



inspiring the journey for
independence together

Educational Visits Policy

Non-Statutory

Reviewed Three-Yearly

Signed:

(Chair of the Trust)

Date: May 2024

Review Date: May 2027

1. 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 Rivermead Inclusive Trust 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. ie. 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.

2. 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.

The Rivermead Inclusive Trust Adopts National Guidance www.oeapng.info (as recommended by the LA).

We use EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for off-site activities.

Under guidance which came into effect on 1st March 2004, all schools are required to have a named Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), who will ensure that the planning and supervision of all visits and adventurous activities meet the DfE Requirements.

The role of the EVC is detailed in Section 2 of the publication 'Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE 2012' (the booklet). This has been compiled by Medway council.

All Visit Leaders are required to read the booklet in conjunction with this policy. All forms referred to in this policy are available from the EVC, or may be photocopied from the booklet, or downloaded from EVOLVE.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with this policy and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

3. Competence to Lead

Any member of staff leading a visit will need to have their 'competence to lead' assessed before approval for the visit is given. For the majority of visits this will be assessed by the EVC. In assessing competence to lead, the EVC will take account of the factors stated in Section F2 of the booklet. In the case of the leading (i.e. instructing) of adventurous activities the assessment is undertaken by **the relevant Executive Head**, using the procedures and criteria in Section Z of the booklet

4. Reasons for Visits

It is essential that all visits have sound and clearly stated educational aims. Trips 'for the sake of it' will not receive approval.

5. Assessment of Risk

'Risk assessment' is a careful examination of what could cause harm to pupils, staff or others, together with an identification of the control measures necessary in order to reduce risks to a level which, in the professional judgement of the assessor, is deemed to be acceptable (i.e. low).

In considering risk, there are 3 levels of which visit leaders should be mindful:

- Generic Risks – normal risks attached to any activity out of school. These will be covered by careful completion of the 'Educational Visits Checklist'.
- Event Specific Risk – any significant hazard or risk relating to the specific activity and outside the scope of item 1 above. These should be recorded on ESRA Form.
- Ongoing Risk – the monitoring of risks throughout the actual visit as circumstances change.

Further detail on risk assessment will be found in Section G of the booklet.

6. Plan B

Despite the most detailed and sedulous pre-visit planning, things can go wrong on the day, e.g. parent helper is unavailable, member of staff is ill, transport fails to arrive, museum have lost booking, etc. To avoid having to make important decisions under pressure, it is important that some advanced thinking is done to cater for any foreseeable eventuality. This takes the form of **Plan B**.

7. Staffing Ratios

A professional judgement must be made by the Visit Leader, , Headteacher / Head of Provision or Deputy as to the appropriate ratio for each visit.

This will be determined by:

- type, duration and level of activity
- needs of individuals within the group (SEN)
- experience and competence of staff and accompanying adults
- nature of the venue
- weather conditions at the time of year
- nature of transport involved

8. Supervision

Pupils must be supervised throughout all visits. However, there are circumstances when they might be unaccompanied by an adult (remote supervision). The decision to allow remote supervision should be based on risk assessment and must take into account factors such as:

- prior experience of pupils
- age of pupils
- responsibility of pupils
- competence/experience of staff
- environment/venue

9. Role of Supervising Parents

Supervising parents **MUST** have a relevant DBS, be fully briefed on the programme, venue, activities, supervision arrangements and their responsibilities. They must also be given a written list of the pupils in their immediate care, and be shown the completed Form EV5. All lists of parents handed to a parent must be returned at the end of a visit to the event leader and disposed of in line with GDPR requirements. It is also a requirement that any supervising parents have received basic safeguarding training.

10. First Aid

The level of first aid provision should be based on risk assessment. On all visits there should be a member of staff who has good working knowledge of first aid. The Appointed Person First Aid Certificate is the minimum requirement for residential visits.

First aid kits are available from (name); if the visit involves the party splitting up by any distance, a kit should be taken for each group.

11. Transport

Travel arrangements should be included in the risk assessment. If public transport is to be used, all pupils and supervisors must be fully briefed as to procedures on platforms, at bus stops, on busy streets etc. Where possible school visits will use School minibuses and cars, public transport or hired minibuses. School vehicles are well maintained and undergo regular servicing. It is the responsibility of the driver to check that the vehicle is in full working order before leaving the premises. Drivers will know how to secure wheelchairs. Where transport is hired it will be from a reputable and fully insured company.

If travel is by coach or minibus, all pupils must wear a seat belt. Staff must ensure that pupils comply with this rule; pupils may also be asked to check the seat belt of their neighbour. If any pupils are to travel by car, the driver must complete Form EV6. This is also relevant to sports fixtures, and applies to both staff and parents' cars. A new form must be completed every academic year.

Use of staff cars to transport pupils – Staff will only use their own cars in case of emergency and covered by the appropriate insurance.

12. Insurance

Rivermead Inclusive Trust has its own insurance which covers visits. Where activities are residential or adventurous it is the responsibility of the EVC to check that the venue has sufficient insurance to cover the event.

13. Water 'Margin' Activities

Where pupils might participate in learning activities near or in water, such as a walk along a riverbank or seashore, collecting samples in ponds or streams, or paddling or walking in gentle, shallow water, then the guidance contained in DfES 'Group Safety at Water Margins' is relevant. All staff, including parents, should be provided with a copy of this guidance prior to the visit.

14. Educational Visits Checklist

This checklist is an essential part of the risk management process and is applicable for all visits. It may be photocopied from the booklet or is available to download from Evolve.

15. Seeking Parental Consent

Parents should be made fully aware of any likely risks of the visit and their management, so they may consent or refuse on a fully informed basis (known as 'Acknowledgement of Risk').

The letter to parents should therefore give full detail of the visit, the reason for the visit (educational aims), supervision arrangements and the transport arrangements. Ensure that detail of other incidental activities is included, together with Plan B if appropriate. The letter should also state the cost of the visit per child.

The reply slip should read:-

"I give permission for my child _____ to take part in I have read and understand the information about the visit. I enclose my voluntary contribution."

In the case of sports fixtures, the reply slip should read:-

"My child _____ is able to play in the match (at) on
I have read and understand the information in the letter, and give permission for my child to take part."

16. Before the Visit

- a) Complete the school's preliminary blue form at least 2 months in advance. Copies should go to the office and EVC.
- b) All trip details should be entered onto Evolve and submitted to the EVC for approval at least two weeks before the trip.
- c) In the case of residential, overseas, or adventurous activities, complete relevant forms as detailed in 'Approval for Visits' above. Enter on Evolve at least a month before the trip in order to get Trust approval.
- d) Teacher should when possible, conduct a pre-visit in order to assess risks etc, planning and preparation.

If approved:-

- a) Complete ESRA Form
- b) Book Visit
- c) Book Transport
- d) Send letter home
- e) Complete Educational Visit Checklist and copy to EVC
- f) Fill out emergency cards

17. On the Day of the Visit

Be sure to:-

- a) Collect first aid kit(s)
- b) Collect bucket if appropriate
- c) Send pupils for asthma inhalers

- d) Brief supervising parents
- e) Give supervising parents their lists of pupils
- f) Ensure that a minimum of one mobile phone is working, and that the office has the number(s)
- g) Count pupils

During the course of the visit, pupils should be counted regularly as appropriate, and always when changing locations. Always 'double-count'.

The mobile phone(s) should be switched on during the entire trip.

18. After the Visit

It is important that after each visit a proper debrief takes place. This should take place within a week of the visit date, and should involve the Visit Leader, accompanying staff and, if appropriate, the supervising parents. The purpose of the debrief is to identify what went well and what could have been done better, in order to inform future planning. The evaluation form needs to be completed. The children also need to complete their own evaluation form. Teachers then will need to summarise the key points of these and send to the EVC.