



Model Educational Visits Policy

March 2017

Context

We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every child 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 Riverbank Academy a supportive and effective learning environment. The benefits of children 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 creativity, developing learning relationships and practicing their 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's)
- Improved achievement and attainment across a range of curricular subjects. Students are active participant's 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.
- 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.
- Physical skill acquisition and the development of a fit and healthy lifestyle.

Application

Any visit that leaves the school grounds, whether as part of the curriculum, during school time or outside the normal school day, is covered by this policy.

Riverbank Academy adopts Coventry City Council's **Policy for the Management of Visits, Trips and Learning Outside the Classroom** (currently dated October 2011 and available via the EVOLVE homepage. EVOLVE is the web based notification, approval, monitoring and communication system, used by Coventry City Council, to which all staff have access.).

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with Coventry City Council's policy. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

The rest of this policy explains how visit approval and planning takes place at Riverbank Academy.

Types of visit

There are three types of visit, for each of which the approval process is slightly different:

1. Staff using the local area to deliver lessons
2. Other visits within the UK excluding adventurous activities
3. Any visit involving adventure activities and / or involving travel abroad

Roles and responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of visits but should involve both accompanying colleagues and the children in this process. Staff must make appropriate checks of any third party providers. Staff are advised to obtain outline permission for a visit, from the EVC/Head teacher, before beginning to plan and certainly before making any commitments.

The EVC is Mrs M.Maunsell-Stewart who will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom. They are the first point of call for advice on visit related matters. The EVC will check final visit plans on EVOLVE before submitting them to the head.

The Senior Deputy Head teacher has responsibility for monitoring and final approval of all visits.

Staff Competence

We realise that staff competence is the single most important aspect of safe trip management and so we support staff in developing this competence in the following ways:

- An apprenticeship system, where staff new to visits assist and work alongside experienced trip leaders before taking on a leadership role
- Supervision by Senior staff of some educational visits
- Support for staff, where relevant, to attend training courses relevant to the role of visit leader

In deciding whether any member of staff is competent to be a visit leader the EVC/Head teacher will take into account the following factors:

- Level of relevant experience
- Any relevant training undertaken
- The emotional and leadership ability of any prospective visit leader to make dynamic risk management judgements and take charge of any emergencies that may arise.
- Knowledge of the children, the venue and the activities to be undertaken

Visit Planning and approval

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

1. Local area visits will follow the extending learning territory policy (appendix 1)
Visits within the UK excluding adventure activities – these are put on EVOLVE and approved internally by the Head Teacher. Visits should be submitted to the EVC via EVOLVE at least 7 days in advance.
2. Visits involving adventure activities must be put on EVOLVE and submitted to the EVC at least 42 days in advance. The school is required to submit these for Local Authority Approval 28 days in advance. Visit leaders must check if an activity provider holds either an AALA licence (http://www.aals.org.uk/aals/provider_search.php) or an LOTC quality badge (<http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/search>). If they don't then they must complete a Provider Questionnaire (National Guidance document 8p)
3. Visits Abroad require detailed planning to commence well in advance and the head must be kept up to date with progress. Checks must be made on any third party providers and permission from the head teacher to use them be obtained before any deposits are paid. Third party providers who hold the LOTC quality badge (see above) do not require further checks. Those who do not hold this accreditation should complete and return a Provider Questionnaire (National Guidance document 8p), which visit leaders should scrutinise.
The head will need to submit final plans to the Local Authority 28 days before the departure date.

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; 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.

The Visit Leaders job list

The visit leader will ensure all the following steps are completed for any type 2 or 3 visit:

- Gain outline approval from the EVC/head to begin planning the visit and agree funding mechanism / charging policy.
- Ensure the visit:
 - has clear learning outcomes
 - has activities appropriate to the group
 - is planned to maximise benefits to the children while managing significant risks

- is appropriately staffed
- complies with the school's safeguarding policy
- Involve children in the planning of the visit, and how it will be managed, wherever possible.
- Ensure the LA procedures are followed and that the visit plan is recorded on EVOLVE.
- Ensure all other staff, accompanying adults and children are:
 - fully briefed about their roles and responsibilities during the visit
 - know what to do in the event of an emergency
 - are given information they need about individual pupil needs.

Emergency procedures must include what would happen in the event of illness or injury affecting the party leader.

- Ensure the base contact back at school is fully briefed and has copies of all relevant information.

Parental Consent

The school obtains blanket consent, for all local, non-residential visits, at the start of each year. For any visits not covered by the extended learning territory, information will be sent home giving parents information on the visit and including a request for information on any changes in their child's medical details.

For residential visits, visits extending beyond the school day or visits out of the City specific consent should be requested using EVOLVE and the relevant forms.

Transport

We use a school minibus and we follow the LA transport policy. All staff driving the mini bus have had the relevant test and training.

Where outside companies are used, they will be companies recommended by the LA.

Use of staff cars to transport pupils - Staff cars can be used to transport pupils when the driver is covered by the MAT business insurance and a clean driving licence (a record of both of these being checked will be kept by the EVC). Any use of private vehicles will be subject to a specific risk assessment.

Insurance

The school has comprehensive liability insurance.

Appendix 1 Extended Learning Territory

Boundaries

The boundaries of the territory are within 20 miles, from the school. This area includes the following frequently used venues, used by some staff:

- Coombe Abbey
- Ryton Pools
- City Centre
- Memorial Park
- Hereward College

We use these areas on a weekly basis for a variety of learning activities and approved staff are allowed to operate in these areas, without completing the visit approval process so long as they follow the agreed standard operating procedure. The EVC and the office maintain a list of currently approved staff.

Operating Procedure

The following are potentially significant hazards within our extended territory:

- Road traffic
- Other people / members of the public / animals
- Losing a pupil
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, 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 or 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
- The concept and operating procedure of the extended learning terrain is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school.
- There is always a minimum of two adults. Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas' and have practiced appropriate management techniques.
- Children are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- Children's clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness before leaving school and staff carry additional spare clothing and a first aid kit
- Staff carry student medical information and emergency contact details (collect this from the office on the way out)
- Staff will deposit in the office a list of all pupils and staff, a proposed route and an estimated time of return. A school, or staff 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 leadership team, or will be able to contact an experienced senior leader.
3. The visit leadership team and the emergency base contact will both have relevant medical and emergency contact information on all the trip participants (including staff).
4. Both the visit leader(s) and the base contact 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.
5. The National Guidance role specific emergency action cards are carried by:
 - a. The visit leader
 - b. The first point of contact (eg the office receptionist)
 - c. The designated base contact senior leader