

Whitegate End Primary School and Nursery



Educational Visits Policy

Responsible Committee	Resources
Date ratified	29.03.2023
Next review	March 2026 or as National Guidance changes
Signed on behalf of the governing body	S Worgan
Print name	S Worgan

Whitegate End Primary School Educational Visit Policy

Rationale

Whitegate End Primary School's Curriculum Policy commits us to providing effective teaching and learning so that **all** children reach their full potential with a relevant and engaging curriculum. This is important for all groups of learners. We believe that learning is an enjoyable, lifelong process through which everyone can achieve their potential and exceed their expectations. We challenge and support our students to do their very best by providing an extensive range of learning experiences beyond the statutory requirement.

An essential element of this commitment is to provide a wide range of educational visits to enhance all aspects of our curriculum. Whitegate End Primary School is committed to inclusion and will include all students in our offsite activities wherever this is reasonably practicable.

Introduction

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers involved in organising, running and assisting with offsite / educational visits from Whitegate End Primary School. This policy does not apply to alternative curriculum provision for which separate arrangements are in place.

Procedures for educational visits

Whitegate End Primary School has adopted Oldham Council's procedures for planning and managing educational visits.

1. All staff involved in running or helping with visits have log-ins giving access to the Evolve system for managing visits
2. The Governing Body has adopted Oldham's 'Guidance for Off Site Visits and Adventure Activities' (GOVAA). This document (together with this policy) gives local arrangements and variations where necessary to complement "**National Guidance** for the Management of Outdoor Learning, Off-site visits and Learning Outside the Classroom". Together these documents summarise the arrangements for educational visits and are all available to staff via the Evolve website ('**National Guidance**' is web based to allow for regular updates when required). If staff members ever feel there appears to be a conflict between advice in these documents, then this policy must be followed and clarification should be sought from the Educational Visit Coordinator.

Clarification of roles

The key roles with regard to visits at Whitegate End Primary School relate to: The Governors; Headteacher; Educational Visit Coordinator and Visit Leader. The responsibilities of these roles are outlined in 'National Guidance' with a brief summary (including some specific local variations) below.

Governors / Management Board

In line with advice in 'National Guidance' the Governing Body will:

1. Adopt and periodically review this policy, as required.

2. Ensure there is a competent Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) in place who meets the requirements outlined in 'National Guidance' and has completed the Local Authority EVC Training Programme and any updates as required.
3. Review the range of visits provided by the school via a report submitted twice a year by the EVC.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

1. Appoint a competent Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) who meets the requirements outlined in '**National Guidance**' and has completed the Local Authority EVC Training Programme and any updates as required.
2. Formally 'sign-off' all visits via the Evolve visit management system, confirming competence of staff as required for the planned visit. These visits are also reviewed by the Local Authority via the Evolve system.
3. In the event of absence of the Headteacher the Deputy Headteacher who is identified as Acting Head will have temporary delegated responsibility for approving all visits – Evolve account changes can be arranged with the Outdoor Education Adviser

Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)

The role of the EVC is summarised in National Guidance ([Click Here](#)) (see also EVC Checklist: [Click Here](#)) The EVC has delegated responsibility for overseeing the arrangements for educational visits. All visits are vetted by the EVC prior to approval by the Headteacher (as outlined above).

Visit Leader

The role of the visit leader is summarised in 'National Guidance' ([click here](#)). Visit leaders must ensure they have met all relevant requirements of the Leader's Checklist in National Guidance ([click here](#)).

The Visit Leader has the overall responsibility for supervision and conduct of the visit. To ensure accountability and to avoid potential confusion, a single Visit Leader should be appointed. If this role changes during a visit, a clear handover should be made.

All visits taking place outside the schools local learning area must be planned and recorded on the Evolve visit management system.

Visits must not proceed without approval – the visit leader should check his/her Evolve account to ensure this has been confirmed.

Procedural requirements

Whitegate End Primary School uses the Evolve system to plan, manage and record all educational visits.

Visit Leaders should plan and prepare visits allowing time for internal and external vetting and approval as required. Normally this will mean that visit plans should be submitted to the EVC by the following deadlines:

- 3 to 6 months before departure for Overseas Visits
- 4 weeks before departure for Residentials
- 4 weeks before departure for Adventure Activities
- 2 weeks before departure for other types of visit

If for any reason these deadlines cannot be met, clarification and approval should be sought from the EVC.

Risk management

This is an important element of planning for visits. Visit leaders are normally responsible for assessing and managing the risks of visits they are planning – involving where possible / relevant other staff and the young people involved in the visit. Staff should follow advice on risk management included in GOVAA and National Guidance. Training is also included within the Visit Leader training programme. Advice and support is available from the EVC and other experienced staff.

All everyday activities include inherent risks and Whitegate End Primary School recognises that experiencing and learning to manage risk within an appropriate framework is an important part of growing up. We aim to have procedures which are effective and proportional to the risks involved in a visit and recognise the important learning opportunities and benefits involved in visits that include inherent risks (for example sports activities). Where activities include inherent risks the following statement should form part of the information to pupils, parents and staff:

“Staff at Whitegate End Primary School plan and prepare visits carefully and aim to take good care of all participants. However, parents must understand that well run activities can still include inherent risks and learning to cope with these sensibly is an important part of education and growing up.”

Generic risk assessments may be available for visits previously run- in which case the visit leader is responsible for reviewing and modifying these as required, to allow for the specific circumstances of the visit. Significant factors (not already recorded on a generic RA form or within this policy, including the consideration of children’s specific individual needs (medical / DSEN) must be recorded via:

- A standard risk assessment form (Schools can upload model forms to the ‘Establishment Documents’ area of Evolve)
- A supplementary note on the Evolve visit form
- Or other suitable format agreed with EVC

Where external providers are used they are responsible for risk assessing the activities they provide. Where necessary this should be confirmed on the Provider Form (not required for providers with a LOTC Quality Badge).

Approval of staff to lead activities and visits

All visits require written approval prior to departure – via the Evolve visit management system.

Evaluation of external providers and venues

Visit Leaders are responsible for ensuring that external providers and venues can meet the learning outcomes required for the group of pupils identified to attend and (where appropriate) they offer reasonable value for money. ‘Provider Statements’ should be completed by external providers where required (see GOVAA for guidance). These should be checked as part of the planning and safety checks for the visit.

Visit Leaders should **not routinely** ask for copies of providers' risk assessments, but it is appropriate to ask for any information that they publish specifically aimed at helping Visit Leaders to manage their visit and assess the risks of any school led activities.

Preliminary visits

The **National Guidance** on visits states:

"While the internet and the LOTC Quality Badge scheme have an important part to play in information gathering, there can be no substitute for a preliminary visit. This will back up research and enable you to clarify issues face-to-face. So, wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit to any unfamiliar facility or venue, including those used by a provider. The cost of this can be built into the pricing of the visit".

Pre-visits should normally be made for new visits or if a venue has not been used in some time.

In some cases (for low risk visits or if for some reason a pre-visit is not reasonably practicable) a preliminary visit may not be required. Staff should contact the EVC for clarification.

If for any reason a pre-visit is not possible the visit leader should research the venue carefully and contact staff who have been to the venue for advice.

Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge (LOtC Quality Badge), AALA assessment and Adventuremark

Holding one of the above is a credible assurance of appropriate Health and Safety management systems, and no further verification of these systems should be necessary. The LOTC Quality Badge also covers learning quality. Providers that hold a LOTC Quality Badge are not normally required to submit a Provider Statement but Public Liability insurance levels should be checked out on the LOTC Badge website. ([Click here](#))

The provider must have Public liability cover for at least £10 million.

Parental consent

Whitegate End Primary School asks Parents/Guardians to complete annual consent forms covering the majority of visits.

Specific consent forms are required for the following types of visit:

- Residentials
- Overseas visits
- Adventure activities (including DofE activities)

(see Model Consent Form in the Resources / Key documents section of Evolve).

Parents / guardians should be provided with information on visits in one or more of the following formats:

- Information letter to parents
- Parents' evening

- Termly newsletter
- School website
- Or in suitable circumstances, text message

Information to parents should remind them of the need to update any details that have changed by including the following statement:

"Consent for this visit is covered by the form you completed at the beginning of the school year. Please let us know about any change to contact details (new mobile phone numbers etc) changes to medical information or allergies, or parental arrangements.

If you have questions or concerns about any aspect of this educational visit, please contact _____ (Name of Visit Leader)."

'Checking out' and 'checking in' before, during and after a visit

1. Prior to departure the visit leader must provide the School Attendance Officer with a list of participants taking part in the visit.
2. The visit leader is responsible for ensuring that all participants are returned to school safely and either dismissed at the end of the day, or continue to subsequent lessons.
3. Pupils should not normally be dropped at locations other than school unless this has been approved in advance and agreed with parents.
4. For overseas and residential visits the visit leader should confirm safe return by phone call or text message to the EVC.

Emergencies

All visit leaders must ensure that adequate arrangements are in place for first aid and emergency numbers are carried.

(Some model documents for Visit Leader and Home / Emergency Contact are available in the Resources> Guidance, Policies and Documents>Key documents section of EVOLVE)

The school should be notified at the earliest opportunity in the event of an emergency.

In the event of an emergency the School's critical incident team will assess and respond to the situation with support from Oldham Council if required.

The EVC will normally act as the 24/7 emergency contact, with support from other senior staff as required. The Emergency Contact(s) will have 24/7 access to all details of the visit, including medical and next-of-kin information regarding staff and young people (via Evolve or hard copies), and the Emergency Card for Home Contacts.

Monitoring

The running of visits is an important professional role for all staff and monitoring the running of educational visits in the field may form part of the professional assessment of staff. This may be undertaken by the EVC or other senior staff.

Evaluation

All visits should be evaluated to monitor and develop the quality of provision. This evaluation can be done in a number of ways according to the circumstances.

- For routine, regular visits this might involve a department having a periodic review involving all staff who lead this visit. The Evolve system includes a very quick and easy assessment tool which focusses on the learning outcomes of a visit. This is a simple way of evaluating 'everyday' visits and outcomes can be summarised in a report to Governors
- For new visits and those involving complex arrangements this might require a meeting of all staff involved with the involvement of the EVC and Headteacher

Outcomes from evaluations might include

- Amendments to risk assessment for future visits
- A decision not to use a venue again
- Cascading good practice to other staff
- Identifying training or support needs for staff
- Passing on issues and concerns to other staff / departments

Staff induction and training

Whitegate End Primary School recognises that staff may require training and experience to maximise learning outcomes from educational visits and to operate safely. Certain kinds of visits (especially residential and overseas visits) may require that staff obtain practical experience as assistant leaders alongside experienced staff as part of an 'apprenticeship model' prior to taking on the role of visit leader. This approach also helps to ensure continuity if key staff running annual / regular visits leave, retire or are unable to attend.

Whitegate End Primary School will actively promote professional development by providing opportunities for a wide range of training for staff involved in running and supporting visits including;

- First aid courses
- MIDAS training for minibuss drivers
- Visit Leader Training (theory and practical)
- Educational visit coordinator (EVC) Training
- Evolve training

Relevant Training will be recorded on the Evolve system.

Induction requirements

Checklist for inducting new staff:

1. Ensure staff member has Evolve log-in (available from the EVC) and understands how to use the website.
2. Staff member to familiarise themselves with school policy and GOVAA requirements
3. Provide / arrange support when planning first visit
4. Arrange mentoring opportunities as appropriate

Transport arrangements

Transport arrangements must be approved as part of the visit planning process

Use of staff cars

Use of staff cars must be approved. Staff must:

- fill in a registration form (renewable each year)
- Produce a clean driving licence (if staff have endorsements on their licence, approval to drive is required from the Headteacher).
- Produce evidence of insurance cover for carrying students whilst at work (business use cover on insurance certificate)
- Ensure students wear seatbelts on journeys
- Consider the need for child seats

School and rented minibuses

Drivers must hold a current MIDAS certificate.

Driving licence requirements are as above.

Regulations related to license requirements for driving vehicles with more than 8 passenger seats are complex. Staff should check eligibility to drive with the **EVC**.

Coaches / Minibuses with drivers

Coaches and minibuses with drivers are booked via the school finance office to ensure they meet required standards and to obtain best value

Taxis

Taxis should be booked through the school finance office to ensure they meet required standards and to obtain best value

Volunteers

Volunteers assisting with visits will normally need DBS checking – check with the EVC well ahead of the visit. Visit leaders are responsible for briefing and supervising volunteers.

Visit leaders are responsible for ensuring that volunteer staff on visits:

- have clearly defined roles
- are clear about expectations of them

The school has a duty of care for all participants including volunteers and the visit leader should ensure this is considered as part of the planning and risk assessment.

Where appropriate the competence of volunteers should be verified by the EVC.

Regular volunteers should be listed on the Evolve system.

Behaviour

The school's Behaviour Policy applies off site as well as in school. Staff should apply the same behaviour management principles and pupils must understand that the same expectations apply.

Inclusion

Visits should be planned with a presumption of entitlement to participate, ensuring integration through participation with peers wherever possible. Accessibility should be ensured through direct or realistic adaptation or modification if required. Advice is available from the EVC where necessary.

Insurance

Whitegate End Primary School currently buys into an annual policy with Oldham Council which provides personal insurance for all educational visits.

Finance

Policy for dealing with finance for visits, including:

- School Charging policy (see National Guidance – [click here](#))



Educational Visits Visit Leader Process

Initial Approval

- Seek initial approval from EVC / Head before making any bookings
- Send letter to parents including willingness to contribute

Final Approval

- Complete Evolve within timescales to seek final approval from EVC / Headteacher
- Include risk assessment that covers childrens' specific medical / DSEN needs

Day of Trip

- Take copy of Risk Assessment
- Take a contact list for parents
- First Aid Kit / Sick bucket / Medication
- iPad - remember photos MUST NOT be taken on personal phones

Afterwards

- Shred any docs with personal info
- Complete Evaluation on Evolve