



St. John's C. of E.

Blackpool's First Free School 1817

Educational Visits Policy

'In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.'
Matthew 7:12

Be Kind

Be Forgiving

Be a Good Friend

Be Honest

Love One Another

Be part of our St John's family!

Updated: September 2024

Next review due: September 2026

Throughout the National Curriculum great emphasis is placed upon the importance of first hand experience. Learning outside the classroom (LOtC) provides a powerful route to the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, in particular enjoying and achieving, staying safe and being healthy.

The school's governing body will afford the opportunity for educational visits, both day and residential, and will enable teachers, support staff and children to work in an environment outside their normal classroom, which will allow the children to develop social skills and interact within different settings.

Educational visits also play a part in the ethos of school as expressed in our Mission Statement:

"Everyone Matters in God's World."

and reflects our ethos which, promotes, recognises, celebrates and welcomes diversity, honesty, respect and tolerance. This is rooted in our theological Christian vision:

'In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.' Matthew 7:12

Benefits of Learning Outside the Classroom

"Every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of earning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances."

By helping young people apply their knowledge across a range of challenges, learning outside the classroom builds bridges between theory and reality, schools and communities, young people and their futures. Quality learning experiences in 'real' situations have the capacity to raise achievement across a range of subjects and to develop better personal and social skills. When these experiences are well planned, safely managed and personalised to meet the needs of every child they can:

- Improve academic achievement.
- Provide a bridge to higher order learning.
- Develop skills and independence in a widening range of environments.
- Make learning more engaging and relevant to young people.
- Nurture creativity.
- Provide opportunities for informal learning through play.
- Stimulate, inspire and improve motivation.
- Develop the ability to deal with uncertainty.
- Provide challenge and the opportunity to take acceptable levels of risk.

Giving young people responsibility for achieving these outcomes helps them to learn from their successes and failures. Learning outside the classroom provides support for many different curriculum areas. Linked to the curriculum, these activities provide direct and relevant experiences that deepen and enrich learning.

The Group Leader (also referred to as the Visit Leader)

Before any visit the Group Leader will ensure there are clear and well considered aims to the learning and development of the group as a whole and individuals within it, which contributes to the wider curriculum and ethos of the establishment. The Group Leader will also verify the appropriateness of the venue and any external providers that may be used. As part of the Risk Management procedure a Visit Leader Check List will be completed for each visit.

The Group Leader will:

- liaise with the EVC throughout the planning and preparation of their trip to ensure risks are assessed and that safety measures are in place prior to the trip taking place.
- assess / reassess the risks involved and amend as appropriate any previous recorded risk assessment.
- ensure there is a contingency plan should a significant change to the programme be necessary due to unforeseen circumstances.
- ensure that all parents of children on their trip are provided with all the required information, including any risk management information, and that any questions raised are answered prior to the trip taking place.
- have overall responsibility for that visit whilst it is underway, however they must ensure there is a designated Deputy Leader who is fully aware of all aspects of the visit and would be in a position to take overall responsibility should this be required.
- be fully familiar with emergency procedures and contact numbers.

Inclusion

- The Group Leader will make every effort to ensure that all children are included on visits, including those with special educational needs, disabilities or other special conditions or circumstances. This may require additional adult support, increased staff to pupil ratio, adult training for specific medical conditions etc.
- The visit organiser will take all reasonable steps to ensure inclusion for all.

Supervisory staff

- All staff assisting with supervision on any trip will be conversant with Blackpool Council's Policy for the Management of Supported and Offsite Visits (including Learning Outside the Classroom)
- All staff will ensure that the requirements of any risk assessments, risk control procedures and safe systems are followed.
- All staff will ensure that once the trip has started, where any previously unforeseen hazards or risks are identified, they are brought to the attention of the Group Leader.
- Staff will feed back information to the Group Leader to enable a full review of the trip to be completed.

Procedures

The school will adopt the procedures as laid out in Blackpool Council's Policy for the Management of Supported and Offsite Visits, (OEAP) Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel and (LOtC) Learning Outside the Classroom. For every educational visit, reference should be made to the appropriate system in present use, i.e. the on-line data-based EVOLVE system and the relevant Blackpool Council risk management form.

The following procedure will be adopted when organising any visit outside school grounds.

Proposals for visits will, as a minimum, state:

- the educational purpose of the visit,
- its aims and objectives and how it conforms to the school's curriculum aims.
- class identification and size, composition, supervision ratios and the names of who will be supervising.
- destination, dates and times.

A planning checklist should be used to provide assurance that each visit is methodically and suitably planned. Approval of visits will be outlined within the arrangements section of this policy, however in brief:

- The Head teacher and/or EVC will approve all visits
- Blackpool Council will be notified for all visits in Category B via registering the proposed visit on the EVOLVE system. Category B visits include, overseas visits; residentials, adventure activities, water-based and open country activities.
- Staff competencies required for the nominated Group leader and for teaching and support staff will be clearly defined.
- Where the school uses external providers, the Group leader will ensure that the individuals/organisations hold the necessary governing board awards/certificates.

Risk assessments and procedures for managing risks will be in place for all risks that are reasonably foreseeable. The risk assessments must be shared with all the adults accompanying the trip. The timescales for the proposal, approval and departure of each visit will be included in the arrangements section of this policy.

Suitable and sufficient information will be provided to parents to enable them to make an informed decision as to whether their child should accompany the trip. Where appropriate, consent forms signed by their parent or guardian will be returned to school prior to the trip, should this consent not be given then the child will be prohibited from attending the visit.

Risk Management Documents

Risk managements are an essential part of the planning process. The Group Leader is responsible for producing risk management for all aspects of the visit. All adults accompanying the visit must be party to the risk management and be aware of all aspects of the visit.

For regular visits, such as swimming, or sports centre, a programme of activities will need to be reviewed on a regular basis e.g. termly or annually. If a previous risk management is being used it is essential that the group leader re-evaluates the risk management and makes any appropriate changes that could have an impact on the forthcoming visit e.g. time of year may be different, specific needs to the children, etc.

Proposals

The Group Leader will submit a proposal to the Head teacher/EVC within the following timescale for each category of visit

Category	Latest date for submission to EVC and/or Head teacher
A	5 working days, but applications may be accepted up to 48 hours prior to visit
B	for foreign trips 8 weeks for all other Category B trips 4 weeks

The EVOLVE on-line Approval for Off-site Visits form or Blackpool Council risk management form must be completed.

The means of complying with the requirements outlined in the planning checklist must be confirmed. Proposed visits should be clear with regard to insurance arrangements and the financial procedures that will be used including charging and remissions.

Parents should be given sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision as to whether their child should participate in the visit. They must sign the relevant consent form(s), and provide emergency contact number(s) and all relevant medical details including children currently on medicines. Forms for Parental consent and medical details should be sent out at least two weeks prior to the visit.

Where coach or minibus travel is to be used it must be in accordance with Blackpool Council's transport policy and the school's Minibus Policy.

Notification

Notification will be made using the EVOLVE on-line Approval for Off-site Visits form or Blackpool Council risk management form.

Notification to the LA Educational Visits team will only be allowed after the Head teacher and EVC are satisfied that the form has been fully completed and that any requisite additional information is attached and they have signed all relevant documentation.

The Group Leader is responsible for sending the notification to the EVC for visits in category B. This must be: at least eight weeks prior to an overseas visit and four weeks prior to any other Category B visit. The Head teacher/EVC will ensure that the Group Leader carries out this task.

Undertaking the visit

Once the trip notification has received approval, the visit will commence in accordance with the itinerary and activities planned. Any deviation from the itinerary or planned activities must be considered by the Group Leader and a risk assessment made prior to the alteration taking place.

A record must be kept of all such instances for evaluation and review purposes. Any accidents that result in a pupil or member of staff having to go to hospital must be telephoned to the school contact immediately. Upon receipt of any such calls the school contact will immediately inform the LA Learning Outside the Classroom team (LOtC).

Monitoring

The school will monitor the implementation of this policy by ensuring that the documentation required has been produced to a satisfactory standard. It is recommended that on occasions the EVC, Head teacher or a member of the Governing Body will accompany a group. The school may also request the LOTC Advisor to undertake a monitoring visit of a planned trip. This will be used for the school's own monitoring purposes.

Insurance

All staff, pupils and adult helpers are covered by Blackpool Council's centrally charged insurance policies, which fall under 'School Journey / Personal Accident' insurance and within the Public Liability Policy. St John's CE Primary School also has the following insurance cover in place:

- Employers Liability Insurance through Blackpool Council
- Governors Public Liability Insurance through Blackburn Diocese
- Vehicle Insurance (minibus) with QBE Motor Insurance (brokers Marsh Ltd)

N.B. This insurance does not cover personal possessions or trip cancellations and staff and pupils should take out additional insurance cover for all other contingencies).

Additional insurance which may be considered necessary by the Group Leader include Overseas Personal Accident Insurance, increased UK coverage and cancellation cover

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the head teacher

The responsibility for ensuring that LOTC is delivered successfully and safely ultimately lies with the head teacher, who will be supported and advised by a competent, experienced and LA trained EVC. This will be monitored by the governing body.

Role of the Governing Board

The role of the Governing board is to monitor that this policy is applied to all LOTC opportunities. The Governors have no direct role in the approval of visits, although they will be informed of those visits which require a local authority notification. The establishment visit policy supports the principles of inclusion.

The EVC will:

- Have attended such EVC training as required by the employer - this is essential for the EVC to understand the links between good practice and the legal requirements of Health and Safety.
- Ensure that visits meet Blackpool Council guidance requirements.
- Ensure that the head teacher, visit leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers understand that all staff involved in visits, receive training at an appropriate level to ensure that BBC guidance and establishment procedures are properly understood.

- Make sure that this policy is kept up to date.
- Ensure that visits are led by competent and confident leaders and that issues regarding succession planning are considered.
- Monitor visit leader planning and risk management, as well as sample monitoring of visits.
- Ensure that visit leaders are kept updated regarding information for parents.
- Check that there is a 24/7 emergency contact(s) for each visit and any medical and first aid issues are addressed.
- Ensure emergency arrangements include access to all relevant paperwork including medical and next of kin information for all members of the party (including staff)
- Ensure that individual visits are reviewed and evaluated and that this process includes reporting of accidents and incidents.
- Ensure that visit policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis, and immediately following any serious incident or systems failure.
- Keep up to date via EVC updating, revalidation and other training events.

Procedures for Group Leaders

- Identify the clear purpose and objectives of the visit
- Obtain EVC approval for the visit and complete relevant paperwork
- Plan itinerary
- Carry out a pre-visit where required by the EVC/Head
- Inform parents and seek consent, detailing the nature, purpose and related activities involved in the visit
- Allocate supervisory responsibility and involve the staff team in the risk management process – including nominating a deputy group leader who could stand in place of the group leader should the need arise
- Make the pupils aware of their responsibilities and behavioural expectations
- Nominate a 24/7 point of contact/emergency contact for the visit where applicable

Parents

Parents will be:

- kept fully informed of all trips and visits.

Information will include:

- date, timings and venue
- reason for visit
- method of transport, if required
- emergency contact - charges/voluntary contributions
- clothing/footwear needed
- money, food etc arrangements

Monitoring and Record Keeping

- The policy and guidelines will be regularly reviewed by the Head teacher and Governing Board.
- The EVC will monitor visits through use of EVOLVE and through coordination with visit leaders
- Records of ALL visits will be kept. - ALL visits will be recorded on the school electronic diary. Information will include times and which adults supervised during the visit. This can be cross referenced to attendance registers so a record of pupils attending is kept.

In addition, reference should be made to any generic risk assessments used during the visit (e.g. crossing the road, walking in local area, etc). parents will be informed of these visits in advance via text message and/or letters home.

In addition, all off-site visits will be recorded on EVOLVE (for Category B visits) and completed Risk Management Forms kept in the EVC file. This will be done in advance of the visit and will include all necessary risk assessments, including some generic ones held in school (e.g for transport arrangements). Parents will be informed of these visits in advance via letters home, and these are covered by the permission forms completed by parents when their child enrolls into school.

Residential visits will be recorded using EVOLVE. Activity specific permission will be sought for these visits, and activity specific risk assessments will be developed. Parents will be informed of these visits well in advance and meetings will be held to give parents details of activities, etc.

Risk Management and Risk Assessment

Risk management, in the context of outdoor learning and off-site visits, is a two-stage process:

1. The identification of the potential benefits to be gained from an activity, along with any risks to the health and safety of those involved.
2. The implementation of a plan to best realise these benefits, using professional judgement to ensure that the level of risk does not exceed that which can be justified by the benefits.

The fact that most human activity involves risk, and that this cannot be eliminated unless activities are not undertaken 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)

There are two broad categories that require risk management and planning:

1. 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.

2. 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. This may be due to distance from the establishment, the nature of the activities, 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. The additional steps needed to manage these aspects should be identified and recorded.

Risk Management involves answering two basic questions:

- What could go wrong?
- What are we going to do about it?

This process happens at three levels:

Generic Risk Management

- Policies and procedures that apply across a range of visits (normally recorded).
- This is guidance or practice that remains constant regardless of the nature of the visit and they form part of an establishment's policy and procedures. It covers the management of risks identified as relevant to all visits involving similar activities.

This will cover:

- Visits in local area, including crossing the road
- Sporting events
- Visits to the area around the school (i.e. our immediate locality)
- Visits to local church
- When using a generic risk management, it is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure it is fit for purpose and whether additional activity-specific information needs to be assessed for risk and added.

Visit-specific Risk Management

- Carried out before the visit takes place (recorded)
- This is the identification and management of any risks not already covered through generic risk management. If existing generic documents cover everything then there is no need to repeat anything.
- It is unique to each occasion and should address staffing, activity, group, environment and distance.
- These could record all significant findings for a particular visit or they may simply record issues not covered by existing generic documents.
- In the absence of generic documents, any significant findings should be included in the visit specific record.

Dynamic/on-going Risk Management

- Carried out continuously throughout the visit (not necessary to record)
- This refers to the on-going monitoring of all aspects of the visit/activity by the visit leadership team. The group and the level of risk must be monitored and assessed throughout and, if circumstances dictate, activities should be curtailed or amended (e.g. change to plan B). In such instances a Plan B should have been considered when the initial risk management was being drawn up e.g. to consider factors such as the weather.
- In practice, it is often these on-going decisions of the Visit Leader(s) that determine whether the group remains safe and whether the activity is successful.

Emergency Procedures and Incident Reporting

When we look at how things can go wrong on an Off-Site Visit, it is possible to consider emergencies in four categories, depending upon the nature of the incident.

Planning and preparation for Off-Site Visits should ensure an appropriate response to an emergency in any of these categories, at any time of day or night.

- Incident: a situation that is dealt with by the Visit Leadership Team. This may, perhaps, involve some communication back to school or to parents, and some support from the EVC/Head teacher but the visit Leader remains in control and is able to cope.
- Emergency: an incident which overwhelms the coping mechanisms of the Visit Leadership Team and which requires the School's Emergency Plan for Off-Site Visits to be initiated. This may involve some communication with the Employer and support from it, but the school takes control of the situation and is able to cope.
- An incident is an emergency where: - A group member has suffered a serious injury - A group member is at risk - A group member has gone missing for a significant period - Any other incident beyond normal coping mechanism of the visit leader
- Critical Incident: an incident which overwhelms the coping mechanisms of both the Visit Leadership Team and the school, and which requires the Employer Critical Incident Plan to be initiated. The Employer takes control of the situation and supports the school and the visit staff/participants.

Procedures in the case of an Incident

- The Visit Leadership Team should stabilise the situation as far as possible.
- The Visit Leadership Team should alert the School Emergency Contact.
- The School Emergency Contact should decide the level of response required and, when necessary, initiate the Emergency Plan and alert the Employer's Emergency Contact.
- The Employer's Emergency Contact should initiate the Employer's Critical Incident Plan for Off-Site Visits.
- Major Incident: an incident which (if in the UK) is declared as a major incident by the Police, who will take control, and where the relevant Local Authority's Major Incident Plan is initiated, or where (if outside the UK) the relevant authorities take control. Both the School's and the Employer's Response Plans will be required in order to coordinate with the Police or other authorities.

Key points:

Deciding what to do in the event of an accident or emergency should form part of the planning and preparation of every Off-Site Visit and be written down as Emergency Procedures for the visit. All members of the Visit Leadership Team should be familiar with these.

- All staff should carry information of who to contact in case of an emergency
- Staff should carry mobile phones. They should also ensure school has all necessary up to date contact numbers.
- In cases of incidents and emergencies staff will contact the school office during the day or the agreed emergency contact (24 hours) in case of residential visits.
- School will then respond in line with their Emergency Policy and Guidance for Educational Visits, and if necessary Blackpool Council Guidance for Critical Incidents.
- If necessary emergency services will be called, e.g. ambulance by the leader and/or school
- School will contact parents in case of any emergency and the designated emergency contact will be responsible for this. The Emergency Contact will hold all the relevant information, including contacts, close at hand at all times the visit is in progress (paper copies, in case electronic information is inaccessible)
- All adults on the visit should know who the Group Leader is and young people should also know what to do in case of an emergency
- For residential visits plans must take into account the possibility of an incident occurring out of normal working hours. The procedures of the establishment will also be followed.
- Useful documents include OEAP leader checklists, available on the website.
- All information about incidents will be recorded, in line with School and Blackpool Council policy.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of a serious accident, such as a fatality, multiple injury, meningitis, abduction or natural / man-made disaster the following procedures must be followed:

1. Assess the situation and safeguard the uninjured members of the group.
2. Attend to any casualties.
3. Call the emergency services, if appropriate. (999 in UK, 112 in Europe)
4. Contact your Emergency Contacts at your School/Service.
5. Stay in contact with your own establishments Emergency Contacts until the accident / incident is fully under control.
6. DO NOT contact individual parents or adults associated with the visit, this will be done by the Emergency Contacts
7. DO NOT speak to the press or media; refer them to school.
8. Keep a written account of all events/times/contacts/decisions as they happen. This will help you recall events afterwards.

Visit Leader Emergency Action Card

If an Establishment decides to adopt this 'card', it should be carried by all staff accompanying a visit and can also be placed in first aid kits.

Emergency Procedure

In the event of an incident overwhelming your team's coping mechanisms, use the following to guide your actions:

1. REMAIN CALM - Assess the situation.
2. Safeguard yourself and then any other uninjured members of the group. Make sure all other members of the party are:
 - ✓ accounted for
 - ✓ safe
 - ✓ adequately supervised
 - ✓ briefed to ensure that they understand what to do to remain safe.
3. Delegate Assistant Leaders if possible so you can keep an overview of events and to allow 'concurrent' activity.
4. Call emergency services as appropriate.
5. Carry out first aid to the best of your abilities. Remember the aims of first aid are to
 - a. Preserve life
 - b. Prevent the condition worsening
 - c. Promote recovery

Essential First aid:

1. casualties need to be able to breath – if they are unconscious this means being put into a safe airway position
2. you need to try to find and stop any serious external bleeding
3. you need to protect the casualty from the environment - keep them warm
4. Monitor their condition, talk to them, reassure them, hold their hand and provide emotional support

Once the immediate situation is contained:

- Inform the school/Establishment Emergency Contact or, if unavailable, your Employer (e.g. the Local Authority) Emergency Contact. They will need the following information:
 - Who you are, which Establishment you are from and what your role is within the group
 - What number can you be called back on?
 - What is the nature of the emergency?
 - How many casualties there are and their status
 - The total number of people in your party

- Your current location
 - Whether you are staying where you are or moving – if you are moving where to?
 - What time did the accident/incident happen?
- Liaise with, and take advice from, emergency services if they have attended the scene.
- Consider the physical needs of the group and casualties in terms of shelter, refreshments, transport/repatriation.
- Consider the emotional needs of the group such as removing them from the scene, providing emotional support (they can often do this for each other), giving them useful things to do.
- Control communications - prevent group members from using phones or going online unsupervised or until approval is given.
- Keep a written log of all actions taken, conversations held and a timescale.
- Refer all media, parental or other enquiries to your employer's press office.