



The Linden Centre

Educational Visits (EVC) Policy

Signed by:		
	Headteacher	Date:
	Chair of Management Committee	Date

Last Updated	04 th January 2021
Review Due:	04 th January 2022

EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Rationale

The Linden Centre is committed to providing a broad, balanced curriculum for all pupils. We believe that experiential learning, through outdoor learning and educational visits, is a special feature of our provision. We are committed to providing inspirational, real-world educational experiences for our pupils through visits and visitors to enrich and enhance their learning experiences, deepen knowledge and understanding and increase skills and confidence.

This policy will set out the key procedures that need to be followed when planning and undertaking outdoor learning and educational visits, in order to ensure they are not only worthwhile learning experiences, but also undertaken in a safe and responsible manner.

Entitlement

The Linden Centre feels that all of its pupils are entitled to:

- A broad and balanced curriculum, where experiences are creative and relevant, over at least those areas described by National Curriculum with differentiation, relevance, progression and continuity.
- Have equal opportunity to take part in educational visits and outdoor learning, within the local area and off-site, including residential visits.

Definition

This Educational Visits Policy refers to all activities that take place outdoors, on-site and off- site, including residential at home and abroad.

Educational visits, including residential visits, provide a context for learning, requiring children to use their skills, knowledge and understanding in real, and often complex, situations; this helps them understand and remember what they are learning about in a meaningful way and brings the curriculum to life.

EMPLOYER'S POLICY

Telford and Wrekin Council is classified as the 'Employer'. This policy should be read alongside Telford and Wrekin's policy and guidance. School staff should follow all these policies when planning outdoor learning or educational visits, alongside the guidance in this document. Any clarification needs to be sought from the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).

ROLES IN SCHOOL

The Management Committee

Management Committee members should provide support and challenge to ensure that:

- School policy is up to date and effective.
- Training is up to date.
- The policy complies with Telford and Wrekin council's guidance.
- Where approval for visits is delegated to the Headteacher and/or EVC that risk assessments are in place and effective.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- The Council's guidance to 'Educational Visits' is adhered to at all times.
- The school policy is up to date and effective.
- Visits comply with guidance and are notified and submitted in advance.
- Risk assessments and suitable safeguarding arrangements are in place (including DBS checks): that these are proportionate.
- EVC and staff training is up to date and effective.

- Staff leading visits are competent and experienced, and are clear about their role and that of any accompanying adults, including volunteers.
- Arrangements for medical needs and any other inclusion considerations have been met.
- Transport and insurance arrangements are appropriate and meet requirements.
- Where the activity or visit involves a third party provider: appropriate checks have been made and assurances obtained; a clear contract is in place setting out what the contractor is to provide; the provider holds sufficient indemnity insurance.
- Emergency procedures and contacts are clear and in place.
- Where charges are made, these are within legal and employer requirements; procedures are in place to account for finance of activities and visits.
- Serious incidents are reported to Telford and Wrekin Council as required by their guidance.
- The Management Committee are kept up to date of policy, procedures and visits taking place.

Educational Visits Coordinator

The EVC will:

- be appointed by/be the Headteacher.
- have appropriate training to fulfil the role, and have experience of leading educational visits.
- Keep the policy and guidance up to date.
- Support staff; be involved in the planning and management of visits, and monitor planning and delivery of visits; evaluate visits with staff.
- oversee the necessary paperwork and risk assessments, ensuring they meet guidance requirements; will maintain records of visits.
- ensure the DFE and Telford and Wrekin LEA guidance is adhered to.

- ensure medical and first aid issues are addressed.
- ensure emergency procedures are in place, clear to all staff, and adhered to.

Teachers/Visit leaders

Visit leaders will:

- seek approval from the Headteacher to carry out the visit.
- be responsible for the planning, organisation and management of visits in line with school and Walsall guidance, in liaison with the EV coordinator, including defining the roles of the other adults; provide necessary information to supporting adults.
- organise transport in accordance with Telford and Wrekin Council requirements, if appropriate, in liaison with the office manager.
- organise letters to parents/carers and ensure suitable consent has been sought from parents/carers, including emergency contact and medical requirements etc.
- where necessary, undertake a pre-visit to the venue; ensure necessary insurance and health and safety requirements are adhered to; ensure child protection and first aid requirements are in place.
- develop the risk assessment, in liaison with the office manager and/or EVC; this may include generic risk assessments and should always include points specific to the activity being planned; ensure risk assessments are understood by all adults on the visit. Where possible involve the pupils in risk assessments, e.g. when discussing how expected to behave on bus, crossing roads, etc.
- keep a register of all adults and pupils who attended, in order to follow checking in and out procedures.
- Report any accidents, incidents or near misses.
- Evaluate visits.
- Should a provider run an activity in a way that causes concern, stop/consider stopping the activity at the first appropriate moment. Such an intervention should be

done with sensitivity and discretion to ensure that it does not result in young people being put at greater risk.

Helpers/Volunteers

Helpers/Volunteers will be:

- Subject to an appropriate DBS vetting.
- Used appropriately and not used to replace a visit leader.
- Suitably competent and confident to be able to carry out the duties they are assigned.
- Confident in their understanding of the role and responsibilities that they have been assigned and how these integrate with other staff.
- Enabled to contribute to the evaluation of all aspects of the visit.
- Appropriately briefed on:
 - Relevant establishment and visit procedures.
 - Group characteristics, including age, health, capabilities, special educational needs, behaviour and any other relevant matters.
 - Context of the visit.
 - Nature and location of the activity.

Where the helper is a parent (or otherwise in a close relationship with a young person taking part in the visit) they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise group management, particularly if there is a serious incident. There is a probability that the helper may be distracted by the needs of their own child, rather than looking to the needs of the whole group. This means that the Visit Lead should directly address this issue as part of the risk-benefit assessment and not assign a helper to a leadership role which gives them a direct responsibility for their own child, other than where this is a risk managed part of the visit plan.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers will be:

- kept up to date with policy (this is available on school website).
- kept fully informed of all trips and visits through letters, text messages, phone calls or social media where appropriate.

PROCEDURES FOR ORGANISING VISITS AND APPROVAL

When planning a visit staff need to:

- Seek approval for the visit from Headteacher/EVC, having gathered all relevant information regarding arrangements, activities, risk assessments of establishment (if relevant), costs, transport arrangements. Parent transport is not to be used, other than to sporting events, and then parents/carers may only transport their own children.
- Undertake a pre-visit, if possible and appropriate.
- Ensure risk assessments are completed: these will be done with office manager/EVC. Generic risk assessments are in place for a range of activities, including use of transport, local walks, and in planning the visit these should be reviewed for any activity-specific information to be added. These should be kept with the group leader.
- Seek parental consent, if required.
- With the office manager, submit the risk assessments and planning for the visit, for approval from EVC and Headteacher. This must be done prior to the visit.
- Ensure first aid and medical requirements are planned for.
- Understand the emergency procedures.
- Ensure adequate supervision is organised (see below).
- Ensure all accompanying adults, including staff and volunteers, have a clear plan of the activity and are clear on their responsibilities; they should know what to do in case of an emergency, and what the risk assessments are; they should have a

register/list of their group members and regularly undertake headcounts; they should have a means to contact the visit leader, if required.

- Ensure catering staff are informed in advance if packed lunches are required.
- Monitor the progress of the visit throughout, ensuring all activities and procedures are taking place as planned.
- Ensure paperwork is completed in case of any near misses or accidents, and that all parties are informed.

Supervision Ratios

Within reason, young people must be supervised at all times and the group leader is responsible for the group at all times. The following ratios are a guide only; each activity should be assessed individually for suitable supervision; off-site venues may also have their own supervision requirements. A professional judgement about supervision ratios should be made alongside the EVC/Headteacher.

Low risk activities (where the risk is similar to everyday life)

- one adult to every 2-3 pupils

High Risk (adventurous, residential)

- one adult to every 2 pupils

MONITORING and RECORD KEEPING

- The policy and guidelines will be regularly reviewed by the Headteacher and Management Committee.
- The EVC will monitor visits.
- Every time a group of pupils are taken out of school, an 'Out of School' form (found in the school office) must be completed with one copy going to the School Business Manager and one to the Headteacher.
- Records of ALL visits will be kept. Information will include times and which adults supervised during the visit. This can be cross-referenced to attendance registers so a record of pupils attending is kept. In addition reference should be made to any

generic risk assessments used during the visit (e.g. crossing the road, walking in local area, etc.).

- Parents/carers will be informed of visits in advance via text message and/or letters home.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

- Newly qualified staff will be given the opportunity to undertake peer monitoring as part of their induction year, if required, in order to gain experience in organising and managing visits. They will always be accompanied by experienced support staff and/or teachers in their NQT year.
- The EVC will keep their training up to date and will keep abreast of developments from LA, DFE and from national best practice via the OEAP (Outdoor Educational Advisor's Panel) website.
- All staff will be made aware of their responsibilities via staff INSET and policy update. It is the responsibility of visit leaders to be aware of current policy and LA guidelines.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk management, in the context of outdoor learning and off-site visits, is a two stage process:

1. The identification of the potential benefits to be gained from an activity, along with any risks to the health and safety of those involved.
2. The implementation of a plan to best realise these benefits, using professional judgement to ensure that the level of risk does not exceed that which can be justified by the benefits.

The fact that most human activity involves risk, and that this cannot be eliminated unless activities are not undertaken is recognised by both the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Department for Education (DfE):

“HSE fully recognises that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life – it provides deeper subject learning and increases self-confidence. It also helps pupils develop their risk awareness and prepares them for their future working lives. Striking the right balance between protecting pupils from risk and

allowing them to learn from school trips has been a challenge for many schools, but getting this balance right is essential for realising all these benefits in practice".

(School trips and outdoor learning activities: Tackling the health and safety myths, HSE).

"School employers should always take a common sense and proportionate approach, remembering that in schools risk assessment and risk management are tools to enable children to undertake activities safely, and not prevent activities from taking place. Sensible risk management cannot remove risk altogether but it should avoid needless or unhelpful paperwork". (The Department for Education's advice on health and safety for Schools updated February 2014)

There are two broad categories that require risk management and planning:

1. Routine visits that involve no more than an everyday level of risk and are covered by establishment procedures and policy. Such visits should require minimal planning or preparation beyond what is needed to make best use of the learning opportunity. In a school context, they are simply lessons in a 'different' classroom.
2. Visits requiring additional planning, and some level of specific risk assessment. A visit moves into this category because one or more aspects cannot be managed adequately by existing procedures and policy. This may be due to distance from the establishment, the nature of the activities, the environment or venue(s), the nature of the particular group, the need for specialist leader competencies, or any combination of these. For some visits this will involve detailed planning over an extended period of time. The additional steps needed to manage these aspects should be identified and recorded.

Risk management involves answering two basic questions: What could go wrong?
What are we going to do about it?

This process happens at three levels:

Generic Risk Assessment

- Policies and procedures that apply across a range of visits (normally recorded).
- This is guidance or practice that remains constant regardless of the nature of the visit and they form part of an establishment's policy and procedures. It covers the management of risks identified as relevant to all visits involving similar activities.

At The Linden Centre, this will cover:

- Visits in local area, including crossing the road.
- Sporting events.
- Travel to visits.
- Visits to local church, local library and local swimming centre (Oak Park).
- When using a generic risk assessment, it is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure it is fit for purpose and whether additional activity-specific information needs to be assessed for risk and added.

Visit-Specific Risk Assessment

- Carried out before the visit takes place (recorded).
- This is the identification and management of any risks not already covered through generic risk management. If existing risk assessments cover everything then there is no need to repeat anything.
- It is unique to each occasion and should address staffing, activity, group, environment and distance.
- These could record all significant findings for a particular visit or they may simply record issues not covered by existing generic documents.
- In the absence of generic documents, any significant findings should be included in the visit specific record.

Dynamic/on-going Risk Assessment

- Carried out continuously throughout the visit (not necessary to record).
- This refers to the on-going monitoring of all aspects of the visit/activity by the visit leadership team. The group and the level of risk must be monitored and assessed throughout and, if circumstances dictate, activities should be curtailed or amended (e.g. change to plan B). In practice, it is often these on-going decisions of the Visit Leader(s) that determine whether the group remains safe and whether the activity is successful.

Risk Management Implementation

At The Linden Centre, we want to ensure that we effectively manage the benefits and risks created by any learning opportunity in such a way that maximises the benefits, while ensuring that any remaining risk is proportionate. We must be clear about who does what within the planning and management of outdoor learning and off-site visits, and to provide staff with sufficient guidance, training and support to do this effectively.

At The Linden Centre, we will ensure that:

- Visits and outdoor learning are an integral part of the work of the school.
- Leaders are given time and support to gain experience in a planned and progressive fashion – not 'thrown in at the deep end'.
- Leaders plan and manage visits within their own, and the visit leadership team's experience, knowledge and capability.
- Benefits and learning outcomes are clearly identified and maximised as much as possible.
- Appropriate training and advice is available to the Headteacher, the EVC and to Leaders.
- Straightforward and practical plans and procedures exist to cover the generic risk management of 'routine' visits.
- Appropriate information on any visit is shared with colleagues, participants, parents/carers etc.
- All leaders and, where appropriate, young people are involved in the planning process.
- Risk assessment is a part of the overall planning process and not 'tagged-on' afterwards.
- Visits are approved or authorised as required.
- There is a prepared 'Plan B', should things go wrong. For most routine visits this may simply be to return to base.
- Visits are monitored and reviewed, and, where appropriate, any lessons learned are shared and acted upon in future visits.

- Where consent is required, parents/carers are provided with sufficient information to make an informed decision about their child.

Planning process:

1. Identify clear aims and benefits: Answer the WHAT, WHO, WHY, WHERE and WHEN questions. In other words be clear about what you want to achieve, with whom and why. A clear understanding of aims makes it easy to identify suitable choices for many other aspects of planning (such as venue, transport, competence of leaders, preparation of the group etc.). Identifying the potential benefits is essential in making sound judgements as to whether the level of risk is 'broadly acceptable'.
2. Identify and assess any risks to the health and safety of those involved.
3. Decide if existing establishment practices and procedures adequately manage these risks. If not, create a visit plan that maximises the benefits and learning opportunities while keeping the risk within an acceptable level. This plan and the judgement about balance of benefits and risks needs to be specific to that group, doing those activities at that venue, at whatever time of year and day it is. There may, for example, be a choice of transport to a venue – walking, cycling, public transport or private coach - the skill is to choose the most beneficial option which can still be managed appropriately. Deciding that a balance of benefits and risks is 'acceptable' involves a subjective judgement. It is, therefore, sensible to include colleagues and young people in the process.
4. If not recorded within existing generic documents (e.g. within National Guidance or your Establishment's policies, etc.), record the significant findings of your planning process. If existing generic documents cover everything then there is no need to repeat anything. Ensure information on the risks and how they will be controlled is shared with all those involved.
5. Carry out the visit or activity using the plan as a guide, but using dynamic/on-going risk management to continue to monitor the plan and adjust where necessary.
6. Review the visit afterwards. Any lessons learned from the visit should inform future visit plans, be shared with colleagues and, if appropriate, incorporated into the establishment's generic policies or procedures.

General advice and Practical strategies

Refer to the document 'Avoiding accidents and emergencies' in section four of the OEAP guidance for advice on good leadership habits and practical leadership lessons drawn from accidents.

The management of a visit or activity may involve working with young people in and around hazards (e.g. near water, around moving vehicles, in a crowded public place, etc). When creating a visit plan to manage this there are a limited number of options to choose from:

- Brief the group. A group can be briefed about hazards, or trained to deal with them and therefore manage the risk themselves.
- Shield the group by skilful positioning. For example: have someone at the front and back of the group; set boundaries that create a buffer zone between the group and the hazard; position the leader between the hazard and the group.
- Provide any necessary protection for the group. For example: gloves for working in rough ground; suitable footwear; waterproofs for bad weather; hats for sunburn.
- Remove the hazard. For example: checking that a hotel fire escape is free from obstructions; keeping sharp tools in a designated place.
- Avoid the hazard. If, despite using any combination of these four strategies, the Visit Leader feels that the level of risk is still unacceptable (remember this may vary from group to group and day to day), then the only strategy left is avoidance ('get away'). Stop what is happening, contain the situation, and either move to the pre-prepared Plan B, or reassess for suitable alternatives.

What to record and how

- Employers are required by law to carry out risk assessments and, where five or more people are employed, record any significant findings. In the context of outdoor learning and off-site visits, this means recording (as simply as possible) what you plan to do, as a result of identifying risks and making a judgement about the balance of benefits and risks.
- A risk assessment record should not be complicated or lengthy; it could be thought of as the minutes of a staff meeting, where any significant issues, and how

to manage them, were discussed and recorded. See the appendices for examples of risk assessments. The quality of the recorded thought process is what matters, not how it is recorded.

- Leaders need to demonstrate that all significant risks have been identified and taken account of in the visit planning; staff will endeavour to consider each visit as unique, considering all of the pupils in the group, all of whom behave differently in different circumstances, The final decision must be that the risk for each participant can be kept within 'acceptable' levels.
- Risk assessments will be undertaken by visit leaders, who have demonstrable experience in planning visits, supported by the EVC as required. Newly qualified staff will be supported in the planning process by a member of the senior leadership team.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND INCIDENT REPORTING

When we look at how things can go wrong on an Off-Site Visit, it is possible to consider emergencies in four categories, depending upon the nature of the incident. Planning and preparation for Off-Site Visits should ensure an appropriate response to an emergency in any of these categories, at any time of day or night.

- Incident: a situation that is dealt with by the Visit Leadership Team. This may, perhaps, involve some communication back to school or to parents/carers, and some support from the EVC/Headteacher but the visit leader remains in control and is able to cope.
- Emergency: an incident which overwhelms the coping mechanisms of the Visit Leadership Team and which requires the School's Emergency Plan for Off-Site Visits to be initiated. This may involve some communication with the Employer and support from it, but the school takes control of the situation and is able to cope.

An incident is an emergency where:

- A group member has suffered a serious injury.
- A group member is at risk.
- A group member has gone missing for a significant period.
- Any other incident beyond normal coping mechanism of the visit leader.

- Critical Incident: an incident which overwhelms the coping mechanisms of both the Visit Leadership Team and the school, and which requires the Establishment Emergency Plan and the Employer Critical Incident Plan to be initiated. The Employer takes control of the situation and supports the school and the visit staff/participants.
- The Visit Leadership Team should stabilise the situation as far as possible.
- The Visit Leadership Team should alert the School Emergency Contact.
- The School Emergency Contact should decide the level of response required and, when necessary, initiate the Emergency Plan and alert the Employer's Emergency Contact.
- The Employer's Emergency Contact should initiate the Employer's Critical Incident Plan for Off-Site Visits.
- Major Incident: an incident which (if in the UK) is declared as a major incident by the Police, who will take control, and where the relevant Local Authority's Major Incident Plan is initiated, or where (if outside the UK) the relevant authorities take control. Both the School's and the Employer's Response Plans will be required in order to coordinate with the Police or other authorities.

Key points

Deciding what to do in the event of an accident or emergency should form part of the planning and preparation of every Off-Site Visit, and be written down as 'Emergency Procedures' for the visit. All members of the Visit Leadership Team should be familiar with these.

- All staff should carry information of who to contact in case of an emergency – EV7 Emergency Card – Group Leader should be carried at all times by the Group leader.
- Staff should carry the school mobile phone. They should also ensure school has all necessary up to date contact numbers.
- In cases of incidents and emergencies staff will contact the school office during the day or the agreed emergency contact (24 hours) in case of residential visits.

- School will then respond in line with Telford and Wrekin Council's Policy and Guidance for Educational Visits, and if necessary Telford and Wrekin Council's Guidance for Critical Incidents.
- If necessary emergency services will be called, e.g. ambulance by the leader and/or school.
- School will contact parents/carers in case of any emergency and the designated emergency contact will be responsible for this. The Emergency Contact will hold all the relevant information, including contacts, close at hand at all times the visit is in progress (paper copies, in case electronic information is inaccessible).
- All adults on the visit should know who the visit leader is and young people should also know what to do in case of an emergency.
- For residential visits plans must take into account the possibility of an incident occurring out of normal working hours. The procedures of the establishment will also be followed.
- Useful documents include OEAP leader checklists, available on the website.
- At least one member of staff to be first aid trained.
- All information about incidents will be recorded, in line with Telford and Wrekin LA guidance.

BEHAVIOUR

- School policies on behaviour and safeguarding will be followed at all times.
- All children will be reminded of behaviour expectations and they will mirror those expected in school.
- Pupils will be reminded of safety procedures prior to all visits and the timetable of the day will be explained to them. It will be made clear who is the group and overall visit leader.
- For pupils who have challenging behaviour issues, a risk assessment will be undertaken and all possible measures will be put in place to ensure the child is included in the school trip. A child will only ever be excluded in extreme cases from

outdoor visits if their behaviour poses a risk to themselves or other pupils and adults. This assessment will be undertaken in consultation with parents/carers/carers.

INCLUSION

- This policy presumes an entitlement of all pupils to participate in events, and is in line with the Equality Policy.
- Accessibility issues will be considered as part of the planning process and realistic modification or adaptations will be made wherever possible.

INSURANCE

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

FINANCE

- When arranging a visit, the cost effectiveness and value for money that the activity offers will be part of the planning process.
- Parents/carers/Carers will be asked for contributions towards the cost and school will support with funding, whenever possible.
- Visits will only be cancelled if the majority of costs cannot be met or supported by school funds.
- No pupils will be excluded from visits (other than residential or those outside of school hours) if parents/carers/carers cannot pay.