



Woodlane High School

achieving success in a nurturing environment

Educational Visits Policy

Updated: February 2023

Next Update: February 2026

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Educational Visits Policy

1. Aim and scope

At Woodlane High School we recognise the value of educational visits to support the teaching and learning of pupils. We value the contribution that educational visits have as a way to supplement and enhance the curriculum, expand pupils' education and provide enriching social and cultural experiences, teach life skills and promote independent learning, provide a foundation for lifelong learning, and form an integral part of our approach to furthering our pupils' education and personal growth.

Educational visits are activities arranged by our school, which require pupils to leave the school premises, having been authorised to do so by the headteacher or other designated member of staff.

This policy sets out our approach to planning and operating educational visits, to ensure the health and safety of our pupils and staff, and to make sure that our visits are available to all pupils. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of staff and pupils when it comes to visits.

This policy applies to activities taking place within and outside of normal school hours, including weekends and holiday periods. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Visits to places of interest in the local area
- Day visits to places such as museums and other cultural and educational institutions
- Sporting activities
- Adventurous and recreational activities
- Residential trips organised by the school
- Trips abroad organised by the school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's guidance on [health and safety on educational visits](#), and the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)
- Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE adopted by RBKC, LBHF and Westminster - 2018
- National Guidance provided by the Outdoor Education Adviser's Panel (OEAP) <https://oeapng.info>

The following elements of this guidance should be read in conjunction with this policy:

Guidance published by OEAP:

- *Foundations of Good Practice*, OEAP National Guidance, March 2022
- *Approval of Leaders*, OEAP National Guidance, March 2022
- *Ratios and Effective Supervision*, OEAP National Guidance, January 2023
- *7i Group Safety at Water Margins*, OEAP National Guidance, March 2019
- *Coronavirus – What are the Implications for Visits?* – OEAP National Guidance, July 2022

Further guidance is available from the appointed Health and Safety team at Hammersmith & Fulham. The school's contact is:

Marlon Barnes
07468700726
marlon.barnes@lbhf.gov.uk

2. Responsibilities

- **Local Authority** – to approve overseas, residential and adventurous activities. Sign off requires minimum 1 month notice for the risk to be reviewed and discussed.
- **Headteacher** – has the responsibility for ensuring that educational visits follow the agreed procedures outlined in the '*Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE*' document and has final sign off, of all trips requiring a risk assessment.
- **Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)** – is responsible for supporting staff to complete risk assessment through EVOLVE and completes first-approval' for all educational visits. The EVC must be 'competent' as outlined below.
- **Visit Leader** – is the member of staff leading the educational visit. The visit leader is responsible for proposing the visit and gaining prior agreement from the Senior Leadership Team. They must complete the risk assessment on EVOLVE, inform all relevant members of the school community, gain permission from parents if relevant and ensure they oversee all relevant aspects of the visit until pupils are safely back at school. Risk assessments should be completed a minimum of two weeks before the visit. The visit leader must be 'competent' as outlined below.
- **Accompanying staff** – are responsible for ensuring all elements of the risk assessment are followed and may have a smaller responsibility, e.g. responsibility for a small group of pupils or 1:1 support.
- **Parents** – are responsible for returning completed documentation and are contactable.
- **Pupils** – must follow adult instruction and adhere to the school's behaviour policy and learners' code. Many will need prior information and support to understand the key elements/risks related to any educational visit.

3. Competency

The competence of the visit leader is the single most important contributory factor in the safety of participants on the educational visit. The school has a clear process for approving people to lead visits or oversee out of school activities. This ensures that there is accountability for all areas of risk and confidence in the competency of staff to carry out the risk assessment and visit specifics as planned.

The school has robust safeguarding measures in place, ensuring all staff have been recruited safely. All staff follow agreed principles of safeguarding as outlined in our school's policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education. It is the school's policy therefore that the trip leader will be a permanent member of the school staff. If this is not the case, or there are any concerns

over any area of competency, then a member of the senior leadership team will attend the trip to lead/support, or it will not go ahead.

Decisions are made using the '*competence to lead*' criteria set out below, taken from section 10 of the '*Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE*' document. The EVC and/or Headteacher must consider the following when a request for an educational visit is made:

- a) What experience has the leader in leading or accompanying similar or other visits?
- b) Is the leader competent in planning and managing visits?
- c) What are the leader's reasons for undertaking the visit?
- d) Does the leader have the ability to manage the pastoral welfare of participants?
- e) Does the leader exhibit sound decision-making abilities?
- f) What experience has the leader of the participants he/she intends to supervise?
- g) What experience has the leader of the environment and geographical area chosen?
- h) Does the leader possess appropriate qualifications?
- i) If appropriate, what is the leader's personal level of skill in the activity, and fitness level?
- j) If leading adventurous activities, have activities of this type, (or will these be) 'approved' by the LA?
- k) Is the leader aware of all relevant guidelines and able to act on these?

4. Inclusion

All pupils, regardless of background or abilities, should be able to take part in every aspect of our school life, including visits. Every effort should be made to make reasonable adjustments to trip programmes where necessary, working with parents/carers to provide additional support, making reasonable adjustments to itineraries, providing additional support staff, and other adjustments as appropriate to accommodate pupils with disabilities or special educational needs. Additional risk assessments may be carried out to ensure the safety of all staff and pupils. However, adjustments should not put any pupil or staff member at any health and safety risk (as detailed in section 6 of the '*Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE*' document).

Where the educational visit being planned cannot accommodate all pupils within the group, an alternative is always preferable to excluding some pupils from attending. However, there may be circumstances where a trip cannot be made safe or accessible for an individual, (e.g. a venue selected by an external provider does not have an accessible toilet for a wheelchair user) but it is a necessary part of the curriculum. In these circumstances the trip may go ahead and the school will attempt to replace the visit for affected pupils. There are other circumstances where a pupil's health condition may prohibit them from attending a trip for a set period of time, or until improved health is seen.

Challenging behaviour

In some cases, it may be reasonable and necessary to prevent a pupil with challenging behaviour from coming on a trip in order to protect their safety and the safety of the other pupils attending. We will consider all reasonable options to help the pupil go on the trip safely, such as adapting the trip itinerary and increasing staffing numbers so the pupil can be supervised on a 1:1 basis.

5. Educational Visit or Local Area Visit

The school uses two separate definitions for the types of visit that may take place. There are different forms of risk assessment required for both, but consideration to the individual needs of pupils should take place regardless of which type of visit.

- **Local Area Visit (LAV)** – A regular or one-off visit or activity taking place within the school's local community. This may include:
 - a visit to Wormwood Scrubs, (our local green space), for a nature walk or similar,
 - a visit to a local shop or Westfield,
 - a visit to a local place of worship where there is no food tasting or travel involved,
 - a visit to a local centre for a Careers Fair or similar,
 - a visit a landmark in the local community within walking distance, etc.
- **Educational Visit (EV)** – a regular or one-off visit or activity taking place that involves leaving the local community, (travel) and/or activities which require additional consideration. This may include:
 - a visit to a Central London landmark, (travelling involved),
 - a visit to a café or restaurant where food will be consumed, (risks related to food consumption would need greater consideration),
 - a sports competition against other schools,
 - a visit to an activity centre where an adventurous activity will take place, e.g. trampoline centre or climbing wall,
 - a visit that includes pupils being near or in water,
 - a whole school visit to a theme park,
 - a visit to another country,
 - a visit that includes an overnight stay.


6. The Venue


Whilst there are many venues that can be suitable for an educational visit, there are a number of factors that should be considered prior to selecting a trip. Staff should consider:


- Is the venue considered safe enough to host a group of pupils?
- Is there likely to be significant value added to the progress of pupils who attend?
- Will the venue provide added context to the pupil's learning?
- Is the venue accessible from school without too much time spent travelling, compared to the time spent in the venue?
- Have I, (or another member of school staff) visited the venue and undertaken these checks?

Best practice is for the venue to have a Learning Outside of the Classroom Quality Badge (LOtC) which demonstrates the venue has undergone rigorous checks regarding its safety, learning opportunities, insurance and suitability for school groups to attend. More information about LOtC badges can be added here: <https://www.lotc.org.uk>. The badge is also endorsed by the DfE, therefore an LOtC badge would usually denote a highly suitable educational visit venue.

7. Planning and Risk Assessment

Local Area Visits are partially covered by the school's Generic Risk Assessment which covers a number of the agreed principles for conducting these visits, (see Appendix 1). When completing a Local Area Visit form on Evolve, staff must list any specific risks, (e.g. medical) within the Comments box at the bottom of the form. After submitting the LAV form, staff should update the register/staffing to reflect who will attend, by pressing the purple eye button: 

Staff should also ensure a copy of the Generic Risk Assessment is added to the form using the plus button:  and carried with staff on the visit.

Educational Visits require a full risk assessment added to Evolve. The Evolve system allows staff to logically walk through the event and consider all relevant elements. Staffing and pupil numbers should be pre-agreed. Event Specific Notes (ESN) should be used to select from commonly identified risks and preventative measures, or enter bespoke ones, which will commonly relate to medical and behaviour needs. Any trip letters, risk assessments provided by the venue, travel documents/itinerary or other associated elements should be added to the risk assessment using the plus button: 

When completing ESN for a full risk assessment, staff are encouraged to consider STAGED:

- Staff,
- Timings,
- Activity,
- Group,
- Environment, and
- Distance.

Both types of risk assessment should be completed on EVOLVE at least two weeks prior to the visit. Visits that have costs associated should be discussed with the SLT prior to being risk assessed. Any visits should be added to the school diary immediately to avoid clashes.

7.1 Medical and Behaviour – What to Include?

It is the responsibility of the visit leader to check the whole school Medical and Behaviour document created and maintained by the SLT and Senior TA. Staff should ensure this information is considered in planning. The document outlines main areas of challenge that might arise on a visit in relation to each child, it does not provide solutions for these directly. Staff should ensure that the risk assessment outlines how these medical and behaviour needs will be met in the context of this specific educational visit. This should be recorded through Event Specific Notes.

All medical and access needs must be carefully considered to ensure the trip is suitable for all pupils. The Medical and Behaviour document includes a RAG rating, indicating the level of risk each pupil presents with in attending an educational visit. This functions as follows:

- Pupils at **level 1** need universal consideration, meaning there are no reasons related to medical and behaviour that would impact their trip attendance. The generic risk assessment will support these pupils adequately.

- A pupil at **level 2** signifies targeted consideration required. Pupils can usually attend if the right support is put in place.
- A pupil at **level 3** indicates specialist consideration. For pupils at this level, careful judgement is needed to ascertain whether there are adaptations and support that can be put in place to ensure these pupils can attend safely. For some pupils, the risk may be too great.

A copy of this information must be carried on the activity/visit along with any medication required. This information should also be made available to all adult supervisors. The Medical and Behaviour document should outline:

- Details of any conditions.
- The impact on the pupil.
- Medication required and instructions for the use of the medication.
- Emergency contact numbers and emergency notes that may be required to share with medical practitioners.
- Any other information, e.g. dietary, toileting or safeguarding requirements.

7.2 Planned Tasks

Additional thought should also be given to planning pupil tasks to support with the management of risk. Visits that have well considered activities, positively engaging pupils throughout are those that are the most successful. Activities can include:

- Active looking/listening tasks when travelling on public transport.
- 'Clue Finding' or 'Scavenger Hunt' style activities at a venue.
- Research tasks.

7.3 Supervision

The ratio of staff: pupils must be considered based on the need of each individual pupil. At Woodlane High School the general rule is 1:5, however, some pupils will require 1:1 support and some group dynamics require a higher ratio. Each visit should be assessed individually and appropriate numbers agreed.

Pupils must be supervised at all times throughout all visits. It is essential that risks are monitored throughout the visits as circumstances change. Risk assessments must carefully outline where adult support is required and how it will be utilised to ensure the pupils are safe and supported appropriately.

7.4 Adapting Plans

Despite the most detailed and carefully planned visits, unforeseen circumstances may affect the visit. To avoid making decisions under pressure it is important that advanced thinking has occurred and a 'plan B' has been considered.

7.5 Parental consent

Depending on the nature of the visit, individual written **consent** is not always required. Particularly if the visit is an important part of the school's curriculum, e.g. a Careers Fair. However, all parents must be informed of every visit taking place. When pupils join the school in Year 7 or as a mid-year transfer parents will be asked to sign a generic educational visits consent form which ensures most visits in the year do not require detailed consent.

For visits that involve increased travel, those where pupils are out of school for a significant period, or if the trip has higher-risk activities/outside of school hours, individual written consent must be sought from parents via a letter home. Best practice is to send the letters two weeks prior to the visit. **A visit may need to be cancelled if consent is not sought in a timely manner.**

7.6 Transport

The visit leader should apply for free passes via transport for London (TFL). The booking system for TFL does not take applications for activities within the next two weeks, so staff must apply for this in a timely manner. Consideration will need to be given for visits which are held outside of school hours or do not qualify for free passes. If it is not possible to obtain free passes permission must be sought from the Headteacher if the school is to pay for travel. Some visits, such as the weekly College Link programme, require pupils to bring their Oyster Cards for free bus travel and parents should be given plenty of notice that this will be required and support provided to apply where needed.

7.7 Ordering Lunches

The school's catering team are able to provide packed lunches for some/all pupils attending an educational visit. Staff should order lunches two weeks in advance, at the same time as completing the risk assessment. The catering team have produced a request form for packed lunches which should be completed and given to the kitchen. This request form complies with Natasha's Law regarding allergy labelling on packaging.

When ordering lunches, a note should be made in the school diary so that office staff can confirm numbers with the kitchen. It is also best practice to speak to the chef directly too.

8. Approval

All matters regarding each Educational Visit or Local Area Visit will require the approval of the Headteacher and/or EVC. A Local Area Visit that meets the criteria set out above may be approved by the EVC, however an Educational Visit will need additional approval by the Headteacher. Further approval of visits defined as, overseas, residential and 'adventurous activity' (as defined in section 21 of the '*Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE*' document) must be also approved by the Local Authority.

The risk assessment as described in section 7 must be submitted via EVOLVE at least two weeks before each visit. Key information such as medical/behaviour and control factors for these, attendees and staffing must be added at this time. Additional documents, such as the consent letter and travel details must be added prior to the trip. The Headteacher may not be able to authorise trips that do not meet this timescale. Evolve will automatically direct the risk assessment for approval to the relevant person.

It is common practice for the EVC/Headteacher to refer the risk assessment back to the trip leader for additional information prior to approval. Any notes/requests through this process should be acted on swiftly.

If a visit is being planned to a provider that **does not hold** an 'LOtC Quality Badge', **and** there are planned activities with anything above a basic level of risk being delivered by the provider (e.g. visiting a fete that has an abseiling wall), the provider is required to complete the '*Providers Form*' found on Evolve under the 'Resources' section, or they provide a risk assessment that outlines how they are fully compliant with Health and Safety legislation. This process ensures that a company complies with health and safety policies, before the school makes a commitment to attend and join these additional activities.

Approving a risk assessment denotes that, at the time of checking all relevant information is considered. Staff should continue to review any risk assessment up to the morning of travel to ensure everything remains appropriately covered. Staff attendance and the presentation of pupils, (e.g. mental health) are the two most commonly changeable elements within each risk assessment.

9. Sharing Information

When a visit is agreed and a risk assessment is authorised, staff should ensure they inform all relevant staff attending the trip. The risk assessment should be shared. Staff should also ensure they have had conversations regarding cover of themselves, and the Teaching Assistants that are also being asked to attend. Cover should be agreed and written clearly within the diary for both Teaching staff and TAs.

It is essential that both the specific and generic are printed and shared where appropriate with staff attending the visit. Any information relevant to medical, behaviour, travel or events must be read, understood and kept to hand for reference.

The lead member of staff should ensure that parents have had appropriate information to inform consent where this is required. If consent is being sought, this must be chased a week before the visit, not the morning of the visit, as this places an unacceptable workload on the front office staff.

10. Visit Briefing

The morning of each educational visit, it is essential that staff conduct a visit briefing with all attending staff. This ensures that any problems are discussed and solutions agreed. Staff should ensure the morning briefing includes completing/assigning responsibility to staff for the following:

- Review their risk assessment and review the generic risk assessment.
- Share relevant information with other staff.
- Recheck medication and pupil needs, collecting medication.
- Collect First Aid kits.
- Collect lunches.
- Collect emergency contact cards.

- Collect any required travel documents/Oyster Cards.
- Ensure actions and activities are recapped with staff and pupils.
- Ensure pupils are reminded of expectations.
- For specific visits, take a printed copy of the appropriate guidance including:
 - *Group Safety at Water Margins*
 - *National Guidance on Farm Visits*
 - *Trampoline Parks Guidance*
- Check the weather.
- Check the news and travel details.

The following list has been made into a checklist for staff. See Appendix 2.

11. Critical Incident Response, including: Terrorism, Crime and Additional Risks

The direct effect of a critical incident, such as terrorism are difficult to plan for and counter but, there are some wider elements of visit planning that can help avoid situations, and improve responses if groups are affected. This is particularly important as the school is located in London, where the threat level is high, and most trips will take place in and around heavily populated areas and tourist hotspots.

Woodlane will take some additional precautions in light of this, including:

- Remaining alert to local and national news before and during a trip.
- Carefully considering the relative benefits of visits to venues and events that could be considered higher risk.
- Research the venue/s to avoid occasions when large crowds are likely or political demonstrations are planned in the area.
- Liaise with venues in advance to understand their own security arrangements for school groups and any individual events.
- Reminding pupils to remain vigilant and alert, reporting anything suspicious to leaders.
- Remaining alert to more 'usual' crime since this remains far more likely than terrorism.
- Briefing pupils where appropriate that if they are caught up in a security situation, they should try and get away as quickly but safely from the immediate vicinity as possible, leaving belongings behind.
- Briefing pupils where appropriate to follow instructions of police or security forces at all times, being mindful that they may be armed and appear more intimidating than they are used to.
- Brief pupils and staff of the protocol if separated from each other in the event of a security incident. This will include designating specified physical meeting points and using emergency contact cards
- Considering use of telephone boxes where they still exist for contacting the school or office in situations where mobile phone networks do not work, as mobile reception was blocked by police in London following the 7/7 attacks but were deliberately maintained by the French police in Paris, November 2015.
- Data based communication services such as WhatsApp might work even when voice calls don't so staff should try alternative forms of communication in an emergency.

In the event of a terrorist incident in the vicinity of the group, the group leader should:

- Attempt to keep everyone together unless it is unsafe to do so, in which case pre-arranged smaller groups should be used.
- Move away as quickly as possible to a pre-arranged safer location/landmark away from tourists/heavily populated areas.
- Staying low and using solid objects such as concrete barriers or buildings for protection.
- Contact all staff on the trip and ensure all pupils are accounted for.
- Contact school once the group are safe. The school will become the contact point for any parents so regular and clear updates are required.
- Do not attempt to travel on public transport until the all clear is given.

Overseas visits are also at risk of terrorist incidents, staff planning for these visits must explore all relevant information through the Foreign Office and British Embassies within relevant countries.

12. Evaluation

Within a week of the visit, visit leaders should evaluate the trip via Evolve. Ideally this evaluation would take place with the pupils.

Best practice is to include photos of the visit within school books. This should include the pupils annotating the photos with their own experiences.

If taking photos, staff should use a school iPad or camera equipment, and not their personal devices.

Appendix 1:

Generic Risk Assessment

General Risk / Hazard	Control Measures
Pupils walking to and from venue may fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils should be made fully aware of the distance to venue. • An appropriate walking pace is used to accommodate all abilities. • Rest breaks are taken when required. • Pupils encouraged to regularly drink water.
Pupils may be hit by moving traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will remain with their adult at all times. • Pupils will be reminded how to travel safely. • Crossing will take place only using an official crossing and must wait until the Green Man is displayed.
Pupils may display poor behaviour/not follow instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading up to the trip pupils' behaviour in school will be monitored. If there are concerns these pupils will remain in school. • Pupils should return to school, with an adult, if they display dangerous or poor behaviour. • Educational visit home-school reports should be used on all visits.
Pupils may get caught in poor weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils should bring appropriate wet/cold weather clothing. • If weather is particularly poor walking can be reduced and a bus can be taken, should form part of 'plan B'.
Pupils may get sunstroke/sunburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils encouraged to wear sun hats in hot weather. • Pupils to use sunscreen and sit in the shade whenever possible. • Pupils encouraged to regularly drink water.
Pupils may trip/hurt themselves on escalators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety instructions are reiterated to pupils. • Pupils must stand on the escalator holding the handrail at all times. • Pupils to check loose clothing/shoe laces.
Pupils may become anxious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will be monitored in small groups and will be close to an adult. • Pupils are verbally prepared for crowds or a social story is used when necessary. • Pupils are reassured by their adult throughout the visit.
Pupils may require first aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For trips that include activities with an increased risk to pupil health, (e.g. a football match against another school) a trained first aider should attend. • A first aid kit must always be taken. • Injuries are reported and recorded in the school office on return.
Pupils may get lost or wander away from adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are assigned to an adult in small groups. • Pupils are supervised at all times. • Pupils are given a contact card, with the school number and address.
Pupils may return late to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The visit leader should inform the office at the earliest opportunity. • Buses should be instructed to wait where possible. • Parents contacted via the school office. • Parents asked to pick up their child. • Adults should wait with the pupils until they are collected.

Appendix 2:

Staff Checklist

On the day of your educational visit, the following checklist should support preparations for the day.

Task to Complete:	Completed?
Review your risk assessment and review the generic risk assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Share relevant information with other staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recheck medication and pupil needs, collect medication.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collect First Aid kits.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collect lunches.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collect emergency contact cards.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check all pupils have permission to attend.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collect any required travel documents/Oyster Cards.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure actions and activities are recapped with staff and pupils.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure pupils are reminded of expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
For specific visits, take a printed copy of the appropriate guidance including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group Safety at Water Margins• National Guidance on Farm Visits• Trampoline Parks Guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check the weather.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check the news and travel details.	<input type="checkbox"/>