School
- Leslie Manser Primary school (Birchwood Carnival)
- The Lancaster School
- Diamond Park

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.

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- The Headteacher 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 '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. 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 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)
- When crossing relevant local roads, the zebra crossing must be used.

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). If the Headteacher is not available, contact will be made with the next member of SLT.
2. This nominated base contact either will 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 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 desktop exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.

Appendix 3
List of EVCs

School	EVC
Birchwood Junior School	Dianne Smith
	David Beveridge
	Melanie Burgess
The Lancaster Infant School	Dianne Smith
Woodlands Infant & Nursery School	Maxine Clark

ACTION CARD 1

GUIDANCE FOR GROUP LEADERS ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

THERE HAS BEEN A MAJOR INCIDENT

INSTRUCT ALL COLLEAGUES TO RECORD THEIR ACTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

ALLOCATE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES – as outlined by the emergency action cards

<u>INFORM</u> OBTAIN FACTS AND INFORMATION CALL THE EMERGENCY SERVICES USING 999 SYSTEM RETAIN ANY RELEVANT EQUIPMENT INFORM SENIOR SCHOOL STAFF CONTACT HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES REQUEST ASSISTANCE ON SITE AS NECESSARY PREPARE TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA	<u>ADULT 1 - INFORMS</u> • Group Leader
<u>SAVE</u> ADMINISTER FIRST AID WHERE POSSIBLE ESTABLISH A CONTACT POINT WITH THE EMERGENCY SERVICES TRAVEL WITH CASUALTIES TO HOSPITAL COMPLETE ACCIDENT FORMS	<u>ADULT 2 - SAVES</u> • Nominated adult to be shown on risk assessment
<u>CARE</u> CALL OTHER ASSISTANCE AS NECESSARY KEEP A RECORD OF WITNESSES KEEP OTHERS INFORMED OF SITUATION CONSIDER ABANDONMENT OF ACTIVITY ARRANGE FOR NON CASUALTIES TO RETURN TO SCHOOL REMAIN AVAILABLE TO EMERGENCY SERVICES AND SUPERVISING COLLEAGUES	<u>ADULT 3 - CARES</u> • Nominated adult to be shown on risk assessment

MAINTAIN VITAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AT ALL TIMES

ACTION CARD 2

GUIDANCE FOR SENIOR STAFF ON HEARING OF A MAJOR INCIDENT
AFFECTING AN OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITY

**THERE HAS BEEN A MAJOR INCIDENT
INSTRUCT ALL COLLEAGUES TO RECORD THEIR ACTIONS AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE**

**ALLOCATE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES – as outlined by the emergency action
cards**

<u>INFORM</u> OBTAIN FACTS AND INFORMATION ENSURE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN CALLED CONFIRM WHO IS IN CHARGE CONTACT HEADTEACHER/SENIOR STAFF CONTACT EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER CONTACT CHAIR OF GOVERNORS CONTACT LEA REPRESENTATIVES CONTACT OTHER STAFF PREPARE TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA	<u>ADULT 1 - INFORMS</u> • Headteacher • Assistant Headteacher • SENCo • School Administrator
<u>CARE</u> DECIDE WHO AND HOW TO TELL PARENT OF CHILDREN ON THE VISIT ESTABLISH INCIDENT ROOM ESTABLISH ROOM FOR RELATIVES REMAIN AVAILABLE TO SUPERVISING COLLEAGUES	<u>ADULT 2 - CARES</u> • If not used above then Assistant – then SENCo

MAINTAIN VITAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AT ALL TIMES

USEFUL CONTACTS

As part of the emergency plan, this list of contacts should be obtained as a matter of course. Telephone numbers can be added to this page and the whole list MUST be updated regularly and frequently.

As a matter of urgency there will be a need for emergency telephone lines. Contact the Emergency Planning Officer for Lincolnshire who is able to make these arrangements with British Telecom.