

Rickleton Primary School



External Visits

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Review Date	Changes made	Ratification Date by Governing Body
Jan 2024	Unchanged	Jan 2024
Jan 2025	Unchanged	Jan 2025

External Visits Policy

The policy and guideline refer to all external visits involving children and young people from Rickleton Primary School. This is a legal requirement. The law requires an employee to take all reasonable measures so far as is reasonably practicable. Sunderland City Council had adopted the national guidance published by the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) on the website www.oeapng.info, which provides detailed guidance about many aspects of off-site visits and outdoor learning.

The head teachers agreement must be obtained before a visit takes place.

External visits are defined as events that involve children and young people being away from their normal school, while in the care of the school. This includes educational visits, outings, school trips, community-based activities and out-of-centre activities such as: local parks, museums, libraries and sports facilities; cultural, educational, recreational and exchange trips; sport and outdoor activities outside the school grounds; residential; field trips.

(External Visits Policy and Guidance-Code of Practice, Sunderland City Council, Dec 2011, section 1)

To download this External Visits Policy please follow the web address https://evolve.edufocus.co.uk/evco10/document_download.asp?fileid=241

Many directives in this policy have been taken from this guidance and used in our practice.

The planning and preparation of External Visits must include measures to safeguard children, young people and accompanying adults from harm.

Planning

When planning any visit, may it be to the local park, museum, swimming pool, or a residential stay, where planning is always crucial, a **Risk Assessment must take place**. We must be satisfied that any risks are minimized. Depending upon the level of Category (1, 2 or 3) will mean the difference in the level of documentation which is required.

Good planning and management of activities should be about reducing risks to an acceptable level, taking in to account the potential benefits. Pupils should not be placed in situations that expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be contained then the visit **must not** take place.

Risk management should be largely a common-sense process centered upon competent staff. It should focus on significant risks, not trivial ones, and it should not become a restrictive and onerous bureaucratic exercise. It should be considerate of up to date regulations stipulated with regard to any COVID pandemic restrictions and other national and local advice in place at the point of the educational visit taking place.

Category of visits

Approval is be sought for all visits using the External Visits Advisory Service (based at Derwent Hill Outdoor Centre).

This is done via EVOLVE, the electronic system (www.sunderland.gov.uk/visits). Discussion about the Category type should be made with the Educational Visits Coordinator.

When using EVOLVE approval should be made at least 3 weeks before a planned visit- longer if the visit is unusual or complex, such as a residential. Where a series of visits is planned (e.g. a regular after-school canoeing club), then a single approval may be agreed for the entire series.

Category	Definition	Requirement for notification & approval
Category	Straightforward routine visits	EVOLVE may be used

1	defined as Category 1 by the school, covered by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A generic risk assessment, regularly reviewed, including football/netball/sports fixtures. • Informed parent/carer consent. • School operating procedures. 	but is not required. School “Application for approval” form and Risk Assessment to be completed at least 3 weeks before the visit, and passed to the EVC with all relevant documentation.
Category 2	Visits requiring enhanced planning with event-specific risk assessment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All residential visits not in Category 3. • These events may include; Coastal visits, Botanical Gardens, museum visits, Dukes House Wood, etc. (Discuss with EVC) 	Must be authorised by the Headteacher/ Manager, using EVOLVE. This provides automatic notification to the Council of the visit.
Category 3	Higher risk visits, defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits outside the UK. • Visits which include adventure activities. • Visits to remote or hazardous locations. 	Must be authorised by the Headteacher/ Manager, using EVOLVE at least four weeks* before the visit, and then approved by the Council.

(N.B. Four week notice allows time for any issues arising to be dealt with and to allow the Council approval to be given. For more complex visits, more time should be allowed.)

The group leader is to complete **all** paperwork, downloaded on to the EVOLVE website, checked by the EVC. Notification will be given by the Advisory Service before the visit can be signed off by the Head teacher. A list of documents will be listed on the EVOLVE website.

School is advised not to sign contracts with providers or to make commitments to participants or parents/carers until they are sure that requirements for approval can be met.

Group leaders/teacher in charge

Group leaders should be competent to monitor risks throughout the visits. They are responsible for the supervision of a group of children during a visit. They should ensure that:

- Adequate procedures are in place for safeguarding children from harm, including DBS disclosures for staff and volunteers.
- Risk assessments are completed and that adequate resources are available for implementing the identified control measures, including regulations for COVID 19.
- Planning and preparation have been properly completed.
- Ratios of staff to participants are appropriate.
- Appropriate travel arrangements are in place.
- There is adequate and relevant insurance cover.
- Contingency and emergency plans are in place and are known to all involved.

Group leaders should:

- Complete the EVOLVE procedures.
- Complete a risk assessment.
- Include a list of attending children and adults.
- Read and have a copy of Emergency Procedures.
- Acquire parental consent.
- Download documents on to EVOLVE website.
- The EVC and Head teacher will then check information and then give approval, if satisfied with arrangements.
- For further information refer to checklist for group leaders.

All documentation to be downloaded at least 4 weeks before, depending upon the type of external visit.

Risk assessments

Risk assessments are a legal requirement for external visits as it is for all work activities. Generic risk assessments are kept for on-going activities such as sport leagues and activities. A written visit risk assessment is needed and kept on central file in the school office, including the particular risks of the venue and visit programme, travel arrangements, the medical and behavioural needs of the group and the expected environmental conditions during the visit.

Review and Evaluation

All visits should be reviewed after the event, with particular regard to any accidents, incidents or other significant occurrences during the visit, followed by any necessary review of procedures and/or risk assessments.

Parental consent

The amount of information parents/carers need will depend upon the type of visit planned and the level of risk involved. For visits, including residential, parents/carers should be provided with detailed information, and specific written consent is obtained. For more information which may be included please refer to External Visits Policy and Guidance-Code of Practice, Sunderland City Council, Feb 2009, section 3.2.2.

Transport

The group leader must take reasonable steps to check that any transport used during the visit is suitable and safe, and that any council or legal requirements are met. A risk assessment should be made. Carriers are obliged to ensure the safety of passengers, but it is the responsibility of the group leader. When traveling by road, the law regarding the use of seatbelts and child seats must be followed.

The number of adults supervising a group on a coach should be determined by the risk assessment, including the level of supervision needed should it be necessary to disembark in the event of a breakdown or emergency. Children should wear a seat belt in buses and coaches when they are fitted.

If staff or parent/carers use their own cars the school should check that the following documents are in order: car tax, insurance (staff insurance should cover business use), MOT and driving licence. A clear distinction should be made between informal arrangements between parents/carers and formal arrangements made by the school with parent-drivers. Drivers should not be put in a position where they are alone with a child.

The council's Minibus Operation Code of Practice must be followed in regard to teacher transporting pupils in a minibus. It should be noted

that there are no Council employees classed as volunteer drivers, and so all drivers require a D1 licence to drive a minibus.

Supervision and ratios

There should always be a qualified teacher with overall responsibility for supervision during a visit. This teacher will usually lead and accompany the group, but there are some circumstances for another adult to take this role. This person should be employed by the school.

Children must be adequately and effectively supervised at all times by an appropriate number of adults, who have been assessed as suitable and competent to carry out their roles. Ratios and other arrangements for the effective supervision of children should be determined as part of the risk assessment process by proper consideration of factors including:

- Age (including the developmental age) of the group.
- Gender issues.
- Ability of the group (including special needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics, etc)
- Nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skills levels involved, as well as the time of the year and prevailing conditions)
- Staff competence.

Ratios for residential should take account of the 24-hour responsibility, the need for staff breaks and reserve capacity, and gender issues. The following are recommended minimum ratios for staff to accompany residential visits:

School years 1 to 3: 1 adult for every 6 children.

School years 4 to 6: 1 adult for every 10-15 children.

A minimum of 2 staff should accompany a residential group.

Safeguarding – child protection

The planning of visits, including risk assessment, should include consideration of safeguarding issues, and must follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. All staff have a responsibility to listen to and take seriously what young people are saying in relation to disclosures, for example about:

- Safety/well-being at home
- Safety/well being whilst on visit

- Safety/well being of a friend or another child
- A staff member at the activity
- A staff member accompanying them

If a child makes a disclosure, staff should:

- Listen carefully to what they are saying
- Not make any promises to the child
- Immediately share concerns with the school's designated person.

First Aid

The availability of a first aider can be an important control measure in reducing risk. This means the cover should be proportional to the risk rather than the size of the group. If the visit is to a remote location where medical support is not immediately available it is important that a member of staff is a current First Aider. All visits for the Early Years Foundation Stage must include a person with a current paediatric first aid certificate.

Medication

Staff should **never** give a non-prescribed medicine to a child unless there is specific prior written permission from the parent/carers. Group leaders should always be aware of any medical needs, and relevant emergency procedures, and should be aware of how to manage common medical conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, asthma and allergies. A copy of any individual health care plans should be taken on visits in the event of information being needed in an emergency.

Use of emergency inhalers

School have their own, internal training to ensure asthma is taken seriously and inhalers are administered effectively. At least one staff member attending the visit should have undertaken this training.

From 1st October 2014 the Human Medicines (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2014 will allow schools to buy salbutamol inhalers, without a prescription, for use in emergencies.

The emergency salbutamol inhaler should only be used by children, for whom written parental consent for use of the emergency inhaler has been given, who have either been diagnosed with asthma and prescribed an inhaler, or who have been prescribed an inhaler as reliever medication.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-asthma-inhalers-for-use-in-schools

The inhaler can be used if the pupil's prescribed inhaler is not available (for example, because it is broken, or empty).

Emergencies

Group leaders should prepare for emergencies during external visits, giving appropriate consideration to contingencies that might be required if things go wrong.

- Traveling (e.g. breakdown/accident, child becoming ill on board on a coach).
- Staying at a residential centre (e.g. a child becomes ill during the night).
- Thought given to the possible implications to staffing levels if a member has to depart for any reason (e.g. to return home or to accompany a child to hospital).

An emergency base contact should be established, usually back at the school, or another member of school staff if the visit is residential. The role is to act as the communication link between group and school, and possibly parents/carers, and may involve helping to overcome any difficulties that arise during the visit.

They should have immediate access to all the visit details, including:

- An accurate list of all group members (including adults).
- Medical consent information.
- Group's itinerary.
- Parents/carers contact details.
- Contact details of group leader and others, including mobile phone numbers.
- Contact details of any accommodation.
- Contact details of any tour operator involved, such as coach companies.
- Copies of insurance documents.

- Contact details of leader's next of kin.
- 24 hour contact details of the Head Teacher, and other relevant staff.
- **Contact details of the Council's Emergency Control Room (0191 553 1998/1999)**

The group leader should always have relevant group information accessible during a visit, and should ensure that other staff have access to group lists, parent/carers contact details, relevant consent form information, insurance details and emergency telephone contact details including the Council's Emergency Control Room.

Emergency response

In the event of a serious incident, or an incident involving the media, or when the school requires the support of council officers, the Director of Children's Services should be informed immediately on **0191 561 1355**. In the event of death or serious injury (or an injury which might involve an employee in more than 3 days off work), the Council's Health and Safety team should be contacted immediately on **0191 561 1738/2375**.

Out of office hours contact Council's Emergency Control Room should be contacted on **0191 553 1998/1999**.

Accident/ Incident Reporting

The Council's Incident Reporting Procedure must be followed, including sending IR1 Incident Report forms to the Corporate Health and Safety Team as soon as possible. Serious incidents must be notified immediately. Note the names and details of any witnesses and, if possible, obtain a signed written account from them. Any equipment involved in a serious incident must be kept for evidence.

After any major incident, school should undertake a review of the incident, their risk assessments and emergency procedures. It is also good practice to record and learn from 'near misses'.

Farm visits

Taking children to a farm should be carefully planned. The risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm

machinery, hazards associated with E coli 0157 food poisoning and other infections- washing facilities **must be** available for the group.

Using an external provider

If an external provider of activities is to be used, their provision must be checked as part of the risk assessment for the visit. During the visit, the group leader retains responsibility for the group at all times and must ensure that:

- Activity risk assessments have been carried out by the provider.
- Providers are responsible in the safe delivery of all activities.
- Any concern over health and safety is conveyed to the provider immediately.
- If any concern that are participants are at significant risk during an activity, the group leader at a safe point can stop the activity.

Assessing Venues and Providers

The OEAP National Guidance includes guidance on Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances.

The Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge provides sufficient reassurances that a provider meets nationally required minimum standards of safety and quality. Details of a provider's status can be checked on the Quality Badge website

www.loctqualitybadge.org.uk

If a provider of activities does not hold the Quality Badge, then detailed checks should be made to ensure that it meets required standards. The most straightforward way of doing this is to use a Provider Statement Form (available on the External Visits Advisory Service website and on EVOLVE).

Emergency Procedures

If an emergency occurs on a school visit the following points need to be considered.

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible

- Summon the emergency services
- Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention if necessary
- Ensure that all the group are safe and looked after
- Ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following emergency procedures
- Ensure that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together
- Notify the police if necessary
- Notify the British Embassy/Consulate if an emergency happens abroad.
- Inform the school contact. The school contact number should be accessible at all times during the visit.
- Details of the incident need to be passed on to school should include; nature, date and time of incident; names of casualties and details of their injuries; names of others involved so that parents can be reassured; action taken so far; action yet to be taken (and by whom);
- Notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required (the school contact can be used to do this)
- Notify tour operator
- Ascertain telephone numbers for future calls. Mobiles may be subject to technical difficulties and should not replace usual communication procedures
- Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence. Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident
- No-one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to families. Media enquiries should be referred to a designated media contact in the home area
- No-one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.

Emergency procedures for school contact

- Prior to the visit, the name and school/home/mobile telephone numbers of a **school contact** should be identified. It is advisable to arrange a second school contact as a reserve.
- The Head Teacher and Group Leader should bear in mind that the contact line may become busy in the event of an incident and that alternative numbers to ring would be useful.

If an emergency occurs the main considerations for the **school contact** to consider include:

- Ensuring the Group Leader is in control of the emergency and establishing if any assistance is required from the school base.
- Contacting the Head / Deputy Head and liaising with them.
- It is a priority that the Head / Deputy or **school contact** speak personally to the parents of any student who has suffered injury or mishap.
- Contacting parents. Details of parents' contact numbers need to be available at all times while the group is on the visit. The **school contact** should act as a link between the group and parents. Parents should be kept as well as informed as possible at all stages of an emergency. Contact must be established even though with modern technology news may already have broken.
- The **school contact** should act as a link between the group and the Head / Deputy Headmaster/ Leadership Meeting and arrange for the group to receive assistance if necessary. The Head will contact the Clerk of Governors.
- A full record of the incident must be kept.
- If a serious incident occurs, the **school contact** should liaise with the designated media contact (Head / School Development Director) as soon as possible. In the event of an emergency all media enquiries should be referred to the media contact. The name or names of any casualties should not be given to the media.

External Visits Advisory Service

The Council's External Visits Advisory Service is based at Derwent Hill Outdoor Education & Training Centre, and may be contacted by phone on 017687 72005 or by email to EVAS@sunderland.gov.uk.

The Advisory Service:

- Provides advice and guidance to EVCs about planning visits, and clarification when required regarding this Code of Practice or the OEAP National Guidance.
- Provides information on the Advisory Service pages of the Derwent Hill website www.derwenthill.co.uk and on the EVOLVE system at www.sunderlandvisits.org.uk
- Monitors and approves visits using the Evolve online system.
- Provides training for EVCs, Visit leaders and Group Leaders.

Policy Reviewed A Woodhead January 2024