



# Walton Hall Academy

## Educational Visits Policy



Document Owner:	Chris Frid
Approved By:	Academy Council
Queries to:	Chris Frid
Review period:	Bi-annually

## **Introduction**

Educational visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The Academy Councillors and teaching staff believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum of the school by providing experiences which would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our student's lives and learning experiences.

In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the safety and health of all students at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all students, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with physical disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day and after school with the residential team and on occasion will include overnight stays. Our school adopts the LA guidance when planning Educational Visits.

## **Aims**

The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our students;
- provide a wider range of experiences for our students than could be provided on the school site alone;
- promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

## **Curriculum links**

For each subject in the curriculum there is a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists). All these activities are in line with guidance published by the LA:

- English – theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups
- Science – use of the school grounds, visits to science centres
- Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment, visits to shops for money skills
- Art and design – art gallery visits, use of the locality
- PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches
- Music – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, concerts

- Design and technology – visits to local factories or design centres
- ICT – its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools etc
- Humanities - castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums; use of the locality for fieldwork, village trails; visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy
- PSHE and citizenship – visit to local emergency services and other services in the community
- KS4/5 – visits to the community to use local shops and services and to learn about personal and road safety
- Walton Hall Residence – programme of activities to support social, independence and Preparation for Adult Life – this includes visits to local cultural and community event, recreational facilities and meeting students off site in safe open setting in order to promote greater independence.

### **Residential and adventurous activities**

Our students may have the opportunity to take part in an off-site residential visit. The visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities. These visits are usually organised in conjunction with a recognised LA authorised activity centre or National Centre. We undertake these visits only with the written agreement of the LA through the EVOLVE on-line Educational Visits system. All adventurous activities should be led by a qualified instructor and hold public liability insurance whether they work for a recognised company or work as a freelance instructor.

### **How visits may be authorised**

The visit leader will complete all planning for the visit through the on-line EVOLVE system, this will then be approved by the Educational Visits Coordinator and then subject to final approval by the Principal.

The school's Educational Visits Coordinator, Chris Frid will be involved in the management of off-site visits and ensuring that the following criteria is met prior to submitting an Evolve document to the Academy Principal, Julie Wood for final agreement that the visit can go ahead.

- ensure that risk assessments are completed and effective.
- support the Principal in their decisions on approval;
- approve the assign staff to lead and help with trips.
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks, and that any letters from coach companies assures us their drivers too have had police checks.
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained.

- communicate any questions or concerns regarding a planned trip through the EVOLVE note system.
- keep records of visits (through EVOLVE), and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues.

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures (National Guidance “NG”) as detailed on the EVOLVE system. All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LA’s instructions.

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the EVC before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made. The EVOLVE submission should be made TWO WEEKS prior to any trip going out.

Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, the Principal will seek the approval of the Local Education Authority before permitting the activity to take place.

Any residential trip must be submitted on the EVOLVE system at least SIX WEEKS in advance of the trip taking place and any necessary accommodation checklists (EV1 and EV2 forms) must be submitted.

### **Duke of Edinburgh Award**

Where students are undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh award practice and qualifying expeditions staff must ensure that students are appropriately dressed to undertake strenuous activities in the outdoors, this will include appropriate footwear, waterproof & windproof jacket, and a hat for sun protection. Staff must also ensure that students have a small rucksack containing, refreshments/sandwiches, a good supply of water and sunscreen is to be made available with consent sought to apply it.

Any campsites visited during expedition will provide a safe space to camp away from other members of the public and ideally have separate toilets for males and females. Generally, staff will sleep alongside students in separate tents, however those students deemed mature enough may be encouraged to sleep further away from staff in order to promote the spirit of the award.

## **Risk assessment**

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue or telephone the venue in order to gain as much information as possible about potential risks and in order to obtain any site specific risk assessments, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. They will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group Leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgments about the risks it may involve. The LA will not have given its approval for the visit unless it is satisfied with the venue, its instructors and their risk assessment procedures.

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the correct ratios (informed by National Guidance and by completion of Staff and Student List that details the medical, behavioural and mobility needs of the students). Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases. Ratios are subject to specific needs of our individual children and these needs must be identified on the "Staff and Student List".

The risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. This

may include walking, use of the school's minibuses, and use of public transport, use of private coach firms or the use of staff or parent cars. Risk assessments for transport must include consideration of the following:

- supervision for students getting on and off modes of transport
- the provision and required use of seat belts and booster seats (if required)
- proper insurance/training for the driver
- breakdown procedures
- DBS checks on any drivers that may in direct supervision of our students
- Road safety

The group leader will ensure that all adults helping to supervise visits regularly are subject to DBS approval, where a volunteer offers their time to assist in one-off visits they will be supervised at all times and will not be allowed unsupervised contact with any students..

A copy of the completed risk assessment will be uploaded onto the EVOLVE system and will be shared with all adults supervising the trip.

## **Cost**

The costing of off-site activities may include any of the following that apply:

- transport
- entrance fees
- insurance
- provision of any special resources or equipment
- costs related to adult helpers
- any refreshments the school has opted to pay for

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches and minibuses fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

Where private cars are used for transport, the group Leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys.

Our minibus meets LA guidelines, and each seat has a belt. We instruct all children, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, to attach their seat belts, we also identify any students that need assistance to attach seatbelts or who need additional support to be safe on the transport.

## **Communication with parents**

The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information on the consent letter about the intended visit. This should include the address of the venue to be visited, departure and return times.

Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities. For visits that may take place on a recurring basis such as visits to a local town, swimming or work experience, permission may be sought through one form to cover all the subsequent visits.

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary except in the case of residential visits). This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

No child may be excluded from an activity (that takes place during normal school hours) because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle through the school website and letters sent home about intended visits.

The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the principal to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time.

## **Further health and safety considerations**

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number and/or the group leaders number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day a mobile telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

Before a party leaves school, the school office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, together with the risk assessment and details of the venue and travel times.

The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount

importance. During the activity the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that students are kept safe. This involves taking note of any information provided by care plans, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school, the party leader should discuss with the Principal the possibility of making additional arrangements for that child.

### **Group Leaders' planning**

Group Leaders must be fully aware of the school's Educational Visits Policy.

They must consult the LA's documentation detailing procedures and requirements, including guidance on Emergency Planning and Crisis Line organisation, and must complete all sections of the EVOLVE on—line Educational Visits Planning form which must include the following...

### **EVOLVE**

The EVOLVE planning form for intended educational visits must include the following:

- risk assessment/s
- staff and student checklist detailing any specific medical conditions, mobility issues and additional adult support entitlement.
- travel schedule
- accommodation plan (if applicable)
- full plan of activities with times (if appropriate)
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures (included on RA on venue if applicable)
- intended arrangements for supervision (RA)
- insurance arrangements (as an Academy we are no longer covered by Staffordshire County Council's Travel Insurance)
- emergency contacts and procedures
- AALA registration where adventurous activities are to be provided by an external company.
- Proof of public liability insurance.
- Risk assessments of companies/individuals providing a service or i



## Monitoring and review

Visit leaders are encouraged to evaluate visits, taking into account the successful and less successful parts of the visit, and considering ways in which the visit could have been improved. Informal conversations might take place between the visit leader(s) and the EVC or Principal regarding the outcome of the visit.

This policy is monitored by the Academy Council and will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

## Policy Review Information

Date	Details of change or review	Reviewer Name
January 2021	Reviewed	Chris Frid
October 2023	Reviewed	Chris Frid