

Outdoor Education and Offsite Visits Policy



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Policy for Outdoor Education and Off-site Educational Visits

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1. Introduction

1.1 Palatine Primary School provides many opportunities for its pupils to enrich and enhance their on-site learning through use of Outdoor Education and Off-site Educational Visits. This encompasses residential activities, environmental studies through Forest Schools, cultural and sporting experiences as well as regular opportunities to develop social skills and to generalise communication and numeracy learning in real life contexts,

1.2 The value of learning outside of the classroom and off-site educational visits is well recognised by the Management Committee and fully supported throughout the school. It is emphasised that a culture of safety must prevail and there is a need for careful planning and adherence to statutory procedures. Off-site educational visits must be well managed, information communicated and responsibilities recognised.

1.3 This document outlines the specific policies and procedures Palatine Primary School. It supplements and follows the advice and guidance contained within the following significant publications:

- West Sussex County Council's Regulations for Educational Visits and the use of EVOLVE and national Guidance: March 2013. See: https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/learning/west_sussex_grid_for_learning/curriculum/outdoor_education/off-site_activities/regulations_and_guidance_for_o.aspx
- Departmental advice on health & safety for schools, regularly updated. See: <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00191759/departamental-advice-on-health-and-safety-for-schools/key-points>
- Department for Education advice on 'Legal Duties and Powers For Local Authorities, school leaders, school staff and governing bodies, available at:

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/h/dfe%20health%20safety%20advice%20181212.pdf>

- The Health and Safety Executive statement: "School Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities – Tackling the Health & Safety myths. available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf>

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Management Committee satisfies itself that the appropriate procedures, risk assessments, and control measures are in place and that the documented guidance notes are being followed. All off-site visits that are residential, abroad, or hazardous need to be approved by the Governing Body. Such approval must be recorded in the minutes of the Governing Body.

2.2 The Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) ensures that all off-site activities follow the correct procedures. The person with these responsibilities will approve the group leader for every visit and monitor the written risk assessments to ensure good practice. In addition, the following responsibilities and duties are undertaken:

- Support the group leader in identifying the purpose for the visit and the selection, training and briefing of appropriate supervising adults and volunteer helpers. (It is important to consider the continuing professional development needs of staff engaged in these activities. Resources will need to be made available.)
- Ensure that Vetting & Barring Scheme / Criminal Records Bureau disclosures are in place where necessary
- Arrange Emergency Contact Duty Officer and draw up proper procedures to be followed in such an event.
- Keep records and make reports of accidents and "near misses"
- Review and regularly monitor procedures
- Liaise with the Outdoor Education Adviser where necessary to ensure the proposed visit complies with the WSCC policies for Learning Outside the Classroom.

2.3 The Group Leader is responsible for identifying the purpose of the visit and following the checklist published in the Local Authority guidance. A risk assessment is necessary for all off-site visits. Significant risks, Full Day visits and their control measures will need to be recorded and attached to the EVOLVE visit form (available on <http://www.westsussexvisits.com/>). This will take account of:

- Generic risks as published in this document and the WSCC Regulations for Educational Visits and the use of EVOLVE March 2013 and Section B (Adventurous Activities) of the Regulations & Notes of Guidance for Off-site Activities 2007.
- Event Specific Risks as identified from a pre-visit or thorough knowledge or experience of the environment, accommodation, the leader's competence, the group and other factors such as transport.
- On-going risks identified by the professional staff responding to changing circumstances and the success of planned activity and procedures. The participants and staff will be fully briefed on the purpose and the risk assessment control measures

2.4 Participants are encouraged to consider risks involved in an off-site educational activity and to assist in the design of appropriate risk management strategies that support their learning. They will be fully aware of the purpose of the visit and understand expectations of behaviour.

3 Guidance Notes for Off-Site Educational Visits

To ensure proper good practice and compliance with the necessary regulations it is expected that :

3.1 All group leaders will familiarise themselves with the published advice and guidance.

Further information is available from the Evolve web-site (www.westsussexvisits.org) and the West Sussex Grid for Learning. Training for group leaders will be arranged to include all aspects of supervision, ongoing risk assessments (including being prepared to stop an activity that has become too hazardous) and how to deal with an emergency. Access to such training is also available through the Outdoor Education Office (0330 222 8344)

3.2. In order to plan an off-site activity the EVC should be involved in discussing plans at an early stage. Routine or local visits such as games matches need to be planned ahead also. It may be possible to approve a series of events on a termly basis. No financial commitment should be agreed until all relevant approvals have been achieved.

3.3 Parental Consent. This must be carried out at the beginning of the school year and then again for each 'out of county' or residential trip. Copies must be available for the Emergency Contact and the Group Leader to take on the visit.

3.4. An Evolve Visit form must be completed for all residential visits and for those that are either visits abroad or for adventurous/hazardous pursuits. Out of county visits are also required to use this system. The form will need to be submitted to, and approved by, the Head of Establishment (or EVC) one month in advance and

certainly before becoming financially committed. These types of off-site activity also need the Management Committee's approval. School Journey Insurance is automatically covered by the Local Authority unless the establishment has 'opted-out' of the WSCC arrangement with Chartis. Group Leaders should check to see if such cover is already being provided by a tour operator, or external provider. A refund may be possible. The details are published at Appendix Z in the WSCC Regulations and Notes of Guidance for Off-site Activities 2007 and are available on the Evolve website.

3.5. OE2 form: This optional form provides information on what WSCC expects an external provider to deliver. It should be sent to any provider being considered for the first time and attached to the evolve form as evidence of the planning process. Information is available through the Evolve website about other West Sussex Educational Establishments that may have used a provider before.

3.6. Evaluation Report: On return the Group Leader must report to the EVC and, where necessary, an evaluation report should be completed in order to achieve any learning about a 'near miss' or where an incident took place. A new on-line accident reporting procedure is now available. If such a form was completed at the venue, there is a need to place such an occurrence on the record at the 'home' establishment. A general evaluation of the visit is possible, within 28 days, through the EVOVE visit form. This can inform future visits and may be a useful check on the value of the risk assessments undertaken.

3.7. Risk Assessment forms should be completed and attached to the Evolve form when risks are perceived as significant. External providers will have their own risk assessment documents that can be used to help in this process. For certain activities an Adventurous Activity Licence is legally required. (See www.aala.org.uk) If this is the case, the provider's licence number should be quoted instead of copies of their risk assessment documentation.

3.8. Providers that hold a LOTC (Learning Outside the Classroom) Quality Badge have been externally assessed and are acceptable as a 'checked' provider on the EVOLVE site.