



Educational Visits Policy

Chair of Governors

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Executive Head Teacher

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Reviewed OCTOBER 2015

Amended September 2016

Educational Visits Co-ordinators:

Cherry Trees School: Mrs Sharon Dickinson

Wightwick Hall School: Mrs Mandy Morris

Policy Statement

Cherry Trees and Wightwick Hall schools acknowledge the many benefits of learning outside the classroom and are committed to supporting educational visits and activities that enrich the learning opportunities of all children and young people.

The schools follow Staffordshire County Council guidance and policy on managing off-site activities and learning outside the classroom.

1. Provision of Employer Guidance

Staffordshire County Council has formally adopted Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel 'National Guidance' (NG) as its guidance for the management of off-site visits and learning outside of the classroom (LOtC). This guidance can be found on the following web site:

<http://oeapng.info/>

It is a legal expectation that staff **must** follow the requirements of NG, as well as the requirements of this policy statement.

For LOtC activities the schools ensure that such a commissioned agent has either:

1. adopted NG

or

2. have systems and procedures in place where the standards are not less than those required by NG

2. Scope and Remit

The NG document [Status, Remit and Rationale](#) clarifies the range of employees whose work requires them to use the guidance. In summary, it applies to employees whose work involves any one of the following:

- Direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;

- Direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of Learning Outside of the Classroom;
- Facilitating experiences for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- Deploying staff that will supervise or facilitate experiences of or for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base.

This applies regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

3. Ensuring Understanding of Basic Requirements

'Staffordshire' provide the schools with:

- Appropriate guidance relating to visits and LOtC activity;
- Employer led training courses to support the guidance to ensure that it is understood;
- Suitable systems and processes to ensure that those trained are kept updated;
- Access to advice, support and further training from appointed advisers that have proven expertise and professional understanding of the guidance, the training and expectations set by current good practice.

The relevant training courses in Staffordshire are:

- Staffordshire Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) Training - all Staffordshire schools and SYPS establishments are required to have a current trained EVC in post.
- Staffordshire Visit Leader Training - this course is strongly recommended for all those who lead LOtC activities.

The schools' EVC (Educational Visits' Co-ordinator) are informed of any updating of information on Evolve.

Help and guidance can be obtained through the Educational Visits team who are best contacted by e-mail at eva@staffordshire.gov.uk The nominated advisers in Staffordshire are Gareth Lloyd 07794331637 and Chris Dillon 07969097487.

4. Approval and Notification of Activities and Visits

'Staffordshire' uses an online system (EVOLVE) for notification and approval. A key feature of this system is that visits and LOTC activities requiring approval are automatically brought to the attention of the Local Authority (LA). Those visits and activities not requiring approval may be viewed, sampled or monitored using the database and diary facilities of the system.

Both schools use the EVOLVE system to complete the required paperwork when submitting the request for a visit. The forms are completed and submitted to the EVC a week in advance of the visit. The EVC checks the paperwork and forwards it onto the Executive Head Teacher for final approval.

Visit forms for a residential visit can only be approved by Staffordshire and should be submitted **six working weeks** before a visit is set to take place, and **before anyone is financially committed**. Approval notification from Staffordshire is sent out as soon as possible which can be up to two working weeks after receipt of the visit form.

5. Risk Management

Staffordshire has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed - requiring them to be reduced to an 'acceptable' or 'tolerable' level - and not to eliminate risks, as would be a reasonable expectation when risk assessing a piece of machinery, work shop or manufacturing process. This requires that proportional (suitable and sufficient) risk management systems are in place, requiring 'Staffordshire' to provide such support, training and resources to its employees as is necessary to implement this policy.

The risk management of an activity should be informed by the benefits to be gained from participating. 'Staffordshire' strongly recommends a 'risk-benefit assessment' approach, whereby the starting point for any risk

assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes.

Staff attach the appropriate risk benefit forms to the EVOLVE documentation for each visit submitted.

6. Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Support

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an off-site activity has:

- Either suffered a life threatening injury or fatality
- Is at serious risk;
- Or has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

'Staffordshire' is committed to providing emergency planning procedures to support establishments in the event of a critical incident.

The emergency contact phone number for Staffordshire County Council outside office hours is 00-44-1785-278499 or 00-44-8451-213322. This is the number for Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service Fire Control and it will be answered by a Control Operator. Upon connection, please provide the Operator with your name, a contact number and a brief outline of what has happened. Then ask the Control Operator to page the CCU Duty Officer and to pass this information in full onto him/her. Please note that calls to the numbers above are to be used only in extreme circumstances, such as serious injuries and/or fatalities. This provision is not for resolving matters such as lost passports, lost luggage and forgotten items such as medication.

These numbers should be carried by leaders at all times during an off-site activity.

Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians.

7. Monitoring

'Staffordshire' ensures that there is sample monitoring of the visits and LOTC activities undertaken by its establishments, either by attaching such monitoring duties to its officers, or by delegating these tasks to establishments. Such monitoring should be in keeping with the recommendations of NG. There is a clear expectation that the monitoring function is a delegated task, principally carried out through systems put in place by the establishment EVC.

8. Assessment of Leader Competence

The EVC and Executive Head Teacher assess the competence of the visit leader when processing the EVOLVE forms.

9. Charges for Off-Site Activities and Visits

'Staffordshire' Heads and Managers, Curriculum Planners, EVCs and Visit Leaders must take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996.

For further information please refer to NG document [Charges for Off-Site Activity](#)

10. Vetting and CRB checks

All staff are enhanced DBS checked.

11. Requirements to Ensure Effective Supervision

In general terms, the law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is 'effective'.

Effective supervision is determined by a proper consideration of:

- Age (including the developmental age) of the group;
- Gender issues;
- Ability of the group (including special learning needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics etc);

- Nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, as well as the time of year and prevailing conditions)
- Staff competence

As an exception to the above Ofsted and DfE guidance prescribe ratios for Early Years.

For further information please refer to NG documents:

[Ratios and Effective Supervision](#)

[Group Management and Supervision](#)

12. Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances

All visits are researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third party provision will meet group expectations.

Wherever reasonably practicable, for new venues, a preliminary visit is carried out.

It is good practice for Visit Leaders to take full advantage of the nationally accredited, provider assurance schemes that are now available, thus reducing bureaucracy.

Examples of such schemes include:

- Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge
- Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS) licensing
- Adventuremark
- National governing body (NGB) centre approval schemes (applicable where the provision is a single, specialist activity).

'Staffordshire' takes the view that where a provider holds such one of the above accreditations, there should be no need to seek further assurances.

Visits to the 'Staffordshire' Outdoor Education Service centres do not require approval or notification as they are self-approving.

Visits that are the responsibility of 'Staffordshire' establishments will usually be staffed by at least one appropriate representative who will fulfil the role of leader. This will always apply to participants under 14 years. The exception to this is on the occasion when education for the 14-19 year old age range may be conducted for individuals or small groups by appropriate provider organisations without close supervision from a 'Staffordshire' leader. In order to ensure that the provider organisation is appropriate and both school/learner base and provider are fully aware of their responsibilities the school/learner base should follow the [Collaborative Provision for the 14-19 Curriculum](#) guidance available on NG.

For further information please refer to NG document [Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances](#)

13. Insurance for Off-site Activities and Visits

Employer's Liability insurance is a statutory requirement and 'Staffordshire' holds a policy that indemnifies it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury suffered by any person employed by it where negligence attaches. This cover should extend to those persons who are acting in a voluntary capacity as assistant supervisors.

Staffordshire also holds Public Liability insurance, indemnifying it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury from persons not in its employ, as well as for the accidental loss of, or damage caused to, property where negligence attaches. Employees (as agents of the employer) are indemnified against all such claims, as are all voluntary helpers acting under the direction of the employer's staff. The indemnity covers activities such as off-site activities and visits organised by all establishments and settings for which the employer is responsible.

Limited Personal Accident insurance is provided for all Staffordshire employees in the course of their employment, providing predetermined benefits in the event of an accident in respect of qualifying injuries. The optional School Journey scheme gives benefits that exceed those of most tour operators and provides a phone number giving rapid access to support and assistance in the event of a claim.

When providers are used it is a requirement for them to hold Public Liability insurance cover with a minimum limit of indemnity of £5M.

For further information please refer to NG document [Insurance](#)

For further information and advice on insurance matters please contact:

Ian Gough Risk & Insurance Manager

Insurance Services, Staffordshire County Council

Office Address: Staffordshire Place 2, 2nd Floor, Tipping Street,
Stafford, ST16 2LP

Postal Address: Wedgwood Building, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2DH

Email ian.gough@staffordshire.gov.uk

Tel 01785 276476

14. Inclusion

Every effort is made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all students. Every *reasonable* effort is made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

The schools take all *reasonably practicable* measures to include all young people. The principles of inclusion is promoted and addressed for all visits thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

- An entitlement to participate
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- Integration through participation with peers

For further information please refer to EG document [Inclusion](#)

15. Good Practice Requirements

To be deemed competent, a Staffordshire Visit Leader, or Assistant Visit Leader must be able to demonstrate *the ability to operate to the current standards of recognised good practice for that role.*

All staff and helpers must be competent to carry out their defined roles and responsibilities.

NG sets a clear standard to which 'Staffordshire' leaders **must** work. The guidance states:

'a competent Visit/Activity Leader (or an Assistant Leader where they may take sole responsibility for a sub-group) requires:

- *Knowledge and understanding of their employer's guidance supported by establishment-led training. It is good practice for employers to provide formal and accredited training to support their guidance e.g. EVC training, Visit Leader training and such training may be a requirement prescribed by some employers.*
- *Knowledge and understanding of establishment procedures supported by a structured induction process specified by the establishment.*
- *Knowledge and understanding of the group, the staff, the activity and the venue.*
- *Appropriate experience*
- *In some circumstances (e.g. first aid, adventurous activities) a formally accredited qualification'*

Staff participating in off-site activities and visits must be aware of the extent of their duty of care and should only be given such responsibilities as are in keeping with the above guidance. It is particularly important that careful consideration of competence issues is applied to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff. Establishments should view the original documents and certificates when verifying leader's qualifications, and not rely on photocopies.

Where a volunteer helper is a parent (or otherwise in a close relationship to a young person taking part in the visit) they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise the Visit Leader's plans for group management. The Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the risk-benefit assessment.

Similarly, it is good practice for the home contact not to be related to (or otherwise in a close relationship to) any of the young people or staff taking part in the visit.

For further information please refer to NG document [Good Practice Basics](#)

16. Transport

Careful thought is given to planning transport to support off-site activities and visits. All national and local regulatory requirements are followed.

The level of supervision necessary is considered as part of the risk management process when planning the journey, giving proper consideration to issues of driver-distraction when considering what supervision is required for the specific group of passengers being transported in a minibus.

The Visit Leader ensures that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company.

Transporting young people in private cars requires careful consideration. Staff have the necessary insurance cover.

Please refer to NG documents:

[Transport \(General Considerations\)](#)

[Transport \(Minibuses\)](#)

[Transport \(Private Cars\)](#)

Further information and advice is available from 'Staffordshire's' [Road Safety and Sustainable Travel](#) team.

17. Planning and Evaluation

Planning reflects the consideration of legal and good practice requirements, ensuring:

- The plan is based on establishment procedures and employer guidance.
- All staff (including any adult volunteer helpers) and the young people to be involved, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including their role in the risk management process.

- Those in a position of parental authority have been fully informed and, where appropriate, formal consents have been obtained.
- Proportionate assurances have been obtained from any providers (making full use of national schemes that accredit that assurances have already been obtained by credible inspection regimes).
- Designated emergency contact(s) have been identified that will work on a 24/7 basis where required.
- All details of the activity provision are accessible to the emergency contact throughout the period of the activity.

For further information please refer to NG documents on [Policies, Planning and Evaluation](#)

Accident Reporting

All accidents that involve anyone - employees, pupils, service users, contractors or members of the public - on County Council premises or anywhere else when engaged in County Council activities are to be handled in line with 'Staffordshire's' [Accident Policy](#). Accident investigation and employee hazard report forms are available from the [Health and Safety](#) intranet site alongside other relevant policies and useful information. A copy of any County Accident Forms (HSF40) submitted to the Strategic Health and Safety Service should be attached to the visit form on EVOLVE.