



Ombersley Endowed First School

Policy on Off-Site Visits

Every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances. Learning outside the classroom is defined as: **“the use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning.”** The rationale is that such learning often makes **“the most memorable learning experiences”** and **“help us to make sense of the world around us by making links between feelings and learning. They stay with us into adulthood and affect our behaviour, lifestyle and work. They influence our values and the decisions we make. They allow us to transfer learning experienced outside to the classroom and vice versa.”** (Manifesto for Learning Outside the Classroom)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the school, and which take place outside the school grounds. The governors and teaching staff at Ombersley 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 children's learning experiences. Staff will review the benefits and learning outcomes of all visits to ensure that they match school aims and objectives outlined below.
- 1.2 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 pupils at all times. Within these limits, we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities. The visits usually take place within the school day.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 The aims of our off-site visits are to:
- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
 - provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils 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.
- 2.2 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.
 - Develop active citizens and stewards of the environment.
 - Nurture creativity
 - Provide opportunities for informal learning through play.
 - Reduce behaviour problems and improve attendance.
 - Stimulate, inspire and improve motivation.
 - Develop the ability to deal with uncertainty.
 - Provide challenge and the opportunity to take acceptable levels of risk.
 - Improve young people's attitudes to learning.

- 2.3 Giving young people responsibility for achieving these outcomes helps them to learn from their successes and failures. Learning outside the classroom provides a powerful route to the **‘Every Child Matters’** outcomes, in particular enjoying and achieving, staying safe and being healthy.
- 2.4 These visits begin with short excursions into the local area and topic-related visits in the Early Years, and progress to a residential experience towards the end of Year 4.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Role of Headteacher

At Ombersley, the post of Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is currently held by Rhiannon Jordan, Deputy Headteacher.

The Headteacher will:

- Have an understanding of the Manifesto for Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) and the supporting rationale.
- Ensure that all visits comply with regulations and guidelines provided by the LA and are notified to the LA as required.
- Ensure that all group leaders have attended Worcestershire County Council Visit Leader Training and ascertain that all staff involved are specifically competent (as defined by the WCC guidance) to carry out such responsibilities as they are allocated
- Designate a suitable member of staff as the EVC.
- Ensure that suitable child protection procedures are in place, including vetting at an appropriate level of all voluntary helpers.
- Assign sufficient time and training for staff to organise visits properly.
- Ensure that visits are effectively supervised with an appropriate level of staffing.
- Ensure that visit information has been shared with parents and that consent has been sought where necessary.
- Ensure that arrangements have been made for the medical needs and special educational needs of all the young people.
- Ensure that inclusion issues are addressed.
- Ensure that suitable transport arrangements are in place and meet any regulatory requirements.
- Ensure that insurance arrangements are appropriate and, wherever possible, are set up to reduce the burden of bureaucracy for all concerned.
- Ensure that details related to the visit and participants (including staff) are accessible to a designated 24/7 emergency contact(s) at all times.
- Ensure that that there are contingency plans in place should the visit plan be significantly changed or cancelled (Plan B)
- Arrangements are in place for the governing body to be informed of any trip where there is a requirement to send an OS5 form into the LA.
- Be aware of the need to obtain best value and to ensure that this has been evaluated in relation to the quality teaching and learning experiences. Appropriate

consideration must be given to financial management, choice of contractors, and contractual relationships.

- Ensure that appropriate risk assessments are completed and preliminary visits carried out.
- Ensure that serious incidents are reported to the LA's emergency planning team to enable the LA's public relations unit to deal with the media.

3.2 **Role of EVC**

If not the Headteacher, The EVC will carry out the above functions with the support of the Headteacher. In addition to those listed above, other responsibilities of the EVC include:

- Ensuring that they have attended such EVC training as required by the LA - this is essential in understanding the links between good practice and the legal requirements of Health and Safety / Employment Law as set out in LA guidance. Regular WCC courses and updates are available.
- Monitoring of visit leader planning and sample monitoring of visits.
- Organising the training of leaders and assistant leaders including voluntary helpers.
- Making sure that individual visits are reviewed and evaluated and this process will include reporting of accidents and incidents.
- Making sure that visit policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis, and immediately following any serious incident or systems failure.
- Making sure that they keep up to date via EVC training events and update.

3.3 **Role of Governors**

As an Endowed School the Governing Body is the direct employer of school staff and therefore has a statutory duty to supply those staff with employer guidance and the systems to support it. This statutory duty is fulfilled by formally opting in to the guidance and support systems of WCC.

When involved in matters concerning visits and off-site activity, a governor should make sure that:

- There is an appropriate EVC in place who has received employer approved training (WCC EVC training).
- There are notification procedures in place for those visits specified within WCC guidance (OS5 forms/ Evolve).
- This visit policy supports the principles of inclusion.

4 **Rationale of EVC selection**

At a later date, should the role of EVC be delegated by the Headteacher, then EVC selection will be in line with the following guidance provided by the DfE:

"The EVC should be specifically competent. The level of competence required can be judged in relation to the size of the establishment as well as the extent and nature of the educational visits planned. ...Evidence of competence may be through qualification, but more usually will be through the experience of practical leadership over many years of off-

site education. Commonly, but not exclusively, such competence will be identified in a person on the senior management team of the school."

Such a person should be an experienced visit leader with sufficient status within the school to guide the working practice of colleagues leading visits.

5 Curriculum links

5.1 For many of our planned topics and curriculum subjects, 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 botanical gardens;
- Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment;
- History – castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums;
- Geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, village trails;
- 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, local schools' orchestra, concerts for parents to hear;
- design and technology – visits to local factories or design centres;
- ICT – its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools, etc;
- RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy.
- PSHE and citizenship – visit to the fire station or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

6 Residential activities

6.1 Children in Year 4 have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. This is an optional visit and the cost of board, lodging and travel is paid for by parents.

6.2.1 The residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work. We go to a residential centre and undertake this visit only with the written agreement of the LA. Qualified instructors are provided for all specialist activities that we undertake.

7 How visits may be authorised

7.1 The headteacher will appoint a party leader to be responsible for running the activity. This will normally be a teacher employed at the school.

7.2 The school's educational visits coordinator, who is currently the headteacher, will be involved in overseeing the planning and management of off-site visits.

7.3 Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the LA (and available from the staff room). All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LA's instructions.

7.4 Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the initial approval of the headteacher before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. Following this, a comprehensive visit plan and checklist should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made.

7.5 Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey of more than 50 miles, the headteacher will notify the governing body and the LA on the OS5 form (Evolve) at least 3 weeks before the activity takes place.

- 7.6 It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us to adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. However, the stated aims and objectives of the trip should still be achievable for all pupils. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

8 Risk Management and Assessment

- 8.1 In line with LA guidance, risk assessment and management processes should be simple, proportional, suitable, sufficient and manageable.
- 8.2 At Ombersley we use the LA **generic risk assessments** as found in the Off-site visit guidance. These are statements of current good practice which apply to the activity wherever and whenever it takes place. These are supplemented with **Event specific risk assessments** which will be undertaken by the group leader and will be unique to each occasion. They will take into account the site, individuals within the group and activity specific needs including the environment, accommodation, the leaders and factors such as transport. In addition, **ongoing risk assessment** involves professional judgements in response to changing circumstances. It is critical that control measures are monitored and confirmed or adapted as required. The lessons learnt from Ongoing Risk Assessments will inform future Event and Generic Risk Assessments. All staff should be involved in this process and have confidence in the management procedures.
- 8.3 Risk assessments should be an integral part of the overall planning process for the visit, ensuring leaders have the experience and competence to manage the process positively and successfully and providing confidence in the process for those involved. 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?
- 8.4 Risk assessments are shared with all adults involved in the visit. Control measures need to be suitable and sufficient for the leader and the individuals within the group, and responsibilities have been defined.
- 8.5 The process will be realistic and effective when it is flexible, recognises the experience and professionalism of leaders, provides sufficient detail for staff confidence and allows leaders, children and young people with varied experience, motivation and training to be treated according to their needs.
- 8.6 Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, 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. S/he should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. S/he 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 judgements about the risks it may involve. While a Visit Leader should seek written assurances that a Provider has appropriate risk management systems in place, the leader should not ask for copies of risk assessment documentation.
- 8.7 An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the following minimum recommended ratios:
- Pupils aged 4-8: 1 adult to 6 pupils

- Pupils aged 9+: 1 adult to 8 pupils

Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

- 8.8 The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip who will be on their own at any time with children have been subject to police checks.
- 8.9 A copy of the completed risk assessment will be given to the headteacher/EVC and all adults supervising the trip.

9 Transport

9.1 The costing of off-site activities should 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 that the school has opted to pay for.

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

9.3 Where private cars are used for transport, the parents are responsible for organising this between themselves. If teachers' cars are used, written permission is sought and the business insurance is held. Booster seats are used when appropriate.

10 Communication with parents

10.1 The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities.

10.2 Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary, except in the case of residential visits), with an occasional limited subsidy from the Friends association.

10.3 Whilst most visits will only be able to go ahead if sufficient funds are available, no child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle through the school prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits.

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

10.5 Prior to a residential trip, parents are given comprehensive information, including emergency contact details.

10.6 The party leader always has a mobile phone on their person and will phone school in the event of an emergency, and the Emergency Contact Team will contact parents. In the event of a late return to school a text message will be sent to parents.

11 Further health and safety considerations

11.1 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, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day, the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

- 11.2 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 a programme and timetable for the activity.
- 11.3 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 safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.
- 11.4 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 headteacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.
- 11.5 More detailed guidance on procedures and requirements can be obtained from the LA's Off-Site & Hazardous Activities File held in the staff room.

12 Group leaders' planning

12.1 Group leaders must read thoroughly the appropriate guidance for off-site activities:

i) HSE: School Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities

ii) Web based guidance: www.oeapeg.info

- 12.2 All Group Leaders must have undertaken the WCC Visit Leader Training. They must consult the LA's documentation detailing procedures and requirements, including guidance on Emergency Planning and Crisis Line organisation, and must draw up a Visit Plan which records in writing (including standard forms, where appropriate) the arrangements that have been made.
- 12.3 Staff have a copy of this policy and a copy is kept in the Headteacher's office at all times. LA guidance folders are available in the staffroom or in the Headteacher's office. All staff have LA guidance available on their classroom computer. This also includes important national documentation.
- 12.4 The Visit Plan for intended educational visits must include the following:
- risk assessment;
 - report on preliminary visit;
 - applications for approval of visit;
 - general information;
 - names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
 - travel schedule;
 - full plan of activities;
 - intended arrangements for supervision;
 - emergency contacts and procedures;
 - medical and first-aid needs.
- 12.5 All staff involved in the organisation of visits must be specifically competent to carry out the tasks they are assigned. To ensure that this is the case with new staff, they are identified as requiring practical training and experience as assistant leaders are given the opportunity to work within an apprenticeship model. Visit leader training is also provided by the school.

13 Use of Voluntary Helpers

- 13.1 A volunteer helper should not be appointed as a Visit Leader as they are not accountable through the normal lines of legal responsibility that would be in place were their involvement based on a contractual relationship.
- 13.2 Safeguarding of children is a priority on all school visits. However, it is only necessary for a volunteer helper to be DBS checked where they may be in a position to be alone with a

pupil. This is not the case if they are supervising a group under the direction of the visit leader or class teacher.

- 13.3 All volunteer helpers are given copies of risk assessments and are given guidance about the expectation of their role.

14 Emergency Procedures

14.1 We ensure that there are one or two nominated people who can provide 24/7 cover as an Emergency Contact and that one of these nominated people will have 24/7 access to all details of the visit. This will include medical and next-of-kin information regarding staff, as well as young people. This person will normally be a member of staff, a governor or a member of the Friends Committee.

14.2 In the case of residential visits, children are given a fire drill and evacuation practice.

15 Code of Behavioural Conduct

15.1 Pupils on residential visits are given a copy of the code of conduct and expectations are outlined to parents.

15.2 Parents are expected to take responsibility for removing pupils in the case of a serious breach of the code of conduct at the discretion of the visit leader and headteacher where possible.

15.3 Sanctions used will be reasonable in the circumstances, and will probably involve the pupil in being isolated from their peers and/or missing an activity.

16 Inclusion

16.1 We promote the Principles of Inclusion at Ombersley. We endeavour to ensure that all pupils are fully included in off-site visits and are aware that all pupils have an entitlement to participate. Accessibility may require direct or realistic adaptation or modification.

16.2 We recognise that it is unlawful to:

- treat a disabled young person less favourably
- fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.

16.3 Expectations of staff must be reasonable, so that what is required of them (to include given young person) is within their competence and normal work practices.

12 Monitoring and review

12.1 This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

Signed: *Caroline Moore*

Date: June 2017

Review Date: Summer 2020