Yorke Mead Primary School

Offsite Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Activities Policy

January 2017

Our School Vision Statement

BRINGING LEARNING to LIFE

We are a school dedicated to creating an environment where children are able to grow into happy, well-rounded individuals with a love of learning through which they can achieve to the best of their abilities.

We want our pupils to enter the wider world as

- *Happy, positive individuals*
- *Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution*
- *Confident, resilient, healthy & life-long learners.*

DARE TO…

D - Determination

A - Ambition

R - Resilience

E – Enjoyment

T - Trust

O - Openness

The Staff and Governors of Yorke Mead Primary School acknowledge the immense value of off-site visits and related activities to young people, and fully support and encourage those that are well planned and managed.

This document provides concise and supportive guidance for the planning and management of off-site visits and related activities. It is available electronically on the school's Shared Drive and on 'EVOLVE', along with a number of other supporting documents.

All visits and 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, either on 'EVOLVE', by means of standard operating procedures using generic risk assessments, or in standard lesson plan format, as deemed most appropriate by the Headteacher in order to minimise the associated bureaucracy.

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 establishment staff, and other adults associated with Yorke Mead Primary School 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);
- 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. This might be a Local Authority (LA) or Governing Body or a Management Panel. An employer has the legal responsibility to carry out the duties imposed by the Act. However, employers can delegate the tasks necessary to discharge these duties, even though the overall responsibility for health and safety rests with the employer.

In Hertfordshire, the tasks of scrutinising and approving arrangements for Offsite Visits and LOtC activities are delegated to the Headteacher of the school.

Headteacher

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, s/he 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, CRB checks must be in place as required;
- S/he 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;
- That there are contingency plans in place should the visit plan be significantly changed or cancelled (Plan B);
- Arrangements are in place for the governing body to be informed of such visits as are required by the establishment visit policy;
- Staff are aware of the need to obtain best value. Appropriate consideration must be given to financial management, choice of contractors, and contractual relationships;
- Establishment visit policy should identify the types of visit that require a preliminary visit;
- Establishment visit policy should formally adopt a set format for recording written risk-benefit assessments. Such risk-benefit assessments should be proportional, suitable and sufficient and

based on the 'Principles of Sensible Risk Management'. The adoption of materials made available by employers to reduce bureaucracy is good practice;

- Where the activities or visit involves a third party provider, appropriate assurances have been sought; national schemes e.g. LOtC Quality Badge, AALS licence, Adventuremark, or a clear management Statement of Competence, are recognised in keeping with Hertfordshire's recommendations and make further seeking of provider assurances unnecessary
- 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 establishment visit policy includes appropriate emergency procedures in case of a major incident
- The establishment 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.

Establishment (Educational) Visits Coordinator (EVC)

To help fulfil its health and safety obligations for visits, this establishment has a specifically designated EVC who supports the Head of Establishment.

The EVC will: -

- Be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment. Commonly, but not exclusively, such competence will be identified in a person on the senior management of the establishment. Where the EVC role is attached to an administrative post, or where a post holder is not an experienced visit leader, s/he will receive structured support in the form of regular (twice Termly) supervision meetings from a designated establishment colleague who has that practical experience
- Attend training, and update training, as required by the local authority (LA).
- Support the head of establishment in ensuring that competent staff are assigned to lead and accompany visits and with approval and other decisions.
- 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).
- Have an understanding of the Manifesto for LOtC and the supporting rationale
- 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 CRB checks are in place where required.
- Provide sufficient guidance to visit and activity leaders regarding information for parents and parental consent.
- 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.

Visit Leaders

The Visit/Activity Leader will: -

- Have sought permission from the Head teacher to proceed with the booking of a trip prior to making any definite reservations.
- Have the overall responsibility for supervision and conduct of the visit. S/he 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. This establishment 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. CRB 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 for parents where appropriate;
- Evaluate all aspects of the visit, both during and after the event;
- Ensure that staff and other supervisors have been appropriately briefed (pre visit briefing) on:
    1. the purpose of the activity
    2. 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.
    3. the nature, location and duration of the activity.
    4. expectations in terms of behaviours for volunteers
- Ensure that all staff accompanying on a trip have read and signed the relevant risk assessments
- Ensure children are never left in the supervision of a volunteer without presence of a member of school staff. E.g. volunteers are paired with school staff on visits.
- Ensure the visit is effectively supervised; the overarching duty of care remains with the accompanying establishment 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;

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

Member of Governing Body

The School's Governing Body will support the head teacher and EVC in acting as a "critical friend" by ensuring that they: -

- have an understanding of how outdoor learning supports a wide range of learning outcomes;
- have access to employer guidance as well as establishment policy, and a training package to support it;
- establishment policy clarifies his/her involvement in the visit approval process;
- 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 establishment visit 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? (Check Visit History on 'EVOLVE').
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) What experience has the leader of the participants he/she intends to supervise?
h) What experience has the leader of the environment and geographical area chosen?
i) If appropriate, what is the leader's personal level of skill in the activity, and fitness level?
j) Does the leader possess appropriate qualifications, especially if leading adventurous activities? (See Appendix 1 of HCC Employer Guidance)
k) Is the leader aware of all relevant guidelines and able to act on these?

This establishment operates a process of apprenticeship and succession for all staff likely to be involved in organising, leading or accompanying offsite visits and LOtC activities.

The establishment 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.

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.

Due to the complex nature of off-site visits, conventional 'risk assessment' as a stand-alone tool is not particularly useful and can on occasion be misleading. It is of greater benefit to consider the overall 'risk management' of visits by taking all aspects of visit planning and management into account. This can be achieved effectively through a combination of the 'EVOLVE' visit form itself, and where appropriate, any event specific notes or attachments.

Visit planning includes consideration of 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. Significant issues must be recorded on 'EVOLVE', either notes or as an attachment, and shared with all parties.

This planning process by the leader may be compared to the expectation of a teacher or youth worker to plan a lesson/session which is relevant to the needs of the group.

Planning that includes adventurous activity commonly involves delivery by an external provider and the provider will have responsibility for risk assessing and managing the activity. As such, the provider's risk assessment is not the concern of the establishment leader, does not need to be requested from the provider, and does not need to be attached to 'EVOLVE'.

Use of generic risk assessments

A selection of generic risk assessments is available in Word format from the Health & Safety pages on the Grid and for use on 'EVOLVE'.

Whilst not exhaustive, the control measures contained within this selection are probably sufficient to cover most eventualities likely to be encountered in the course of most offsite visits and LOtC activities.

However, these risk assessments should not simply be adopted without reflection on their relevance. Non relevant sections should be deleted and Staff must adapt these to reflect their own "event-specific" risk assessments. These should highlight any potential hazard and the measures to minimise the risk and ensure visit participants are safe.

Note: whilst it is not possible to "clone" visits on 'EVOLVE', it is possible to re-use risk assessments and other documents that have been attached to previous visits. Staff should liaise with their EVC about this.

The Visit Leader will sit with the Visits Administrator to ensure risk assessments are relevant and appropriate. The Visit leader will also ensure ratios are relevant, 1:1 forms are completed/ updated, all staff supporting the visit are fully briefed and have read the risk assessments.

Plan B

Alternative arrangements should be included within the planning process where appropriate, for example, where weather conditions or water levels might be critical, or where an overcrowded venue might necessitate an alternative option.

Where appropriate, all alternative activities should be fully considered and risk assessed beforehand.

Seeking Assurances from Provider / Use of a Provider assessment Form (OV6)

Hertfordshire County Council provides the OV6 'Provider Assessment Form' to help provide an audit trail for arrangements and checks if required.

To reduce bureaucracy for both Visit Leaders and Providers, leaders should take advantage of national schemes that have been established to eliminate the need for questionnaires and forms as advised in LA guidance e.g. **LOtC Quality Badge, AALS Licence and 'Adventuremark'**

Holding one of the above is a credible assurance of Health and Safety, and Visit Leaders should seek no further verification. The LOtC Quality Badge also covers learning quality.

Many providers have websites and offer information packs which contain the sorts of information asked for on the OV6, including a Safety Management statement, so it may not be necessary to use one.

The OV6 is a generic form, for use for all kinds of provider, so if one is sent to a provider, it should be specified that they only need to complete the parts applicable to them/their services.

Once an OV6 has been received, signed and dated by a manager or person in authority, it is not always necessary to send a new one to the same provider each time you use them. It is sufficient to annotate the existing form already held by the establishment to show the school has checked back with the provider and that there have been no major or significant changes since the form was originally signed; this will not apply if the time interval is not more than 12 months or so.

Visit Leaders should **not** ask for copies of risk assessment documentation but may seek assurance of a provider's competence to deliver their activities safely by means of a Safety Management statement if this is not already provided.

National Institutions and Public Buildings: - by their very nature these venues and providers are extremely unlikely not to conform to current Health & Safety legislation so it should not be necessary to require them to complete an OV6 or send out copies of their risk assessment documents.

HCC Providers and Establishments: - OV6 forms are not required from HCC-run providers such as Cuffley Camp, Herts Young Mariners Base, Hudnall Park or The Old Coach House in Snowdonia.

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. **A preliminary visit is essential if the Visit Leader has not previously visited the site.**

Within the UK, highest priority for preliminary visits will be where no serving member of staff from the establishment 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.

Participants

It is good practice to involve participants in the planning and organisation of visits, as in doing so they will make more informed decisions, and will become more 'risk aware' and hence at less risk. They will also have greater ownership of the event.

Outcomes

Clarity regarding the intended outcomes of the visit will help to ensure that the potential benefits can be achieved. Up to four 'intended' outcomes may be recorded on 'EVOLVE' during the planning process, for subsequent evaluation.

Work that takes place outside the classroom can provide a very powerful means of developing learning in all curriculum areas, and raise attainment. Experiential learning can also provide opportunities for development in other areas, including:

- **R**elationships

- **E**motional & spiritual
- **C**ross curricular
- **I**ndividual
- **T**eamwork
- **E**nvironmental

Preparatory work should take place in advance of the visit where appropriate. This, in conjunction with activity that will take place during the visit, should feed into any follow-up work.

'High Quality Outdoor Education' can be used as a tool by visit leaders to assist in both identifying outcomes and in the evaluation of the learning taking place.

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'. This must have been approved by the EVC and Head of Establishment and, where applicable, in accordance with Governing Body policy.

Ratios for Early Years are specified and must be adhered to; see Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

For all other visits the visit leader, EVC and Head of establishment 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;
- 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 the Visit Leader, EVC, or Headteacher is not satisfied that an appropriate level of supervision exists.

A useful 'starting point for consideration' is 1 adult:10 young people. Where departure from this starting point results in fewer staff, the justification should be recorded as a note on 'EVOLVE'.

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 CRB 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)

Use of Voluntary Helpers

The use of parents and other adults with a clear association with the establishment, as helpers or supervisors 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 establishment's staff.

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

It is a fact that a volunteer will not be accountable through a legalistic audit trail (as would exist were their involvement based on a contractual relationship) and is therefore the case that a volunteer helper cannot be appointed as a Visit Leader.

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

Clear CRB-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 establishment's policy on emergency procedures.

The establishment maintains a mobile phone specifically for use during offsite visits. It is each Visit Leader's responsibility to ensure these 'phones have:

- fully-charged batteries (and chargers available if necessary)
- sufficient credit available for the duration of the visit

School staff may also use their own personal mobile phone if they wish to during a visit for visit related purposes only.

Beware of over-reliance on mobile 'phones; in event of an emergency a land-line should be used wherever possible.

For all "out of hours" and residential visits there will be a nominated person(s) that can provide 24/7 cover as an Emergency Contact and that the person(s) 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.

Consideration will be given to the following:

- Criteria for identifying the nominated Emergency Contact(s)
- Is more than one Emergency Contacts required?
- Procedure for lodging visit plans to enable them to be accessed in the event of an emergency?
- Have procedures been tested?
- Is it possible to demonstrate a proactive response, to any pattern that can be recognised within incidents?

Visit Leaders should also complete and carry an Emergency Contacts sheet (OV9).

Where appropriate the Visit Leader should have an "Emergency Events" card, as issued by HCC to all CS establishments.

First Aid

It is not always necessary that qualified First Aider accompanies an offsite visit or LOtC activity. First aid issues for any LOtC activity should be considered as part of the risk management process and the exact requirements should be determined by ensuring that first aid support is available at an appropriate level. What is "appropriate" will be determined by:

- The nature of the activity.
- The nature of the group.
- The likely injuries associated with the activity.
- The extent to which the activity will isolate the group from normal ambulance support, or a known point where a qualified first aider will be available.

A very basic level of first aid support must be available at all times. This will require that one or more of the staff leading the activity:

- Know how to access qualified first aid support.
- Have a working knowledge of simple first aid and are competent to use the first aid materials carried with the group.

For some activities (most commonly in defined adventure activities) there is a good practice expectation that requires those leading such activities to hold a current first aid "qualification". To be a "qualification", the first aid course must include a formalised assessment process; otherwise any certification will have the status of a certificate of attendance. In practical terms, the course will be a minimum of 16 hours.

It is a legal requirement that all minibuses must carry a first aid kit.

Approval of Visits

Approval is delegated to the Head of Establishment 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.

Regardless of whether a visit should be notified to the LA or not, there should be a clear, unambiguous audit trail for arrangements with clear evidence of approval. Such evidence will usually be recorded on EVOLVE but where this is not the case a signature of endorsement on a lesson plan will suffice.

The process for approval has three main stages:

1. Visit/activity proposed and planned by Visit Leader and accompanying colleagues;
2. Arrangements scrutinised by EVC until satisfied to recommend approval;
3. Arrangements re-scrutinised by Head and, when satisfied, approved.

An offsite visit or LOtC activity should not proceed without clear evidence of approval.

Endorsement may be required from the Governing Body; 'Read only' access on EVOLVE for the relevant member(s) and a Note added for their attention will generate an e-mail alert. Endorsement will take the form of an additional Note from the member(s).

Where applicable, a visit may also need to be notified to the LA; this is done automatically by 'EVOLVE'.

Additional monitoring

In its evaluation of LOtC, "How far should you go"- 2008, Ofsted recommends that it is good practice to sample monitor offsite visits and LOtC activities by means of field visits.

From time to time the EVC may recommend, or the Head/Governors/LA may decide to, sample monitoring by field visit as an additional means of ensuring safety of participants and quality of provision.

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.

Insurance

Advice regarding insurance may be sought from the Local Authority's Insurance department.
Contact details are given on the 'Contact' page and from the 'Insurance' section when completing a visit entry on 'EVOLVE'.

In addition to the standard public liability cover which all establishments will have in place Hertfordshire County Council has taken out 'blanket' personal accident cover / travel insurance for all trips/visits at home or abroad. This cover only applies to establishments which buy into the Council's Annual travel Insurance Scheme. Details are available from the County's insurance department on 01992 555480 or by email at insurance@hertscc.gov.uk

For those establishments who make their own insurance arrangements, personal accident / travel insurance must be taken out for all visits abroad. For all other visits it is the responsibility of the Governing Body (where applicable), Head of Establishment, and Educational Visits Coordinator to determine whether additional insurance should be taken out. The establishment should particularly consider the need for additional insurance for residential activities, or those involving adventurous activities or hazardous environments.

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

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

This establishment encourages the use of codes of behavioural conduct as a means of establishing appropriate expectations of young persons' behaviour. Such codes need to be explained to both the young people 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.

As part of encouraging social responsibility, young people should be encouraged to sign up to a "behavioural contract" for all residential visits

As part of the request for consent, parents should sign and accept responsibility for removing young people in prescribed circumstances.

Further examples can be found under 'Resources' on 'EVOLVE'.

Transport

Private Cars

Where a private (staff or parent) car is to be used to transport young people then this must be approved by the Head of Establishment, and an OV7D Form must be completed and retained by the establishment on an annual basis.

Coaches

The LA does not 'approve' coach companies. Whilst UK legislation ensures that coach companies are fit for public use, the facilities available on coaches may vary. Liaising with other establishments within the LA that have used a particular company (via a search on 'EVOLVE') will help to determine the level of service that may be provided.

Public Transport

For public transport within the Greater London area contact 'Transport for London', who offer special arrangements for establishment parties on London buses, Underground, Tramlink, and Docklands Light Railway, to cultural destinations. See *Transport for London* Tel. 020 7918 3954.

Swimming

This establishment 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.

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

All swimming activities and venues must be included within the visit plan, and life-guarding arrangements checked in advance. This is particularly important in respect of visits abroad, where for example, a hotel pool may be available.

Particular consideration should be given to the following factors:

- Unknown locations and hazards, especially overseas.
- Changing environmental conditions.
- Supervisor complacency & lack of transferable knowledge.
- Adherence to local advice.
- Preparation and knowledge of young people, i.e. is it a planned activity?

Young people must be supervised by a competent adult at all times whilst undertaking swimming activities.

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.
- Unless suitably qualified, the establishment's staff should not have responsibility for life-guarding. However, they do retain a pastoral role for participants at all times either through direct or 'remote' supervision.
- 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.

Hotel (and other) swimming pools

Visit Leaders should check the life-guarding position in advance.

If life-guarding arrangements are not provided at the pool then the visit leader will bear the full responsibility for ensuring swimming safety.

Staff must be aware of the procedures in the event of an emergency, and who at the venue will provide back up. Staff should also know if they have exclusive use of the pool, as other pool users may increase the supervision role of your lifeguard.

If a young person in the party holds an appropriate qualification then their role should be emergency lifeguard action, but supervision should remain the responsibility of the LA establishment's staff.

Open water swimming

LA notification is required via EVOLVE.

The designated lifeguard must be dedicated exclusively to the group, and the location used must fall within the RNLI/RLSS definition of a 'safer bathing area'. Local advice must always be sought.

Weather, Clothing & Survival

Where appropriate, the leader must obtain and act upon recent weather forecasts and local advice.

Participants should be adequately clothed appropriate to:

- The time of year, prevailing weather conditions, altitude and exposure to elements;
- Likely changes in weather;
- The experience and strength of the party;
- The nature of the visit and environment.

When venturing away from immediate help, leaders should consider the need for:

- Comfort, insulation and shelter for a casualty;
- Comfort, insulation and shelter for the whole group;
- Provision of emergency food and drink;
- Torch;
- Possible need of signalling equipment and/or mobile phone (NB. Mobile phones may not work in remote areas);

It is primarily the responsibility of the visit leader, in consultation with other staff where appropriate, to modify or curtail the visit or activity (e.g. Plan B) to suit changed or changing circumstances - for example: over-busy lunch area, rain, rising water levels, etc.

Other possible areas for consideration: -

Farm Visits

Residential Visits

Water-Margin Activities

Field Work

Adventurous Activities - Water-Based Activities - Open-Country Activities - Snow sports

Overseas Visits

Exchange Visits

Overseas Expeditions