



Policy for Outdoor Learning, Off-Site Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom

1. Requirements

1.1 Change Record

Issue	Date	Author	Description
1.1	April 2015	P Atkin	Draft for Discussion
2.0	May 2015	P Atkin	Ratified by Governors
2.1	January 2018	P Atkin	Updated draft
3.0	5th February 2018	P Atkin	Ratified by Governors
3.1	1st February 2020	P Atkin	Updates for ratification
4.0	5th February 2020	P Atkin	Ratified by Governors

Note: All issues except those of the form 'X.0' are draft.

1.2 Equality Statement

In developing and reviewing this policy we have carefully considered its impact on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

1.3 Approval and Review

This policy was approved by the Full Governing Body on 5th February 2020. It is due for review in the Spring Term 2022.

2. Introduction

“Learning outside the classroom is about raising achievement through an organised, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance. This is not only about what we learn but importantly how and where we learn.”

Manifesto for Learning Outside the Classroom, 2006

This policy is based on the national guidance provided by the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel and should be read in conjunction with this guidance.

2.1 Guiding Principles

Learning Outside the Classroom provides essential experiences for children who attend Fowlmere Primary School. In order that these experiences are the most beneficial it is important that:

- Activities and visits are linked to curriculum planning with clearly identified curriculum links and aims, eg
 - a visit to Tate Modern as a planned activity to support curriculum learning on Matisse’s art
 - children’s social and problem solving skills at EYFS are developed by using the school grounds and local environment as part of a Forest Schools programme
 - a visit to Hunstanton to give pupils first-hand experience of a contrasting UK locality as part of a term’s geography learning
 - a visit to the theatre to support children’s literacy learning on drama, or a particular play
- Activities and visits should promote high quality outcomes, eg

- making use of professional performance spaces for performances to raise expectations
- engaging professionals to run workshops in the school, eg in dance, art, drama or sport

2.2 Aims

At Fowlmere Primary School we use outdoor learning to:

- inspire, motivate and engage children by using the widest possible contexts for learning
- improve outcomes for all children by offering the opportunity to learn from and apply their learning to a broad range of situations
- support children to manage their own risks
- provide meaningful context to curriculum work
- promote equality by enabling classroom learning to be based on common, shared experiences

2.3 Scope

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers at the school. It relates to all learning and activity which takes place outside the classroom environment, including school visits, outdoor activities on-site, performances, whether they are in the school hall or in another venue, and visitors.

2.4 Guidance

The school has adopted the National Guidance from the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (<http://oeapng.info>). This gives detailed up-to-date guidance for staff leading outdoor learning activities or volunteers supporting them. Staff should ensure that they refer to the guidance when planning outdoor learning, and direct volunteers accordingly.

2.5 Links to other policy

This policy also refers to:

- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Equality Statement
- Critical Incident Plan
- Charging and Remissions Policy

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Governing Body

The role of the Governing Body is to:

- understand the principles underpinning Learning Outside the Classroom
- approve the school's policy, making reference to the OEAP Guidance
- periodically monitor how learning outside the classroom promotes equality
- periodically monitor the systems in place for risk assessment and emergency planning
- ensure the school has an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)
- ensure that training is available for school staff and volunteers, especially the EVC
- ensure the school monitors the impact of Learning Outside the Classroom

3.2 Headteacher

The role of the Headteacher is to:

- appoint an Educational Visits Coordinator, in line with guidance, and ensure they are competent, appropriately trained and of sufficient status to implement the policy
- have final approval for all residential visits
- ensure that on-site activity is appropriately risk-assessed
- ensure that the impact of Learning Outside the Classroom is monitored effectively

3.3 Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The Educational Visits Coordinator has a specific role in any activity which takes place off-site. The EVC's role is to:

- ensure that all visits off-site comply with the school's policy and the national guidance
- maintain an overview of visits off-site to ensure that there is breadth of experience, being mindful of the school's equality duty
- ensure that visit leaders are competent and appropriately trained
- periodically monitor visits to ensure that school policy is adhered to
- periodically review systems and procedures, and necessarily after any incident
- approve visits by assessing the competence of visit leaders, reviewing the visit aims, approving the risk assessment process, taking account of the nature of the visit and its participants
- induct new members of staff and provide opportunities for future visit leaders to act as deputy leaders supporting their professional development
- approve volunteers as suitable for accompanying the visit

3.4 Visit and Activity Leaders

The Visit Leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit. To ensure accountability and avoid confusion, as single visit leader should be appointed. Under ordinary circumstances a Visit Leader will be a Class Teacher. Activity Leaders have overall responsibility for on-site activities.

The role of the visit leader is to:

- ensure that school policy and guidance is followed at all times
- properly plan and risk manage the activity, including establishing appropriate aims for the visit
- ensure the visit or activity is adequately staffed and that all staff and volunteers on the visit or supporting the activity are clear about their role and responsibilities
- carry out the visit or activity organisation on the day
- notify senior staff of any incident or issue within an appropriate time-scale

3.5 Class Teachers or Cover Teachers

The role of class teachers or cover teachers is to:

- be prepared to be a visit or activity leader
- support the visit or activity leader in any joint visits or activities
- plan suitable opportunities for learning outside the classroom when curriculum planning
- support families to give consent if this proves to be an issue

3.6 School Office

The School Office has a responsibility to provide administrative support for the visit or activity. Their role is to:

- make bookings, seek prices and establish visit or activity costs
- produce standard letters informing parents and carers of the arrangements for the visit
- manage the consent and payment/contribution process, including timely reminders and “chasing” consent
- inform teachers as soon as possible of any children where consent has not been given
- inform the EVC as soon as possible where visit contributions may provide a significant shortfall against visit costs
- prepare pupil contact lists for staff conducting visits off-site outside of school hours, and ensure they are returned to be shredded
- be prepared to provide administrative support to a visit leader on the day

3.7 Staff or volunteers accompanying visits

The role of other staff or volunteers is to:

- familiarise themselves with the expectations of the visit or activity, the expectations of their own conduct and of that of the children they will be supervising
- follow the instructions of the visit or activity leader
- have an understanding of how a direct relationship with a pupil (in the case of a parent volunteer) will affect their ability to manage an emergency

4. Procedures for Off-Site Visits (Non-Residential, Outside Fowlmere)

4.1 Curriculum Planning

Opportunities for off-site visits should be identified at the curriculum planning stage. Teachers should, as much as possible, balance the number, style, subject and cost of the visits over the course of a year.

Class teachers should:

- Plan the aims of any visits
- Ensure a balance across the year
- Identify likely destinations and visit leaders
- Check availability, costs, procedures, quality and appropriateness of the destination
- Get in-principle approval from the EVC

The EVC should:

- Give any advice required to the teachers, especially in making a judgement about the quality of a provider
- Be clear about an ‘in-principle’ decision about the visit
- Identify whether the visit has taken place before, or whether it is a new visit

4.2 As soon as possible after planning

Procedures for planning a visit should begin as soon as possible after curriculum planning, and in **any case at least 4 weeks** before the date of the visit.

The visit leader should:

- Identify appropriate dates for the visit

- Identify whether consent is required
- Discuss the visit with a member of staff who has carried out the visit before, or carry out a pre-visit
- Seek final approval for the visit from the EVC
- Complete a visit form and pass it to the school office

The school office should:

- Make any bookings necessary, including those for transport
- Make arrangements for payment, and to complete any booking forms or information forms
- Check that the visit is in school diary and that this includes the departure time and return time
- Calculate per-pupil costs in line with the Charging and Remissions Policy
- Note the following deadlines on the office calendar:
 - 4 school weeks before the visit date
 - 1 school week before the visit date

The EVC should:

- Approve the visit detail, including approving the suitability of visit leader/deputy leader
- Sign the visit form if final approval is granted

4.3 At least 4 weeks before the visit

The visit leader should:

- Confirm with the school office whether parent volunteers are required
- Check the visit letter produced by the school office

The school office should:

- Add the trip to the school calendar
- Send a letter to parents requesting consent and a voluntary contribution if necessary

4.4 Between 4 weeks and 1 week before the visit

The school office should:

- Include the deadline for consent in the weekly reminders

4.5 At 1 week before the visit

The visit leader should

- Write, or update, the risk assessment and pass it to the EVC for approval
- Consider groupings, staffing, incident response and the impact of weather on the visit
- Contact parent helpers to confirm their involvement
- Speak to any parents who are refusing consent to reassure and seek consent

The school office should

- Check and chase consent
- Inform the visit leader of any child whose family has refused consent

The EVC should:

- Check and sign the risk assessment

4.6 The day before the visit

The visit leader should:

- Check the travel first aid kit, or ask the school office to do so
- Ensure they have a list of all children attending the visit
- Have contact details and medical details if necessary
- Make sure that any school cameras to be used on the visit are cleared of old photos

The school office should:

- Check the travel first aid kit, if asked
- Print a list of all the children taking part in the visit for the visit leader and any contact or medical details if needed

4.7 The day of the visit

The visit leader should:

- Brief staff and volunteers on the expectations of the visit
- Leave an accurate list of children off-site with the school office on departure taking a copy with them as a register

5. Procedures for Off-Site Visits (Residential)

5.1 Curriculum Planning

Opportunities for Residential Visits should be identified as part of the school's long-term plan.

Class teachers should:

- Plan the aims of any visits
- Ensure the visit fits into any plan for non-residential visits, in particular in relation to costs for families
- Identify likely destinations and visit leaders
- Check availability, costs, procedures, quality and appropriateness of the destination
- Get in-principle approval from the EVC

The EVC should:

- Give any advice required to the teachers, especially in making a judgement about the quality of a provider
- Be clear about an 'in-principle' decision about the visit
- Identify whether the visit has taken place before, or whether it is a new visit

5.2 As soon as possible after planning

Procedures for planning a residential visit should begin as soon as possible after curriculum planning, and in **any case at least 6 months** before the date of the visit.

The visit leader should:

- Identify appropriate dates for the visit
- Discuss the visit with a member of staff who has carried out the visit before, or carry out a pre-visit
- Seek final approval for the visit from the EVC

- Plan the specific tasks to be completed to prepare for the visit and a timetable for these and discuss with the EVC
- Register the visit on the Evolve system (<http://cccpccvisits.org.uk>)

The school office should:

- Make any bookings necessary, including those for transport
- Make arrangements for payment, and to complete any booking forms or information forms
- Check that the visit is in school diary and that this includes the departure time and return time
- Calculate per-pupil costs in line with the Charging and Remissions Policy

The EVC should:

- Approve the visit detail, including the suitability of the visit leader/deputy leader
- Seek approval from the LA if required

5.3 After booking

For each visit staff should follow the agreed planning timetable agreed between the visit leader and the EVC. The tasks will look similar to those for non-residential visits though the lead times are likely to be longer, eg visit staff will need to be briefed well before the visit.

5.4 Emergency Planning

Particular care should be taken to plan for emergencies and other more minor incidents as school staff may well be unavailable to assist, for example if children are unwell during the night, contact details for families will be needed. Staff should follow the guidance at <http://oeapng.info>.

6. Procedures for On-Site Activities or Off-Site Activities within Fowlmere

In many cases as much benefit can be gained with on-site activities as off-site ones; providing a cheaper alternative to run alongside off-site visits. We are fortunate to have a great deal of green space nearby, a hall with performance facilities and a talented community on which to draw. All of these features should be exploited to the fullest extent by staff.

6.1 Curriculum Planning

Opportunities to use the school environment, or the environment local to Fowlmere village should be identified at the curriculum planning stage.

Class teachers should:

- Plan the aims of any activities as they plan the curriculum
- Identify likely sites and activities
- Consider the amount of additional support from staff and volunteers they may need
- Check the relevant generic risk-assessment and include any additional control measures necessary for specific activities or children
- Inform parents of the activities through the curriculum précis
- Ensure that senior staff and office staff in school are aware of the location, nature, children and staff involved in any off-site visit
- Have a plan in case of emergency

The EVC should:

- Approve the visit detail, including the suitability of the visit leader/deputy leader

7. Parental Consent

The school does not need parental consent for any off-site visit taking place **wholly within the school day** and which is typical of the types of visits for the year group. Examples of such visits might include:

- walks within the local environment
- a museum visit in Cambridge city
- a visit to a historic site, for example West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village or Hedingham Castle
- a sports festival or competition organised by the local Sports Partnership or other local school

For a visit to take place without needing parental consent, the following conditions must be met:

- The activity is planned as part of the curriculum
- The visit leader has carried out the visit before (as additional staff or assistant visit leader)
- A list of children and staff involved in the visit is held in the office and senior staff are aware of the activity and its location
- There is a risk assessment in place
- Parents have been informed of the visit or activity
- Staff on the visit are able to contact the school in an emergency

Parental consent is required for any visit which:

- takes place outside the school day, even if only in part
- involves outdoor and adventurous activities
- is residential

7.1 Receiving Consent

Where an off-site visit requires parental consent, this may be given by signing the consent slip at the base of the letter which informs parents about the visit, by email to the school office (from the email address registered to the parent in Bromcom) or through the My Child at School (MCAS) website. Where a parent makes a contribution to the visit through the MCAS Online Payment facility, this will be taken as consent.

7.2 Refusing Consent

Where the visit **requires** parental consent, a parent has the right to withhold consent. In such circumstances, the visit leader should meet with the parent to explore the reasons for withholding consent to seek solutions to any concerns the parent may have – for example, over visit safety or visit content. Where separated parents hold different views, guidance can be found in Section 4.3d of the OEAP National Guidance. The school has a duty to provide an alternative education during the visit, for example, by having set work in another classroom during the day.

Where the visit **does not require** parental consent, a parent has no legal right to withdraw their child from the activity. However, where a parent has suggested this as a course of action the visit leader should meet with the parent to explore the reasons for their concerns and suggest solutions to address them. The headteacher and EVC should be involved with the visit leader in making the final decision, based on the concerns of the parent, wishes of the child, entitlement of the child to a broad and balanced curriculum, any special educational needs and the potential risk to trust between the family and school. Occasionally, in such circumstances, a parent may make the decision to keep a child at home in order to avoid the activity; in all cases, this would be recorded as unauthorised absence.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The following monitoring and evaluation activities take place:

- Visit leaders should evaluate the impact of the visit in the days after the visit.
- The safeguarding governor sample monitors risk assessments for Educational Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom annually
- Governors' Premises Committee review the school's emergency procedures annually; this will include the outcomes of any emergency planning for visits
- The EVC should sample monitor a visit at least annually to ensure that policy and procedures are adhered to
- Governors' Standards Committee should monitor the number, scope and balance of visits annually, including ensuring that visits comply with equality legislation and policy
- Class teachers should evaluate the impact of any Learning Outside the Classroom activities as part of their usual evaluation of teaching

9. Managing Risks

9.1 Outdoor Learning Activity

The school holds generic risk assessments for common Outdoor Learning Activity, including:

- Playground Risk Assessment
- Site Risk Assessment
- Site Security Risk Assessment
- Outdoor Play Areas Risk Assessment
- Village Walks Risk Assessment
- The Butts & Community Woods Risk Assessment

Specific activities many need additional risk assessment.

9.2 Educational Visits

Preparation for any off-site visit must include a comprehensive risk assessment, carried out by the visit leader using the school's agreed format. Risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might they affect?
- What safety measures need to be put in place to reduce risks to acceptable levels?
- Can the visit leader realistically put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

It should also take into account the:

- type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
- location, routes and transport arrangements;
- competence, experience and qualifications of staff and adults;
- ratios of adults to pupils,
- age and competence of the pupils;
- special educational or medical needs of pupils,
- quality and suitability of equipment;
- seasonal conditions, weather and timing;
- emergency procedures;
- need to monitor risks throughout the visit.

KS2 pupils will be involved in the risk assessment process through classroom work and/or discussion before the visit.

Risk assessments must be shared with all adults accompanying the trip, including details of the measures they should take to avoid or reduce the risks. The visit leader must continue to assess potential hazards throughout the trip, and the risk assessment form should be used to record any alterations or updates to the original risk assessment.

9.3 Children with special educational needs

In some cases a separate risk assessment form will need to be completed for individual children with specific special needs, taking into consideration staffing needs or groupings.

9.4 Preliminary visits

Where a visit or activity takes place for the first time, or where there are no existing staff in school who have undertaken the visit before, a risk assessment will include a preliminary visit made by the visit leader. A preliminary visit may also be necessary where:

- the visit is to be led by an inexperienced member of staff;
- the visit is to unfamiliar terrain or location, especially where activity is to be teacher-led;
- the visit is to a location where there may be special hazards, e.g. the seaside;
- the visit will include a pupil or pupils with specific special needs.

9.5 Adult : Child ratios

There are no specific Adult:Child ratios for school visits laid down in guidance as the precise number of adults needed will vary according to the staff, age, experience, environment and activity of the visit in question.

The following table is a rough guide as to the typical ratios expected but these may need to be varied according to the visit in question. Leaders should also be mindful of the number of adults that would be needed in cases of emergency.

Pupil age	Reception	Years 1 - 3	Years 4 - 6
Adult:Pupil ratio	1 : 3 – 5	1 : 6 - 10	1 : 10 - 15

9.6 Assessing Provider Quality

Where an external provider is involved in a visit or outdoor learning activity, the visit leader, along with the EVC, should make an assessment of their competence and quality. This could be completed by:

- checking accreditation such as LOtC Quality Badge, AALA Licence or Adventuremark
- making a preliminary visit and meeting with the provider
- reviewing visit evaluations recorded on the LA Evolve system

9.7 Volunteers

Volunteers are often essential to ensuring the success and safety of Learning Outside the Classroom. Class Teacher and Visit Leaders should ensure that tasks given to volunteers are in line with their competencies and experiences. Class Teachers and Visit Leaders should consider volunteers':

- past experiences: have they been on school visits before, and were there any problems?

- status: are they parents, teachers, students, work experience?
- vetting status: are they suitable vetted for regulated activity, or do they need to be supervised?
- knowledge and understanding: have they been briefed, or trained?

Volunteers should be approved by the EVC in case there are any concerns as to their suitability to accompany a school visit. Visit leaders should also seek the advice of the EVC as to whether aspects of the visit amount to regulated activity and therefore require an enhanced DBS check for all volunteers.

9.8 Transport

The mode of transport should form part of the risk assessment. Different modes of transport will lead to the need to evaluate different risks:

- Walking
 - pre-walking the route to check for hazards such as narrow paths or blind corners
 - staying in pairs with staff at either end of the line, periodically pausing to ensure that everyone is together
 - crossing roads: use crossings wherever possible, otherwise choose places with good visibility; staff should stop traffic if necessary and always be visible in the road when children are crossing
- Private Coach or Minibus (including school minibus)
 - checking that seatbelts are working and seats are in good order (this is especially important where a coach is full and the opportunity to avoid issues is reduced)
 - visually inspecting the coach and being satisfied that the driver is fit to drive
- Service Bus or Train
 - considering what to do if the bus or train is full and children need to stand, or the group needs to be split over two buses and needs to be appropriately staffed
 - deciding systems for ensuring that everyone is safely aboard quickly, eg giving one adult the responsibility of watching the group onto the bus or coach
 - being clear about how children will interact with the public
- Private car
 - checking the insurance and vetting needs for drivers
 - ensuring that booster seats are used where required by law

9.9 Toilets

Staff should risk assess access to toilet facilities shared with the general public. They should:

- Check toilets for cleanliness and any particular hazards (eg drug paraphernalia) before children make use of them
- Ensure, as much as practicable, that toilets are empty of members of the public before they are used by children
- Not be afraid to challenge members of the public acting suspiciously or naively, eg entering public toilets whilst using their phone, or ask them to wait a moment whilst children finish.

9.10 Behaviour

Children are expected to adhere to the same standards of behaviour on school visits as in school and should be reminded of such before all visits. The visit leader should apply consequences to poor behaviour in line with the school's behaviour policy.

9.11 Electronic Devices and Mobile Phones

Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones on any school visit or residential. Expensive items, such as other electronic devices are also not allowed due to the risk of loss or damage. The headteacher may make exceptions to this rule, at their discretion, for example, where there is a particularly long coach journey.

Cameras are not allowed on residential visits.

9.12 General Considerations

- Use regular headcounts to ensure that all children are together, especially at transition points
- Be clear who is responsible for checking whether all children are present – is it the visit leader or individual group leaders
- Have a register so the identity of a missing child can be established
- Ensure all children wear school uniform so they are easy to spot in public places
- Give clear physical boundaries where children are allowed freedom to “roam”
- Consider that the visit leader has no group responsibility so that they can follow any issues
- Ensure you can contact senior school staff in an emergency
- Know what you will do in an emergency

10. Inclusion

All children who attend Fowlmere Primary School are entitled to participate in outdoor learning. It is expected that visit leaders, with the support of the EVC, will make direct or realistic adaptations to visit in order to make them accessible to all children.

Visit leaders are reminded that it is unlawful to treat children less favourably because of a disability and to fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification. However, expectations of staff must be reasonable and within their competence.

11. Medical information and emergency procedures

The visit leader should take written details on the trip of any relevant medical information about pupils. Where appropriate other adults will be made aware of the specific medical needs of children in their group. If medicine needs to be administered during the trip the child’s parent will be required to give written authorisation to a named adult. In certain circumstances the pupils’ parent may be encouraged to attend the visit.

The visit leader needs to take with them contact details for the school office, and in the case of visits outside the normal school day contact details for two senior members of school staff.

Senior contacts must have home and office telephone numbers of the Education officer team. They should also have contact details for the parents for each pupil on the visit.

11.1 First Aid Provision

Visit leaders must take on each coach a stocked and checked first aid bag, appropriate to the nature of the visit and the numbers in the group.

11.2 Emergency Procedures

In the event of an accident or emergency the visit leader should:

- Assess the situation;

- account for all other group members and ensure their wellbeing;
- inform other staff of the problem and decide action to be taken;
- establish who has been involved in the incident and the nature and extent of any injuries;
- notify the police and emergency services as appropriate;
- ensure that wherever possible hospital trips are accompanied by a teacher;
- restrict telephone access until the school emergency contact has been alerted with precise details;
- not release names of involved parties other than to police or medical services;
- avoid any direct dealings with the media.

If the incident is serious the Emergency Contact should alert the head teacher who should then inform the Education Officer and the Chair of Governors. Contact with parents should be as early as possible, consistent with accuracy.

As soon as possible a record should be made of all the details of the incident and subsequent events.

11.3 Reporting and recording of accidents and incidents

The visit leader will be required to make a written record of the exact circumstances of any accidents involving injury to an individual, pupil or adult, listing all relevant factors. Such records will be kept on file in school, in support of the report of the incident in the Accident Report Book. For more serious incidents an LA accident report form will also need to be filled in.

12. Finance and Insurance

The school asks for voluntary contributions where a trip incurs a cost which cannot be met by school funds. The school reserves the right to cancel visits where insufficient contributions place an unacceptable burden on the school budget. Full details are given in the Charging and Remissions Policy.

The school holds Educational Visit Insurance with the Local Authority.

13. Data Protection

Information about staff and participants, including recognisable photographs, are subject to data protection law. Confidential information about participants will be needed on school visits (for example medical information in case of an emergency, or dietary information in the case of a residential visit). Senior staff may need access to contact information overnight where pupils are on a residential. All staff should ensure that this information remains confidential, for example, by:

- Ensuring information is shared on a “need to know” basis only – for example, volunteers do not necessarily need to know detailed information about children
- Staff keeping pupil information with them at all times – in a pocket rather than a bag, for example – and this is shredded on return to school
- Contact information held offsite being sealed, and this seal is checked on its return if it hasn’t been used.
- Any photographs only being taken on school equipment. Volunteers must not take photographs.

Where information is shared with third party providers this practice is covered by the school’s Privacy Notice.