



## Learning Outside (including trips and visits) Policy

March 2016

### Framework

The Staff and Governors of Cherry Tree Primary School acknowledge the immense value of offsite visits and related activities to young people, and fully support and encourage those that are well planned and managed.

All visits and Learning out of the Classroom (LOtC) activities will be planned in such a way as to ensure that the benefits and intended learning outcomes are clearly identified and understood by the supervising adults beforehand and can form the basis for objective evaluation afterwards.

This establishment uses Hertfordshire's Internet-based system, 'EVOLVE', to facilitate the efficient planning, management, approval, and evaluation of visits. All staff that lead or accompany visits can access their own 'EVOLVE' account, which is set up by their Establishment's Visits Coordinator (EVC).

Arrangements and considerations for all visits and LOtC activities will be recorded on 'EVOLVE' using generic risk assessments.

### Scope and Remit

It is a legal expectation that employees must work within the requirements their employer's guidance. This policy relates to Hertfordshire's "Guidance for the Management of LOtC and Offsite Visits" and it is the expectation that all staff will follow its requirements

This policy applies to all members of Cherry Tree Primary School staff who take responsibility for children and young people participating in learning and recreational activities in environments that are different from where the young people are usually based. It therefore applies when organising and supervising children and young people taking part in off-site activities and visits, as well as when taking part in on-site activities outdoors.

This policy provides the key reference for sound planning for learning and recreational activities that involve taking groups of children and young people away from their usual operational base. It should be implemented when using places such as:

- the establishment's own grounds
- the local environment
- places further afield e.g. visits to local libraries, theatres and museums etc.
- residential venues
- learning ventures abroad

and involves any one of the following:

- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC);



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- facilitating experiences for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- deploying staff who will supervise or facilitate experiences of or for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base.

Staff must ensure the young people are supervised in accordance with the contents of this policy, regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), health and safety responsibilities lie with the employer who has delegated this to the Headteacher of the school.

The Head teacher will ensure that: -

- All off-site visits and LOtC activities comply with employer guidance and are notified or submitted for formal approval as required;
- All staff involved are competent to carry out such responsibilities as they may be allocated;
- There is a clearly designated person, either him/her self or another suitable member of staff, as the EVC and that the designated person meets employer requirements, including undertaking EVC Training as recommended or required by the employer;
- If taking part in the visit or activity as either an Assistant Leader or as a group member, They is clear about their role and that they should follow the instructions of the designated Visit Leader (who will have sole charge of the visit);
- Suitable child protection procedures are in place, including vetting at an appropriate level of all voluntary helpers. Where access to the young people is regular or significant, DBS checks must be in place as required;
- They is assured that the EVC, Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers are appropriately trained and competent to carry out such tasks as they are allocated;
- Sufficient time is assigned for staff to organise visits properly;
- A culture of apprenticeship /succession planning, to ensure sustainable visits and the development of competent visit leaders and EVCs, is supported within the establishment;
- The EVC is supported in ensuring that visits are effectively supervised with an appropriate level of staffing;
- The EVC is supported in ensuring that visit information has been shared with parents and that consent has been sought where necessary;
- Arrangements are made for the medical needs and special educational needs of all the young people and staff;
- Inclusion issues are addressed;
- Suitable transport arrangements are in place and meet any regulatory requirements;
- Insurance arrangements are appropriate;
- Details related to the visit (including person details of both participants staff) are accessible at all times to a designated 24/7 emergency contact(s) in case of a serious incident;



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- That there are contingency plans in place should the visit plan be significantly changed or cancelled (Plan B);
- Staff are aware of the need to obtain best value. Appropriate consideration must be given to financial management, choice of contractors, and contractual relationships;
- Some visits may require a preliminary visit e.g. a venue that has not been visited before;
- A risk assessment must be undertaken before any trip or visit takes place;
- Where the activities or visit involves a third party provider, appropriate assurances will be sought e.g. LOTC Quality Badge, AALS licence, Adventuremark, or a clear management Statement of Competence;
- All visits are evaluated with regard to best value, teaching and learning, quality experiences, addressing issues raised by any serious incident and to inform the operation of future visits;
- The visit policy includes appropriate emergency procedures in case of a major incident
- The visit policy includes a procedure to ensure that parents are appropriately informed in the event of a serious incident;
- Serious incidents are reported to the employer as required by employer guidance, meeting the requirements of RIDDOR.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) will: -

- Be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the school and will be on the senior management team.
- Attend training, and update training, as required by the local authority (LA).
- Support the Headteacher in ensuring that competent staff are assigned to lead and accompany visits.
- Ensure that a policy is in place for offsite visits and LOTC activities, that it is updated as necessary, and is readily available to staff, (e.g. via EVOLVE) and that procedures should aim to minimise bureaucracy, taking full advantage of any national schemes that provide assurances regarding safety and quality of provision.(e.g. there should be no need to seek assurances from adventure activity providers who hold the LOTC Quality Badge, or a current AALS Licence, or Adventuremark).
- Ensure Offsite and LOTC activities meet employer guidance requirements.
- Ensure the Headteacher, Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers understand that all staff involved in visits require access to training at an appropriate level to ensure that employers' guidance and establishment procedures are properly understood.
- Ensure Offsite activities must be led by competent leaders and that assistant supervisors are competent to carry out the tasks to which they are assigned.
- Organise the training of leaders and assistant leaders, including voluntary helpers.
- Support the Head/Manager with approval and other decisions.
- Monitor visit planning and arrange for sample monitoring in the field as appropriate.
- Ensure DBS checks are in place where required.
- Provide sufficient guidance to visit and activity leaders regarding information for parents and parental consent.

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- Ensure there is a 24/7 emergency contact(s) for each and every visit and that emergency arrangements are in place.
- Ensure 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; this process will require the reporting of accidents and incidents.
- Ensure that visit policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis and immediately following any serious incident or systems failure.
- Keep up to date via EVC training events and employer information updates.

The Visit/Activity Leader will: -

- Have the overall responsibility for supervision and conduct of the visit. They must be an employee and not a volunteer.
- Be competent to take on such responsibilities and tasks as may be allocated or required for the duration of the visit/activity and be formally approved to do so.
- Plan and prepare for the visit, taking a lead on risk management. Cherry Tree School sees it as good practice to involve all participating staff in the planning and risk management process for any given offsite visit or LOtC activity to ensure wider understanding. It is also seen as good practice to involve young people in these processes wherever appropriate;
- Define the roles and responsibilities of other staff (and young people) to ensure effective supervision, and appoint a deputy wherever possible;
- Ensure that where any accompanying staff includes someone with a close relationship to a member of the group, there are adequate safeguards to ensure that this will not compromise group management;
- Ensure that child protection issues are addressed. e.g. DBS checks;
- Collate, make available and disseminate relevant information to supporting staff, parents and young people as appropriate
- Make sure there is access to first aid at an appropriate level;
- Arrange pre-visit information meetings where appropriate;
- Evaluate all aspects of the visit, both during and after the event;
- Ensure that staff and other supervisors have been appropriately briefed on:
  1. the young people making up the group, including age, health characteristics, capabilities, special educational needs, behaviour and any other information that seems relevant in the context of the planned activities.
  2. the nature, location and duration of the activity.
- Ensure the visit is effectively supervised; the overarching duty of care remains with the accompanying school staff, even when partial responsibility is shared with a provider. Should the provider run the activity in a way that causes concern, the accompanying staff should consider stopping the activity at the first appropriate moment. Such an intervention will need to be used with great sensitivity and discretion to ensure that it does not result in young people being put at greater risk;



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- Ensure that all staff and any third party providers have access to emergency contact and emergency procedure details.

### *Member of Governing Body*

The Chair of Governors is designated as specifically responsible for Offsite Visits and LOtC activities.

This person's role is to "enable and ensure" by acting as a "critical friend".

They will ensure that: -

- They have an understanding of how outdoor learning supports a wide range of learning outcomes;
- There is an EVC in place that meets with employer requirements;
- There are formal notification and approval procedures in place that meet with employer recommendations and requirements;
- The school's Learning Outside policy supports the principles of inclusion;
- There are monitoring procedures in place.

### **Competence**

Competence is a combination of experience, training/qualifications and common sense.

The competence of the visit leader is the single most important contributory factor in the safety of participants.

Consideration will be given to the following when assessing the competence of a member of staff to lead a visit:

- a) What experience has the leader in leading or accompanying similar or other visits?
- b) Is the leader competent in planning and managing visits?
- c) What are the leader's reasons for undertaking the visit?
- d) Is the leader an employee at the establishment?
- e) Does the leader have the ability to manage the pastoral welfare of participants?
- f) Does the leader exhibit sound decision making abilities?
- g) Is the leader aware of all relevant guidelines and able to act on these?

The school undertakes to ensure that all such staff, will undergo an induction process that typically entails Visit Leader Awareness training, either in-house or from the LA's Offsite Visits Adviser, access to (and training where required) the establishment's 'EVOLVE' site and practical experience of accompanying visits and LOtC activities *before* being tasked with leading a visit for themselves.

### **Planning**

The extent of planning required is related to the complexity of the visit, based on STAGED: - Staffing, Timings, Activity, Group, Environment, Distance.

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## *Risk Assessment*

Risks are expected to be reduced to an *acceptable* or *tolerable* level, and not necessarily eliminated. Planning should achieve a rational balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity.

For every visit there should be a risk assessment in place. The person writing the risk assessment can use a generic one if appropriate, but should add and modify it so that it is 'event-specific' and review and re-use it as required. They should consider the question: 'What are the really important things that we need to do to keep us safe?' It should focus on those issues that are specific to the individual event, taking into account the needs of the group (including special and medical needs), the experience and competency of the staff team, and the leader in the context of the event.

If using a provider with a national accreditation e.g. LOtC Quality Badge, AALS licence and Adventuremark' then there is no need for them to provide risk assessments.

## *Preliminary Visits*

Wherever reasonably possible, it is good practice for the Visit Leader to make a preliminary visit to a venue or provider beforehand in order for them to familiarise themselves with the layout and surroundings, and any site-specific procedures or issues which may have an impact on the visit or members of the group.

Within the UK, highest priority for preliminary visits will be where no serving member of staff from the school has visited before, then when the Visit Leader has no experience of the venue/activity.

For overseas visits, advantage should be taken of any offers by tour operators for "leaders' orientation"-type visits.

## **Staffing and Supervision**

The LA requires establishments to ensure there is an **appropriate level of supervision at all times** for all visits and that such supervision is 'effective'.

The suggested ratios are:

- Nursery: 1 adult to every 2 children if visit is off site. 1 adult to 4 for local visits depending on the group of children. The risk assessment should consider the appropriate ratio.
- Reception: 1 adult to four or five children. The risk assessment should consider the appropriate ratio depending on the activity.
- Yr 1, 2 and 3: 1 adult to 6 children (although Year 1 may need more depending on activity). Similarly Yr 3 could be higher depending on activity.
- Yr 4, 5, and 6: 1 adult to 10 children.

For all visits the visit leader, EVC and Headteacher will make a professional judgement regarding the number and suitability of staffing on an individual visit basis after consideration of the following factors:

- the type, level, and duration of activity;

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- the nature and requirements of individuals within the group, including those with additional needs;
- the experience and competence of staff and other adults;
- the venue, time of year and prevailing/predicted conditions;
- the contingency or 'Plan B' options.

A visit must not go ahead where either the Visit Leader, EVC, or Headteacher is not satisfied that an appropriate level of supervision exists.

Staff who are assigned to support the special needs of an individual cannot be included in the overall staffing ratio. Their responsibility should not include the wider group.

Particular consideration should be given to the additional implications that may arise if staff are to be accompanied by family members (or partners) on visits.

Staff and volunteers who work *frequently* or *intensively* with, or have regular access to young people or vulnerable adults, must undergo an enhanced DBS check as part of their recruitment process. For the purpose of this policy:

- '*frequently*' is defined as 'once a week or more'.
- '*intensively*' is defined as 3 times in a 30 day period or overnight (2am - 6am).

### *Remote Supervision*

Young people must be supervised throughout all visits. At times they may be unaccompanied by a member of staff or other responsible adult, e.g. D of E expeditions, 'down time' in a shopping mall, etc. This is known as 'remote' supervision.

'Remotely supervised' activities can bring purposeful educational benefits, and the progression from dependence to independence is to be encouraged.

In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

The decision to allow remote supervision should be based on professional judgement taking into account such factors as:

- prior knowledge of the individuals (including their maturity and levels of responsibility);
- venue and conditions;
- the activity taking place;
- preparatory training;
- the competence of the supervising staff;
- the emergency systems in place.

### *Use of Voluntary Helpers*

The use of parents and other adults with a clear association with the school, as helpers for on offsite visits or LOtC activities, is seen as a valuable means of encouraging or maintaining closer links with the local community and accessing a wider set of skills and experience than may exist amongst the school's staff.

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Such volunteers will need to understand and consent to the fact that they will be answerable to the visit leader.

It is good practice that all adult helpers and volunteers are subject to DBS checking; however this may not be required where there is no possibility for unsupervised direct contact exists.

Clear DBS-checks must have been returned before a volunteer adult helper may participate in a residential visit or activity.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Staff involved in a visit must be aware of, and adhere to, the school's policy on emergency procedures.

Visit Leaders should complete and carry an Emergency Contacts sheet.

They should have a charged mobile phone with them which has credit.

For all "out of hours" and residential visits there will be a nominated person that can provide 24/7 cover as an Emergency Contact and that the person so nominated will have 24/7 access to all details of the visit. This will include medical and next-of-kin information regarding staff as well as young people.

### **First Aid**

It is not always necessary that qualified First Aider accompanies an offsite visit unless the visit is for foundation stage children, in which case one of the adults accompanying the group must have a current pediatric first aid certificate. Visit leaders must ensure that they have a first aid kit with them. It is a legal requirement that all minibuses must carry a first aid kit.

### **Approval of Visits**

Approval is delegated to the Headteacher for all visits.

However the following types of visit are required to be notified to the LA: -

- Overseas (anywhere that involves crossing a substantial area of open sea, including Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Hebrides and the Channel Islands)
- Those involving one or more adventurous activities to be led by a member of establishment staff.

### **Consent**

Section 35 of the Education Act 2004 states: '*Where a visit is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time, then parental consent is not necessary although it is recommended good practice to ensure that parents are informed.*'

Annual consent is appropriate for regular routine activities that take place during normal school hours.

For all other visits, consent should be obtained on an individual visit basis. Information provided to parents prior to granting consent should include full details of the activities and any other significant information.

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## **Insurance**

In addition to the standard public liability cover which Cherry Tree School has in place Hertfordshire County Council has taken out 'blanket' personal accident cover / travel insurance for all trips/visits at home or abroad. For travel within the European Union (plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland), all participants must hold a valid EHIC (European Health Insurance Card). See [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

## **Inclusion**

This establishment policy endorses the following principles:

- A presumption of entitlement to participate
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- Integration through participation with peers.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled participants because of their disability, without material or substantial justification.

Visit Leaders are required to make reasonable adjustments to avoid participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage.

However, the Disability Discrimination Act does not require responsible bodies to place employees or participants at inappropriate risk if a health and safety issue arises.

It is also the case that the adjustments made to include a disabled young person should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity.

Expectations of staff must be reasonable, so that what is required of them (to include a given young person) is within their competence and normal work practices.

## **Codes of Behavioural Conduct**

Cherry Tree Primary School expects all pupils to behave in line with the behaviour guidelines and expectations. These will be explained to pupils and those in a position of parental support before the visit, so reducing the opportunity for misunderstanding both expectations and the sanctions that may be invoked where the code is breached.

Parents will be expected to sign up to a "behavioural contract" for all residential visits.

## **Transport**

### *Private Cars*

Where a private (staff only) car is to be used to transport young people then this must be approved by the Headteacher.

### *Coaches*

The school uses various coach companies with fitted seatbelts for visits determined by reliability and cost.

### *Minibuses*

The school does occasionally hire a minibus from Roundabout Transport. All drivers of the minibus must have undertaken a Minibus Drivers Assessment Scheme training, and keep that



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training current (re-test every 5 years). This applies to pre & post 1997 licence holders operating under the section 19 permit scheme as 'volunteer drivers'. Post 1997 licence holders may drive a minibus provided:

- Drivers are aged 21 years or over.
- They have held their category B driving licence for at least two years.
- The minibus is being used by a non-commercial body for social purposes, but not for hire or reward.
- Drivers are not being paid to drive the minibus, other than out-of-pocket expenses.
- The minibus does not exceed 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes if specialised equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers is included) gross vehicle weight.
- No trailer is towed.

### *Public Transport*

Some visits may decide to use buses or trains. Individual risk assessments need to be put in place for this.

### **Swimming**

Cherry Tree Primary School acknowledges the immense educational benefits that swimming activities can potentially bring to young people, and fully supports and encourages swimming activities that are correctly planned, managed, and conducted.

#### *Swimming pools (life-guarded)*

LA notification is not required

- UK Swimming Pool safety is guided by various Health and Safety at Work Acts and Regulations. Pool operators have a duty to take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure that teaching and coaching activities are conducted safely.
- For publicly life-guarded pools abroad, the establishment's staff must seek assurances that appropriate lifeguard cover is in place prior to participants entering the water.
- For swimming lessons, the LA establishment should ensure the swimming teacher in charge or other pool employees/responsible adults supervising the participants are qualified according to current guidelines.

### **Weather and Clothing**

The visit leader will take into account the time of year, the nature of the visit and environment and the likely weather conditions when deciding on what is appropriate clothing and footwear for the visit. Pupils (parents) will be given a list of this prior to the visit.