

# Birkdale High School



Birkdale  
High School

Aspire - Thrive - Succeed

## Educational Visits Policy



## **Birkdale High School** **Educational Visits Policy**

*Date of Policy:* November 2017  
*Members of staff responsible:* Headteacher (Mr Bourgade)  
*Review date:* November 2019

### **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 Birkdale High School 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.

## 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, Birkdale High School:

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 [www.seftonvisits.org.uk](http://www.seftonvisits.org.uk) ).
2. Adopts National Guidance [www.oeapng.info](http://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 within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. Eg. 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.
2. **Visits that are overseas or involve an adventurous activity led by own staff as opposed to using an outside provider.**  
These follow 1. above, but the Head then submits the visit to the LA for approval.

## Roles and responsibilities

**Visit leaders** are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE (with support Mrs B Peacock where required). They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head Teacher (if in category 2. Above or it involves students missing significant curriculum time) and Mr Marshall (to ensure it can be supported in view of other commitments in the school calendar) significant 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.

**The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)** is Mr D Pryor, who 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 Head. Mrs B Peacock is also EVC trained and will set up and manage the staff accounts on EVOLVE as well uploads generic school documents, etc.

**The Head Teacher** has responsibility for authorising all visits, and for submitting those that are overseas or adventurous led by own staff to the LA for approval.

**The Governing Body's** role is that of a 'critical friend'. The Safeguarding link governor is Mrs A Mulligan and has been given 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

**The Local Authority** is responsible for the final approval (via EVOLVE) of all visits that are either overseas and/or involve an adventurous activity where the activity is led by own staff..

## 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 may be sought from external providers such as private contractors or Lanchashire LA who offer ad hoc support contracts.

## Educational Visits Checklist

Birkdale High School's Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities, and may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources. The LA has adopted the Outdoor Education Advisers - Panel National Guidance checklist See section 3.3a in <https://oeapng.info/> A visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is 'YES'. The list is attached at the end of this policy.

## 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 through a traditional paper consent form.

Specific, (ie. one-off), parental consent must be obtained for all other visits. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents (via EVOLVE, letters, meetings, etc), so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. Parents currently only have the option of consenting through a traditional paper consent form.

## **Inclusion**

Birkdale High School is committed to ensuring to all students who wish to take part in educational visits can do so and are not discriminated against under any protected characteristics. Where there are significant behaviour issues that may present a safeguarding issue, the school does reserve the right, after consultation with parents and where it is felt that no reasonable adjustments can be made, to refuse a child's taking part in some hazardous, overnight or foreign trips.

For some visits such as end of year visits, the decision to invite students on the activity is based on their pastoral record and is at the discretion of the school.

## **Charging / funding for visits**

Please see Charging and Remission policy

## **Transport**

Please see Use of minibus policy and specific risk assessment forms

Staff may occasionally use their own vehicle to transport students. It is the staff's responsibility to ensure that the vehicle is road worthy and is legally entitled to use the high ways. School will provide business insurance for all its staff but requires them to show their documentation at least annually. This will be the responsibility of the premises manager. Staff transporting students should ensure that they follow the safeguarding policy and are never on their own in a car with a student. Where possible they should transport more than 1 student and sit them in the back.

## **Dismissal of pupils after activities**

Parents will always be informed of arrangements for dismissal after all visits and activities (if different from normal school hours). Staff are responsible to ensure all parents are aware and have consented. Once agreed it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that individual arrangements are in place for their child to go home.

## **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
- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).
- should be recorded on EVOLVE if regular,
- do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE if these are ad-hoc activities

## **Boundaries**

The boundaries of the School Learning Area are considered to be the school's grounds as defined by the perimeter fencing.

## 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.
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, and falls.
- Weather conditions.
- Activity specific issues when doing environmental fieldwork (nettles, brambles, rubbish, etc).

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved. These include teaching staff and educational support staff.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas', and have practiced appropriate group management techniques.
- 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 the activity (ie coat if it's cold or raining).
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (eg gloves, goggles)

## 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).
2. This nominated base contact will either 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 (Available via [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info))
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.