



Educational Trips and Visits Policy

Adopted by Governing Body: 25.04.12

Reviewed by Governing Body: 22.10.19

Next Review: 3 years

Statutory Policy: No

1. Link Statement to Worcester County Council Guidance

The Pitcheroak School Visits Policy follows the Employers Guidance supplied on the OEAP (Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel Employer Guidance) Website which has been adopted by Worcestershire County Council as its employer guidance.

www.oeapng.info

2. Rationale: prioritised benefits and aspirational outcomes

"Learning outside the classroom is about raising achievement through an organised approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance. This is not only about what we learn but importantly how and where we learn."

Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto (LOtC)

Definition:

An off-site visit is defined as each and every occasion that an individual pupil or groups of pupils leave the site of Pitcheroak School.

All off-site visits should have clearly defined, stated and valuable purpose.

Staff at Pitcheroak School, have had the opportunity to discuss and identify the benefits and learning outcomes of off-site visits. The following list, although in no particular order, is based on their discussions.

- To extend and consolidate learning that takes place within the classroom through the provision of real life experiences within the wider community and environment.
- To encourage an increased motivation for learning and personal achievement.
- To develop a positive attitude towards challenging and adventurous activities.
- To provide opportunities to develop personal, social and life skills in preparation for post-school life.
- To become aware of their natural environment.
- To strengthen each pupil's personal development, through the provision of activities which encourage confidence, positive self-esteem and initiative.
- To develop and extend key skills, including communication, problem solving, leadership and teamwork.
- To promote the benefits of fitness and a healthy life-style.

3. Clarification of Head Teacher Delegation of Responsibilities to the designated Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC)

The Head teacher is not the EVC. These responsibilities are delegated to a nominated member of Staff. At Pitcheroak School the nominated member of staff is Mr David Lockyer.

The detailed role and responsibilities of the Head teacher can be found in www.oeapng.info

Any venture falls into **four essential phases:**

- **PLANNING**
- **PREPARATION**
- **EXECUTION**
- **REVIEW**

4. Role of the Governors:

The specific role of the governors is laid out in the www.oeapng.info guidance. The Head teacher will update the Staffing and Curriculum Committee about any Evolve visits that are forthcoming. The visits policy supports the principles of inclusion and enrichment.

5. Rationale of EVC selection:

“The EVC must be specifically competent. The level of competence required can be judged in relation to the size of the establishment as well as the extent and nature of the educational visits planned. Evidence of competence may be through qualification, but more usually will be through the experience of practical leadership over many years of off-site education. Commonly, but not exclusively, such competence will be identified in a person on the senior management team of the school”.

Such a person should be an experienced visit leader with sufficient status within the school/establishment to guide the working practice of colleagues leading visits.

6. Role and Functions of the EVC:

The EVC should:

- Have an understanding of the Manifesto for LOtC and the supporting rationale;
- Have attended WCC EVC training;
- Make sure that visits meet WCC guidance requirements;
- Make sure the Head, 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 WCC guidance and Pitcheroak school procedures are properly understood;
- Make sure that Pitcheroak Schools visit policy is regularly reviewed;
- Support the Head with approval and other decisions;
- Make sure that visits are led by competent and confident leaders who have had the appropriate training. Refer to WCC definitions;
- Make sure that assistant leaders are competent to carry out tasks they are assigned;
- Monitor visit leader planning and sample monitoring of visits;
- Organise the training of leaders and assistant leaders, including voluntary helpers;
- Make sure that the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are in place as required;
- Make sure that the Pitcheroak School Visits Policy provides sufficient guidance to visit leaders regarding information and parental consent;
- Check that there is a 24/7 emergency contact(s) for each and every visit and that emergency arrangements are in place;
- Make sure that medical and first aid issues are addressed;
- Make sure emergency arrangements include emergency contact access to all relevant visit records including medical and next of kin information for all members of the party including staff;
- Make sure that individual visits are reviewed and evaluated and this process will include reporting of accidents and incidents;
- Make sure that visit policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis, and immediately following any serious incident or systems failure;
- Make sure that staff, are up to date via EVC training events and updates and that there is a list of training that has been undertaken.

7. The Role of the Visit Leader:

The visit leader will have overall operational responsibility for the supervision, discipline and conduct of the participants for the duration of the visit and should be experienced in organising such visits, the supervision of pupils, and all relevant health and safety matters. They should be able to direct and supervise pupils, and be suitably qualified/competent to instruct them in activities, as appropriate. The member of staff undertaking the role of the visit leader should have undertaken WCC visit leader training within five years of the visit, and they should make sure that their qualification is current for the duration of the visit/residential trip.

The visit leader has a crucial role to play in the successful and safe completion of an educational visit.

The Visit Leader should:

- Review their roles and responsibilities (www.oeapng.info);
- Obtain prior agreement and approval before any off-site visit takes place;
- Appoint a deputy, if appropriate, with the consent of the EVC;
- Adhere to best practice as outlined in this policy document (www.oeapng.info);
- Undertake and complete the planning and preparation for the visit including the briefing of school leaders, supporting staff members, pupils, parents and carers;
- Ensure that all relevant checks have been undertaken if an independent provider is to be used;
- Take steps to become familiar with the location/establishment where the activity will take place;
- Inform parents and carers as to the terms and conditions of any additional insurance cover taken out by the school.

8. Procedures and Forms:

All Staff should refer to the 'Planning for Pitcheroak School Off-site visits' document to check the required procedures before planning and preparing an off-site visit. This document should serve as guidance and the appropriate offsite forms and WCC offsite visits risk benefit assessment for visits completed.

The school has a copy of a generic parental consent form for all off-site visits within a 20 mile radius of Pitcheroak School. This parental consent is for the duration of the child's school life however, it is good practice that communication of any off-site trips that are extraordinary and not routine (for example, theatre, farm, museum etc.) consent is expressly sought.

The following forms should be completed as part of this visits policy.

**ALL FORMS CAN BE FOUND ON THE V DRIVE –
ADMINISTRATION – OFF-SITE VISIT FORMS**

Pitcheroak Off-site Proposal for SLT

To be completed for all Off-site Visits. Forms to be signed and approved at the SLT meetings and transport booked etc.

Pitcheroak School Off-site Visit Authorisation

To be completed once approval has been given, details should include pupils' names, staff contact details etc. There is a section to complete to instruct the visit leader to log the trip on EVOLVE. In addition, it is the visit leader's responsibility to identify a member of staff who would be willing to be called up on in an unforeseen circumstance to replace a member of staff on an offsite visit or residential, the name and out of hours contact number should be entered in the appropriate box on this form.

EVOLVE

To be completed and submitted to the LA for the visits meeting any of the following criteria:

1. Involves a journey more than 50 miles away from school.
2. Involves a residential or overnight stay.
3. Involves a hazardous environment.
4. Involves water.
5. Involves an adventurous activity.
6. EVOLVE trips need to be submitted to the LA at least 5 weeks before the event.

For regular trips the '**Going Off-Site' Form** should be completed once authorisation has been given.

Parental Consent Forms:

Parental Consent Forms to be completed for Visits meeting any of the following criteria:

1. Involves a journey more than 20 miles away from school.
2. Involves adventurous activities that are extraordinary and not routine

Parental Acknowledgement Form:

Parental Acknowledgement Forms are recommended as good practice by the Local Authority.

1. Parental Acknowledgement Form should be sent to parents by the visit leader to be completed by parents so that they are always informed about visits their children are undertaking.
2. These forms must be completed by parents when there is an extraordinary off –site activity which is not regularly planned (for example swimming).
3. These forms must include information about the activities that their children will be undertaking including the date, time, venue transport etc. and any items that parents will need to provide for their children so they can take part.
4. On the form parents must sign to say they have understood and acknowledged their children will be taking part in this off-site activity.

WCC Offsite Visits Risk Benefit Assessment:

- A current WCC Offsite Visits Risk Benefit Assessment form should be completed for all offsite visits.
- A copy of the WCC Offsite Visits Risk Benefit Assessment form can be found on the staff intranet under the folder 'Administration' in the sub-folder 'Offsite visit forms'.
- Copies of completed WCC Offsite Visits Risk Benefit Assessment forms should be saved on the Intranet for all staff to access for reference. On the V Drive there is an EVC Folder that is categorised under Key Stages.
- A completed copy of the WCC Offsite Visits Risk Benefit Assessment form for certain visits, such as days out, hazardous activities, etc. (refer to EVC for advice). Should be attached to the Pitcheroak School Off-site Visit Authorisation Form and left in school reception prior to departure.

9. Risk Management and Assessment:

Educational visits cannot be entirely risk-free. The aim, therefore, must be to contain risks within acceptable levels. Effective risk management will enable new experiences and will maximise the impact of educational visits, whilst poor risk management may suppress opportunities for learning.

Care must be taken not to expose the child to unacceptable physical or psychological risk, particularly on those occasions when the educational visit aims to exercise the individual's sense of adventure.

Fundamental to the planning process of any educational visit is the process of risk assessment. Risk assessment enables schools to make a reasoned judgement about the level of risk involved and what actions need to be taken to reduce the risk to an acceptable level which permits the visit to go ahead.

This is achieved by either:

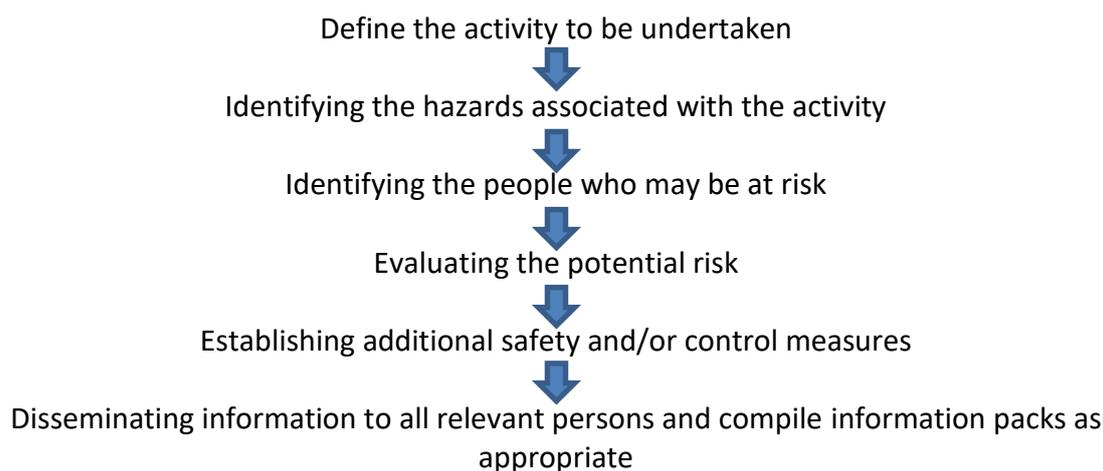
i) Eliminating the identified hazards altogether: -

For example, by choosing not to use a water sports centre if the centre staff do not possess current life-saving qualifications or

ii) Managing hazards by introducing effective control measures: -

For example, by ensuring that participants are led by competent and experienced instructors when participating in adventurous activities

Risk Assessment comprises the following steps:



The vital issue is whether the risk can be managed. If there are doubts that the risk is manageable, then it is advisable to change the activity and/or the location. Where there is considerable concern as to the outcome, it is better to abandon and redesign the educational visit than to expose pupils to an unacceptable level of risk.

The LA guidance sets clear expectations on its requirements regarding the management of risks in the context of visits and off-site activities. All off-site visits require a copy of the WCC Offsite Visits Risk Benefit Assessment form to be completed and recorded during the planning and preparation process. The risk assessment and management process should be:

- Simple
- Proportional
- Suitable
- Sufficient
- Manageable

These principles should be refined and should concentrate on managing risk by:

- Being an integral part of the overall planning process for the visit
- Ensuring leaders have the experience and competence to manage the process positively and successfully
- Providing confidence in the process for those involved
- Focusing on the users and recognising their current competence
- Building upon current good practices within Pitcheroak School
- Enabling this process to be collaborative
- Ensuring all those that need to know, do know
- Concentrating on significant hazards in order to assess the risks
- Ensuring that the control measures are suitable and sufficient for the leader and the individuals within the group, and responsibilities have been defined.

The process will be realistic and effective when it:

- Is flexible by not insisting on a rigid format
- Recognises the experience and professionalism of leaders in applying relevant policies and procedures

- Provides sufficient detail to give confidence in the event
- Provides evidence that the process has been followed
- Allows leaders, children and young people with varied experience, motivation and training to be treated according to their needs

The process is broken down into three levels:

- **Generic** – general hazards and control measures associated with the activity.
- **Venue/Activity/Group/Individual** – unique to each occasion, takes in to account site, individuals within the group and specific needs.
- **On-going** – professional judgements in response to changing circumstances. It is critical that control measures are monitored and confirmed or adapted as required. It is these on-going decisions that will determine the safety of the group.

Risk Assessment Terminology:

- **HAZARD** – Anything that can cause harm
- **RISK** – The possibility of someone being harmed by the Hazard

All staff should be involved in this process and have confidence in the management procedures. Risk Assessments should be recorded on an Offsite Visits Risk Benefit form supplied by WCC, using the 'Risk Level Estimator' which are available on the school intranet. The visit leader and the staff identified by the visit leader should consider significant risks for: Staff, Transport, Activity, Group, Environment, Distance (STAGED).

In the event that, despite all reasonable measures been taken, the risk level has been identified as being **“Moderate”** and the necessary control measures **cannot** be identified the visit should not go ahead. In accordance with the 'Risk Level Estimator' on the WCC Risk Assessment – Offsite Visits Risk Benefit Assessment sheet, the risk level has to have been identified as being **“Tolerable”** or lower with the clearly identified control measures in place – if there is any uncertainty, advice should be sought from the Head Teacher and the EVC to decide if the visit falls within the criteria.

A trip where the risk level is identified as being “Moderate” and the necessary control measures are not agreed by the EVC or Head teacher the offsite visit cannot take place.

External Provider Risk Assessments:

While a Visit Leader should seek written assurances that a Provider has appropriate risk management systems in place, **the leader should ask** for copies of risk assessment documentation. However the leader should check the following.

- Are all staff given specific training on Risk Management and Assessment in the context of Visits?
- Is such training kept up to date with HSE recommendations on **“Sensible Risk Management”** based on proportionality and minimising bureaucracy?
- Is there a requirement that the Visit Leader involves other staff in the planning and preparation of the visit, including the risk management and recording of the Risk Assessment(s)?
- Is there a standardised format for recording Risk Assessments?

10. Provider Assurances and Preliminary Visits:

The Visit Leader should ensure that the LA requirements are met e.g. AALA Licensed Providers, for adventurous activities. There should be clear and fool-proof handovers of responsibilities. Wherever possible the Visit Leader should make a preliminary visit in order to inform the risk management and assessment process. Refer to EVC for advice if necessary. The Visit Leader should ensure that a 'Provider Statement' is completed by a Provider if they don't have a valid '**Learning, Outside the Classroom' Quality Badge.**' An up to date list of holders can be found at: www.locqualitybadge.org.uk

11. Safeguarding on Educational Visits:

In the context of educational visits, it is essential that the school's safeguarding Children Policy and procedures are followed and the visit leader should make all the staff members attending the educational visit / residential trip aware of this policy and remind them of the importance of its contents before the educational visit commences. This policy can be viewed or downloaded from the school's website. In addition, it would be best practice for the Safeguarding lead at the school to reinforce expectations around the Code of Conduct when supervising children in residential settings.

12. Use of Voluntary Helpers:

- A 'regular' voluntary helper should have been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- A voluntary helper **should not** be appointed as a Visits Leader.
- A voluntary helper should always be supervised by Pitcheroak School staff.
- A parent can be a voluntary helper on an individual basis and doesn't need a DBS. They will be supervised by Pitcheroak staff at all times and not be given a group to look after unsupervised.
- All volunteers should be made aware of their roles and responsibilities prior to the trip.

13. Use of Private Vehicles:

There are circumstances when staff might use their own vehicles. However, the LA does not recommend this practice. The LA Guidance states, the following procedures which must be addressed if staff use their own vehicles:

- The vehicle should be properly maintained and have a current MOT Certificate.
- There must be evidence that the driver has a valid license.
- A valid insurance policy should be in place. Staff must hold "Business Use" Insurance if they are to transport pupil's in their own vehicle (even in an emergency).
- There should be explicit parental consent before their child can be transported by a named person in their private vehicle.
- All drivers should properly understand their duty of care.
- It is more difficult for the Visit Leader to exercise full control of the party when it is split up into a number of different vehicles.
- With younger children there should be appropriate child seats or booster seats, restraints if needed must be available and used.
- Children must not be left unattended in a vehicle.
- Maximum seating should not be exceeded.
- Drivers should not be alone with the child in a car.
- Pupils must not be seated in the front of the car.

14. Emergency Procedures:

- There should be 24/7 emergency contact(s) for all visits.
- In the event of an emergency during the school day the Visit Leader should contact the school and speak to the Head Teacher or in their absence the Deputy.
- In the event of an emergency during after – school activities or during a residential visit, the Visit Leader should contact the nominated emergency contact number. This is usually the Head Teachers mobile phone number.
- For all after – school activities and residential visits, the Visit Leader should leave the relevant emergency contact details in the School Office and with the Head Teacher. These should include medical and next of kin information regarding staff as well as pupils.
- To access L.A. support for a **critical incident** during a visit the Visit Leader must use the following numbers.

Emergency Planning 24 hour Emergency Helpline 07624 909756

Office hours (01905) 843796 or 07834 251989

Visits Advice

Rachel Whiteley - rwhiteley@worcestershire.gov.uk

14. Codes of Behavioural Conduct:

All pupils need to know the 'Codes of Behavioural Conduct' before participating in an off – site visit. Expectations of pupils' behaviour should be clearly explained both to the young people and to their parents so that is maximum opportunity for misunderstanding the sanctions that may be invoked where the code is breached.

15. Inclusion:

Young people derive considerable benefit from taking part in educational visits. In particular, they have opportunities to participate in activities and gain from experiences not available in the normal classroom setting. Such educational visits help young people to develop a wide range of valuable personal and social skills.

To be able to tailor educational visit(s) to meet the needs of our young people, which enable them to experience the appropriate level of challenge in order to thrive and enjoy the associated benefits, firstly the learning outcomes related to the visit need to be relevant to the individual learner's area of study and identified need(s). As many of our learners are undertaking different personalised learning pathways the identified area or areas of the curriculum for which an educational visit(s) may be an essential or a relevant component, may differ between these pathways. This could mean that some pupils within the same key-stage may undertake different educational visits to meet the needs of their personalised curriculum.

The LA guidance promotes the 'Principles of Inclusion' as an issue to be addressed for all educational visits. These should ensure:

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

It is unlawful to:

- Treat a disabled young person less favourably

- Fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.

16. Supervision and Staff Ratios:

Supervisory roles should be closely aligned to the roles and responsibilities undertaken by staff on a visit. **Pupil to staff ratios for educational visits are not prescribed in law.** Those planning visits, on the basis of risk assessment, should decide the ratios taking into account the range of variables which are determined through an informed risk assessment.

Supervision ratios should relate to:

- The category of the educational visit;
- The specific educational objective(s) and;
- The outcome of a risk assessment.

On the basis of a risk assessment, it is likely that additional supervision may be required, particularly in relation to residential visits and hazardous activities.

Risk assessment may include the assessment of individual pupils, particularly in relation their current ECHP, and those in receipt of a medical care plan. In addition those pupils with behavioural considerations, their 'behavioural management plans' should also be taken into consideration. This will have a direct influence on supervision ratios.

The key factors which should be taken into consideration in the establishment of appropriate ratios are as follows:

- Nature and location of activities to be undertaken;
- Age and ability of the group;
- The identified needs (SEND and medical) of the pupils;
- Day visit or overnight stay;
- Mixed or single gender group;
- Experience of supervisory staff in off-site supervision;
- Duration and nature of the journey type of any accommodation;
- Competence of supervisory staff, both general and in relation to specific learning activities;
- Requirements of the organisation/ location to be visited;
- Competence and behaviour of the pupils;
- Prevailing weather conditions and time of year;
- Duration and location of planned activities;
- First aid cover (paediatric first aider to accompany early years pupils)

Supervision should be determined through an informed risk assessment, taking account of the range of variables. There are a number of different approaches to such an assessment. The OEAP (oeapng.info) provides one example using the acronym SAGED as a way of remembering the issues to consider:

Staff requirements – Training? Experienced? Competent? Ratios?

Activity characteristics – Specialist? Insurance issues? Licensable?

Group characteristics – Prior experience? Ability? Behaviour? Special and medical needs?

Environmental conditions – Urban, rural, remote? Impact of weather? Ease of communications?

Distance from support mechanisms in place at the home base – Transport? Residential?

The following issues should also be considered when establishing ratios:

Under normal circumstances where it is possible there should be a gender mix of staff when accompanying a mixed sex group of pupils, where an overnight stay is involved. Where this is not possible, parents must be made aware and give their consent to the proposed arrangement prior to the visit.

Arrangements should be made to ensure that appropriate ratios are maintained if a staff member needs to leave the group e.g. to accompany a pupil to hospital, escort a pupil home, personal illness or attend to a personal emergency.

16. Maintaining Staff Ratios on Offsite Visits and Residential Activities:

- If a member of Pitcheroak school staff or a voluntary helper makes it known to the visit leader during an offsite visit or a residential activity that they wish to withdraw from the offsite visit or residential activity. The visit leader should first establish the safety and wellbeing of all the students through maintaining the appropriate staff ratios and informing the member of staff that they need to fulfil their agreed responsibilities until they are relieved by another appropriate member of school staff.
- The emergency school contact should be informed of the situation. After a plan of action has been formulated between the visit leader and the emergency school contact, then the standby member of staff who is identified on the Pitcheroak School Off-site Visit Authorisation form should be contacted.
- It is the responsibility of the visit leader to identify a member of staff who is willing to be a standby member of staff, and is able to be contacted at any hour of the day during the duration of a planned residential activity or offsite visit should circumstances dictate.
- Once contacted the standby member of staff should be given the necessary consideration to ensure their welfare and wellbeing until they arrive to relieve the member of staff.

17. Open Country Activities:

- For open country activities that take place in low land areas, or more than 1km from vehicular access. Where this takes place in the UK in good weather led by a member of the establishment staff (Pitcheroak school staff) the staff member or staff leading the activity must have the following minimum levels of technical competence.
- The leader must demonstrate an appropriate level of competence. This may include one or more of the following:
- *Countryside Leader Award*
- *BEL – Sports Leaders UK Level 3 Award in Basic Expedition Leadership*
- *Completion of a suitable outdoor Leadership Training Course*
- *A written statement of competence by an appropriate technical adviser.*

(These are the minimum requirements to lead groups safely in the outdoors as identified by WCC, and members of staff may be in the possession of higher certification and experience, which would need to be verified by the EVC before any open country activities could take place.)

17. Access to Guidance: where and how:

- The LA Guidance and the Pitcheroak School Visits Policy are available on the school's website and on the Intranet. There is also a website which is constantly reviewed and updated at www.oeapng.info, which has comprehensive information available for Staff/Parents/ Governors and interested members of the public.
- In 2012 the DfE officially withdrew their HASPEV guidance document along with the supplements published to support it. On the 26 November 2018 the DfE have published their new revised guidance on educational visits; 'Health and Safety on Education Visits' which can be viewed on the following link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>
- In addition it is also advisable to refer to the "Employers Guidance" www.oeapng.info
- Ofsted have provided a Learning Outside the Classroom Summary to be found in the 'Employers Guidance' on www.oeapng.info