

Christchurch Infant School

Educational Visits Policy

Reviewed:	December 2021
Date of next review:	December 2024

At Christchurch Infant School, 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 our 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, **Christchurch Infant 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 (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 three 'types' of visit:

1. **Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day.**
These follow the 'School Learning Area' Operating Procedure (Appendix 1).

2. Other non-residential 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.

3. Visits that are residential, or involve an adventurous activity.

These follow 2. above, but the Head then submits the visit to the LA for approval.

Visit Leaders should plan and prepare visits allowing time for internal and external vetting and approval as required.

Normally this will mean that visit plans should be submitted on Evolve for approval by the EVC by the following deadlines:

- 6 weeks before departure for residential
- 4 weeks before departure for non-residential adventure activities
- 2 weeks before departure for other types of visit

If for any reason these deadlines cannot be met, clarification and approval should be sought from the EVC.

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 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 **Jo Simpson (Deputy Head Teacher)**, 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 Teacher. EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

The Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher have responsibility for authorising all visits, and for submitting those that are residential or adventurous to the LA for approval.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'. They have the responsibility to ensure that procedures, including emergency procedures are in place and visits are planned in accordance with the school's policies are in place. They also have the responsibility to ensure that the policies about charges and remissions meet legal and employer requirements. Individual governors may be given 'read-only' access to EVOLVE, to monitor visits.

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.
- 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 will be sought from the local authority.

Educational Visits Checklist

Christchurch Infant 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. 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'.

Parental Consent

Consent is not required for activities within the School Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum, during normal school time. However, in light of the current climate with the uncertainty of Covid-19, it is good practice to ask for parental permission for all activities that take place off of the school premises.

The school obtains blanket consent at the start of each year for certain other routine activities, eg. after school fixtures, etc. Parents have the option of consenting 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 through the use of a traditional paper consent form.

Inclusion

Visits should be planned with a presumption of entitlement for all protected characteristic groups/pupils to participate, ensuring integration through participation with peers wherever possible. Accessibility should be ensured through direct or realistic adaptation or modification as required.

Charging / funding for visits

Charging for School Activities All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum. There are some circumstances when the school can make a charge for certain activities and these are detailed in the Charging and Remissions Policy. A copy of this is available on the school website or from the School Office. The Governing Body has agreed that parents will be invited to make a voluntary contribution towards school visits or activities in school not part of the national curriculum or not wholly subsidised by other funds. Voluntary contributions will be used to cover the costs of travel, materials, admission fees and/or overnight accommodation costs.

Transport

In order to ensure that the transport used for visits is suitable and conforms with legislative requirements the school will only use hired transport from a reputable and approved company. Seat belts must be provided on all seats and it is school policy that each child will wear a seatbelt whilst travelling on a school visit. Private cars will only be used in exceptional circumstances and seatbelts must be worn and the legal requirements relating to child restraints and booster seats must be complied with. Parents will be notified of these arrangements. Evidence of appropriate insurance cover for staff whilst carrying pupils whilst at work (business cover use on insurance certificate) is required.

Insurance

Christchurch Infant School currently buys into an annual policy with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole LEA, which provides personal insurance for all educational visits.

Appendix 1 – Christchurch Infant School Learning Area 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:

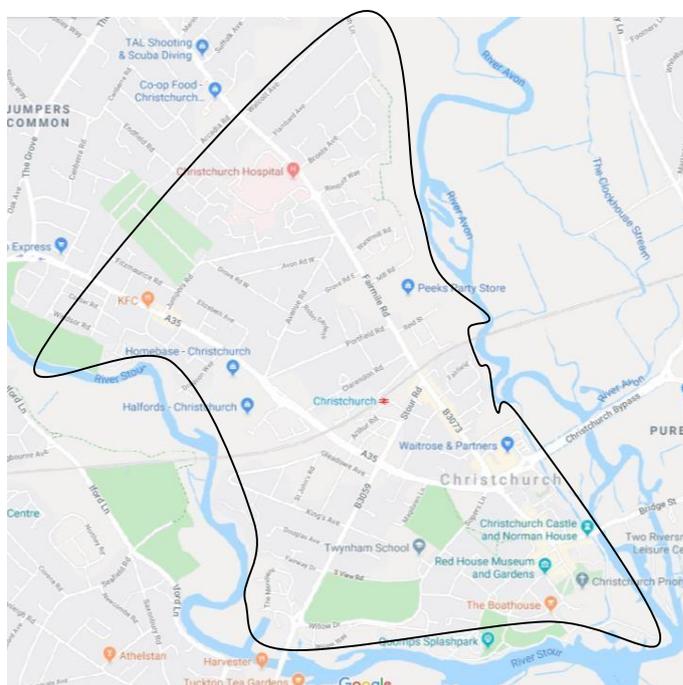
- do not require parental consent

- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).
- should be recorded on EVOLVE if regular, eg. Swimming
- do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE if these are ad-hoc activities e.g. Welly Walk, picnic at Christchurch Junior School

Boundaries

The boundaries of the School Learning Area are shown on the attached map. This area includes, but is not limited to, the following frequently used venues: e.g.

- *Christchurch Priory*
- *Regent centre*
- *Red House Museum and Gardens*
- *Christchurch Town Centre*
- *Etc.*



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.
- Losing a pupil.
- 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:

- The Head, Deputy/EVC must give verbal approval before a group leaves.
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved. A current list of approved staff is maintained by the EVC and office.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the 'School Learning Area' is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school, and a synopsis is in the School Prospectus.
- There will normally be a minimum of two adults.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas', and have practiced appropriate group management techniques.
- Pupils have been trained and have practiced standard techniques for road crossings in a group i.e. annual road safety and reference to road
- Where appropriate, pupils are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group e.g. *return to school, wait where they are, go to x and ask for help, etc*).
- 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 leaving school.
- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.
- Staff will deposit in the school office a list of all pupils and staff, a proposed route, and an estimated time of return.
- A school mobile is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (eg gloves, goggles)

Appendix 2 – 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.oeap.info)
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.