

HOWITT PRIMARY COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Offsite Visits Policy December 2022

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1. Introduction

Howitt Primary Community School acknowledges the immense value and many benefits of outdoor learning and is committed to supporting offsite visits and activities that enrich the learning opportunities of pupils and young people.

The school (and any contracted external providers where an activity has been commissioned) works within the requirements set out in Derbyshire County Council's Offsite Visits and Adventure Activities Guidance and the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel 'National Guidance' (both accessible via EVOLVE).

All establishment staff will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and any changes that are made when the policy is reviewed.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

For all visits it is important that each person involved understands their specific roles and responsibilities as detailed in this section.

Under Health & Safety law the employer, who is Embark Federation Trust, has primary responsibility for Health, Safety & Welfare of employees and students: this overall responsibility cannot be delegated.

The employer will ensure that its employees are provided with appropriate guidance, that there are training regimes in place to support it and that the guidance is understood.

The School Visits Service (SVS) team will provide Derbyshire County Council visit guidance. The SVS team has a huge breadth of knowledge and experience and can provide support with any visit from a walk to the park through to extended overseas expeditions.

The SVS provides training courses for the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) (Clare Rhodes) and Visit Leaders. SVS monitors visits through EVOLVE and through sample monitoring 'in the field'.

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring offsite activities and visits comply with the LA Guidance and this Offsite Visits Policy and are notified or submitted for formal approval as required, so that all visits approved can be accommodated within the planned provision and that the ethos of each visit is one with which the school wishes to be associated.

The headteacher will ensure that the Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC), Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers are appropriately trained as required and specifically competent to carry out the responsibilities allocated to them for all visits.

The deputy who approves offsite visits in the absence of the headteacher is Clare Rhodes.

Educational Visit Co-ordinator

The Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC) is a staff member who has received relevant training and induction and is delegated with the following tasks: -

- To grant verbal permission that a leader may plan a visit after deciding that the timetabling and ethos of the visit are acceptable.
- To check and approve that the planning and risk management for visits follows employer policy and guidance, and to liaise with the LA as required.
- To ensure that there is sample monitoring of visits in keeping with the recommendations of employer policy and guidance

The EVC should be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment.

The designated EVC is Clare Rhodes. She has received full training in the role. EVCs need to have updated training at least every three years.

The named governor for offsite visits is Darryl Richardson.

Visit Leader

Visit Leaders will have over-all charge of the visits they lead. They are also responsible for, and must demonstrate, the following;

- Competence, including where necessary verification, to lead the visit.
- Awareness of potential hazards, dangers and competence when completing the necessary risk assessments and introducing measures to control risks to an acceptable levels.
- Informing the headteacher of the identified risks.
- Sound judgement of what constitutes a dangerous situation and preventing access to dangerous situations.
- Ability to undertake dynamic risk assessments.
- Arrangement of adequate supervision.
- Knowledge of where to get information about the area they are travelling to which could include such things as tide tables and weather forecasts.
- Ensure relevant visit information is shared with parents/carers and informed consent is sought where necessary.

Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers will be appropriately trained as required and specifically competent to carry out the responsibilities allocated to them for all visits.

Details related to a visit and its participants (including staff) will be accessible to a designated 24/7 emergency contact in case of emergencies.

Refer to the [Visit Leader Checklist](#).

3. Procedures

Staff wishing to plan and undertake a visit (prospective Visit Leaders), will first seek permission from the headteacher or EVC.

Finance

The headteacher, EVC and Visit Leaders should take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449-462 of the Education Act and detailed in the [Charges for Offsite Activity](#) guidance document.

The school charging policy for offsite visits is:

All activities which take place during the school day and are deemed a necessary part of teaching and learning will be provided free of charge. The school cannot charge for education provided during school hours. The school can charge for education provided outside of school time that is not part of the National Curriculum or part of religious education. The school can charge for transport in some cases, and can charge for board and lodging on a residential visit. For full details, refer to Charging and Remissions Policy.

Staff Induction and Training

All new staff will as part of their induction into the school, be familiar with the local policy for offsite visits and activities and understand their role in managing, planning, leading or assisting with organising offsite visits. All staff will have access to county and national guidance.

The EVC will identify any specific training needs and requirements and ensure staff can access relevant learning and development opportunities as appropriate and as required by Derbyshire County Council School Visits Service.

Visit Approval

Howitt Primary Community School has adopted the Derbyshire County Council system for approval of visits which is based on these being categorised into three broad types:

1. Local low risk single day visits that are regular and routine.
2. Day visits and programmes that require enhanced planning.
3. Higher risk visits, further afield that require detailed planning and leader competence.

See [Visit Planning Flowchart](#)

Category 1:

These visits will be regular, routine day activities that are organised in and around the locality, usually on foot.

Regularly repeated visits can be covered by a block annual consent subject to parents/carers being made aware of every visit, especially any involving a return time outside the normal day.

Visits and activities included in this category for this school are:

- On-site activity (excluding adventurous activities and Forest School listed in category 3).
- Transporting young people between other local schools/venues.
- Visits in and around school on foot (churches, parks, urban centres).
- Sports fixtures (involving transport).
- DCC Primary curriculum swimming programme

These visits should be planned using the school's All Visits Risk Assessment and with approval by the EVC and headteacher. Some activities can be covered by an [annual blanket parental consent](#).

Where there are local activities that are a planned part of the curriculum/routine programme but are dependent upon the right conditions on the day, then the visit leader will sign out before departure leaving relevant information with the base contact.

The specific establishment offsite All Visits Risk Assessment (that may also include road transport) covers general supervision of these visits. A review will be required rather than completing a new document each time. Any additions can be documented by adding a note to the EVOLVE visit form.

All other visits: All other visits must be planned and submitted using EVOLVE. Based on the visit types, EVOLVE automatically directs the flow of approval for Category 2 and 3 visits.

Category 2:

These visits are single "one off" day visits or a programme of visits that take place offsite but further field than your base locality and with no element of adventurous activities (as defined in Category 3). These opportunities will usually require transport and could also require some enhanced planning and risk assessment. Example visits are:

- Visits requiring use of transport (urban areas, theatres, social events, places of interest).
- Swimming in public lifeguarded pools (excluding open water).
- Fieldwork visits (not in open/remote country).
- Activities at Water Margins (coastal locations and inland waters).
- Farm visits.
- Forest School programmes.

These activities will be entered onto EVOLVE and submitted to the EVC at least a week prior to departure. Approval is delegated to the headteacher and visits should be covered by a [specific parental consent](#). Consent should be 'informed' consent.

For a programme of regular visits to similar destinations, one single visit form can be completed, with the relevant dates selected and can be covered by an [annual blanket parental consent](#).

The specific school All Visits Risk Assessment (that also includes road transport) will cover general supervision of the visit. A review will be required rather than completing a new document each time. Any additions can be documented using the Event Specific Note form.

If a visit is planned to a higher risk environment, the appropriate risk assessments must be completed for your specific visit. This will then be attached to the EVOLVE record, prior to submitting to your EVC and headteacher for approval.

Certain activities will require staff to hold specific qualifications or competencies before being able to deliver sessions, e.g. Forest School. Please contact SVS for further information. Relevant qualifications will be added and uploaded to EVOLVE. These activities will not be undertaken unless there is a sufficient number of suitably qualified staff to deliver them.

Evolve: Category 2 minimum document uploads

- Itinerary
- All Visit Risk Assessment
- Specific Risk assessment/Care Plan

Category 3:

Approval from the Local Authority (LA) will be required for all overseas visits, residential visits and those that include adventurous activities, be it provider or establishment lead. The EVOLVE system will automatically pass such identified visits to the LA for approval after first being checked by EVC and authorised by the headteacher. Specific informed consent will be required for each visit.

Overseas visits and DofE expeditions will be submitted to the LA **four working weeks** before a visit is set to take place, and before anyone is financially committed. **Other visits requiring LA approval require two working weeks' notice.** Approval notification via email will automatically be sent out (from EVOLVE) as soon as possible up to two working weeks after receipt of the visit form.

A member of staff intending to lead an adventurous activity, must be specifically approved by the LA to do so via the EVOLVE Leader Approval Request function.

When external providers are used it is a requirement for their safety management to have been verified either by completion and return of a Provider Form or verified by holding an appropriate national accreditation e.g. AALA licence, Learning Outside The Classroom Quality Badge (LOTC). Providers will not be used until they have been 'vetted' by the LA.

Evolve: Category 3 minimum document uploads

- Itinerary
- All Visit Risk Assessment
- Specific Risk assessment: e.g. Activity, Transport, Residential, Oversea, Care plan, etc.

4. Risk Management

The risk management of an activity is normally carried out by the visit leader and assistants with the support of EVCs as required. Risks are expected to be reduced to an acceptable or tolerable level, but not necessarily eliminated. Planning should achieve a rational balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity.

This appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is 'acceptable'. HSE endorse this approach through their 'Principles of Sensible Risk Management' and advocate that it is important that young people are exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves.

There is no legal requirement to produce a risk assessment in a particular format but there is a legal requirement for the process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual or harm several people.

Howitt Primary Community School staff will adopt and adapt the risk management materials available through EVOLVE to ease the burden of bureaucracy that might otherwise discourage leaders from making full use of educational visit learning opportunities.

5. Monitoring

To ensure policy and procedures are being followed, the school will undertake monitoring of offsite visits. SVS will provide sample monitoring of visits 'in the field'.

6. Insurance

Appropriate insurance must be in place for all visits.

The responsibility for arranging adequate insurance cover rests with the headteacher in conjunction with the organiser of each journey.

For visits abroad, additional journey insurance **must** be taken out.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Board, headteacher and EVC to determine whether any additional insurance should be taken out.

Insurance at Howitt Primary Community School is provided by RPA, Membership number 146454.

7. Inclusion

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to treat a young person less favourably and/or fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.

Howitt Primary Community School endorses the principles of:

- a presumption of entitlement to participate;
- accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification;
- integration through participation with peers.

Adjustments made to include a disabled child or 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.

Behaviour

Howitt Primary Community School encourage the use of codes of behaviour conduct as a means of establishing appropriate expectations of a young person's behaviour. Such codes will be explained to both young people and those with parental authority prior to a visit, so reducing the opportunity for misunderstanding both expectations and the sanctions that may be invoked where a code is breached. (See Embark Code of Conduct).

Whilst inclusion of young people and adults on offsite visits will be the norm at Howitt Primary Community School, this will not be the case where health and safety of the individual or other group members would be significantly compromised. Visit Leaders will ensure that they consult the LA and parents well in advance of the visit where inclusion is an issue.

8. Evaluation

Visit leaders must have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes they hope to achieve. Outdoor learning, off site visits and activities have the potential to deliver a very wide range of benefits and outcomes, these should be prioritised and recorded on EVOLVE.

For a positive safety culture to exist and develop, learning from past experience, incidents and mistakes is a crucial component in any safety system. A review/evaluation of the safety management of all of the school's educational visits by the Visit Leaders, EVC and headteacher will take place after each visit. This should include a review of incidents, near-misses and accidents.

9. Emergency Procedures

The risk management for each visit will identify the relevant emergency procedures during the visit. For any offsite visit a home contact will be designated by the school who may be needed as a link between the party, the parents/carers, the school and the County Council in the event of an emergency. The home contact must be an employee, be unrelated to anyone attending the visit and be confident in providing support in a crisis.

For visits that take place outside normal establishment hours:

- A completed [Emergency Card – Visit Leader](#) (or equivalent) must be with the Visit Leader at all times, **and**
- A completed [Emergency Action Card – Home Contacts](#) (or equivalent) must be with the emergency home contact(s) at all times, where access to EVOLVE is not possible.
- A [First Contact Emergency Action Card](#) can be used when taking an initial call from a Visit Leader in an emergency.

In the event of a delay in returning (of more than 1 hour), or of an incident resulting in harm to any attending participant, staff member or volunteer, then the school must be contacted as soon as possible to inform the headteacher or designated deputy so that they can decide:

- A. If the incident is of a less serious nature then the next of kin or parents of those affected will be informed about what has happened (e.g. that the party will be returning late or that an incident has befallen a party member) and the action that has been taken so far. In appropriate circumstances the Visit Leader will be designated to undertake this task.

B. If the incident is very serious to contact Derbyshire County Council using the emergency contact phone number and details given below:

The emergency contact phone number for Derbyshire County Council during office hours is 00-44-1629-538364 or outside office hours 00-44-1629-533085. Upon connection, please ask for the Emergency Planning Duty Officer. Please note that calls to the numbers above are to be used only in extreme circumstances, such as serious injuries and/or fatalities. Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians.

10. Accident Reporting

All accidents will be handled in line with Derbyshire's County Council's [Accident Reporting Procedures](#).

Where an incident or accident occurs on an activity led by a Provider, please ensure this is reported to the LA Visits Team.

This policy will be used in conjunction with:

The Accident Reporting Policy.
Health and Safety Policy
The Lettings Policy
Evolve Procedures
Equality Policy
Critical Incident Plan

Co Chairs of Governing Board

Signature:

Name:

Date:

Headteacher

Signature:

Name:

Date: