



Education Visits Policy

Approved by the Local Governing Body: 18th May 2026

To be reviewed by: May 2029

Introduction

This policy covers all off-site visits and activities organised through the school and for which the Local Governing Body and Headteacher are responsible. This ranges from walks around the locality to residential visits of several days in duration. It includes Outdoor and Adventurous Activities. This policy has been developed to ensure that the school is compliant with statutory, local and best practice guidance, including:

- Health and Safety: Advice for Schools (DfE 2014)
- OEAP National Guidance <https://oeapng.info/>
- Oxfordshire County Council policies

Rationale

Carterton Primary School seeks to ensure that every pupil has access to a wide range of educational experiences as an entitlement to support and enrich their education. As part of this entitlement, we recognise the significant educational value of visits and activities which take place away from the immediate school environment.

Carterton Primary School aims to become an educational environment in which all members of the school community can thrive, regardless of race, religion, culture, gender or individual need. We intend to apply this aim to the planning and management of all visits and off-site activities.

At Carterton Primary School outdoor learning is an integral part of our whole-school approach to education and the curriculum. We recognise the benefits for pupil achievement, personal development and physical and mental wellbeing. It develops interpersonal skills, team building and broadens horizons. Outdoor learning involves first-hand real-life, challenging experiences and so contributes to the richness of learning across all subjects. Memorable experiences inspire creative writing and lead to memorable learning and skills for life.

Outdoor learning is also a powerful process for promoting personal and social development, including:

- Developing and discovering interests and talents;
- Developing character (including risk taking, resilience, confidence, and independence);
- Knowing how to keep physically and mentally healthy;
- Becoming responsible active citizens.

This is recognised by both the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Department for Education (DfE):

“HSE fully recognises that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life – it provides deeper subject learning and increases self-confidence. It also helps pupils develop their risk awareness and prepares them for their future working lives. Striking the right balance between protecting pupils from risk and allowing them to learn from school trips has been a challenge for many schools, but getting this balance right is essential for realising all these benefits in practice”. (School trips and outdoor learning activities: Tackling the health and safety myths, HSE).

“School employers should always take a common sense and proportionate approach, remembering that in schools risk assessment and risk management are tools to enable children to undertake activities safely, and not prevent activities from taking place. Sensible risk management cannot remove risk altogether but it should avoid needless or unhelpful paperwork”. (The Department for Education’s advice on health and safety for Schools updated February 2014)

The management of visits and off-site activities places particular responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of all participants on the Local Governing Body, Headteacher, Educational Visits Coordinator, the Group Leader, members of staff and volunteers, pupils and parents. The school also has responsibilities to other members of the public and to third parties. This policy on visits and off-site activities therefore complements the wider school health and safety policy. Planning for visits reflects Public Health advice.

It is a priority of this school that all visits and off-site activities are safe, well-managed and educationally beneficial. Visits are an integral part of the work of this school and have clear learning/development intent which is specified on each risk assessment form. Visits are reviewed and evaluated, and good practice is shared.

Practice

Responsibilities of the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

- Ensure that planning complies with your Employer’s requirements and that the arrangements are ready for approval within agreed timescales;
- Review Education Visits policy and check it adopts current OEAP policy.
- Ensure that educational visits follow National, LEA and the schools’ guidelines and that the Group Leader and accompanying adults are suitably competent to run the visit.
- Support/oversee planning so that well considered and prepared arrangements can lead to well-managed, engaging, relevant, enjoyable and memorable visits/outdoor learning.
- The categories are:
 - Routine visits that involve no more than an everyday level of risk and are covered by establishment procedures and policy. Such visits should require minimal planning or preparation beyond what is needed to make best use of the learning opportunity. In a school context, they are simply lessons in a ‘different’ classroom.
 - Visits requiring additional planning, and some level of specific risk assessment. A visit moves into this category because one or more aspects cannot be managed adequately by existing procedures and policy ie Residential Visits. This may be due to distance from the establishment, the nature of the activities e.g. adventure, high level, the environment or venue(s), the nature of the particular group, the need for specialist leader competencies, or any combination of these. For some visits this will involve detailed planning over an extended period of time.
- Develop and implement a procedure for dealing with emergency situations.
- Develop and implement a procedure for the investigation of and reporting on accidents, incidents and near misses.
- Be a champion for all aspects of visits and outdoor learning;
- Challenge colleagues across all curriculum areas to use visits and outdoor learning effectively in order to provide a wide range of outcomes for children and young people and contribute towards establishment effectiveness;
- Mentor leaders and aspirant leaders, supporting their ongoing development and training and sample monitor their activity to identify any further training needs;
- Support the Headteacher and Local Governing Body in approval decisions so that all those with responsibility have the competence to fulfil their roles;
- Ensure that activities are evaluated against their aims for learning and development, that good practice is shared, and any issues are followed up and comply with statutory and employer’s requirements (self- evaluation form).
- Keep the Senior Leadership Team and Local Governing Body informed about the visits/outdoor learning taking place and their contribution to establishment effectiveness.
- Be up to date with latest guidance; revalidation of training takes place every three years.
- Induct new staff in how to plan any visit.

Responsibilities of the Group Leader

During the planning of a visit the Group Leader will (*under the guidance of the Educational Visits Coordinator where necessary*):

- Ensure the intent for the visit clearly focuses on the learning and development of the pupils.
- Check the venue has LOTC accreditation and if appropriate an AALA accreditation.
- Ensure that the visit is planned and risk assessed. A **risk assessment form** and a **visit notification form** (if appropriate) are completed for an educational visit and the appropriate consents and approvals are obtained.
- An exploratory visit prior to the trip by the Group Leader to be carried out, whenever it is possible.
- Ensure that the visit complies with National, Oxfordshire County Council and the schools' guidelines for school visits. Also complies with OEAP national guidance.
- Ensure that a parent/guardian and students are made fully aware of the nature, purpose and detail of the visit e.g. financial cost and that permission including all relevant information is obtained for any off-site activity i.e. medical information, dietary requirements, SEN information.
- Ensure that appropriate enquiries are made of any establishment or company being used for residential or outdoor adventurous activities. (e.g. check providers that hold a valid learning outside the classroom quality badge).
- Ensure that insurance has been arranged.
- Ensure that provision is made for any incident, including First Aid and procedures to follow in the event of an emergency or other serious incident.
- The following details **must** be logged with the school office, prior to the trip taking place:
 - Names, addresses, dates of birth and phone number of all children taking part.
 - Names of all staff attending, with contact phone numbers.
 - Full details of the venue, coach company, departure and arrival times, with appropriate phone numbers.
- Ensure the Group Leader has contact numbers of all parents **and** the Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher.
- Ensure there is effective communication in the case of an emergency i.e. school mobile phone.
- Any personal information is kept confidential, secure and disposed of when it is no longer needed. (Data Protection Act 2018).
- When planning the number of adults needed, bear in mind the following recommended guidance:
 - Foundation Stage - 1:5
 - Year 1-3 – 1:6
 - Year 4-5 – 1:10
 - Year 6 – 1:12

*These are a **minimum** recommended guideline only and may need reviewing after the risk assessment has been completed, taking into account the specific group being taken and the nature of the activities planned.*
- Ensure all students/pupils are informed of the nature and purpose of the visit and the behaviour expectations and consequences if they choose to misbehave.
- Ensure any children who need 1:1 adult support in school have the same support outside school.
- Ensure all adults who have unsupervised access to children are DBS checked.
- Any plans will have an alternative 'Plan B'.

During a visit the Group Leader will: -

- Ensure that the visit is as safe as practicable.
- Curtail the visit or stop the activity if the risk to the health and safety of any participant reaches an unacceptable level.
- Ensure that participants are aware of the need to be involved in the process of ongoing risk assessment, including the reporting of hazards and potential risks.
- Retain ultimate responsibility for participants at all times.
- In the event of an emergency the **emergency procedure and flowchart** should be implemented. The school **home base emergency plan** will then be put into action.

After the trip the Group Leader will:

- Evaluate the visit against its aims for learning and development, that good practice is shared, and any issues are followed up and comply with statutory and employer's requirements (Self-Evaluation form)

Responsibilities of additional members of staff taking part in visits and off-site activities

Members of staff, volunteers and parent helpers should:

- Assist the party leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of young people on the visit;
- Ensure they undertake the roles and tasks given to them so as not to put themselves or others at unacceptable risk.
- Complete a volunteer driver declaration if appropriate.

Responsibilities of Pupils

Whilst taking part in off-site activities pupils also have responsibilities about which they should be made aware by the Group Leader or other members of staff, for their own health and safety and that of the group. Young people should, where possible:

- Avoid unnecessary risks;
- Follow instructions of the Group Leader and other members of staff;
- Behave sensibly and courteously, keeping to any agreed code of conduct;
- Inform a member of staff of significant hazards.

Responsibilities of Parents

Parents have an important role in deciding whether any visit or off-site activity is suitable for their child.

Subject to their agreement to the activity parents should:

- Support the application of any agreed code of conduct;
- Inform the party leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit;
- Provide sufficient emergency contact details;
- Sign the consent form
- Complete a volunteer driver declaration if appropriate.

Accidents and Incidents

Any accidents and incidents that occur during off-site visits and activities will be reported and recorded in accordance with the school health and safety policy. Accidents and incidents will subsequently be reviewed within the school to identify any learning points.

Please read the relevant educational visits checklist alongside this policy.