



**BIRCH CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Educational Visits Policy

*APPROVED: JANUARY 2026 EVC
REVIEW: JANUARY 2027*

Birch C of E Primary School

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 *Birch C of E Primary 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, *Birch c of E Primary 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.
2. Adopts National Guidance www.oeapng.info, (Outdoor Education Advisors Panel National Guidance 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 school policy (ie this document), 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

There are three types of visit:

1. Routine local visits in the 'Extended learning locality' (See Appendix 1).
2. Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity.
3. Visit that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

Roles and responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE (where required). They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head Teacher or EVC prior to planning, and certainly before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is *Rebekah May*, 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. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

The Head Teacher has responsibility for authorising all visits and for submitting all overseas, residential or adventurous activity visits to the LA for approval, via EVOLVE.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend' and the headteacher regularly reports to them on educational visits, including reviewing plans prior to a residential visit. Individual governors may request 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

The Local Authority is responsible for the final approval (via EVOLVE) of all visits that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

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 Head Teacher 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.

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- Knowledge of the pupils, the venue, and the activities to be undertaken.

Use of tracking Devices:

The school follows the National Guidance (oeapng) for Group Management (**see Appendix 2**) and requests that parents do not use tracking devices on school trips.

Approval

The approval process is as follows for each type of visit:

1. Local visits are planned using the Local visit form on EVOLVE. Parents sign a permission slip for local visits as children join the school.
2. Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. These are entered on EVOLVE, and must be submitted to the EVC for checking at least *3 days in advance*.
3. Visits that are overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity (see LA guidance for definition of 'adventurous') are then submitted by the Head to the LA for approval.

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 will be sought from the local authority.

Educational Visits Checklist

Birch C of E Primary School Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities. This has been adapted from the LA's generic checklist. A visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is 'YES'. *Birch C of E Primary's* Educational Visits Checklist may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources.

Parental Consent

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The school obtains blanket consent at the start of each year for activities that fall within the 'Extended learning locality' (see Appendix 1). Parents have the option of consenting online via Scopay, or 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, letters, meetings, etc), so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. As above, parents have the option of consenting online via Scopay or through a traditional paper consent form.

Inclusion

In our school we seek to ensure that the National Curriculum is delivered to all children, regardless of social background, race, gender or differences in ability. All are entitled to the development of knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes. To enrich the curriculum for our children, we also offer a range of educational visits and other activities that add to what they learn in school.

Charging / funding for visits

There are some circumstances when the school can make a charge for certain activities. The governing body has a charging policy that details the

Transport

Appropriate methods of transport may include:

Coach or bus with driver

Parent cars – organised amongst parent groups

Public transport e.g train into London

Use of staff cars to transport pupils – staff cars may be used under these conditions:

Insurance documents are held at school

More than one child is being transported

A parent has supplied and fitted a car seat if needed

Insurance

School has LA insurance for educational visits

Appendix 1 – 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 'extended learning locality', 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.oeap.info*)

Appendix 2: Tracking Devices

This section is from the National Guidance on Groups Management. The full guidance can be accessed here:

https://oeapng.info/search-results/?download_search=trackers

Electronic Trackers

Electronic trackers, including some phone apps, can be used for tracking the location of participants. While these might be appropriate in certain circumstances, such as some remote unaccompanied expeditions, they have significant disadvantages including:

- Unreliability – electronic devices can fail, batteries can go flat, and signal coverage can be lost;
- A false sense of security;
- False alarms;
- Accidental or deliberate misuse;
- Safeguarding concerns, e.g., if an unauthorised person is able to track a child;
- A reduction in participants' real or perceived independence, the development of which may be an aim of the visit.

Sometimes parents consider providing their child with a tracker, with or without the child's or establishment's knowledge. This should be discouraged, not only because of the above disadvantages, but also because it can introduce mistrust between parents and leaders, and tensions between parents who choose to use trackers and those who don't.

The use (or not) of trackers may need to be covered in an employer or establishment policy and/or a code of conduct to be agreed by parents and participants, in the same way as is done for mobile phones and other technology. If trackers are to be used, they should be provided and controlled by the establishment (or by an external provider within terms agreed by the establishment – see OEAP National Guidance document 4.4h "Using External Providers").